

THE VICAR'S WIFE'S STORY

This is a true story, although it didn't happen in Bosham!

She still doesn't know quite why they reacted as they did, but she'll not forget it. And nor will they.

It all started innocently enough, at a local lunch for the Women's Institute, held in the church hall. As the leader of the local WI and the vicar's wife, she'd overseen and indeed done much of the organising, so as some 50 ladies tucked into their desserts, she began to relax, a little.

Everything was going smoothly, with fewer than the usual crop of niggles. Mrs Wiggins got her vegetarian option after they'd discovered that there were two of them—Mrs Wigginses, not vegetarian options. The second one was a last minute and unexpected guest. She'd proved very gracious when, with cutlery practically poised, her promising lasagne disappeared, to be replaced by a brace of lamb chops. The other Mrs Wiggins was relieved and there was barely a feather ruffled.

So the vicar's wife began to relax. She had to say a few words to introduce the guest speaker, but that held no terrors—she was a confident speaker and years married to a busy vicar and the WI meant she'd had plenty of practice.

Indeed, she looked forward to the talk on beekeeping, as her husband was showing increasing interest in the subject, and she felt it might be something to encourage, with his retirement on the horizon. And she liked honey and loved honeycomb. Thoughts of hot buttered toast heavy with honeycomb floated sweetly, slowly and seductively through her mind.

She brought herself back to earth but allowed herself to enjoy the buzz, the conversation and occasional laughter as 'her' ladies clearly enjoyed themselves.

Then the door clattered open as a young man entered at the far end of the hall, carrying a large box, which he put down near the centre of the stage, before disappearing through the door again. She knew the beekeeper man was due to bring some props and guessed that they were arriving, well timed for his talk. Hopefully there might be some samples too.

The young man reappeared with more boxes and assorted bits, and the buzz of conversation slowed slightly. She realised that she was not alone in appreciating that the young man was very attractive, with a bright smile that flashed round the room like a searchlight. She thought she heard, or maybe felt, a slight sigh as he left again.

The buzz resumed, only to drop again as he reappeared and started to plug wires into a nearby socket. Heads turned to watch expectantly.

She hadn't realised that beekeeping presentations might be so complicated and struggled to remember the details of the conversation with Mr Barnes when she invited him to talk.

The young man checked all the connections, clearly pronounced himself satisfied and pushed a button. The room exploded to raunchy rock and he started to dance.

She remembered something about bees doing a waggle dance, wondered what it was and if this was an unusual way of illustrating the concept. It was certainly memorable; all her ladies were transfixed, all conversation dead and forgotten.

Then she realised that the young man was starting to undress...

She strode across the room, hands help up to stop the show. Again, she thought she heard that sigh in the silence before she spoke: "What are you doing?"

"I'm the entertainment you ordered," he said.

"I ordered nothing of the sort," she countered.

→

“This is the Village Hall, and I’m booked for 2.30...”

“This is the Church Hall,” she interrupted. “The Village Hall is at the other end of the bypass, nearly a mile away. Leave now and you’ll only be a few minutes late.”

With a few more flashes of that searchlight smile, he collected his kit and left.

She still doesn’t know why they reacted as they did, but she’ll not forget it. And nor will they. For weeks, at least half ‘her’ ladies wouldn’t speak to her. She’s still trying to decide whether it was because they thought she’d hired the young man, or because she stopped his performance!

© December 2012 *Robin Dickeson*