

scene of the famous International Tuna Angling Tournament where, each year, teams from all over the world congregated to ply their skill against each other for highest honors in their chosen sport. My blood rippled with excitement. I glanced at the "fighting chair", swaying gently to the steady roll of the sea; and in my mind's eye I had already pictured myself as the hero in a ferocious battle waged against the giants of the deep.

A short time later the bow of our fishing craft broke through the powerful ebb tide of Soldier's Rip. Here, in the dirging wind, the water tossed and boiled as waves lashed against our 30-footer. And here too, in bygone days, fishing fleets caught unaware, suffered at the mercy of the unpredictable wind and weather as towering seas battered scores of ships to the icy depths below, or drove them helplessly onto the nearby rocky Tusket Islands.

We hugged the edge of the powerful tide-stream and drank a thermos of hot coffee. The air was razor-edged, but the dawn showed promise of a warm summer day. Already, to the west, sea fowl were swooping and circling over the rocky islands, searching for food.

Uncle Pat baited the hook with a whole mackerel and spilled out the 39-thread linen line over the stern of the boat. I anchored myself with the heavy rod in the fighting chair, braced my feet against the solid foot-rest, and began trolling the heaving sea.

"They like to feed early in the morning," Pat reflected, cutting the motor to a slow purr. He turned his head sharply in my direction.

"Look!" He pointed.

A fin cut the water less than 30 feet to starboard. It circled closer, turned away and then dashed toward the open sea.

I watched tensely.

"Nothin' but a white shark," Pat snorted, disgustedly.

Then as the rising sun climbed slowly out of the sea, a mighty tuna was spotted breaking the water not far from the baited hook.

I trembled with excitement and impatience; gripped the rod tightly, moistened my dry lips—and waited. The big fish curiously nudged the mackerel lure, then streaked off and circled again. This time it made a wild lunge, snapped its jaws, hard—and the fight was on.

I jerked forward in the chair, line petering out fast. Beads of sweat poured down my face. I felt scared that the game fish was trying to pull me into the sea. The rod bowed like a hoop as the fish lunged away and dived to the ocean floor; then, like a streak of greased lightning, it surged to the surface, twisting its body, viciously, from side to side, in a vain struggle for freedom.

Again and again it crashed the water, dived and shot upwards, trying desperately to shake free the baited hook.

My arm ached from reeling. My back and leg muscles seemed to pull apart. The line went slack for a moment and the fish paused to rest before making the next lunge. For nearly 45 minutes we fought it out, each straining hard for victory and in the end the fighter of the deep lost.

Later, as we weighed the fish, my uncle turned to me and said with a smile.

"My boy, it's only bait for the big ones. Let's get rid of it fast!"

I flexed my aching muscles, stood for a moment and gazed at the 175 pounds of fighting fury. My heart swelled with pride. Perhaps to Uncle Pat and the other "old salts" of the briny, it was only an over-stuffed minnow—but to me it was the thrill of a lifetime, my first and only Bluefin tuna. ●●●

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*Professionals Wanted.*—During a recent interview at one of the federal penitentiaries, a member of the RCMP was advised by an inmate, that in his profession (bank robbery) he had learned to operate alone, as "reliable help" was hard to find. His recent incarceration had been, so he stated, due solely to the inexperience of such an associate.