

Waves crashed against the rocky outcroppings surrounding the cliff sides as seagulls flew overhead, calling out to each other in a cheery tone. A curvy little figure sat upon a large rock nestled against a ledge holding a small crystal clear tidal pool. Her yellow tail sifted through the waves as they splashed her rock. A gull landed beside the pudgy girl and tipped its head at her. Her short chestnut curls bounced as she tilted her head to the same degree with a curious little smile.

The two observed each other for a moment before the mermaid reached for a sewn kelp bag wrapped around her curvaceous waist, and pulled out a small purple marble. She held it out in her hand for the gull to take, but before it could a quick movement a stone throws away startled it causing the gull to take flight. The mermaid turned to see the commotion, quickly shoving the small orb back into her pouch and locked eyes with another mermaid. This one was absolutely stunning. Long flowing raven hair cascaded over petite freckled pale shoulders. A long, elegant, emerald green tail turning to slender hips and a long torso. Her small chest was bound by beautiful pink coral, wrapping its way up and around her neck. Deep blue eyes and a scowl met the little mermaid's extra rolls and a scoff escaped her puckered lips. She turned away in a huff and didn't turn back around. The little mermaid flinched and turned to look down into the tide pool.

In its crystal reflection she saw her own dark skin, stretched out by her extra weight.

She saw a bright yellow tail meeting her voluptuous hips where the kelp bag was still bound. She lifted her hand to move her hair from her face so as to see her rosy cheeks, green eyes and button nose. She hugged herself as she pulled her tail out of the water, staring solemnly at the mermaid in her reflection.

She glanced back at the pretty mermaid to see a young merman surface. He pulled himself out of the water beside her and the little mermaid's eyes grew wide. Her eyes traveled his body and seemed to drink in every detail. From his toned abs to his short choppy raven hair and bright green tail. Freckles on his shoulders showed he must have been related to the pretty mermaid.

Suddenly he turned and sparkling blue eyes met hers. Her eyes got bigger as a blush deepened across her entire face up to her ears. She whipped her head back down to the tide pool and bit her lip. After a moment she glanced up again and saw the merman staring at her with his own red cheeks and wide eyes. He looked entranced. A shy smile accompanied by a wave made her blush deepen again. She lifted her hand to wave back when the pretty mermaid turned around and grabbed the merman's wrist. She glared at him and dragged him under the waves with a quick triumphant glance at the little mermaid.

The little mermaid watched the waves cover the ripples. Her face fell as she pulled her tail up against her body, hiding her belly rolls. She covered her face with her hands as tears began rolling down her soft cheeks. Her gentle sobs were drowned out by the gulls echoing calls.

The same gull from before landed beside her. He called to her, making her look up. Startled, she noticed the merman had returned and was swimming towards her. She sniffled and wiped one eye with the back of her hand as she watched him as he pulled himself out of the water beside her. A concerned wrinkle was set in between his brows, but his eyes were kind. He lifted his hand to her face, and used his thumb to wipe a tear from her cheek. He glanced over at the gull before looking back at her. His concerned frown turned to a comforting smile. The little mermaid allowed her tail to rest in the water again as she lifted her small hand to the merman's and smiled back at him. She closed her eyes and sighed in content. The merman moved closer so as to sit next to her, and placed his arm around her shoulders. She shyly looked up at him as the blush started creeping again. He grinned a warm grin as his blush blossomed too.

The two sat together and listened to the waves crashing and the gulls calling for what seemed like eternity. The gull nestled next to them seemed sleepy as it sat with its eyes closed. The little mermaid glanced at the gull and smiled. She reached back into her

kelp bag and retrieved the little purple marble. The merman watched her curiously as she placed it gently in front of the gull. The gull opened its eyes and looked down at the pretty little sphere before taking it up in its bill. It looked over at the mermaid as she smiled warmly at it. It took off and flew up the cliff side into the over bearing noise of its brethren. The mermaid and merman watched as it landed next to a large pile of sticks and another gull lifted its head. The first gull held out its bill and offered the marble to the smaller one in the nest. The nested gull took it and dipped its head back down behind the sticks before returning without it. The first gull then hopped into the nest next to its mate and settled in for the night.

