

## Scene 1

*Clear stage apart from the awning of a large tent SR. Brian staggers in with an enormous armful of camping seats and paraphernalia. He erects two chairs.*

Elaine            *(From inside the tent)* Is that you Brian?

Brian            Well who do you think it is – the Beast of Bluebell Wood?

Elaine            Don't be silly. You never know, anybody could be creeping about in these woods. I'm not used to being at risk like this.

Brian            Oh don't start again. You agreed to come on this holiday. "Let's go green", you said. "Let's get back to nature", you said.

Elaine            I didn't mean this far back. I had in mind a little log chalet in Sherwood Forest not this! I don't see why we couldn't go to my sister's in Skegness.

Brian            We've been there for the last ten years – ever since she bought that B & B.

Elaine            You've never liked my Beryl have you?

Brian            Well she's not an easy person to get on with.

Elaine            I get on with her and so do all her other borders.

Brian            Well you're all women.

Elaine            She'd sooner have women – they're tidier.

Brian            That's her excuse.

Elaine            What do you mean by that? Are you insinuating something?

Brian            I just find her a little – well – more like a bloke really. She chats up the milk girl.

Elaine            She does not! You're imagining things!

Brian            I'm not. And she never looks – well – feminine.

Elaine            Oh now we get to the truth. Just because she isn't showing her cleavage and wriggling about all over the place. Typical man!

Brian            Well don't you find it odd that she used to be a crane driver before she was a prison warder.

Elaine            She was very good at her jobs. They were sorry when she left. Anyway what has all this got to do with anything? The point is that I don't like it here and I'd sooner be in Skegness.

Brian            But when I read you the synopsis of the Nurture Nature Camp you liked the sound of it.

Elaine Well I don't like the look of it. It's positively primitive!

Brian Primitive? You are having a laugh aren't you? We've got two easy chairs, a sofa, a table, a blow-up double bed, a cooker, a fridge, a TV, you've even got your own dressing table!

Elaine Well I will have when you bring it all down here.

Brian Bloody Hell! You'll just have to wait! I'm knackered!

Elaine Brian! Language! Just because we're in an uncivilised environment we don't have to use uncivilised words!

Brian All I'm saying is it's a long way back to car that's all.

Elaine It's ridiculous not being able to drive to the tent site. I'm going to have a word with that woman. Better still, I'll send her one of my notes – what's her name?

Brian Mrs Stubbs and please don't start sending your notes to people. We've only been here five minutes.

Elaine People have to be told and then, as my mother used to say, it's best to put it in black and white. I didn't like the look of her anyway, her eyes are too close together and I didn't like the look of her shower block either. I spotted an earwig.

Brian There's earwigs everywhere.

Elaine Exactly! *(She rushes offstage)*

Brian You've got to put up with a few bugs that's part of the getting back to nature bit. *(Two young boy scouts rush across laughing one of them is carrying a metal detector. Elaine enters)* Oh for goodness' sake earwigs don't do any harm.

Elaine *(Spraying furiously)* They do – they get into your orifices.

Brian *(under his breath)* Which is more than I do.

Elaine Don't be coarse Brian! Mrs Underwood's nephew had one crawl into his ear while he was asleep. It bit him and he was in agony for weeks. *(She sprays again – Mrs Stubbs bursts in with a clipboard)*

Stubbs What on earth are you doing? *(She snatches the can)* Haven't you read your Nurture Nature Do's and Don'ts? DO remember that you are the visitors into the harmonious world of Bluebell Wood. Which means you don't massacre our woodland friends with chemical sprays!

Elaine *(Snatching the can back again).* Give me that! Earwigs aren't my friends. I hate them!

Brian *(Snatches the can)* Now, now Elaine. Mrs Stubbs is quite right. We have to live in harmony with nature.

Elaine I'm sure that doesn't include earwigs *(trying to snatch the can back).*

Mrs Stubbs If you persist in this wholesale slaughter I shall have to ask you to leave.

Brian That won't be necessary Mrs Stubbs, Elaine will behave in future won't you dear?

Elaine Alright. But I give you fair warning – if I see one in the shower I'll consider it no man's land and I shall squish it!

