The Free Press Short Story

TIDE-RUNNERS

By-GEORGE-M.-JOHNSON

satisfied over rigging his new steel stiff, the line that marks the biting of a big you. If you can hold the boat, I can inch rope, but some beach wanderer brother had had, and when he finally had stolen the rope and also the grapnel attached to it. To prevent a like loss in the future Fred fastened his new three-prong anchor to the bow of the boat by means of thirty-five feet of wire cable and doubly secured his anchor knets with an application of solder. Nothing short of a hack saw could have separated boat and anchor. It was really a foolish thing to do, but Fred did

not realize that it was, and no one took the trouble to tell him. The other residents of the shore colony that the Atkins family had joined for the summer doubt less assumed that Fred knew what he Some fine catches of blackfish had been brought in from the reef that extended from a small cluster of rocks known as Duck Islands about a mile and a half from shore. Fred was a fisherman by instinct, though he had much to learn about salt-water fishing. He asked

the advice of a neighbor, who told him what sort of tackle and bait to take and pointed out the best place to enchor "You row out about one third the distance between the outer island and the red buoy that marks the shallowest part of the reef." his neighbor advised him. "Rising tide is generally better than falling tide or slack water. You'll need pretty heavy sinkers because the tide comes through there like a mill race. occasionally I've hooked even bigger most of the strain off the wire.'

"Those are regular corkers! I've caught plenty of fish, but only small ones perch, crapples, little pickerel and now and then a bass. The biggest bass I ever landed weighed two pounds and a half. Are tide-runners hard fighters?"

"They fight after a fashion, but they don't deserve to rank as true game fish. The bass you caught probably put up a better fight than any four-pound blackfish would. Still they pull pretty hard, especially with the tide to help, and it's fun to haul 'em out."

Fred and his younger brother Walter spent a morning in pursuit of fiddler crabs: they obtained besides a few clams and some winkles and with that assortment of bait were ready to start. After dinner they shoved the skiff into the water and were on their way. The tide was low at half past eleven, which would give them several hours of rising water for their fishing. For best results they -should have been on the spot when the tide turned, but finding bait had taken longer than they expected.

"Near as you can tell without measuring it with a yardstick." Walter respond- Fred realized that their situation was distance away. He struck out for it, acted well in the emergency; he had ed. "Shall I put the anchor over?"

moments Fred said, "Now jerk her up he hope even to gain the nearest island and down to see if we're on mud or rock. so long as the tide was bearing the way You can always tell by the feel what sort it was. Walter was good for less than of bottom you're over. You have to be two hundred feet. on the rocks to get the tide-runners." "It's rock all right," Walter assured in hopes of seeing a boat that he might

him. "I can even hear the anchor clinck signal. Several boats were visible, but on the bottom." Bet you I land the first blackfish."

"Try and do it!" retored Walter, hurriedly sorting out a hand line, for the the tide. Walter," he directed. "I want heavy sinkers necessary to hold the batt to feel the anchor." on the bottom made rods impractical. The two rigs were over at the same he set to work at the oars and in spite

instant, and then each boy waited breathlessly, with his line across his skiff ahead. Fred pulled on the wire forefinger ready for the first nibble. Fred as soon as it was slack and found that jerked up victously.

"Bite?" Walter demanded. worthless cunners. Mr. Chapman said Each time he tried it the result was the they bothered a lot stealing bait. He same. It made no difference from what said you'd know it when a tide-runner direction the strain came; Fred had his took hold."

Walter heaved wildly on his line. "Bet your life you'll know it!" he welled in that he could twitch on the wire uptide excitement. "I know it, let me tell you! Twe got hold of one now. It felt as if 'I can't hold her any longer, Fred." the bottom had reached up and grabbed Walter said at last. my balt!"

The taut line cut this way and that caught under a big boulder or in a way through the water while young ledge. I wish I'd been satisfied with Walter held on for all he was worth. "Want me to help you, Walt?" asked Fred.

"No. sir!" His brother grunted deflantly. "I'll land this old fish by myself, or I won't land him at all. You take care of your own line!" And a few minutes later he heaved his fish over the edge of the boat.

"He's a dandy. Walt!" oried Fred." "Weighs four pounds at least." "I told you you wouldn't get the first was down so far that the water come one!" replied Walter and proceeded to up to within three or four inches of the bait again with supreme satisfaction. gunwale. Time was getting short; as

F Fred Atkins had been more ex- | Fred lost several baits to the cunners cause I can pull myself down the cable. he might not have felt so self- he felt the powerful downward surg of seconds, and everything will depend on conquered he was gratified to find that

> one that Walter had captured. "Great stuff, eh. Walt!" he said gloat-

> the blackfish was half again as big as the

"You've said it!" his brother agreed. 'My turn now."

