FRANTIC FAMILY VACATION

By Regina M. Ballard

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STORY OF THE PLAY

The wealthy Stanton family and the hillbilly Hill family are going on a camping vacation together, at the suggestion of their young married children, Tim and Lisa Stanton. Tim just signed a contract on his first book and he is using this vacation to gather material for his second book that deals with family time together. However, what was supposed to be a peaceful family camping trip turns into a series of hilarious mishaps.

Edward Stanton spends the entire time working at his makeshift office made of cinder blocks and a board while his social-climbing wife, Audrey, breaks out with poison ivy. Elizabeth finds out she is pregnant and is plagued with morning sickness and severe mood swings. Elizabeth's husband, Brett, is at her every beck and call, but even that is not enough for the irrational Elizabeth. When Brett and Elizabeth break the news to their son Rain, he runs away because he thinks his parents are trying to replace him.

Clarence becomes the expert on home remedies that are sometimes in jest. He brought along his gigantic *(and still growing.)* prized cricket that is the centerpiece to his new business venture in mail-order fishing bait, but the insect somehow escapes. Clarence's wife, Sarah, is busy making the campsite homey. Their youngest daughter, Kim, a bona fide ditz, eats a wild berry that causes her to be strangely intelligent. Kim's red-neck lawyer fiancé, the ever silent Bud, is always by her side.

When a wild bear is on the loose, Ranger Rick comes to their campsite to warn them in his bizarre and grossly graphic way. Unfortunately, Grandma and Grandpa, Tim's slightly senile and fun-loving grandparents, decide this is their opportunity to catch a bear and slip out into the night, leaving their family frantic.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7 M, 6 F, 1 B.)

TIM STANTON: Lisa's husband, early 20's
LISA HILL STANTON: Tim's wife, early 20's.
ELIZABETH STANTON DURAN: Tim's sister and Brett's wife, early 30's.
BRETT DURAN: Elizabeth's husband, early 30's.
AUDREY STANTON: Elizabeth and Tim's mother.
EDWARD STANTON: Audrey's husband.
RAIN DURAN: Brett and Elizabeth's 9-year-old son.
GRANDPA STANTON: Edward's father.
GRANDMA STANTON: Edward's mother.
CLARENCE HILL: Lisa's father.
SARAH HILL: Clarence's wife.
KIM HILL: Lisa's younger sister.
BUD: Kim's fiancé.
RANGER RICK: A strange park ranger.

COSTUMES

Tim, Lisa - Casual camping attire
Elizabeth - Fashionable camping outfit and a warm-up suit
Audrey - Fashionable camping outfit and a silk robe
Brett - Yuppie casual wear and warm-up suit matching Elizabeth's
Edward - Wildly-patterned shorts, tennis shoes, white dress shirt (T-shirt underneath), tie, and silk robe
Rain - Dirty pants with torn knee, T-shirt, sneakers, white warm up suit or karate outfit and bandana
Grandpa - Bright tourist shirt, clashing shorts, tall black nylon socks, white dress shoes, leaves and twigs in hair, combat fatigues
Grandma - Combat fatigues and a variety of hats including one with wolf ears, a raccoon cap, an army helmet, and a fishing cap with lots of lures attached
Clarence, Sarah, Kim, Bud - Hillbilly outfits. Also flannel nightshirts for Clarence and Sarah
Ranger Rick - Ranger uniform or solid-colored (tan or green) clothing

SETTING

Current day. Summer. Stage looks like a campsite in the forest with trees and rocks UPS, three large tents CS, and a picnic table and several lawn chairs SL. Several cinder blocks and a board are SR. There are several suitcases already in front of the tents as the play opens.

Scene 1: Mid-afternoon.
Scene 2: Early evening and much later that night.
Scene 3: The next morning.

