

TOP FISHING SECRETS

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Hell & High Water

A True Adventure Story

Whatever monster finds itself on the end of my line, it will, at the very least, be in for the battle of its life

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Tired of losing fish to the piling of a bridge I got an idea how to avoid it after the fifth fish was on and then off. Hook the next fish, get on the bridge to fight it and hold on for dear life until the salmon tired itself out, then it would be possible to reverse the process and land the fish. That was the plan. This is what happened: the tip of the rod broke; I got hit by a car; and dangled over a bridge for hours fighting a fish on light line that wasn't even hooked! Who would have thought that to catch fish meant going through hell and high water?

"Dude, what are you doing?"

"God in heaven! Ron, is that you?"

"Yeah, but what are you doing hanging from the bridge?"

"Are you kidding me? I'm fishing! Can't you see my rod Dragon Slayer?"

"Man the only thing anyone can see is that it looks like some guys trying to commit suicide and is maybe having second thoughts. Were you fishing from the bridge?"

"Hell no! What I thought was a good idea is about the worst fishing idea I've ever had! If I could go back in time I'd rethink this whole thing, but as it is, I've put too much time in to quit now! Run over to the other side of the bridge and see if you can see the fish! It's just sitting in one place and I want to know what it's doing."

"Hang on there buddy and I'll be back as soon as possible."

There hanging in the air upside down so focused on fighting a huge salmon that I had forgotten everything else...until that moment my longtime fishing buddy had arrived.

"Hey man! I'm back! Can you hear me okay?"

"Yeah, what's up?"

"This is going to sound weird but it's true! The fish on the end of your line is right at the surface just like you said, but there's something else! It's not hooked!"

"It's not hooked? What in the heck do you think I'm doing hear? How do you think I'm fighting this fish, with my imagination?"

"It's lassoed!"

"It's what?"

"Tim, you got the fish around the neck and it's not even hooked. Somehow you got your fishing line around the fish and the hook is acting like some kind of anchor holding the line in place!"

"Ron, I want to ask you to do something for me! Would you mind taking my place? You don't have to be as far over as I am, especially if what you say is true! I just have to see it for myself!"

Carefully, he grabbed hold of my belt and pulled me up from the brink of falling in just far enough for me to hand him the rod.

"What in the hell happened to you? Your face is covered in blood! Were you in an accident or fight cause your

TOP FISHING SECRETS

nose looks like mush?”

“Dude, I’ll tell you later. I’ll be right back.”

Hanging upside down for as long as I had, I had forgotten about the blood from my nose, but the single most important thing was to find out about the fish. Heading back to the far side of the bridge to the trail that led down to the water; panic was setting in due to the fact that I had been fighting the fish going on three hours. If that fish was foul hooked like Ron said I was going to be faced with a moral dilemma, and the last thing I wanted to do was let a fish go that had cost so much.

“Please, please, please, please don’t be fouled up on the line. Please!”

Down on the beach and looking out into the water, I slowly peered around the first of two pilings and saw my fishing line lead to a huge bright salmon at the surface. It was true. The fish had somehow been lassooed very near the gill plate without actually touching it. The buzz-bomb must have hit the water, submerged in the form of a loop and the fish must have swum through it...or something like that. Racing back to the bridge there was only one thing left to do.

“What do you want to do Tim?”

“I guess I’ll have to let it go. Thanks for holding onto it. The only thing left to do is flip the bail and wait for enough slack to form to let the fish untangle itself. It’s hard to believe that I was fighting it this whole time on ten-pound test. You know, with the reel holding at least three hundred yards, I really thought I had a chance at getting the fish. Who would have thought something like this could happen? Can you see my tackle box from here?”

“How did you get up here if your box is down there?”

“I’d been hooking fish from dawn on the incoming tide. Every fish I hooked raced to that first piling just underneath us and would snap the line every time it would touch one of the barnacles on it. It’s just another reason not to use light line. I hate that piling!”

“Yeah, me too, which is why I don’t fish the incoming tide anymore.”

“Anyway, I lost the fifth fish when I got the idea to fight from the bridge and tire the fish out. I figured that I would be able to outlast it long enough for the tide to change. Then I would be able to trick the fish back out from under the bridge and back out to sea so I could fight it without the threat of losing it to the piling.”

“But then there’s the problem of getting up here. How’d you manage that?”

“Most of the fish I’d been hooking were pretty far out and away from the bridge. Given the angle of each hookset, it looked as though I’d be able to keep just enough slack tension on the line and race to the bridge and get on top of it before it ever made it to the piling. You know what? It worked just like I thought. Keeping the rod in my left hand I was able to grab hold of most of the boulders with the other one so I could move a little faster.”

“Man, that’s an incredibly steep trail too! Didn’t you think that you could fall or become unbalanced fighting the fish at the same time?”

“I thought about that. As a matter of fact, I was so focused when I got to the top that I didn’t notice until a van hit me that I was a little out in the street; at least my rod was. The impact virtually launched me into the guard rail head first. Can you believe it, only the tip of my rod broke?”

“So that’s what happened to your nose. How do you know that’s not broke? Dude it really does look like an accident.”

“No one stopped, except some kids that wanted to know what I was doing hanging over the bridge, but that was later. I thought they were kidding ‘til you told me that you couldn’t see what I was doing. Before heading out to the middle I had to sit down on the rail for a few minutes. I suppose what kept me going was grim determination to get that fish.”

Just as I finished that last sentence is when the line went completely slack and stopped paying out. That gorgeous fish was gone. I kept asking myself why anyone would put themselves through something like that. I

TOP FISHING SECRETS

fought through hell and high water to get that fish and I ultimately let it go. Sportsmanship...it sucked sometimes, but it's a lifestyle not a fad. I knew there would be other fish and other adventures, and that's the thing. Now and again I think about it and whether or not I'd ever do it again knowing the possible outcome. There are many fishermen who think I'm fearless, but it's not true. I get scared just like anybody else, but when adventure comes knocking there isn't a lot of time to think about it. I've always known in my heart that whenever a monster fish finds itself on the end of my line, it will, at the very least, be in for the battle of its life, and I'll do it every time, whatever it takes. Going through hell or high water for an amazing fishing adventure is absolutely worth it. Some outdoorsmen can embrace adventures and others like to read about them. I like to do both.