

## **Uncle Mike's Fishing Trip**<sup>©</sup>

My name is Tim and our family loves to tell tall tales. If you don't know what a tall tale is it is a story that is basically true but everything that happened was changed to make the story sound better. This story is about my Uncle Mike's Yukon fishing trip. It is about him, the salmon, the grizzly bear, the police, a forest fire, and a barbeque.

My Uncle Mike loved the great outdoors. Whether it was canoeing, hiking, or fishing he enjoyed it all. By far his favourite was fishing. Whenever he was in town he would visit. Tonight we were having salmon, which reminded him of his great salmon trip.

"That was a great meal sis." Said my Uncle Mike. "Although not quite as tasty or interesting as the BBQ salmon I had on my arctic fishing trip in the Yukon." He went on to say. My mom just looked at him and frowned and said, "Oh! Really." "I didn't know there were salmon in the arctic," added my dad.

Without changing his big smiling grin Uncle Mike responded. "Well there not called arctic salmon anymore. Shall I tell you what happened to them and me?" No sooner did he say this when the table was cleared. Uncle Mike sat with his coffee and everyone was waiting eagerly for the story. My mom decided to stay in the kitchen doing the dishes saying, "I think I heard this one before." Then Uncle Mike sat back and told his BBQ arctic salmon story.

After graduating college I decided to take some time off and travel. I arrived in the Yukon just in time for the annual salmon migration. I didn't have any fishing gear with me and was trying to make a pole to fish with when I saw a grizzly bear in the river fishing for salmon his way.

He was standing in the middle of the river and swatted the salmon as they jumped past him. He was doing really well and there were a dozen salmon lying on the river bank. I figured he wouldn't miss one.

Carefully I made my around some trees and rocks so I could get close to the salmon pile. When the bear wasn't looking I ran out and grabbed a fish off the pile. I no sooner turned around to leave with my catch when I heard a loud bear roar.

I stopped with the salmon over my shoulder, turned half way around and there was the bear on the far side of his salmon fish pile looking right at me and growling. I dropped the salmon and ran for the trees. I figured that bear would be happy to get his fish back rather than chasing me. I was wrong.

No sooner had I made it to the trees when I realized the bear was right behind me. No matter how fast I ran that grizzly was right behind me running just as fast. I ran through a stream and the bear jumped it. I sped through an old mining camp zipping and dodging through, over and around buildings and rusty equipment, but the bear still found me.

I hopped in an old ore car and road in down the mountain side. When I got to the bottom I looked back and saw that old Grizzly sliding down the same rails on all fours.

I ran and jumped off the river bank onto a log, hoping to ride it down stream to get away from this angry bear. What id didn't know was that at the end of the log was a paint can. This can flew up into the air. As I'm watching the paint can go up the bear jumped onto the end of the log where the paint can was. Now I was flying through the air. The bear was now watching both the paint can and I fly.

The paint can comes down and hits a stick which knocks loose a stone underneath the wheel of a full ore car. The ore car runs down a short section of rail hitting the base of a tall metal tower. The tower falls over onto the other end of the log where the bear is standing. Now the bear is flying in the air.

Meanwhile I'm still up in the air flying. Just as the bear is heading upwards I'm coming down. I land on a metal roof. Bounce off the roof into an old wagon that starts rolling towards the river. The wagon hits a rock just before going into the river.

I'm now flying again. This time it's into the river. I land on a huge arctic salmon. We wrestle and I win. I put the salmon over my shoulder and head for the river bank. I had forgotten about the bear until I heard a gigantic splash and felt half the river rush past me.

That grizzly sat up shook himself and saw me with the salmon. He was madder and meaner than before. I guess he figured I had another one of his salmon. The chase was on again.

I dropped that fish and climbed onto another river log that had a long stick which I used as a pole. I rode that log down the river as fast as I could. That bear was far behind but he seemed to be getting closer.

