

BATTLE OF THE BREAD:

At Sittard in Holland, all the bakers are busy with the so-called "Mid-Lent Crescents" - a tradition which was based on the Miracle of the Leaves and Fishes - but which has developed through the centuries into a very special day for Dutch children. When the crescents are ready, they're carted to the Kollenberg, a hill just outside the town. The baker's work is only just beginning.

From the hilltop, they throw the crescents to a scrambling crowd of 2,000 youngsters - all the children in Sittard. And once the battle starts - it's everyone for himself!

Years ago, the ceremony was much quieter - the crescents were hidden in bushes and hedges, and had to be searched for - but the people of the town decided it was more fun this way.

Of course, the bigger boys are well to the fore, and sometimes the going's a bit tough, for the smaller youngsters. But sooner or later, everybody gets one; and before long, grown-ups are joining in too!

In Sittard, you have to be something of a clown to make a good baker.

The last crescents are handed out - though the crowd take a lot of persuading that there really aren't any left. Peace returns as the warriors settle to enjoy their loot. They've earned it - and so has he!