

BARE BEAR BONES

A comedy

By

MICHAEL GRANT

Bare Bear Bones

Characters

Norman: Is a quick witted but very conservative empty nester in his fifties. He is married to Ruth and is the father of two children with no grandchildren. He is reluctantly attending a marriage councillor because Ruth feels that they have “lost the spark”.

Ruth: Is a religious and very conservative empty nester married to Norman. She is in her fifties and raised two children as a ‘stay at home mom’. Lately, with the children grown, she feels her marriage has no spark and is desperate to rekindle the relationship so it can be like that magical night in the pick up.

Frank: Is a widow in his fifties who has found a more liberal side to life. After losing his wife to cancer, he was deeply depressed but accidentally discovered a new way to life. Bare Bear Bones Nudist Camp was created from the failing family camp. He is the father of Libby and Annie.

Annie: Is in her twenties attempting a career as an actor. She lives at home with her father and helps him at the campground. She is energetic and always interested in having fun.

Libby: Is in her late twenties or early thirties. She studies medicine at university and is in her final year. During the summer, she helps her father around the campground. She is more conservative than her younger sister Annie.

Lenny: is in his twenties or thirties. The ultimate “party dude”. On the other hand, there may be a more professional side to him too as he works at a Talent Agency in the city.

Bruce: is middle aged. He is a regional manager for a linen company and spends much of his time on the road. He has the typical travelling salesman stories but is happily married to Doris.

Doris: is also middle aged. She is married to Bruce and they have raised two boys together. Bruce and her decided after the kids left home, that they would do something outside their comfort zone at least once a year.

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(As the curtain rises the stage is in darkness. It is silent except for the sound of the odd cricket, and then we hear a crash)

Norman: (In the darkness) Oh for the love of....!

(More noises and shuffling in the darkness, as if someone is moving things and doing physical labour.)

(Another loud crash.)

Norman: Jesus, Joseph, and Mary riding a camel through the desert!

Ruth: Norman!

Norman: What?!

Ruth: Mind your tongue.

Norman: What did I say?

Ruth: You know what you said. You took the Lord's name in vain.

Norman: I did not! I was just comparing His family trip to ours!

Ruth: Nonsense.

(Lights should now slowly rise to a night time blue to show a campsite complete with fire pit, picnic table and a pop up tent trailer half erected up stage centre. There is a hedge running from behind the trailer to down stage left, creating a half wall effect. We can also see the top of a tree behind the trailer. We see Norman struggling to finish the task of erecting the trailer)

Norman: Besides, it wasn't in vain. Putting this damn thing up, that's in vain!

Ruth: (Entering down stage right, pulling a rope that is tied to something off stage. She walks behind the trailer to tie the rope to the tree.) Willy showed you how to do it. He said it was finicky.

Norman: Finicky! No, the truck is finicky. This thing is just plain stupid!

Ruth: Don't get all worked up. It won't help.

Norman: You're right it won't, now a sledgehammer on the other hand, that would help.

Ruth: Did you take your pills?

Norman: Yes I took my pills!

Ruth: I think it was very kind of Willy to let us use his trailer for free.

Norman: Nothing is free with your brother, trust me, we'll pay.

Ruth: Oh Norman.

Norman: Was anyone at the office?

Ruth: No. All the lights were out. Do you think we should be doing this?

Norman: Doing what?

Ruth: This?

Norman: This ridiculous trip? No.

Ruth: I mean setting up our trailer here. We haven't even checked in yet.

Norman: I'll pay him in the morning. We use to camp here all the time with the kids. I called and told them that we were coming and booked this spot. We've pulled in late before. Frank will be ok with it.

Ruth: But times are different now. Maybe we should have waited until tomorrow, it kind of feels like we're breaking in.

Norman: Hog Wash!

Ruth: We should have stayed home tonight and come up tomorrow after such a late start.

Norman: We got a late start because of your brother. If he had this damn trailer road worthy when we got to his place we would have been here for supper.

Ruth: I know, I know. But this just doesn't feel right.

Norman: It'll be fine. Frank's an old friend.

Ruth: We haven't seen Frank since the last time we were here.

Norman: So?

Ruth: So, that was 15 years ago. He probably won't remember us.

Norman: Have you finally snapped? You don't sit around a guy's campfire drinking all his beer as much as he did and not remember.

Ruth: All the beer you two drank I'm surprised you remember.

Norman: Don't start. (Pause) Where is the beer?

