

BLUE CORDELIA

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1. EXT. FOREST - DAY

Head to toe in dark green, two men lie prone with binoculars pressed against their eyes. A book plastered with diagrams of rare birds lies open in front of them.

MALCOLM

Jerry was at the Club last Wednesday telling everyone about blackbirds.

SIMON

What about 'em?

MALCOLM

The first five notes of one of its calls are the same as the song 'Barbie Girl' by Danish-Norwegian pop-group, Aqua. As if that was news.

SIMON

Oh, didn't know that.
(chuckles)
That's funny.

Malcolm throws a glance to Simon who's busy peering down binoculars.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Cheers for invitin' me to join ya, Malcolm.

MALCOLM

No need to thank me, Simon. As President of the Club it is my duty to show virgin birdwatchers the ropes. All Committee Member duties are outlined at the AGM.

SIMON

Oh yeah the AGM! Ya doing a barbecue? Can't wait to meet the other birders.

MALCOLM

You are not a birder, Simon. You are a birdwatcher. You need more experience to call yourself a birder..

SIMON

Sorry...And what d'ya call what we're doin'? Tw...tweet-

MALCOLM

Twitching - it is what birdwatchers call the pursuit of a rare bird. In our case, the Blue Cordelia. It sings the most exquisite song. A kind of-

As he is about to mimic the Blue Cordelia, a distinctive, real BIRD SONG dances through the forest.

A look of realisation smacks Malcolm in the face. He becomes deathly silent and drops right down, binoculars glued to his eyes.

SIMON

Is that it?

MALCOLM

(hushed tone)

Shut up!

Malcolm scans the canopy for sight of the bird. He can't see it.

SIMON

...I think I can see it!

MALCOLM

(becoming slightly panicked)

Where?

SIMON

(unhelpfully, vaguely pointing)

Just kinda over there.

MALCOLM

(in a whispered tone)

Where can you see it, Simon?!

SIMON

...It's beau'iful...oh my god...the feathers...they're so...blue...

Malcolm tries to see where Simon is pointing his binoculars.

SIMON

Incredible. My firs' bird...I'm gonna take a photo.

Simon reaches round for his camera.

MALCOLM

Show me where it is, Simon!

SIMON

I told ya, sorta up on that branch.

He brings the camera's viewfinder to his eyes and begins snapping.

SIMON
What a beau'ey.

MALCOLM
You are lying!

SIMON
I ain't lyin'. Look.

Simon tilts the camera to show him. At that moment the bird song stops.

Malcolm clutches the camera with the kind of gentle awe one would a baby.

MALCOLM
...Stunning.

A handful of birds flutter through the trees, making the leaves RUSTLE. Malcolm arcs his head up, secretly hoping to see the Blue Cordelia.

SIMON
I can't wait to tell 'em at the Club.

MALCOLM
Tell them what exactly?

SIMON
That I found the bird. Show 'em the photo.

MALCOLM
...those binoculars you have. Who's are they?

SIMON
...they're...your's...

MALCOLM
And that camera?

SIMON
David gave it to me.

MALCOLM
David is the Club's treasurer. He oversees our assets, such as that DSLR camera. As President of the Pinefield Birdwatching Club I, however, have ultimate authority over all assets.

SIMON

What ya tryna say, Malcom?

MALCOLM

It is standard stuff, Simon. That photo, this sighting. It is part of the Club. It is not your's.

SIMON

Er..yeah it is.

MALCOLM

I am afraid to say it is not.

SIMON

No one mentioned that to me.

MALCOLM

Well...it is in the Club Constitution.

SIMON

So what ya sayin' is...the Club owns the photo?

MALCOLM

Correct - and takes credit.

SIMON

And...you are...President of the Club.

MALCOLM

President of the Pinefield Birdwatching Club, that's right.

SIMON

So basically...ya own the photo.

MALCOLM

No. The Club owns the photo. I happen to be President.

Simon gets up.

SIMON

This is bollocks.

MALCOLM

My hands are tied, Simon.

SIMON

That photo is mine.

2. INT. CABIN KITCHEN - DAY

Malcolm is washing dishes. The camera is on the table. It takes him a few moments but soon he realises he's alone with the camera. The temptation proves too much and he makes a beeline for it.

He loads up the camera, sifts through the gallery and - within seconds - Malcolm's finger hovers over the delete button.

A beat.

He puts it down and steps away. But just as soon as he does, Malcolm swiftly reconsiders. He rushes back and urgently loads up the camera. But then...

SIMON

Malcolm?

He almost drops the camera in shock.

SIMON (CONT'D)

What ya doin' with the camera?

Simon steps into the kitchen.

MALCOLM

Oh...uh...I...I was reviewing the functionality. In-In line with Club procedure.

SIMON

Rubbish. You were tryna delete the photo, weren't ya?

MALCOLM

No, no, I would never.

SIMON

You're insane, Malcolm. That photo is mine. I own it. Not the club. Not you. Me. Moi. Simon.

MALCOLM

You don't own it.

SIMON

Course, I do.

MALCOLM

(yelling)
NO YOU DO NOT!

He slams a fist against the wall.

SIMON

What is wrong with you!?

MALCOLM
I deserve this.

SIMON
But I'm a birdwatcher too, I saw
the bird.

MALCOLM
Beginner's luck...it was just
chance.

A beat.

