



Creative Intervention

The Grinch 2

SARA SOBEY

Guest Editor's Introductory Note (Miranda J. Brady)

Sara Sobey's fan fiction rewrite, *The Grinch 2*, follows a lively tradition of creative play and active engagement with popular media texts (Jenkins, 2008; Hall, 2008). Fan fiction borrows characters and storylines from previous works, allowing authors to re-imagine existing narratives (Jenkins, 2008), in this case stories based on Dr. Seuss' Grinch character (1957, 1982). Sobey's piece, which is an excerpt of a longer screenplay, intervenes in Dr. Seuss' story through an allegory wherein autistic persecution is legible. Her reimagining of The Grinch provides an apt metaphor for the profound alienation and cruelty imposed on those deemed "other" to or outside of normative society. Ultimately, while Sobey's fan fiction helps us see the world through the perspective of The Grinch (and explains why he became so jaded), it invites us to turn a critical lens on the saccharine and compulsory homogeneity of the Whos. Like Ursula K. Le Guin's (1973) classic science fiction short "The Ones who Walk Away from Omelas," this story invites us to recognize the Whos' dirty little secret, which enables the apparent Utopia in which they delight. It poignantly leads readers to ask what kinds of violence they tacitly support through a social contract designed by and for allistics. Sobey is a talented singer and writer, who hopes to see her stories on the big screen someday. *The Grinch 2* is an exemplar of the multimodal and valuable contributions offered by autistic creatives in all stages of media production.

References

- Dr. Seuss (T. S. Geisel). (1957). *How the Grinch stole Christmas*. Random House.
- Dr. Seuss (T. S. Geisel) (Writer), & Perez, B. (Director). (1982, May 20). *The Grinch grinches the Cat in the Hat*. [TV Special on ABC]. David H. DePatie (Executive Producer). Marvel Productions.

Correspondence Address: Sara Sobey: Email: sara_mation@yahoo.ca, or kim@heartfeltmusic.ca

ISSN: 1911-4788



- Hall, S. (1980/2008). Encoding/decoding. In N. Badmington & J. Thomas (Eds.). *The Routledge critical and cultural theory reader* (pp. 234-244). Routledge.
- Jenkins, H. (2008). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. NYU Press.
- Le Guin, U. K. (2017). *The ones who walk away from Omelas*. Harper Collins.

--



The Grinch 2

Prologue

Whoville was a peaceful, friendly, and cheerful town where the Whos, animals, creatures, and even the once grumpy Grinch lived.

Yes! The same Grinch who stole Christmas to try to make the Whos shed a tear and then he grew a heart and brought all the presents back that year. That's the story you know. One where the town was a friendly place that looked like a gingerbread house with or without snow. I hate to say this, but long ago, the very friendly town wasn't always that way.

Years ago, Whoville was an unhospitable place for the Grinch race. There were a bunch of off limit toy factories where the Grinches toiled as slaves.

Mayor Augustus was very strict, just like his ancestors before him. He forced the Whos to act happy all the time and instructed them never to see or talk about any Grinches or else they would get the blame. It was almost just

as bad as the butter battle with the Zooks and the Yooks – but that’s another story!

Each time the mayor’s servants saw any Who going on strike, they would confiscate their protest boards and flags and bring them in front of the Who jury and ultimately ban them from Whoville.

One day Mayor Augustus stood at the podium in front of the Whos of Whoville and proudly stated, “Whos of Whoville! May I have your attention, please?” Every Who down in Whoville stood at attention in front of the mayor.

“I’m giving you all a warning!” said mayor Augustus. “As you know, the Grinches, those talking cats with hats who poison our minds with nonsense or anything ugly looking are the symbols of evil! They are forbidden to live in harmony with us!” He continued, “But if you see them, don’t go near them or make friends with them! Me and my crew will arrest them and turn them into slaves! They are filthy and dangerous! So go back to your activities!” So back to their daily activities the Whos went.

That night, two illegally married Grinches returned to their cell at Santa’s toy factory, after all their hard work making Christmas toys for the Whos. One Grinch was pregnant and had long red hair with beautiful green eyes. The other was hazel eyed, and had bushy fur all over. After they returned to the cell, the wife’s water broke and the father had to put her to bed and help deliver the baby. After her baby was born, the Grinch’s mother’s eyes filled with bittersweet tears. She was sad that her mother had passed away too soon and about the Whos not accepting them. The Grinch’s mother played her mother’s music box for him and sang along with the melody. The cooing baby Grinch held up his little hands to his mother. The Grinch’s mother’s face reached her baby’s hands.

