



THE ADVENTURES OF
LILY & LEON
A SOPPY FISH TALE

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Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.



As told through the eyes of a child, *The Adventures of Lily and Leon* is a story meant to be read to a child by an adult. This fictional tale, about Lily who has white scales and Leon who has black scales, broadly and simply addresses social issues and peer pressures of interracial relationships.



Glug! Bonk! Glub!

Leon, a Black Sea Bass, and Lily a White Sea Bass, had just experienced a head-on swimcollision. Leon wasn't hurt, but Lily had been knocked unconscious for a minnowsecond.

Lily was awake now but she was still feeling dazed from the swimcollision. "Who are you and why are you staring at me?" She crabbed.

Swish, swish! "My name is Leon. We just had a head-on swimcollision." he said. "Are you alright?"

"Oh my gosh, I feel airheaded! What happened?" Lily asked.

"Airhead? Yes you are...oh, no, I mean you're not an airhead," Leon stammered.

Leon thought Lily was an aquamarine dreamfish. Being near her made him feel like his tummy was turning into scrambled seaweed.

Leon smiled. He had seen her before, dipping and diving in Dragon Fish Lagoon with her schoolfishfriends. He had been too shy to swim up to Lily and say "Hi, Glug, Glug Hi."

A few minnowweeks before, Lily had seen Leon swimming through the coral reefs in the Green Gulf. At first she thought he was a shadow cast by the sea urchins who were playing barnacle ball in the octopus caves. Then one day she got a better look at him when he'd stopped to read the Ocean Gazette. He was unlike any fish she'd ever seen with black scales and deep brown eyes. She was instantly intrigued with him.

Lily's schoolfishfriends had seen him too and warned her, "Lily, stay away from him, he's a Black Sea Bass. He's different than us so he's sure to bring trouble."

"I totally disagree with you. We're all alike on the inside. Our scales might be a different color, but we think similarly and we feel love and hurt in the same way." She said turning on her fin and darted away.

Leon didn't frighten Lily, she found him fascinating. Boyfish often made her a minnowbit uneasy, but she sensed Leon was an honest, caring bass and that's what mattered the most to her.

She was thinking about his bright eyes and melodious voiceglugs when, without warning, her fishlashes started to flap uncontrollably and her fintips started blushing bright pink. Oh, my! What a weird reaction I have when I get near him, she thought.

"Are you okay?" Leon asked leaning in closer.

"Yes, I'm fine, thanks!" she snapped.

His eyes widened and he started back-paddling away from her.

"Oh, I've hurt your feelings. I'm sorry," she burred sweetly. "My name is Lily. Did you say your name is Leon? Hi Leon! What ocean do you come from?" she gushed.

That's better, he thought. He was more comfortable when Lily gurgled in friendlier tones; he slowly paddled toward to her. Once again, as he drew closer his tummy started to feel like scrambled seaweed.

"I'm from the Bay of Bubbles where the water is warm and aquamarine blue. Bubbles of all sizes and shapes float through the water. I swam many oceans before choosing the Green Gulf as my new home," he explained.

And so it was. Lily, a White Sea Bass from the chilly dark Green Gulf, and Leon, a Black Sea Bass from the warm bubbly Bay of Bubbles, began a fishfriendship that would forever change their fishlives.

They looked different--one sleek-bodied with black scales, the other a billowy ball of white lacy scales. They had met under bumpy circumstances, but it wasn't long before they were sharing fishtales and playing marine games.

Together Leon and Lily explored every pool and inlet of the Green Gulf. Other than when she was at Ms. Seaqueen School, their time was spent together laughing, diving and playing Red Dover, Red Dover with the greenlings in the kelp fields.

The laughter they shared sent tidewaves through the Gulf. Sometimes the two fish laughed so hard they had to cling to a nearby sunken ship to keep from floating to the air. One time when Leon told Lily he put pepper on his pineapple to keep himself black, she totally lost it. Lily chuckled so hard that Leon had to sit on her to keep her from drifting to the surface.