Mrs Stubbs (*Consulting her clipboard*). Now you are site 23 (*she indicates a little disc on the tree*) – Mr & Mrs Windsor.

Elaine No relation of course – well as far as we know. Now would it be possible for my husband to bring the car down here whilst we unload. We've a lot of equipment.

Mrs Stubbs I'm sorry – no motor vehicles are allowed in Bluebell Woods.

Elaine Well how do you expect people to transport all their equipment?

Mrs Stubbs Most of our visitors don't have this much equipment. The idea is to live simply, to experience nature in the raw.

Brian (*Very interested all of a sudden*) In the raw? Do you mean that this is a...

Mrs Stubbs No it isn't! I meant that nature is in the raw not the visitors! Now just to reiterate. Your toilet and ablution block is number 2 you'll see it on your map. Unfortunately ablution block number 1 is closed after an unfortunate incident on Wednesday with a dachshund – essential maintenance is now required. I don't know what it was doing in there in the first place. We've had to dig the floor up.

Elaine (*Looking at her map*) Does that mean everybody is using the same shower block?

Mrs Stubbs Just temporarily. You will collect all your litter and deposit it in the bin adjacent to the ablution block. There will be no open fires and no music at any time. Ball games are prohibited and since last Wednesday so are dogs. And a most definite no no is climbing trees.

Brian I think you can rest easy on that score. It's been some years since my wife climbed a tree.

Mrs Stubbs No digging up of wild plants and of course no shooting, trapping or otherwise causing harm to the wildlife of Bluebell Wood – including the insect population. Now is that clear?

Brian (*Clicking his heels and saluting*). Jawohl mein Obengruppenfuhrer!

Mrs Stubbs (*Glaring and not amused in the slightest*). Very well – I'll leave you to it then.

Elaine Huh! Who does she think she is? (*She snatches the spray from Brian and does a defiant squirt after Mrs Stubbs*). I've met her sort before. She's the type who would go without a bra.

Brian Really? I didn't notice. How did you know that?

Elaine It's not what you see. It's her attitude – womens' lib and all that.

Brian                    So you believe women should know their place then.

Elaine                    I certainly do. Now go and fetch the rest of the stuff from the car and don't be too long. *(She exits into the tent. Brian gives her a look. Simon and Scott enter carrying all their gear. During the next dialogue Simon erects their little tent.)*

Scott                     Hello mate – we're looking for site 24.

Brian                     Well we're 23 so I think you must be over there.

Scott                     Oh right. *(He dumps his stuff)* Put it down here then Si. We'll get the tent up and then go and find the nearest boozier. We can bring a few cans back with us. Got to keep the throat lubricated for "Ging Gang Goolies" round the old campfire haven't you? We'd better collect some dead wood.

Brian                     I'm afraid you can't have open fires. It's in the rules.

Scott                     Why, wouldn't the old bat like it?

Brian                     Oh have you met my wife?

Scott                     No the old bat who runs the place.

Simon                    No – it says so in the booklet. Anyway we've got a gas burner to cook with.

Scott                     Oh that's not so much fun – still as long as I can have me burgers.

Brian                     Actually I think you're supposed to be the other side of the numbered disc.

Simon                    Are we?

Scott                     Nah – this'll do – it's more friendly isn't it? Anyway we might want to borrow something – you look as if you've got everything.

Brian                     We have – including the kitchen sink.

Scott                     Excellent! I've never done this before – but Twitch has haven't you? He was in the cubs, scouts – he was a real swot at school and a computer geek and now he's a twitcher! We're here for the birds. Him for the feathered variety and me for the tottie. I'd have gone to Benidorm if I'd had the money but this is all I could afford.

Simon                    Oh thank you very much! And what were you? Mostly suspended, bottom of the class, skiving off and supporting Man U and you don't live within 200 miles of them. I don't know why I have anything to do with you.

Scott                     Cos we're mates – Scotty and Twitch – the dream team.

Simon                    You're not a dream you're a nightmare now are you going to help me put this tent up or not?

Scott                    Alright – don't get your knickers in a twist – Twitcher! (*Scott and Simon busy themselves. Elaine pokes her head through the awning*).

