

Untitled

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Straining to reach the last piece of firewood, I finally gave up and jumped into the back of the truck to get it. My two friends, Jordan and Zac, and I were unloading our camping gear in the middle of the mountain field. We had finally convinced our mothers that we were mature enough to handle a fishing trip without adult supervision. Jordan and Zac were struggling to put up the tent. Of course, we didn't need to look at the directions. Directions were for women. I was unpacking the food and firewood and arranging our fishing gear.

"Dude, I am so pumped. I can't wait to get out on the river tomorrow and show you guys who's the best," I shouted across the field. Of course, each of us argued that we would catch the biggest trout, so we made a little wager. I was definitely the best fisherman of the group. I could tie lures around Jordan and Zac, and they knew it.

After several hours, a few minor mishaps with the tent, and one closely avoided punch in the face, we had camp set up and were ready to "catch" a few hours of sleep. Five a.m. comes early, and even though I love to fish, I would have liked a few more hours of sleep. But I, like every good fisherman, know that you have to get up early if you want to catch "the big one."

Being the master chef that I am, I cooked breakfast over the fire. I couldn't help but get that excited feeling in my stomach - you know the one reserved for that giant fish, or that trophy buck, or maybe even that special girl, although I was yet to find that last one. After breakfast, we put on our waders, grabbed our poles, and began our hike to Five Mile Island. Five Mile Island is my favorite fishing hole. It's about an hour long hike through the woods to reach it, but the

twenty inch trout I caught there last summer convinced Jordan, Zac, and myself that the hike was worth our time and effort.

Finally, we reached the river and crossed over to Five Mile Island. We walked around the little island for a while before settling on a rock ledge about fifteen feet out into the river. We spread out and cast our lines. Each of us kept quiet, focusing on the morning, the river and the fish. We stayed on the ledge for about two hours, but we weren't having much luck. I'd caught a couple of red eyes, and Jordan and Zac each had nabbed a small trout. We decided to move around to the other side of the island where the current was a little stronger. We figured if we could cast down below the rapids that we might be able to catch some native brook trout, which prefer the cold water rushing down off the mountains.

We slowly made our way to our new spot. We were trying to move quietly and slowly so that if there were fish down there we wouldn't scare them away. I was leading the way, and there appeared to be a rock ledge that ran about ten feet out from where we were walking. I slowly made my way out when I suddenly felt myself slipping. I dropped my pole and tried to regain balance, but I felt myself slip under the icy water.

Instantly, I was filled with panic. I knew that I had to get my waders off, and if I didn't the water that rushed into them when I fell would weigh me down and hold me under. I tried to keep calm and find something I could cling to in order to pull myself above water, but my lungs started burning. I felt myself losing strength. My head was hurting, and I didn't want to fight the water anymore.

Just when I had unbuckled my straps and had given up hope, I felt something grab me. My mind was fuzzy, but it felt like someone was grabbing for my shoulders. Suddenly, I was

above the water, and I could faintly see the chest waders I had been wearing floating down the river. I felt myself being pulled toward the shore.

I gasped for air as I crawled onto dry land. I looked around, and there stood Jordan and Zac, soaking wet. I could see fishing gear and waders thrown all over the shore. They told me that as soon as they saw me go under, they headed after me, but the current was traveling pretty fast. In the final seconds, when I was ready to give into the blackness, they had pulled me out of the water and dragged me onto the shore.

We made our way back to camp. Our long, hoped for fishing trip suddenly didn't seem as fun. We were cold, wet and tired, and when someone just barely evades death, it kind of ruins the fun. We headed home.

I may have held the title of best fisherman, but you have to give them credit for saving me. Maybe they are better fishermen than I give them credit for, because they fished me out of the water, risking their own lives to do so. Maybe I take back what I said about tying lures around them.