Their friendship deepened and giddy gales of giggling softened into more serious conversations on the seashore. Leon was sometimes too careful and overly fearful; he was learning to lighten up. Lily, on the other fin, took life lightly and needed to be more cautious. They were both learning about each other and what trust means in a friendship.

Leon loved Lily's free spirit and curious ways, but the fact remained, she was easily distracted and often wandered off into unknown waters. Leon worried that Lily might accidentally swim in the wrong direction and wind up in the dangerous air zone above the water.

"Beware of the Seafalcons up near the air. If they catch you, they'll make you into seafood," Leon warned Lily.

"What are Seafalcons, what is seafood?" she asked gurgling.

"Seafalcons wander the surface of the water trying to catch fish. They dangle shiny spinners and sharp hooks in the water that'll grab you up quicker than you can yell, "WIGGLY YELLOW JELLY FISH!" He blurted.

"And, the seafood. Well...I'm not sure what that is, but I know you'd have to go far away and we'd never see each other again.

"Lily, my words are going in one of your fishears and out the other!" Leon complained.

"OK, Leon, I'll be more careful, I promise! Now let's go dive from the top of the sea palms down into the mango pools. Gulp! Yum, Yum Gulp!

"Lily, are you listening to me? Leon asked. "I'd miss you a lot if you went away!"

"I'll try to do better. Now let's go see if the guppies want to join us in the mango pools," she burred brightly.

Lily and Leon continued to talk about everything in the sea and she grew to care a great deal for him. Most boyfish were perplexing to her and they'd inevitably do or say something really dumb, or things would turn...well, complicated!

Lily was generally a happy White Sea Bass but her soft heart was carrying a heavy burden. Her schoolfishfriends at Ms. Seaqueen School didn't like Leon. Babbs warned, "It's wrong to swim with a dark-scaled fish when you are white-scaled." Bonita chimed, "Girlfish, only swim with your own kind or there will be troublesome days ahead!"

Lily wondered why her schoolfishfriends thought *they* knew so much. "We're all alike inside regardless of the color of our scales," she insisted with hot, angry fishtears springing from her beautiful blue eyes. Then an idea popped into Lily's head.

"I'll go talk to my wise MamaBass; I've been able to trust her advice ever since I was a babyfish." Lily turned and swam toward MammaBass's bungalow. Lily knew MammaBass would know if she should swim to a far-away ocean to get free of her critical schoolfishfriends.

MamaBass gave Lily a big mamafishhug when she arrived. "Don't be sad, Lily. Things always work out for the best. Staying here in the Green Gulf is where you can best resolve your problems. Running away never helps anything." Then she added, "One day the emptiness you feel inside will be filled with a special fishmate, and you're sure to meet that fishmate when you least expect it."

Lily hoped that day would be soon because she felt the void more and more every day...except, of course when she was with Leon.

Leon's life had been an ocean apart from Lily's. He came from a large fishfamily of all boyfish. As a fingerling he was only allowed to play with boyfish, so he was somewhat awkward and shy swimming with girlfish. Now he'd grown to be a maturefish so his Bassparents let him swim away to build a grown-up fishlife for himself.

Leon swam through every ocean and sea around the globe before settling in the luscious waters of the Green Gulf. There were times when Leon missed his fishfamily and even more he missed feeling accepted. He knew he was different and...well...he was black and most of the fish in the Green Gulf were white. Why did outside color matter to the other fish, after all they were all bass! Didn't the Green Gulf fishparents teach their babyfish that what's inside a fish is what matters the most? He was pleased that he and Lily had bumped into each other. When he was swimming with Lily everything seemed right in his fishworld.

One day, Leon arrived at the mango pools to discover Lily was no where in sight. She is never late for diving games, where could she be? He wondered.

Leon waited, and waited.