The mermaid turned her head and grinned at the merman who grinned back. Together they watched the sunset fade before slipping into the waves and disappeared.

Red Riding Hood

Cat Hartt-Towle
Grade 12
Kamloops School of the Arts

Characters

NARRATOR: Witty. Opens the first scene only and can be a dual role.

RED: Sly and secretive. Acts innocent.

WOLF: Caring and curious. Tends to go out of his way.

GRANDMOTHER: Blind without her glasses and is a bit of an airhead.

HUNTSMAN: Arrogant and egotistic. Only does things to make himself seem better.

SCENE ONE

**(NARRATOR walks onstage oblivious to the audience until they reach about CS.
NARRATOR looks surprised when they look DS.)**

NARRATOR

You're here already? **(Looks at wristwatch)** You aren't supposed to be here yet. Huh. Oh well. The actors are almost ready anyway so we might as well get started. **(Starts to head offstage before stopping.)** Well, before that I should tell you about the play you're about to see. **(Clears throat.)** Welcome to [insert company/school name]'s drama production of 'Red Riding Hood'. Now, you may be thinking that this'll be another one of those lame watered down versions of just another fairy tale. You are half right. The story has a bit of a twist though. Want me to tell you what is it? Too bad, you have to wait. Watch closely and keep your ears open. Now, let's get started!

(NARRATOR walks offstage the opposite direction they entered in. Lights dim as the stage is set with a few bushes. RED skips onstage carrying a basket that has pastries in it. She is humming.)

RED

La la la la...

(WOLF walks on SR, sees RED, and pretends to hide.)

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WOLF

Who's this in the forest? I don't remember seeing this... child. And what is she carrying? It certainly smells strange.

(RED stops and looks in the basket. WOLF moves closer to her.)

RED

These pastries will be perfect for Grandmother. She'll think they're to *die* for.

(WOLF gets close enough to RED to be able to touch her. She turns around and screams.)

RED

Ahh! Mr. Wolf, you've frightened me!

WOLF

Now, what is a little girl like you doing in this forest alone?

RED

I'm heading to Grandmother's house to give her some pastries I've made special for her.

WOLF

Is that what's in the basket?

RED

Yes.

WOLF

They don't smell like normal pastries. Are you sure they're good to eat?

RED

Of course! I only made them yesterday.

WOLF

Why don't you try one then?

RED

Because they're only for Grandmother. I... shouldn't eat any of them.

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(RED takes a step backwards.)

RED

I better be going now Mr. Wolf. Goodbye.

(RED runs offstage.)

WOLF

There's something wrong with her and those pastries. I know! I'll go warn her Grandmother!
There's only one house in this forest after all...

(WOLF runs offstage after RED.)

[END SCENE]

SCENE TWO

(Scene opens up to a bed SR. GRANDMOTHER is laying on it under the blanket. She has glasses sitting on top of her head. WOLF enters SR.)

GRANDMOTHER

Hello? Red, is that you dearie?

WOLF

(Girly voice) Yes Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER

Oh good. Come a bit closer, I can't see you very well. I seem to be missing my glasses. Could you help me?

WOLF

Of course, anything for you.

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(WOLF creeps over to the bed. GRANDMOTHER grabs his hand.)

GRANDMOTHER

Oh my, you sure have grown. And your hands are very, very hairy. You must be maturing really fast.

WOLF

Uhhh...

GRANDMOTHER

Could you help me out of bed dearie?

WOLF

Of course.

(as WOLF helps GRANDMOTHER out of the bed a knock is heard offstage.)

GRANDMOTHER

Now, who could that be? I'm not expecting anybody else.

WOLF

I'm sure you're just hearing things.

(GRANDMOTHER feels the tops of her head and grabs her glasses.)

GRANDMOTHER

My glasses! Thank you dearie for finding them for me.

(As GRANDMOTHER puts the glasses on she screams. Another knock is heard.)

GRANDMOTHER

Wolf!!!

WOLF

(Normal voice) Oh no! Don't scream! **(To self)** I've got to hide her somewhere to keep her safe from the pastries... I know! **(To GRANDMOTHER)** Get in the closet!