SIMON
...Malcolm...I think I'm gonna head
back. Cheers for invitin' me to do
this with ya but its all too much.

MALCOLM
Don't you dare leave.

SIMON
I'm gonna go pack. I'll be out ya
'air in an hour.

Simon begins to walk away but briefly turns back.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Delete the photo for all I care.
Already made copies.

Malcom seethes.

LATER

Simon stands in the kitchen putting the last few things in a
large camp-style rucksack.

MALCOLM
...I'm sorry, Simon. I over-
reacted.

SIMON
And then some.

MALCOLM
Why don't you stay a few more
days...we still have the Crested
Kite to see.

SIMON
No, Malcolm. Thanks but no thanks.
I'm going 'ome.

Simon readies himself to leave. Malcolm panics.

MALCOLM
 (blurts out)
 I'll let you talk at the AGM.

Simon stops in his tracks.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 You can tell everyone about the
 Blue Cordelia.

SIMON
 Even the Committee Members?

MALCOLM
 Even the Committee Members.

Simon considers it.

SIMON
 ...No. I'm done with the Club.

MALCOLM
 Fine. Fine. I understand. But at
 least give me five minutes. Just
 five minutes. I want to say sorry.
 Properly.

SIMON
 ...Five minutes then I'm goin'.

MALCOLM
 Thank you. That's all I need. I'll
 make us some tea. Milk? Sugar?

SIMON
 Sugar, no milk.

Malcolm seems disgusted for a fleeting moment. He flicks on the kettle and speaks whilst putting two tea bags in mugs.

MALCOLM
 Simon. The way I have behaved on
 this trip has been unbecoming. To
 say the least. The Blue Cordelia is
 a beautiful creature and I let that
 get the better of me. To make
 matters worse I abandoned my duties
 as President of the Pinefield
 Birdwatching Club. I should have
 supported you but instead I let the
 thrill of the twitch take over.

The kettle pings off and Malcolm pours water into each mug, adding sugar into Simon's.

MALCOM (CONT'D)
 The truth is that I was jealous.

He passes Simon his mug of tea. Simon takes a sip, Malcolm watching him do so intently.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
I wanted to see the Blue Cordelia first. Did you know, until you, there had been no recorded sighting of the bird for 55 years.

SIMON
I 'adn't a clue.

Malcolm has to suppress frustration at Simon's ignorance.

MALCOLM
That could have been me.

Simon takes another sip.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
That will be me.

SIMON
Wha'dya mean?

MALCOLM
You don't know anything about birds, do you? You are not even a birder. Barely a birdwatcher.

SIMON
Where ya going with this?

MALCOLM
I know more about birds than you could possibly ever fathom. You don't get elected three consecutive terms as President for nothing.

SIMON
So?

MALCOLM
Sooo...did you know...the egg-shell of the Cornish Hornbill is actually toxic to humans...

SIMON
(sarcastically)
Great, real fascinatin'.

MALCOLM
Yes and if you were to crush the pearly white shell...

Simon starts coughing.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 ...you would get a substance that,
 to the untrained eye, looks a
 little bit like...sugar.

He smiles at Simon who looks down at his tea.

SIMON
 What have you done!?

Simon gets up but is immediately hit by a wave of dizziness.
 He staggers around.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 Section 3a, Part I, of the
 Pinefield Birdwatching Club
 Constitution - all photos taken
 with Club property belong to the
 Club.

Simon takes a lunging step towards Malcolm but misses his
 balance and stumbles to the floor.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 You got lucky, you talentless hack!

Simon writhes on the floor. He tries to speak but the words
 that come out are slurred and mushy.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 (sarcastically)
 Sorry I can't hear you? What was
 that? No no you'll have to say it
 again.

Simon wriggles painfully towards Malcolm..

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 At least you got to see the Blue
 Cordelia before you went!

He tries to grab Malcolm's trouser leg.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
 Not that anyone will know!
 (mimicking conversation)
 Simon? Missing? Oh my, I am so
 sorry to hear that officer. No, he
 cancelled at the last minute. I
 went by myself. I wish I could be
 of more help officer.

Simon flails a hand towards his rucksack, contorting himself
 as he squirms on the floor.

Then he stops. The hand drops.

Malcolm stands proud in amongst the sudden silence. Simon's twisted, unmoving body lies before his feet. A drawn-out stillness envelopes the kitchen.

He walks over to the kitchen sink and pulls out two yellow gloves from the cupboard below.

Leaning down over Simon, he grabs both his hands and starts dragging the corpse out of the kitchen.

LATER

Malcolm sits at the table eating boiled eggs and soldiers . He dips each one meticulously into the egg. The CRUNCH and MUNCH of food is the only sound that ripples round this kitchen.

Then...a muffled BIRD SONG eeks out. The Blue Cordelia. It's loud - too loud.

Confusion nestles in Malcolm's face. His eyes dart around the room before finally locking onto Simon's rucksack, still sitting in the corner of the kitchen. Malcolm anxiously gets up. He takes a step towards Simon's bag. The sound gets louder. Another step. Louder.

He rushes over to the bag, yanking it open, and jamming his hand down. Malcolm pulls out clothes, throwing them onto the ground, before dragging out a speaker.

The bird song becomes clearer, blaring out from this speaker. He notices something else...a book...he pulls it out from the bag, glaring at it with a face of horrific realisation.

The book's title: "IMAGE EDITING FOR BEGINNERS"

THE END.