

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU FISH FOR

Written by

Stewart McConnell

Stewart.mcconnell1@gmail.com

EXT. CAR - DAY

A tiny car drives through the mountainous Scottish Highlands.

INT. CAR - DAY

MALCOLM (50's, unshaven face, baggy eyes) stares out the window gripping a can of beer as PETE (50's, balding, strong armed) drives. The radio mentions a lottery prize through static.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - DAY

Pete leads the way along an uneven, rocky path, holding a blue camping table and wearing a rucksack with a sleeping bag and a fishing rod sticking out whilst Malcolm treads behind with a bag containing the same items whilst holding a can of beer and some foldable chairs.

INT. BOTHY - DAY

Pete walks into an stone bothy with a cold fireplace and a raised platform for a bed. Malcolm follows and drops his bag onto the floor with a thud, startling Pete who looks round to Malcolm and pushes past him. Malcolm sighs, grabs his bag and walks out.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

The Bothy is a small, brutalist building that rests on a tiny mound of rocks. Pete struggles to set up the table whilst Malcolm sits on a chair. He cracks open a beer and is about to take a sip but Pete looks up at him with an exasperated stare pointing at the table. Malcolm sighs and stands up.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY, LATER

Both men are sat around the table which now has a large cloth and some cups on it, drinking from cans of beer.

MALCOLM

Walked past Mikeys shop last week.

(drinks)

He got some fucking Romanian or Polish lass or something, I don't know, to replace me.

PETE

What do you mean?
(confused)

MALCOLM

It's just, like, Mikey always had integrity. But then he goes and hires some cheap menial drone over the hard working man.

PETE

Don't take it personally mate.
Might just be waiting for you to come back?

MALCOLM

Still, you agree that you thought better of Mikey.

PETE

I don't get what you're saying?

Malcolm puts his can down.

MALCOLM

Cmon mate you know what I mean. You see it.

Malcolm wags his finger at Pete who sighs as he slumps in his chair.

PETE

Right, sure. Whatever.

MALCOLM

I'm just saying it how it is.
(beat)
I just wish he would've like...Y'know.

Pete stares blankly at Malcolm.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Stayed local.

Pete rolls his eyes then looks up at the sky. He then stands up and grabs his fishing rod.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Where you headed?

PETE

Fishing, you coming?

Malcolm shakes his head and opens another tin of beer.

PETE (CONT'D)

No worries, I'll be back in like an hour or two probably.

Pete walks away as Malcolm takes his phone out of his pocket and presses on it a few times. It rings 5 times then goes to voicemail.

MALCOLM

Can you at least answer my calls?
Look if you get a chance ring me back. Alright, love you.

Malcolm hangs up and looks ahead with a glassy stare.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - DAY

Pete walks alone. Taking in his surroundings.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

Malcolm sits by the table and opens a tin of beer.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Pete takes out his fishing rod from his bag and starts to assemble it meticulously with a big smile.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

Malcolm is sat at the table drinking his beer.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Pete stands knee deep in the water holding the fishing rod. His face is relaxed. The area is peaceful.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

Malcolm crushes a can and throws it behind him, it hits the bothy and lands on a growing pile of cans.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - DAY

Pete holds a massive FISH (Rainbow trout, size of a skateboard) as he walks along with a big cheesy grin.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY, LATER

Malcolm is slumped in his chair snoring. Pete approaches the table with a beaming smile and slaps Fish down. Malcolm startles awake, looks at Pete then down at Fish.

MALCOLM

Christ, how'd you catch that?

Pete shrugs and cockily swaggers to his bag. He bends down and starts routing around as Malcolm investigates the Fish.

FISH

Hello.

Malcolm jumps back whilst Pete continues to search his bag.

PETE

What?

Malcolm looks up at Pete then down at Fish.

FISH

Hello, Malcolm.

Malcolm drops his beer and stares at Fish with a weary eye.

PETE

You talking to yourself?

Pete takes out a small black box from his bag and opens it to reveal a fillet knife. He turns around and walks over to the table, brandishing the blade. The blade is about to pierce the scales but Fish suddenly flops up like a billy bass.

FISH

Congratulations on the catch,
Peter.

Pete stumbles backwards.

PETE

What the fuck?

FISH

I am Fish. A wish fish, meaning I
can give wishes in return for a
small... Personal payment.