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(WOLF pushes GRANDMOTHER off SR and exits behind her.)

[END SCENE]

SCENE THREE

(Scene opens to same set as scene two. WOLF is laying in the bed in GRANDMOTHER'S clothes and wearing her glasses. Another knock is heard.)

WOLF

(Girly voice) Come in!

(RED enters SL and walks to the bed.)

RED

Hello Grandmother. I've brought you those pastries you asked for.

WOLF

Oh good! You can just put them over there for now.

RED

Don't you want one?

WOLF

No thank you dearie. I had a late lunch.

RED

Are you sick Grandmother? Your voice sounds very strange.

WOLF

I'm fine dearie.

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RED

And your eyes look especially large. And your teeth, they're very sharp.

(RED pulls the blanket off to reveal that it is obviously WOLF. RED drops the basket.)

RED

Ahh! Mr. Wolf! Where is Grandmother?

WOLF

Why does it matter to you?

GRANDMOTHER

(Offstage) Red! Dearie help me!

(WOLF gets off the bed and blocks RED from running to SR. RED screams.

HUNTSMAN walks in SL carrying an axe and runs in front of RED.)

HUNTSMAN

Don't worry little girl! I, the strongest, most handsome and charming huntsman in the forest has come to save the day! Wolf! Prepare to be mutilated!

(WOLF steps back as HUNTSMAN swings the axe at WOLF. Die WOLF.)

RED

Oh Mr. Huntsman! Thank you!

(RED runs offstage and enters with GRANDMOTHER. HUNTSMAN picks up the basket and looks inside it.)

HUNTSMAN

Now how about we celebrate with some of these desserts?

(All three of them take a pastry from the basket and take a bite. After RED finishes her first bite she looks at it and is horrified.)

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RED

Oh no. I forgot about the--

(ALL die.)

[END]

Stray Thoughts

November nights have me lying awake
Wondering if I'll ever be rescued
From my room staring at the fan circling round
I am Prometheus damned to suffer for the crime of compassion
I see a speck of dust descending towards me, a Morning Star falling from grace
Looking outside wondering if I should let the sun grace me
Yet I turn away from the rays trying to steal a glance through the window
For I do not want to taint something of grace with my melancholy
Thoughts of dancing with happiness
It is in the end wishful thinking
I wonder is there anything I have to do today
Is there anybody expecting me
Am I on someone else's mind
Am I wanted
Probably not
Who wants me, who wants to see me, who has a house in their heart for me
Maybe
No one
I guess you can criticize me for making assumptions
But the empty notification box, the silence of the door bell, and the lack of calls or
texts asking

Me how I am or what I am doing this weekend is all the evidence I need

I know I am breathing therefore I am alive

Yet I don't know what it means to leave these sheets and feel

Daylight.

Based On A True Story

I crumble, like the world around me.
The towering monoliths torn to dust.
Chaos has took the reigns, I am now free.
Free to decay, free to fade, free to rust.
Lost in the rubble, never to be found.
My life traded for somebody's interest.
A bank account is why I'm in the ground.
The city, my tomb, as I'm laid to rest.

Somewhere I might be on the morning news.
Only to be mourned for just a second.
Palestine, Columbine, Christians and Jews.
We are always meant to be someone's end.
I had a beginning to my story.
Not enough pages to have some glory.

Glass heart

I can't believe
I willingly gave my heart
And you broke it, into a million pieces
Into a million shards
Shattering like a glass object
And you don't care
You don't take one look back
Look back to see my heartbroken
expression
To see what you have done to me

Because you know
You know that when you come back
I will be waiting, with wide open arms
Expectation is your glue
And you'll use, thinking that it'll glue my
heart
Mending the pieces

Perhaps you're right
Maybe I'll give you a second chance
A third, a fourth, a fifth
Maybe *multiple chances*
Thinking that this time around, you'll
love me

But sooner or later
You'll start losing the pieces
The pieces of my trust
Until the chances of forgiveness is
narrow
Until you're left with a broken mess
And I'm walking away from you

Cause baby
I've got a glass heart
Can be easily shattered
But can't
But will not be easily replaceable

