

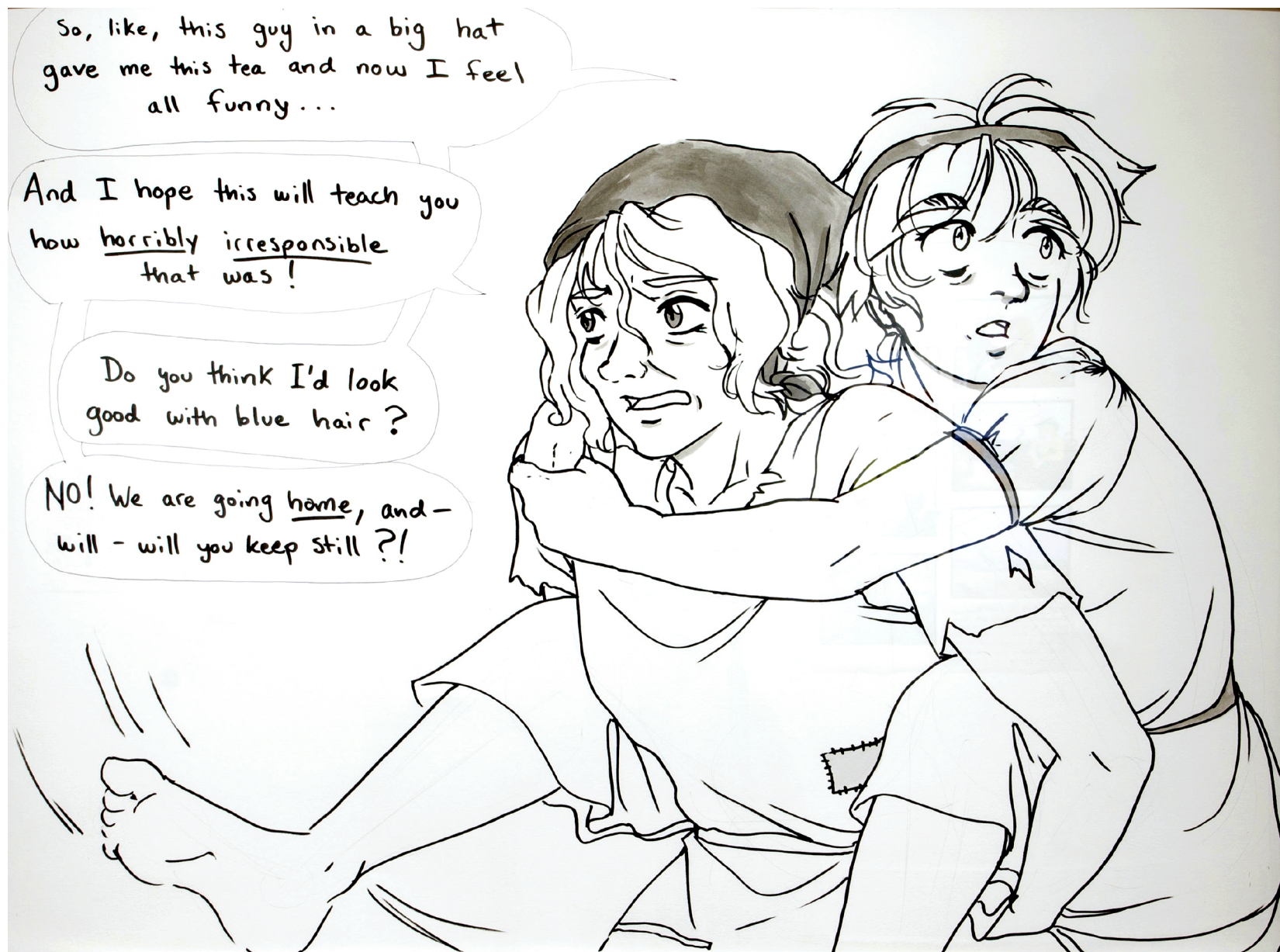
KRISTEN KERN

Arsy Varsy

My goal in my work is to connect to people through stories. I use my characters and narratives to turn people inward towards their own lives; my drawings may remind them of a person, a place, an event, or an experience or emotion. I use ink and Photoshop, which are clear, easy to read, and familiar. This is one way in which my art evokes the feel of comics, cartoons, video games, and other geek-culture influences from my childhood and today. I gravitate most noticeably toward the aesthetic of Japanese manga, applying various elements of this aesthetic to nearly all of my work.

