

Mr. Potato Head

by Meg Pokrass

Read it here:

<https://www.strangepilgrims.com/p/mr-potato-head-by-meg-pokrass>

Optional Prompts Inspired by “Mr. Potato Head”:

1. Open Response:

Pick an image, phrase or theme from the text that you are particularly drawn to. Use it as a starting point for your own piece of writing.

2. A Toy That Tells Us More:

Think about a toy that, as a child, you either loved, didn't much care for, or desperately wanted. What do your feelings about the toy tell us about you, your life, your desires, or what society was like back then? You could also complete this exercise for a character, rather than yourself.

3. Subverting Reader Expectations:

We are led to believe that the Mr Potato Head in the story is made of plastic, unlike the original 1948 version consisting solely of push pins to put into real potatoes, thanks to the mention of the later-released sea monkeys. The reveal of the real potato at the end of the story adds extra physicality and metaphor to the story. In your piece, can you lead the reader to think you're talking about one thing (which could be very similar but still have significant differences), and later reveal it to be another?

4. Difficult Relationship Dynamics:

This piece includes statements that suggest what Anya's family situation is like, and what she'd rather it be like. For example, when talking about the replacement Mr. Potato Head dad: 'He wasn't a mad dad or a bad dad or a sad dad or a rad dad', and speaking about her mother: 'when she grew nicer again'. Experiment with writing a scene or two (or a poem!) in which dynamics between family members, friends, or even co-workers are subtly revealed through both statements and actions.