



Honeymoon with Fishing -
A Marriage made
in Heaven (1954)

- TED HORN

1 CHAPTER ONE

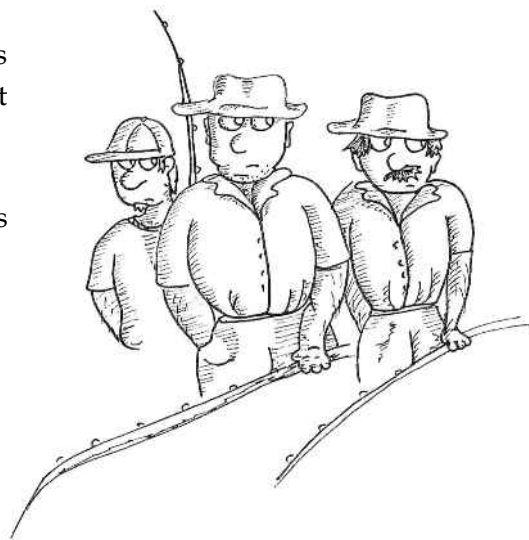
It is really hard to express the excitement billowing up in the pit of my stomach. For years I had listened to the tales of fishermen friends, the prowess of riding the high seas and the thrill of the catch. There is little doubt that this had planted a seed, a seed that grew with each new dawn, feverish in its intensity until I found I could no longer put off the inevitable - I was well and truly hooked!

Not surprisingly, it was my first fishing voyage on the *Isle of Capri* that was to steal my heart, time and hard earned income - for even then, this was no cheap sport and the thrill of the sea saw all other fishing adventures take a sound second place in my life.

As I stood at the kiosk on the beach in Durban to book my ticket I mused about the fellow fishermen who might be joining in the trip the following day. I had this inner vision of gnarled men of the sea, well-seasoned amateur ichthyologists who would impart their worldly wisdom to me - recognizing the bright spark in my eyes and the keenness of spirit that possessed those of this noble age old sport.

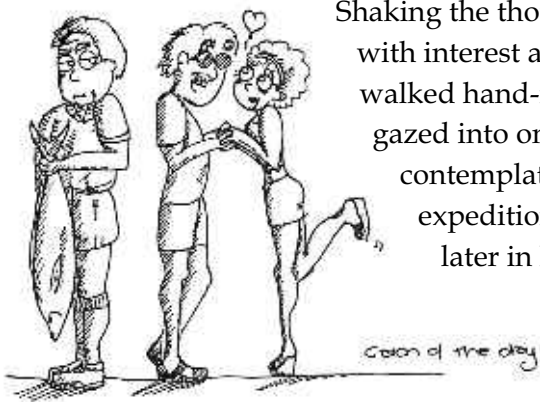
Arriving in line at the small kiosk, I was taken aback by the small queue forming before me. There were no grizzled old men of the sea, deep tanned and with salt in their hair, but rather an interesting mix of crewmen. Before me stood a small group of farmers, sporting deep sun-tans on all areas of exposed skin, framed by pearly white flesh at the upper arms and a distinctive V-shape along the front of their chests. Their faces were reddened, though I guessed this to be more the result of an intake of beer than the effects of the morning sun. They were

certainly distinctive, khaki floppy hats and long hot woollen socks in contrast to the raucous coloured shirts they sported. Each of them sported the characteristic Thys Lourens side burns – a great triangular shaped growth of facial hair that merged into day old stubble, Lucky Strike non-filter cigarettes hanging from lips.



Nearby, stood an accountant type, flicking through his planner and wallet in internal conflict with himself as he glanced at his hard earned money before turning his attention to the *Isle of Capri's* promotions board of photographs of quantities of large fish being held by grinning anglers. The crisp, seemingly unused notes would appear from the depths of the leather wallet before disappearing from view once more. I could not shake the image from my mind of a grey-suited fisherman perched on the gunnels carefully reeling out line metre by metre, his mind in turmoil as he calculated the cost of bait over the possible catch of fish that lurked in the depths below. Perfectly groomed, he seemed quite incongruous amidst the patiently awaiting crew.

