

Like A Fish

Short story by Allison Fine

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He was making love to her--stabbing her gently. She was breathing in the rhythm of his stabbing. Quick, quick jab, quick, quick jab--he stopped a moment, took a sip from a glass near the bed, she caught her breath, then he resumed.

“Stop it,” Gia spoke quietly and rolled away from him.

He lay there, despondent, not sure what to do.

Gia grabbed the phone and began dialing.

“Who are you calling now?” He asked. He was miffed, but not beyond recovery.

It was time to pull on his pants and leave.

“Someone else,” she said carelessly.

“Oh well” he had one pant leg on, “you and your stupid friends.” He was out the door before she finished the phone call.

Gia was careless about Antoine because she thought his penis was too small. In actual fact, it was not, it was average, but Gia had been screwing a black model who was extremely well hung, and everything seemed minuscule by comparison. She compared. For some reason it was important to her.

Antoine took the stairs two at a time and made a vow never to come back to Gia again. She was definitely off his list, if he had one. Gia was too skinny. He didn't like her moles. She had a scattering of them all along her belly and buttocks. He found them distasteful.

Gia heard the door slam.

“Thank God,” she sighed. “Pencil dick is gone.” Her friend finally answered on the other end.

“What are you doing? Gia asked.

“Taking a bath. And you?”

“I just screwed Antoine. Uch.”

“Why do you keep doing him? Gil is crazy about you.”

“Yes, but he’s always busy. I need someone on call at all times.”

“You’re an addict.”

“I know, and I love it.”

Gia and her friend Michelle laughed for a few moments.

“I wish I had your flair for the insane,” Michelle said as she lit a cigarette.

“Insanity is like a good wine, you must savor it slowly.”

They both laughed again. Laughing was a habit of theirs.

“Must go, cherie, bon chance.” Gia kissed the air and placed the phone back in its cradle.

What to do now? She thought. Take a bath? Shoot heroin?

She walked into the bathroom where her needle and works were kept neatly inside their leather case.

“Shoot heroin,” she said to herself.

Sitting on the toilet, she took the rubber tie and tied it tightly around her right arm, feeling for the vein, her heart already racing with anticipation. Taking the needle, she filled it from a small vial in her case, poking it deftly into the vein, slowly drawing the liquid into her. It was a feeling like no other, the warm rush, the sudden ecstasy, the quick

moment of release, the second total rush of oblivion. Her head fell to her chest, she nodded up and down, she leaned back, letting the needle fall out of her arm onto the floor. Gia was gone for an hour or so.

She heard some commotion and noise. It was muffled to her ears, her eyes slowly slid open. A large man with a police uniform was standing in the bathroom. He flipped open his wallet and began reading her rights.

“You have a right to remain silent, you have a right to--”

“Wait a minute,” she slurred. “You don’t know who I am.”

“I don’t give a fuck,” the officer said, handcuffed her, naked as she was, and dragged her into the bedroom.

“Get some clothes on and let’s go.”

He threw a pair of dirty pants and a shirt at her.

“I can’t wear these--they’re dirty.”

“Listen, you little ho, in jail you’re getting a uniform and these clothes are going in a plastic bag, so just fucking put them on.”

“I can’t with my hands in cuffs,” she said forlornly.

He grabbed the pants and threw her on the bed. He had a mind to rape her before forcing her into her clothes and he did. He jumped on top of her lean body, unzipped his pants, stuck his dick inside her little wet vagina.

“Hey--” she yelled. He was pumping in and out like a goddamn oilrig. He had no taste, no discrimination, she decided. She didn’t even feel it. Everything from the waist down was numb. The heroin always made sex an exploration into sad, mad, oblivion and a kind of painful ecstasy.

“You done?” she asked when he came.

“Yes, you little bitch ho.” He stood, pulled up his pants and looked down at her. She could feel herself drained out like a piece of dried fruit. Maybe she was hungry.

“Here,” he said as he pulled on her pants for her, fastening the button on the side. Then he pulled the shirt over her head, unlocking the cuffs to get her arms in, and locking them right back up again. She did not resist. Gia didn’t have enough awareness to even know what had just happened. Perhaps she got raped by a policeman, she wasn’t sure.

“You taking me to jail?” she asked sweetly as he slipped her sandals on.

“You bet. Now let’s go.”

He looked at her tiny, little, white, sorry ass and gave it a smack. She jumped. He pushed her ahead. She’s as docile as a deer, he thought, and just as dumb.

