

ARE/EAR/AIR/ERE/EER

NARRATIVE

TREV'S ANGRY RAM

"Oi, Sam!" Trev hollered over the fence, his voice barely audible over the baa-ing of his flock. "Reckon you could lend a hand with the shearing? Got a ropey ram that needs a haircut."

Sam's head popped up like a meerkat, his eyes gleaming with the prospect of doling out unsolicited advice. "Fair enough, mate. I'll be right there."

As Sam sauntered over, Trev eyed him warily. His neighbour's enthusiasm for "helping" often led to more trouble than it was worth, but he was in a tight spot. The fierce ram had already sent two of his best shearers packing, and Trev was running out of options.

"Right," Sam declared, puffing out his chest. "I've been reading up on ram-wrangling techniques. We

need to approach with flair, like we're doing an interpretive dance."

Trev rolled his eyes. "Mate, it's shearing, not the blasted ballet."

Ignoring him, Sam continued, "We'll snare him with our zen-like presence, then—"

His words were cut short as the ram charged, sending both men scrambling. They barely dodged the woolly missile, falling in an ungraceful heap. "Crikey!" Trev exclaimed. "So much for your zen approach. Let's just grab the fella!"

After a few failed attempts that left them both wheezing and the ram looking decidedly smug, they finally managed to wrestle the beast to the ground.

Trev fumbled for the shears, his hands slick with lanolin and sweat.

"Steady on, mate," Sam advised, his face inches from the ram's rear. "You don't want to give him a reason to kick. I read that rams can—"

"Less yakking, more holding!" Trev interrupted, firing up the clippers.

As they grappled with the squirming sheep, Trev's hand slipped, sending the clippers veering off course. A startled yelp pierced the air, and it wasn't from the ram.

"Blimey, Trev!" Sam shouted. "Watch where you're aiming those things!"

But it was too late. A chunk of Sam's hair drifted to the ground, joining the woollen tufts scattered about.

With the ram finally shorn and released, the two men stood up, panting. Sam caught his reflection in a nearby water trough and let out a horrified gasp.

"Crikey, Trev! What have you done to my hair?"

Trev surveyed the damage, trying to hide his amusement. "Er, sorry 'bout that, mate. Bit of an occupational hazard, you might say."

Sam's once-full head of hair now sported a bizarre pattern, with patches missing here and there. "You've given me a bloomin' mullet!" he wailed.

"Now, now," Trev said, barely containing his laughter. "Let's not get too dramatic. We can fix this. I've got some scissors in the shed."

After a good half hour of snipping and trimming, accompanied by Sam's constant stream of advice on proper haircutting techniques, they stood back to admire their handiwork.

"Well," Trev said, scratching his head, "it's... unique."

Sam peered at his reflection again, his expression a mix of horror and resignation. "Unique? It's a nightmare! I look like I've been through a sheep-shearing machine!"

Trev clapped him on the back. "Look on the bright side, mate. At least you won't need a haircut for a

while. And who knows? Maybe you'll start a new trend. The 'Shorn Sheep Chic' look."

As they walked back to the house for a well-deserved beer, Sam grumbled, "Next time you need help with shearing, I'll be nowhere to be found."

Trev grinned. "Ah, don't be like that. You've got to admit, it's been a hell of a day. And just think of the story we'll have to tell down at the pub."

Sam couldn't help but crack a smile. "Alright, but you're buying the first round. And the second. And probably the third, given what you've done to my head."

Trev chuckled. "Fair enough, mate. Fair enough."

GLOSSARY

- **Ropey:** Not very good or in bad condition.
- **Hollered:** Shouted or yelled loudly.
- **Sauntered:** Walked in a relaxed, casual way.
- **Unsolicited:** Given without being asked for.
- **Warily:** Carefully, like you're watching out for danger.
- **Flair:** A special talent or style.
- **Interpretive dance:** A type of dance where you use movements to show feelings or ideas.
- **Zen:** Calm and peaceful.
- **Crikey:** A word people say when they're surprised (like "wow!").
- **Lanolin:** A kind of oil that comes from sheep's wool.
- **Occupational hazard:** A danger or problem that can happen because of your job.
- **Mullet:** A hairstyle that's short at the front and sides, but long at the back.

GLOSSARY

- **Bloomin':** A word used to emphasise something, like saying "really" or "very".
- **Unique:** Special or different from everything else.
- **Chic:** Fashionable or stylish.
- **Doling out:** Giving away or handing out.
- **Veering:** Changing direction suddenly.
- **Grappled:** Fought or struggled with something.

FIND THE WORDS:

Find all the words that follow the 'are/ear/air/ere/eer' sound. Find the meanings of any you don't know.

COMPREHENSION:

1. **How does Sam's head appear when Trev calls him over the fence?**
2. **What does Sam say about helping with future shearing tasks?**
3. **What approach does Sam suggest for handling the ram?**
4. **How does the ram react when they first try to catch it?**
5. **What accidental mishap occurs while Trev is shearing the ram?**

ACTIVITIES:

1. **Creative Writing:** Write a short sequel to the story, describing what happens when Trev and Sam go to the pub and explain Sam's new haircut to their friends.
2. **Illustration Task:** Draw a comic strip depicting the key scenes from the story, focusing on the facial expressions and body language of the characters.
3. **Rural Life Research:** Research sheep shearing in New Zealand and create a short presentation on its importance to the country's economy and rural lifestyle.
4. **Character Analysis:** Compare and contrast the personalities of Trev and Sam based on their actions and dialogue in the story. How do their approaches to problem-solving differ?