

Cat-Fish

By

Molly Shields

The FISH lies asleep on the stainless steel metal of the surgeon's operating table. The operating theater is empty and dark, except for the sterile white light which spotlights his still body. The fish is hooked up to a heart monitor which bleeps irregularly.

The SURGEON enters the theater. He walks hurriedly over to the fish before vaguely consulting his notes. He shuffles the papers aside and snaps on a pair of hospital green latex gloves.

The surgeon begins to work. He selects a scalpel and draws it across the fish's body, making a cut near the heart. He delicately peels the skin back to reveal the feebly beating organ. It is small and tinged with grey, as if it is physically aged.

With great precision, the surgeon snips the surrounding arteries holding the heart in place, and ceremoniously lifts it out with both hands. The heart is small enough to be held between thumb and forefinger, and the solemnity with which the surgeon performs this action is incongruously flamboyant. He places the old heart in a box.

Without looking (his eyes are fixed on the inanimate body of the fish) the surgeon clutches for the tray holding the new heart on the counter beside him. The counter is messy-seemingly holding bits-and-bobs from the previous surgery.

His hands clumsily knock metal instruments and dishes which clang jarringly. Finally he snatches up what he was looking for, a circular silver dish on which a juicy pink heart sits.

He turns and continues his surgery.

#### 15 MINUTES LATER

The surgeon is snipping off the loose ends of thread which bind the fish's heart in place. He proudly admires his handiwork before removing his bloody latex gloves and tossing them in the bin by the counter. Sat on the counter is are two silver trays. On one sits a fresh, pink heart, with the helpful label 'FISH HEART' stuck to it. The other tray is empty, a bloody smear congealing on the surface of the metal with the label 'CAT HEART' next to it.

The surgeon's face turns white. His mistake is obvious.

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Apprehensively, he turns to the fish- still lying calmly on the operating table. A faint yet sturdy heartbeat begins to emanate from the fish and the heart monitor flashes green in unison.

The surgeon gently picks up the fish in both hands and walks him over to the 'recovery tank'. He carefully slips the fish into the water where he lifelessly floats for a second before suddenly waking and swimming deeper into the tank.

SURGEON

phew.

The surgeon leaves the operating theater.

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INT FISH TANK DAY

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The fish swims happily through the tank. Music begins to swell to the beat of his new heart and he throws pebbles like confetti and dances around the luminous plastic plants and tiki statues. His new heartbeat pulses loud and strong, fading into the drumbeat of the music which he dances to.