“Daddy,” Gia cried and slobbered into the phone on her one phone call from jail. “I’m in jail--please, please get me out.” She looked around and saw the attendant looking bored and angry, but not listening to her. She didn’t want these people in jail to know who her daddy was; that he was a famous rock star.

“Jesus, Gia--what have you done now?”

“I got arrested, daddy.”

“For what? You know, the band’s going on tour next week, and you have to bother me with this shit. Why didn’t you call your mother?”

“Mother’s dead, daddy.”

“Oh yeah, I forgot.”

“You killed her.”

“I didn’t mean to.”

“Daddy, please focus, will you?”

“All right. How much is bail?”

“I don’t know.”

“Shit.”

“What?”

“The dog has a huge tick on his neck--it’s gross.”

“Daddy—please, I need your help.”

“All right--I’ll send Garrett over.”

Garrett was her brother and a lawyer, the only normal one in the family. Actually, he was completely crazy too, but he hid it well. He and Gia had started having sex with each other when she was five and he was seven. It kept on until her father took over and started pumping her. Pretty soon she got wise and starting charging her father for his services. He got tired of paying up and quit her.

Then one day mommy and daddy had a huge fight during which daddy threw a glass ashtray at mommy that hit her smack on the side of the head and knocked her out cold. She had a brain fart, it seems, and died on the way to the hospital. It was a mean and ugly moment, and Gia preferred not to think about it. Garrett made his decision to become a lawyer because of all the research he had to do on daddy’s court case. Daddy got off because it was deemed self- defense, although what he was defending himself from no one ever made clear. It seemed mommy had pulled a knife from the drawer, but Gia knew she never intended to use it. They were in love for twenty years, in spite of all the incest and domestic violence.

Gia testified. She had to lie but it worked. She just didn't want all the family sexual stuff to come out in court.

After that, Garrett went on and became a really good student, got into Yale, went to law school, mainstreamed the whole way. Gia took drugs all through high school, got pregnant twice, had two abortions, went to community college for two days, and decided being a drug addict was the best use of her potential. It wasn't cheap, but it was easy, and she made money prostituting and living off her male friends. She always managed to attract a lot of male friends more than willing to support her and her habit, as long as she put out regularly, which she did.

Keeping her in drugs was getting harder and harder these days. Supply was going down, prices going up. Gia was high all the time and that didn't make her a very good lay. A lot of her men friends complained about her lack of enthusiasm.

“How can you fucking be enthusiastic when you're doped out like this?” she asked ingenuously. The argument made her case weak. And now she was in jail for drugs. Wow. How could this happen? She pondered. Her life was down the tubes and her only way out was marriage. She would have loved to marry Eric, the black model, but he had had a steady chick. Daddy had to get her out of here so she could find a husband; that was all there was to it.

It would have to be someone rich, and not one of the debauched rock and roll shit-heads her father worked with. No rock people. It would have to be an executive who could like a skinny little drug addicted ho. She'd have to dress up a little. Well, that was okay, she thought. After all, she liked clothes, she just could never afford any these days. Drugs were taking all her extra cash. She'd have to get off the drugs, buy some clothes

and find a rich guy. Maybe one of the record producers her dad dealt with, somebody high up in the record business.

Her quest for marriage helped Gia kick the drug habit. Garrett put her in a hospital rehab program for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks she was drug free and ready to hunt for a husband.

“Garrett, I need a little seed money, just to get started.”

“Gia, you are such a little parasite. Why don’t you get a job?”

“If you and dad hadn’t got your jollies on me all through my childhood, maybe I wouldn’t be so damn dysfunctional,” she pleaded.

This always shut him up. He was scared Gia would tell about the incest and ruin his law career, not to mention his marriage to the senior partner’s daughter, Alison. Alison would never have tolerated a husband who had a history of incest. She had enough trouble that his father was a rock star and accidentally killed his mother in a fight.

“Your family history is so--UGLY,” she would say, and brush imaginary flecks of dust off her sweater.

“Look, Alison, me and my family have parted ways. We’re very--different from one another.”

“Thank goodness, dear!” she would laugh, kiss him somewhere decent, and the whole thing would slide under the carpet, where it belonged.

Everytime he saw his fucked up sister she would bring all that back. He was afraid he’d be giving her blood money for the rest of his life.

“Here,” he handed her a couple of hundreds.

“\$220 dollars! Is that ALL you can spare. Alison is rich and you’re rich and you could do better!”