“Our beautiful little Grinch,” said the Grinch’s mother as she turned to her husband, who was just as happy as his wife.

“Look at him, dear.” He said. “He has your beautiful eyes.” He continued, “What are you going to call him?”

“I’m going to call him... Grinch. Jr. The same name as you” his wife replied. “Grinch. Jr.... That makes me Grinch. Sr. I like the sound of that.”

“But that’s not all - he has your smile too,” said the Grinch’s mother. “We’ll make sure he’s happy with us, the Grinches, and even the Whos one day... That way he won’t ever be alone,” she said.

The Grinch’s father began to feel doubtful that the Whos would ever trust them. He felt hatred for them in his heart.

The Grinch’s father was a lonely guy ever since he was a Grinchling. He never made friends with anyone as a child because he was always working alone. His parents had died of exhaustion from work during his childhood and he was bitter at the Whos who weren’t there to help them.

Despite his troubles, the Grinch’s father didn’t want to give up so easily. He knew he had to remain hopeful for his wife and their newborn son.

As Mother and Father Grinch watched their son grow while they kept working away as slaves they had to be careful to hide their son from the mayor's servants while they worked. The Grinch's mother sang him to sleep every night so he wouldn't feel lonely while they were gone.

By the time the Grinch was four years old, his father taught him how to build gadgets to aid them in their failed attempts to escape. There were guards everywhere in Whoville. The Grinch's mother painted a portrait of them all happy together in a dream home with the Whos and Grinches. Eventually the young Grinch was found out and caught with his parents and he too became a servant.

The young Grinch worked and worked as the bosses barked their commands. The Grinches never got to stay together as much as they wanted to. They never found a better home. They never even celebrated Christmas together. The mayor wouldn't allow it. The Grinch slaves just built needless toys that symbolized Christmas. The Whos would buy them and then years down the line, they would get tired of them and throw them away.

The mayor thought that all the Grinches had to be punished for all the crimes they had done in the past and present despite the fact that most Grinches had never caused any harm. He originally thought of killing them all, but the Whos insisted that they be spared. The mayor agreed to this but not without a price – the Grinches would have to be his slaves – to most of the Whos' dismay. The Whos attempted to protest his decision, but they were threatened if they attempted to speak up again. The mayor said that they would never see their family and Whoville again.

The young Grinch and his family did try to make some friends with some Grinches. But the Who servants forbade it. They couldn't help them and they couldn't sneak into their cells to feed them. Santa's factory had a whole lot of cameras just to keep an eye on them. They all worked alone, with no one to talk to and few breaks. The young Grinch couldn't control his crying when he got separated from his parents for work.

Every day one servant barked, "GET TO WORK, GREEN FACE!"

The other yelled, "STOP WHINING GREEN FACE!"

Then more yelled: HEY, GREEN FACE! STOP SLEEPING ON THE JOB!"

"GREEN FACES LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE A FUTURE!"

"GREEN FACES NEVER CHANGE NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY TRY! THEY'RE TOO EVIL!"

"YOU WILL NEVER BE ONE OF US, GREEN FACE! NEVER!"

"GREEN FACE!"

"GREEN FACE!"

"GREEN FACE!"

All the Grinches, including the youngest one, had never forgotten how much that name stabbed them in the heart.

The young Grinch's tears caused such a flood that he and the servants had to swim to safety. The servants opened the doors to let the tears flow away outside.

One of the servants said, "What a crybaby! Be a man! You nearly got us killed with your tsunami of tears!" The servants sent the young Grinch to his cell.

On most nights, the Grinch's mother tucked her son in bed before she went to go back to work. The Grinch family was never invited to the Whos Christmas dinner or anything else. As time went by, the Grinch's father sat on his cell bed and became bitter towards the Whos. It became too difficult to forgive them for what they did. The Grinch's father remembered all the times when the Whos were so afraid of him and what his parents had warned him about before they passed away.

"Everything is becoming clear," said the Grinch's father. "Those Whos!" said the Grinch's father, as if they were a deadly disease. "They are all heartless, evil and cowardly, monstrous Jibboos." He continued, "The Whos didn't save my parents from death. They were too busy with their own petty lives. I'm going to be the Grinch they wanted me to be and I'm hoping my son will live it up for me! The Whos won't let me or my wife see my son and they'll pay for their crimes!" The Grinch's father became cautious with his wife and son's devotion to the Whos as he became more and more bitter towards them.

Later that night, the Grinch's father descended downstairs to the lower cell.

