

The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch

Once there was a lighthouse keeper called Mr Grinling. At night time he lived in a small white cottage perched high on the cliffs. In the day time he rowed out to his lighthouse on the rocks to clean and polish the light.

Mr Grinling was a most industrious lighthouse keeper. Come rain or shine he tended his light.

Sometimes at night, as Mr Grinling lay sleeping in his warm bed, the ships would toot to tell him that his light was shining brightly and clearly out to sea. Each morning, while Mr Grinling polished the light Mrs Grinling worked in the kitchen of the little white cottage on the cliffs concocting a delicious lunch for him. Once she had prepared the lunch she packed it into a special basket and clipped it on to the wire that ran from the little white cottage to the lighthouse on the rocks.

But one Monday something terrible happened. Mrs Grinling had prepared a particularly appetising lunch. She had made a mixed seafood salad, a lighthouse sandwich and a peach surprise. She put the lunch in the basket as usual and sent it down the wire.

But the lunch did not arrive. It was spotted by three scavenging seagulls who set upon it and devoured it with great gusto.

"Clear off, you varmints," shouted Mr Grinling, but the seagulls took not the slightest notice. That evening Mr and Mrs Grinling decided on a plan to baffle the seagulls.

"Tomorrow I shall tie the napkin to the basket," said Mrs Grinling. "Of course, my dear," agreed Mr Grinling, "a sound plan."

"They will have to try harder this to stop us" squawked the seagulls

On Tuesday evening Mr and Mrs Grinling racked their brains for another plan.

"They are a brazen lot those seagulls," said Mr Grinling.

"Brazen indeed," said Mrs Grinling, "what shall we do?"

"Our cat Hamish is an accomplished seagull chaser."

"Of course," exclaimed Mrs Grinling, "tomorrow Hamish can guard the lunch."

"A most ingenious plan," agreed Mr Grinling.

Hamish did not think that this plan was ingenious at all. He spat and hissed as Mrs Grinling secured him in the basket. "There, there, Hamish," said Mrs Grinling consolingly. "I'll have a tasty piece of herring waiting for you when you arrive home".

Sadly, flying did not agree with Hamish. His fur stood on end when the basket swayed, his whiskers dropped when he peered down at the wet, blue sea and he felt much too sick even to notice the seagulls, let alone scare them away from the lunch.

On Wednesday evening Mr and Mrs Grinling racked their brains again for a new plan. "What shall we do?" said Mr Grinling.

Mrs Grinling looked thoughtful, "I have it!" she exclaimed, "just the mixture for hungry seagulls."

Indeed, my dear," said Mr Grinling, "what have you in mind?"

"Wait and see," said Mrs Grinling, "just wait and see."

"Mustard sandwiches," chuckled Mr Grinling. "A truly superb plan my dear, truly superb."

On Thursday morning Mrs Grinling carefully packed the mustard sandwiches and sent them off down the wire to the expectant seagulls.

"Yuk...Ugh...Aaaak" squawked the seagulls.

On Friday Mrs Grinling repeated the mustard mixture.

"It's the same as yesterday's lunch, let's go elsewhere" moaned the seagulls.

On Saturday, up in the little white cottage on the cliffs, a jubilant Mrs Grinling put away the mustard pot before she prepared a scrumptious lunch for Mr Grinling.

While he waited for his lunch down in the lighthouse on the rocks, Mr Grinling sang snatches of old sea shanties as he surveyed the coastline through his telescope seeing the seagulls devour a fisherman's lunch.

"Ah well, such is a life," mused Mr Grinling as he sat down to enjoy a leisurely lunch in the warm sunshine.