

Little Red

(a full-length one act; ninety five minutes)

TIME: The present

PLACE: New York City: the interrogation room of a police station, and a sparsely furnished apartment with a desk, several chairs, and shelves filled with human skulls.

CHARACTERS:

AMBER SPENSER, a red headed poet in her twenties

DOCTOR RODERICK RONDEL, a teacher and former forensic artist in his forties

MARGARET MADRIGAL, a poet, professor, and editor in her mid-thirties

RUDOLPH VILLANELLE, a British born viscount and literary critic in his forties

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

The Viscount Villanelle, a renown literary critic, has been missing for weeks. Desperate to find him, his wife, Margaret, seeks the help of Roderick Rondel, a retired forensic artist known for his uncanny ability to summon the spirits of the deceased by simply touching their skeletal remains. Margaret had been sent a tooth, and Roderick reluctantly summons the spirit of the Viscount who claims to have been murdered by a vengeful coterie of poets known as “The Mad Doggerel League.” All the Doggerels were abused by the Viscount’s vicious reviews, so they held a drawing, and a young poet named Amber, was chosen to confront, humiliate, and record the Viscount eating his own words: a printed page filled with his cruelest condemnations. Amber succeeds in her mission, but while swallowing the paper and his pride, the Viscount chokes, suffers a heart attack, and Amber flees. The deceased Viscount’s spirit instructs Roderick to find Amber who reveals his hideaway in the woods. The police are informed but fail to find a corpse, and when members of the Mad Doggerel League appear to be dying in mysterious ways, suspicion falls on the Viscount who may not be deceased after all. In the course of their investigation, Margaret and Roderick forge a romance while Amber behaves erratically and is suspected of being possessed by a revenant that can be traced to the Viscount and the wild wolves he hunted as a child. Eventually the Viscount’s corpse is found, but his revenant spirit proves more elusive and powerful than those of mere mortals and poets.

THEMES: The play explores the importance of poetry in the age of Twitter as well as corrosive effects of harsh criticism, and the human capacity for romance, vengeance, and belief in the world beyond. Throughout the story, various Grimm fairy tales are referenced as the characters attempt to mythicize their own misguided lives.