

My Lucky Tooth

by Alim Ramji

Ted gazed at the ceiling. It resembled an assortment of colorful phlegmatic chromosomes of various sizes (same shape). The way the moon light came in seemed that the rays were outstretched hands whose only purpose was to tickle and grope the innocent and vulnerable overhead. The ceiling started to giggle. He wanted to take a sledgehammer, creep up behind the moon, and then tickle the moon with the soft handle of the sledgehammer until the moon turned inside out and he could see its stomach contracting. At that point he would leave and listen to the scientists as they debate as to why the moon has organs and why they are covered in a thick fat.

"It was once a life form," the bald scientist would say, "that never got any exercise."

"Are you sure those are organs?" The young soon-to-be-stoned PhD would ask.

His phone started to vibrate in his pocket, near his groin. He didn't want to answer.

"Hello?" the voice spoke first and did not wait for a response.

Ted began to see small purple sharks swimming in small purple pools of molasses in between the chromosomes. The sharks looked happy, but it was too dark to tell.

"This is Jythia," she pronounced it "Git-Ya", "we were supposed to meet today. I waited for an hour and a half."

The sharks began to eat each other. This he could tell. Molasses could do that to you.

"Hello, are you there? You're there; I can hear you breathing. Speak, damn it! An hour and a half!"

"Sorry, I forgot." The lethargy in his voice was crippling.

"You *forgot?*" her voice cracked. Ted wanted to laugh, but didn't.

"People forget their shoes, their keys, their children on occasion, but not their closest friends who drive over two hundred

miles to visit!" He was almost certain that Git-Ya had come to visit her parents. She continued to fume while his attention wavered.

The molasses turned several shades darker. Blood was mixing with the purple molasses. Sharks aren't vampires. He had written a paper once, detailing the physiological differences between sharks and vampires. It was for his Comparative Anatomy class. He even considered mating patterns. He got a D-.

"So, what's your answer?" He hadn't even heard her question.

"Maybe." he replied. In the past, whenever he found himself in a similar situation and replied with either a Yes or a No, he usually ended up living on an edge of some sort. Ted didn't like living on edges, but between them.

"I asked how your mother was doing." Git-Ya was a vampire. She was also an artist. "You know what, forget it. Don't ever call me again!" She tried to slam the phone but missed, hitting the edge of her small, dilettante circular table and catapulting her small fishbowl into a wall of protruding sheathed samurai swords. The small goldfish landed on one of the sheaths, then flopped down hitting every other sword, like a pinball. 14,300 points.

"Shit!" she yelled. Ted only heard a whisper. He hung up.

All the sharks were gone now except for one, which was swimming as if drunk in the pool of viscous purple and red. The layers of the pool were beginning to separate every now and then, but the shark kept mixing them. Ted liked the shark. And so he stared at him. The shark stared back and stopped swimming. They locked their gazes and Ted started to play a staring game. It was only when his eyes were watering and bleeding that he realized that sharks don't have eyelids and that the shark was actually dead. Sharks die when they stop swimming. He remembered that from Discovery Channel.

It wasn't his fault that he forgot to meet Git-Ya.

"If you had to meet a vampire, wouldn't you forget?" he asked the sinking shark.

The dead shark responded by jumping from the ceiling pool and biting a small chunk out of his left leg. Then he disappeared.

Ted turned his night lamp on with his right hand and saw that there were letters smudged on his palm.

"J the Vamp, 7:30 PM - " he couldn't make out the rest. He had masturbated with that hand.

"It's not your fault. It's the masturbation. It causes you to forget things." Ted smiled. At least it wasn't his fault.

He sat up in his bed, put on his flip flops, kept the light on, and went outside onto the beach. The weather was beautiful. Even the fat moon was beautiful. He walked up to the water's edge and started washing his hands in the water.

"Hey!" Ted looked to his left. A young Beluga whale was washed up on the beach. It was staring at him.

"Hey." Ted went on washing his hands.

Five minutes later he turned back to the Beluga. It was still staring at him.

"What do you want?"

"Come closer, I want to show you something." The Beluga tried to move its flipper to beckon Ted, but failed miserably. It was too dark to tell how miserably.

Ted dried his hands and walked over to the Beluga.

