

**If it Looks
Like a Bear**

GEOFF W. WYSS

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CONTENTS

Chapter One	7
Day 1 - Part 1	7
Day 1 - Part 2	9
Day 1 - Part 3	11
Day 1 - Part 4	13
Day 1 - Part 5	14
Day 1 - Part 6	16
Chapter Two	18
Day 1 - Part 1	18
Day 1 - Part 2	20
Day 1 - Part 3	22
Day 1 - Part 4	24
Chapter Three	26
Day 2 - Part 1	26
Day 2 - Part 2	29
Day 2 - Part 3	31
Day 2 - Part 4	33
Day 2 - Part 5	34
Day 2 - Part 6	36
Day 2 - Part 7	38
Day 2 - Part 8	40
Chapter Four	42
Day 3 - Part 1	42
Day 3 - Part 2	44
Day 3 - Part 3	46
Day 3 - Part 4	48
Day 3 - Part 5	50
Day 3 - Part 6	52

Day 3 - Part 7	54
Day 3 - Part 8	56
Chapter Five	58
Day 4 - Part 1	58
Day 4 - Part 2	60
Day 4 - Part 3	62
Day 4 - Part 4	64
Day 4 - Part 5	65
Day 4 - Part 6	67
Day 4 - Part 7	69
Chapter Six	71
Day 4 - Part 1	71
Day 4 - Part 2	73
Day 4 - Part 3	75
Day 4 - Part 4	77
Day 4 - Part 5	78
Day 4 - Part 6	80
Day 4 - Part 7	82
Chapter Seven	83
Day 5 - Part 1	83
Day 5 - Part 2	85
Day 5 - Part 3	88
Day 5 - Part 4	90
Day 5 - Part 5	92
Day 5 - Part 6	94
Chapter Eight	96
Day 6 - Part 1	96
Day 6 - Part 2	99
Day 6 - Part 3	101
Day 6 - Part 4	103

Day 6 - Part 5	105
Day 6 - Part 6	107
Day 6 - Part 7	110
Chapter Nine	112
Day 7 - Part 1	112
Day 7 - Part 2	114
Day 7 - Part 3	115
Day 7 - Part 4	117
Day 7 - Part 4 <i>continued</i>	119
Day 7 - Part 5	121
Day 7 - Part 6	123
Chapter Ten	125
Day 8 - Part 1	125
Day 8 - Part 2	126
Day 8 - Part 3	128
Day 8 - Part 4	131
Chapter Eleven	133
Day 9 - Part 1	133
Day 9 - Part 2	135
Day 9 - Part 3	137
Day 9 - Part 4	139
Day 9 - Part 5	141
Day 9 - Part 6	143
Chapter Twelve	145
Day 9 - Part 6	145

Geoff W. Wyss

Chapter One

Day 1 - Part 1

On the first day of my holiday, I rose to a hearty and leisurely breakfast. A second coffee and I was off to the beach and a likely looking spot to set myself up for my favourite pastime, fishing.

I enjoy the solitude that goes with it. The peace and quiet, and the belief that nothing would disturb the thrill of the chase, and the catch.

So here I was, at my favourite little beach holiday village. It was just at the end of the holiday season and most of the regular campers and holiday makers had returned to their far away homes.

At this time of the morning the beach is usually deserted, so I could fish from anywhere along here.

What more could anyone wish for, to start the day. The sun was quickly climbing up into the sky and bringing its warming as a promise of a pleasant day to come.

I mentioned, 'a likely looking spot' above, jokingly, because in nearly all of those likely spots, I have fished without success. But that will never stop me.

With my record of not catching anything, I have referred to myself as the second worst fisherman in the world. I say this, the second worst, because, hopefully, out there in the fishing world, there is someone worse than me.

With my gear set for the conditions I went out to knee deep and cast out with all my strength into the surf. Walking back letting out line to where my rod holder was positioned, I set the rod and I was ready for the day.

Come on fish, here I am.

So, here I was, all prepared for another uneventful morning.

Little did I know that I would be wrong.

And how much 'wronger' could I be???

Day 1 - Part 2

A couple of Sudoku puzzles later, I stood at the water's edge with the sun's rays warming my legs. As I gazed down along what can be a lonely and peaceful beach, suddenly, I stopped. I was not expecting to see anything this time of the morning, especially on this holiday beach.

