

# Y Blwch Sglodion

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Sam: mature male

Denise: mature female

Both characters are herring gulls living in Aberystwyth.

They have been lifelong acquaintances, perhaps 'mates' who hold few surprises for each other, and are ready to tell each other the truth.

Sam is a bloke. He's short on imagination and ambition and has a lot of friends like himself. He's been around the block a few times – at least, he thinks he has. His conversation can be crude.

Denise hopes that life holds something for her other than more of the same, and people like Sam. She affects good manners, but – when all is said and done – is a seagull.

*Lights up on SAM and DENISE. They are sat on top of the Cambria building, looking down at the passing world outside the pier, paying no particular attention to each other.*

*It is a grey day with mild drizzle. Sam eventually becomes bored of the silence.*

SAM Fancy a shag?

DENISE Oh, ha ha. Fnarr fnarr.

SAM Uh? You spoke?

DENISE (*Disdainfully*) The oldest seabird joke in the book. Beneath even your dignity, I might have hoped. Could you not, just once, find something to say that does not include a crudity?

SAM So-reee. But I was being serious.

Madam, may I invite you to a spot of, fnarr fnarr, intercourse?

DENISE Scarcely an improvement.

Do you and your chums ever think of anything else?

SAM '*Larus argentatus* is my name, procreation is my game'.

But yes – often my mind turns to the yummy product of Y Blwch Sglodion, which you see just there (*gesturing*). The very second we commence fnarr fnarr-ing down there, embarrassed parents of impressionable children will attempt distraction. A rain of chips.

'Rain of chips' ... 'Glaw sglodion' d'ya think?

DENISE Sam, your company is boorish.

Your Sunday name cuts no ice with me: you are, to use a phrase I have heard often, 'just another bloody seagull, no better than a rat with feathers'. As am I, come to that, although my manners are somewhat better.

And as you know very well, the time of year for 'fnarr fnarr, intercourse' is well past. And if you think I would ever consider that activity with you, you have another think coming. Where would you be when I was sitting on eggs for 4 weeks? And what about the babies? I do not see you as a responsible father. Your dalliance with Cousin Babs is well remembered in my family. She brought those twins up single winged and she has never regained her figure. I could weep for her.

SAM Oh get your beak out of the air, you snob. 'Cousin'? As you know, she is my second cousin via my Dad and a great niece via my Mum. This is, I believe, how seagulls ... pardon me, how *Larus argentatus* ... operate. I can remember sitting in this very position with her and making the same proposal as I just made to you – she was pretty swift in giving the idea the nod. Straight down to the paddling pool, and in no time at all, we heard 'Cor look Mum, what are those birds doing?', followed by a glaw sglodion as a parent tried to distract us.

Works every time, only on this occasion Babs got lucky with the opportunity to reinforce my end of the gene pool.

DENISE Your cod Welsh does not impress me. Those poor children.

SAM And Cousin Babs was never pure as the driven snow. If only half of what my mate Terry says is true //

DENISE // your mate Terry? He's not uttered a single truth since the day he was hatched.

SAM Yeah? Next time you see her, just ask Babs about Tesco car park last Boxing Day. Top deck, in full view of everyone.

Anyway, those twins are just fine; they're as happy as an osprey in an aquarium. They've moved to Barmouth. Chip shop every 20 yards ... 'Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive, but to be in Barmouth was very Heaven'.

*She gives him a contemptuous look. They resume sitting in silence.*

DENISE (*Catching sight of something in the distance*) Look - trawler's coming in. Fancy a bite?

SAM As you well know, I hate fish.

DENISE You have clearly spent a lot of time on Wikipedia. I recommend you go back there and check on the diet of *Larus argentatus* – fish, matey. Fish, fish and more fish.

SAM Hate fish. Always hated fish. Hated fish when I was still in the egg.

DENISE You don't think sometimes that with a diet of chips and mushy peas you are getting somewhat above your station in life?

SAM Oh no. I am an example of evolutionary development. Superior diet, superior intellect. Next step, opposable webs on the old feet. Or opposable wings - not quite made my mind up yet. Only a matter of time before I get a new genus name. The twins too - Babs will be so pleased about that trip to the paddling pool.

DENISE Has Evolution spotted the Council notices; 'Don't feed the seagulls'?

SAM No skin off my beak – they've been ploughing that furrow for years. Nobody down there takes any notice. I suspect I can read better than them at times.

*They resume sitting in silence.*

SAM Where do the starlings go in summer?

DENISE Dunno, actually. North, perhaps. Or South. Or East ...

SAM I hate starlings. I'm glad they've gone.

DENISE What have they done to you? I don't seem them competing for chips.

SAM All that bloody dancing at bedtime. It really hacks me off. Are they all gay or something?

DENISE Bigoted behaviour does not become you. Nor does your other behaviour, come to that, but homophobia is new to you.

