

Ki Utsuri

By

Keelan Smillie

After an underpaid barista finds herself in possession of a koi worth millions she must keep its existence a secret as the annual koi auction date approaches.

Character bios

Penny (25) is an optimistic person who works hard as an underpaid barista; however, she is impatient and tends to be petty. She tries to be a good person, but simultaneously believes that the world owes her something after growing up in poverty with only her grandmother caring for her. She did not grow up with the best education and lacked the opportunity to study, she expects life to be hard on her and that's why she doesn't attempt to find a better job that can offer her a better life. When she finds the fish and finds out its worth, she is quick to decide to auction it off, but is more than willing to share the riches with her friend Turk. After finding out that the fish belongs to someone else, she is determined to keep the fish, but does experience guilt.

Turk (27) is a bitter and honest person; he despises the wealthy and only is drawn to people who have been just as unfortunate as he has been growing up. He was orphaned and became an angry child, fighting with other children which resulted in him never getting adopted and remaining an unwanted child. He works at a library because he enjoys the silence and having little to deal with people as possible and fell in love with reading resulting in him educating himself using the books. He cares deeply for Penny, because she had a hard life growing up like he did and they both want more in life, but feeling like they could never get it.

Cherry (72) is a lonely and verbally abusive old woman. Her husband died thirty years ago leaving her alone and angry over him leaving without her. The restaurant was once her husband's, it was popular years ago, but is now understaffed and needing maintenance that she can't afford. Turk and Penny are regulars and Cherry has only ever been kind to them, giving them some guidance about life when she can and giving them food when they had none. She travelled a lot when she was younger and often tells those stories to Turk and Penny, educating them on places and the things she has learnt.

SCENE 1

INT. CHERRY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Besides a GROUP OF MEN at the bar and PENNY and TURK sitting across from one another as a table closest to the door the restaurant is empty.

Classical Chinese music is muffled due to the old speakers. Tiles are cracked, red curtains stained, and red and blue lights decorate the ceiling.

Penny glances up at Turk who stares at the menu on the table. She opens her mouth to speak, but hesitates. She lifts the menu closer to her face and loose pages fall out, she awkwardly gathers them placing them back on the table. Turk notices and raises an eyebrow at her. She smiles awkwardly.

The group of men get louder, hanging on each other and spilling their beer over the counter and floor without a care. Turk stares at them.

TURK

This place has become a dump.

Penny winces, glancing at the group of men then back at Turk.

PENNY

It is cheap here. Plus Cherry does go out of her way to take care of us.

Turk scoffs.

TURK

The old woman is bitterly lonely,
she'll care for us before...

He uses his fingers to make fake fangs.

TURK (CONT'D)

Sinking her teeth in our necks and
suck us dry.

Penny narrows her eyes at him. His arms fall to his side.

PENNY

You need to stop reading vampire
novels and read something that will
benefit you.

(beat)

God knows I should.

TURK

You know, I can just as easily get those books to you, the security there isn't the best.

PENNY

(sarcastic)

Ironical, the security guard for a library is the one who steals the books.

CHERRY, a short old Asian woman in a greasy apron and large thick glasses, waddles up to them with an empty tray in hand. Turk and Penny greet her with a respectful light bow of the head. Cherry smiles widely at them and opens her arms wide in greeting.

CHERRY

My children! Good you come, food is hot.

PENNY

Got a crowd tonight Cherry.

Penny motions to the group of men. Cherry's smile turns bitter as she glances at the rowdy men, she leans closer to Turk and Penny, who, in turn, lean closer to her too.

CHERRY

(whisper)

While they aren't looking I spit in their beer.

Cherry laughs loudly, clutching her tray. Turk snickers, glancing back at the group of men.

TURK

They definitely look like they deserve it.

Cherry waves her hands in agreement and shakes her head disapprovingly.

CHERRY

Too loud tonight, I want here empty soon. What you want?

Cherry pulls the tray in front of her, she whips out a notepad and pen. She stares at Penny patiently. Penny shyly away awkwardly, she briefly looks at the menu and turns back to Cherry with a confident smile.

PENNY
Fish and Chips.

Cherry's eyes widen and she waves her fingers at them.

CHERRY
(whisper)
Fish not fresh, you get better
chicken.

Turk's mouth falls open in shock and Penny frowns.

TURK
Now the fish isn't good, when will you
get better stock Cherry?

Cherry hesitates, she glances around her restaurant, the
dirty curtains and some broken tables. She shakes her head
and motions towards the rowdy men.

CHERRY
When there is more money. But for now,
bad customers will get bad food and
good customers...

Cherry smiles at Turk and Penny. Turk hesitates, but smiles
back. Penny places a comforting hand on Cherry's arm. Cherry
smiles sweetly at them.

CHERRY (CONT'D)
Good customers will get better food
and you not get sick.

Cherry scribbles down the order and puts away her notepad and
pen as quick as she had taken it out. Penny glances around,
deep in thought.