Although the blackfish did not bite specially fast after that, the boys managed nevertheless to catch a fair number. hough none of them was so big as either of the first two. Suddenly Fred noticed that the bow of the skiff was lower than it had been; the anchor wire went down very steep considering the strength of the tidal rip in which they were fishing. He felt vaguely uneasy. "We've got to get out of here," he said to his brother. "What's the idea?" Walter demanded. Fish are still biting."

anchor line's too short, and as the tide lift on the anchor and it'll be clear." rises the anchor holds our nose down. The thing must be stuck on the bottom.' "That's right. I didn't notice how low the bow was before."

"Neither did L. It's going to be some | Walt!" job to get that anchor loose. I'm afraid. But if I row the boat ahead against the tide, it ought to come free. One of the flukes is probably hooked under a rock." there!" Fred got out his oars. The boat moved ahead a short distance, but though he You may not get so many fish as you pulled with all his strength, the grapnel would get inside the rocks, but they'll still held. "No use!" he grunted. Then, be bigger-what the old salt-water fisher- after a moment's thought he said, "Walt, men call tide-runners. 'I've often hooked see if you can jerk the anchor free. I'll them up to three or four pounds, and hold the boat in the tide; that will take

> Walter vanked desperately while Fred worked hard to hold the skiff in the by the manoeuvre.

> ing," Walter suggested hopefully. at five-forty, and now it's only half past three. There must be at least two more

if we don't get the anchor loose?" Walter and he doesn't realize it." asked in a worried tone. "The skiff will go under." Fred replied

"But father said this boat couldn't

"She won't sink-not to the bottom: the air compartments will keep her up. and he should have to give up. But after her nose dips under and she fills with water the pull of the tide will hold her down-far enough to finish us.

Walter's chin quivered a bit, but the said -confidently.

the wire cable, which passed through a "This is about one third, isn't it, the hard steel strands of the cable that did nothing but gasp convulsively. Walt?" inquired Fred, resting on his fifteen minutes of chipping made little Presently he became aware that Walter impression on it.

was a fair swimmer, he could not make The anchor fell, and in a few the mile and a half to shore; nor could

Fred looked anxiously in all directions they were all too far off. It seemed that "Good enough! Now let's get busy. he must either save himself and his brother by his own efforts or not at all. "See if you can row the boat against

Walter was a strong boy for his age: of the powerful current slowly forced the it yielded two or three inches and then hung fast; when he released his hold "Sort of. Probably one of those he could feel the grapnel settle back. brother row the skiff to the right and to the left and a little farther ahead so

> -but all to no effect. "Let her go, then. The anchor is

"How you going to get that anchor

loose?" Walter inquired. The boy still had unbounded confidence that in some way or other his brother's wit would get them free.

"I don't quite know." Fred admitted. and his brow wrinkled in thought. "There must be some way out, if I can only think

of 1t." As the skiff was now lying the bow boat full of water and so far under as to be useless as a life raft. Suddenly Fred began to take off his

"What's up?" Walter asked. "There's just one chance for us." his brother explained hastily, "and I'm going to take it."

In a few words he carefully described to his brother just how he thought the anchor was fastened. "Now." he said. "if you can only hold the boat as you did a little while ago. I'm sure I can get it loose; I'm going down to try anyway. It won't be hard to reach bottom, beperienced in salt-water boating before, fifteen or twenty minutes later, but I'll be able to stand it only a few with an anchor rope of woven wire. fish. In a few moments he had even jerk the anchor free; but I probably Originally Fred had used a piece of half- more of a fight on his hands than his sha'n't be able to stir it if the tide is jamming the grapnel against the rock it's hooked to. Get the idea?"

"I've got it all right. Don't worry about me. I'll hold the boat."

"You'll have to keep your wits about you to be sure you stay in the right position," Fred said as he finished undressing. "There's one thing more. I'll swim for the surface with a good kick-off from the bottom when I've done what I can, but I sha'n't be able to get back to the skiff against the tide. So as soon as you feel the anchor clear pull up before it has a chance to catch again." "How deep is it here?" Walter asked.

"About thirty feet." But you won't have any wind left to tussle with the snarled anchor after you get down!" Walter protested. "Sounds to me like a pretty slim chance." "It may be a slim chance, but it's our

only chance. And anyway, if you're on "Look at the bow of the skiff. Our the job, I shan't have to tussle. One "That's settled. Let's go!" said Walter. Fred walked forward to the bow and

> easily overboard. "Shove her ahead The bow rose as the wire slackened. "A little more on the right," Fred directed. "That's just right: Now hold her

holding to the anchor cable, slipped

"I'll hold her." Walt promised through set teeth and worked the oars with

rapid, even strokes. Fred filled his lungs and then began pulling himself rapidly down the wire. He had always been good at under-water swimming, but he had never tried to go down thirty feet. The wire seemed to be endless, but finally his outstretched arm struck the uneven, rocky bottom of the right position, but they gained nothing reef. In desperate haste he felt for the anchor and found, as he had supposed, "Maybe the tide's nearly through ris- that it was wedged beneath the hollowed edge of a large flat boulder. He pushed "Not by a long shot. High water comes back on the grapnel, expecting to release it without great effort, but it was firm under the rim of the rock, "Good night!" he thought. "The kid's not holding the "Say, Fred, what will happen to us skiff right: She's swung to one side.

