

FISH

By

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FADE IN:

1 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 1

A black and white CAT is perched on the kitchen counter pawing at a fishbowl with a dead GOLDFISH floating on the surface of the water. The fishbowl is slightly out of view behind a stack of cookbooks.

2 INT. FRONT FOYER - DAY 2

SOPHIE, 19, groggily walks through the front door dressed in Nike Dry-Fit shorts, a Gilford High School soccer sweatshirt, and mid-calf socks with Birkenstocks. A BLACK LAB bounds toward the door to greet her.

3 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 3

Sophie makes her way to the pantry and grabs the dog food. A GERMAN SHEPARD MIX joins the black lab to excitedly await breakfast. A checklist on the counter reads DOGS, CAT, GUINEA PIG, LIZARD.

SOPHIE

One more day... Okay, puppies! Sit,
Midnight! Sit!

Sophie commands the dogs until they obey. She sets the bowl down and moves to retrieve the cat food out of the fridge.

SOPHIE

Ollie! Ollie?

The cat is too occupied with the fish. Sophie notices his black tail poking out from behind the cookbooks.

Sophie moves toward the odd scene. As she peeks her head behind the books, Ollie jumps back and scampers out of the room. She immediately sees the fish's limp, lifeless body.

SOPHIE

Shit.

Her eyes dart around the room, thinking about what to do next. A poorly drawn picture done by the family's 6-year-old boy sits next to the fishbowl depicting him and the fish with a heart around them. "Nemo and Me!" it reads. The fish in the drawing has a distinctly smaller right fin.

SOPHIE

Shit.

4 INT. CAR - DAY 4

Sophie stares ahead, Nemo floats in a Ziploc bag filled with water in the passenger seat.

She picks up her phone and searches "pet stores near me." Three results show up and she plugs the first location into Google Maps and turns up the radio.

5 EXT. GILFORD PET STORE - DAY 5

Sophie pulls up, gets out of the car, fish in her hand, and stands outside of the large window displaying cats, dogs, and bunnies. She confidently strides to the door but stops herself before opening it.

She looks at the fish for a few seconds before nodding to herself, taking a deep breath and walking in.

6 INT. GILFORD PET STORE - DAY 6

The BELL attached to the door RINGS and a female EMPLOYEE, mid-60s with bushy brown hair and glasses resting on her porky nose with a nametag that reads "Terry", is looking down at today's newspaper crossword, totally unbothered by Sophie's presence.

Sophie slowly makes her way to the front desk, making subtle movements and waiting for Terry to notice her. The woman looks up and cocks her eyebrow.

TERRY

Can I help you?

SOPHIE

Um.. yeah. So I have this fish.

She holds up the Ziploc bag.

TERRY

No refunds for dead fish. Things die.

Terry goes back to working on her crossword.

SOPHIE

No, no I'm not trying to return it. So, I'm pet sitting for this family and I didn't notice the fish tank this whole week because it was hidden and they didn't write down that they even had a fish so now it's dead and they're coming home tomorrow and I need another one.

(CONTINUED)

Terry is still looking down, not actually listening to Sophie's story.

TERRY

Okay, the goldfish are on the back wall.

Terry points to the back without lifting her eyes.

SOPHIE

Well, so this fish has this tiny fin and the kid knows about it so I can't just pick up any fish. He's already a nightmare child and I can already imagine the monumental tantrum he'd --

Terry looks up, annoyed and stern.

TERRY

You can go to the back and look for an oddly finned fish. Come find me when you want me to fish it out for you.

Terry realizes the pun she made and breaks character to let out a small giggle, but catches herself and immediately goes back to being crabby.

SOPHIE

Oh.. kay then.

Sophie moves to the back wall and starts studying the ten colossal goldfish tanks. All of the fish look the exact same. She gets on her knees to get a closer look at the bottom tank and holds up the Ziploc bag to compare the other fish to Nemo.

SOPHIE

Why did you have to be different, Nemo?

TERRY(O.S)

Can you quiet down? I need to concentrate.

Sophie gives an unimpressed look to the older woman.

7 INT. GILFORD PET STORE - AN HOUR LATER

7

Sophie is studying the final fish tank. The Ziploc bag is on the floor next to her and she glances from the tank to the bag, comparing the fish. Terry watches amused as she taps her long fingernails on the counter.

SOPHIE

Is this all you have in stock?

TERRY

Even if we had more I'm sure none of them would match the runt.

Sophie stands up, defeated, and moves towards the door.

TERRY (CALLING AFTER HER)

Okay, well you could at least buy a

--

8 EXT. GILFORD PET STORE - DAY

8

Sophie pulls out her phone as she walks away from the pet store and queues up the next location in Google Maps. She whips the car door open, throws the Ziploc bag back on the passenger seat and drives off.

