
Lobster On The Loose

by

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Our story begins with Lucky the Lobster. Lucky was one of the world's largest lobsters, weighing over 40 pounds. Being that he was so large, he mostly just slept and waited for food to pass his way. His large claws were helpful for catching most any reasonably sized sea critter.

One day Lucky was in the ocean doing nothing in particular, just swimming around doing his usual lobster-y things. It was a sunny day and the water was nice and warm, thus keeping our crustacean friend alert and active. As the day progressed, the thought of danger was the last thing on Lucky's mind.



Suddenly, a large net floated up from underneath him. Lucky didn't know what to do, so he just kept still. Gradually, the net got closer to him until it was touching him. Then the sides of the net began to close in around him. At this point, Lucky was trapped in the net, but the worst was yet to happen!

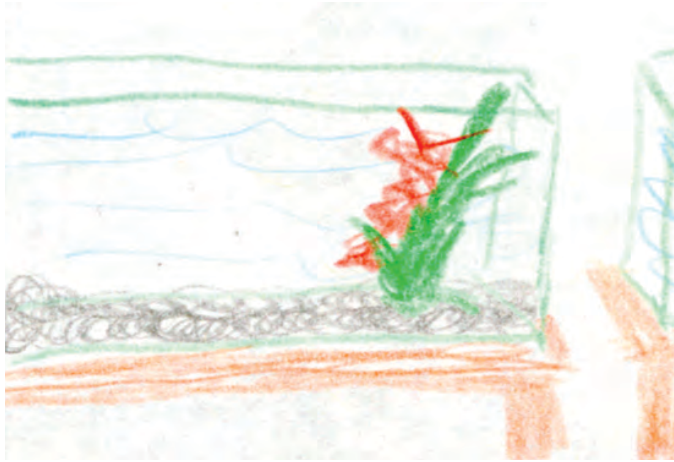
The net began to move upwards, pulling Lucky with it. Lucky was scared, but concealed it behind his shrewd lobster face. After a short while, the net came to the surface of the water, with Lucky still in tow. Then some fisherman began to extract him from the net, and immediately put him into a crate. Lucky could hear the fishermen rubbing their hands together thinking about how much money they would make when they sold him.



And so it went; the fishermen brought Lucky on to dry land, and sold him to a nice beachfront restaurant. The restaurant wasn't nice for Lucky, though. Lucky was put into a tank with a banner across it. Although Lucky couldn't read it, he knew that it said something to the effect of "World's Largest Lobster: Serves 12!" Lucky was saddened, thinking that his lobster days were numbered. He racked his little lobster brains to try to come up with an escape plan.



Soon, he had a plan that just might work. You see, Lucky was put into a large tank that, along with some sand on the bottom, had a large stalk of seaweed growing. This seaweed was in dire need of some pruning since it had grown out the top of the tank and into the air. Lucky saw that his only chance for escape was to use his claws to climb the seaweed, and so he did.



When he reached the top of the seaweed, he realized that he only had the narrow glass edge of the tank to walk along. Lobsters aren't known for their grace, and Lucky, weighing in at 40.35 pounds was anything but an exception. As he teetered along the edge of the tank, one of his six legs slipped, causing a chain reaction that caused another leg to slip. Then another, and another, and before he knew it, Lucky was falling down past his tank to almost certain death when he hit the hard floor.

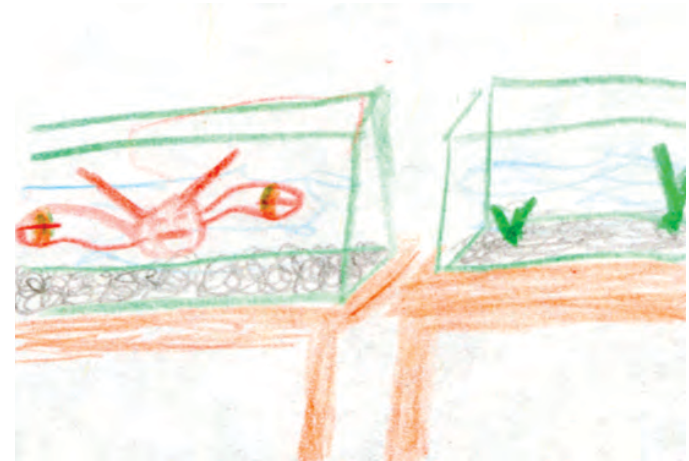


It was Lucky's lucky day. He landed with a tremendous splash in a small tank, sitting a few inches off the floor. Even better for Lucky, the tank was filled with squid. Feeling relieved that he was still alive, and also feeling hungry, since 40 pounds is a lot of weight to move around if you're a lobster, he took notice of the squids. The squids were an annoying lot, always floating around, moving up and down continuously. Furthermore, they were intrigued at the new arrival, Lucky, to their tank. They began bouncing off him, and causing him to get irritated.



Irritated, hungry lobsters are known to take action, and that's what Lucky did. Since he was surrounded by what to a lobster made a seven course dinner, he began his feast. Slurping down one delectably squishy piece of calamari after another, he satisfied his appetite. He was almost bulging out of his shell when he finished eating the last piece of squid from the tank.

