

A Fish with a Wish

Ethan Crownberry

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ISBN-10: 0989853306

ISBN-13: 978-0-9898533-0-9

First Edition 2013

Jetpack Publishing
New York



Special thanks to Jacqueline, Dinine, and Paige.

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To my father,
the most honorable man I've ever known.
I wish you well...

A Fish with a Wish

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Some time ago, in an awfully gray room,
in a corner so dark and so filled up with gloom,
on a table just barely four legs and a plank,
sat one gallon of water in a tiny glass tank.
And inside that water a goldfish was swimming,
pondering glumly the life he was living.
And in that glass tank on that ol' wobbly table
is where we begin this odd fish-wishy fable.



For the fish had been brought home from the pet store that day
and was dropped in his tank in a most unpleasant way.
He'd been bought by a man as a gift for his daughter—
bought with no more than one thin, shiny quarter,
then carried home quickly in a small bag of water.

And now the fish was unhappy. He was far, far from glad.
He was so disappointed, and growing quite mad.
For the water all around him was cloudy and cold,
and the table beneath him
was eighty years old.



“How mean to have put me in such a tight place,”
said the fish with an awful fish frown on his face.

“Thank goodness I’m small and not big like a trout,”
he huffed one more time as he pouted about.

His tank was too small; it was quite plain to see.

His tank was much smaller than a fish tank should be.

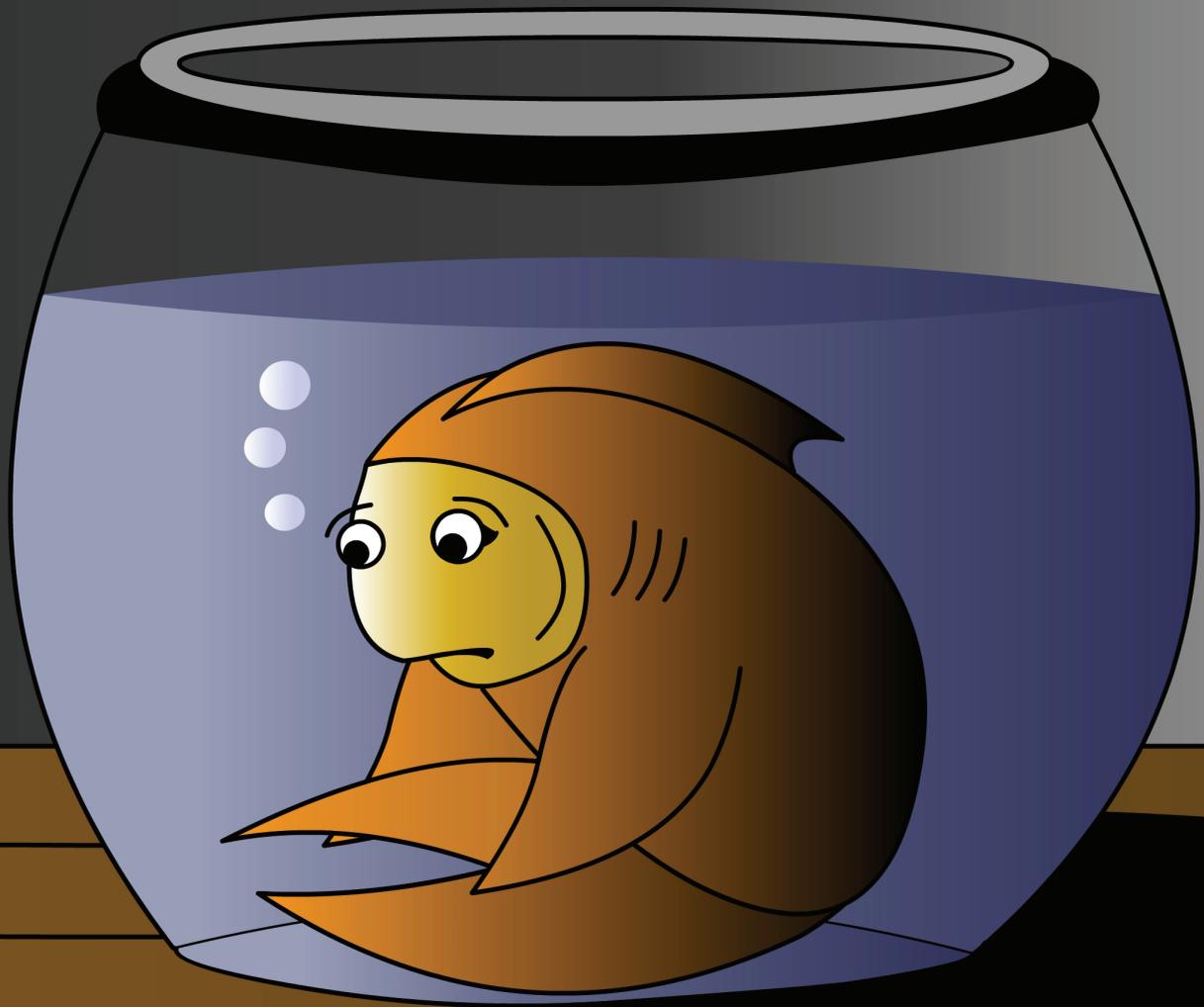
There were no fun fish toys and no fish decorations,
like shipwrecks that bubble and plastic crustaceans.