> Fred reached his left arm up and tried to pull the boat forward, but he had no purchase, and his body merely lifted clear of the bottom. The boy's lungs were heal. throbbing painfully, and a roaring sounded in his ears. A few seconds more

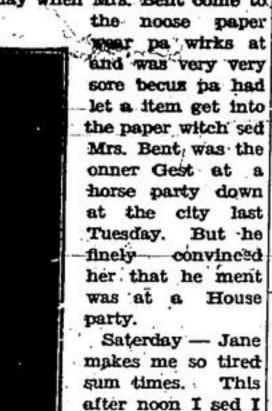
Suddenly he felt the taut cable slacken as Walter succeeded at last in putting the skiff back where it belonged, and in frantic desperation Fred went to work how short a distance they can stop. again at the grapnel. At last it yielded Young people, too, often need to have next moment he smiled. "I guess you'll to his fingers. A final thrust shoved it their brakes examined. How soon can be able to fix it some way, Fred," ne backward clear of the old boulder. Then you stop when you see that the present he flexed his legs and gave a push that line of conversation is leading to bad Fred's first thought was to unfasten sent him shooting for the surface.

If the journey down had seemed long, you realize that your temper is getting Finally they pulled out beyond the solld steel ring at the bow of the skiff. the return seemed endless. Finally, when the better of you? One of the most farthest rock of the group and lined the He got out his pocketknife and set to he was sure that he must yield to the important parts in life is to have your work to cut the solder away, but the pressure in his lungs, his head flashed brakes in good working order. How soft metal, was so closely mingled with up into the sunlight. For a moment he lately have you tested yours?

was calling to him, and, turning his legs were as heavy as lead. But he didn't Meanwhile the water was rising fast. head, he perceived the skiff only a short care. The big thing was that he had extremely dangerous, though he did not swimming slowly and laboriously, for his lived up to the confidence that his "Go ahead, but be careful you don't tell his brother so. Although he himself whole body was weary; his arms and younger brother had in him.

SLAT'S DIARY BY ROSS FARQUHAR

for Good today when Mrs. Bent come to. the noose paper



let a item get into the paper witch sed Mrs. Bent, was the onner Gest at a horse party down at the city last Tuesday. But he finely convinced her that he ment was at a House Saterday - Jane makes me so tired

thot I had : more

Branes than Money and she begun to ook sorry and then when we were comeing to her gate why she offered to Lone me a dime. It made me so sore I woodent go in to the house with her. I woodent of went in if she had envited

Sunday-Ant Emmy herd frum her neace witch is travelling out West and she told Ant Emmy in the letter that the most instrusting thing she seen out West, was the Indian Squalls with the Cabooses on there back.

Munday-They was a Tramp cum to are door today a looking for sum thing to eat and ma sed she was Just looking for a man to do a little wirk in the cole seller and the tramp sed well if you give me a Bite to eat 1st I will help you look for him.

Teusday-Ant Emmy says they are all ways Discovvering sum new disease to wirry fokes about. She sed she was reading in the noose paper this morning about the Tobacko consumption in the United States.

Wensday-Are new skool teecher was here at are house today and she told me we was Going to have Scotts Ivenho when skool starts up. well if it ain't no better then his Emulshun I dont look for mutch

fun out of it. Thirsday-Agnes Pluff just finished a short Story and she told pa she had ben wirking on it for three months. well all I go to say is I think she was very very foolish to spend all that Time writeing a story when she cud of boughten a Magazine full of storys for a Dime.

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10 Best Agricultural or Heavy Draft Team, 1st, by Storey Glove 11 Best and Fastest Road Horse, speed 60 per cent.; conformation and soundness, 40 per cent.; to be driven round the track once hitched to a four-wheeled vehicle, without boots or hobbles, to give three exhibitions of speed. 1st, by Dr. R. K. Anderson, cash, \$10.00; 2nd, by Amos Mason, cash, \$6.00; 3rd, by Amos Mason, cash, \$4.00 20.00 12 Running Relay Race, half mile, 3 horses to enter, 1st, cash, \$12.00; 2nd, cash. \$8.00; 3rd, cash, \$5.00 13 Best Spring Colt, sired by Brilliant, by William Brennan, to be deducted from service fee, 1934. 1st, \$5.00; 2nd, \$3.00; 14 Best Roadster, mare or gelding, by Bank of Nova Scotia, Acton, 1st, cash, \$6.00; 3rd, cash, \$4.00; This special to take the place of Class 6. Section 1 10 00 15 Best Carriage, Mare or Gelding, by Bank of Montreal, Acton, 1st, cash, \$6.00; 3rd, \$4.00. This special to take the place

of Class 6, Section 2 10 00 16 Steeplechase on horseback, to be judged on points, 1st, cash, \$7.00; 2nd, cash, \$5.00; 3rd, cash \$3.00 A similar event will be held in Arena First Evening of Fair 17 Best Lady Rider, by Acton Creamery, 1st, cash, \$3.00; 2nd,

