

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

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If only the minnows could have grown into fish...

Though the minnows could have grown into fish, Lucille did not care. She set a minnow trap at the end of the wooden dock and watched the small fish swim from the edge of the shoreline to inside to eat the bread bait. Once caught, the minnows only could swim about the metal cage, sometimes bouncing off one another due to the small space for such a large school of baby sprouts.

Lucille did not care that the minnows could not escape. She had no such sympathy for these tiny creatures. She wanted to go fishing off the dock, and now she had some bait to do so.

So she pulled the trap's heavy string up from the depths of the water, gasped at the sight of the flipping, shiny silver fish. She opened the small door to the trap, grabbed one of the minnows and quickly shut, locked the door, and placed the trap back into the swallow water.

She walked over to the opposite side of the dock and picked up the wooden fishing rod with a large hook at the end of the line.

"Daddy," shouted Lucille. "I caught some minnows. Would you help me put this small one onto the hook?"

"Lucille, I'm busy cleaning the boat. Please try to do it yourself," he replied.

"Okay," she said. The minnow jumped around in her closed hand.

She carefully balanced the fishing rod between her legs and stopped the line with the hook from swaying back and forth with her free hand. Then she opened her hand just to see the minnow leap out and land back into the sandy brown colored water.

Not easily discouraged, Lucille placed the fishing rod back on the wooden dock, walked back to the minnow trap, and pulled it up for the bay water. She carefully opened the trap door and took out another minnow. After closing and dropping the trap back into the water, she ran over to the fishing rod, sat down, and lifted the line with the hook on it. This time she slowly unfolded her fingers, placed the minnow between her thumb and index finger. Success! Now she simply had to hook the minnow onto the bent piece of silver metal.

Somehow the minnow slipped easily onto the hook. Lucille was grossed out but excited at the same time. She lifted the fishing rod from the pier and reeled the fishing line into the water. There were minnows on the surface of the water, but the hook dropped deeper into the water scaring the tiny fish away. Lucille walked up and down the dock, pulling the fishing rod up, down and sideways.

Five minutes passed. Fifteen minutes edged along. And by twenty minutes later, Lucille was getting a bit fidgety. She decided she needed a drink, placed the fishing rod onto the dock, and ran over to the docked boat. "Mommy, can I have an apple juice?" she shouted.

"Sure, dear. Just look in the refrigerator," Her mother said, as she read

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from a paperback on a captain's chair on the boat's deck. She looked up and smiled at her teenage daughter.

Lucille selected a drink and headed back to the fishing area. "Hey," she said. "Where's the fishing rod?" She looked all around on the dock then glanced into the receding water just to see the fishing rod skidding across the surface of the bay's water. "Huh?" she cried.

"Daddy! Mommy! Look! A fish took my fishing rod! Now what am I going to do?"

Her parents ran over to the dock where she stood crying. "I guess you just have to jump in and swim after it," her father laughed.

"But what if the fish is a monster? Or a shark? Or whale?" Lucille pouted.

"Go in. I don't want to lose that new fishing rod," her father said.

"Honey, just try to catch the fishing rod," suggested her mother.

"It's probably not a whale or a shark. More like a sea bass or a flounder."

"No. No." Lucille said and walked away. "Now we won't have any fish for dinner tonight. I'm bummed."