There was no ocean backdrop. There were no colored stones.

There were no pirate chests with skulls and crossbones.

There were no deep-sea plants or tree trunks to swim through.

There was no one to talk to. There was nothing to do.



“This tank is not fit for a fish to be in,”

said the fish as he tapped on the glass with his fin.

“Now, I don’t mean to mumble and don’t mean to moan.

I don’t mean to grumble and don’t mean to groan.

“Please pardon my anger,

and pardon my tone,

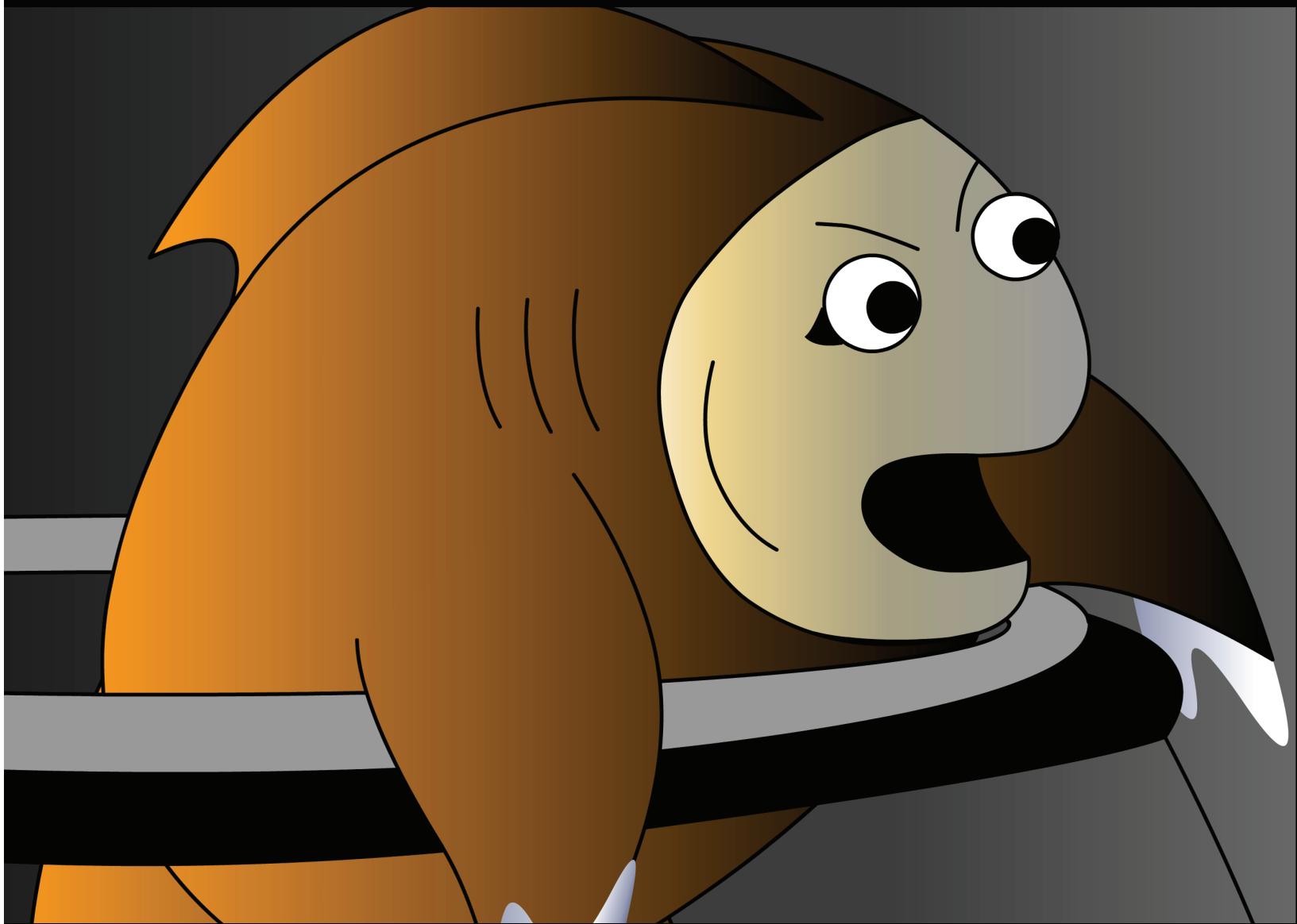
but...IS ANYONE THERE?

