

The Striped Little Fish

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1

Angel, the angelfish, still didn't know what color he was. Every morning, when he woke up, he looked at himself, and his stripes always had different shades. He had seen other fish change color little by little, becoming darker and turning from electric blues to almost black... but gradually!

"Well," he thought to himself, "It will pass. It must be like that illness children get: measles. They get covered in spots, and I just change color."

2

But one day, not only did the colors change, but so did the shapes.

At first, his stripes got so close together that you could hardly see them. Then they spread out so much that, for a whole day, he was half red and half white.

They even went horizontal; they crossed, and it looked like he was wearing a tablecloth. After that, the stripes twisted into spirals and then circles. Every day, when he woke up, he looked different!

3

The strange thing was that he also felt different and did funny things.

For example, when he had checkered stripes, he could only swim in a straight line, and to turn, he had to snap a 90-degree angle.

When he was covered in dots, he bounced up and down like a little ball.

When he had spirals, he spun around in circles, and it took him three hours to swim just one meter.

4

Angel didn't like surprises; he was a creature of habit, and all of this upset him a lot!

To avoid these effects, every morning, he would roll in green seaweed to cover himself nicely, doing it before the sunrise showed him his color of the day. But even that didn't solve the problem: the weird effects, like swimming in spirals, didn't stop.

Children know that if you paint yourself, underneath it all, you're still the same.

Maybe grown-ups have forgotten this a bit, which is why they dress up in strange ways to look different.

No one reminds them that they are special just the way they are... and that they should wear the color they like, not the one that's trendy. Trying to look different from what you are often leads to confusion.

5

Angel had always been a solitary fish, but now he was even hiding under the corals. He found shelter in a little cave where he spent his days sighing. One day, a voice, shaped like a wave, light as a caress, whispered to him:

“You are what you are, and you can’t change that.” Angel’s eyes widened as he looked around to see who was speaking, but he saw no one. So he yelled his words into the water, but they bounced around the cave without escaping:

“Who are you? Show yourself! What do you mean: ‘You are what you are, and you can’t change that???’”

The answer came. He heard it clearly, and it tickled his ears:

“It means that who you are inside is also who you are on the outside.

Your imagination bursts out every day in different colors.”

6

He swam out and said, “Listen, instead of spouting nonsense like seaweed, show yourself, or I’ll get mad! And maybe you’re just a fish who wants to eat me!”

7

“Let yourself float, Angel, fly through the water; you are fantastic!”

The voice felt like a veil wrapping around him. He felt touched and comforted all over. He calmed down, and for a moment, he closed his eyes, letting the current carry him. The red disappeared, the blue became softer, and he relaxed. For a brief moment, he didn’t feel like Angel anymore but like the Sea.

His breath became the rhythm of the waves, and his heartbeat followed the tides. “I am you, and you are me.”

The voice grew fainter and fainter until it disappeared inside him.

8

He remembered that when he was little, he used to tell stories about the sea: stories about colors, tastes, and shapes that only he could imagine. Every day they were different. But then, they told him he had to focus on eating and sleeping.

9

From that morning on, he began telling stories again, and he couldn’t wait to wake up and discover the colors and shapes of the day.

And those who know themselves know where to go and what to do.

That’s how he met a lovely little fish named Angelina, Lina for short. They became a couple, actually a family. Lina chose the prettiest leaves to lay her eggs, and Angel, swimming over them, turned them into little fish!

10

Many little fish were born, all with different colors. Angel told them a story where the Sea spoke to a sad, angry fish, turning him into a happy, loving fish!

When you go to the sea, listen to the voice inside the waves.

Why?

To be happy, just the way you are.

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