The young Grinch was building a sandcastle all alone. He was trying to get the Whitsel birds outside the cell to come inside his castle, but they didn't seem to want to cooperate – they just flew away. Just like they flew away from his mother when she tried to whistle to them. The young Grinch remembered it well.

The young Grinch was startled when his father appeared and said strictly, "Junior, we need to talk!" The young Grinch looked up at his father. He didn't look like his nicer self. He looked angry.

"Daddy?" said the curious young Grinch. "What happened to you? Are you okay?"

The Grinch's father said, "Listen son. A Grinch is not supposed to be nice to the Whos! The Whos are cruel and selfish! They had my parents killed when we had to work separately!"

The Grinch felt sorry for his father and his parents. "But come on, Daddy!" he said. "Don't say that all Whos are bad! Why don't we give them a chance? And maybe your parents wouldn't have died. Mommy told me she met a Who named Elizabeth. She was friendly towards her!"

The Grinch's father replied, "No! She's a phony! She set her up to get the Grinches captured! Turning them into lonely slaves! Your mother is naive about this! I just know it! They can't be trusted, junior! My parents taught me the same lesson! It took me a long time to learn it." He took a breath and continued, "I tried to be nice to the Whos but they never return it! Even those

you think are your friends will betray you eventually. I've been there once! I learned this lesson the hard way!" The young Grinch shook his head, not wanting to believe it. The young Grinch said, "But dad!"

The Grinch's father said, "They're pretending to be nice to you just to fear you! They only think about themselves! Especially around Christmas day! Christmas is the worst day of the year! It's a day for the Whos to do their worst! This is why you should follow your destiny, son! You can't go." Then the Grinch's father started to mimic a cutesy little child's voice, "Hi, I'm the Grinch. Wanna hug? Will you be my friend?" he mocked. "And the next thing you know..." the Grinch's father said in his normal voice, "They will ignore you and make you a slave! Or maybe even kill you or your family! Blech! Sickening, if you ask me! You have to be mean to them in order to survive! It's part of your Grinch family tree! It's in your blood! A Grinch is a Grinch! It's all part of nature's plan. One day you'll learn the whole truth!"

"Well what if I don't want to be like those Grinches who did bad stuff to them," the young Grinch said, angrily. "Can't we make our own decisions, Dad?!"

The Grinch's father yelled "DON'T YOU DARE TALK BACK TO YOUR FATHER!"

The young Grinch was startled by his father's loud and commanding voice. The Grinch's father realized what he'd done and said, "Look, I'm really sorry I yelled. But you have to learn things the hard way. You need discipline to survive their malice and escape this awful place!"

The Grinch tearfully whimpered and sniffled. To which the Grinch's father said, "Now, now. Big boys like you shouldn't cry. It won't help you. If you cry, you'll feel weak and you'll never want to move on ever again. Remember me and your mother cried when you cried every time? It almost made us feel we couldn't go on either. It will make me and your mother sad and weak too if you keep doing that. I learned it the hard way just now. Don't let your eyes get wet, no matter how tough things get. You'll understand."

The young Grinch wanted to stop crying until this nightmare was over, but he couldn't help it when he felt depressed every day. Maybe he'd think about it. Then the Grinch's father heard his wife walking downstairs. She'd heard her husband yelling about everything. The young Grinch heard his mother and ran up to her, hugging her sadly. The Grinch's mother looked at her husband in shock and said, "Dear, you shouldn't believe in Grinch rules or what your parents had said! You don't have to be like this! The Whos have the potential to be kind! I saw it with my own eyes!"

The Grinch's father said, "I didn't want to believe it either, dear. But it's becoming clear. The Whos will never change. They're very deceptive and manipulative. You know how bad they treated us Grinches! Even your so called Who friend is one of them! There's no doubt that she has secretly tried multiple times to get rid of you behind your back. And she succeeded! And look what happened to you and your late mother!"

The Grinch's mother said, "That's not true! I saw honesty in her eyes! She cared about me! She tried to rescue me and my mother! Not all Whos are bad!" The Grinch's father sighed and said, "You'll understand the hard way someday! Our son needs to stand up to the horrible Whos to survive even if we die young!"

The Grinch's father looked at the young Grinch's sad, frightened face. He felt regret for hurting his son's feelings like this. The young Grinch saw the regret in his eyes. So did his mother. But his father's face turned to determination. He had to teach them this harsh reality. Then he went upstairs.