"Do you have a flashlight?" asked the Beluga.

"Yes." Ted pulled a large Japanese paper lantern out of the open wound in his leg.

"I can't see anything with that, throw it away." Ted threw it in front of him on the sand. The Beluga crushed it with its chin.

"Here, you're worthless, take mine. I can't reach it, but it's in the inside of my right — your left — cheek." The Beluga opened its mouth. It was quite big, considering how young it was. "Reach in. Don't worry, I don't eat human arm."

Ted realized the Beluga was speaking Arabic. When had Ted learned Arabic? Whatever.

Ted rolled up his sleeve and knelt on the sand. This would be easier with the Japanese paper lantern, he thought to himself, but the Beluga had crushed it. He reached into its right — his left — cheek, felt something solid, and pulled it out. The Beluga winced

slightly. It was a battery-powered microwave with a small scarecrow soldered onto its top face. The scarecrow was wearing a CCCP T-shirt and a metal cone with a sharp tip on its head.

“What the hell is this?” Ted asked, annoyed. He hated scarecrows.

The Beluga turned on night vision mode, which it could only sustain for less than twenty seconds. Its eyes turned neon green and it glanced down at Ted's hands. Its neon green eyes widened.

“Oh, no! What have you done?!” Ted looked up alarmed. The Beluga eyes were beginning to water, its neon tears began to fall on the sand. Ted could tell they were made of a strong acid; he had studied chemistry in college.

“That is my lucky tooth!” The Beluga screamed, “MY LUCKY TOOTH!”

It started shaking and trying to roll in place. Its tears were shooting everywhere; they looked like shooting stars. Actually, more like a meteor shower. The Beluga started to roar.

Ten seconds left before my night vision runs out, the Beluga would have thought to itself if it was thinking.

Ted stood up quickly and cringed, the shark bite was still painful. He shouldn't have extracted a Japanese paper lantern from it. He began to run on the sand, holding the “tooth” in his hands. The Beluga bounced after him, screaming, tearing, and convulsing. With all its erratic movement, the Beluga's acidic tears turned into acidic projectiles. Ted saw a bat get hit in the wing and fall into the sea. Git-Ya was a vampire; she couldn't swim either. Ted then felt a painful itch-burn — his flesh reeked of aspartame and urine.

“STOP!” Ted heard himself yell. The earth shook. He turned around, the Beluga was looking at him; it wasn't tearing, but there were minor scrapes down its cheeks. The acidic tears hurt it too.

They had stopped near the lifeguard stand, it had glowing red emergency light, signaling that the sea was no longer safe to swim in.

“You can have this back!” Ted couldn't stop yelling. He held up the tooth. The light accentuated its now slightly mutilated shape.

The Beluga was silent, then started to moan. Its tears were no longer acidic, just extremely salty. Ted saw one of the tears land on a snail. The snail wilted and then turned into a flower.

Ted was now compassionately annoyed.

“What's wrong now?”

The Beluga let out a wail: “¡Yo no sé quién soy! Nunca he sabido!”

The Beluga's Spanish was beautiful. Ted had taught basic Spanish to elementary school children when he was volunteering in order to see if his interest in teaching was real. “¿Te gusta mierda?” he would ask the smiling children before the class started.

“What do you mean you don't know who you are.” Ted didn't ask the Beluga anything.

“I can't speak Beluga,” said the Beluga. “I detest cold water. I like human languages.”

Ted didn't say anything, he didn't like the word “detest”.

“Soy diferente!” yelled the Beluga, “and that tooth was the symbol of that! I could always blame the tooth for everything that was wrong with me! And now that you have touched it, I can't anymore,” the Beluga's voice lowered, “...it's yours now.”

Ted sighed. He didn't know who he was either. He began to like the Beluga, a lot. And so he took a small flask of gasoline out of his wound, emptied it on the tooth, took a lighter out of his pocket, and lit the thing on fire. The Beluga watched in awe — it had never seen fire before.

“There. It's gone.”

Ted walked over to the Beluga and hugged him. He was in love with the Beluga. Together they hopped towards the ocean.

“By the way,” Ted asked, “what was it you wanted to show me?”

“Oh, nothing,” replied the Beluga, “I wanted to bite your arm off.”