Elaine                    (*In a stage whisper*) Brian! Brian

Brian                    Yes dear.

Elaine                    What are they doing there?

Brian                    They look like they're putting up a tent dear.

Elaine                    Well stop them. Tell them to move on. They're too close. I need my privacy

Brian                    Look – we're site 23 they're 24.

Elaine                    They are still too near. Tell them to go to the other side.

Brian                    I did. They said they thought it was friendlier to be closer in case they want to borrow anything.

Elaine                    Have they got tattoos?

Brian                    I didn't notice.

Elaine                    Well go and look.

Brian                    They've got clothes on – how am I supposed to see if they've got tattoos or not?

Elaine                    Well wait until they take their jackets off then. If they've got tattoos they'll have to move. I refuse to have a holiday next to anyone with a tattoo.

Brian                    They seem nice enough lads. They've come to watch birds.

Elaine                    (*Somewhat mollified*) Oh. Birdwatchers? Oh well they won't have tattoos then. People who watch birds don't have tattoos.

Brian                    Oh? Is that in the booklet?

Elaine                    What?

Brian                    Birdwatchers don't have tattoos.

Elaine                    Don't be silly Brian – introduce me to these young men.

Brian                    Excuse me lads. This is my wife, Elaine.

Simon                    Hello – I'm Simon and this is Scott.

Elaine                    I'm Mrs Windsor. I understand you're here to watch birds.

Scott                    Among other things Darling.

Elaine                   Mrs Windsor.

Scott                    Oh sorry dear.

Elaine                   Have you got a tattoo?

Scott                    No – but if I had one dear – I’d show it to you.

Simon                   No Mrs Windsor – I’m the birdwatcher. This is a very good area you know. People come from miles around to camp here. There are some rare species here.

Scott                    We live in hopes. Ha ha ha. (*Mr Houston the Scout Leader enters puffing*).

Houston                I say, sorry to trouble you but have you seen them?

Everyone                Who?

Houston                Oh sorry, what a fool I am - two young boys – scouts that is.

Scott                    What do you want to know for?

Houston                Oh sorry again, you’re not to know are you? I’m their Scout Leader Timothy Houston.

Scott                    Oh right, Dib Dib Dib, Dob Dob Dob, what ever happened to Bob-a-job?

Houston                Ha ha – er yes – very droll. Williams and Jenkins they’re called – nice lads but a bit mischievous you know. They should have been on cookhouse fatigues but they’ve done a bunk and the troupe are waiting for their beans.

Elaine                   Well we haven’t seen any boy scouts and please keep it that way. The last thing we want is a gang of adolescents shrieking about the place.

Brian                    That’s not quite true dear.

Elaine                    What – do we want smelly little boys messing up our campsite?

Brian                    No – I did see two boys.

Houston                Oh I say did you really? Which way did they go?

Brian                    They shot off in that direction. They had a metal detector with them.

Houston                Oh dear – they are too bad. I told them quite categorically not to bring that infernal thing with them. West you say?

Brian                    Well – er – that way.

Houston           Towards the old firing range – God knows what they’ll dig up there. Thank you for the information sir. You’re more than kind. I’ll be off then. See you again no doubt. Cheerio. *(He throws them a three finger salute and exits.)*

Brian             *(Returning the salute)* Right – yes – cheerio – see you again.

Scott             Not if I see him first. What a pratt!

Simon            Oh I thought he seemed alright –

Elaine            Well he doesn’t seem to have much control over those boys. I don’t want them metal detecting round here.

Brian            Why not?

Elaine            You know.

Brian            Not really dear.

Simon)  
Scott )           Neither do I.

Elaine            Of course you do – everyone knows!

Brian            My wife believes that metal detectors can.....

Scott            No don’t bother. The more I see of this place the less I like it. There doesn’t seem to be anything to interest me. *(Kara and Amy wearing shorts and backpacks enter wheeling their bikes and looking at the numbers on the trees)* Hang on – things are looking up. I take back everything I said.

Kara             *(Consulting her map)* Excuse me, are we anywhere near site 30?

Scott            Unfortunately not – this is 24 - so you must be six sites that way.