9 INT. PETS R US - DAY

9

Sophie pushes the door open and makes a beeline for the counter. TOMMY, 16, jumps up from his slouching position at the counter and plasters on a bright grin. Unfashionable wire-rimmed glasses sit on the edge of his pimply nose and he's swimming in his employee polo.

TOMMY

Welcome to Pets R Us! I'm Tommy, how can I assist you today?

He's clearly rehearsed this bit.

SOPHIE

Hi, um... long story short I need to find a goldfish that looks exactly like this one.

She gestures to the Ziploc bag, Tommy jumps back a little bit at the sight of the pale, floating fish.

TOMMY

Oh boy! How'd you kill it?

Sophie ignores his boyish excitement.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE

Do you know if you have a fish with
a weird small fin?

TOMMY

Not that I know of, but how about a
nice hamster? We've got a new
litter and they're so cute and fun!
They're perfect for any...

Tommy looks down at an index card taped to the counter.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

... Family with young kids! Or old
kids. Honestly, any kids can enjoy
a hamster. Adults too! Hamsters
don't discriminate.

He breathes out a sigh of relief.

SOPHIE

That's nice, but I'm really just
looking for a fish that looks like
this one.

TOMMY

Hmm... I can help you look! I don't
know a great deal about goldfish,
but you know what I do know about?

SOPHIE

Hamsters?

TOMMY

Yes! So this new litter is a mix of
Syrian and Siberian hamsters, don't
ask me how that happened, though.
Those creatures are just wild!

Tommy's voice drowns out as they walk over to the goldfish
display.

10

EXT. PETS R US - DAY

10

Tommy spastically waves out the door as Sophie walks away
sans a new goldfish. Her face is expressionless and
exhausted after enduring Tommy's never-ending chatter.

TOMMY

Good luck! Sorry we couldn't find
another Nemo, but thanks for
keeping me company for two hours! I
hope to see you back at Pets R Us

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY (cont'd)
real soon! Be sure to tell your
friends and family about our
fabulous selection of hamsters!

11 INT. SOPHIE CAR - DAY 11

Sophie silently stares ahead while driving. She keeps glancing over at Nemo. Sophie screams in frustration and gets cut off by:

12 INT. TRI-STATE PETS - DAY 12

Sophie halfheartedly opens the door with a scowl. She's immediately met by DAVE, 39, a plump, balding man. He addresses her before she can plaster on a look of friendliness.

DAVE
Hey there! Looking for something?

SOPHIE
Uhh... yeah actually --

Her face falls when she spots her ex-boyfriend, CAM, 20, sporting the usual tall-dark-handsome script, sharing his winning smile with another customer looking at iguanas.

Sophie ducks into the closest aisle, out of Cam's sight. Dave follows.

DAVE
Is that a dead fish you got there?

SOPHIE
Yeah, it's a long story... Do you think we could find one that looks exactly like this little guy?

Sophie cranes her neck to peer over the aisle display to make sure Cam isn't coming this way.

DAVE
Except alive, right?

SOPHIE
Yes?

DAVE
Weird fin and all?

SOPHIE
How did you --

Dave is very serious.

DAVE
I've seen it all. Come here.

Dave begins to stride over to the goldfish tanks, he's on a mission. Cam comes out from the back room with a rag and moves toward the fishtanks.

Sophie grabs Dave's arm and leads him into a different aisle to avoid Cam.

SOPHIE
Wow! These dog toys look fantastic,
how are the reviews?

DAVE
Well, funny you should --

Sophie cuts him off when she notices that Cam is moving away from the tanks.

SOPHIE
Oh great! Okay let's go check out
these fish, I need to get this done
as soon as possible.

She drags him over to the tanks with spastic and urgent energy.

Dave and Sophie study the tanks, scouring each fish for a small fin. The BELL on the front door JINGLES.

DAVE
Oh! Let me go help this family.
Cameron?

Sophie freezes.

SOPHIE
Oh, no don't worry I can look on my
own from here.

DAVE
Don't be silly! You need two pairs
of eyes. Cameron!

Cam appears from the back room. He and Sophie lock eyes. His jaw clenches while her body shrinks and she looks away.

CAM

Yeah, boss?

TERRY

Will you help this young lady find
a fish with a small fin?

Cam whips around to go back into the back room.

CAM(CALLING OVER HIS SHOULDER)

Nope.

Dave puts his hand to his chest, taken aback.

DAVE

Well, someone's a tough egg today.
Cameron! I bet you don't want me
telling your father about this.

Cam turns around.

CAM

Fine.

Dave walks away to greet the new customers. Sophie is still
on the ground, red as a tomato.

CAM (CONT'D)

Hey.

SOPHIE

Hey, you don't have to do this I'm
just looking at goldfish.

CAM

Is this your excuse for not
answering my texts?

Sophie refuses to look at him, she speaks while looking at a
tank.

