

A Brief Lesson about Roles, Role Switching, and Ghost Roles

(by Amy Mindell, November, 2005)

Meet two real people:



Susan Blue

and

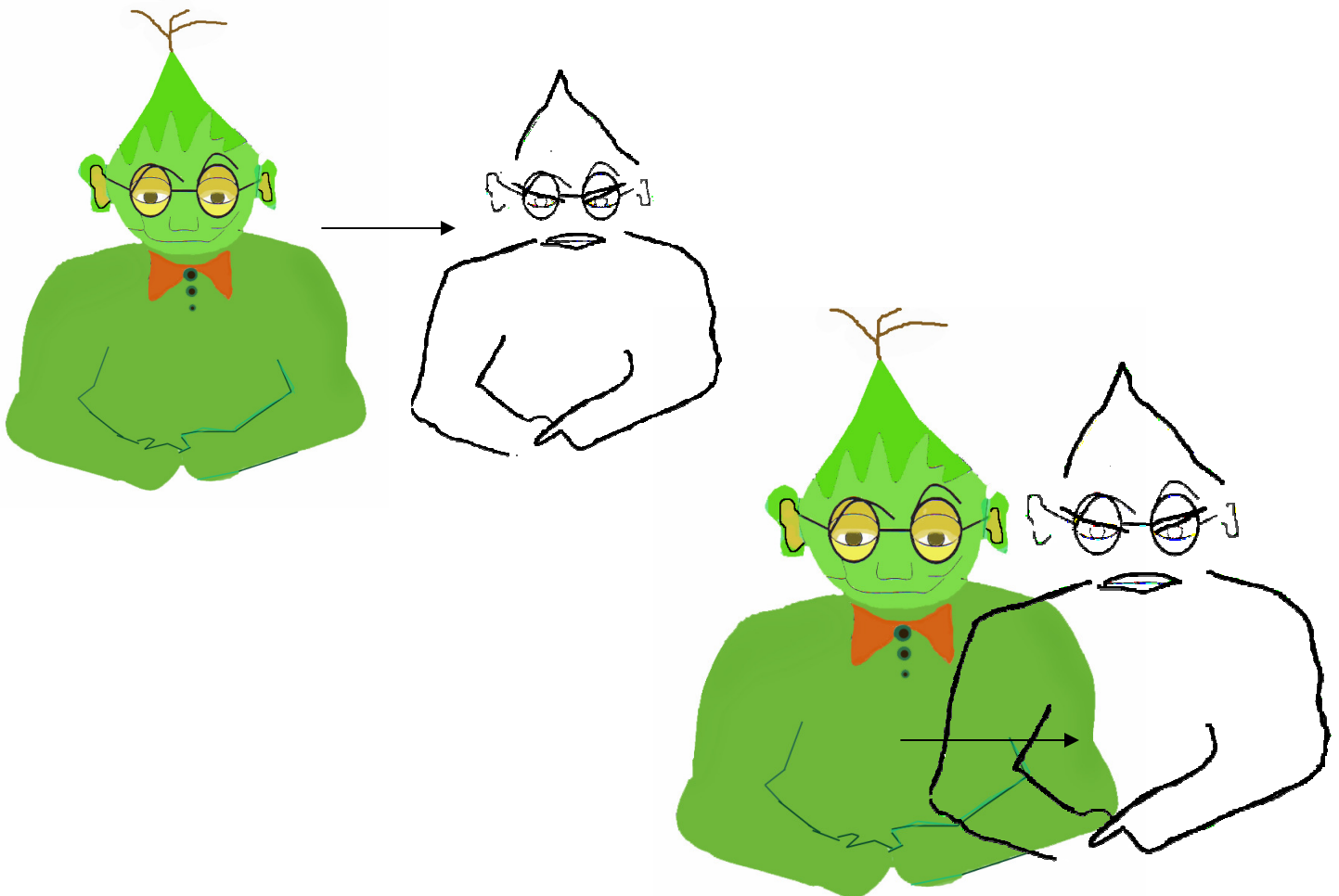


Sam Applehead

Susan is a bit shy and very studious. Sam is a mild mannered, easy-going sort of guy.

One day, Susan and Sam go to the University. At the University, Sam is a professor and Susan is a student in his class.

Now, Sam is ordinarily very mild mannered but when he gets close to his classroom, something strange happens to him. He slowly starts to become didactic, linear, and very strict! Quite unlike his ordinary demeanor! Watch...





What's going on?

This strict, linear
behavior is a *role* in
the air at the
University and ...
Sam has slipped into
it!!

Voila!
Good morning
Professor Applehead!!



Now, on this particular day, Professor Applehead was pontificating about something. Susan Blue was in class and was feeling a little bit intimidated by him.



However inside herself, she slowly started to think, “Hmm, I don’t think his ideas are that great. Actually, I think *I* have better ideas than he has!”

And then, something started to happen.



She started feeling more confident...



And suddenly she said out loud much to everyone's surprise....