Shaking the thought from my mind I watched with interest as a young honeymoon couple walked hand-in-hand to the kiosk and lovingly gazed into one another's eyes as they contemplated the togetherness of a fishing expedition. I could visualize this couple later in life, happily fishing together. It seemed like a marriage made in heaven.



At dawn the following morning a motley crew arrived filled with anticipation and bright, shining, eager eyes. Everyone was grinning and courteous as they took up their positions on board and awaited the instructions of their captain. At the stern of the boat sat four seasoned anglers who obviously knew what the day held in store as they prepared trace lines and discussed drift techniques.

It was hardly surprising that I elected to select a spot within earshot of these anglers, straining to listen to their conversation, my whole body filled with eager anticipation. It was not long before the arrival of our honeymoon couple, hand-in-hand and filled with a *joie de vivre*, though excusably red-eyed from an active “night before”. Hot on their heels was the accountant and the farmers, who despite the early hour, had already allowed themselves some stomach settling brandies for breakfast.

Safely aboard – I seemed to be becoming at one with the nautical terminology, our Skipper ran through basic safety points. Sadly, warnings of the dangers of alcohol, boats and sea not making good bedfellows was lost on our team and the characteristic “shssht” of opening beer cans seemed to accentuate each point made. The warnings on the likelihood of nausea once entering open waters met with a good amount of bravado, guffawing and elbowing one another in the sides as they laughed off the remote possibility that any of them could get seasick chugging greedily at the beer tins in their enormous hands.

The honeymooners – who were overflowing with the joys of unbridled love sat cuddled together, admiring the cleverness of the farmers who had packed a glorious picnic hamper filled with a leg of lamb, roasted chicken, bread and an amazing amount of beers. The farmers, so delighted with the praise, instantly became their new found comrades-in-arms, great lumps of meat offered with greasy fingers and homemade bread spilling out on deck. None of this excitement was lost on the seasoned fishermen who knowingly glanced at one another

and proceeded to take cash bets on who might catch the biggest fish. My keenness of eye noted one or two quietly placed side bets on who would be the first to lean over the gunnels and call to the deep. Everyone on board happily contributed ten shillings or so to the kitty for the largest fish – never a gambler, I could not refrain from rubbing my hands together at the promise of victory whilst the accountant's eyes seemed to glaze over and I could see him mentally tallying this potential for new found wealth.

The lovely young wife was soon to discard her summer beach dress and sporting a skimpy bikini, she then selected her prized sun-bathing position on the foredeck. She stretched luxuriously before easing her lithe frame onto her towel, unclipping her bikini top to ensure the best tan coverage. It did not take long for the avid crew to momentarily forget fishing exploits as they manoeuvred themselves closer to the bow rail, admiring the curvaceous form of the newlywed whilst expounding on the merits of the *Isle of Capri*. Her husband, no doubt

aware of the nature of men, was both flustered and undeniably proud at the attention his new wife was receiving and spent the better part of the next few minutes warding off attack before standing back to gloat over his magnificent catch.



The boat slipped its moorings and glided over the calm and scenic harbour waters of the bay, the wake frothing up to stern and the deep rumble of engines stirring all our emotions. The lovely young bride was all too aware that the boat had stolen her admirer's attention and she cunningly sat up, re-strapping her bikini top before sweeping back her hair and accentuating the fullness of her cleavage, her eyes darting from one crewman to the next before smiling disarmingly towards her new husband.

It was a congenial crew that stared out to sea, knees bending with the jockeying motion of the boat. The sense of excitement was tangible on board and celebrated with the snapping open of more cans of beer, white froth spewing onto the deck as the fishermen eagerly gulped down the cool fluid. The delicious smell of roasted lamb mingled with the sea air and reminded the crew of their aching, hungry tummies. The basket was eagerly passed around and everyone tucked into delicious doorstep size sandwiches, with mayonnaise running down their chins.

