

THE MYTHS OF BLUEBEARD AND ORANGESKIN

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

I have been tamping down my disgust for the last four weeks, just as many of you have.

I'm completely disgusted with talking head punditry blaming everyone but themselves, including Democrats and Democratic Party-wannabes who decided after the election that it was a good time to kick minority groups and blame them, or turned stupid before the camera and insist the barrier to winning was something facts say it wasn't.

But I have a specially level of revulsion allocated for – brace yourself, it's not about some of you personally – white women.

53% of white American women have voted for Donald the adjudicated rapist Trump not once, not twice, but three fucking times – in 2016, in 2020, and yet again in 2024.

For some it was about financial issues like taxes – *I earned this, I've got mine, fuck you*, they voted, wanting Trump to ensure their rank in the economic pecking order was conserved.

For others it was about race and/or misogyny. Internalized oppression makes these voters believe they are somehow exempt from the oppression when they are only a future victim.

In a handful of states it's clear reproductive rights were important to this bloc of voters because they voted against abortion restrictions. And yet they still voted for Trump.

Trump's claims that he would leave abortion to states to decide apparently convinced them they could have things both ways. They could belong to the cult of Trump and white patriarchal

supremacy and still retain their reproductive rights.

What poppycock. Trump had already made the biggest move possible to eliminate their rights at federal level by ensuring the Roberts' Supreme Court would undermine them.

It's infuriating and yet somehow predictable.

This cognitive dissonance in women is the stuff of myth, the kind of behavior we've been warned about in stories nearly a millennia old.

We're watching once again the unfolding myth of Bluebeard.

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Here's the tl;dr version of the Bluebeard myth from Simple Wikipedia:

A rich man has a blue beard which frightens young women. He has been married several times but no one knows what has happened to his wives. He woos two young sisters in the neighborhood but neither are inclined to consider marriage. He treats them to a lavish time in his country house. The younger sister decides to marry him. Shortly after the wedding (and before he travels to a far land on business), Bluebeard gives his wife the keys to his house. One key opens a door to a distant room. He forbids her to enter this room. He leaves and his wife opens the door to the forbidden room. Here she finds Bluebeard's former wives, all dead and lying on a floor covered with blood. She drops the key. It is magic and becomes stained with blood that cannot be washed away. Bluebeard returns. He discovers the blood-stained key and knows his wife has disobeyed his order. He tells her she will take her place among the dead. He grants her a few minutes to pray. She calls her sister Anne and asks her to go to the top of the tower to see if her

brothers are on the road. After several tense moments, Anne reports seeing the men approaching. Bluebeard raises a cutlass to decapitate his wife. Her brothers burst into the room. They kill Bluebeard. Their sister is safe.

I'm not going to write out the full Bluebeard myth here. I'm going to trust readers to do their homework reading the original, more complex Wikipedia entry and possibly the Charles Perrault version available for free at Project Gutenberg.

There are many versions of this myth across languages, countries, and cultures. It has been adapted in contemporary culture repeatedly. In other words, humans have been telling a story in which the same familiar elements have occurred because humans universally find it relatable across history and now.

We've even begun discussion of universal liberation and the enslavement of fully-conscious AI "women" to serve Bluebeardian men, as in writer/director Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* (2015).

It should not be difficult to see the parallels between Bluebeard and Trump – the multiple silenced wives, the naïve woman/women who yield to promises of wealth and pleasure, the unpleasantness of discovering the truth beneath the promises, the mortal price to be paid.

Nor should it be difficult to see the meta layer of this myth, where wealthy men feel entitled to demand subordination by women including the suppression of knowledge and therefore consent. To slip this leash is to suffer loss unless rescued at the last moment. That rescue is the only thing separating the bride from the corpses of sister brides.

The biggest single variant between versions of the Bluebeard myth is the means of rescue. A sister or sisters, brother or brothers, or a mother figure steps in at the very last moment

to save the final girl.

Unfortunately, the parallel here is that they believe naively they will always be the lucky final girl; in truth we as societal siblings are always the rescuers.

We did a shit job three elections in a row, mostly because we assumed the victim(s) were fully informed and aware of the danger, failing to reach them at a level mythic stories connect. Many were fully informed and blithely voted for Trump because he said he would leave reproductive rights to the states.

Like the last bride in Bluebeard's myth, they may have been amply informed of the manifold deaths of previous wives yet plunged ahead into marriage believing they were somehow immune.

What if the victim(s) refuse efforts to save them?

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Three women married Trump, two of whom should have known better. More women were involved with him consensually; they, too should have known better.

Note status of consent here – some girls and women were forced to be involved with Trump without their consent, from minors at the Miss Teen USA pageant to E. Jean Carroll. Don't confuse these persons with the former. Many of them fought in some way not to be involved with Trump, informing more women about his nature as they did so, clawing back against his efforts to stuff them in his bloody oubliette by way of SLAPP suits and other forms of legal harassment.

The women who voted for Trump three times are among those who expressed their consent at the ballot box. They agreed to what he offered them as a candidate.

Like the younger sister who heard all the rumors about Bluebeard, who may have been warned by mother and sisters against him, they went ahead and consented to Trump as president.

The only thing which gave Bluebeard's final wife pause was her own discovery in the personal pursuit of information. In many versions of the myth she is merely overwhelmed by her own curiosity about the forbidden. In other versions she is upset about being denied access to what is hers by rights as his wife. Whatever it is that drives her, it is she who must put the key into the lock, she who makes the discovery of the many corpses, she who in terror drops the key and eventually exposes her intransigence to Bluebeard.

It is she who must be threatened for her failure to obey and she who must face the intense fear of death.

She will seek her ready rescuers only after she has been confronted with the reality of Bluebeard's immense monstrousness and his intent to kill her.

In short, the 53% of white women who voted for Trump will only realize the enormity of their mistake when he threatens them personally at immense personal cost.

They will ask us for help once they are fully aware of the immediate danger to themselves and loved ones – not before then.

Or as Adrian Bott as @Cavalorn tweeted so elegantly on the dead bird app back in 2015,

'I never thought leopards would eat MY face,' sobs woman who voted for the Leopards Eating People's Faces Party.

So very prescient that he used a woman as a face-eaten victim.

Until a substantive number of these 53% of white women voters actually lose their faces so to say, they will not reach out for aid.

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You may be depressed now. You may already be angry. But you must be prepared for the day that

last bride, the final girl, the blundering substantive number of white women Trump voters emerge from their privileged state of heedless unawareness – unwokeness, dare I say – holding out a bloody key of knowledge asking frantically to be saved.

Because you're going to have to be ready to save her sorry stupid ass in order to save us all.

If this wasn't true humans wouldn't be telling this story over and over so many times in so many ways, both as a warning to the women who need to be informed, and as a reminder to the rescuers they will be needed if Bluebeard is to be stopped from taking yet more victims.

Furthermore, you need to prepare yourself to tell your children and grandchildren about the myth of Bluebeard.

Now with Orangeskin.