

FISH STORY

By Heather Violanti

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ISBN: 978-1-60003-965-2

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FISH STORY

A Ten Minute Comedy Skit

By Heather Violanti

SYNOPSIS: Lily's always felt like a fish out of water until an unexpected encounter at the Metropolitan Museum of Art gives her the courage to make a splash and follow her dreams.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male, 1 either; gender flexible)

GUARD (m)..... 30s-60s: A bored, lonely, museum guard who suspects the fountain might not be as ordinary as it appears. *(18 lines)*

LILY (f) Late teens, early 20s: An anxious young woman with big dreams, but who isn't entirely convinced she can make those dreams come true. *(61 lines)*

KOI (m/f) Any age. A beautiful, mysterious, and ominously charming fish. *(50 lines)*

TIME: A sunny Tuesday afternoon in May.

SETTING: The fountain in the Chinese Scholar's Court at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

COSTUMES

LILY – A floral Dress with overly elaborate shoes, and a large purse.

GUARD – A Hat. Optional: A guard uniform.

KOI – Should depict a Koi fish.

PROPS

- Plastic Water Bottle

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play is best staged simply. The actors and the audience work together to create the world of the play. The actors' physicality plays a large part in this -- especially for the role of Koi. Find a creative way to explore and portray how a fish moves, how a Museum Guard walks, how Lily changes from being anxious to being confident.

There's no need for any set pieces or elaborate costumes -- but feel free to create the world you think best expresses the play.

Stage directions are meant as suggestions only -- you can use the suggested blocking as a guide, but you do not have to follow it to the letter. Discover what staging works best for you.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Fish Story was first produced at the Altruistic Theatre's BareKnuckle Festival on October 14, 2011 at the Producer's Club, New York City, with the following cast and production team:

GUARD -----	Don Castro
LILY -----	Molly Archuleta
KOI -----	Chima Chikazunga
Director-----	Heather Violanti

A revised version of *Fish Story* was produced at the Radium Girls' Third Annual Radioactive Festival, on May 26, 28, and 29, 2016, at the 4th Street Theatre, New York City, with the following cast and production team:

GUARD -----	John Wiethorn
LILY -----	Autumn Mirassou
KOI -----	Paul Mitchell Wilder
Director-----	Jennifer Sandella
Co-Directors -----	Dawn K. Cowle and Bo Frazier

AT RISE: *An empty stage. KOI and LILY stand upstage with their backs to the audience. GUARD, sits in the audience. Suddenly, GUARD runs onstage.*

GUARD: The fountain in the Chinese garden in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A quiet, sunny, and slow Tuesday afternoon in May. The drip, drip of the fountain.

KOI: Drip. Drip. Drip.

GUARD: Distant hushed conversation in the corridor.

LILY: Distant hushed conversation.

GUARD: A bored museum Guard (*Puts on a hat.*) strolls by, hands behind his back. He stops at the fountain and looks in. He whistles loudly. (*Whistles.*) Here fishy, fishy. Fish. Fish.

No response. GUARD puts his hand into the empty space representing the fountain and makes a splashing motion. Still no response.

GUARD: Ignoring me, huh? Not gonna say hello?

KOI gives no response.

GUARD: (*Laughs.*) Look at me. Talking to fishes. (*Takes a sip of water from his water bottle.*) The Guard sighs and walks away, his shiny shoes echoing down the hall.

GUARD walks into the audience, observing the play. Suddenly, LILY turns around and storms into the playing space. LILY is on the verge of tears. She stops herself, looks to see if anyone is around. No one is. She runs to the space representing the fountain” and splashes water on her arms, then her face to calm herself down. Stares back at the fountain. Then, she “reads” from a small metal sign beside the fountain.

LILY: “Please do not throw coins in the water, as they are harmful to the fish.”...Fish? What fish? I don’t see any fish. (*Rummages into her purse for a penny.*) Ohh...What do I have to lose?

LILY closes her eyes, turns away from the fountain, and mimes throwing a penny into the water, making a large popping sound as she does so.

KOI: *(As if the penny hit him.)* Ow!

As this happens, the GUARD pops up from the audience, shakes his water bottle, and splashes KOI and LILY with water.

GUARD: LOTS OF SPLASHING!

GUARD disappears back into the audience. LILY opens her eyes. She sees KOI, a shimmering, gorgeous fish. He maneuvers himself to sit beside LILY—not easy to do because he is a fish, after all—but he manages. He rubs his head from where the penny hit him.

KOI: That hurt! Stupid land creat....

KOI stops and stares intently at LILY. LILY screams.

KOI: Shh!

LILY: Shh! I'm supposed to shh when a fish—a giant fish starts talking to me?

KOI: Shh!

LILY: Shh yourself!

KOI looks in the direction where the GUARD disappeared.

KOI: If you make too much noise, He'll come back.

LILY: Who?

KOI: The awful land creature. The one who splashes my water and makes terrible noises with his mouth. Like... *(Unsuccessfully tries to whistle.)*

LILY: What?

KOI: You know... *(Sputters some more.)*

LILY: You sound like a dying whoopee cushion.

KOI: What?

LILY: You sound—different.

KOI: You're different. You're not one of them.

LILY looks apprehensive.

KOI: That's why I chose you. I don't talk to just anyone. Certainly not them.

LILY: Them?

KOI: The land creatures.

LILY: But that's what I am.

KOI: No you're not.

LILY: Do I look like a fish to you?

KOI looks insulted.

LILY: Not that there's anything wrong with being a fish.

KOI: You're a lily.

LILY starts at the use of her name.

LILY: How...how did you know my name?

KOI: *(Gesturing to her dress.)* Your petals.

LILY: Oh. *(Laughs.)* These...these aren't...They're a...um. They call it...a dress. It's vintage.

KOI looks at her blankly.

LILY: OK. I lied. It's from Target™. [current department store] See?

LILY lets KOI touch the hem of her dress. KOI sniffs it. LILY pulls away from him.

KOI: I see. You're in disguise.

LILY: Disguise?

KOI: There has been precedence. You know the legend of the fishwoman?

LILY nods no.

KOI: The one who fell in love with a land creature. She trades her fin for legs. But every step cuts like a knife. She gives up her life, her very soul, for this man....and he does not even love her!

LILY looks uncomfortable.

KOI: This happened to you?

LILY: No!

KOI: I see.

LILY: No, you don't.

KOI: You fell in love with one of those silly land creatures, only he does not love you in return.

LILY: I don't love Harold!

KOI: Ah! What's a Harold?

LILY: That's his name. My— *(Starts to blubber.)*

KOI: How do you do that?

LILY: *(Bawling louder.)* WHAT?

KOI: Make little drops of water pour out of your eyes. Maybe you carry a stream inside you, but when you can no longer bear its rushing—whoosh!—it pours out of you.

LILY laughs.

KOI: Now you sound like a river, when it falls over the shining pebbles, just before it becomes one with the sea.

LILY starts to blubber again.

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