Won't put up with it anymore

Stop this
Stop confusing me
Stop your roundabout ways of truth
And leading me in circles
As if I'm a dog on a leash
Willing to take orders
Longing for a treat

But I have noticed
You may think that you lured me in
With your mischievous eyes
And cheeky smile
But now I know better
I know you're two-faced
And I won't put up with it anymore

It's getting harder to tell apart
What is wrong
And what is right
Cause you smile bright and wide
But I feel an itch underneath my skin
An itch of deceit
But I can never be sure

You're sneaky
Cause you never give out lies
Instead you give out vague answers
But specific enough
So I don't have to continue my question
And just be sated and satisfied

I'm so sick of second-guessing myself
Of putting a line of boundaries
And you tip-toeing over it
Just small enough so I wouldn't notice

Tianna Salvati-Taylor

St. Ann's Academy

Grade 12

About Me

You think it's a illness,

Something to cure.

It's not.

You say that it's wrong to be like them,

But how?

They are happy.

How is happiness wrong?

You say they are disgraceful,

But they are just loving each other.

Why can't you see that when you say these things,

It tears me apart that you think that way about them,

About me.

I'm trying to get you to see who I am.

So I don't have to say it out loud.

I don't want to hide it from you,

I want you to love who I love.

I am not sick,

I am not wrong,

I am not disgraceful.

Tianna Salvati-Taylor

St. Ann's Academy

Grade 12

About Me

I am your daughter,

And I'm telling you,

I love her!

I Think I Do

I can't.

Can I?

No, it's too soon for that.

I mean how can you when you haven't really seen them?

At least not without the wifi and a camera.

But then she smiles...

No, I can't

I haven't seen her.

I have yet to truly gaze into her eyes.

I... I can't.

But... when I see that she is typing a reply

Tianna Salvati-Taylor

St. Ann's Academy

Grade 12

I Think I Do

To my good morning, when it's her afternoon

My heart goes to the moon and back a thousand times.

I can't though.

I've only known her for 4 months and 8 days,

That's too soon.

Is it though?

No it is, I can't.

But I always think about her,

I can't think of anything else.

She is the first one I want to tell anything to.

Good or bad.

Does that mean I do?

I think it does.

I think...

Tianna Salvati-Taylor

St. Ann's Academy

Grade 12

I Think I Do

I think I do...

I love her.

Afraid of the Dark

“Please, ma’am, don’t lock me up in that... that coffin. I done nothing wrong. I swear.”

The man’s words are so unusual that I stop short. Not the proclamation of innocence. It would be unusual for someone *not* to try their luck on me. As if I have any power here. And not the trembling of his voice. Inside, they’re all just little boys, afraid of the dark. But no one’s ever called me “ma’am” before. I stare at his deep blue eyes, thinning hair, and hollow gray cheeks. I smell stale urine. Again, not unusual. For a moment, I’m paralyzed. Then I tighten my grip on his handcuffs. Unable to meet those eyes again, I shove him in his cell without a word. I run, as if empathy’s something I can escape.

I never dreamed I’d end up as a prison guard. As a kid, I was quite the little anarchist. I wouldn’t tolerate a monarchy among my *dolls*, for God’s sake. Everyone was all free and open-minded. Bleeding-heart liberals. But when I was nineteen, I started feeling my own heart bleeding. And Mommy wasn’t there to kiss it better.

That night, the snow was falling, hiding the town in a feathery blanket. The yellow lamp on my desk cast a halo-like glow on my chemistry textbook. I smiled down at the periodic table. I used to want to be a doctor. I used to have dreams of saving the world. I used to want to kiss everybody better, like my mommy did when I fell off my bicycle. The doorbell ringing woke me up from my daydreams. Mom and Dad had been out for dinner, but they had a key, didn’t they? I got scared, thinking they were too drunk to remember that they had one. I was scared of drunk

people. But I was a good daughter, and trotted down the stairs. I swung open the door, then staggered back, nearly tripping over a pink flower pot.

“Miss Hazel Pierce?” Three police officers stood in my doorway.

“Y-yes, that’s me.”

