

Chapter Five

Yummy Sardines

Slim slammed the mailbox shut—that's kind of a tongue-twister, isn't it?—and turned onto the little road that led to his house. When we reached the front door, he pushed it open and said, "Get in there, dogs, and catch a mouse."

I went streaking inside. Drover went inside too, but he didn't "streak." He lollygagged around, as he usually does, and at that speed he couldn't catch a mouse even if the mouse threw up his hands and surrendered.

Paws, I guess. Threw up his paws. Mice don't have hands, see.

Right away, I flushed out three head of mice and chased one of them to the three sacks of trash sitting beside the back door. He dived into the trash and so did I.

My goodness, what a mess. The mouse managed to escape—I mean, who could find a little mouse in that mountain of garbage?—the mouse managed to escape, but only by the tiniest of margins.

Unfortunately, the three sacks of garbage didn't manage to escape and they, well, became "rearranged," shall we say, all over the west side of the kitchen. Sardine cans. Vienna sausage cans. Bean cans. Cans filled with cold bacon grease and cigar butts and coffee grounds.

Yes, the, uh, rearrangement caused quite a mess.

I was standing there, giving the area one last noseatory scan, when Slim walked up. "That's probably enough, Hank. I'm sorry I brought up the subject of mice."

He opened up one of the cabinet doors and reached for a can of...something. Ah ha, it was the sardines he had promised. He looked back at me and grinned. "You ready for this, pooch?"

All at once, my tongue shot out and swept across my lips.

Slim laughed and held up a small flat can. Again, my tongue shot out and swept my lips. It appeared that my mouth had begun to water, so to speak.

"Yummy sardines!"



I moved my front feet up and down. A whine leaped out of my throat, and yes, my mouth was watering like crazy. Could we hurry this deal up?

He squinted his eyes at the can. "There's just one little problem, Hankie. This can's pooched up in the middle, which means the sardines might be spoilt."

No problem there. Shucks, I ate spoiled sardines all the time, and could we HURRY UP?

"That's why I saved 'em for you, but I don't want you getting sick in my house."

Sick? That was ridiculous. No dog in history had ever gotten sick on sardines. I could almost taste 'em, yummy sardines.

"Well, I reckon we can give it a try, but if you get to feeling sick, let me know."

Sure, you bet, anything at all.

He opened the can and set it down on the floor. Right away, I turned a menacing glare towards Drover and showed him some fangs. "These are MY sardines, pal, so don't even think what you're thinking."

"I was just thinking that sardines make me sick."

"Fine. Go chase your tail."

Having disposed of Drover, I turned back to my feastly treasure and...WOW! Those were some wonderful-smelling sardines, and I was so excited that my legs were quivering.

Sardines packed in oil! My favorite kind.

Slim watched with a lopsided grin as I tore into those yummy delicious awesomely wonderful sardines. I gobbled them in huge bites, hardly noticing that, yes, they had a slightly rancid taste to them.

Maybe they were a little past their prime, but that was no big deal. As you may know, we dogs have a digestive system that allows us to eat many food items that would make others ill.

Great sardines! Don't know as I'd ever had better, which just went to prove what I'd always said: A little age on a sardine didn't hurt a thing.

Slim watched me eat for a while, then he got down on his hands and knees and started picking up the garbage mess.

"I don't understand what brings these derved mice into my house. You'd think a mouse would rather stay outside where it's nice and clean." After finishing up the chunks of yummy sardines, I threw myself into the task of licking the oil out of the can. See, I wanted to do my little part to keep the house clean.

The only trouble with sardine cans is that they don't stand still. Every time you take a lick, they move across the floor. They're not as fast as mice, but by George, you have to stay with 'em and chase 'em down.

A lot of your ordinary dogs don't have the patience to tackle a major sardine job and stick with it to the end. They'll get tired of chasing that can across the floor and just give up.

Not me. I followed it all the way across the kitchen and was out in the middle of the living room when, suddenly and out of nowhere, I heard a tap at the door.

Then someone said, "Yoo-hoo, Slim? Are you home?"

Well, you know me. I'm never too busy to bark and I never make careless assumptions about who's at the door. Fellers, I bristled up and barked!

And you'll never guess who it was.