Amy              *(Very fed up)* We’ve been that way once. We found 29 then it jumped to 31.

Elaine            Well perhaps the disc has fallen off the tree. I don’t think this place is very well maintained. Have you pedalled far?

Kara             About 25 miles. I’m a bit saddle-sore *(She rubs her bottom)*

Scott            Can I assist you with that?

Kara             Oh I can see we might have trouble with you.

Scott            I certainly hope so.

Elaine            Come away Brian *(Brian doesn’t move – he is goggle eyed at the girls)* Brian!

Brian           What?

Elaine           Go and fetch the rest of our things.

Brian           Oh right. Pleased to meet you girls. I'm Brian Windsor and if there's anything I can do to help please don't hesitate to ask.

Elaine           Brian! Go and fetch the rest of our equipment. *(She exits into tent)*

Scott           *(Imitating Elaine)* Yes Brian, go and fetch the rest of the equipment – like now!

Brian           Oh right. I'll go and fetch the rest of the equipment then. And I'll no doubt see you young ladies again. *(He exits backwards smiling and waving, trips and hurriedly departs.)*

Scott           While he's putting up the tent why don't I help you look for number 30. I'm Scott by the way.....

Simon           Hang on Scotty – you've done nothing! You finish putting up the tent and I'll help the girls.

Kara           That's very good of you. I'm Kara Ash and this is my miserable friend Amy Underwood.

Simon           She doesn't look miserable - she looks very nice to me.

Amy           Thank you very much.... Er

Simon           Simon – Simon Davies – pleased to meet you.

Amy           Yes – I didn't think there would be anyone like you here.

Simon           That's very kind of you to say so Amy. I must admit I didn't anticipate meeting anyone as lovely as you here.

Scott           *(Making sick noises)* Pardon me while I puke.

Kara           Oh come on Amy. I know you came here to find yourself but we need to find the campsite first! *(They exit – Simon leaps after them).*

Simon           I'll help you. Can't have you getting lost can we? *(He goes – by this time the tent should be up).*

Scott           Well I like that! I thought he'd come to watch birds not pull'em. Ah well time for a fag and kip I think. *(He goes into the tent and zips it up. Gordon and Zoe enter. Gordon is laden with equipment. Zoe is inappropriately dressed in high heels, mini skirt etc. and very heavily made up. She is pulling a small suitcase on wheels. Suddenly one of her heels sinks in the ground).*

Zoe           Oh bugger! Gordon wait! I'm stuck again. Oh I hate this place.

Gordon          Now come on hon – it's a lovely place. We're really going to have a good time. Just look at the view – isn't that terrific?



Zoe No!

Gordon It is.

Zoe No it's not!

Gordon Well what's wrong with it?

Zoe It's too.....green. I don't know why we couldn't have stopped at a hotel.

Gordon You know why hon, we have to be careful, we have to keep things quiet. After all I am a respectably married man and very well known. That's why I thought camping was the ideal solution. I mean I'm not likely to meet anyone who moves in my circles on a campsite am I?

Zoe Well why couldn't we have stopped at that campsite five miles back with the swimming pool and the clubhouse and the funfair. They had a hairdresser and bingo and everything!

Gordon Oh I think this one's much nicer.

Zoe Well if it's so nice why is there nobody here? The other place was full. They even had a MacDonaldis!

Gordon Only morons with no taste eat that crap.

Zoe Well thank you very much! I've always liked it since I was a kid. But then of course I am so much younger than you.

Gordon Yes – I think it must be an age thing hon – I think the older you get the more sophisticated your taste becomes. And when you're Assistant Supervisor of the Canteen I'm sure your tastes will change.

Zoe “When” – you keep saying “when”. I'm not sure any more that you can get me that job!

Gordon Don't worry – it's in the bag I've already spoken to Mr. Fielding in Human Resources. He owes me one, especially since Southport.

Zoe You never did tell me about that Seminar at Southport you went to. What happened?

Gordon Don't you worry your pretty, little head about it. Suffice to say I've got Dick Fielding just where I want him. So why don't we relax and enjoy the weekend? I'm sure we'll be very cosy in our little tent.