Ruth: In the cooler.

Norman: I know it's in the cooler. I meant, where is the cooler?

Ruth: In the trailer.

Norman: (Looking at the half-erect trailer) In the trailer?

Ruth: Consider it an incentive.

Norman: Incentive.

Ruth: Yes.

Norman: You're evil.

Ruth: Yep.

Norman: Would you go to the car and get the flashlight so I can at least see the beast I'm wrestling with here.

(She exits SR. Norman resumes erecting the trailer. He stops looks at trailer and then off SR obviously trying to make a decision. He heads to the trailer door, opens it and crawls in the half built trailer. We hear him rustling around inside then silence. After a moment Ruth enters from SR carrying a strand of patio lanterns.)

Ruth: I don't care what you think of Willy. To lend us all this stuff for the weekend was wonderful of him. (Pause) Norman? (Pause) Norman?

(There is a crash from inside the trailer)

Norman: (Inside trailer) Oh Sugar coated Cotton Candy!

Ruth: What are you doing in there?

Norman: Baking cookies. What the blazes do you think I'm doing?

Ruth: You just couldn't wait could you?

Norman: In a word, No.

(Another rustling from the trailer)

Norman: FFFFFiddle Sticks!

Ruth: What's wrong?

Norman: Nothing.

Ruth: Norman.

Norman: I knocked over the cooler. There's water everywhere.

Ruth: Never mind, I'll mop it up once you finish with the trailer.

Norman: No need, the sleeping bags have already done the job.

Ruth: Oh dear.

Norman: Yeah, Oh dear!

Ruth: Toss them out. I've already got the clothes line up.

(A rolled up sleeping bag is thrown out of the trailer, followed by another. Ruth moves to pick them up when a pillow is tossed out, followed by another. Pause. A blanket is then thrown out followed by a second then a third. A beach towel is last to come)

Norman: (crawling out of trailer with beer in hand) I would say that this trip is off to a magnificent start.

Ruth: It'll be fine. (She begins to hang wet sleeping bags and blankets on the rope she hung earlier.) (**SPECIAL NOTE: The blankets and sleeping bags must create a solid half wall blocking the sight lines from the audience**)

Norman: Oh sure, fine. As long as this monster doesn't decide to close its jaws and chew us up in the middle of the night.

Ruth: Can you get it up?

Norman: Ruth, at my age that can take some time, besides I haven't even finished with the trailer.

Ruth: Norman!

Norman: I mean, wow! Who knew the Doc's idea would work so well?

Ruth: Would you stop.

Norman: Not a chance. Not with what you got in mind.

Ruth: Quit it, someone might hear you.

Norman: I'm sure they will. These walls are only canvas after all.

Ruth: You're ridiculous. Look at these things, they're soaked.

Norman: They'll dry. We'll just have to use the others.

Ruth: What others.

Norman: You didn't pack any other sheets?

Ruth: Why would I? We're only here for three nights.

Norman: What are we going to sleep on?

Ruth: There's the blanket you have in the back of the truck.

Norman: Honey, that's called a tarp.

Ruth: Oh.

Norman: I use it when I go to the dump.

Ruth: We'll come up with something. One little set back isn't going to ruin this trip.

Norman: No, we would want to disappoint the good doctor.

Ruth: This trip is not for the doctor's sake, it's for ours. And I think he's right.

Norman: You always think he's right.

Ruth: I do not.

Norman: He's the only man on your planet that has ever been right.

Ruth: He is not, but I agree with him, to return to the place we use to bring the kids to, where we felt in love. This is the exact kind of trip our relationship needs.

Norman: Great, we're going to start yapping about "our relationship" again.

Ruth: What does that mean?

Norman: I'll tell you what "our relationship" is. You're my wife and I'm your husband. That's our relationship.

Ruth: The doctor's talking about relationship in a deeper sense.

Norman: Oh yeah, he's really deep, that one.

Ruth: I think he's very good.

Norman: Good? Good? The only reason we're going to him is because he plays on Willy's bowling team! He's giving us a discount.

Ruth: So?

Norman: So, he a discount marriage councillor who bowls with Willy every Tuesday night! Does that sound top shelf to you?

Ruth: It's all we can afford.

Norman: I suppose that's my fault.

Ruth: That's not what I'm saying.

Norman: Maybe if I bowled with Willy and Super Doc then I could earn some extra cash on the old timers bowling circuit. Would that help?

Ruth: That's just the beer talking.