Ahead the wide ocean lay in wait, surely nothing could spoil this festive spirit on board? This was not exactly how I had imagined my first fishing voyage, but the scantily clad bride would no doubt offer great distraction from boredom on board. Her ample attributes had already led to the first accident. Our dedicated fishermen had tried in vain to tie complex knots around devastatingly long hooks whilst their attention was focused on deliciously exposed cleavage. The heat of the day ensured a thin sliver of sweat ran enticingly down between her curvature which she dabbed at seductively – more than a little aware of the attention she was receiving. As the first fisherman felt the needle sharp hook pierce through a finger the initial intent was no doubt to give a scream of anguish before prancing around the vessel. The vivid image of the young newlywed, however, curbed any thought of pained hysterics and an “einaa, and bliksem!” had to suffice.

The boat slipped through the harbour mouth and the first swell of the ocean raised the bow alarmingly before the hull crashed down into what seemed an interminable void. There was a momentary lapse amongst the celebratory crew before a cheer went up and the second round of sandwiches were passed around the deck.

Our trusty boat accelerated forward, meeting the rising swells head on, and spray washing up over the foredeck, warm and salty it was a

mariner's dream. Our young bride soon found her prone position untenable with the bounce of the vessel and she raised herself up to a kneeling position, her stern pointed towards the admiring crew as she grasped at the railing for balance. A new set of swells rolled towards us before lifting the prow alarmingly as the boat rode the crest before crashing down once more. Unused to such unchecked motion, our nubile bride lent forward just as the boat splashed down into the trough of the swell, bracing herself for the inevitable grounding out of the boat on the back of rolling water. Unfortunately, her somewhat unladylike posture had ensured her stomach muscles cramped, expelling air both forward and aft with a resounding burp and a gurgling fart that seemed to reverberate around the boat. For what seemed an eternity there was not a sound to be heard amongst the crew. Mortified, her first instinct was to somewhat naively look around to see if anyone else had heard, only to see the broad grins of an entire crew and scarlet colour of her new husband confirming her worst fears. Grabbing at her light cotton dress, she wobbled unsteadily towards the cabin, using the flimsy dress to cover her modesty – an act lost on the now hysterical crew. At this point, the old fish and diesel stench of the cabin seemed vastly preferable to the ridicule of the men on deck! All the while the skipper shook his head, eyes creased against the glare of the sun, his chest seeming to shiver with mirth. No doubt he had seen it all before!

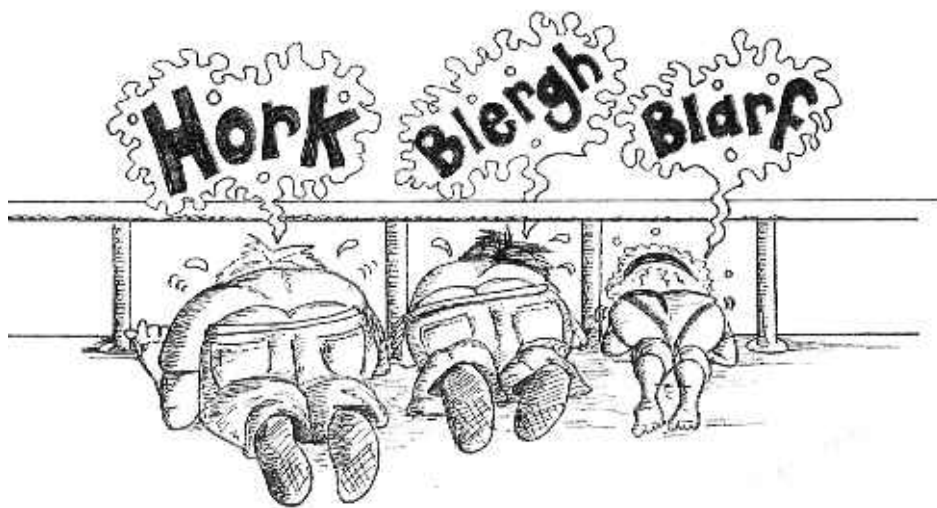
I have been blessed with a seaman's stomach, little upsetting neither the gurgling gastric juices nor the delicate balance of ear fluids but I had noticed a calming effect on the farmers who appeared to be staring glassy-eyed at the horizon, the odd belch a warning precursor to what might be coming up later in the day. Infinitely worse, would have been the prospect of cowering in the stifling heat of the cabin amidst a veritable arsenal of fumes. It was therefore not surprising that, before long, a very pallid face appeared on deck once more, the young bride having now lost all sense of feminine modesty as she