Then the Grinch's mother sat down on the chair and sighed. The young Grinch sat down on her knees. He looked up into her sweet, loving eyes and tried his best not to cry. But soon enough he started sobbing and hugged his mother. It was just too much for him to bear to live like this. The Grinch's mother hushed her son gently. She rubbed his back tenderly and said, "I'm right here beside you. Your dad's still a nice guy deep down inside. He's just angry with the Whos right now. Maybe we'll find another Who like Liz who understands. Maybe your father will turn around." The young Grinch sobbed quietly as he hugged her tightly.

The Grinch's mother tearfully said, "Forget what your father said. Just keep crying, shhhhhh. Only you can make your own choices. Just be your own Grinch."

"Thanks, Mom. I feel better now," said the young Grinch. "But I won't cry anymore! I don't want to make you or Dad sad. Once we find a better life, we won't have to cry anymore!" The Grinch's mother said. "I'm sure it will happen!"

The Grinch's mother was never bothered by her son crying in front of him despite him trying to be strong. But she couldn't argue with him about it. So she let her son decide and they hugged each other again.

As time went by, his mother's views of the Whos remained unchanged. She taught her son about the Whos and how they lived and their kindness towards others. The Grinch's mother kept an open mind that not all Whos were evil and heartless. She wanted to make sure the young Grinch was kind to them too. And maybe, just maybe, they could open up to the Grinches someday.

The Grinch's mother kept whistling "How Do You Do" to the Whitsel birds despite them being scared of her. As the young Grinch watched his mother whistling to the birds, he wished to be as pure hearted as she was when he grew up. But the Grinch's father's behaviour became worse and worse. He became more depressed and angry by the day.

The young Grinch heard his father repeat the Grinch's oath his parents taught him. Because of praying to the underworld, his father grew more vengeful and angry. The next night on Christmas Eve, the Grinch's mother tucked her son in to bed. She felt stressed and sad about her husband's behaviour. But despite all this, she and her son read a Christmas book

together to keep their minds off it for a while. The young Grinch looked at the picture of the gingerbread house.

“Look at the gingerbread house with vanilla icing on top, Mommy!” said the young Grinch. The Grinch’s mother replied, “That’s beautiful, isn’t it?” The young Grinch pointed at the picture of a family of gumdrops. “They’re a family of gumdrops too!” said the young Grinch. The Grinch’s mother replied, “That’s right.” The young Grinch asked, “Mommy, will we ever spend time together a lot? Even on Christmas Day like the gumdrop family? Maybe the Whos could invite us too.” The Grinch’s mother said, “I’m sure of it my dear.” The Grinch’s mother felt doubtful but she tried to remain positive for her family. So, she said, “Even if the rules in Whoville are unfair, we’ll still keep trying. And we’ll even have the best Christmas ever! I’ll make sure of it. We’ll find a nice job and get you to school and make new friends!” The young Grinch asked, “Cross your heart?” The Grinch’s mother said, “Cross my heart, hope to die!” and she drew an X on her chest with her finger.

The Grinch’s mother said, “One of my Who friends, Pearl, once told me how she met a rare cat in a hat who made children happy by doing magic tricks with his hat and sometimes even going on adventures. He once told her that sometimes it’s okay to break rules as long as one doesn’t take it too far.”

“There was a cat in the hat who did magic tricks with his magical hat? Wow!” said the young Grinch. The Grinch’s mother said, “Yep! Who knows, maybe someday we’ll meet one too.” The young Grinch said, “That would be wonderful. Mom – when we live a more peaceful life – we’ll always be together no matter what, right?” The Grinch’s mother said, “Yes. But there’s one thing you must remember, even if I’m gone. I’ll always be there for you. Even if you can’t see me. It’s sad sometimes, but it’s okay to feel sad sometimes.” The young Grinch said, “I don’t understand mommy. I don’t want to be sad. I don’t want you to disappear. I want to be happy with you.”

The Grinch’s mother said, “You will understand someday, son,” and the young Grinch and his mother hugged each other tenderly. Almost tearfully, the young Grinch said, “Please don’t go.” To which the Grinch’s mother replied, “I won’t.”

The young Grinch thought about what his mother had said. What did she mean? How was it possible to be there for someone even if he couldn’t see her? But the young Grinch wanted to keep that sad thought off of his mind. He wanted to avoid crying more than ever. So the young Grinch asked, “Can you sing me a lullaby, please?” The Grinch’s mother said, “I’d love to.” Then she turned on his music box and sang her lullaby to her son.