“Constables Ferguson, Lewis, and Dunn” one of them said, as if I cared what their names were. “May we come in? We need to speak with you.”

I would never say no to a police officer.

Sitting on our patched-up sofa, I wracked my brain for what my crime might be. I was the most goody-goody of anyone I knew.

“Miss Pierce, we have some bad news for you. Driving home tonight, your parents collided head-on with a pickup truck. Their hearts had stopped by the time we arrived.” My heart stopped, and I was so dizzy that my vision went black. The bitterest bile I’d ever tasted rose to my throat. The officer continued, unaware. “Fortunately, the suspect’s car was too damaged for him to drive away, and he’s in custody,” he said, as if that would make it all better. Back then, all I wanted was to see my parents again. “We’ve got to go now, but please give us a call if there’s anything we can do for you. We understand that this will be hard for you.” And they were gone so quickly that I could almost have convinced myself that I’d dreamed the whole thing. But my nausea was proof that I hadn’t. I sprinted to the bathroom, barely making it to the toilet before my stomach rid itself of all its grief and anger. If only my mind was that easy to purge.

After that night, the dizziness never seemed to leave. Anger was the only emotion that I wasn’t too numb to feel. The only time I felt alive was during the killer’s trial. He’d been drunk,

and was found guilty of manslaughter. I'd hoped for a murder conviction, but I cheered anyway. You can say I have a sick mind. I was intoxicated by my love for the prison system. Gone was my anarchism; gone were any thoughts of going back to university. My brain was a black hole of uncertainty, and if I started thinking too much, I'd fall in. Everyone said there was light at the end of the tunnel, but I knew better: there's no light in a black hole.

"What can I do for you, dearie?" A few months later, I was staring at the employment office lady's smile, so wide I watched the floor for fallen dentures.

"I heard they're hiring a prison guard," I said, trying to look like the tough chick I knew I'd never be. "I want to apply." The woman narrowed her eyes at me.

"Dearie, I'm not supposed to tell people what to do, but I've never heard of a happy female prison guard." She clearly didn't understand that for me, anger was not an emotion but a lifestyle. She didn't understand that for me, "have a nice day" was an insult.

"Thanks for your opinion," I snapped. "As I said, I want to apply." Her eyes widened, but she passed me the form.

Until now, I'd never looked back. I didn't want to fall into that black hole. Inside the prison, I'm free. So is my fury. No one would argue with me for punching a man who's groped me, and I don't tell them that groping isn't why my fists fly.

But the slam of that man's cell door keeps echoing in my mind. Usually, I have no trouble imagining the prisoners as my parents' killer. But this man looks more like my father. A sob starts in my throat, and a tear, my first since they died, runs down my cheek. I can tell from the

stabbing pains in my chest that it's bleeding again. Somehow, my feet leave the floor and move back towards the man's cell. My voice is that of a child's as I call to him through the bars.

“Sir? If you're actually innocent, I might be able to get you out.”

Kirsten Zubak

Grade 12

St. Ann's Academy

Magical Mishap

The store bell is still ringing when the bookkeeper inquires, "Do you like cats?"

Ana pauses under the door frame. "Excuse me?" When he does not answer, she fully steps into the store and its old book scent. Her eyes widen at the sheer scope of the room. When Grace asked her to pick up a book order from an obscure bookstore, her assumption was that this was a rather quaint joint. A gargantuan emporium complete with a spiral staircase and loft demolishes that notion.

"Cats," the voice returns. She swivels around to see a teen boy hunched over an intricately carved oak desk. Tattoos swirling down both his arms, he does not glance up from his work while he chews his pierced lip. His hands deftly shift behind the cash register. "Do you like them?"

"Um, I guess?" Ana's gaze darts wildly around the store – from the vast, stained glass windows, to the unkempt wooden bookcases teeming with leather-bound novels, to the fragrant hanging plants dropping down from the high arching ceiling. How did she not see this from outside? "I have nothing against them."

"Good," the boy comments, immersed in his tinkering. "Because we have, like, twenty in here."

