



We'd been fishing pals for a long time, Denny and I. Growing up together on the island, we spent years going after every species—salmon, steelhead, sea run

with what Denny was up to. So I asked if I could tag along the next time he went to fly fish the “Saltchuck.” As if he'd been waiting for me to ask, he answered with a nod and a smile, then

“look at me, a **63**-year-old rookie”

cutthroat—all with conventional tackle of course.



Both of us had spin fishing down pat. In fact, we could probably catch 'em with our eyes closed. So, when Den was looking for a new challenge, he decided to try fly angling for sea runs. From what he told me, Den became quite adept at it, and even created his own fly patterns.

Curious, and lonely for my fishing chum, it wasn't long before I too became intrigued

invited me over. We tied flies till dawn.

Look at me, a 63-year-old rookie, fly fishing for cuts. “Good luck,” I thought. Then I hooked one—on the candlefish pattern I invented myself, not store bought, but my own hand-tied fly.

I released the fish and slipped the fly into my vest pocket. Wouldn't want Den to copy this one.



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Being the mother of four rambunctious boys, I was accustomed to roughing it. And between my sons' adventures—fishing in Alaska, crawling out of crevasses and dodging

announced his engagement, I was worried there'd be no one left to fly fish with me.

When I met his fiancée I told her, rather bluntly, that I intended to fish with my son after

“I landed a daughter and a fishing buddy”

great whites while surfing Australia—you could say I learned not to worry, to go with the flow.

Until a month ago. While I survived our trips to the Tetons, the Snake and vari-



ous

emergency rooms, I never once had to fish without the company of at

least one of my boys. But now, three of the four are married. And when my youngest son

the wedding. Next thing I knew, she pulled a tiny Adams from my fly box, and asked me if “this one would work on the river today?”

They say “you aren't losing a son, but gaining a daughter.” Turns out, I landed a daughter and a fishing buddy. I'm taking her to the Poconos tomorrow to show her



the ropes. Looks like my son's found a keeper.



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It all started when my big brother, Dave, invited me to go brook trout fishing in the Olympic Mountains. I had never fly fished and had no idea how to cast a fly rod. But

I knew, a 14-inch brookie gulped my fly. The line went tight with so much pull and energy that the fish literally exploded out of the water. And suddenly came 3 seconds of total chaos. I wasn't

“suddenly came 3 seconds of total chaos”

luckily, we were fishing a small enough stream that casting wasn't all that important. We only had three or four patterns—small stimulators, parachute adams, renegades—and all you had to do was dab the fly above the little pools and wait for a splash.



I made a short cast behind a boulder in the middle of the stream, and the next thing

sure whether I was supposed to let the line run through my fingers or what.

I will never forget that first big trout. Had I stayed home that day, it never would have happened.

I am truly grateful for being introduced to the sport, and owe it all to my big brother, who I now outfish three to one.



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