PROPS

Brett - Camping supplies, suitcase
Edward - Briefcase, watch, cellular phone
Audrey - Watch, reclining lawn chair, room freshener spray, nail file, bag, eye mask, two sticks
Grandpa - Life preserver, red cape or hooded sweatshirt, wicker basket, goggles, rifle, pitchfork
Grandma - Hats (see costume notes) and goggles
Rain - Pad of paper, pen, bundle tied to stick
Elizabeth - Handkerchief, note, robe
Clarence - Suitcase, large bag with box in it, cup, knife and stick to whittle, two sticks, flannel robe, bowl, calamine lotion
Sarah - Suitcase, cooking pot, broom, flannel robe
Kim - Suitcase, cooking utensils, ring, bowl, berries
Bud - Suitcase, cooking utensils
Tim - Backpack
Lisa - Backpack, book contract, glass

Performance time: 45 to 60 minutes.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Enter BRETT and ELIZABETH from SR. Elizabeth leads the way while Brett struggles to carry a large load of camping supplies.)

BRETT: *(Panting.)* This is the last of the supplies. Is there ANYTHING you didn't bring?

ELIZABETH: *(Looking around with disdain.)* I still can't believe I actually agreed to do this. Imagine me, Elizabeth Stanton Duran, on a camping trip. What would my friends at the club say about this?

BRETT: Look, you're supposed to be the environmentalist here. You can't get much closer to the real earth than this. *(Stoops down and pretends to sift dirt through fingers.)*

ELIZABETH: *(Defensive.)* I AM an environmentalist! *(Snobby.)* I just don't like doing the yucky stuff, and dirt is definitely yucky! *(Feels forehead for temperature.)* Speaking of yucky, I don't feel so good. *(Acts faint.)*

BRETT: *(Dropping supplies in concern and goes to HER side.)* Are you OK? Maybe you'd better sit down. *(Leads HER to picnic bench.)*

ELIZABETH: *(Laughs shakily.)* It's probably nothing. *(Clasps hand to mouth and jumps up.)* Oh, I think I'm going to be sick. *(Runs off SL.)*

BRETT: *(Jumps up and runs after HER.)* I'm coming, my little daisy.

(Enter AUDREY and EDWARD from SR and cross to SL. Edward is carrying a briefcase.)

AUDREY: I still can't understand why you feel you have to dress like that on a camping trip. This is supposed to be our vacation.

EDWARD: *(Growls.)* Look, I compromised, OK? The shorts and shoes are for you and the dress shirt and tie are for me. I just don't feel comfortable wearing anything else. *(Starts setting up a makeshift desk from the cinder blocks and board.)*

AUDREY: Well, at least promise me that you will try to enjoy yourself and relax. It's not like I'm going to enjoy roughing it. When I think of camping, I imagine staying in a five-star hotel overlooking a beautifully maintained golf course, not in some pup tent in the middle of nowhere. And another thing, all this great outdoors is ruining my hair. Three hours in the beauty parlor down the drain. *(Notices EDWARD.)* Now what are you doing?

EDWARD: I'm setting up my office. *(Notices AUDREY'S disgusted look.)* Just in case I need it, OK?

AUDREY: *(Exasperated.)* I don't believe you! Didn't last Christmas teach you anything about family togetherness?

EDWARD: *(Continues to unpack desk supplies.)* Of course it did! That's why I agreed to come on this trip in the first place. Look, I even put my desk right in the middle of all the tents so I can be with the family.

(AUDREY throws up her hands in disbelief. RAIN and GRANDPA enter from SL. GRANDPA should have leaves and twigs sticking out of his hair. He is also wearing a life preserver around his neck.)

RAIN: Grandmother, Grandfather, guess what Pappy just showed me how to do?

AUDREY: *(Sees RAIN'S torn clothes.)* Oh my goodness, Rain. What happened to you?

GRANDPA: *(Laughs gleefully.)* He climbed his first tree, that's what he did! I taught him myself.

AUDREY: Grandpa! You shouldn't be climbing trees. What if you had fallen out?

GRANDPA: Silly woman! What do you think I'm wearing this life preserver for? *(Shakes head.)* I still can't understand why a boy his age hasn't been tree climbing before now.

RAIN: *(Hands on hips, speaks intelligently.)* I told you Pappy. Mother said that tree climbing is for monkeys and squirrels. I did not realize the pleasure I was missing. *(Inhales deeply.)*

End of Freeview

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