

"JAW ON THE FLOOR
THE ENTIRE TIME I WAS READING."

"So, that was darker than I thought at first."

"There are a lot of 'oh crap' moments."

In his journal, a goldfish enthusiast shows admiration for his latest pet—his fourth beautiful fish. He sounds a bit too fervent and obsessed, but perhaps this is what an aficionado is like. However, the whole picture soon turns creepy and sinister once it is revealed that the fish he feels passionate about are young women, the goldfish bowl he is gazing at a basement apartment, and he himself is far from a pet lover, but a voyeur. He has been getting away with his "goldfish appreciation," until his latest fish girl comes on the scene with a well-thought-out revenge plan that gets him into big trouble. What else can a true devotee like him do after the betrayal of his loved one? Reunite with his escaped pet and teach her some good lessons for sure.

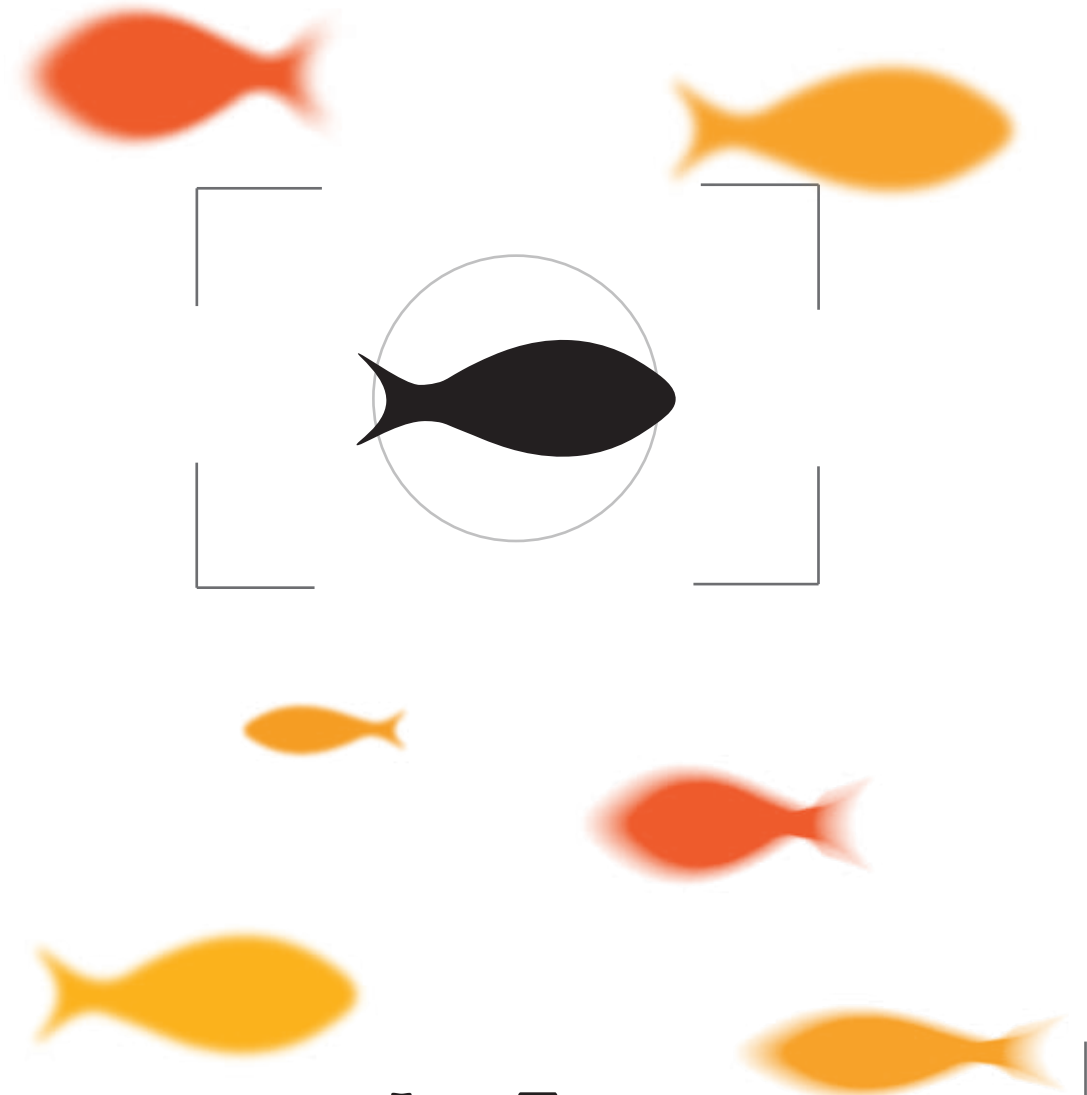
Goldfish and the Beholder



Iris Tsui

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Goldfish and the Beholder



Iris Tsui



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Goldfish and the Beholder

Iris Tsui



*To my landlord who makes the basement warm enough
for me to live, write, and create during Ottawa's winter.*

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters and places are all a product
of the author's imagination and any resemblance to real persons or
places is strictly coincidental.

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Chapter 1

Of All the Fish in the Bowl

April 1, 2024

2024-04-01

Day 153

April Fools' Day brings me another gorgeous goldfish. My Goldie No. 4. I thought I would be less emotional as more goldfish swam into my bowl. But I was wrong. The excitement is still wild, pumping my heart and feeding my passion. Because every one of them is unique. Every one of them thrills me differently. Their shapes, their posture, their bearing, their shine. All are beautiful in their own ways. All become attractive when they are unaware and susceptible under my gaze. And I know more now. I've learned from my mistakes. I am savvier. I am a better goldfish connoisseur this time. This beauty is my fourth one. I'll treat her right with the experience I gained from the previous three. She looks docile and graceful. But at the same time, she's sad. She carries the grief of those who have lost their loved ones. A heartbroken lover maybe? And she looks familiar. She reminds me of No. 3. Perhaps I miss her too much. My good, demure No. 3. How hard I cried when I learned she did that to herself five months ago.

