

SURVIVING REALITY

A Two-Act Comedy

By
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SYNOPSIS

When the owner of a small local television station decides to jump on the bandwagon and produce his own reality show, sparks fly about the million-dollar prize. Harold Fastbuck sees an opportunity to make millions with the TV show, which casts the haughty Tuttletons of Park Avenue, New York, with the down-home Hatter family of Hog Holler, Kentucky.

The families think they only have to live together in the Hatter cabin for a month, but unbeknownst to them, they must also endure a series of challenges. Being the lying cheater that he is, Fastbuck intends to make the challenges increasingly impossible so the million dollars cannot possibly be won.

Yet the desperate Tuttletons and simple Hatters comically endure everything thrown at them, including exchanging clothes and accents, to the final, ultimate test of eating worms and cow eyes.

Add in to the mix a young director fresh out of school; two obsequious producers; an elderly, egotistical emcee; and a compilation of all known reality shows, and you have chaos and laughter.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 13 f)

BRENDA BYRD: Vice president of programming, a pompous, back-stabbing suck-up.
NEVILLE NERDSTROM: Vice president of programming, an insecure suck-up.
HAROLD FASTBUCK: Devious, gruff, fast-talking owner of CHEP TV station.
OLIVIA STONE: The young, naïve, likeable director.
CASEY: Fastbuck's air-headed niece and secretary.
MARLENA RIVERS: The old, sharp-tongued Oscar winner and botox-loving emcee.
LANGSTON TUTTLETON: The belittled and disrespected father.
MILLICENT TUTTLEON: The haughty, outspoken mother.
SYDNEY TUTTLETON: The very spoiled collegiate daughter.
LAWRENCE TUTTLETON: The arrogant, Harvard student son.
JASPER HATTER: The laid-back, friendly hillbilly father.
NADINE HATTER: The very friendly hillbilly mother.
SCOOTER HATTER: The friendly but dumb hillbilly son.
WANDA MAE HATTER: The shy, Daisy Mae-type daughter.
GERT HATTER: The tough and rugged mountain daughter.
JUNIPER HATTER: The highly intelligent, oddball youngest daughter.
GRANNY STONEWALL HATTER: The wise, solemn, riddle-speaking granny.
LIZZIE: Easy-going camera person.
MAKEUP ARTIST: Marlena's hypodermic-wielding makeup artist.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

Scene 1: Conference room, CHEP TV station.

Scene 2: Two weeks later in a dark Kentucky woods.

Scene 3: Moments later, Hatter home and the TV station.

Act II

Scene 1: The next morning, Hatter home and the TV station.

Scene 2: Three days later, Hatter home and the TV station.

Scene 3: Two weeks later, Hatter home and the TV station.

Scene 4: The following week, at the TV station.

Scene 5: The last day of the challenge, Hatter home.

PROPS

Telephone	Tray w/glasses
Pitcher of water	2 notepads
Contract	Cigar
3 pens	3 suitcases
Bush with hole for lens	Map
Kettle	Mountain rifle
Contract	Script
Handheld camera	Corncob pipe
Axe	Rope
Logs	Metal washtub
Headset	Clipboard
7 small bowls	6 glasses
Bread or biscuits	Cell phone
Large syringe	Scrub board
Wash clothes	Clothes basket
Fax messages	Bottle of white nail polish
Man's trench coat	Hat
Sunglasses	Bowl of "worms"
Bowl of "eyeballs"	Glass of "pig's blood"
3 cloth napkins	Million-dollar check

SOUND EFFECTS

Birds in the woods, funny cell phone music, mule bray.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The CHEP TV conference room. BRENDA and NEVILLE, both with pens and notepads, are seated SL at table with four chairs. There is a pitcher on a tray with glasses, a telephone, and a sign "CHEP" on the UPS wall.)

NEVILLE: *(Looking at watch.)* What's keeping the old fool? I have a tee time in an hour.

BRENDA: Old fool is right. I can't believe he is hiring someone from M.I.T. What would they know about directing? I thought the whole idea was to keep the cost of this show down.

NEVILLE: So far I believe it is the cheapest television show in history. That is, if it ever goes into production. Although I suppose patience is a price well paid to have one's creation come to fruition before one's eyes.

BRENDA: Why, thank you, Neville. It certainly is.

NEVILLE: *(Fake smile and laugh.)* Thank you? What do you mean, thank you?