AM I HERE ALL ALONE?”



But no one came running to answer his call.
There was nobody there; there was no one at all.
And the room was as dark as the night was outside.
It was quite hard to see, though he tried and he tried.
There was nowhere to go. There was nowhere to hide.
And with nowhere to swim, he was fit to be tied.
He was so sad and lonely, he could have just cried.
But the tears wouldn't come; he was too full of pride.
It was all he could take; he would not let it slide.
He would not keep the way he felt bottled inside . . .

So up from the water the fish popped his head,
and with one giant fish breath the fish loudly said,
“I am not just some trinket one locks in a case.
I’m a goldfish with needs—I need room—I need space.
I need sunlight and friends and clean water and food,
and a lack of these things is not good for my mood.



“Now, I know that you’re out there, you fish-buying man,
and I know you can hear me—I know that you can.
This tank is as bad as a fish tank can get,
and one day I’ll get out, and on that, you can bet!
For I feel that my life should hold much more in store.
I do not want to stay here—not one minute more.
And I don’t mean to frown, and I don’t mean to pout.
I don’t mean to ramble and don’t mean to spout.
I don’t mean to yell, and I don’t mean to shout,
but . . . for goodness sake, somebody, PLEASE LET ME OUT!”

And again no one came. And the fish kept on talking.
He complained and complained, he went on and on squawking.

He whimpered and whined, but he didn't stop there;
he niggled and nagged and continued to blare.

He ranted so loudly that if he had hair,
he'd have pulled every strand 'til his fish head was bare.

He nitpicked and picked and left nothing to spare,
and at least thirty times muttered, "Life isn't fair."

Then all of a sudden, a light shined in his face,
not a light from inside but from deep outer space.
It shined through the window right down in his eyes,
so fast it had taken him quite by surprise.
He squinted and flinched, and he closed his eyes tight,
and he held up his fish fin to block out the light.
He had never seen anything shining so bright,
and had never seen light with such power and might.