"Perhaps her schoolfishfriends have convinced her that Black Bass and White Bass shouldn't swim together." He cried. He felt sad and empty inside to think Lily would swim away to different waters and start a new fishlife without him.

Then a wave of fear washed over him and he realized that Lily would only be a no-show at the mango pools if something was *keeping* her away.

"Holy, fishfeathers! Lily is in trouble, I just know it!" With one big swoop of his tail he jetted upward to the water's surface.

Over and over Leon leaped high into the air looking for signs of Lily, while at the same time checking to see where the Seafalcons were trolling. He saw nothing. He tried floating quietly on top of the water listening for the tiniest glug or gurgle but is all he could hear was the pounding of his own heartbeat.

During one of his high dives into the air Leon was snagged by a Seafalcon's hook and lure. His lower jawbone was deeply cut and he was losing blood from the injury. He stopped to rest near the shore and that's when he heard an odd sloshing sound. Leon turned to see Lily floating on the water's edge. She appeared lifeless.

"Gallop goldfish, it's Lily!" Leon cried.

Lily had fishnet wrapped tightly around her delicate body. Fish net marks crisscrossed her sides from thrashing against the unrelenting twine. She, too, was bleeding from her wounds.

Lily partially opened her eyes and smiled sweetly at Leon. "Leon, will you help me?" She pleaded.

Then seeing his injuries, she gurgled, "Oh your mouth is bleeding...does it hurt?"

"Lily, I'm OK! Right now you need *my* help. Be still and don't pull against the net. Save your strength for diving in the kiwi lagoon." He said forcing a smile.

"Listen to me, Lily. I need to swim for help. I'll return as fast as I can." Lily understood.

Leon was short of time, and his mind was racing as he sliced through the water. How was he going to save Lily?

Suddenly it came to him. "I know what I'll do!"

He swam upward with lightening speed, and when he broke the surface of the water he propelled himself high into the air. As he fell level with the water's surface, he slapped his tail on the flat water and arched his body into a rock hard curve, which hooked his body around the ridged outer rim of the net. He pulled with strength he didn't know he had. Snap! Lily rolled out of the captive net with a loud plop!

"Lily, your sides are cut and I know you're in pain, but please try to move your endfin so I can help you swim to safety." Her endfin slapped limply against the sandy shore. Time seemed to stop for Leon.

At last Lily opened her eyes and glanced around. When she saw Leon her fintips blushed with bright pink and her fishlashes started flapping uncontrollably. She swished her endfin sideways with one hefty sweep. Leon offered his fintips for support; when they touched he again felt like his tummy was turning into scrambled seaweed. Lily was going to be OK.

Along the way Leon scooped up kelp balm for their wounds. When they found a safe area near Sunfish Beach & Bogs they nestled down into the soft comfort of newly sprouted sea ferns.

Lily didn't make a sound when Leon gently applied the balm to her sides. "You're so brave." He told Lily. When he was done she gurgled for him to come closer. She dipped her fintip into the kelp balm and tenderly daubed it on his injured jawbone.

"Leon, look at our wounds. We *are* alike inside, just like I've been telling everyone," she said smiling from gill to gill.

"Thank you for saving me, Leon. Please forgive me for not listening more closely about the dangers near the air. This wouldn't have happened if I would have listened to MamaBass and put more trust in our friendship." she gurgled.

"I should be asking for your forgiveness." Leon confided. "You see, I didn't trust that you truly believed we're all alike on the inside, and I was fearful that you left me because we're different."

"All is forgiven!" they exclaimed, raising their fins in the water to share a slippery high-five!

Leon and Lily remained trusted fishfriends for many seayears. They filled their days by doing back flips through the sea palm plantation, languishing in the mango pools, and eating lots of pepper on their pineapple. Eventually they taught Ms. Seaqueen's fishpupils that we're all alike on the inside regardless of what color we are on the outside.

Glug! THE END Glug!

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