

Gone Fishing

By

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I awoke at 6am feeling as if I was being groped by a dead octopus. But it was him. He'd just got into bed and cuddled up to me and he was as cold as a snowman. The touch of his icy feet sent a sharp shiver up my spine and made me shudder.

"You're very cold," I said, through gritted teeth.

"You'd be cold too, if you had spent all night asleep on the landing," John replied.

"It was your own fault, what do you expect after you drank so much that you passed out on the top of the stairs?"

"You could've tried enticing me to bed, Julie, it was a dangerous place to leave me" "But I did try to move you, both mentally and physically." It was obvious that he'd been drink like a fish all night. He burbled something about winning a big competition but I didn't care. You would've thought they'd won the gold medals at the Olympics, but they hadn't, it was only a fishing trophy.

When we staggered up to bed and fell asleep on the top of the stairs, I was livid, how could anybody be so selfish? At first, I did try to move him, but then I realised that this could be my big chance. Yes, there had been times in the past when I felt like killing him but they were just harmless thoughts and would never have come to anything. Now here I was being presented with a golden opportunity, all I had to do was let fate take a hand. If I went to bed and prayed hard enough he could roll over in his sleep and fall down the stairs, I would cop for the insurance money, marry a non-angler, and live happily ever after.

"You're not mad with me are you darling," he mumbled, while putting his head under the duvet to try and capture some extra heat.

"Yes, I am mad at you actually, another week-end has been ruined because of you and your fishing, I've had just about as much as I can stand." No answer, he started snoring, as if in defiance.

It was enough to make my blood boil. Yes, there were times when I felt like I hated him but somewhere deep down, I knew that my love hadn't died completely. When we married, he was tall and slim with long fair hair and gorgeous blue eyes. I used to call him my Viking, but then he started putting on weight, he took up fishing and ended up looking like Nanook of the North. Some of his nicer traits the ones that led me to marry him in the first place were still there, but they were harder to find.

It's his obsession with fishing, that's our main problem. He is away dangling his rod most week-ends so our Saturday nights out are often ruined as well. I've lost count of how many parties I missed out on because he wouldn't go. I'm sick of hearing the same excuse.

"I can't go to a party tonight love, I've got to be down the river early for a fishing competition."

So I would miss out on another party and be left on my own for most of the following day. No wonder I didn't care if he fell down the stairs.

Another gripe is the number of holidays that I've missed out on. When most people are booking their summer breaks in the middle of winter, we can't. He would always give the same little speech.

"I'd love to book a holiday dear, but I need to know when all of the fishing matches are first, just to make sure that I don't miss any."

Weeks would pass, his diary would get fuller, and the thoughts of taking a holiday that summer would slip away. Oh how I dreamt of lying on a beach in the hot sun. Never mind falling down the stairs, sometimes I wished I had a gun.

I think we're only still together because of the compensation. He knows that his fascination with fishing is making my life hell, so he tries to make up for it in other ways. He will often make dinner or do the dishes and sometimes even clean the whole house in an effort to win back some favour.

On the whole our communications are starting to fail, the periods of silence between us have been growing longer, and neither of us seem to have the will to put in that extra bit of effort. For the last few weeks our routine has been to speak only when we really need to.

Now here he was snuggled up to me, using me again to try and get warm. My emotions were all over the place, but part of me was glad that he hadn't taken the plunge in the night.

He was generous and would buy me expensive presents for Christmas and my birthday. We also had more meals out than most; sometimes we would go to a restaurant twice a week, if it didn't interfere with his fishing. He pays me lots of compliments and he's good company and fun to be with, that is, when he's not absorbed in his sport. Yes, it's the damn fishing, that's the problem.

I listened to his snoring and looked at his face, he was contented and at peace with the world. Unlike me, my stomach was churning over and over because I was wasn't sure of my feelings anymore. I wondered what would have happened if he had fallen down the stairs. I'm sure that I would find somebody else, somebody who would love me, take me out and pay me lots of attention.

What shall I do? I can't carry on like this. Something must change. Perhaps I should divorce him, or at least threaten to leave him, that might be just the shock he needs to bring him to his senses.

Then, it was as if he had heard what I was thinking. He turned his head towards me and gave me a lovely smile and a big kiss.

"Good morning sweet-heart, I've got something to tell you. You know the fishing match that we won yesterday."

"Yes," I said in a sharp voice, "do you really think I could've forgotten it already?"

"Well we didn't just win a cup we also won a holiday in the Seychelles and we are taking our partners with us."

I was stunned, I didn't know what to say, I was so happy that I embraced him and of course one thing lead to another. After five minutes of mad passion I was lying on my back staring at the ceiling and wondering how I could have entertained letting him fall down the stairs. He's not so bad really and I think I still love him.

Feeling that we were having a bit of a fresh start, I asked him what we were going to do for the rest of the day, and suggested we went shopping and perhaps buy a new bikini for the holiday."

His reply floored me; "you can hit the shops if you like my angel, but I promised the lads I would meet them down the canal, I'm going fishing."