“I’ll have to write you a check, Gia, I don’t have any more cash on me.”

“Where can I cash it?”

“Oh Jesus.”

They walked to an ATM, Garrett got out another \$500 and handed it to Gia.

“This is it, you little blood sucking ho.”

“Why does everyone call me a whore?”

“Cause you ARE, that’s why. Now, go DO something with your life, and don’t spend it on drugs!”

He looked at his watch.

“I’m late for court.”

“Thanks Garrett.”

Gia stood on the street, right in front of Bloomingdales. Thus began her new drug and her new addiction: shopping. She would buy fabulous clothes, jewelry, shoes, stockings, underwear, the works; and go hook herself a well-heeled idiot.

After she accrued the proper wardrobe, she starting hanging out in certain restaurants and cafes where she knew wealthy men hung out and did business. She was careful to make sure her look was not sleazy or even slightly suggestive. It was class all the way. She appeared to be a wealthy young woman alone in the city. It worked. The only problem was that it tended to work mostly with guys from the Middle East and India.

Oil barons were fine, but did they have to be swarthy? She asked herself. She would have preferred a Texan with a cowboy hat to this, but somehow all the rich men seemed to be from another country.

One contender was named Krishna Bashchuto, from Darjeeling, India. He took an interest in Gia. Her exotic dark eyes and fair skin intrigued him. She had a very skinny little body poured tightly into tasteful but extremely revealing dresses. He liked the sling-backed shoes she wore. She looked like trouble, and he also liked that. Trouble was something he could handle, he had enough money for all kinds of trouble. His family was one of the richest families in India, owners of Ty-Phoo tea company, international distributors of tea. He had the means to enjoy himself immensely, and he did.

Gia agreed to date Krishna. He would always pick her up in his limousine, the driver separated from them by a glass partition. She enjoyed this kind of lifestyle, it suited her fine. They would go to various places for lunch, or dinner. She still had the apartment in the west village, but he starting to suggest she move uptown.

“I can’t afford it, Krishna!” she said.

“Well, I can get you into a place in Central Park West. I own a co-op there, and you can live there rent free.”

“Rent free?”

“Yes,” he said, and began patting her back, moving his hand down her dress, feeling the flesh.

“Krishna, please--wait till we get home. So that means I’ll be kind of a, kept woman?”

“I wouldn’t see it that way. I mean, after all, we can have some children and you can cook.”

“COOK?” she looked at him shock. “Ohmygod, Krishna--like I NEVER cook! I do boil occasionally, and heat up.”

He kissed her neck.

“You do heat up.”

She relaxed. He was a laugh. He had money. What could possibly go wrong?

She moved into the Central Park West condo in July. It was so hot she could see steam rising from the soles of her feet. Or, thought she could see it. Krishna hired some guys to help her move. She had a few pieces of furniture, but he provided the rest from a warehouse he had on 42nd street. Watching the guys made her wish for her whoring, drug addicted waif days. She would have fucked every one of them then. Now, she was a prisoner of her own solution. Krishna kept her on a tight rein and demanded to know where she was going and what she was doing at all times. This constant badgering precipitated arguments.

“Krishna, I am RIGHT here and GOD there is nothing to do but shop, put on makeup and watch TV! I’m bored!”

“I am working to support your shopping habit,” he said, pouring out a large glass of Tamarind/Orange juice. “The least you could do would be to cook my favorite dishes!”

“Your favorite dishes have names I can’t pronounce or spell--how the hell do you expect me to cook them! Anyway, we’re not married--I’m NOT your wife, damn it!”

Krishna looked at her. Perhaps it was time to marry the bitch and be done with it. God knows she was expensive as hell, but he could afford it, and he doubted whether he could get another skinny good looking broad to give him the time of day after this. She looked good on his arm, he was even starting to get a little respect from his brothers and cousins, who had always treated him like dirt because he was short and round.

“Do you want to get married?” He asked her.

She looked at her nails. One was chipped, damn it--she'd have to make an appointment with her hairdresser.

“What is it Krishna?”

“Will you--do you--want to get married?”

“Oh, I guess so,” she said absently. “Why not? I have nothing else to do.”

He got her a pear shaped diamond from Harry Winstons. Garrett's jaw practically hit the pavement when he saw it. He just could not believe this stupid skinny nitwit could bag a diamond like that.

“So, is he Jewish or what?”

“No, dummy--he's Indian.”

