

# For their own survival

[Life](#), [Love](#)



For their own survival Can you make people love you more by forming them, the way you want them to be? This is the essential question in For their own survival (2002) the short story by Ursula Hegi. The story is about the two persons Liz and Sam. They are on holiday by the coast in Mexico. After eleven years of marriage, Liz decides to leave Sam. This is very ironic, because she is the one who promised him, that he would always be with her. They are both active persons, and do everything together. The reason for this is that Sam wants them to. In the place they live, it is the man who is in charge. The woman needs to do what the man wants her to do. That's also why they have no children, because Sam has no interest in having them. They do have two dogs, probably also Sam's decision, instead of having two kids, they get two dogs, easier to look after, and do not crave as much attention. All Liz can do is say that's a wise decision, and keep her frustration to herself. One of the clearest examples of this being a man dominated world is when they are out fishing, and Liz hooks a marlin. Almost instantly Sam takes the rod away from her, to take the credit and honour for the catch. This could also be because Sam is an old military man and now principal. He is a control freak. He needs everything to go after his head or else everything goes wrong. I think he means well with the things he does. He just wants to make sure it is done right. Sam being the control freak that he is describes and almost analyses her. He describes her as being a shy woman, with no confidence. Sam doesn't like her being that way and wants to change her. He goes in and plays god. Only god or themselves can change people. He shapes her like she is a mannequin or a piece of plastic. He hasn't been perfect and has made some mistakes such as " A few times he

misjudged his timing, and she slipped away from him. " (Line 91) The way the sentence is, it is almost like a military diary, a journal or logbook. He gives her almost animal like intelligence. The prey slipped away from the hunter, it is once again him putting himself higher than her. He makes himself seem as god. Being able to change and shape her for his own liking, a violation against god as well as Liz and not to forget nature. There is a reason why god is over us humans, he can do what we can't or shouldn't. A little later it says that they have often laughed about the person she was when they first married. This points to that Sam only fell in love with the idea or potential of Liz and not her. It now gets clearer that Sam is manipulating Liz, to be the person he wants her to be, just as when he was drill instructor in the army. Once again he shows his lust for control. The themes in this story stretch a lot, all from control, sculpturing, love and the understanding of love and self-education. The one going through the biggest change is Sam as he explores his own self, and when he realizes why he is alone it covers up a kind of emptiness. That is what self-education is all about, you might not find the solution, but you learn something and can progress. Then there is the theme of love. The whole thing stops when " and all at once he wanted to release the fish before the color drained from it completely" (Line 169) In that line Sam finally lets go of Liz. After having thought about who he is, and learned something, he could finally let go of her. The thing with colours is because he tried to make her in his image, and almost made her go grey, but he realised it before it was too late. Therefore we can forgive him, because he realized his mistake before it was too late. Another thing the fish being Jesus symbol, and him having played god, so that supports my theory of

him playing god. Sam has a real hard time of letting go of Liz, because he finds it difficult to see where he went wrong, but as pointed out earlier, he is able to see it in the end. When looking back, he couldn't see any of the signs of her wanting to leave him. To conclude on this story no one can shape people the way you want them to be. For Sams own survival he needs this power and control over Liz and everything else. He needs the power until he starts looking in himself. Shaping things is his force and nature, and didn't do anything to hurt Liz, at least no deliberately. He always did what he thought was the best. When he realizes that he has been manipulating and controlling Liz, he sets her free. This is a very hard realization. He realizes that the one who needs to change is him. It is very hard for him to change, because he is used to changing others to his liking, now he has to change for others liking.