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### The Wizard of Roz

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*CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College*

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## The Wizard of Roz

**By Marleen S. Barr**

“I thought the Donald would evaporate in a poof of orange smoke, ending a supremely screwed-up period of history. But the loudest mouth is not shutting up. And Republicans continue to listen, clinging to the idea that the dinosaur is the future.”

– Maureen Dowd, *New York Times*, May 9, 2021

Professor Sondra Lear, suffering from pandemic induced claustrophobia, stepped out on her Manhattan apartment roof in the early evening to get fresh air. She looked up and noticed an unidentified flying object careening toward her. Upon closer inspection, she realized that she was viewing a flying, chartreuse 1960s Lincoln Continental complete with silver edged tail fins and whitewall tires. The Lincoln landed on her roof. The door opened. A bleach-blonde bouffanted woman in her forties, wearing an A-line, pink-and-purple paisley knee-length dress, a three-strand beaded necklace, and white tennis shoes, emerged from the flying car. Although a feminist science fiction scholar and used to extraterrestrials, Sondra was baffled as to why this particular alien was a dead ringer for her dead mother.

“Why are you appearing as a replica of my mother coming to visit me at my 1960s summer camp?” Sondra asked as she tried to remain calm. “Who and what are you?”

“I am Rozie6812, an emissary from the planet Roz. We are controlled by the big giant head, an omniscient, omnipresent computer named Roslyn. We call Roslyn the Great and Powerful Wizard of Roz. As a card carrying Rozie, I have to follow the computer’s orders—and she ordered me to find you. She admires your academic interest in science fiction written by women.”

“My mother’s name was Roslyn.”

“All of the billions of Roz inhabitants are versions of your mother. We are interested in accomplishing two things. First, we want to know if you are married. Despite our ability to find out everything, we want the answer to come directly from you.”

Sondra felt dizzy.

“Steady yourself. Just answer the question.”

“Yes,” said Sondra as a sky-blue rotary phone materialized and floated in front of the Rozie.

“Excuse me while I call home,” said Rozie6812 as she picked up the receiver. “Hello. Roslyn. Sondra said yes. She is married.” The Rozie then turned to Sondra and said, “Everyone on Roz is deliriously happy and giving you a standing ovation. Now, turning to my second directive, I have come to put an end to President Trump. No one who spends her professional life writing about feminist superheroes should be subjected to his misogyny.”

“You’re too late. Biden is the president. Trump is tweetless in Mar-a-Lago.”

“Too bad. Since I cannot accomplish my second objective, Roslyn will order me to return,” said Rozie6812 as she opened the Lincoln’s driver-side door.

“Wait. Stop. Trump is not nullified. He’s perpetuating the Big Lie that he won the election, proclaiming that he will be re-ensconced in the White House, and threatening to run for

president in 2024. Someone smarter and, I shudder at the thought, worse than Trump could succeed Biden. Help!”

“Roz is a very bureaucratic planet. But I’ll see what I can do. Let me apprise Roslyn of the situation.” Rozie6812 spoke into the telephone.

“I am afraid to ask, but what did Roslyn say?”

“She says that because you are married, she will make an exception even though I arrived too late to carry out the original Trump removal mission. But, according to Roz regulations, changed mission objectives impose additional requirements. Roslyn will not allow me to assist you unless you bring me Donald Trump’s broom. Her decision stands. Resistance is futile.”

“In order to save America from the Big Lie, an eventual Trump second term, or an even worse political fate, I have no choice but to comply. I’m off to Trump Tower on a quest to bring back Trump’s broom.”

“Good decision. I’ll drive around the Milky Way while I wait for you. When you have Trump’s broom in hand, return to your roof, and I will tell Roslyn that your mission has been accomplished.

Sondra put on her face mask and walked up Fifth Avenue to Trump Tower. She sat against the wall near the entrance, dejected and trying to discern what to do. A piece of straw fell on the floor nearby. As a lifetime New Yorker who grew up with myriad anti-litter bug campaigns, Sondra picked up the offending material and placed it on the seat beside her. Something that resembled a lime-green sea horse appeared and hovered above the straw.

“Thank you for rescuing my nesting component,” said the flying entity.

“You’re welcome. I am sort of afraid to ask, because I already did this today, but who and what are you?”

“I’m a dragon.”

“Aren’t you a little small for a dragon?”

“Size doesn’t matter. Just as a hummingbird is as much an avian as a Great Blue Heron and a chihuahua is as much a canine as a Great Dane, I am a bona fide dragon. I was in the middle of building my nest in one of the atrium trees when this straw fell out of my claw. Thank you for retrieving it.”

“The atrium is devoid of trees.”

“It was supposed to contain several 40-foot trees. But Trump chopped them down because he didn’t like them. His disrespect for nature made me mad. I restored all the trees and

ensconced them within an invisibility cloak. Believe me, although you can't see them, the trees are here."

"I believe you," said Sondra in the middle of having a brainstorm. "Could I possibly have some more of your straw nesting material?"

"I am happy to share, but why do you need it?"

"It could help keep Trump from having the ability to destroy swaths of the American natural landscape." The dragon flew away and quickly returned with a bunch of straw.

"Thank you," Sondra said. "I have one more request. Please bring me an atrium tree branch and make it visible." The branch appeared next to the straw pile. "It was nice to meet you. I wish you well with your nest building and I hope you successfully raise your offspring amid the invisible trees."

Sondra gathered up the straw and used the original piece to tie the bunch around the branch. Because the broom was made from materials garnered from within Trump Tower, she was certain that Trump, by default, owned the broom. She was ecstatic.

Sondra returned to her building's roof and said to Roz6812, "Here's Trump's broom."

"If it looks like a broom, and it sweeps like a broom, and you say it is Trump's broom, thus it is," proclaimed Roz6812. The rotary phone reappeared. "Let me clear this with Roslyn." She spoke into the phone. "Good news. Roslyn says because you have fulfilled the quest, I am cleared to nullify Trump. As I speak, the Mar-a-Lago resort is being turned into a roach motel. Trump is permanently checked in and he can never check out. A cheeseburger and a can of soda will appear whenever he gets hungry."

"Great job!" Sondra said as Rozie6812 flew off.

Sondra returned to her apartment and found a baby lime-green mini dragon flying loop-the-loops above her sofa.

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Marleen S. Barr is known for her pioneering work in feminist science fiction and teaches English at the City University of New York. She has won the Science Fiction Research Association Pilgrim Award for lifetime achievement in science fiction criticism. Barr is the author of *Alien to Femininity: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory*, *Lost in Space: Probing Feminist Science Fiction and Beyond*, *Feminist Fabulation: Space/Postmodern Fiction*, and *Genre Fission: A New Discourse Practice for Cultural Studies*. Barr has edited many anthologies and co-edited the science fiction issue of *PMLA*. She is the author of the novels *Oy Pioneer!* and *Oy Feminist Planets: A Fake Memoir*. Her *When Trump Changed: The Feminist Science Fiction Justice League Quashes the Orange Outrage Pussy Grabber* is the first single authored Trump short story collection.

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