“Indian? What tribe?” Garrett envisioned Russell Means, intelligent, educated with two long braids down his back.

“No IDIOT--not THAT kind of Indian. The other kind. His name is Krishna.”

“Krishna? Holy Mother of God, Gia. Have you told dad?”

“Not yet.”

“Well, don't call him in England, he'll be mad as hell.”

“Why? Krishna's family is in tea and he's rich.”

“Tea? What kind of tea?”

“Ty-Phoo, dummy.”

Garrett was really worried about Gia at this point. She, married to a tea tycoon from India? Something in this picture is just not right, he thought. He had a difficult time envisioning her with any man in marriage, but certainly not some other world--third world geek.

“Is he good looking?”

“Well, in a kind of short and round sort of way.”

“Oh, God, Gia.”

“Well, he supports my habit.”

“You still shooting, you little vixen? I thought we put you through rehab.”

“I am NOT on drugs anymore. I mean my shopping habit. I changed addictions to shopping.”

“I see. Well, there’s no harm in that.”

Well, there’s no harm in that. Those words would forever be emblazoned on the sky and the thought planes as they followed Gia down the pathway to marriage.

Krishna arranged a simple wedding with just one of his brothers and his wife attending. They were married in Garrett’s office. Garrett got a judge from another district to perform the ceremony. He never told Alison about it. Better some things were left unsaid. Gia kissed Krishna lightly on the cheek, and the whole thing was clinched in under an hour.

“Where you two going on your honeymoon?” Garrett shook Krishna’s pudgy hand.

“Costa Rica,” replied Krishna. “I have a wonderful hotel there.”

“Nice,” said Garrett. Well, he was ugly but well heeled, and maybe shopping would be enough to occupy Gia for the next forty years, who knows?

The hotel was lovely. They stayed in the wedding suite. All the staff waited on them hand and foot. The first night, after making love, Krishna fell immediately to sleep. Gia decided to explore. She walked out the verandah and down the steps to the beach.

Ocean is wild, she decided, and I am wild with it! She took off her her long, gauzy dress and waded into the surf. To her surprise, there was a gorgeous man in there too, with nothing on but a cowboy hat. Her cowboy! Destiny took strange turns.

The cowboy turned and saw a lovely sylph-like thing playing in the waves.

“Hello,” he doffed his hat.

“Hello”, she said, suddenly shy.

“My name’s Teddy Carroll. What’s yours?” he said in a strong western drawl of some kind.

“You from Texas?” she asked.

“No, actually Idaho. But I live in Texas now.”

“Oh. I live in New York City.”

“Well.”

The moved closer to one another. There was something a little awkward about them both being nude, but Teddy quickly dispelled the awkwardness by placing his hat over her breasts.

“Sorry,” he said. “Don’t want you to be embarrassed.”

“Oh I’m not!” she said gleefully. This was too good to be true. “You here on vacation?”

“You bet. I own a small little oil company in El Paso and somebody said this was a great place to unwind.”

“Small little oil company?”

“Well, we just went public for the first time this year. Our last year’s take was 2.5 but we’re growing.”

“2.5 what?”

“Million. I want to hit the billion mark before I’m fifty, though.”

“How old are you?”

“Twenty two!” he laughed. “OK. Forty six and holding. What about you?”

“I’m twenty three. In August.”

“Well, aren’t you a sweet young thing.”

They made love on the beach. It was glorious. She could hear him breathing and the ocean roaring all at the same time. He stayed hard forever, and knew exactly what to do. He got her going and she went forever. It was great sex and she knew it. He knew it too. After they finished he lit a cigarette.

“Mind if I smoke?”

“No, you go ahead,” said Gia. His back was strong. He was one lovely man.

“Are you married?” she asked, timidly.

“Hell yes. Twenty two years, strong as an ox, stubborn as one too. I love her, but she’s been going through the change lately and driving me crazy. Her hormonal moments

are enough to drive a man to drink. Or sex!” he laughed as he said this and touched her buttocks.

“Oh.”

“What about you?”

“Well, tonight’s my wedding night.”

“Right,” he said.

“I’m serious. It is.”

“You’re not kidding?”

“Nope.”

“Well, aren’t you a feverish bitch!” He rolled over and took her again. There was something hard and mean about his lovemaking that she adored. He wasn’t emotional, he wasn’t too tender, except for odd moments, he was passionate and strong and manly. Perhaps it was being in Texas, or being in oil, she decided, that made a man this way.