SOPHIE

I don't answer because you're not
my boyfriend anymore.

Cam is visibly miffed - clenching his jaw and puffing his
chest.

CAM

So if you won't answer my texts
because I'm not your boyfriend why
did you show up to my fucking job
looking for a fucking goldfish?

(CONTINUED)

She looks at Cam, the long day is testing her nerves.

CAM (CONT'D)

Well?

She stands up, grabs the Ziploc bag, and storms away in a huff.

SOPHIE

Thank you for your help, Dave.

Dave, who has been watching this out of the corner of his eye, gives her a confused look.

DAVE

Yes, of course, we hope you've had a pleasurable experience!

He looks over at Cam and twitches his eye.

13 INT. CAR - DUSK

13

Sophie slouches in the driver's seat. She looks over at Nemo and realizes she is going to have to face the family tomorrow.

She goes to rest her head on the wheel and the HORN GOES OFF, startling her.

14 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

14

Sophie is pacing on the phone in the living room, ranting to her friend ELISE.

SOPHIE

... So what the hell am I supposed to say to the kid like, "Alan! How was Florida? Did you get to swim in the ocean? Speaking of swimming I killed your fish"? Like, there is no good way to say it to him or avoid talking about it because I can already see him asking if Nemo missed him but, like, fish don't miss people, kid!

She stops pacing.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Dude, are you even listening to me?

Elise's voice crackles through the receiver.

(CONTINUED)

ELISE (V.O.)
Mhm, yeah. Sounds like... really tough.

SOPHIE
Okay, did I mention that I forgot that Cam still works at that place?

ELISE (V.O.)
Oh yeah? Great...

There's a faint giggle on the end of the line.

SOPHIE
Oh my god, are you with Sam right now? Did he hear all of this?

ELISE (V.O.)
I'm sorry, Soph! You just called and started ranting so I wasn't just going to hang up!

Sophie rolls her eyes, closes them, and takes in a big breath.

SOPHIE
Hope you're having fun with Sam, then!

She immediately hangs up the phone and runs her fingers through her hair, exasperated.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

15

INT. FRONT FOYER - NIGHT

15

Cam awkwardly shifts back and forth in the doorway with a goldfish in a plastic bag.

Sophie is skeptical.

SOPHIE
... So your boss told you off for your behavior and because of that, you're here to deliver a fish.

CAM
I mean I came here on my own to --

SOPHIE
Save your own ass. You don't have to say that you care about this cause or anything.

(CONTINUED)

Beat.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, that was mean I'm just frustrated with this stupid fish thing and you and... wait how were you able to find a fish with a small fin?

CAM

I wasn't, those aren't like a thing, it just happens to some of them because of underdevelopment or something. I don't know, Dave's read a book about it.

They both sheepishly laugh.

CAM (CONT'D)

I just figured... Alan's like, five, right?

SOPHIE

Six.

CAM

Ah, that changes everything. Anyway, he's six, he's not a fish anatomy expert. You could just tell him that fins can grow like he had a little growth spurt over the weekend or something.

Sophie looks at him dumbfounded and leans all of her body weight on the doorframe. Cam rocks back and forth on his heels.

SOPHIE

You're kidding me.

CAM

Okay, sorry that was a stupid idea.

SOPHIE

No.

She groans.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

That's genius.

She lets out an exhausted laugh. He sheepishly joins in.

(CONTINUED)

CAM

Alright, well, glad I could help out. Here's fish 2.0.

SOPHIE

Nemo 2.0.

CAM

Ah, Nemo. Very original!

Sophie responds with a small eye-roll. The two stand awkwardly facing each other, not knowing what to do next.

CAM

Well, I guess I'll head out then. Hope Nemo 2.0 adjusts well to his new home.

SOPHIE

Oh, I'm sure he'll love it. Thanks, Cam.

CAM

Don't worry about it, I'll see ya.

Sophie sighs in relief as he walks away. She closes the front door and leans against it, staring at the new fish in her hands.

Sophie pulls out her phone and plugs a contact: "DON'T DRUNK CALL". She types:

"Hey, thanks again. I really appreciate your help :)"

She bites her tongue, shakes her head, and deletes the message.

16

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

16

Sophie pours the plastic bag - fish and all - into the old fish tank. The fish springs to life and explores his tiny sanctuary.

Midnight, the black lab, comes up behind her and starts pawing her leg.

SOPHIE

Ah, sorry.

She collects the other animals' dinners and gets them settled. Finally, she gets around to feeding Nemo.

(CONTINUED)

She opens the lid of the fish food container and turns it over the fishbowl. Nothing comes out. She shakes it a little more to shift the food, maybe it's stuck. Nothing comes out. She takes off the shaker lid, ready to just dump whatever's in the container into the tank. She looks inside to see what's wrong. It's empty.

SOPHIE

You've got to be shitting me.

CUT TO BLACK.