

Fish Fry

By Arnold Marmor

**Lots of strange things happen at sea. But
this was a new twist, a fish that really wasn't
a fish at all. So the question, who hooked what?**

Fish Fry

Off Key West in the Florida Strait, with the bucking of the motor launch under the seat of my pants, and a rod and reel in my hands, I could relax. I mean really relax. Sometimes a cool current from the Gulf of Mexico would engulf me and it would be like something a man dreams about. Alone, under a blue sky, with one's thoughts. And then the thoughts would vanish as that familiar tug on the line meant a struggle was coming up. A battle between man and fish.

I love deep sea fishing. I was on a vacation with nothing to do but relax. Oh, there were women, all right. But one gets tired of women. But not fishing.

So here I was, this bright sunny afternoon, in my motor launch, when that tug on my line made me sit erect, and my brain became alert. You have to think clearly. You have to know when to let out line and when to pull in line. When the fish got tired you could tell. It all comes through experience.

From the pull of the line I thought I'd hooked a sailfish.

I reeled in fast, then started letting out line. But the line didn't get taut. It was loose. At first I thought I'd lost it.

And then it climbed into the launch.

I got up fast and made ready to dive overboard.

"Hold on, fella," it said. "Don't get into a panic."

I stared at it. It was about four feet tall, with scales and two thick stubs that was supposed to be tails. It stood on its tails and blinked enormous eyes at me.

"The creature from the black lagoon," I said.

"To you I'm a creature," he said. "To me you're a creature."

"What kind of a fish are you?"

"I'm not a fish. I'm a Grenarian."

"You mean you eat vegetables?"

"I'm from the planet Grenaria."

"Look," I said. "You want this boat? Keep it. I'm off for Tampa. It's about time I took up drinking."

"You hate me."

"No, I don't. Honest. I'm just not used to these things."

"It happens all the time. What you don't understand you hate."

"But I don't. Honest. And where did you learn to talk?"

"I learned English from a professor. He understood my plight and tried to help. He was fishing the same as you when I caught hold of his line and we met."

"What happened to him?"

"He went back to tell his colleagues. I never saw him again."

"He's probably in the booby hatch," I said.

"What's that?"

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