Malcolm walks closer to Fish.

MALCOLM

Prove it.

FISH

Make a wish and I'll prove it.

Malcolms forehead forms tight, strained wrinkles as he looks around the area. He sees his pile of discarded cans.

MALCOLM

I wish for a cold can of beer.

FISH

In return for your crisp cold beer
I want to bite your finger.

Malcolm is hesitant at first but slowly sticks his pinky out. Fish bites it lightly and some blood trickles out. A rainbow glow shines out of Fish's stomach as he flops around.

Pete's eyes and mouth are wide open whilst Malcolm holds his pinky close to his chest. Their faces are both lit up in a barrage of colour.

A can of beer covered in condensation appears next to Fish, dropping about an inch from the air. Pete and Malcolm both stare at it then look to each other. Pete nods his head, indicating that Malcolm should investigate.

Malcolm slowly creeps up to the beer and picks it up. He snaps round to Pete excitedly.

MALCOLM

It's cold!

He opens it up and takes a swig, and starts to laugh.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

It's good! Really good.

(drinks)

Alright, now I want...I want you to
give me a...a--

PETE

Mate, maybe we should think about
this first?

Malcolm doesn't even glance at Pete.

MALCOLM

I want more beer!

FISH
How about something a
little...more?

Malcolm nods.

MALCOLM
Aye, I want...some Vodka and coke!

FISH
Done. I'd like to bite your middle
finger.

Malcolm sticks out his middle finger immediately and Fish
chomps on the tip, just missing the nail.

MALCOLM
Ow fuck, watch it Fish.

FISH
Terribly sorry Malcolm.

Fish glows brightly again. Pete remains unsure and walks over
to his bag to put his knife away before sitting down on a
seat.

The light dims and the drinks drop onto the table. Malcolm is
overjoyed and immediately grabs a cup to pour himself a
drink. Fish arches his back to look to Pete.

FISH (CONT'D)
Cmon Pete, don't you want a wish?

Pete holds up his hand and shakes his head.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY, LATER

Malcolm, with a bloodied bandage over his hand, is sitting on
his chair which is now closer to Fish, unlike Pete's chair.
Malcolm leans in close to Fish and, with a glazed eye, takes
a sip from his cup of vodka coke.

MALCOLM
And, the bitch didn't leave a note
or nothing. It's like, that's like
cruel. Intit. She's just gone with
the bairn.

FISH
That is messed up Malcs.

Malcom leans back into his chair nodding. His face then
lights up and he lunges forward.

MALCOLM

Oh and Mikey, the boss I mentioned,
he went and replaced me with some
cheap, unqualified bird he met off
the street.

Pete's face questions the legitimacy of this claim but he
remains silent.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Luckily, I've got this guy here.
Petes always been a mate no matter
what.

Malcolm grins as he points to Pete, who forces a smile.
Malcolm then takes a big swig from his cup of vodka coke.

FISH

When was the last time you made a
wish?

Malcolm turns back to Fish.

MALCOLM

Too long mate too fucking long. I
wish for...I wish for another
bottle of...

PETE

Malcs, don't you think you've had
enough drink?

FISH

Yeh Malcs, maybe you should wish
for something else? Something
bigger?

Malcolm nods.

FISH (CONT'D)

Or something you always wanted but
couldn't get?

Malcolm strokes his chin as he thinks, Pete looks at Fish
then at Malcolm whilst picking at his nails. A big childish
smile grows on Malcolms face.

MALCOLM

I know what I want. When I was
younger I always wanted a BMX. But
my old man wouldnae allow it.

Pete laughs whilst staring down at the can.

PETE

I remember you "Borrowing"
(finger quotation)
Toms BMX. Ended up breaking your
shoulder tryna do some stupid
trick.

Malcolm rocks back into his chair laughing.

MALCOLM

You were too much of a shitebag to
try.

PETE

I wasn't a shitebag I was calling
the ambulance.

Both men sit and laugh as they reminisce.

MALCOLM

Think that's why my dad said no?

PETE

I don't think it helped your case.

FISH

Well, you're older now Malcs. More
responsible. Why not?

PETE

I dunno Malcolm, this isn't the
best place for a BMX.

Fish snaps round to look at Pete.

FISH

I'm sure he'll be fine.
(irritated)

MALCOLM

Fuck it. I want a BMX.