Norman: Ruthie, I'm the one talking, the beer's away over there.

Ruth: You know what I mean.

Norman: If it's talking then its battier then you are because he's the only one of his kind I've seen all day. Maybe he's just sad after I separated him from the herd. The poor fella. I should get him a friend.

Ruth: Not until the trailers up.

Norman: I was kidding.

Ruth: Oh.

Norman: You have to stop taking everything so seriously and loosen up.

Ruth: I'm loose!

Norman: Ok Ruth! Take it easy.

Ruth: I am easy!

Norman: Ruth!

Ruth: What?

Norman: Settle down.

Ruth: No, I won't settle down! We need this weekend to work and I'm doing my part, meeting in the middle, as the Doctor says and I'm loose and easy! Loose and easy!

Norman: Would you quiet down.

Ruth: Quiet down? I'm trying to connect here Norman and you're telling me to quiet down?

Norman: Yes!

Ruth: You're not meeting me in the middle, Norman. I'm here in the middle and I'm loose and easy! Loose and easy!

Norman: Would you listen to yourself!

Ruth: I'm all alone in the middle being loose and easy! Loose and easy!....Oh dear.

Norman: Yes, oh dear.

Ruth: Do you think anybody heard me?

Norman; I suspect we won't be short of company tomorrow night.

Ruth: We should go.

Norman; What!

Ruth: We have to leave.

Norman: Why?

Ruth: I'm too embarrassed to stay now

Norman: Are you kidding me?

Ruth: No, I won't be able to look anyone in the face. I'll be wondering all weekend who heard me.

Norman: Don't worry, you'll know. They'll be the ones swooping in like a flock of vultures. We're not leaving. I just got this damn thing up.

Ruth: Then you'll know where to find me this weekend. (She enters trailer)

Norman: What are you doing?

Ruth: Settling in for the weekend.

Norman: You don't plan to spend the entire weekend in there do you?

Ruth: Yes.

Norman: Ruthie, it's after midnight in the morning. Nobody heard you, they're all asleep.

Ruth: I'm not taking any chances.

Norman: You can't just stay in there. There's no plumbing.

Ruth: I'll hold it until the middle of the night.

Norman: I don't think you want to be doing that. That's when the vultures get hungry.

Ruth: *(After a pause)* What is that smell?

Norman: What's that?

Ruth: It stinks in here!

Norman: Yes, I noticed that too.

Ruth: Why?

Norman: I suspect it is the direct result of wise old Willy storing the trailer for three years inside his chicken barn.

Ruth: I think I might be sick!

Norman: Before you do, could you pass me the cooler? I'm not going in there.

(The door to the trailer opens and the cooler is slid to the door. We never see Ruth)

Norman: *(Taking cooler and setting it on the ground. He opens it and gets another beer. Sits on picnic table)* Well, this is going to be fun. You drag me to this damn campground. And now you're becoming a reclusive shut-in like the crazy cat lady that lives down the street. I'm not sure this is what the Super Doc had prescribed.

Ruth: I am not showing my face out there again.

Norman: Want me to find you a cat?

Ruth: If you want to go to another campground, that's fine.

Norman: I don't want to be at this one. Why the hell would I go to another one?!

Ruth: Can you find me a blanket then?

(Norman looks around then exits stage right. He returns in a moment carrying a ripped and stained old tarp. He knocks on the door then opens it)

Norman: Room service. *(He stuffs the tarp in and closes the door.)*

Ruth: *(From inside trailer)* Oh my goodness! We can't use this, look at it! It's covered in.....I don't know what.

Norman: Sheep shit.

Ruth: What?

Norman: Sheep manure. Remember, I got you that load for the garden.

(Coughing from inside the trailer)

Norman: It was cheaper to buy it bulk then by the bag.

Ruth: It stinks!

Norman: Yeah, sheep shit does that.

Ruth: This is horrible.

Norman: *(As he twists a bulb back "On" in the string of lanterns)* Yep, kind of fits the whole trip rather well I think.

(Black out)
End of Scene One

Scene Two

(The lights slowly come up indicating a sunrise. All is the same. We hear birds chirping. After a moment, Norman enters from Stage Right. He is bent over and in obvious pain. He pauses and looks around, taking in the campsite for the first time in daylight.)

Norman: *(Going to cooler)* Sing all you want, Quasimodo doesn't have any bells to ring. *(Birds continue)* Yeah, go ahead. Mock me, you didn't sleep in the old Ford, you got a reason to sing.