As I experimented these past months with new ways of exploring my interest in cartooning, I began creating backwards fairy tales. These are several well-known stories, many made popular by the ubiquitous animated Disney films from the 1930's to the present. Extracting the major plot elements, I reverse the order, and thus create an entirely new tale. The results are comic-like drawings which use immediately familiar visuals to first draw the viewer in, and then subvert expectations as the viewer notices that the known story is somehow off. My new fairy tales offer something that is at once accessible and off-beat. In these pieces, I play with the gray area between the comfortable and familiar, and the strange and unexpected.

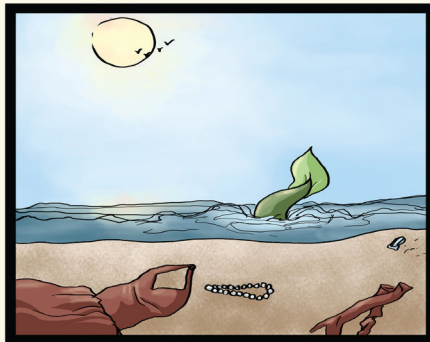
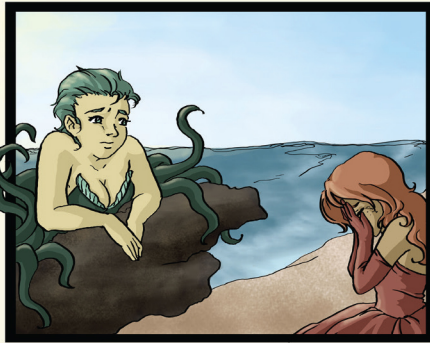
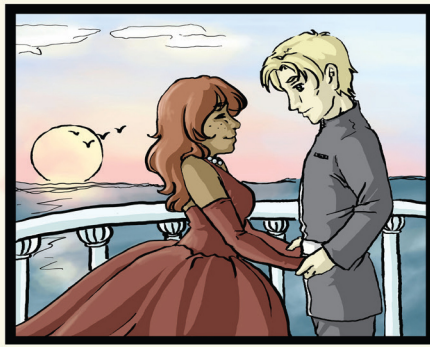
This body of work is particularly focused on the characters built from these backwards stories. As I reversed their narratives, I realized that the people within them changed dramatically as well. I began to develop these characters more fully, getting to know them better through their contexts and interactions. Through this work, I became very familiar with them as individuals, down to how they speak, how they carry themselves, or even their favorite colors. My drawings aim to introduce my characters, communicate their unique personalities, and invite the viewer to get to know them as well as I do.



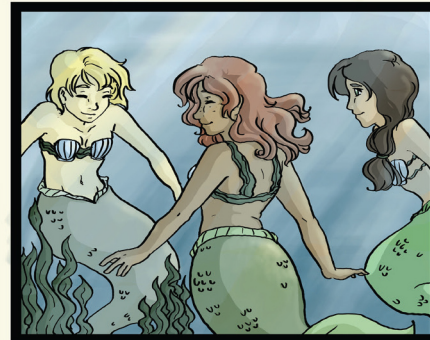
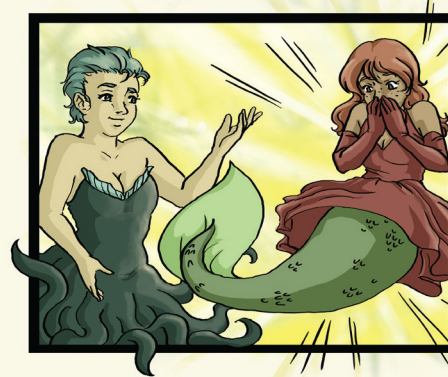
Cinderella and Alice-- Weird Tea, ink on paper, 22" x 40", 2014