CATTLE SPECIALS 18 Best Herd of Shorthorn Cattle, 1 bull and four females, 1st, by Gilson Manufacturing Co., Guelph, plow shares to the value of \$6.00. This special to apply to Class 7, Section 8. first-prize 19 Best Baby Beef, steer or helfer, any breed, 1st, cash, \$3.00; 2nd, cash, \$2.00; by Union Stock Yards, Toronto. This prize to take the place of Class 7, Section 10 .. 20 Best Herd of Jersey Cattle, 1 bull and 4 females, 1st, by

Ontario Bakeries, Guelph, bread tickets to the value of \$5.40; 2nd, by Acton U. F. O., cash, \$2.00 . 21 Best Group of Three Dairy Cows, consisting of one mature cow, one two-year-old-heifer, and one yearling, to be sired by a pure bred bull, by The T. Eaton Company, Toronto, one 8-day mantel clock, chrome finish, marble and onyx

22 Calf Club. See special announcement elsewhere in this prize list. Dominion and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, cash, \$57.00; Halton & Peel Jersey Cattle Breeders Association, cash, \$20.00; Acton Fall Fair Board, cash, \$15.00; W. K. Graham. Manager Bank of Nova Scotia, Acton, cash, \$5.00

SHEEP, HOG AND POULTRY SPECIALS 23 Best Flock of Sheep, consisting of 1 ram, 2 ewes and 2 ewe lambs, any breed, exhibited by any boy or girl under 14 years, by Councillor L. L. Mullin, 1st, cash, \$3.00; 2nd. cash. \$2.00 24 Best Pair of Marketable Wether Lambs, 1st, by Councillor G. W. Murray, cash, \$2.00; 2nd, by Chas. Wilson, \$1.00 25 Best Boar and Sow. most suitable to produce bacon type, 1st, by Chas. Barber, Guelph, bacon, value \$3.00; 2nd, by Doughety & McFarlane, seed merchants, Guelph, 26 Best Pair of Bacon Hogs, weight from 190 to 230 pounds, by Messrs. Cook Bros., Toronto Stock Yards, 1st, cash, \$3.00; 2nd, by R. J. Kerr, cash, \$2.00 27 Best Pen of 12 bred-to-lay Pullets, S. C. White Leghorns or B. P. Rocks by C. W. McKeown, 1st, cash; \$2.00; 2nd,

GRAIN, ROOT AND VEGETABLE SPECIALS Best Collection of Farm Produce, including grain, roots, vegetables, fruit, flowers, domestic science, ladies' fancy work, and children's work, not more than forty samples, gardeners not eligible, 1st, by Pioneer Equipment Company, Guelph, one Hudson Autocrat Sprayer, value \$5.00; 2nd, by M. Pallant Acton, one pair of Lighthouse Overalls and Smock, value \$3.50

29 Best Collection of 3 mangolds, 3 turnips, 2 pumpkins and 2 cabbages, by Woodhall & Musselle, goods from greenhouse, value, 1st, \$3.00; 2nd, \$2.00 30 Best Bag of Dooley Potatoes, donor to receive same, by Alex. McIsaac, cash 31 Best Bag of Dooley Potatoes donor to receive same by King & McEachern, cash 32 Best Bag of Dooley Potatoes, donor to receive same, by Jas. 33 Best Bag of Dooley Potatoes, donor to receive same, by John H. Bennett, cash 34 Best Bag of Potatoes, donor to receive same, by T. Morton

35 Best Bag of Potatoes, donor to receive same, by Wm. Cooper 36 Best Bushel of Dooley Potatoes, donor to receive same, by A. T. Brown, cash 36½ Best Basket of Yellow Globe Danvers Onions, donor to receive same, by A. T. Brown, cash . 37 Best 100 lbs. of Brewing Barley, suitable for brewing and not for seed, must be grown in 1933. Winners must not compete

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delivery later, by Rev. C. L. Poole, cash 43 Best Bushel of McIntosh Reds, donor to receive same, by Mrs. H. P. Moore, apples to be delivered to "Moorecroft" Best Bushel of Northern Spy Apples, donor to receive same,

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