

The Little Trianglefish

Vagelis Iliopoulos

In the far depths of the open seas, amongst the society of fish, everything remains the same for centuries. Fish lay their eggs at the same spots and once the little fish come out they immediately join the school ran by Miss Cuttlefish. There, they learn how to draw in the deep, how to decipher the secrets of the rocks, and, of course, how to save themselves from the hooks and the nets of the fishermen.

This year, just like any other, Miss Cuttlefish awaits her new students at the entrance of the big rock and as soon as she recognizes them by their shape, she welcomes them with a kind voice calling out their names: «Welcome, dear little Mulletts, welcome, my Soles, nice to see you, Breams», she says.

But then, her eyes met a strange little fish, the likes of which she had never seen before. It was yellow, short and wide, with shiny eyes and a crooked mouth. The weirdest thing about this fish, however, was its shape. It was like a triangle. The other fish asked questions about his family, but he didn't know what to tell them. The teacher hesitated for an instance, and then she said to him: «Welcome... Little Trianglefish» and since that moment, everybody called him that. Little Trianglefish's differences from the rest of the fish didn't only lie on the physical appearance but also on his interests and his skills.

Once lessons began, all the little fish found them hard... Soon, however, they turned into excellent students. Only Little Trianglefish still found school difficult. No matter what his teacher asked him to draw, he could only produce triangles. In reading he faltered whenever he came across any shapes other than triangles. Miss Cuttlefish scolded him and his peers wouldn't stop making fun of him. But he was really trying, despite the fact that everyone called him lazy. No matter how hard he tried though, he could still not draw any other shape. And on top of all this, nobody wanted to be around him during the breaks. All the other little fish wanted to play with the good students, like the little sea-wolf, and our Little Trianglefish sat alone and miserable on his rock eating his plankton and whispering the following verse:

I'm not silly

I'm not half-witted

I'm Little Triangle-fish

And I'm just ***Different***

Although he, as well as everyone else, had a right to be loved, nobody ever paid any attention to what he had to say, nor did anyone want to admit that Little Trianglefish was their relative or friend.

The days were going by, the school term was almost reaching its end but Miss Cuttlefish still hadn't taken her students for their first round outside the safety of the school district. The little fish were constantly asking her, full of impatience and youthful restlessness, to take them out and introduce them to the adventurous world of the deep seas.

One day, Little Trianglefish accidentally over-heard the Squid talking, saying that the fisherman had created a new type of net, and had surrounded the school with it. This new net was so fine that no fish would be able to go through it and escape. Therefore, the deep-sea society was in grave danger; the school would close down for good and all the different kinds of fish would eventually disappear. Little Trianglefish tried desperately to warn the other little fish about the imminent danger by reciting his little verses to them, but his voice still remained unheard... But when his impatient peers tried to get out on their own, lone and isolated though he was, Little Trianglefish darted forward faster than he ever had before, stopped in front of them and yelled as loudly as he could. The other fish stumbled, and when they heard what was going on, they were petrified and quickly hid behind their familiar rocks. The Sole went over to Little Triangle-fish and smacked him a kiss, while Miss Cuttlefish and the Squid couldn't thank him enough.

The following days were heavy with fear in the society of fish. The fish councils went on and on in a desperate attempt to find a solution to the problem. Even the huge sea mammals came around outside the school, as well as the old octopus, in order to lend their knowledge and wisdom. Yet, a solution could not be found. «*I will inject my ink*», said Miss Cuttlefish, but old, wise Lobster cautioned her against that line of action, saying that «*This is no time for cunning tricks; this is a time for a wise solution.*»

It was then that Little Trianglefish, who had been buried for days under innumerable triangle sketches of his, came up to the fish-council and exclaimed: «*I have found the solution!*». Miss Cuttlefish and the Squid tried to keep him back, but old, wise Lobster, having recognized him from his odd shape, asked them to let him come closer. Little Trianglefish explained to him what the solution was. All the little fish would cling together in such a way as to form a very sharp triangle, like the one he had designed. This huge fish triangle would be so sharp that it would tear through any net. The old Lobster was very excited. «*Is he the same one you called silly?*» he asked Miss Cuttlefish while summoning all the fish to place themselves as Little Trianglefish had said. Some fish complained, but the rest reminded them how Little

Trianglefish had saved them once before. One even went over to him and apologized for their despicable behaviour thus far.

Little Trianglefish wanted to leave the past behind him, though. He asked of them to sing his song along with him, as loudly as they could, and placing himself in front of the huge triangle, they all set out for the great feat! His heart only knew how terrified he was. However, he never once hesitated. He led the way straight into the murderous net with all his might. Some of his scales were scraped, a little blood ran from his wounds but... aided by the pressure of all the fish together, the net was torn through and through. Everybody, recognizing by now Little Trianglefish's true worth and how wrong they had been to insult and segregate him, cheered him gratefully. Miss Cuttlefish's eyes were tearful and the Squid were clapping their tentacles. Not only the school, but the entire society of Fish had been saved!

Little Trianglefish remained in history as the wisest fish ever; his story is taught by all the cuttle-fish in all the fish-schools, all the fish claim to be his relative and they all keep his picture on their rocks. And when they want to say about some fish that it is very clever they ask: «*Are you a Little Trianglefish?*»

Copyright PATAKIS Publishers, Athens

Foreign rights:

George Pantsios, foreignrights@patakis.gr, Tel: +30.210.36.50.051