To my surprise, just about a kilometre down the beach were two figures. I do not know how long they had been there, but their arrival must have been during my second Sudoku. Like most fishermen, I reached for my binoculars, which are always to hand to check if other fishing people, like me, are catching anything.

One person, a woman, who was sitting on the beach near the sand wall, rose as my gaze located her. Swinging the binoculars away from the beach I saw the second person, a man, standing in just under knee-deep water, holding a fishing rod.

When I swung back towards the woman she

was in the act of picking something up from the sand. The object was too far away for me to identify, but its size and shape looked like it could have been something similar to a cricket bat. Straightening up, she went into the water in the direction of the man.

She was holding the object in two hands in front of herself and a little to her left which seemed to hide her face and had the effect of almost keeping most of her back towards me. I could see that she had what looked like black shoulder length hair.

Oddly enough, as she walked, it was in a rolling sort of motion. Her right shoulder seemed to bob up and down as if her right foot was constantly on something higher than her left, perhaps rocks, as there were plenty in the area as far as I could see at this distance.

Day 1 - Part 3

Looking at the man again I could see he was still in the same spot holding the rod. At this point, for some reason, I swung back to the approaching woman, then, just as quickly back to the man in time to see him start to turn around as if spoken to. He turned unhurriedly, bringing his left shoulder around his body towards the woman.

All this swinging back and forth caused my hands to slip off the binoculars at the time when the woman would have neared the man.

When I grabbed hold again, the binoculars revealed the man swinging quickly to his left, away from me as he turned, and fell face down into the water. In the same instance I saw the woman had both her hands holding the object she had picked up almost over her right shoulder. Again her back was mostly towards me.

It occurred to me then, that for her hands and the object to be in that position, and for her back

on my side, it must have been at the end of a movement that I had missed due to my fumble.

Everything had happened so quickly. I had not actually seen a blow being delivered, but I had seen the man as he spun around before falling. This was the point where he went out of sight due to some large rocks between the man and me. I kept up my search for a few minutes to try and locate him.

Chapter One

When I was unsuccessful and turned the binoculars back to where the woman had been standing, she was gone.

Day 1 - Part 4

From where I stood, all the binoculars showed me was a blank picture of a deserted beach running far away into the distance... for kilometres from where I had seen the incident. The man in the water was not visible and the woman had moved out of sight without me seeing her.

When I did find her again, a few minutes later, she was on her knees running her hand along the sand. What she was doing, or why, I could not tell as it was too far away.

A minute or so of this and she stood, climbed up the cliff face onto the sand dunes and disappeared among the tea trees and out of sight.

The beach was now deserted and my heart beats started to get back to normal. Well they nearly did, until the events I had just witnessed all came back in a flash.

I was looking forward to having a nice day. I really didn't need this.

Day 1 - Part 5

Minutes passed as all sorts of things went through my head. What was I to do? Get help? And if I reported an incident like this, who would believe me?

Yes, that's right. Who would believe me? Me, alone on a beach, and something like this happens. No one would!

I do not know how long the effects of all I had seen took to subside, but whatever it was, it was cut short by the arrival of a family coming down the wooden steps from the high dunes onto the beach, and walking straight over to me.

It always happens. Whenever people arrive on a beach and they see a fisherman, they always go over and ask how many fish have been caught. Sometimes it is a bit irritating. Most times I don't catch anything, and what else would I be fishing for?

Well, that's what they did to me, impressed when I answered, about twenty, then they moved off

in the direction of where the incident happened.

When they were about 100 metres away I came to my senses and realised something had to be done.

I ran down the beach to the family and told them what I had seen. They could not, did not, or didn't want to understand, what I said. They gathered their children, hurried back to the steps, and were off and away as fast as they could.

Day 1 - Part 6

Chapter One

I was flattened by their indifferent response, they could have been my witnesses. Then it occurred to me. If I was the only one on the beach, whose witness would they be?

If they didn't believe me it could be said that I killed the man, then ran back to my fishing spot to wait for someone to turn up, and let them find a body. I could easily end up being the prime suspect.

Questions could have come up as to why I hadn't gone down to the place where the incident happened and looked to find the man to see if he needed help. I could easily have to explain how such a thing could happen, when, to all intent and purpose, circumstances would show that there was no one else on the beach except the man and me.

So, how do think I felt? How would you feel in my shoes?

Well, it didn't take long. I was a witness and it

was my duty to do something about it. Whether I liked it or not, that is what I would have to do.

I went back to my gear and mobile, and called the police.