

ENCOUNTER ON THE DOCK

The day had begun like so many others. I was out of bed at five a.m. and out on the Bay to fish with my uncle Angus. Angus had seemed a little jumpy that morning but I didn't let on. In fact, Angus had yelled more than once when the boat banged against the dock. "Sammy - grab the blasted rope, the rope, for cryin' out loud!" The tide was high. I knew that was the reason Angus was having trouble with the boat. I just shrugged and did what he told me.

Angus had brought another guy along that day. Davis was his name. Angus smirked whenever Davis asked him a question. He never seemed to give him a straight answer. "You never stop asking questions, do ya' Davis," Angus had said with an irritated tone to his voice.

I decided to keep quiet. I thought Angus would come around. I'd never seen him act this way before though.



Angus leaves the harbour with Sammy.

It was almost noon when we made it back to the dock with a heap of fish. "Good catch today, Sammy," Angus had said to me. Davis was still asking questions when Angus turned and walked up the stairs to the dock. "Sure nice spendin' time with ya', Sammy," Davis had said to me with a twinkle in his eye. "Yeah, it was a good morning out on the bay," I had responded looking out past the acres of mud to the low tide beyond it.



Later that day I made my way back down to the dock to check the boats. The sun was starting to set and I knew it would be a blazing sunset. The seagulls seemed to be telling me the weather would be a little unsettled tomorrow. I could always tell by the seagulls what the weather was going to be like. Angus had taught me that. He always seemed to be right. I followed the seagulls up onto the east part of the dock. I knew I had to put away some stuff Angus had left out anyway.

Then I saw it! Angus's boat was covered with fish guts and garbage from the processing plant. I couldn't believe the stench. No wonder the seagulls were hanging around! I knew that when Angus found this mess he would be totally miserable. "Who could have done this to the boat," I wondered? What if he thinks I did it? I reached down and tugged on the line to make sure the boat was secure. It wasn't. Angus would be back to check the boat, like he always did around this time.

"Hey, Sammy - what're you doin' here?" It was his booming voice. I recognized it instantly. "You little imp. What've you done to my boat? I'd like to teach you a lesson."

"I didn't do anything," my voice cracked as I muttered the only thing that came to my mind. "I didn't do anything."

"Get out of here, just scram, you twirp." Furious, I turned and dashed full tilt up the dock. "How dare he accuse me of that," I thought, as my heart pounded in my chest. "Loser," I yelled back. "Loser, sicko." I didn't know why I said it. It just blurted from my mouth as I ran toward home. All at once I noticed the darkness. The sun had sunk below the horizon while I wasn't looking.

"Davis, is that you?", I asked as his large figure appeared out of nowhere. "Yeah," he laughed. "Surprised to see you here. We're havin' a little fun with Angus. You know about it?"

Suddenly I felt a weird feeling in my head. Like a tidal wave it swept over me that the whole thing had been a joke. Davis was just getting back at Angus for some crazy thing that happened on the weekend. And I had freaked, lost it! "Hey, I'd better go back an' apologize to Angus", I muttered. "He was really mad at me, and he didn't seem to be in a very good mood this morning either. You two had me thinkin' you weren't getting along too well."

"Oh," laughed Davis, "we go way back to the good old days in Braden's Harbour. We're friends from way back. We were always pullin' little stunts on each other. He just acts a little strange sometimes is all."

As I sheepishly walked back down the dock, I thought of Angus giving me advice. "Don't ever jump to conclusions kid," he'd said.

"Sorry Uncle Angus. I didn't take your advice about jumpin' to conclusions. I didn't mean to call you those names." "No harm done," was the husky reply. "I shouldn't have figured it was you that put that junk on my boat. Sorry 'bout that! You just keep on bein' a terrific niece, Sammy. You're the best!" "Thanks Angus," I answered. "You're a terrific uncle. See ya tomorrow."

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