

What the Cat Dragged In

Isobel Horsburgh

When Miffy came in backwards through the cat-flap, they feared it would be like the time they had to prise half a baby rabbit out of his jaws, burying it after dark behind the shed.

Angie distracted the cat with a piece of Red Leicester.

His trophy lay squirming on the kitchen lino. "If that's one of next door's Koi, it's going down the toilet, dead or alive," said Ron.

It wasn't.

They put the mermaid in a tumbler of salty water. It had a narrow face, slanted eyes, no eyebrows, and a tangle of spinach hair. Its thin lips were open, but no sound came out they could hear.

Later, as she grew, she travelled in a customised golf bag, peridot eyes avid. She shredded the camisole Angie made her, with needle teeth.

Freed off Tynemouth Pier, she wailed up a hurricane.