

Hare

Characters

- Publican** Male - early middle age dressed smart casual. First impressions are of an affable jobsworth.
- Hare** Female – a bit younger. A walker/hiker dressed as such. In movement and actions she should be hare-like.

Synopsis

A Publican finds something purporting to be a hare in his pub at closing time. She will not move when asked. The publican suddenly snaps and pretends to be a hare strangler. He knows more about hares than he is letting on as his wife, who was killed in a fall, was very fond of them. The publican reveals more than he means to before the hare escapes to continue her watching.

Hare

Publican is mopping out (or brushing) and upending chairs onto tables till he comes to Hare, whom he stares down his nose at, but Hare is in her form and thinks she can't be seen

He moves round the table till he gets to the last chair that Hare is sitting on. He continues to stare at Hare, but Hare ignores him

Publican Time to go now madam

Hare is frozen, moulded into the chair

Publican Time to go

Hare shrinks even further into the chair

Publican I said it's time to go

Hare You can't see me

Publican I can see you perfectly well and it's after drinking up time

Hare I look like the chairs

Publican You look like a fool. Finish your drink and go home. It's the law

Hare It's water

Publican What is

Hare My drink. So I'm not consuming alcohol and it doesn't matter and besides, nobody can see me because I look like the chairs

Publican I'm not wasting my time watching you finish a drink you haven't even paid for

Hare *(Indicating audience)* They're still here

Publican It's their local. They keep me going through the winter. I shared out a sandwich earlier so they're all drinking with a meal

Hare You can't see me

Publican Out! I'm fed up with you hikers on the coast path. Coming in here any time of the day with your wet cagoules and muddy boots, dripping on

the floor, taking two hours to drink a glass of lemonade, and eating your own sandwiches whilst you dry your feet in front of my fire

Hare I'm a hare. Licensing regulations don't apply

Publican If you're a hare, I'm a bleedin' greyhound

Hare sinks lower still

Publican Woof!

Hare is almost under the table

Publican Why do nutters always pick my pub?

Hare I hopped in. The door was open

Publican A real hare would be frightened of people and stay well clear. I know a bit about hares. I used to be married to a hare-lover. Boo!

Hare There's nowhere left to hide on the hill. I was curious

Publican Come on! Out!

Hare The pasture topper cut off all my patches of reeds

Publican Do I throw you out, or would you rather I called the police?

Hare No-one noticed me in here until you came. It was a perfect place to hide this evening

Publican Have you heard of licensing laws?

Hare I prefer to sit in the sun

Publican Licensing laws are for dealing with spongers like you

Hare Watching

Publican goes to lift Hare bodily, but as soon as he touches her, she leaps up and dodges round the space. The publican corners her and advances on her. She freezes.

Publican Yeah, I see you now. You are a hare. You're just a bloody animal. I should ring your neck and jug you

Hare jumps up to him, boxes him vigorously on the sides of his face then leaps off

Publican Animal!

Hare You said you'd wring my neck

Publican And why not – it's all you're good for. What've you ever done for the world?

Hare I dance mad circles on the evening hill. I lurk in sandy scrapes beneath the thistles. I graze the summer bents and chase across the snowy night. I box the moon. That is enjoyment enough

Publican And what is the use in any of that?

Hare I live

Publican I live too. I live by bloody hard work.

Publican advances on the hare again, feeling his ear

Publican You've assaulted me. I should call the police

Hare You would wring my neck

Publican It'd not illegal to kill an animal

Hare You would kill an animal?

Publican If it suited me. I'm human I can do what I like. Man, so I have been told, was given dominion over animals. He's more important

Hare You would kill me?

Publican advances to Hare, who petrified, sinks down to the floor. He pulls her back up by the neck and stares into her face for a moment

Publican You were one of them, weren't you

Hare wriggles free

Hare Shot at

Publican You were one of those watching

Hare Hunted by dogs

Publican Looking down your long nose, watching

Hare Poisoned by sprays

Publican She shouted out to you, didn't she. Shouted to her hares

Hare They rip out my hedgerows

Publican It wasn't my fault you know. It wasn't my fault

Hare A green desert. Neverending sameness

Publican I only did what any bloke would have done

Hare In spring I hide my leverets amongst rushy clumps.

Publican But she shouted for her hares

Hare My leverets lie quiet

Publican She preferred an animal

Hare To be cut to pieces by the flail mowers

*Publican lunges out and holds her by the scruff of the neck, facing away from him.
Hare puts her hands up, miming a pair of binoculars*

Publican You talk to those bleedin' hares more than you talk to me.

Hare They understand me. You never could listen, could you.

Publican To a hare? They don't say anything

Hare You have no patience to sit and watch

Publican Why do we always have to come up on these crags

Hare There are hares here running in the fields in the evening

Publican Exactly my point

Hare They're watching us watching them

Publican That's what I don't like

Hare Just watch. Here, borrow my binoculars

Publican No thanks. Wake me up when you've finished

Hare is now standing on the table, looking through her imaginary binoculars. The Publican releases his hold on her neck and steps back

Hare Don't eat that you silly thing it's a thistle. There! I told you.

Publican *(to himself)* You're so bloody cocky

Hare Your friend's up there. Sit up and look

Publican *(To himself)* I can't move at home for books on natural history.
(Turning round) Stop watching me!

Hare That one's female, definitely. I wonder if she has leverets? Two males and a female, and a possible youngster. But all keeping themselves to themselves

Publican You're so cocky

Publican creeps up behind her and jerks her. She falls forward off the table

Publican turns round and shouts

Publican Stop watching me!

Hare To watch with empty mind

Publican I only pushed you a little, like that. Only a little joke, just meant to give you a scare and shut you up, but you fell forward, all stiff like a tree.

Hare You know nothing of the joy of a spring night

Publican You landed head first on the rocks. I think you did it deliberately *(He turns)* Stop watching me!

Publican throws himself over the table

Hare It is enough just to live

Publican raises his head back above the table

Publican I'm a hero! I broke my arm trying to catch her, see, and tumbled down with her.

Hare Sitting in the evening sun

Publican I got the insurance! I'll buy a pub on it and bin the natural history books!

Hare I still have leverets

Publican You're always there, on the hill, watching me

Hare But you won't find them

Publican Shape shifter! Witch!

Publican leaps on Hare and attempts to throttle her

Publican Just a little twist to your neck, bring my knee up in your back and it will all be over

Publican appears to have throttled Hare, who is limp, but she suddenly flicks from his grasp and boxes his ears again. He subsides as much with humiliation as with any pain

Hare I don't like this place. I don't think I'll come again. It is all the same. No sun, no rain, no wind, no space to leap.

Publican is a heap on the floor, hands over his ears.

Hare I shall stay on my hill till you destroy it utterly. *(Beat)* Watching.

Hare leaps out, leaving the publican wrecked in the middle of the space
