

Fishing

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He loves to fish. Not just the catch, but the chase. Not just reeling it in, but the fight – feeling it struggle. The techniques and the tactics taught to him by his father ensure that generational strategy is applied. As the world progresses and modernises, technology advances and equipment improves but this strategy remains unchanged. The rules of the game stay the same and he knows how to play the sport.

Placement is important. He knows the right spot to guarantee their vulnerability. Vulnerability, as his father taught him, ensures success. Vulnerability, as his father taught him, forces willingness. Standing at the bridge at the river mouth means the fish must fight both psychological and physical struggle. Beneath the bridge at the river mouth, the water is in a rush and the current is strong. The water - the trout's home - turns against the fish and aids him in his endeavours. Because they're blanketed in the supposed safety of their home he knows that the fish will feel a false sense of security, making it easier for him. God he loves how easy it is. He knows that there is no beating the current and therefore no beating him. Try as they might, there is no hope in getting away. It seems to him that they are almost willing to be caught and as long as it seems that way, morally, he's okay.

He waits with a hook disguised by colourful lures. A lure, unlike live bait, can be reused. Why feed the fish when the fish are supposed to feed us?" his father would ask him. He has carefully selected the ones in his tackle box. Shiny and reflective, there's no missing them in the blank canvas of the ocean. These lures are designed to trigger their fishy instincts. Their instincts to chase, to catch, to eat and feed. It's not something they can help but an irresistible urge ingrained into their brains from birth. He relies on this instinct, plays on the fact that they can't help but fall for his trap. This trap will force separation and will force them away from the school. Everyone knows one is more vulnerable when they are alone. Some of the more talented men, the ones who fish for their job, do actually play on this idea of a 'school'. They use nets and baskets, scooping up the whole group. But him? He needs them away from their crowd. His line can only hook one at a time and that's how he likes it. He wants one, just one, to be fully engrossed in his lure and his alone. I must say I understand the satisfaction of having one thing truly devoted to you, but I do wonder if it's hurtful knowing he needs a mask for the fixation.

Now the fun begins. Now he gets to play on the fish's sanity. There is a certain way to play on its resilience - on its stamina. He knows the importance of tiring the fish out so he uses

psychological tricks to fool the fish into thinking it stands a chance. It's easier for him, you see, when the fish is tired. So when he feels that strong tug, the tug that lets him know it's fallen for his trap, he reels it in but not all the way. He goes half way then lets the fish run. Then he reels some more... and then lets it run. Over and over again he repeats this cycle. Each time the fish thinks, "Maybe I'm the lucky one. Maybe he's letting me go!" But no. It is all part of the ploy. A trick thought up many generations ago. He feels accomplished. The fish feels defeated. He had full control.

A fish out of water is a duckling on the road or a deer in the lion's cage. He stares with a look of triumph at eyes full of desperation. It gasps for breath like an astronaut who lost its helmet, suffocating in the air that he breathes. The persistent slapping of tail as the fish attempts to make its way back into the water doesn't worry him. He knows it's trapped securely within the walls of his bucket. There was never any escape. From the moment he set up camp on the bridge, chose his lure and got a bite he knew the fish was his. This was his sport.

What makes fishing so desirable to him? Perhaps it's the praise he knows he'll get in his comments when he posts a picture with his newest conquest. The jealousy his mates will feel when they see that he has the biggest catch. It could be that this is what he's good at. The method never fails. He knows he can rely on coming back with something. He can rely on that endorphin kick, that feeling of success. Or maybe, he craves that feeling of devotion. Knowing that for one reason or another, the fish sought him out. Despite it all, he can say that it chased him first. She, deceived or not, came to him. There are a multitude of things that he may like about it but I wonder if it's less about the fact that he enjoys it and more about the fact that it is what's expected of him. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather have passed on this tradition to their sons for years. These men, in a way, are his society and there is an overwhelming pressure to continue to cast the line and live in this custom. He has been shaped, sculpted and moulded by culture and genetics to act this way. This is why when his 'fish' gives him his own son, he will teach him the thrill of the chase.