"Twenty –" She jumps. The heavy-lidded, calico cat rubbing against her jean-clad legs cocks its head as if to say, *What, silly human?*

Kirsten Zubak

Grade 12

St. Ann's Academy

Magical Mishap

“Uh, hi,” Ana greets the cat, reaching a hand down to it. After a disdainful sniff to her palm, the cat saunters off with a dismissive tail swish and joins a cluster of cats huddled on an antique patterned rug.

Well, okay then... Ana gazes over at the boy again. “I’m here to pick up a book for Grace Woodland.”

The boy halts in his work and snickers, leaning back in his creaking wooden rocking chair. “Grace Woodland can read? Wouldn’t have thought that was possible.” Before Ana can react, he is up, pushing in his chair. “Just let me put my cauldron down, then I’ll take you upstairs.”

Cauldron? Ana gapes as he snatches up a miniature iron cauldron containing a sloshing, violet liquid and sets it on a high shelf. When he catches her staring, the boy shrugs. “I know it doesn’t look like much, but it’ll be a revenge brew soon enough. Only thirteen bucks, if you’re interested.”

Ana bites down her shock while the boy throws on a hooded scarlet cloak. *Maybe this store is Harry Potter-themed?* “I think I’m good.”

He shrugs. “Suit yourself. I’m Nikita by the way. You friends with Grace?” Nikita asks as he strides over to the spiral staircase.

Ana bolts to keep up with his long-legged pace. After dodging racks of glass vials with their vibrantly coloured contents labelled “Beauty,” “Love” and “Patience,” she weaves around a

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display of powders boasting promises of eternal youth before she catches up to him at the bottom the stairs. "I'm Ana. And yeah, we go to school together."

Nikita chuckles. "Normie school? That must suck. I'm so glad my parents homeschool me."

Ana frowns. Before she can question his comment, he is on the move again – this time up the spiral staircase. Sighing, she rapidly climbs. After ascending the endlessly swirling steps, they arrive at the loft. Nikita proudly strides past a row of grinning skulls. Ana eyes them suspiciously and hurries past iridescent crystal balls and beeswax candles to catch up before Nikita speeds too far ahead of her.

A sudden metallic clattering arises. Ana – now caught up – stumbles into Nikita. "Is that a crow?" she cries, staring at the hulking, black bird trapped in the cage above her. The bird's beak menacingly clicks open and closed, but no sound comes out. Its eyes viciously glare at Ana.

Nikita steadies her. "Rudy's a raven. I had to put a silencing charm on him." He overdramatically rolls his eyes. "He's always nagging about how I'm so stupid that one day I'm just going to let a human into the shop. As if!"

Rudy delivers a spiteful glance to Nikita. Nikita once more rolls his eyes.

This guy is really into the shop's theme. "So, you speak raven then?" Ana asks jokingly, absent-mindedly wringing her hands.

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Magical Mishap

“Nah, Rudy speaks English. With a heavy German accent, mind you, but he does have impeccable grammar.”

A purring laugh emanates throughout the room. Ana whips around. Behind her, curled around an oddly-shaped ivory statue, is a cream-coloured cat, daintily cleaning its paws. Its piercing amber eyes glow mischievously.

“Hey, Rosabelle,” Nikita says to it, stroking its silky fur. “What wisdom do you care to spout today?”

Ana smiles, amused by Nikita's seriousness, until the cat idly stretches and states in a sleep-heavy manner, “Humans are stupid, but wizarding folk are by far the stupidest.”

Without waiting for a reply, the cat twists around the statue and leaves the two alone. After a puzzled moment, Nikita shrugs and approaches a locked chest. Ana, on the other hand, grasps for words that evade her. Not noticing her distress, Nikita pops off the iron lock and heaves a hefty volume entitled *A Hex a Day: Spells to Master Daily* out of the case. “Well, looks like this is Grace's order. She's already paid for it, so don't worry.”

Stunned, Ana mechanically accepts the book. Nikita smiles kindly at her and then flicks a hand behind him. The chest snaps closed and locks itself. Ana's breath catches. “You're really a wizard.”

Nikita gives her a funny look. “Yeah.”

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Magical Mishap

A light-headed feeling sweeps through her body. A weak laugh expels from her chest.

“I’m not.”

He stares at her. “Oh. Well, this is awkward.”