Then a terrible thought dawned on him; he was still trapped in a tank. Worse yet, this tank had no seaweed to use as an escape path, although he had gained so much weight eating all the squid, he wasn't sure that the seaweed would have been strong enough to hold him. Then he thought again about the word, "weight." By eating all the squid, he had made himself an even more desirable commodity.



You wouldn't have known it, though. When the chef of the restaurant discovered that his expensive imported Italian squid had been consumed by a fat lobster, he was irate. Lucky was yanked from the squid tank, and promptly returned to his tank, although not before his claws were tightly rubber-banded shut.



Then the unthinkable happened. He was ordered by a group of diners. Lucky was in for it now. The chef eagerly pulled Lucky from the tank, and brought him to the kitchen's cutting board. Poor Lucky's final fate was nearly determined, and the terrified lobster just didn't know what to do.



Next, the chef came toward the lobster, brandishing a large meat cleaver. To Lucky, it was like a maniac wielding an axe. So he ran, directly off the edge of the table and fell onto the floor. Shaken by the tremendous force of the fall, he staggered out of the kitchen. Unfortunately, he made an error in choosing which door to go through, and instead of leaving the restaurant, he stumbled into the dining room, where he was eventually caught. "Eventually" is the operative word, since before being caught, he managed to frighten each and every one of the diners out of the restaurant, and of course, not one of them would agree to pay for dinner after an event like that. Lucky was returned to his tank.



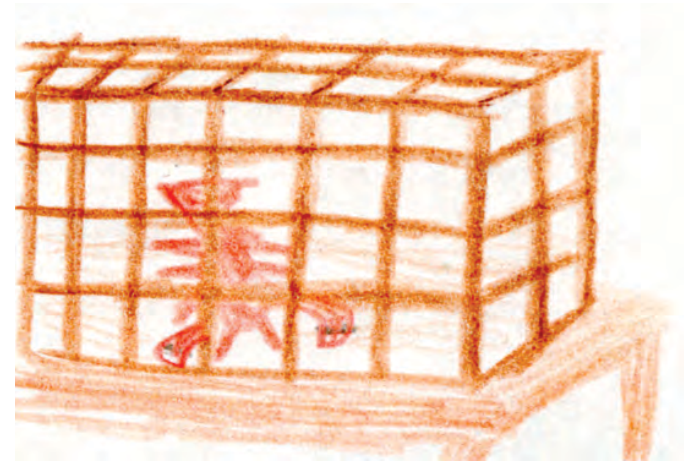
During the night, Lucky had an inspirational thought; although he could not use his claws to climb the seaweed, he could cover himself with it. The seaweed cover would then act as camouflage, and anybody entering the restaurant would believe the tank to be empty, or so he hoped. So he quickly set to work at knocking down the stalk of seaweed. Since his claws were still rubber banded, he had to swim backwards toward it, and use the sharp edge of his tail to slowly cause the stalk to lean. After several attempts, it finally gave way and fell, completely concealing Lucky.



The next day arrived, and the restaurant opened as usual. Well, not quite, the chef had taken the day off to recover from the stress of the previous day. In his place was a substitute chef, who knew very little about seafood preparation. Therefore, when two diners looked at the seaweed in the tank, and ordered sushi, he merely grabbed the seaweed, and with Lucky still obscured beneath it, put it on a plate to be served to the diners.



The diners began to pick at the seaweed, and soon realized that there was a large lobster hidden beneath it. Luckily for Lucky, the diners were strict vegetarians, and sent the meal back. After a rather lengthy argument, the diners walked out of the restaurant, vowing never to return. The plate was returned to the kitchen, where the poor confused substitute chef discovered Lucky in the dish. He figured that some large red creature was an undesirable thing to have in the food, after all, it certainly didn't seem to be a safe thing to try and eat, especially since it had terrifyingly large red claws.



The substitute chef carefully placed Lucky into a wooden crate, and placed the crate far back in a corner where he wouldn't have to see the fierce-looking red creature. As the saying goes, out of sight, out of mind, and when the substitute chef left that evening, he forgot all about the crate in the far back corner.



That evening, Lucky was sad and he realized that he was in serious trouble. He was now hardly noticeable in the kitchen, and feared that he would starve being trapped in the crate. He could not escape from the crate, since there was nothing he could do to split the wooden bars. Furthermore, he wasn't used to spending so much time out of water. He began to cry when he thought of how happy he used to be, swimming out in the ocean, eating fish and other small animals.



Then a miracle happened. The rubber band that was around one of his claws snapped, and fell off. Lucky's luck was extraordinary, and now he could use his free claw to clip the rubber band off of his other claw. Now he went to work, and in less time than it takes to cook a lobster, he had split apart the wooden laths of the crate.



On the loose, he quickly darted through the kitchen, and headed toward the exit. He couldn't believe his good fortune, as he found the front door of the restaurant unlocked. He went through the exit, across the beach and straight into the surf along the shore.



As he swam into the ocean, he found himself surrounded by a group of squid. Lucky was enamored with the thought of another calamari dinner, and after slurping down every last one, was well on his way to becoming a 50 pound lobster.