“So, honey, you want to go buy a country or something, tomorrow?” he laughed and lit another cigarette.

“Why, you thinking of buying Kuwait?” she asked. He laughed.

“No, there’s some little islands around here I’d like to check out. Want to look at boats too.”

“Boats?”

“Yeah--how about a 36 footer with all the trimmings?”

“Oh yeah,” she said and began plotting a way to leave Krishna and run off with Teddy. Teddy wasn’t thinking of taking Gia for a long ride, just a cruise. But he tiring of the tame ones, this was a wild animal. She had a savage quality that he liked, she was like

a little rabid beast. Feral. Maybe good men can't be good lovers, he decided. He'd rather be a good lover.

“Let's go to the bar and see if we can get them to whip up some breakfast.”

“Oh, I can't, I better check and see how Krishna's doing.”

“Krishna?”

“That's my husband. He's in Tea.”

“He's a geek, right?” Teddy asked.

“Right. But he's my geek, for better or worse.”

“Well, nobody says you can't ditch for a few days.”

Gia tiptoed quietly into the suite. Krishna was out like the dead. She grabbed her clothes from the closet and the dresser, throwing them hastily into one of the matching pieces of luggage they had got for their wedding from one of Krishna's ubiquitous brothers. Krishna stirred a moment, she ran over to the bed and kissed him.

“My honey, my sweet, she whispered quickly as she brushed his hair with her hand. “Go back to sleep and I will ravish you in the morning.”

He turned on his back, never opening his eyes.

“Yes,” he moaned and began to snore again.

She lifted the suitcase off the bed and ran out to the elevator. As she got to the lobby the concierge spotted her.

“Are you checking out?” he looked at his watch.

“Oh no! Oh no!” said spoke quickly. “I and my husband are purchasing a boat. Uh--the gentleman who is showing us the boat--well--he is in Oil and has to get back to Texas quickly so we thought we'd close the deal tonight.”

The concierge looked at her in puzzlement. His English wasn't that good and he didn't really understand much of what Gia said, but he assumed everything was all right.

“ Yes. Fine. I am so fine,” he said using one of his best sentence constructions, and left it at that.

“Yes you are!” Gia said passionately and kissed him on the cheek. He was so confused he was cute, she decided.

Teddy came into the lobby. He had dressed. He was wearing a crisp pair of jeans and a gorgeous purple silk shirt. He had his cowboy hat on and a silver belt buckle.

He leaned over her and kissed her neck.

“Hey--you'll give me a hickey!” she laughed.

“Let's go. I got the car out front.”

It was still night, dawn was just creeping in. Gia wondered what Krishna would think when he awoke and found her and her things gone.

“Do you think this is cool, leaving a guy on your wedding night?”

“Well, I dunno darlin', but I'm enjoying it!” Teddy laughed and maneuvered the Porsche around some of the island's tight curves. Gia thanked god she had the body and the destiny to attract rich men, poor men were so dull and boring. She just couldn't see bothering when a rich man was just around the corner.

As she thought this they whipped around a corner a little too tightly, the car skidded, Teddy swore, tried pulling the wheel back, the car spun and went off the side of the road. It was a steep drop down a cliff to the water. The car immersed head first. Teddy's face hit the windshield and came to rest, a bloody mess, on the steering wheel.

His airbag had failed to explode, but Gia’s did, right into her face. It made her gag, but it saved her life.

It was some time before Gia realized what had happened. She was unable to move, the airbag pinned her into the seat. The car was sinking into the water, but it was shallow. She tried climbing out the back but couldn’t get the window open. Finally, using all her strength, she pushed the door open and got out. Teddy was a mess and she thought he might be dead. She fished her suitcase from the back seat.

Well, she thought, I have my suitcase.

On the dashboard she grabbed Teddy’s wallet. There was \$1400 in cash and a slew of credit cards. She kept the wallet.

Who knew? She thought. I can have my own adventure. He’ll never know anyway.

She tucked the wallet into the back pocket of her pants and proceeded down the beach. The suitcase was getting a little heavy, so she decided to toss it into the ocean. A little further on she stood looking at the waves, the sun coming up beautifully over the horizon of her new life. She took the car keys and threw them as hard as she could into the waves.

Well, that’s that, she said to herself and continued walking along the beach.

Things had lightened up considerably.

She didn’t worry about her future, it had no beginning and it had no end. It was just a ribbon of sand along the ocean. She would swim with it, like a fish.

The End