SAM I'm not homophobic. But all that swooping about for no reason – it's gay. It attention seeking. Every night that bloke is there with the cameras, and all they're trying to do is get into the *Mail Online*.

DENISE Oh come off it Sam. You're just jealous.

SAM That I am not.

But if we all started behaving like that there'd be a fuss. See those headlines: 'Aberystwyth wowed by A Flock of Seagulls'. Maybe better in Welsh: 'Diadell o Wylandod'.

DENISE Don't make me laugh.

SAM Actually, Terry and I tried it with some of the lads last Easter.

DENISE Please tell me you're joking.

SAM Not at all. We spent 10 minutes watching that lot doing their gay dance, then copied them. It's not so hard: you keep one eye on the chap in front, and one on the chap on the left, and one on the one on the right, and see where the mood takes you. It helps if you have three eyes of course.

DENISE How did it go?

SAM Pretty well, though I say so myself. For a bit.

DENISE How many of you were there?

SAM Oh, quite a few. Five, six maybe.

DENISE (*Laughing*) I think the starlings manage a few more.

And just how long did your 'dance' last?

SAM Oh it was going very well. Terry was out front and we were just completing our second reverse twisted tuck, and ... well ...

DENISE Yes?

SAM Well we were at low latitude over Tesco's car park when Terry spotted another of your cousins. That one with the nice legs and the squint in her left eye.

DENISE Dolores?

SAM That's the girl. Well, it was 'fnarr fnarr' season, to use your terminology, and Terry rather forgot why we were all there. So he is single-mindedly paying her a visit, so to speak, and we were dutifully following him. If we hadn't pulled out just in time it would have been 'fnarr fnarr fnarr fnarr fnarr'.

DENISE You disgust me. You all do.

SAM Don't look at me! That sort of thing is not my cup of tea at all. Anyway, you learn that

whoever leads that stupid business for the starlings doesn't get easily distracted.

DENISE So five seagulls made asses of themselves before embarking on gang rape. Yes, I can see the Mail headline.

SAM I hate starlings.

*She gives him another contemptuous look. They resume sitting in silence.*

SAM Did you see *Hinterland* last night?

DENISE It's a repeat. Another repeat.

SAM Maybe. But Series 2, Episode 3 features a very long sequence starring me.

There's a house on Prospect Street; you can perch in the back yard and watch their telly through the upstairs window; on warm nights the window is propped open and you can hear it too.

Watch the Welsh version mind; I don't appear in the English one.

DENISE You were the laughing stock of the whole colony over that, you know.

SAM I'm sorry?

DENISE 'Oh look, a camera!', then all you could see for weeks was Sam perching in shot. Embarrassing. I'm amazed you weren't a backdrop in every scene of every episode of every series.

SAM Truth to tell, they had a high quality catering van that often distracted me. But Series 2, Episode 3 (Fersiwn Cymraeg) features one fine bloody *Larus argentatus* for about 5 uninterrupted minutes.

DENISE Embarrassing.

*They resume sitting in silence. The drizzle has stopped.*

DENISE The rain's stopped.

*(Sniffing the air)* Student barbecue alert! We eat!

SAM *(Likewise sniffing, and looking around)* Down there ... by the jetty.

DENISE OK, all set? In we go.

*They both spread their wings ready to swoop*

SAM No. Mission abort.

DENISE Why?

SAM I know that lot. They're fucking vegans.

DENISE And?

SAM The very worst kind. Have you tasted tofu?

DENISE (*Disappointed*) Oh. Ugh.

SAM I hate tofu. (*pause*)

Where do the students go in summer?

DENISE No idea. Same place as the starlings?

SAM I hate students.

DENISE Oh come on. Is it their gay dancing or what?

SAM Not being a habitu  of Yoko's, I cannot comment on their dancing. I loathe them and I especially loathe fucking tofu.

DENISE They aren't all vegans. Chicken nuggets - yum!

SAM Chicken nuggets do not make the error of parading about the place lording their so called intelligence. I hate students. They think they are so clever. And their endless smoking of that stuff that makes them laugh and just makes me cough. Although Terry says there's something to it . . .

DENISE All a problem easily solved.

SAM Yes?

DENISE Enrol in the university. Get yourself a degree. Beat the enemy from within. If, that is, you are so clever yourself.

SAM (*Giving her a withering look*) I hate students. And I detest tofu.

*They resume sitting in silence.*

DENISE Now I'm really hungry. Sure you don't want some fish?

SAM You can stick the fish up . . . (*DENISE gives him a sharp look*).

Fancy a shag?

DENISE On the strict understanding that it's a food ploy and nothing more – oh, all right. If it leads to a meal, I'll do it. But that's the only reason, OK?

SAM On my Grandmother's honour. She's your Grandmother too. And your Auntie. And my cousin. And . . .

DENISE Let's get on with it. Where?

SAM Usual place – paddling pool.

There's talk of the Council closing it for ever. I might have to move to Barmouth.