



SOMETHING FISHY

by Louise Welland.

(Inspired by Kippers on a Newspaper)

We crept stealthily away from behind the marketplace's waste container., my Mother proudly clutching her 'prize' wrapped in newspaper.

"Lay the table Lucy"

I dragged the wooden packing crate from its home under the kitchen window and set it in its daily resting place in the middle of the floor.

My three-year-old hands struggled to open the stiff wooden drawer, but finally I managed to yank it open to begin the search for the bone handled knives and forks.

"What's for tea Mother?" It was a freezing cold, dark winter's night, and we hadn't eaten the day before, so I was particularly looking forward to having a hot meal inside my rumbling belly.

"We have a real feast today, the very best salmon from the fresh fish stall."

My mouth was watering in anticipation. I tried desperately to watch how my mother was preparing our evening meal, but as usual she pushed me away snapping, "Get out from under my feet."

I carefully placed the cutlery into position, making sure that it was straight in line with the edge of the table, and that both sets were directly opposite each other. I scuttled into the living room for the dining chairs which resided in their normal home, beside the huge shiny brown radiogram. I struggled to drag them through to the kitchen each evening, but it was a challenge I cherished. Moving chairs was something I could normally manage without being scolded for being clumsy.

"Right, wash your hands, I'm dishing up."

I couldn't use the kitchen sink, I would have been reprimanded for being in my mother's way, so I fearfully ventured out to the back yard, to face the place I hated; the dark, damp, spider infested toilet.

I sat down in anticipation as my mother ceremoniously placed the 'salmon' meal onto the table.

A slice of bread and a strange, smelly flat piece of fish.

I took my first mouthful and coughed as I felt something scratching the back of my throat. "Stop making such a fuss, they are only bones."

I don't remember my Nan's tinned salmon sandwiches ever tasting like that!