PENNY
If I ever win the Lottery I will only
share it with you and Turk.

Turk nods knowingly.

TURK
I'd probably do the same.

Cherry abruptly laughs loudly, taking Penny and Turk by
surprise.

CHERRY
I not share with you, I leave here and

live on big boat, forever!

Turk and Penny both laugh. Cherry points at Penny knowingly.

CHERRY

And I buy that coffee shop you work in
and give you a raise.

Penny chuckles.

PENNY

(sarcastic)

Thank you Cherry.

TURK

And me?

Cherry narrows her eyes at him.

CHERRY

You work with books forever. Good for
anger.

The rowdy men get even louder as one of them starts pushing
at another. A glass breaks and Cherry turns and sighs. Turk
stares at the men and abruptly narrows his eyes angrily.

TURK

Just ask Cherry, and it will be done.

Cherry blinks, surprised and Penny frowns.

PENNY

I would prefer if you didn't, you
could get hurt or worse--

Cherry puts a finger on Penny's mouth, silencing her. Cherry
shrugs at Penny and turns to Turk, still eyeing the group of
men.

CHERRY

Ignore her, you do it, less work and
worry for me.

Penny blinks, shocked.

PENNY

Cherry!

Turk smiles confidently and stands up, stretching his arms,
eyes locked on the, now rowdy, group of men.

TURK

You heard the old woman.

Penny rolls her eyes and massages her temples. Cherry smirks as she walks away towards the kitchen.

PENNY

(sternly)

I'm not stitching you up afterwards.

Turk laughs.

TURK

You won't need to.

Turk marches up to the rowdy group of men and lands a sudden hard punch in the face of one of them. They all yell as they throw fists at Turk. Turk uses his large frame to protect himself. He swings hard punches at all of them and one by one they fall unconscious. Penny watches on, shaking her head disapprovingly.

PENNY

(to herself)

This is going to be expensive.

FADE TO BLACK;

SCENE 2

INT. PENNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cherry is hunched over the fish in a children's inflatable pool. There is a sudden loud knocking at the door. Cherry frowns and slowly gets up and waddles towards the door.

CHERRY

Yes, yes I come now.

There is more loud knocking. Cherry shakes her head in frustration.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Wait, impatient children.

EXT. PENNY'S APARTMENT - DAY- CONTINUOUS

Cherry swings open the door, CHARLES and JAMES stare back at her, surprised, in full formal suites and a collection of papers in hand. Cherry narrows her eyes at them and frowns deeply. Charles glances at James and James shrugs.

CHARLES

Hello miss are you--

Cherry raises her hand, silencing him.

CHERRY

Shush man, what you want?

Charles blinks, surprised. He nervously glances at James then back at Cherry.

CHARLES

Uh, we are here to look at the fish.

Cherry narrows her eyes at them. Charles cocks his head to the side curiously.

CHARLES

We are from the auction.

Cherry's eyes widen and she smiles widely.

CHERRY

Ah, come in, come.

INT. PENNY'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Cherry waddles towards the fish and Charles and James follow her in. Charles and James stare in awe at the fish in the inflatable pool. Charles licks his lips and points at the fish.

CHARLES

Where is the paper work?

Cherry frowns, glancing at the fish and back at Charles.

CHERRY

What paper work?

PENNY (O.S)

Cherry, why is the door open.

Cherry gasps. She stares at Charles.

CHERRY

(loudly)

There are men here.

Penny and Turk walk in, they stare at Charles and James with concern. Penny and Turk slowly move beside Cherry. Turk eyes Charles and James accusingly.

PENNY

Hello?

TURK

Who are you two.

Charles straightens his blazer and stares seriously at Penny.

CHARLES

We are from the auction, we have suspected that this Koi has been stolen.

Penny scoffs. Turk's eyes widen and Cherry's mouth falls open in shock.

PENNY

It was not stolen.

Charles smirks confidently. Turk grits his teeth.

CHARLES

Then where is the Koi's paper work.

PENNY
It doesn't have.

Charles nods knowingly at James.

CHARLES
A rare koi like this has to have paper work, and if this koi does not then it is clearly stolen and we have to confiscate it from you and ban you from the auction.

Penny steps defiantly forward. Cherry takes hold of her arm, holding her back as Turk watches on.

PENNY
No! It isn't stolen, I can get you the paper work.

CHARLES
You mean make your own paper work.

Turk clenches his fists and steps forward. Cherry widens her eyes and grabs Turk's arm too, keeping Penny and Turk back.

TURK
Don't talk to her like that.

CHARLES
Oh please, look at this place, look at where you are keeping the fish. I doubt that a poor bunch of bottom feeders like you are the legitimate owners of this fish.

Cherry lets go of Turk and Penny and pushes past them, pointing accusingly at Charles.

CHERRY
You can't take that fish!

Charles motions James to leave.