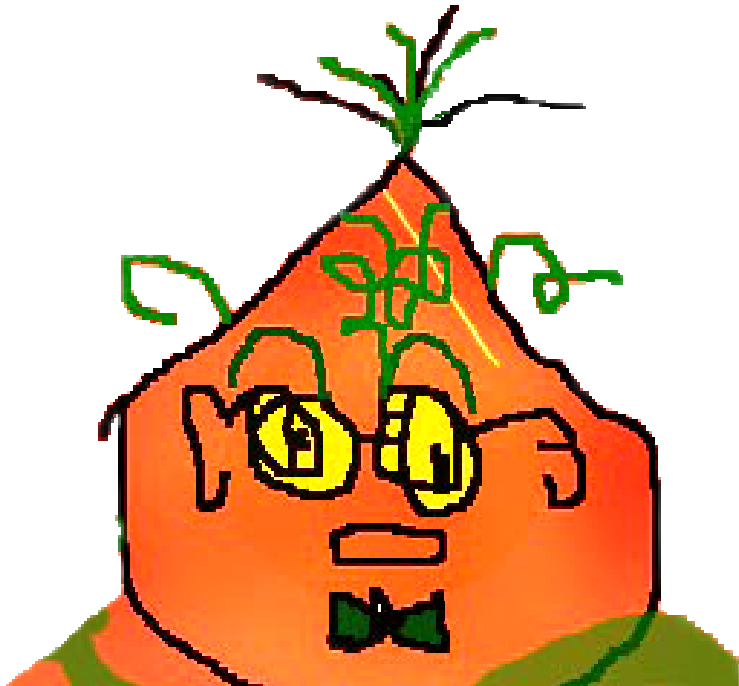
“Hey, I think I have good ideas, too! Listen to this! I’m going to outline *my* thoughts on the matter!”

What happened? The role *switched*. Susan took over the strict, linear, and didactic teacher role!

Basic Concepts so Far

- There are roles in the air.
- Roles are like magnets.
- Whoever is closest to a role in a particular moment will be drawn into it.
- Hence, roles switch.
- Strange, huh?

Now, there is one more part to this lesson.
Meet Madam Peach!



Madam Peach used to be the principal at the University. Everyone simply adored her. She was peachy and kind and warm to everyone.

A year ago, for some unknown reason, Madam Peach left her position as principal of the University in order to pursue some other part of her life. She was greatly missed.

One day Susan Blue and Prof. Applehead were in the hallway. They began to reminisce about Principal Peach.



“Oh how I loved Principal Peach.” Susan said. “She was so loving.”

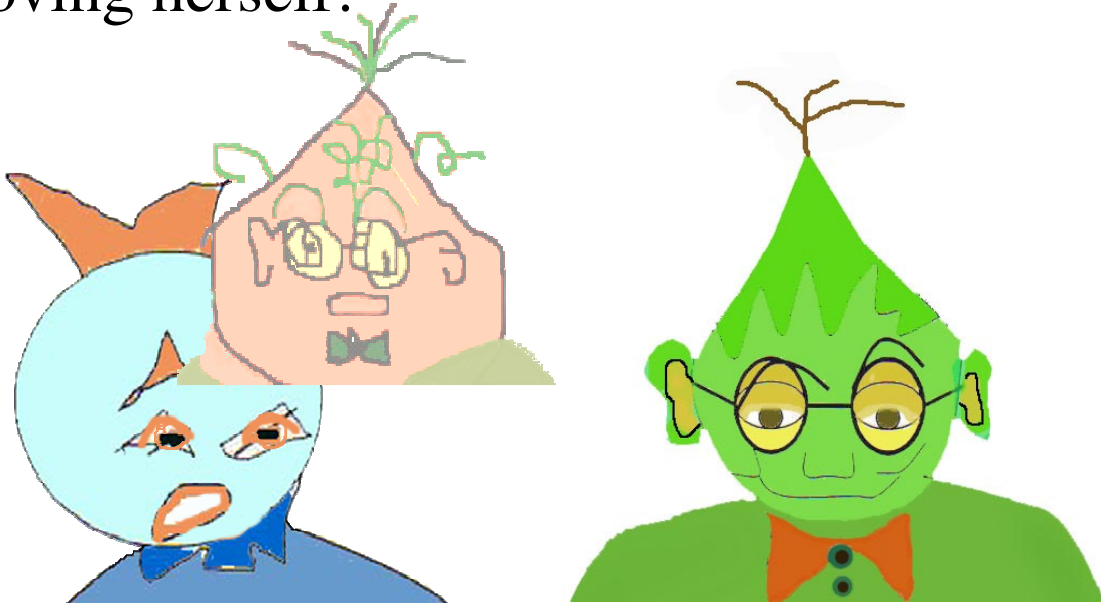
“Yes, me too,” said Prof. Applehead. “She was so wonderful and kind to everyone.”

Then an odd thing occurred.

As they spoke, it was as if the ghost of Principal Peach floated around in the air. Principal Peach was a *ghost role* in their conversation (that is, a third party between them that was hanging around in the ethers!) though they didn't realize this.



As Susan continued to speak about her love for Madam Peach, she began to move her head from side to side in a wistful sort of way and became very warm and loving herself!



And suddenly, without even knowing it, Susan had taken over the ghost role of Madam Peach!



Prof. Applehead, not really noticing that Susan had picked up the role of Principal Peach, continued to speak and said, “You know, I was always a bit jealous of Principal Peach. She was so warm hearted and everyone loved her so much.”

Susan replied, “Oh Prof. Applehead, I think *you are* sometimes like Principal Peach!” In that moment a shy grin crept over Prof. Applehead’s face and he unwittingly began to blush!





And slowly but surely, unbeknownst even to himself....



Prof. Applehead took over the ghost role of Principal Peach!

The Moral of the Story

At the end of the day, Susan and Sam went back to their homes.

However, the roles of the Strict Teacher and the Loving Principal remained in the air at the University...



waiting for someone else, perhaps you or me, to step into them and bring them to life!