

“Crazy Fruitcakes” — by Patricia Stamm

Character Descriptions

Dr. Jared Lockheart Shamas, III

Dr. Shamas is the psychiatrist at Beauview State Hospital for the Mentally Insane in Manhattan. He is a nice looking sixty year old with a mustache and beard like that of Freud. He had dreams of being a renowned psychoanalyst but after his wife left him, taking their daughter with her, he had a nervous breakdown and the New York State Psychoanalytic Institute revoked his psychoanalytic privileges. Now, though deep down he is sincerely interested in helping his patients, it is masked by his disillusionment about his life, not to mention a serious cocaine habit.

Head Nurse Stoneheart

Stoneheart is a woman in her sixties who works as the Head Nurse at Beauview State Hospital for the Mentally Insane. She functions as Shamas’s assistant, keeping things organized on the ward, as well as being responsible for dispensing medications including administering sedatives. She has a sociopathic streak, taking pleasure in causing the patients distress and pain. Additionally, she is a paranoid schizophrenic who hides her delusions.

Malcolm X Washington

Malcolm is a forty five year old lawyer brought to the ward after attempting to kill an army major at his son’s military funeral. He is furious at his ex-wife because he believes that she turned his son against him, and he is furious at America for being on the wrong side of a war that got his son killed. He is outwardly aggressive belying his inner vulnerability and grief.

Tallulah

Tallulah is a sensitive, affectionate, and earthy woman in her fifties. She was brought to the ward after attempting suicide when her lovers left her, landing her the diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder with abandonment depression. Despite her generosity and ease at relating to others, she remains highly devaluing of herself.

Julia

Julia is a pretty eighteen year old college student who was brought to the ward after an overdose. A history of sexual violation, beginning with her stepfather, has left her traumatized. Though sweet, she is very shut down, finding it painfully difficult to connect with others, let alone address her past. It is eventually revealed that Julia is in fact Shamas’s long lost daughter, who changed her name to get distance from her stepfather.

Shakespeare

Shakespeare is an androgynous-looking man in his sixties who is always dressing himself up in some new creative getup. He has both bipolar disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder,

manifesting as a constant need to rhyme his speech. It is revealed that it is fact his shame at being a hermaphrodite that is at the root of his pathology... Once he is able to be accepted by others and then himself for who he really is, he finds healing.

Angel

Angel is a eighteen year old who is brought to the ward after being found naked in Times Square with no memory of who he is or how he got there. He speaks alternately in his normal voice and a grand voice, which he believes he is channeling from a Divine source. Ultimately he remembers that the precipitating event for his dislocation was that he accidentally killed his abusive father in an attempt to keep him from harming his mother.