But what's past is past. My whole attention is on No. 4 now, and she's in good hands of mine. I'll replace her sadness with love and care.

A new round has begun.

After all the tears, denial, nightmares, and guilt over the past five months, I finally moved into the basement. The cursed space that held and killed Liliانا. I've done everything I could to prepare myself for this moment. But still, I was overcome with grief and fury the second I stepped inside. I feel so weak, helpless, and despairing here. I have to fight against all my emotions and pretend to be an innocent tenant all the time, but worst of all, it's because of the voyeur's eyes that peep constantly. I can't help but keep glimpsing the pair of small, rectangular, curtainless windows right below the ceiling. They themselves are like a pair of eyes that never wink, staring incessantly at my little sister before and me now, smudging our womanhood, smashing our dignity, stripping off our humanity.

But I can't keep looking at them. I can't make him suspicious. I have to keep my plan intact for a successful revenge. Lily would never allow me to do so. But I have to. I need to find justice for her. I need to DO SOMETHING for her to keep myself sane. The bastard destroyed my sister, so I am here to destroy him.

When the stress of being watched by those filthy eyes and a twisted mind sucks all the air out of my lungs, I will think of Lily.

I'm ready.

April 3, 2024

2024-04-05

Day 157

I did so much to prepare for a new Goldie after No. 3.

I kept visiting Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. The old couple are good, simple people. "Argus, my dear, you are such a good Samaritan!" They thank me wholeheartedly each time I drop by to help clean their house. You have to be kind and helpful. Trusting neighbours bless you with incredible convenience and access. I have the couple in the palm of my hand by learning their living patterns. I got chances to survey the whole house to facilitate my goldfish appreciation. I put the vacant basement in perfect order, so decent and neat goldfish would want to rent the place. I was so considerate that I created the rental ad for the couple, who told me happily they'd found a nice tenant finally five months after the last one left.

