

that they have been fished out. It's just that they have disappeared. It was sardines the "Rex" was looking for.

Island Bay, Wellington, is the headquarters of a fishing fleet. Sheltered there are a dozen or more medium-sized boats, smaller craft besides, scores of dinghies. Mooring buoys are in the water. On the beach are nets drying in the sun, old boats with planks stove in, fish crates, crayfish pots, ropes, oars, barrels, men sitting in the sun in the way of fishermen, gossiping, smoking; men with weather cut deep into their skin; wind, rain, and sun, the sea on their faces and arms.

The names on the boats tell you something: "St. Guiseppe," "Princess Jolanda," "Pincipe Umberto," "San Antonia," "Amondo Daiz," "Revittorio," "Rosalia," "St. Marie de Lobra," "Cita da Sovrento." They tell you the boats are owned and worked mostly by Italians. Some of the other names tell you more: "Wild Duck," "Nancy Lee," "Vagabond." They tell you not all the boats have Italian owners or Italian crews.

But most of them have; and at Island Bay there is a colony of Italians that has been there many years. In the streets you notice the black hair, the olive skins. Sometimes you hear strange talk. On the gateways are Italian names of a music teacher, a dressmaker. There are probably several hundred Italians in that colony. The menfolk are mostly fishermen, and their work supplies Wellington with fish.

For the catching of that fish they use sardines as bait. And that's why we were introduced to the "Rex" and her crew; her crew of five—Zi, Marianna, Cos, Raphael (Fey for short) and Bill. All except Bill were either born in Italy or in New Zealand of Italian parents. Large laughing fellows they are, carefree, with huge appetites, and voices used to roaring above wind, sea, thunderstorm. They are skilled fishermen, and capable seamen. They have to be when their days are spent in Cook Strait, where the seas can lash from calm to waves, roaring houses high, in less than hours, where the rip of the tide can tear the bottom from a boat or a man from the deck, where the wind can be as dangerous in treachery as the grey hidden rocks often hardly covered.

It was barely dawn, but just off the beach the gulls were working, diving, smack from sky into water. We were up with those birds that morning, and before the fishermen. It was cold waiting, cold in spite of fat layers of singlets, flannel shirts, cotton shirts, jerseys, wind jackets, heavy boots, two pairs of socks. The wind was cold from the sea. We shivered, and cursed every fish in the sea.

Jump quickly, before boots are swamped full with water, into the dinghy. Shove off. One man, Marianna, rows, standing, legs braced, shoulders rhythmically heaving into even regular strokes. He faces forward, pulling the oars from that position. With Island Bay fishermen, this is the



Marianna in the cabin of the
"Rex."