(He enters trailer, then quickly exits and goes to cooler. He opens it and pulls out a carton of orange juice. He looks around for a glass. He can't find one so he returns the carton and pulls out a beer instead. He is about to open it when he hears a noise. He returns the beer and picks up the carton again. He begins to examine trailer while continuing the search for a glass. Ruth enters from Stage Right, she appears rather stiff from a night of uncomfortable sleeping but is walking quickly.)

Norman: Where are you going?

Ruth: I told you. I'm spending the weekend in the trailer. *(She exits into trailer)*

Norman: I wouldn't go in there. I haven't had a chance to air it out yet.

(Pause as he waits, then Ruth quickly leaves the trailer.)

Ruth: Oh my goodness! Why haven't you pulled the tarp out of there yet?

Norman: Ruthie, the smell is not from the tarp. The smell is coming from several different fragrances. The first comes from Willy the wise brother's storage habits. The second and only slightly more pungent aroma is obviously from the skunk that visited last night. The tarp is actually working as an air freshener.

Ruth: A skunk? How did it get in?

Norman: It knocked softly on the door. How do you think it got in? There's a hole somewhere.

Ruth: What are we going to do?

Norman: I'll find it and patch it then air it out. Be damned if I'm going to spend my remaining days living in some bell tower built Ford tough.

Ruth: You know it's not the first time we spent a night in a truck together.

Norman: What's that?

Ruth: Don't you remember? When we were dating? You were driving me home from the 4H meeting and your truck broke down.

Norman: (*Opening Orange juice carton and looks for a glass*) Oh yeah.

Ruth: Yes, we had to wait until daylight so you could see under the hood to fix it.

Norman: (*Preoccupied*) Yeah.

Ruth: We sat in the truck and talked the night away. We talked about everything, our hopes, our dreams, our future. I was wishing the whole time that the night would never end that we could stay there forever, sharing our feelings and just being together.

Norman: (*Giving up on the glass hunt and drinking from the carton*) I was wishing that you would stop talking so I could get some sleep.

Ruth: Yes, you were a perfect gentleman. Then in the morning light you lifted the hood and tried to fix the truck. I was secretly praying that you wouldn't be able to and that we'd be stuck there on that side road until someone came along. I was hoping for just a couple of more hours.

Norman: I was hoping for a spark plug so I could get home and get my Dad's ass kickin' over with.

Ruth: But then you fixed it and took me home. My folks were so worried.

Norman: Yeah, your father thought there was more than talking going on.

Ruth: Oh, he did not.

Norman: Ruthie, he took me behind the shed and introduced me to his two friends.

Ruth: What two friends?

Norman: Smyth and Wesson.

Ruth: He did not.

Norman: Well, I proposed to you that afternoon, didn't I?

Ruth : Yes, yes you did.

Norman: It saved your father from starting his hillbilly man hunt.

Ruth: You are such a story teller. My father would do no such thing.

Norman: Oh no, Jack wouldn't do that, the upstanding citizen that he is.

Ruth: Don't you start on my father. I'm not going to listen to it. I'm going to the showers and try and work these kinks out.

Norman: *(Stretching himself.)* I don't think a shower will work. We may need a pressure washer.

Ruth: Where's the bathroom stuff?

Norman: The back of the truck. I'll get it for you. *(He sets the orange juice on the picnic table and exits.)*

Ruth: Thank you hon'.

(She picks up the carton, wipes the opening, reaches into the box beside the cooler and pulls out a plastic cup and pours some into a glass. As she pours, a man enters from stage right behind the clothes line and crosses behind the trailer and begins to exit behind the hedge. He appears shirtless with a towel over his shoulder.)

Bruce: Good morning.

Ruth: *(Startled)* Oh, good morning.

Bruce: A bit chilly this morning.

Ruth: Yes, yes, I guess it is.

Bruce: It's supposed to get pretty hot later.

Ruth: Headed to the beach?

Bruce: Yeah, I guess, eventually. After breakfast. *(He exits.)*

Ruth: See you there.

Norman: *(Entering.)* Here you go.

Ruth: Oh thanks dear. I'll clean myself up then make us some breakfast.

Norman: I think I can almost stand upright, no thanks to Henry Ford. I guess I should head to the office and let Frank know we're here.

Ruth: OK, I'll meet you back here.

(She exits behind the trailer and is seen exiting off Stage Right behind hedge. Norman watches her leave. Then he goes to the cooler, removes a beer.)