For these five months, I was in hell.

"Why did you end your life after my confession?"

The question haunted and tortured me day and night. I needed time to recover from her betrayal. My good, demure No. 3.

Anyway, I'm back. And I knew all my efforts had paid off the moment I saw No. 4.

I checked and upgraded my equipment before she moved in. It was tempting to have a cam with a sound recording function inside the basement. But no. I refuse to get as low as a peeping Tom. I am a connoisseur. Only professionals like me can enjoy the tantalizing excitement of not seeing all. Two cams outside the windows are good enough.

I've considered many scenarios, assessed their risks, and made different plans accordingly. I know it is possible to take revenge remotely. But deep down, I want to do it in person. I want to put myself in Lily's situation and feel how she felt. It may sound irrational, but I believe I can make Lily less lonely and lost by doing so. And I hope I can make more sense of Lily's desperate decision at the end. I try to be closer to her physically and emotionally.

Still, I do have moments when I regret my decision to move into the basement. I have to admit that I've underestimated the power of forced exposure to a voyeur on me. The air is stuffy and depressing. An ominous silence hangs around. The windows, though small, reveal most of the 300-square-foot studio, even part of the bathroom with the door open. The only corner tucked away from the peeking windows is the tiny dressing area beside the bed. If the information in Lily's letter to me is still correct, there are two cams outside the windows but it's clear inside the basement. So my privacy and sanity are alive only in the dressing area and the bathroom. Sometimes I need to imagine myself as someone else whenever I leave my protection and step back into the main room.

It agonizes me when I imagine how miserable it must have been for Lily to lie on the phone and say that she was having a great time living away from family for college.

If only she hadn't believed the deviant's empty threats of hurting her family if she left...

April 10, 2024

2024-05-07

Day 189

Every fish has her character, style, and habits.

No. 1, the sweetie pie, the one who got me into goldfish appreciation, always swam around the bowl merrily. She was like a carefree and content child living in a world so kind and loving to her. I'll pay all I have to see her smile once again.

No. 2 was sporty and social. She had many friends, boys and girls, visiting her all the time. Her way with people made her popular. Everyone enjoyed being around her.

I am nothing like them. In fact, I am the opposite of them. I am given up. No one cares a shit about me. My world is a cold and cruel desert. How could goldfish imagine a wasteland without water and the desolate creatures in it? I am not as stupid as others think I am, so I kept them as my goldfish for watching only.

But then No. 3 came along. My good, demure No. 3 was an angel. She was quiet, organized, hardworking. She offered to help Mr. and Mrs. Wilson with lots of chores. They loved her. So did I. Kind, pure, and submissive, she was perfect to me. After six months and many nights of eating, sleeping, and living together, we were deeply connected. We were in a relationship. She was waiting for me to step forward. It was just tragic that she misunderstood everything I'd done for her.

I won't and can't wait that long with No. 4. She's reserved and mysterious in a way that urges me to meet her outside the bowl, so I can get closer and learn more about her.

In the month I've lived in the basement, I have to deal with the stress of living with his watching and at the same time collect every piece of information about the psycho.

I am cautious about exposing my body and personal details to the windows. I won't give him anything he can use to extort me. Instead, I've been acting like someone low-key, shy, timid but accommodating and approachable—someone like Lily—through body language and stuff like books, albums, clothes, and decorations. Meanwhile, I've tried to create a puzzling blank on me that hopefully can coax him to come out of the dark and figure it out.

When I'm out and free, I meet with my private detective to learn what he's got about our target—his family, education, job, friends, anything.

"A beaten bullied from a sad family," the detective summed up.

With the information I've gathered from the detective and Lily's letter, as well as the footage I've got from my cam outside the basement—an eye for an eye—showing how the bastard sneakily deployed his cams before I moved in, I wait patiently.

