

I'm Reeling in the Big One
Narrative Essay by Ethan Young

"Bigger isn't always better." That's a lesson I learned the hard way. Five o'clock arrives too early for everybody, especially for me on vacation. As I try dreaming that my alarm will just magically turn off and I can go back to sleep, I feel something fly through the air (must be my spider senses). I duck under my blanket and quickly feel two bodies land on top of me.

As I try to catch my breath, they are yelling at me, "Get ready so we can leave early."

As you can tell I'm not as excited for the day's events as they are. So by the time I roll out of bed and get dressed, I can't find anybody, not even the adult, so I go to check in the car and, sure enough, they are all waiting for me. So I pile in to go deep sea fishing.

Now my other two cousins with us, Craig and Nick, love fishing more than breathing, I'm pretty sure. I, on the other hand, like catching.

While in the car on the way to the dock, we are all talking about how "I am going to catch the biggest fish." My cousin Nick likes to get his way, all the time, so he won't drop the subject: "I'm the best fishermen."

"No, Nick, you most certainly aren't."

"Yes, I am. I caught a big fish out of a river once."

"No, Nick, you didn't. And even if you did, this is the ocean, not a river."

"I'm still going to catch the biggest one!"

"Okay, Nick, okay."

As we are pulling up to the dock, I am pretty oblivious to what exactly we would be catching, so I ask and I get a "wait and see" answer. Once there, my spirits lighten and I am in a very good mood. So once the guide gives us his little safety speech, we cast away. Heading out

to sea, I go to the bow (front) of the boat and stand there to soak up what is happening around me: the waves hitting the boat, the feel of the cool ocean misting my face, and the smell of the deep blue something that can't be described. It must be experienced!

After riding for what seems like thirty minutes, we stop and the guide says, "Look towards the horizon." The sun is just coming over the line of the ocean. This is a moment to cherish.

Continuing on, we all talk with the guide and get to know him until the boat comes to a sudden halt. That's when this laid-back trip does a complete 180. I hadn't realized that we had lines in the water the whole trip out.

The guide yells, "Fish right top." It sounds like Greek to me, but to my cousin Nick, who is a year younger than I, it makes sense. He grabs the pole and the other guide helps him get into "The Chair." This chair pivots 360 degrees and when in it, one is strapped down with a seat belt type harness.

The guide says, "Reel like you've never reeled before." So my cousin, who is about my size, starts reeling like a mad man...for thirty seconds.

Then he stops and I ask, "Why did ya stop?"

He's speechless and out of breath.

Then the line starts to whine.

The guide says, "Let it go for awhile. Then start reeling on my command." So he gives the signal and Nick starts to reel once again.

Fifty-seven minutes later, the guide reaches his hands down into the water, and what he pulls over the side of the boat I am not expecting. It is a Mahi Mahi, a member of the dolphin family. This fish is six feet long and weighs eighty-eight pounds. I am shocked!

So with one in the boat, I know Craig or I are up next. Not more than fifteen minutes later one of the lines starts whistling again. This time I am ready, but Craig does the most acrobatic move I've ever seen, and he gets to the rod before I do. Once strapped into the chair, he begins to sweat bullets; and he fights for the next hour, trying to get this beast in, giving ground to gain ground.

With our dads watching and laughing, it is then that I realize, "No matter how strong, brave, or courageous you are, you are no match for an animal that is in his own element." Once Craig finally pulls in his catch, it is an impressive seventy-eight inches long and weighs ninety-five pounds. By this time I am pretty nervous that I will have to reel in the next monster. We cruise around for fifteen minutes, and then we move to a different spot.

Right away when we get there, the line goes "Whap!" It scares me, but all my nerves go away. I jump for that rod, sit in the chair, and started "The Fight." I am staring down two hundred and fifty feet of line with a monstrous beast at the end. I reel to my heart's content. Then thirty minutes into the battle, the line goes limp. So I start to reel like pro, but what was about to happen I'm not ready for. One hundred feet away from the boat, my fish rockets out of the water and six feet into the air. It is the most glorious sight I had ever seen! The bright colors radiate off the fish and it glistens in the sunlight. Time seems to stop for a moment. Once it goes back into the water, that beautiful creature turns into the same fighting machine that I had been battling for the previous thirty minutes.

Within another twenty minutes, I have that fish in and I can't feel my arms. It even hurtsto grip my hat to readjust it. My fish is only seventy pounds and just a little short of six foot, but it packed a punch for its size.

With our time over, we head back to shore, and we all relive our fights on the trip home. We get off the boat and watch the guides turn the three beautiful fish into what was soon to be dinner for the family. In the car back to the house, I think, “Bigger isn’t always better.”