Zoe Well I'm not cooking! I have enough of that every day of the week in that rotten canteen. I want to go to a nice restaurant for all our meals.

Gordon You won't have to cook. I've bought lots of ready meals with us – some of them are reconstituted by just adding water. We want lots of peace, quiet and solitude.

Zoe I know what you want! *(She tries to clean her shoes)*

Gordon Now, now hon. Why don't you take those shoes off then you won't get stuck again.

Zoe And ladder my tights?

Gordon Well take your tights off – and anything else you care to – I won't mind.

Zoe Oh I know that! You're terrible you are. I don't know why I agreed to come away with you in the first place.

Gordon Oh yes you do. *(He pinches her bottom)*

Zoe Gordon! Somebody might see.

Gordon No they won't – that's why we're here. It's as quiet as the grave. Come on – let's find our site – number 13 unlucky for some – but not me eh?

Zoe Gordon you are terrible! *(They exit and Brian staggers in with more equipment including a little fridge).*

Brian I don't know what why we've brought this – there's nowhere to plug it in.

Elaine Oh you're back are you? Well put that stuff into the tent and go and get some water! And check the shower block – see if there's anyone in there and whether there's any earwigs. Make sure the water is hot – you know how fussy I am when it comes to my showers.

Brian You're just fussy full stop!

Elaine I heard that. I see – you drag me out here into the wilderness and then you want to deny me the simple comforts that I am used to. Typical male that is! *(she starts to snivel)*. Showing your true colours now aren't you?

Brian No, of course not. It's just a different sort of a holiday that's all. A simple holiday, the kind of holiday I had when I was a kid. I love it out here. Remember what we said when we were planning to come here. Peace and quiet, no stress, away from the hurly burly of modern life, back to basics.

Elaine Well go and get me some water then and check the showers. Then go to the camp shop and see if they've got any moisturiser – I've left mine at home. And make sure it's good quality – I can't put any old rubbish on my sensitive skin.

Brian Well how am I to know whether it's right or not? I don't know anything about moisturisers.

Elaine Negative again you see? I'm going for a lie down – I've got one of my heads coming on. It's all your bullying. *(She exits. Simon enters)*

Simon Hello Mr. Windsor.

Brian Brian – please.

Simon Brian. Isn't it lovely here? Just listen to those birds. This is my idea of paradise.

Brian Yes I suppose it is nice.

Simon You sound a bit fed up.

Brian Well- I've been looking forward to this for weeks but I don't think it's quite what Elaine expected. She's not really the outdoor type. She likes her home comforts you see.

Simon Oh – it's so beautiful here – surely anybody would like it.

Brian Yeah anybody would, but you don't know my wife – she isn't anybody. What did you think to those two girls then? What were their names?

Simon Amy and Kara. Not bad eh? Especially Amy – she told me she's come here to decide whether to dump her boyfriend or not. She says he's too possessive and a bully.

Brian Ah – it's easy for you youngsters just to “dump” people isn't it? *(He looks longingly at the tent)* It's not so easy after 25 years.

Elaine Brian!

Brian I'm going. I'm going. See you soon Simon. *(He trails off miserably)*

Simon *(Peeps into his tent – comes out quietly and kicks a lump which is protruding from inside the tent – there is a yell of pain)* Oh sorry mate – we're you asleep? I tripped. *(Scott crawls out of the tent rubbing his bottom).*

Scott You did that on purpose!

Simon I think she likes me - that Amy *(he indicates where Amy and Kara are)*

Scott You jammy bugger! I thought you came here to watch birds.

Simon I did – but there's no harm in a little romance is there?

Scott Oh is that what you call it? 'Ere - can you get me off with the other one – Kara?

Simon Possibly – if she's not too fussy.

Scott I'll have you know mate I've had more birds than you've had hot dinners.

Simon I mostly eat salads.

Scott Oh very witty – we'll see. We'll see who scores first. Now let's go to the boozier? I saw a nice little pub on the way here – we can have a pie and a pint.

Simon Yes alright – it is lunchtime, but I'm not spending all the afternoon there and you're paying.

Scott Why am I paying?

Simon            Because I paid for the site and it's my equipment and my tent and I put it up!