And thank God, things progress faster than I expected.

This evening when I returned, the old couple introduced me to the boy next door.

"Argus is the nicest boy we've ever known," Mrs. Wilson said. "You two can be friends."

I think the fish has taken the bait.

May 15, 2024

2024-05-18

I've never been so fulfilled, understood, and appreciated over the last week. I'm glad that I made the move of approaching No. 4 in person. I worried too much before.

Her name is Rosamund. But it is not important. She's my Goldie No. 4.

We clicked with each other the moment we met face to face. She's always shy and afraid to make eye contact, but I can tell she enjoys my company. And we talk a lot. We communicate in our own language which the world doesn't care to make sense of.

With what I've learned from No. 3, I am careful this time not to reveal anything about myself being a connoisseur early on. But I'm optimistic that No. 4 will see the beauty of it and my dedication over time because she's very keen on knowing about me.

And I've contained myself from making any physical contact with her. Last time when I held No. 3 in my arms and gave her all I had, she trembled badly and struggled so hard like a fish out of water. Soon after, she abandoned me forever. Therefore, I've decided this time I'll wait longer and be more patient lest my little mermaid will turn into foam once I touch her.

I am making plans for tomorrow. She asked if she could visit me at my place so we could chat more. Of course! I will never say no to my Goldie! Having her paddling around me in my house where I can appreciate all her beauty without the stupid cams has always been my dream!

I feel renewed and hopeful. I can now see a future in my life like others.

Day 200

I couldn't believe I was allowed to be inside the animal's den so quickly. It was too easy. I was therefore particularly vigilant all the while when I was there.

His place was overly clean and tidy for a young man in his mid-20s. There were no family photos. No signs of social life. Nothing for memories. The house was as empty as its owner. But I had no mercy on him.

I continued to act in the way he liked and expected. He couldn't resist a weak and obedient girl. So be it.

He put the movie *The Shape of Water* on for us. He said it was his favourite, which made him cry many times. A romantic fantasy about the love story between a human and a sea creature? It makes a hell of sense now.

I took a chance and laced his drink with a strong sedative. While he fell asleep, I took his laptop away. Lily mentioned in her letter that he kept all the clips and "goldfish profiles" on his computer. I then fled his house, "the bowl," and the city immediately as planned.

I managed to crack his code with some help and gather evidence strong enough to get him locked up. But first of all, I had to make sure the case was sensational enough for the authorities to address it seriously and immediately. So I made him infamous on all major social media platforms.

May 21, 2024

Goldfish are beautiful but cold-hearted animals.

I thought I was a professional who knew them well and could pick the right kind of goldfish for my appreciation. I was overconfident. They don't have teeth, but they can still bite hard.

My pure heart and love were betrayed yet again. I received a letter from No. 4, who turned out to be the elder sister of my good, demure No. 3, not long after she escaped from my bowl. She says her sole purpose for writing to me is to reveal her identity so that I know her sister is loved and cared for by her family and for what I will be punished.

Love and care? What does she know about love and care, especially mine for No. 3? If I didn't love her, I would sell her pictures and clips to earn a fortune. If I didn't care for her, I would livestream her time in the bowl 24/7 like those voyeuristic perverts.

But I didn't USE her. I kept her to myself only. I protected her from the sick, evil world.

I AM A TRUE LOVER!

I now see that No. 4 has a terrible misunderstanding of me. I'll track her down after I return and show her my unique love and care that drowned No. 3.

Just wait for me, my little naughty Goldie No. 4. You deserve me.

“Goldfish Man” locked up for 3 years in mental facility

The victim of child abuse and school bullying dodged jail with a sympathetic jury

Reported by [Caroline Ferguson](#)

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[532 comments](#)

After months of sensational buzz surrounding the mysterious [“goldfish watching” footage](#) online, the day-by-day uncovering of jaw-dropping details about the “Goldfish Man” across major social media platforms, [the suspect’s dramatic surrender to the police](#), and the subsequent trial in the spotlight, the judge imposes a three-year mental health facility detainment on the 26-year-old voyeur today.

