



### **BUSTED: CHANGING CHARACTER PERSONALITIES MID STREAM**

One Life to Live has recently undergone two ill-conceived character renovations, revamping the characters of Eli and Ford almost overnight.

Viewers were just starting to know and like Eli, as the show worked to establish him as a love interest for Blair. He was strong, handsome, smart, sexy, and kind. It was refreshing to see Blair paired with someone besides Todd, and with someone who wasn't in love with someone else, like John. Blair deserves a man who's completely into her and Eli appeared to fit the bill and adore her. Their once physical-with-no-strings-attached relationship was slowly blossoming into more and we were rooting for Blair to finally get her man.

Our high hopes for Blair were eviscerated when Eli was revealed as a psycho stalker-murderer, responsible for killing Blair's aunt, Melinda, and her friend Rodney. He was also the culprit who pushed Marty down the stairs causing her to miscarry, and the one who beat Ford to a bloody pulp.

I'm still scratching my head as to why the show sacrificed a viable leading man to tie all of their loose ends together into one convoluted plot. It's not any fun for fans to watch Blair fall even more in love with her new Mr. Wonderful, even agreeing to marry him, while we know he's only going to break her heart again. Isn't Blair due for some happiness?

The show has gone the complete opposite direction in their remodeling of Ford. We've spent months watching Ford sleep his way through Llanview with a complete disregard for anyone but himself. Ford manipulated Langston for his own purposes and when things got too complicated, he dumped her, and moved right on to Jessica.

On prom night, Ford slept with Karen the pizza girl, seduced Langston and was about to sleep with her until her boyfriend walked in, and then wound up in bed with Jessica. When he was discovered beaten and near-dead the next day, no one would have been too upset if his next on-screen appearance was at his own funeral.

Ford survived his brutal beating and now, inexplicably, is a changed man. We're supposed to believe that he was a misogynist pig because his father beat him and his little brother, and his mother abandoned them. Now poor, misunderstood Ford has apologized to Jessica, and is acting nice to Hannah (another girl he slept with and dumped). He's also working overtime trying to convince Langston he really did love her, after telling her on prom night it was just a line to get what he wanted. Talk about revisionist history.

One Life to Live isn't the only show undergoing such drastic character 180's. General Hospital is guilty of committing this offense with the character of Claire Walsh. When Jax brought Claire to town, she was a tough-as-nails federal prosecutor, whose sole mission in life was to prosecute mob boss Sonny Corinthos. Claire went after Sonny with a balls-to-the-wall vengeance, even putting his young son Morgan on the witness stand in an effort to discover the truth about Claudia's murder.

After Claire's case fell apart when Sonny was exonerated by his other son confessing, Claire vowed to exact vengeance and lock Sonny away for a different crime. All of a sudden, Sonny began flirting with her and she turned to Jell-O. A few weeks of Sonny flashing his dimples and batting his big brown eyes at her, and the woman lost her mind. She can't think straight and even asked Sonny to father a child with her. This makes no sense, especially given what she knows firsthand about his relationships with his children and the damage it has caused them.

While Dahlia Salem (Claire) and Maurice Benard (Sonny) have good chemistry, it's not enough of a rationale to justify destroying Claire's credibility as a strong willed prosecutor by relegating her into another one of the many notches on Sonny's belt.

Characters should have a legitimate reason to undergo such an extreme metamorphosis, and it should happen over time. Neither OLTL or GH has made a convincing case for these characters' rapid transformations, so viewers are left to wonder what might have been if they had stayed the course.



**BLISSFUL: THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT**

OLTL has a knack for casting good kid and teenage actors. The show successfully cast Kristen Alderson (Starr) and her brother Eddie (Matthew) when each turned seven, and struck gold again with Carmen LoPorto as Starr's brother Jack. Now newcomers Kelley Missal as Starr's half-sister Danielle, and Nicolas Robuck as James, a potential love interest for Starr, are the latest young finds taking Llanview by storm.

LoPorto is hilarious as Jack. Jack idolizes his unscrupulous father, Todd, and the writers give LoPorto plenty of great lines to this effect. LoPorto is able to portray Jack's natural exuberance - as well as his tendency to scheme against anyone he doesn't like - as charming not bratty, a rare feat for a child actor. If OLTL is smart, they'll sign this kid to a contract now, instead of leaving him dangling in the land of the recurring.

Missal has been a revelation in her role as Dani. She is by turns petulant, proud, strong, scared, sarcastic, smart, and warm, exactly as one would expect an offspring of Todd and Tea to behave. It's hard to believe Missal is making her soap debut.

Robuck, too, has star (r) potential written all over him. He's handsome and charismatic without crossing the line into cheesiness. His chemistry with Alderson's Starr is something to behold. As much as Starr and her baby daddy Cole, have a built in rooting value, their relationship has been dull to watch for sometime. In the four years they were paired together, Alderson never had the chemistry with Brandon Buddy (Cole) that she has with Robuck after two months.

Robuck brings out the feisty side of Alderson, an attribute Starr inherited as the daughter of Todd and Blair, and one which used to be a key aspect of her personality. Alderson lights up any time Starr is flirting with James and nothing is more endearing than watching him call her "Twinkle."

Robuck also has chemistry with Brittany Underwood, who plays Starr's best friend Langston. This trio is a compelling triangle in the making and will be great fun to watch develop.

When teen actors invade soaps for the summer, it's usually time to fast forward the TiVo. However, OLTL has hit the jackpot with their new talents, and made the once insufferable warm

weather months enjoyable. Let's hope when fall comes, these kids don't get sent off to boarding school.

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