

On a very high hill in a little old town lived a young, handsome boy named Oscar. Oscar had no family and even fewer friends. He spent most of his days in a one room schoolhouse where the nuns frequently rewarded him for his compliant, albeit sullen manner. Although he most likely would have been that way had they scolded him instead.

Oscar would walk to school via the main road where he would venture into the candy store to buy a single Tootsie Roll to put in his pocket and save for the long walk home.

He would walk home from school via the cemetery where he would stop and chat with the dead. He especially liked to visit his late uncle Bernard. Bernard had a penchant for Tootsie Rolls. Oscar would set one down and walk away. Within seconds he would return to find only the wrapper.

When Bernard was alive, the two would spend the weekend days fishing in the cold, cavernous lake behind their house called Lucky Lagoon. Oscar loved to fish in Lucky Lagoon because he would always catch tons of huge, voluptuous muskies the size of small children. He loved that the fish were as big as he. And he loved to eat them.

On one particularly chilly Saturday Bernard had come down with the flu and couldn't make the trip out to the lustrous lagoon. Oscar was destined to fish alone.

Oscar knew he could power the small rowboat by himself, and that he could cast his line into the dark, calm water. He was a bit timid, however, about baiting his

own line. Yet he knew that to be a true fisherman he'd have to finagle it on his own.

Now this Saturday was so brisk that Oscar could see the breath of the ravens as they landed on the dock. He could also, after a time, no longer feel his toes.

At precisely 10:23, right after Oscar cast his line into the ripple, he felt an enormously strong pull. He thought it was too soon to catch so big a muskie, but at the same time he was elated. Maybe this meant he could go home sooner, having caught a whole day's catch in one quick swoop.

He tugged some, then let out the line some, then tugged some, then let out the line. He applied all the skills he had learned from his uncle Bernard. He was being meticulous and thoughtful. He was so proud; he couldn't wait to tell his uncle.

Then something unreal happened.

The pole slipped out of Oscar's hand, slapping onto the water's surface. Then it plunked down into the water, gulp, glup, glop.

The giant muskie at the end would never be seen, and Oscar would have to go home empty handed...he thought... until the pole resurfaced attached to a fish so big Oscar howled. He had never seen anything so huge. Not a man, woman, horse, car, bus, not even the moon was as big as this doggone muskie.

Oscar got a hold of himself, reached down into the water, and retrieved the pole. He began to tug once more at the line but lost his grip. The pole fell into the

