

## Carma

The old man kept on watching me. He traced me with his half-open blue eyes through the decorations of the aquarium. He used to do so every morning. He drunk his coffee and wolfed up his well-mashed breakfast. He approached me and showered me with a good amount of flake food. They were as small as particle of dust, but they were enough for me to remain frisky all day.

A whole year passed since the old man had brought me into his cozy room to accompany him in his deleterious solitude. Unlike what most people thought, solitude grows more gruesome in cozy rooms. Both of us spent the days together in the same room, but each of us lived in their own world. We were as strange as the west to the east.

He thought that he brought me to entertain him. However, watching him every day was more than entertainment. I used to see him reading bulky books on his rocking chair. His face was like a wide screen that showed me how good or bad the books were. Some books made him absent-minded, others drew an alluring smile on his wizened face. The worst of them all was that very book that made his eyes become tearful. It was a cumbersome book with a brown leathery cover. Every time he read it, he searched within its pages for a dried crimson rose. He smelt it, holding a black-and-white picture for a pretty young lady. He gave the picture a careful tender kiss, closed the book and dried his eyes with his hands. Sometimes he sat by his desk and wrote a glut of papers after crumpling a plethora of others. Other times he tried to draw me a picture, but he failed. Actually, he failed for two reasons. One of them was that he could not find an apt gold color to draw me. The other one was my uncontrollable movements. The lukewarmness of the water encouraged me to swim from side to another, flexing my tail and my fins.

He was so generous to put me in such immense aquarium, unlike the previous owners who put me in a fishbowl or in a plastic bag dangled from a rusted nail on a wall.

“You know, sometimes I envy you. You’ve a weak memory which means that you aren’t burdened with memories,” he said sotto voce. I let some bubbles to swirl, showing him that I sympathize with him. His throaty voice always brought me to tears; Tears that were not seen in the water. He was haunted by his memories. He was imprisoned in the past and cocooned in solitude. I believed that if I left my world, I would die, but if he left his, he would live.

Every once in a while I imagined myself as a blonde girl with freckles. I would have legs to run, hands to hug pathetic humans and a glib tongue like that of the salesman in the pets shop. Still, I am contented with my fish being and my unmatched gold color. My world is as lukewarm as the relationships among humans. I do not fear the darkness, as I am sure that every morning the sun will dye the water with a gold hue. I do not fear solitude as it is the only thing that accompanies us at the beginning and the end. No need for memories, as they drown us in misery even if they are sweet. Memories always grab our attention to the missing parts. If I was a human, I would remember my forgettable parents. They were swimming around when that flash appeared and humans caught me. They caught me because of my unmatched color. My mother was as red as the blood of martyrs and my father was as yellow as the sand of a remote desert. However, their

hearts were, alike, colored with love. That love granted me that very gold color.

One day, the sun tickled the quite cloudy water. The old man, for the first time in that year, opened all the windows in his small apartment. The shimmering water was not as magical as his eyes that overflowed with happiness and tears. "It's a good day, Carma. I can feel this within the bracing air," he said. "I wish I could spend more time with you, but I think you will find someone better than me to take care of you dear".

He pressed a button in a small device, then piano music found its way through each and every inch in the place. He tossed his bony body on a fluffy sofa, sinking comfortably. He sloshed some juice to his glass and savored every drop of it. He leant his hairless head back, gave me a satisfied smile and closed his eyes. Now, I am sure that he is in a warmer place where there is no more darkness or solitude. Nevertheless, I am in a colder place than his, surrounded with strangers who annoy me every now and then.

"Now, it's time for medicine. They've told me that you're a good girl, Carmella," said a stout nurse. "I know that you miss your grandfather, but this is life dear". Another nurse brought capsules and a glass of water, and tried to give them to Carma who suddenly took the glass of water and drenched herself before losing consciousness.

"Poor girl! She watched her parents drowning in the sea last summer. She was adopted by many families, but she used to run away. She went so far away until her grandfather found her. Now she lost her grandfather. She could not bear all this misery and chose to be a fish. A goldfish by the name Carma. What a pity!" said the stout nurse while she was trying to take the pulse of the blonde Carma.