PENNY
It is mine you have no right!

CHARLES
We have every right. You can expect a very strong worded email from the organizers later today.

James returns with a portable fish bag. James pushes past Cherry, Turk and Penny and scoops the fish into the bag. Penny squints her eyes as sees James leave with the fish. Charles smirks confidently.

CHARLES

Now behave yourselves and don't even
think about coming to the auction.

Penny wipes away the tears falling down her cheek. Cherry sighs and pulls Penny into a hug. Turk stares down at Charles. Charles shrugs and slowly marches out the apartment.

PENNY

What are we going to do?

Turk turns towards Penny, he shakes his head looking at Penny embracing Cherry.

TURK

Can't we steal it back?

CHERRY

Koi things don't work like that, high
security.

Penny pulls away from Cherry.

PENY

You heard what he said. The auction
will make sure we won't get near that
fish.

TURK

Then what are we going to do?

Penny wipes away her tears. She takes in a deep breath and glances at Turk and Cherry.

PENNY

I can call someone who can help, or at
least, might have the paper work from
the fish.

Turk and Cherry both frown, confused. Turk hesitates.

TURK

Someone with the paper work?

SCENE 3

EXT. AUCTION - DAY

Penny, Turk, DAN and Cherry burst through a tent's flaps with Turk carrying a transparent tank with the Koi inside. Four security guards chase them through the crowds.

PENNY

Hurry Turk!

Turk huffs as he struggles to keep the heavy tank steady.

TURK

I can only run so fast with a fish
this big.

Cherry breathes heavily and abruptly stops holding her back in pain.

CHERRY

Go without me. I can't run more.

One security guard takes Cherry by the arm and slowly guides her away as Penny, Dan and Turk continue running forward.

PENNY

Cherry!

DAN

It is too late for her, keep running
to freedom.

Dan runs faster, passing Turk. Turk blinks, surprised by Dan's speed.

TURK

Crazy man.

The three of them dart down a different alleyway of tents. Suddenly Dan gasps and points forward. More security guards are now in front of them.

PENNY

Oh no! Quickly go down a different
path.

Dan nods and runs in a different direction. Penny and Turk follow him.

TURK

Wait! We are going the wrong way.

Penny glances around her and gasps.

PENNY

Why are you taking us back to the center!

DAN

I have a plan.

Turk grunts.

TURK

You are an idiot.

PENNY

Just trust him!

TURK

Both of you are idiots.

Suddenly Dan darts into the open in the middle of the auction. The crowd surrounding him stare at him. Penny and Turk follow, but Penny bites her lip nervously.

DAN

Stop here!

Penny and Turk abruptly stop alongside Dan. Security guards close in on them and surround them on all sides.

TURK

What have you gotten ourselves into.

Dan looks back at Penny and Turk, smiling confidently.

DAN

Trust me and we can all win.

Penny frowns, shaking her head, unsure.

PENNY

I'm seriously doubting you right now.

TURK

I thought you told me to trust him.

Penny snaps her gaze towards Turk and narrows her eyes at him.

PENNY

Yeah? And I changed my mind, I have no idea what to do.

Charles and James emerge from the crowd, moving past the security guards and towards Turk.

CHARLES

You really got some nerve coming here to steal that fish.

PENNY

It is not yours!

Charles scowls at Penny.

CHARLES

And neither is yours.

DAN

It is mine.

Charles laughs out loud.

CHARLES

Don't make me laugh. A bum, like you, with a fish like this?

Charles moves towards Turk and reaches out for the fish tank. Turk pulls away, staring threateningly at Charles.

TURK

I wouldn't.

CHARLES

(whisper)

You know what happens if you don't give it to me right?

Turk reluctantly gives Charles the fish. Charles steps away.

DAN

You can't take my fish, I own it.

CHARLES

(sarcasm)

Really?

DAN

Yes, look here.

Dan rummages through his coat and pockets. He quickly takes off his shoe and pulls out a collection of folded papers. He holds them up confidently.

DAN

Here! The fish's real documentation.

Charles quickly snatches the pages and looks through them intensely. Suddenly his eyes widen in disbelief.

CHARLES

It can't be.

Penny snatches the papers from him and hands them back to Dan. She smirks at Charles.

PENNY

It sure is, which means you are the real thief.

Charles hesitates, and points accusingly at Penny. The crowd gasps around him.

CHARLES

No you are the thief.

DAN

She has been taking care of it for me while I have been busy.

Penny glances at Dan and smiles sweetly. She turns back to Charles, staring at him.

PENNY

You might want to give the fish back.

Charles sneers at her and hesitantly hands the fish back to Turk. Turk smirks as he takes the fish back in his arms. Charles leans towards Penny.

CHARLES

This will not be the last time we meet, I can assure you.

Penny smiles amusingly.

PENNY

I count on it.

Charles walks away and disappears into the crowd. The security team soon turn to leave as well.