

I love monsters. I love how easily something so strange and terrifying can embody the fears and emotions that we see in ourselves.

Guillermo del Toro, aficionado of the strange and creepy, said once, "Well, the first thing is that I love monsters, I identify with monsters."

Monsters and the monstrous are reflections of our humanity. They look a little strange, a little undesirable, because we are scared to be seen as different. They act unpredictably, and with emotion, to parody our fear of spontaneity. Monsters are our own worst qualities, and in that lies a freedom. A complete disregard for what is right and wrong. In monsters, there lies possibility. In my art I embody and explore that.

Red was written as a first draft over two days. I did not plan it at all. It took over my hands and poured itself to life in a document. I had the wonderful opportunity to be able to send the freshly drafted story to a group of young editors. Like all good editors, they seemed to thoroughly delight in taking the story apart at the seams and asking impossibly sensible questions about the internal workings. I left that experience with four different mark-ups of the story and a feeling of genuine humility.

Since then, Red has undergone several iterations. At first it was an extremely distant text, full of unnecessary descriptors and run-on sentences. Since then, it has become one of my favourite things to have written, and I hope to share that enthusiasm for the story.

Red is strange. When I first brought home the marked-up copies of the story, my father read it and told me that it was horror. I thought this was strange, because to me, Red was a story about deep happiness. I guess it is true, the idea that a story will never be read the same way twice.

To me, though, Red is about feeling trapped inside a system of arbitrary rules, other people's rules, and learning how to take those feelings and turn them into something powerful. Red is about self-love, especially trans self-love. It is coming to terms with a body that feels strange, and learning to let the discomfort go. Red is about being unknown and so full of joy that others think you are strange. Red is all of these things and more, which I leave to the reader's imagination.

Red is a story about a monster, but it is also a love letter to the strange and the creepy, and to the endless possibilities in all of us.