BY THE SEA
By Jerry Rabushka

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ONE: *(as if telling a story)* She lived by the sea.
TWO: *(hardly!)* No she didn’t!
ONE: *(more insistent)* She lived by the sea.
TWO: *(to the audience)* Don’t listen to her/him.
ONE: *(still holding ground)* Right by it. It was moaning in her ear and it kept her up nights like an after hours dance party.
TWO: Nowhere near it.
ONE: She could walk down her steps and wade right into it.
TWO: *(frustrated)* It was a gulf, and she didn’t have any steps. *(short pause, and ONE looks over quizzically)* Just very high heels. *(pause, explains)* Deep sand.
ONE: Fine. Call it a gulf. I see it as a sea.
TWO: I see a gulf between us.
ONE: “She lived by the gulf?” It’s ugly.
TWO: The gulf? You’ve never seen it.
ONE: I don’t have to see it. This isn’t *write what you know*, It’s *tell a story*. “She lived by the gulf” doesn’t generate interest. That’s why I want to call it a sea.
TWO: You can want it all you want. You can’t call a gulf a sea.
ONE: Why not? It’s poetic license.
TWO: This isn’t a poem. Why not call a dog a cat?
ONE: I could call it the Arctic Ocean if you weren’t here to naysay.
TWO: No one has steps leading to the Arctic Ocean.
ONE: Do they all wear heels?
TWO: Mukluks, I think. You can’t wear heels down icy steps and expect to survive to page two.
ONE: You said she didn’t have any steps. So she may as well be in the Arctic.
TWO: You said she did. You’re trying to eat your cake and still have it.
ONE: *(distracted)* Do you have any cake?
TWO: No, I ate it. Want a piece?
ONE: You still have it?
TWO: No. I’m just playing along.
ONE: *(annoyed)* See?
TWO: Gulf!
ONE: No, I mean see? I can’t believe you ate the cake!
TWO: You didn’t even know I had it.
ONE: Selfish! You *take* the cake!
TWO: Down to the gulf. It’s a picnic.
ONE: So where were we? Does she have heels and a flight of stairs, or is her house on stilts in northern Canada?
TWO: With those heels, who needs stilts?
ONE: What if she takes them off?
TWO: She sinks. I hope she has a lifeguard.
ONE: I don’t like her living conditions.
TWO: You started it.
ONE: I simply said she lived by the sea.
TWO: Which she didn’t.
ONE: I know that.
TWO: Then why did you lie?
ONE: Why did you take my cake?
TWO: Your cake? You didn’t even know I had it.
ONE: Of course not. You didn’t offer me any.
TWO: Then stop whining. If we can’t agree on where she lived, we probably can’t agree on what kind of cake.
ONE: Chocolate.
TWO: Carrot.
ONE: Well, let’s incorporate it into the story.
TWO: Carrot cake by the gulf.
ONE: (argumentative) Chocolate cake. By the sea.
TWO: Carrot by the gulf!
ONE: Chocolate by the-
TWO: (intrusive) Carrot!
ONE: Who cares? You probably didn’t let her have any.
TWO: She’s fictional.
ONE: Then why are we giving it to her?
TWO: So you can have it and she can eat it. I’m tired of one person hogging it all.
ONE: You’re hogging all the details. You’re probably putting nuts on the cake without asking permission. A beach house at the gulf with heels like corn stalks. Is she 16 feet tall?
TWO: It helps during high tide. What did she do by the sea? Since you’re so convinced she lived there.
ONE: That’s what she did.
TWO: What?
ONE: Lived there.
TWO: Just lived there. No source of income, no source of protein. No husband? No hobbies, dreams, unfulfilled desires. No clam bake? No beach party? No volleyball?
ONE: In those heels?
TWO: I’m sure she has sandals. Now, what is she doing there? She didn’t randomly wind up living on the beach just because you say so. She’s a character, not your mother. What does she want?
ONE: She probably wants a piece of cake.
TWO: Job?
ONE: Hopefully at a bakery.
TWO: Who does she sell to?
ONE: (bitter) You, apparently.
TWO: I can't buy from a fictional character.
ONE: You sure told a good story about the cake. Where did it come from?
TWO: I don't know.
ONE: You just found a random piece of cake and took it.
TWO: Okay, it was my birthday.

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