PETE

Malcs, you've also had a few tins
and some mixers, why not wait till
morning?

FISH

Malcolm is a grown man Peter. Why
do you wish to control his actions?

MALCOLM

Yeh Pete, fuck off. Stop tryna
like, control me.

Pete looks down at his feet.

PETE

Sorry mate.
(defeated)

Malcolm looks away from Pete and stands up to get near to Fish. He begins undoing his bandage.

FISH

Actually, Malcs. I want something else for this.

Malcolm stops undoing his bandage and slowly rewraps it.

FISH (CONT'D)

I think you should call your wife, tell her how you feel about being treated so cruelly.

PETE

Malcolm this is a bad--

FISH

Shut up Peter. She's treated him horribly and you won't even allow him to be honest with her? A relationship is based on communication.

Malcolm pulls out his phone and presses some buttons.

PETE

Malcolm mate, think this throu--

Malcolm jumps up, snaps his head round to stare at Pete and storms towards him, shoving his finger right into Petes face.

MALCOLM

Shut the fuck up Peter. I don't wanna hear from you right now.

The phone rings 5 times then goes to voicemail.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Erin, I feel it's only fair you listen to me for once. You've treated me like shite. Like, hiding my own kid from me? That's fucking cruel, you fucking bitch. I will see him again, you can't stop me, You... Horrible... BITCH!

Malcolm hangs up and throws his phone, narrowly missing Pete, and kicks over his chair before pacing back and forth.

FISH

You'll feel better about it in a bit. It's therapeutic.

Fish glows for a few seconds. A brand new BMX falls a few inches above the ground and lands on its side, close to the bothy.

FISH (CONT'D)

You wanna give it try?

Malcolm picks up his chair and sits down.

MALCOLM

Nah. Maybe in a bit. Not really in the mood the now.

Malcolm finishes the last of the vodka coke in his cup as they all sit in silence.

PETE

I'm gonna go for a piss.

As Pete walks past Malcolm rubs his chin, avoiding eye contact. He then stands up, walks over to Petes chair and picks up his cracked phone.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - DAY

Pete stands on the edge of a cliff. Water violently smashes against the rocks below. He looks out at the horizon.

Malcolm walks up behind him. They both stay silent.

MALCOLM

Sorry about the phone mate. I wasn't aiming for you.

Pete forces a smile but his dead eyes stare outwards at nothing.

PETE

Is it alright?

MALCOLM

Aye aye, think its... Alright.

Malcolm nods and they both continue to stare outwards.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
Should probably head back, Fish
might get lonely.

Malcolm starts to walk away, he stops to look back at Pete who stands still, alone, for a few moments. He then turns around and joins Malcolm.

EXT. BOTHY - NIGHT

The sun is setting, casting an orange glow over everyone. Malcolm sits down but Pete goes towards the bothy.

PETE
Well, it's getting late and we've
gotta be up early so I'll head off.
See yous tomorrow.

MALCOLM
No worries mate, see yah.

Pete enters the Bothy.

FISH
Is he alright? He seems a bit...
off.

Malcolm pours himself another vodka coke. They're both silent as he drinks.

FISH (CONT'D)
How about another wish?

MALCOLM
I Think I should take a wee break
for now.

FISH
C'mon, I'll give you this one for
free.

Malcolm whips his head up and looks at Fish.

MALCOLM
Could you have done that the whole
time?

FISH
In theory.

Malcolm drops his shoulders and looks at his drink.

MALCOLM

Whatever.
(under breath)

FISH

Cmon, how about something to cheer
you up?

Malcolm shakes his head slowly.

FISH (CONT'D)

How about the lottery. You could
take your missus on holiday?

Malcolm nods and a faint smile grows on his face.

MALCOLM

Aye, she'd love a trip to France or
something like that. Go on then.

Fish glows again lighting up Malcolms face who stands up.

Fish stops glowing and a lottery ticket appears next to him.
Malcolm picks it up, looks at the numbers, and opens his
phone. He searches up the winning lottery tickets and all the
digits are a one to one copy.

A smile grows on Malcolms face and he begins to laugh and
dance around his chair as he grips onto his ticket.

FISH

Should you not be telling someone?

