

One Day at the Kitchen in November 1937

It is late fall day, mid-November, the weather is cold with a good half-yard of snow, and quiet waters at sea. It is only six o'clock in the morning.

A faint sound from the bedroom door, and into the kitchen comes grandfather well dressed in woollen clothes.

A match is lit, and soon there is light in the kerosine lamp. Then there is the stove to get going. He puts fire to some frail birch bark and takes chips out of a box, the small store he made ready last night. Soon there is nice purring from the big kitchen stove as the good birch logs gradually catch fire.

A cosy warm lue spreads in the room together with the food smell of coffee, and the scent of burning birch.

Today he is going fishing at the dawn of the day, so he has a slice of bread and a cup of coffee, and the grand-dad is ready to go. It is only half past six and the other people in the house are still asleep.

But soon mummy is down from the loft, and has a lot of things to do before she and granny go to the cow-house. The cows are milked and all the cattle get hay, which has to be shared carefully, because short of fodder.

Well back inside again, we the children have come down into the kitchen. That is Jens and I, cause daddu has a lot of chores, things to be made or repaired for the home and for his fishing-nets.

Now grand-dad has come ashore with fine fresh cod for dinner. He has another slice or two of bread and a drop of coffee and relaxes a bit. Then he goes out to chop wood, because wood-logs are needed all the time both in the house and in the small log-house where fish and meat is smoked.



Those who have some spare minutes carry in logs and turf. And there is the water. The big barrel in the porch must be filled up. And the animals must have water too.

We kids play on the floor and crawl around. The cat comes in from the barn and is cold and she smells of hay, and there are lugs to be got at the fire-side, and some drops of milk.



Mummy is baking bread and 'gomme' today at the same time as she patches one of daddy's trousers. We are allowed to make pat-cakes of the dough and that tastes very good with butter and sirups.

Granny is carding wool which will be spun later today, and then she knits sea-mittens, big ones that have to be shrimped carefully to become thick and warm.

Granny has come in again, and is busy making "komags" that is foot-wear made from the finest hides from the farm cattle, especially worked out to become soft and fine.

Daddy is outside, doing some job in the boat-house, something with the nets that have to be attended to, and which he will take home.

It is cold outside, so many things have to be done in the kitchen, preferably in the morning, but also in the afternoon.

Mummy has cooked the fish that daddy caught early in the morning, and we eat at half past noon, and get lovely soup with the food. The grown-ups have a nap after dinner. Now it must be quiet in the house, and we small ones are doing small things, we try to knit a little, that is difficult to manage, but it is exciting to do grown-up things,

Jens is only three, so he cannot do very much, but he tries to thread the needles for the cod-nets. Training must begin early, or as a good old Norwegian provert says "To make a good hook you must start bending the wood early".

Then, in the afternoon the grown-ups have many things to do. Granny and daddy have carried in the long nets, that need repairs. There are lots of holes, and theris hands go swiftly. We the kids

try to help by threading the needles, and then we get small prize, a prume or two, hidden in the yam-ball. Granny and mummy have taken out the two spinning-wheels, nd now they go in full speed. Grany's wheel gives out a nice good sound, and I thumble around on the floor trying to touch the pedal of her spinning-wheel, thinking that I can help her threading, but she does not allow me to do that.

Jens and I have been out for a while today, in the snow and frost, and we have made a snoow-house to play in. Now our thich woolen foot-wear, "the lugger" hang above the stove same as granny's sea-mittens and other clothing that needs drying.

Mummy and granny often sing hymns and songs. It is very nice, and I learn to sing with them. Granny sings in a special way, slowly and melanchoy, I think. She will also ask us to crack riddles; that is fun and exciting."What is a thick-bellied mother and a lunch-backed father and three headless kids"? Well, just you guess ?



They are also talking about their family and back-ground and that is important, I understand.

About five o'clock is the afternoon meal, caraway tea and milk, drink with new-baked bread with “gomme” and jam. The grown-ups carry on with their work, grandfather and daddy are making thole-spins for the boat, and teeth for the hay-rakes, everything is hand-made, mostly with the sheath knife.

Mummy and granny are knitting mittens and socks, all very big, to be shunk to become thick and warm. They are spinning yarn for it.

Daddy is going to the Lofoten fisheries after New Year, and many a thing must be made or mended till then. Mummy is making pollardporridge for supper. She has already heated slates on the oven and has already put them into our beds, so it will be cosy and snug when we go to bed. We eat our porridge with a “butter-eye” in it and cinnamon and sugar strew upon it. It is very good, and we get full and drawsy after a long day.

We kids go up into the loft with mummy and creep into the warm beds. We say our evening prayers and soon we are asleep.

The old people have also gone to bed now, and then it has to be quiet in the house, but mummy and daddy have still some things to do and this is the only time they have alone for themselves. He makes new nets for the Lofoten fisheries and carries on with that and she sits at the spinning-wheel making new yarn.

Now they also plan new work that has to be done before Christmas. They talk, and they feel the sorrow and grief after the little daughter they lost with whooping cough in the spring, and they have a quiet evening hour together.

Fauske 15.05.2002-08-17

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