Norman: The only thing that pulls you through a family camping trip, a Barley Breakfast. *(He pauses.)* She'll smell it. *(Pause.)* Mouthwash! *(Pause.)* She took the bag. *(Pause.)* Damn! Foiled again!

(He returns the beer and pulls out the orange juice carton looks around for the glasses then drinks. Two young women enter SR and walk behind the hedge. We can only see their heads and bare shoulders over the hedge. Eventually they cross behind the trailer and exit behind the clothes line)

Libby: Good morning.

Norman: Oh, good morning.

Annie: It's starting to warm up nicely don't you think?

Norman: Oh yeah, it's coming along.

Annie: It's supposed to really heat up later.

Norman: That'll be good.

Libby: Yeah.

Annie: You're new around here.

Norman: Not really, we use to camp here years ago.

Libby: Really?

Norman: Yeah, it's been awhile.

Libby: We don't see a lot of the old campers anymore.

Annie: Yeah, not since the change.

Libby: Welcome back!

Annie: Are you coming to the Beach Volleyball Tournament?

Norman: Beach Volleyball Tournament?

Annie: Yeah.

Libby: We have a big Beach Volleyball Tournament on the long weekend.

Norman: Well, I don't think I'm up for playing at my age but...

Annie: Hey, you're only as old as you feel.

Norman: Then you two better start digging my grave.

Libby: It's a great time, come watch at least.

Norman: We'll do that.

Libby: Great! See you there.

Annie: Bye.

Norman: Yeah, see ya. *(As he crosses to watch them leave.)* Why is it only the young people that say "You're only as old as you feel"?

(He walks over to the clothes line and looks at the women as they exit. He is shocked! He immediately goes to cooler and pulls out a beer and begins to drink it with purpose.)

Frank: *(Entering from Stage Left and standing behind clothesline.)* Well, there's a familiar sight! Some things never change.

Norman: What! Oh, Frank, I was just coming to...ah.... You won't believe what I just saw!

Frank: Norm, are you OK? You look like you just saw a ghost.

Norman: Oh Frank, it wasn't a ghost! I don't know what it was. I mean, I know what it was, I just can't believe it! Two girls just went by, and they were...they were...

Frank: Oh yeah, I saw them too.

Norman: I can't believe it!

Frank: Yeah they grow up so fast.

Norman: Oh yeah, they were grown up all right.

Frank: Yeah time stops for no man.

Norman: Maybe not but I think my heart just stopped.

Frank: Yeah, hard to believe that they're the same girls you use to give piggy back rides.

Norman: Piggy back rides?

Frank: Yeah, Libby and Annie.

Norman: Libby and Annie?

Frank: Libby and Annie, my girls. Don't you remember? You use to give them piggy back rides all the time. They loved playing with you. They always marked on the calendar when "Uncle Normie" was coming to camp.

Norman: That was Libby and Annie?

Frank: Yeah, they're all grown up now.

Norman: (*Searching for something.*) I'll say.

Frank: What are you looking for?

Norman: A spoon.

Frank: A spoon?

Norman: Yes, to gouge my eyes out!

Frank: What on earth are you talking about?

Norman: Frank, did you not notice them?

Frank: Of course.

Norman: And you're OK with them....

Frank: OK? I'm the proudest father you ever saw!

Norman: But they were, there were...

Frank: Are you sure you're OK, Norm?

Norman: Frank! They were, you know.

Frank: What?

Norman: You know?

Frank: No I don't! What?

Norman: *(Looking around and then going to whisper over the clothes line to Frank. As he begins to whisper he notices)* They were, you know, showing all God gave them. They were nak... *(Noticing)* AHHH! You're...you're...you got no clothes on.

Frank: Of course I don't. Why do you?

Norman: Why do I?! Because I'm civilized!

Frank: What does that mean?

Norman: Geez! Let me get you a towel. *(He looks around, sees nothing. He then retrieves the tarp from the trailer)*

Frank: I don't want a towel.

Norman: Oh yes you do!

Frank: No I don't! This is Bare Bones Campground.

Norman: Exactly! This could ruin you! What if someone sees you? You'd be out of business! You could kiss "The Bear Bones Family Campground" good-bye!

Frank: I already did.

Norman: What?

Frank: I already kissed "The Bear Bones Family Campground" good-bye, and embraced "The Bare Bones Alternative Lifestyle Campground".

Norman: "Alternative Lifestyle"?