

Home Country

What is really a name anyway?

We'd finished coffee and were committing loiter in the Mule Barn truck stop's parking lot before going fishing when Janice Thomas came over to see Doc.

"Mornin' boys! Hey Doc, I'm curious," said our local art teacher. "When I moved here,

your wife introduced herself to me as Mrs. Doc. You know, I never did get her first name."

"Well ..." Doc said, "that's the name she goes by. Ever since we got married, she wants people to call her that."

We looked at each

other. We'd never known her by any other name, either.

"She has to have a first name, Doc," Janice said.

"I think everyone does. I think Elvis had a first name, too," Doc said. "But my wife, well, she's kinda touchy about hers. But she does have one, you know."

"What is it, Doc?" said Herb. "I never knew it, either."

"When Mrs. Doc was born," Doc said, "her folks stuck her with a name that would drive most people to maim their parents. She messed about with a bunch of

nicknames when she finally got old enough to be embarrassed, but they didn't take. Does she look like a Cookie to you? Yeah. Me, either. So when we got married, she called herself Mrs. Doc."

"Hermione?" asked Dud. Doc shook his head. "Murgatroyd?" asked Herb. Nope. "Phalarope?" asked Dud, again.

"Phalarope?" we said.

"It's a kind of bird," Dud said. Doc just shook his head.

"Look," said Doc, "it's just one of those old-fashioned names that nobody would



Slim Randles

ever name a girl any more, and she can't stand it. If I told you what it was, this town would be without a doctor by morning."

Dud scratched his chin. "Old fashioned ... hmmm, hey, I got it! Pocahontas!"

Nope.

So then Janice said, "Well, Doc, I know there are moments ... you know, personal moments,

when there are just the two of you together, and it's romantic, if you get my drift. What do you call her then?"

Doc smiled. "I call her 'Yes Dear.'"

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