BRENDA: *(Fake smile and defensive.)* That is what one does when one is complimented on one's creation, dear Neville.

NEVILLE: *(Smile slowly turns to a scowl.)* True, dear Brenda, However, might I not seem foolish thanking myself?

BRENDA: You delusional little man, why would you thank yourself?

NEVILLE: *(Stands.)* Because, you pompous twit, it is my creation.

BRENDA: *(Stands.)* I beg to differ – you untalented bore!

NEVILLE: Beg all you want, you witch, this show was my creation!

BRENDA: HA! You couldn't create gas in a bean factory!

NEVILLE: It was my idea!

BRENDA: It was my idea! *(Shoves HIM on shoulder.)*

NEVILLE: No it wasn't! *(Shoves HER back.)*

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(THEY start hand fighting like children while SHE keeps saying, "Yes it was," and HE keeps saying, "No it wasn't." HAROLD ENTERS with OLIVIA. He is wearing a loud sports jacket, chewing on a cigar and yells...)

HAROLD: What in the name of Aunt Minnie is going on?

BRENDA & NEVILLE: *(Quickly stop and look nervously for an answer.)* Ah, ah.

NEVILLE: *(Blurts out.)* Bees!

HAROLD: What? What in tarnation are you talking about?

BRENDA: We – ah – were being attacked by bees.

NEVILLE: Yes, they just came out of nowhere. *(To BRENDA.)* Wait, don't move. *(Slaps HER on the shoulder.)* There, got it.

BRENDA: *(Angry.)* No, wait, there's one more. *(Slaps NEVILLE across the face and smiles.)* There – all gone.

HAROLD: You'll be gone if you don't sit and be quiet.

BRENDA & NEVILLE: *(Quickly sit.)* Sorry, sir. *(Give each OTHER dirty looks.)*

HAROLD: Ms. Stone, believe it or not these are the geniuses that came up with the idea for the show.

BRENDA & NEVILLE: Thank you; yes, I did. *(Dirty looks.)*

HAROLD: Brenda Byrd and Neville Nerdstrom are the station's VP's in charge of programming. Byrd – Nerd, this is the young lady I'm trying to lure into directing our new show – Ms. Olivia Stone.

BRENDA: *(In awe.)* Are you

HAROLD: No relation.

OLIVIA: Nice to meet you both and I must admit I'm impressed with the concept.

BRENDA & NEVILLE: Thank you. *(BRENDA kicks NEVILLE under the table.)*

NEVILLE: *(Loud.)* OW! *(Quickly tries to cover up.)* I'll be looking forward to hearing your thoughts.

OLIVIA: Thank you. Even though reality TV isn't a new concept, your format is intriguing.

BRENDA: Thank you, Olivia. That means a lot coming from someone who attended M.I.T.

OLIVIA: *(Surprised.)* Really?

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NEVILLE: *(Not to be outdone.)* Yes, very impressive. I myself would have attended such a prestigious school ... *(Zones out.)* ... had it not been for a controlling mother, a verbally abusive father, and the fact we were dirt poor, thanks to my father's inability to provide because of his lack of drive, couth and education!

(OTHERS stare, stunned.)

NEVILLE: *(Forced.)* But I still love them ... wherever they are ... *(Comes back.)* I'm sorry, I'm sure you don't want to hear about my struggles.

HAROLD: *(Stern.)* No we don't ... dirt-poor boy.

(BRENDA and HAROLD burst out laughing.)

BRENDA: Good one, boss. Olivia, tell us more what impressed you so much about my idea?

(NEVILLE groans and bites his knuckles.)

OLIVIA: First I would like to say Mr. Fastbuck —

HAROLD: Harold, please.

OLIVIA: Okay, Harold. I'm very impressed that a small, local television station would take on such an undertaking. Reality TV is a very expensive operation.

HAROLD: *(Points to sign.)* Don't let our call letters *(Pronounced cheap.)* CHEP be misleading — we are anything but. True, it is a risk, but I believe once the networks see our product, they will be lining up to buy the rights. How can we miss when we bill the show as the reality show that can't be won? In fact, the network heads have said they will be watching with great interest.

BRENDA & NEVILLE: *(Surprised.)* They did?

HAROLD: *(Angry, HE fakes a laugh and smile.)* You two didn't read the memo?

BRENDA: *(Realizing HAROLD is lying.)* Oh, that memo, yes, yes we read it. You remember, don't you, Neville? *(Kicks HIM under the table.)*

End of Freeview

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