

BAMBOOZLED

SAMPLE SCRIPT

SCENE SIX

The logo of the 'Cairngorms National Park' is displayed prominently on a large sign. The stage is empty. After a few moments, a red squirrel (Nut) enters and scurries here and there. A few moments later, a mountain hare (Boulder) enters, then a red deer (Rose), a pine marten (Marty), and finally a Scottish wildcat (Blacktip). They gather together.

Rose Good evening, everyone. Right, best behaviour please. There's five of us have arrived safely, and five of us need to depart.

Nut She's talking you, Blacktip.

Blacktip Yes, Nut, I know. And to Marty! I'm not the only predator in the Cairngorms, you know.

Marty You are to me!

Blacktip You needn't worry about me: I've already eaten today.

Rose This late winter snow isn't making things easy, though, is it? I was hoping to be back onto the grasses by now. How about you, Boulder?

Boulder Yes, I'm still on the heather. It'll do for now.

Marty You're still very white. It makes it very difficult to spot you in the snow.

Boulder Yes, I'm well aware of that. And very grateful too.

Nut It's been a long winter, that's for sure. I'm almost out of nuts.

Blacktip We'll have to come up with a new name for you. Like . . . Bushy!

Nut Very original.

Rose Does anyone know how long the snow is likely to last?

Marty Well, none of the birds have returned yet, that's for sure.

Blacktip *(looking offstage)* What's that heading this way then? Looks like a bird to me.

Marty looks off in the same direction, then turns back.

Marty That's a crossbill. They stay all year round.

Rose He's coming straight towards us: he must have news.

They watch as the Scottish crossbill (Billy) flies onto the stage and takes up an elevated position close, but not too close, to the animals.

Billy You won't believe what I've just seen.

Rose What have you just seen?

Billy You'll probably tell me I'm lying.

Rose What is it?

Billy Or that I'm mad: that I've finally gone cuckoo.

Marty Will you just tell us?

Billy Honestly, I do wonder if I saw it all. Maybe I am going mad!

Blacktip (*fiercely*) What did you see?

Billy (*frightened*) A bear! I saw a bear! He had a big white head, fierce black eyes, and paws that could rip a wildcat to shreds in seconds.

Blacktip I beg your pardon?

Billy There's more too. I mean, there are more animals. Some humans, some kind of woolly deer, five peculiar little creatures with long tails. Oh, and the strangest looking animal I've seen in my entire life.

Nut What did it look like?

Billy It was the nose that caught my eye. No, I shouldn't even call it a nose. A snout, maybe. Strong enough to squeeze the life out of all of us, I imagine.

Bounder Oh my word. This is unbelievable. This is incredible.

Nut This is worrying.

Blacktip Rubbish! That's what this is. He's making it all up.

Billy I'm not! See, I knew you wouldn't believe me. I told you, didn't I!

Marty So where are they then? Which way are they heading?

Billy They're heading here! This way. I'm telling you, batten down the hatches, this could be the end of life as we know it.

He flies off quickly in the opposite direction from which he came. The others watch him go.

Bounder Well that was a turn up for the books! I mean, he's clearly talking nonsense, but . . . why?

Marty It's the snow. He's gone stir-crazy.

Blacktip That's not a thing.

Marty Sure it's a thing.

Blacktip No it's not.

Marty It really is.

Nut has squirreled himself off slightly upstage, and ideally elevated. He now calls over to the others.

Nut Um . . . everybody. I hate to tell you this, but there's a large black and white bear heading this way. And a whole load of others too.

Rose Oh my word! How near?

Nut No, not 'near'. Here!

Yun Zi, Andi, Sniff and the lemur family, closely followed by a tired-looking Angus, Isla and an assortment of other keepers, enter. The Cairngorm residents are open-mouthed and speechless, but find themselves subconsciously grouping together and moving a few steps backwards.

Yun Zi Good evening. Allow me to introduce myself: I am 云子 YúnZǐ (Yun Zi), a panda bear on route to Edinburgh Zoo from Inverness Airport.

The other animals stare back at him from the other side of the stage. They are too shocked to reply.

Yun Zi turns back to the animals with him, confused.

Yun Zi Did I say that in Mandarin?

Andi Maybe they don't speak English! We're in Scotland after all.

Red takes a few steps forwards.

Red Bonsoir. Nous allons au zoo d'Edimbourg depuis l'aéroport d'Inverness.

The other animals remain speechless.

Red Nope. Maybe it was my accent.

Andi I think they might just be in shock. Let me try.

She moves forward cautiously.

Andi Hello. We're on our way to Edinburgh Zoo. Can you tell us where we are? Nobody will hurt you.

Rose steps forwards.

Rose You are in the Cairngorms National Park. You must forgive our silence. It's not every day that you come face to face with . . . well, this.

Andi No, we're an unusual collection of animals. As you can probably tell, we're not from around here.

Rose Where are you from?

Andi Me? I'm from Peru.

Yun Zi I'm from China.

Blanche We're from Madagascar.

Sniff steps forward and is properly visible to the Scottish animals for the first time.

Sniff I'm from Brazil.

The Scottish animals are visibly shocked at the sight of Sniff, and there is a collective intake of breath. Rose is the first to recover.

Rose You are all very welcome. I have heard of these other places from our friends the birds. But I've never been myself.

Yun Zi We're all a long way from home. But we're on our way to a new home at Edinburgh Zoo.

Blacktip You seem to be taking a strange route.

Flora We're explorers.

Andi It's a long story: we've been journeying for two days already.

Blanche It's taking a bit longer than we had hoped.

Yun Zi But we'll get there. We'll definitely get there.

Rose Well, tonight you must rest. Be our guests here in the Cairngorms.

Andi It's certainly very beautiful here, even in the snow.

Bounder You should see it in the summer!

Nut I don't imagine there's a more beautiful place on Earth. Sit, rest your weary paws. We'll tell you all about it.

The travellers sit as the Scottish animals (and ensemble) sing Haven On Earth. Billy could also return to join in.