

Just ghostbusting with 'ol Grady and the gang



LOON TUNES
and
OUTDOOR NOTES
by Len Landry

"Phantoms, Len," John said with a serious face. "Phantoms, and fairies, and figments of fertile imagination. There are no fish in this lake... simply phantoms..." he continued as he plunked down his tackle box and began preparing his line for battle.

"Oh, by the way, this is Grady Len. She loves fishing as much as you do, and she's a fine fisherdog too..."

"Woof," said Grady, with a friendly, open-mouthed smile so typical of tiny terriers. Although she was an older dog (13 human years to be exact), she was as excited and playful as a puppy... and she was to enact a very significant role on this day, possibly the most embarrassing occasion of my fishing career.

Now, big John Minns, who resembles Larry Csonka, the ol' running back with those powerhouse Miami Dolphin teams of the seventies, tied on a Ripplin' Redfin lure.

"So, how's the fishing today, Len?" John boomed.

"Well, it's been... well, uh... sort of..."

"Ruff!" interjected Grady, with another smile.

"Yeah, that's right Grady. It's been rough. No fish. No follows... but we'll get 'em. One of us will get a fish today for sure!"

"Hhehh... Hhehh... Hhehh..." panted Grady in a chuckling sort of way.

"Then you'll believe me," I continued. "I know that there's a big pike out there with my name on it. Just wait! I've been here since

5:30..."

"Ruff," interrupted Grady... and I smiled too this time.

"It's only six a.m. now. Give it a chance..." I implored.

"Ho, ho!" roared John.

"Hhehh... Hhehh... Hhehh," panted our companion.

Well, I could tell that my partners on this day sensed that I was only putting on a brave front for the fans. We were fishing that peculiar little piece of paradise called Fairy Lake... that's right; Fairy Lake, in Acton, probably only minutes from where you live; yep, Fairy Lake with Prospect Park, and its baseball diamonds, running track, picnic benches, playground for the kids, and a surrounding body of water that looks to be crawling with fishy critters, especially in the calm conditions of dim daybreak.

The only problem with Fairy Lake, for me, is that all too often the fish seem to be... well...

"Phantoms, Len. Phantoms and ghosts, and goblins and legends of great ghusto... but, really, there are no fish in this lake. I can't believe you'd even try..."

"Hhehh... Hhehh... Hhehh..." chipped in Grady.

"Listen John, ...uh, you too, Grady... my son Zac who's only three years old, caught a nice, chunky little pike last week right here, on a simple hook and worm, and I keep hearin' about eight to ten pounders."

"Where are they then, Len? Hey Grady, show him how we'd get that fish! Wroomm! How would we treat that big, bad pike, Grady?"

"Ruff! Ruff!" barked the little terrier, now running back and forth on the shoreline, unable to contain her excitement.

"Good girl, Grady! Hey look, Grady! There's a motorcycle... a biker! Say 'hi' to the biker! How do we talk to bikers, Grady?"

"Ruff! Ruff! Grrr..."

"A biker once hit Grady. She hates 'em all ever since..." ex-

plained John.

"Hey," I protested, "Some of my best friends are bikers, you know."

"Hhehh... Hhehh... Hhehh..."

As you can gather by now, I was certainly going to have to try very hard to convince this cast of characters about the merits of Fairy Lake.

And as the day progressed, the problems compounded. It was colder than usual, only a few degrees above freezing, and cold fronts always mean slow fishing, especially when accompanied by the high, blue sky so cherished by the weatherman. It was windy, with gusts from the north. Remember the adage: "wind from the north, venture not forth." The phase of the moon was all wrong, and that celestial body sat perched in quarter phase to give testament to the fact... and, above all, according to John, I hadn't consulted the solunar tables for peak periods of fish activity.

"Tsk tsk tsk..."

So I fished my Rapalas, and my spoons, and spinnerbaits, and I tossed out Zac's tried and true hook and worm trick.

I plied the deep water near the wading pool, and the shallows and lily pads to the north, all to no

avail.

John wandered down the shoreline with Grady, seeming more intent on games than angling.

I resigned myself to the scoreless morning... sighed... and began packing my equipment.

Suddenly, from an unseen distance away, John let out a loud roar... "Ho! Ho! Ho! I don't believe it!"

John has a fish, I thought, and he would be insufferable, but at least we caught something.

The only thing was... John hadn't caught the fish... a bluegill... that was securely in the jaws of... you know who...

"Hhehh... Hhehh... Hhehh," panted Grady proudly, a piscatorial winner on this day.

Now, I've been outfished many a time, and by girls too. Heck, Rita's done it to me a ton of times.

But to be outfished by... a girl dog? Now that was a little hard to take...

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