His mother’s singing voice had a beautiful soothing sound to it. Downstairs, the Grinch’s father sat on the chair depressed and angry again. Then he heard his wife singing upstairs. The Grinch’s father came upstairs and watched them tenderly. The Grinch’s father loved her singing ever since he first met her. It would warm his sad soul every time. The Grinch’s mother

gazed at him. Although they had recently had disagreements about the Whos, they still loved each other with all their hearts.

Then suddenly, the servants of Mayor Augustus barged into their cell. The Grinch's father growled and snapped, "What do you want from us?!" Servant #1 replied, "Since your son is old enough, we've come to take him away from you." The Grinch's mother and father were beyond shocked.

"He's too whiny to be around! His tears nearly got us drowned!" said the #2 servant. "So, we decided to take him to another toy factory," he continued. "Since he's old enough, you will never see him again!"

"What?!" the mother yelled. Servant #1 said, "He would be perfect for the job! The mayor is a genius!" The Grinch's mother said, "No! You can't possibly – Please reconsider! Make peace with the Grinches!"

Servant #1 said, "Sorry, Grinch lady! But these are the rules!" The young Grinch was shocked at this. He hugged his parents and said, "Mom... Dad.... Please don't let them take me away from you!" The Grinch's mother said, "We won't dear. We promise!" and the Grinch's father said, "We won't let those Whos get their filthy hands on you! We will escape this horrid place! Make the Whos go away and rescue the Grinch slaves! And start a new life with the Grinches! We won't have to be ridiculed or be alone ever again!"

Servant #1 looked at the music box playing in the young Grinch's hand.

"You don't need this anymore!" said servant #2. The Grinch's parents were shocked at this. The young Grinch tried to yank it away from his grasp.

"Let go of it! it's mine!" said the young Grinch. The Grinch's father yelled, "You can't do this! You Whos are filth!" Then the young Grinch and the servants dropped the music box. The music box fell on the floor with a thud and broke as it hit the floor.

The young Grinch gasped as he looked at the broken music box on the floor.

"How could you?" he said tearfully. He then ran angrily up to the servants and tried to attack them. Servant #1 said, "Hey! I will not tolerate such behaviour! You're coming with us young man!" The young Grinch grabbed the remaining parts of his music box.

As the servants opened the doors to the cage, the Grinch family ran through them. Servant #1 yelled "Hey! Get back here!." The Grinch family ran outside as the servants chased them.

"You can't run from us forever, Grinches!" yelled the second servant. The Grinches ran and ran and ran until they found a bush where they watched the servants looking everywhere for them in the forest. But they were already surrounded. The Grinch's father had an idea. He turned to his son.

"I'm going to put a stop to those Whos! You stay here with Mommy!" he instructed. "Remember, no matter what happens to us, don't let your eyes get wet, no matter how tough things get! Just be strong, tough and happy now and in the future!" said the Grinch's father. The young Grinch tried to hide his emotions for his parents. He had to believe that things were going to get better.

The one servant yelled, "Surrender, Grinches or you'll all suffer the consequences!" The Grinch's father put his hands up ran out from the cover of the bush.

"Okay - you caught us!" said the Grinch's father. "But can I do one more thing?" he asked.

"Alright!" said the servant. "But hurry up!"

The Grinch's father took a weird looking block out of his pocket and placed it on the ground. The Grinch's mother whispered, "Dear, what are you doing?" The Grinch's father smiled maliciously without answering her and took a button mechanic out of his pocket as well. The Grinch's father chuckled as he pressed it. Suddenly, the block was coming into being faster and faster and then grew and grew bigger. The roof of Santa's toy factory broke off as the machine grew. "Prepare yourselves, you miserable Whos!" said the Grinch's father. "You see, I already built it right under your pathetic little Who noses!"

The frightened Who servants gasped in horror as they looked up as the box revealed its own scary looking moving mechanic. The Grinch's mother and the young Grinch looked up in horror too. "Oh no.... Don't tell me you're...!" said the Grinch's mother worriedly. The Grinch's father said, "I have to do this, my love! For our kind! For our son! And for you!"

The Grinch's father turned to the Who servant and quickly hopped on the machine which began to move and shoot laser beams. The Whos scattered and got out of the way without getting shot or getting stomped on. The Grinch's father pulled the lever to move the arms. The robotic hands grabbed the roof of each factory and pulled them right off. The Grinch prisoners looked up in awe at the Grinch's father and his machine. "Be free, my Grinch friends!" he yelled.

All the Grinch prisoners rejoiced by unchaining themselves and attacking the bosses who had kept them enslaved and then they ran out of Whoville.

In Loving Memory of Audrey Geisel, 1922-2018.