Scott            Fair enough – just asking. *(They exit. Williams and Jenkins enter with their metal detector and a large round metal object.)*

Williams        We haven't seen old Trapper Houston – I bet he's looking for us.

Jenkins         I don't care –I'm not spending my holiday dishing up baked beans. Kipper Collins can do that. He's a crawler. What do you think this is? It's quite heavy. *(He gives it a good shake)*

Williams        I can't hear nothing. Chuck it away – what do we want that for?

Jenkins         No – it might be ancient – you know – like on Time Team. *(A loud snore is heard from the tent off)* What's that?

Williams        It sounded like a pig.

Jenkins         There's no pigs here. It could be a wild boar...or a badger! Sssh! It's in that tent – we'll stalk it. *(He carefully lowers the metal object and they both begin crawling off to the tent. After a moment there is a scream from Elaine and the boys rush back on again, pick up their metal object and scuttle off giggling).*

Williams        Quick before she catches us! *(He picks up the metal object)*

Jenkins         What her? You must be joking! I could get away from her on one leg.

Williams        Let's hop it then! *(They rush off laughing – Elaine enters)* and chuck that rusty, old thing away.

Elaine          Come back here you little brats. I know who you are. I shall tell your scout master and you'll be in trouble. I shall send him one of my notes and you'll be sent home. *(Zoe teeters in on her high heels carrying a frilly toilet bag. Immediately Elaine feigns distress).*

Zoe              Are you alright?

Elaine          No I am not. I've had an awful shock. I was having a nap because I had such a terrible headache.....

Zoe              Oh I get those – do you know – once....

Elaine          .....and I was rudely awakened – no – violently awakened by two young ruffians in my tent.

Zoe              Oh my God! Did they hurt you?

Elaine          No – but they were peering at me and grinning insanely. It was a terrible shock.

Zoe              Oh you poor thing. Just a minute. *(She guides Elaine to a chair - Elaine totters as if about to faint).* There you are – you're not on your own are you?

Elaine          No – I'm with my husband.

Zoe Well where is he? It's at a time like this a woman needs her husband.

Elaine Exactly! He should be here. He only went to fetch some water – that was ages ago. I don't like to say this but he's always been the same – unreliable, lazy, but that's men for you.

Zoe Well they're not all bad. There must be some good ones.

Elaine They don't do as they're told straight away, that's the trouble. If they did there would be no conflict. They have to resist. I don't know why – it just causes trouble. My mother was right – she never really controlled by father and I vowed when I got married I'd keep Brian on a very tight rein, but you see what happens as soon as I close my eyes for a moment. He's off – up to no good I'll be bound.

Zoe Are you feeling better now?

Elaine It's kind of you to ask dear – but I feel this holiday is doomed. From the moment we arrived he's behaved very strangely. I think it's the call of the wild – it's beckoned to the savage in him.

Zoe Oh dear he sounds a bit fierce. Gordon's quite the opposite – he's exactly the same as usual – as soon as he put the tent up (if you know what I mean). I said to him – it's lunchtime and I need to do my face – so he's having a sulk now.

Elaine All men are beasts!

Zoe It's so childish. I mean I didn't want to come here in the first place...

Elaine Me neither – but he would have his own way. That's always been my trouble – I don't assert myself enough. I thought it would be a little log cabin, like in Sherwood Forest.

Zoe I thought we were going to a hotel – five star, with pool you know – like he does with his wife.... Er – I mean – like he did – did with his wife – when he was married – before ..... if you see what I mean...

Elaine *(Realising the situation)* Yes – I think I do. Well thank you for your help but I'm feeling much better now – I think I'll go back and lie down.

Zoe Oh alright then. Well don't let him bully you. You stand up for yourself.

Elaine Yes – I'll try – goodbye.

Zoe My names Zoe by the way, I'm just at number 13 if he gets violent....*(Elaine has gone)*.. poor woman. *(She picks up her toilet bag just as Gordon enters)*

Gordon You've been gone ages. Have you done your face? It looks the same to me *(Zoe glares at him – he realises what he's said)* Lovely as usual. *(She is not convinced)*.