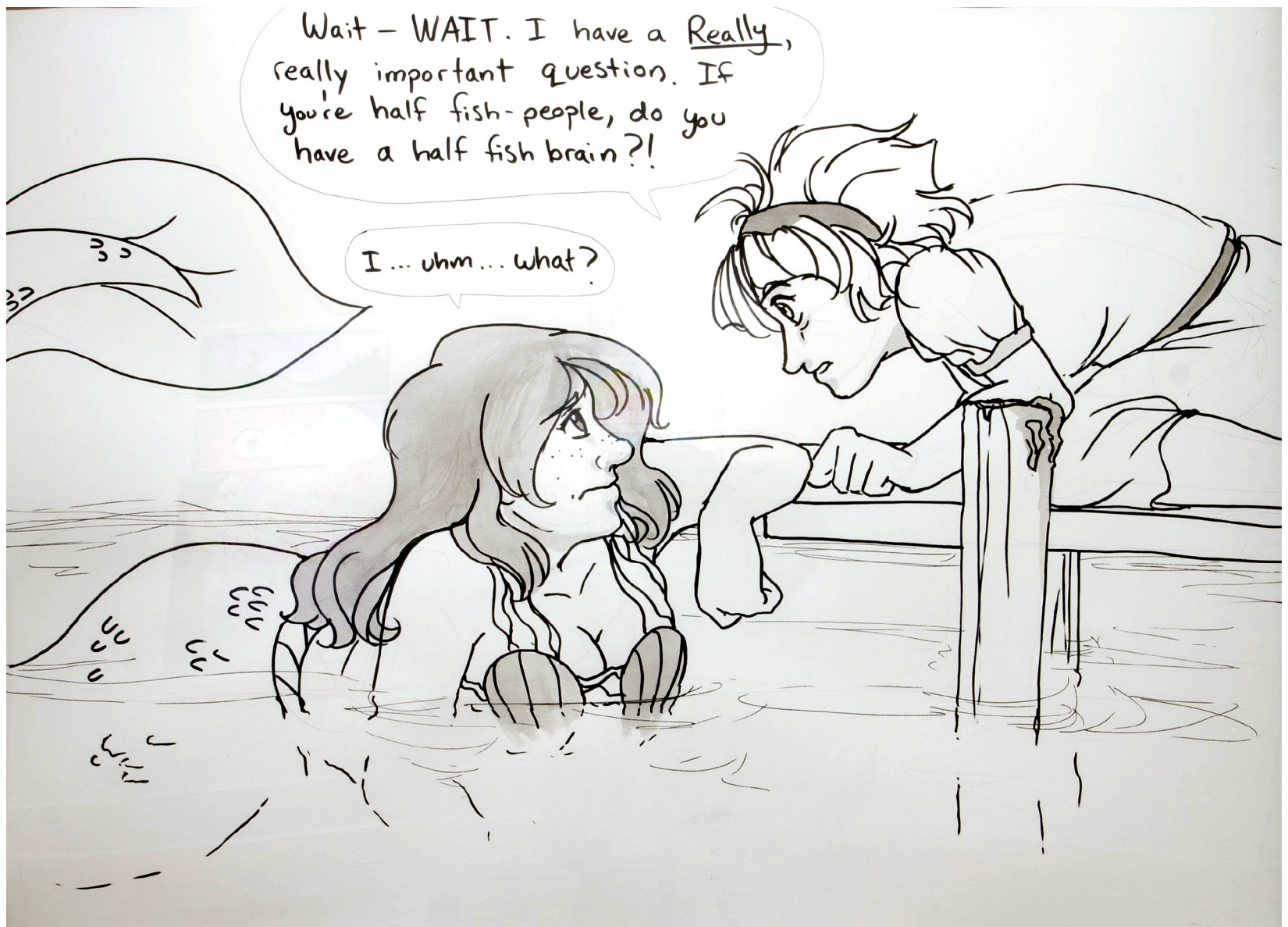
Alice in Wonderland, Rapunzel, Beauty and the Beast, ink on paper, 2' x 4', 2014



If you watch *The Little Mermaid* backwards, it's about a girl who is cast out by her husband, but then befriends a kind sea-witch who turns her into a mermaid. On the sea, she then learns to forgo possessions and to value family and friendships.



The Little Mermaid Backwards, digital print, 55" x 39", 2014



Little Mermaid and Alice-- Important Question, ink on paper, 22" x 30", 2014



Arsy Versy Exhibition, Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery, Providence College, April 21-25, 2014

