

## Characters – The Nature Reserve Sue Fairclough

*Scene is in a car park at a nature reserve*

*Characters: Isobel (Pat), Ben (Mike), Sister Mary Bernadette (Jane), Delia (Sally), Costin (Colin), Man (Edward)*

ISOBEL: Oh, isn't this just perfect! I love this time of year.

BEN: What? Er – yes -

ISOBEL: Did you bring binoculars?

BEN: Binoculars?

ISOBEL: Ben, this is a nature reserve – people come here to enjoy the wildlife. Just because we may not see much of it - once we're cuddled up in a nice quiet, cosy hide together - doesn't mean that we shouldn't look the part.

BEN: I'm not so sure this is such a good idea, Isobel. Why couldn't we meet up as usual before choir practice - suppose one of Daphne's friends is here? Where is this hide? I hope it is as hidden away as you say.

ISOBEL: Don't worry – it's not marked on the reserve's map so visitors just walk passed the path to it. It might be a bit over grown, that's all.

BEN: Oh-oh, there's another car.

ISOBEL: It's a public car park, there will be other cars! Don't be so jumpy.

BEN: Well, let's get going.

SR MARY B: Hello! I say – hello! Oh, I thought it was you – Mr Truscott, isn't it? I teach Emily. Such a lovely girl with the voice of an angel.

BEN: *(under his breath)* Oh no, that's done it. *(normal voice)*: Sister Mary Bernadette, what a surprise. Lovely weather this afternoon, isn't it?

SR MARY B: Oh yes, this is one of my favourite places to go on my day off.

BEN: Good, good. Well, enjoy yourself. We must be off. Nice to see you. Er – yes – bye!

SR MARY B: Oh, you must be Emily's Mum. I don't think we have met. I believe Emily said you are a teacher too. So difficult to get to school events and parent's evenings when you are dealing with your own school programme too, isn't it?

ISOBEL: Um - yes.

BEN: Oh, how remiss of me. This is Mrs Truscott, I mean – Daphne. This is Daphne.

DELIA: Ah! There you all are. Nice and prompt too. We have a couple more to come. Let's hope they are not going to keep us waiting.

ISOBEL/BEN/SR MARY B: What? / Excuse me? / Oh, no –

DELIA: Do you all have binoculars? Ah yes (*to Isobel*), I see you have a good pair. Don't forget your cameras too. I am quite an experienced photographer, though normally it's a different sort of wild life. I will be happy to give advice, if needed. Now – important news - I've just heard from one of the rangers that a red-necked phalarope has been seen. Very unusual here, and at this time of year. Must have taken the wrong turning down the M6 (*laughs at her own joke*)

SR MARY B: My camera's in my car - I'll just pop back to get it (*exit*).

BEN: I'm sorry, but I think there has been a –

DELIA: That must be one of the people we are waiting for just arriving now. Hello – over here please.

COSTIN: Eh – you talk to me?

DELIA: We can't wait here too long – there's a red-necked phalarope about.

COSTIN: He from Moscow? I don't like Reds. If he dangerous – well I tell him to get lost. I am Costin and can handle anything. Lady, you know where is Bernie?

DELIA: Bernie? The office didn't provide me with names, and phalaropes should be further north, in the arctic tundra by now.

COSTIN: *(to Ben)* You Bernie?

BEN: No.

SR MARY B: *(returning)* Oh dear, I wonder if someone can help? I have a bit of a problem with my car.

COSTIN: You know Bernie?

SR MARY B: Me? Well, I'm Sister Mary Bernadette.

COSTIN: Hey, Bernadette – Bernie! Nice touch – I like the disguise.

SR MARY B: I'm sorry, don't know what you mean?

DELIA: Look, I don't think we can hang around any longer if we want to catch the phalarope. *(to Sr Mary B)* Have you got your equipment?

SR MARY B: That's the problem. I was getting my stuff out of the car and shut the boot and the keys are now locked in it.

DELIA: Oh, well – we'll have to share. *(to Costin)* What about your stuff?

COSTIN: Who is dealing with who here? My stuff goes to Bernie and no one else. No reds, no you. You want a share – you deal with these two *(indicating Isobel & Ben)*

BEN: What are you talking about?

ISOBEL: Yes, what is all this? We just came here for a quiet – a quiet walk.

SR MARY B: Do any of you know how to get into a locked car without keys?

COSTIN: OK, Bernie, leave it to Costin. I have been getting into cars since I am a kid – no problem. You got the dosh in there?

SR MARY B: Dosh? Oh, well, of course I can pay you for your services.

COSTIN: Hah-hah. I like your style. Another car comes – this place is a bit busy for my liking. We be quick and do the deal, yes? You give me dosh, and I give you smack.

SR MARY B: Well, really, I am not in the habit of –

COSTIN: Bernie, you crease me. If you not in the habit – why you dress up like a nun, huh?

MAN: Hello there! Sorry to be so late. Got held up in the village – placing is full of police – buzzing around like bees!

COSTIN: Police? Come on Bernie, let's get to your car and do the deal quick, then I split. *(exit)*

DELIA: *(to Man)* Did you book?

MAN: What? Speak up, I'm a bit hard of hearing. Did you say book? Well, glad someone remembers it. Published a good few years ago now.

DELIA: I said – DID YOU BOOK ONTO THE TOUR OF THE RESERVE?

MAN: Oh, yes, J R Hartley's the name.

DELIA: *(to Isobel and Ben)* Did you book?

BEN: No!

DELIA: You can't come on the tour then.

BEN: Good – I don't want to. In fact, I'm going home. Isobel, are you coming?

ISOBEL: *(whispering to Ben)* It's Daphne – remember?

DELIA: Well, you should have said. Ah – looks like that fellow has got the nun's boot open. Good gracious, two police cars!

ISOBEL: Oh my, for a big man, that fellow can certainly move fast!

MAN: Not fast enough for our police. I say, jolly well done - handcuffs and all!

DELIA: Did you write a book on Fly Fishing, by any chance.

MAN: Why yes – do you have a copy?

*Exit all*