I saw a bridge up ahead with people on it. I decided to head for the shore. The hill up to the road was steep and I was tired by the time I got to the top. As I stepped onto the bridge there was a road block with Mounties and wildlife officers. One of the Mounties shouted, "STOP. You're under arrest for escaping justice." Well I've never been arrested or been in a prison or been wanted for anything except for a meal. So I turned around and started running down the road.

Just as I went past the spot in the road where I came up from the river the grizzly stepped out onto the road. Then I heard one of the wildlife officers, say "You're under arrest for harming that bear."

So I'm now running down the road with a mean grizzly bear chasing me for stealing his fish followed by the Mounties for being an escaped fugitive followed by the wildlife police for harming a bear that was trying to eat me. Just as I'm thinking it can't get any worse I smell wood burning and see black smoke. As I round the bend in the road a wall of flames comes rushing toward me. There's now a huge forest fire in front of me.

The flames are coming down the mountain and crossing the road in front of me. This was the largest forest fire the Yukon had seen in a hundred years. The bear and the authorities are behind me and getting closer. I have no choice but to run down the mountain towards a far off lake or at least I thought it was a lake.

When you're running down a hill you start going faster and faster. Running down a steep mountain makes you go even faster. I'm now zooming down the mountain side and I start becoming lighter. I zip past tiny bushes then whiz past bigger bushes.

Now I'm whipping past small trees then bigger and bigger trees so fast they are a blur. Instead of running into these bushes and trees my speed made me so light that I was running on top of them.

I thought I had gotten away from my pursuers now but again I was wrong. They had the same speed and lightness as I did and were running across the trees tops just like me.

I was finally getting tired and the bear was real close. He was so close I could smell his fishy bear breath on my neck. Then it happened (Uncle Mike paused for a moment). I ran out of tree tops.

What I thought was a far away lake was actually a river at the bottom of a cliff far below all the tall trees. Needless to say I stopped in mid air. The bear continued on until he ran out of tree tops. The Mounties and wildlife officers also ran out of trees. We all stopped for a brief moment in mid air as well collided into each other in one giant pile of heavy solid earth creatures.

Down we all went. Falling past the 50 foot trees. Zooming past the 100 foot cliff. Hurling toward the raging river toward certain death and destruction. I screamed. The Mounties and wildlife officers screamed. Even the bear screamed.

We all hit the water like a giant meteor striking the earth. When we all hit the river the water was hurled up like a huge tower. The column of water went higher then the cliff and higher then the trees. The water continued up higher and higher into the sky. This giant pillar of water then turned and game down on the forest fire on the mountain. There was so much water that went up that the river became drained. So much water came down that it put the forest fire out.

With all that water going up into the air all the salmon went up with it. They also came down with the water onto the fire. These salmon were caught in the burnt trees and cooked to a smoky barbeque perfection from the remaining heat of the fire.

Meanwhile back at the river we were all unraveling ourselves form the wet pile that we were in. The Mounties looked at me closely and realized I wasn't there man. The wildlife officers decided I hadn't harmed the bear after all. The grizzly bear saw I didn't have any salmon and there were no salmon around so he wandered off looking for some. They walked away leaving me standing in an empty river.

Slowly I made my way back along the river to the bridge and climbed up to the road. By the time I got back the salmon were all nicely cooked and ready for dinner. I grabbed a couple salmon that were on the lower branches and was deciding what to do when I heard a voice behind me.

"Hey. How much do you want for that BBQ'd salmon?" I turned quickly and saw a man in a camper and told him \$20 cash. He paid me and left.

I decided to open up a BBQ salmon stand and sold the salmon by the roadside. Even the grizzly that chased me decided to eat the salmon and not me. Everyone who came by liked the BBQ salmon so much that they renamed the arctic salmon to Arctic Char.

We all laughed and my dad groaned. My Uncle Mike smiled and so did my mom as she walked into the dining room. She just shook her head and smiled at her silly brother and his fish story.