Malcolm stops and looks to fish with a big grin. He taps some
buttons on his phone and holds it to his ear. It goes
straight to voicemail. Malcolms face drops.

He presses some buttons but, again, it goes straight to
voicemail. He stands motionless, staring at his phone.

Malcolm suddenly heaves his phone at the bothy and begins to
pace, breathing heavily.

FISH (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

Malcolm storms up to Fish.

MALCOLM

You made her hate me. It's your
fucking fault!

Fish laughs maniacally as tears start to pour down Malcolms face. He Paces over to Petes bag and routes around in it. Malcolm pulls out a small box and takes Petes fillet knife out, he then goes up to Fish and holds it into the air.

Fish laughs even harder and starts flopping all over the table. Malcolm brings the knife down and it pierces the table next to Fish who stops laughing, looks at the knife then up at Malcolm before laughing like a hyena on Nitrous oxide.

FISH

Have one more wish Malcs, another
one on the house.

MALCOLM

I wish... I wish...
(defeated)

Malcolm sighs as his shoulders drop.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I don't fucking know...

Malcolm turns around and heads over the hill.

FISH

Don't you want one more wish Malcs?

MALCOLM

I wish you'd go fuck yourself!

Fish laughs so much he's wheezing.

As Malcolm walks away his back is lit up by all the colours of the rainbow.

INT. BOTHY - NIGHT

The colours shine through the window into the bothy onto Petes face.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BOTHY - DAY

Pete wakes up and looks around the bothy to see Malcolm isn't there. He gets up and stretches.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

Pete walks out and surveys the area. He sees the knife stuck into the table next to Fish.

FISH

Good morning Peter. Beautiful day,
isn't it?

Pete waves to Fish but turns away and rolls his eyes.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - DAY

Pete walks along the path.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - DAY

Pete looks over the edge, staring at the rocks. His eyes widen, tears start to well up.

PETE

M-Malcolm?

In the water, crashing against the rocks, is Malcolm.

Pete bends over and starts toretch.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - DAY

Pete runs along the path, tripping up as he goes.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

Pete runs up to Fish.

PETE

Brings him back. I wish for Malcolm
to be okay!

Fish chortles.

FISH

But what about the trade off?

PETE

Anything!

Pete takes the knife out the table and holds it over Fish.

PETE (CONT'D)

Please.

FISH

Alright, alright. I'll bring him back.

PETE

Thank you!

FISH

If you drown yourself.

Pete steps back, he wipes his eyes and starts to nod.

PETE

Alright. Done. You promise to bring him back?

FISH

I haven't lied yet, have I?

Pete walks back over the hill.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - DAY

Pete stands on the cliff edge. He looks down to see the waves crash. He exhales and leaps off.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Malcolm lies on the sand, soaked. He coughs up some water and sits up, looking around the environment, confused.

EXT. ROCKY PATH - DAY

Malcolm walks along the rocky path slowly. Stumbling over as he moves.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - DAY

Malcolm looks over the rock edge. In the water he sees Petes body smashing against the rocks. Tears stream down his face.

EXT. BOTHY - DAY

A red faced Malcolm storms up to Fish.

MALCOLM

Bring him!

Fish chuckles.

FISH

Who?

Malcolm reaches the table, pulls the knife out of the table and holds it over Fish.

MALCOLM

Bring him back!

FISH

Say the magic word.

Malcolm pushes the knife slowly into Fish who bleeds a bright magenta colour.

FISH (CONT'D)

I'll bring him back if you return me to the ocean.

MALCOLM

No. Bring him back now!

FISH

You aren't in any position to bargain. Throw me to the waves and I'll bring him back. Have I lied yet?

Malcolm hesitates, the end of the knife is still poking into Fish's skin. He steps back and drops the knife onto the grass.

He stands, staring at Fish. Slowly, he starts to nod.

He picks up Fish and walks away with him.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - DAY

Malcolm looks at the waves crashing against the rocks. Fish is still in his hands.

FISH

Ready when you are.

Malcolm pulls his arm back, tightly grasping Fish, and then throws him outwards.

FISH (CONT'D)
You're an idiot
(gets more distant)

Fish's laugh echoes through the quiet cliff edge. Malcolm stays silent, staring at the water.

There is no glow, no Pete, and no Fish. Malcolm drops to his knees, then his side. He curls up into a ball.

FADE TO BLACK.