

Culture Vulture: Out After All

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Perhaps you've heard that Selma (one of the aunts) on *The Simpsons* has recently come out as a lesbian? I'd heard that they were going to out someone on the show, but the PR people were being coy about which character it would be – I'd had my money on Lenny and Carl, frankly.

In honor of Selma's recent conversion, I thought I'd compile a list of other famous fictional characters who need a coming out party – and not the kind with debutantes (you know, unless that's what you're into).

Jo and Blair on *The Facts of Life*

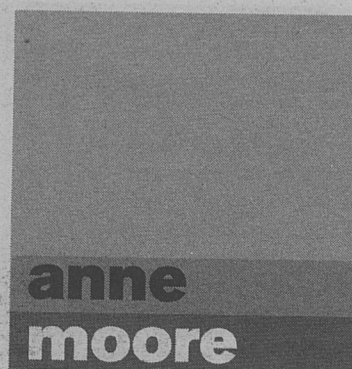
This seems so obvious as to not even be worth mentioning, but at the same time, I don't think I could not mention them since an emulation of or incoherent longing for Jo Polnicheck was the first sign of queerness in so many women of my generation. The scene I'm picturing would look a little something like this:

It's one of those Jo/Blair episodes, where they're stuck together and forced to realize that their animosity hides a deeper kinship. So they're snowed in at a hotel where all the girls have gone for the weekend – the rest of them have driven back to town together, but there was no room in the van for Blair because her toiletries took up all the passenger space.

Blair resigns herself to riding home on Jo's motorcycle even though it will muss her hair, but a sudden storm leaves her and Jo stranded. By the time the roads have cleared enough for them to drive back together, they realize that all their animosity over the years was hiding their true feelings for each other. They head back to Peakskill, but instead of returning to Eastland Academy, they set up a combination salon and mechanic's shop just down the road.

Anne Shirley and Diana Barry in *Anne of Green Gables*

Because you know that Anne never cared about stupid blank Gilbert as much as she did Diana. Anne's crying jag early in the novel when she's considering the possibility of Diana's still entirely theoretical



future marriage feels like the cry of every young queer girl who wants to marry her best friend, so I pose that she and Diana have a secret affair that extends throughout the series. Their signal at the window of five flashes of the candle means more than just "come over right away, for I have something very important to tell you" – instead, it means "I have to see you. Now."

Luke Skywalker's queeny bitchiness seems significant to me of a deeper connection he feels for Han Solo.

Although Diana still marries Fred, and Anne agrees to marry Gilbert, the prospect of moving to Ingleside and leaving Diana and Avonlea is too much for Anne, and she spirits Diana away in the night. They make for the big city of Montreal, where Anne learns to speak French and opens a women's bookstore.

After the gossip in Avonlea has settled down a bit (although all the townspeople always knew that Shirley girl was a bit off, if you get my meaning), Marilla joins them in the big city, and keeps their brownstone tidy and manageable while Anne and Diana run a salon for bohemian writers in Montreal. Marilla meets up with Gertrude Stein and realizes that her desire to follow Anne and Diana to the city was motivated by more than just her fears that Anne wouldn't be able to manage on her own. Years later, they return to Prince Edward Island to run a rural bohemian retreat.

Luke Skywalker

I'm thinking particularly of the scene in the first *Star Wars* movie just after Han has left the Rebel Alliance to go back to Tatooine and pay back Jabba the Hut. Leia approaches Luke and asks, "Luke, what's troubling you?" He responds pissily, "It's Han."

I know this seems like a throwaway moment, but Luke's queeny bitchiness here seems significant to me of a deeper connection he feels for Han. The scene when Leia kisses Luke cements this reading in my mind, since Luke seems so much more fixated on Han's reaction to their kiss than he is on Leia herself.

Sadly, I don't think that Han returns Luke's feelings, but that does make the situation perfect for a tragic tale of unrequited love. In this version, one of the things Luke realizes while he's training

with Yoda on Degoba is his love for Han. His trip to Cloud City is motivated as much by his desire to tell Han the truth before it's too late as it is by his need to save them all from Vader. However, when he sees Leia and Han together, he realizes that it's she whom Han truly loves.

Fortunately, Luke and Chewie find solace together, and through their shared bond of love for the forever unattainable and clueless Han Solo, forge their own relationship.

Frodo and Sam in *The Lord of the Rings*

Oh wait—someone already made that movie! ▼

Anne Moore is a cheerleader and local gadabout who hails from various interchangeable suburbs all over the country. She currently lives in Burlington with her cat and exhaustive collection of Buffy DVDs.

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