The convict, identified only by the initial X in a decision out of the Court of Justice despite his name being revealed online already, pleaded guilty to the charge of voyeurism at the beginning of the three-month trial after he turned himself in to the police in August in the middle of the heated scandal.

“Even with a cooperative suspect and the materials he willingly presented which were conducive to our proceedings, it still took months because we got so much to look into,” explained John Hamilton, the case’s public prosecutor.

“It basically was a detailed profiling we needed to nail down on X to sort things out,” Hamilton continued. “Materials like stacks of old journals he kept from childhood to adolescence, his official records and reports from different government departments, and statements of all the parties and individuals involved came in dozens of boxes. We haven’t even included the materials found online.”

The [“goldfish profiles,”](#) the files that give “Goldfish Man” his name, are among these online materials exposed by an unknown source. The outrageous documents that are allegedly created by X are thorough voyeuristic observations and records made individually for his four young female victims, dehumanizingly watched as goldfish and marked with sequential numbers. Though traces of their identities were wiped out by the source, horrendous details such as “No. 3 was approached and mated” remain.

The police refused to give details of their investigation conducted on the online materials, the unknown source, and the evidence provided to them anonymously. The only information they confirmed was that there were four victims in total, two of them remained ignorant of the crime, one of them was deceased, and another’s whereabouts were unclear.

The deceased victim and the unknown source have been the focus of the speculation before the jury handed down its verdict today. As predicted by some who believed the jury would be lenient toward offenders traumatized by years of child abuse and school bullying, X was not sentenced to imprisonment but a 36-month detention order in a mental institution.

“The jury has scrupulously examined all the evidence presented and spent an extended period of time discussing and deciding on X’s liability for the charge as someone deeply victimized by his past,” the case’s spokesperson revealed. “The members of the jury believe X, despite his abusive behaviours, is a victim himself who needs immediate and professional assistance along with custody.”

“X’s surrender, his genuine regret, and heartfelt apology” were alleviating factors in the case, according to a decision written by Justice Carl Williams, the case’s judge.

“A similar case saw an 18-month psych ward detention,” a not-to-be-named legal professional commented. “The punishment given was not too mild regarding the (detention’s) length. And the argument that X brings no immediate danger to the public and his crime being location-specific—he only did so to females in a particular basement suite—was bought apparently.”

[A government consultation paper](#) about the limitations of the current law targeting voyeurism in 2021 states “there is no comprehensive statutory response to voyeurism.”

Let’s hope that X is a one-off before our law gets us covered. Or, the better chance is, X’s story will make it to Netflix even before he walks free.

Comments

Anonymous	3 years in a psych ward? What if they are your daughters and friends?
Carson Howles	I saw all the online stuff. Real sicko... Beware! All you ladies.
May Taylor	Our society is sick! People are sick!

[Log in](#) to join the discussion or read more comments.

2024-12-25

It's Christmas again, Lily. I feel I can finally stop counting the days since you left.

With the bastard being put away, are you at peace now?

But sadly, I'm not.

An order of psych ward detainment for just three years is far from enough for what he did to you and other girls. Someone that twisted should be locked up for life.

His eyes and the look in them still haunt me in my nightmares. What will happen when he's released? What if he's not fixed and comes after me? Should I prepare for the worst in these short three years?

And even with one of them down, I'm afraid ill intentions and evils are still lurking anytime everywhere. Our world is such a terrible yet pathetic place.

I miss you so much to the point that I once considered keeping your clips I got from the psycho to retain pieces of you. But that was wrong. So wrong that I was ashamed of myself for the thought.

I don't need a shell of you in the goddamn clips.

You are always in my heart, Lily. I'll keep you warm and safe there, my dear loving sister.