scrabbled for the railing and deposited the contents of Karoo lamb sandwiches into the briny. Once more her *derriere* pointed skywards, offering a quite delightful wobble as she heaved and wretched, interspersed with some colourful language aimed squarely at her groom.

Not surprisingly, there was a flurry of notes being changed amongst the crew, but to one victor the spoils! The perplexed groom stood numbly against the stern rail before summoning his courage and moving up to assist his wife, his hand placed lightly on her bowed shoulders. The response would have made a pirate blush, like the Irish banshee she let out a scream that I was convinced would have made it ashore. This not enough for the now trembling groom, she turned her pallid face to him and drew enough energy to throw a breathtaking diatribe of expletives at him. Stopping briefly for breath, her eyes tore into him before ending off with, “and if you think you are ever going to touch me again you are in for a big surprise mister!” With that she turned back seaward and retched once more, her forlorn groom moving back to the stern, head bowed and not daring to look towards us.

During this little interlude, none of us had noted that our gallant band of farmers had now put aside their sandwiches and beers and as if in sympathy to our young bride, had taken up kneeling positions along the starboard railings. Unfortunately, their nautical knowledge was poor, and they had chosen to prostrate themselves into the wind. The net result, of course, was that the first man to retch succeeded in coating his crewmates alongside him which in turn, led to an almost immediate sympathy vote from the rest of them. The sight was most reminiscent of a construction crew, hairy buttocks sticking out of droopy pants as they leaned ever further over the railings, the odd flatulence adding to the colourful scene as their cheeks rose in perfect timing with the swells. Oblivious to all on board, the men were in no

condition to ponder the ever southward passage of their khaki pants, rolls of pearly white fat wriggling in discomfort as they heaved gallons of beer into the briny.



Once again, I could do little other than to watch the withdrawal of wallets and rabid exchange of bets between captain and remaining crew members, heartless grins upon their faces as their well-seasoned constitutions remained unaffected by the gruesome sight on board. For my part, even with a cast iron stomach, I opted to stare towards the horizon, not daring to turn astern as the volume of chum had now reached unprecedented proportions. As for our accountant, I could have sworn he mentally tabulated the cost of food and drink lost overboard. As an afterthought, the boats "Number One" recovered the remains of the picnic hamper which still sported a most healthy supply of goodies, the hardened crew aware that they, at least would enjoy a good lunch later on in the day.

Whilst this single trip sealed my fate and ensured a lifelong infatuation with the sea, I cannot for the life of me remember the fish caught that day. Certainly our bride found herself caught out, the groom caught

between a rock and a hard place and the farming brigade caught between the railings and the boat's head as a secondary rear end action made its entry to the day's activities. If this little jaunt could have such a profound affect on me, there was no doubt that I was now to become a committed fisherman, the memories of my first sojourn to sea a memory that I cherish. To end it all, I do remember standing on the quayside at the end of the day, wallets opened once more as my fellow crew dished out my monetary reward for the best catch of the day, a 30kg Steenbras – I was well and truly hooked and for me, at least, the honeymoon had only just begun!

