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**Cape Fear Regional Theatre
Auditions for On Golden Pond**

SCENES

CHARLIE – page 20-22 with Ethel “Morning Ethel” – “ Busting her ass for the community.”

CHELSEA – PAGE 52-53 with Norman “Tough old buzzard” – “Tsk. I married Bill.”

BILLY – page 41-42 with Norman “You like that word, don’t you?” – “It will make it easier to bear your heavy load.”

BILL page 38 “Norman, I don’t want to offend you” – end of page 40 with Norman

NORMAN. But, you've already filled the buckets.

ETHEL. Don't move. *(He doesn't. She exits into the kitchen. The sound of a motorboat can be heard. Norman looks to the lake.)*

NORMAN. Here comes whatshisname. He'll be bringing the paper, you know. I wouldn't want to miss any career opportunities just because I'm out looking for strawberries.

ETHEL. *(Coming back with an empty bucket.)* I'll pay you, Norman. It could be the beginning of something big. You may become a major strawberry picker.

NORMAN. Not if I have to be bending over all the time. I think you're trying to kill me.

ETHEL. I've thought about it.

NORMAN. You needn't bother. I'm on borrowed time as it is.

ETHEL. Would you please take your cheery personality and get out of here?

NORMAN. Maybe I could lie down to pick the berries.

ETHEL. Would you go on?

NORMAN. Where did you say these strawberries were? Other than on the ground I mean?

ETHEL. On the old town road. Just up from the meadow. *(He exits. Ethel watches him go. There's a look in her eyes, partly concern, partly pleasure at making old Norman get moving. She closes the door and crosses the room, tidies the pile of newspapers. The motor is very loud now. Ethel steps up onto the platform and looks down at the lake. She opens the wooden door and calls through the screen.)* Yoo hoo! Charlie! Hey! *(The motor stops.)* Good morning. Got some coffee on, if you'd like. Come on up, you can take five minutes off. I'll write you a note and you can send it to the Postmaster General. *(She steps quickly to the kitchen where she can be heard banging about. After a moment Charlie Martin appears on the porch. He's a big, round, blond-haired man, weather beaten face, smiling eyes, strong Maine accent. He is indeed a laugher, but not exactly "deficient." In his rustic, simple, thoughtful way, he is actually quite charming. He carries a small package, a rolled newspaper, and several letters. He peers through the screen door.)*

Charlie
Start

CHARLIE. Morning, Ethel.

ETHEL. *(Opening the kitchen door and leaning out.)* Come in, Charlie, and have a seat. Like a biscuit?

CHARLIE. Sure. *(She goes back inside. Charlie pulls the screen door. It falls back over on him. He wrestles with it and it slams down onto the porch.)* Uh oh. *(Ethel comes back out, having heard the noise.)* I

think I broke your door.

ETHEL. Oh, no. It's been that way for a month now. I should have warned you. Norman is supposed to fix it. It's not high on his list of priorities. I'm afraid.

CHARLIE. *(He sets down the mail and leans the door up against the wall.)* I could give it a try. It's just missing its little thing-amabobbers, that's all.

ETHEL. No, better let Norman get to it. Come in and let's close the big door before every mosquito in the county finds its way in here. *(He steps in, laughing, leaving the mail outside.)*

CHARLIE. Pretty bad this year, huh?

ETHEL. Worse than ever. Sit down. How's your brother? We haven't seen him at all this season.

CHARLIE. You mean Tom?

ETHEL. That's the only brother you have, isn't it?

CHARLIE. Yes. He's fine. He's just come back up from Portland. Got stopped twice for speeding. Once down and once up. *(He laughs.)* By the same policeman. *(He laughs. Ethel comes in with a coffee carafe.)* You should have seen his face.

ETHEL. I love your laugh, Charlie.

CHARLIE. Thank you. *(He laughs.)* Tom wasn't too happy to hear it yesterday. I don't know, it just struck me as awfully funny that he could be stupid enough to be stopped twice by the same cop. When he told me, I couldn't stop laughing. *(He laughs. He stops.)* Tom's not speaking to me anymore now. *(He helps himself to his coffee and grabs a biscuit. Ethel smiles at him.)* Where's Norman?

ETHEL. Norman is off picking strawberries. I threw him out. *(Charlie laughs.)* Don't laugh. *(Charlie stops.)* Norman is restless this year. I don't know what's got into him. How's your mother?

CHARLIE. *My mother?*

ETHEL. Yes.

CHARLIE. She's holding her own. *(He laughs and laughs.)* She fell down, you know, a couple of months ago.

ETHEL. I didn't know that.

CHARLIE. Yuh, a couple of months ago, right on her rump, when she was out helping clean up the town common with the Ladies' Auxiliary. She was having a tug-a-war with a dead juniper bush, and she won, or lost, depending on how you look at it. *(He laughs.)* She hasn't been normal since. *(He laughs.)* She walks all right, and sleeps and everything. She just can't sit. *(He snickers.)* It's taken a little adjustment. *(He laughs and laughs. Ethel smiles.)* If

End

you'll pardon the expression, she's one old lady who really believes in busting her ass for the community. *(He howls. Ethel joins in, neither of them noticing at first as Norman steps in, carrying a bucket.)* Hi, Norman.

ETHEL. Hello, Norman. What are you doing back already? You've barely left.

NORMAN. So? I moved fast. I ran all the way, picked without stopping and ran all the way back.

ETHEL. *(Rising and starting to head him off.)* Well, I don't believe a word of it. Let me see what you've got.

NORMAN. I'll just dump them in with yours. Stay where you are.

ETHEL. *(Getting closer.)* Let me see.

NORMAN. No. I don't have many.

ETHEL. *(On him now. She reaches for the bucket.)* Just let me see. *(He tries to pull away. They wrestle with the bucket, it drops on the floor and bounces.)* There's nothing in it at all. You didn't get a single strawberry. What's the matter with you?

NORMAN. *(Looking at the empty bucket.)* I must have eaten them all.

ETHEL. Why didn't you stay and pick some?

NORMAN. Too many mosquitoes. You were right about them. I was afraid I'd contract malaria and die before my time.

ETHEL. Well, I don't know. Do you want some coffee?

NORMAN. No. *(He looks at Charlie.)* No mail today, Charlie?

CHARLIE. Holy Mackinoly! I left it on the porch!

NORMAN. Well, how about fetching it? Could you do that?

CHARLIE. You bet. *(He jumps up and goes out the door.)*

NORMAN. Look out for the mosquitoes.

ETHEL. You want a glass of milk, Norman?

NORMAN. No.

ETHEL. I'll get you one. *(She exits to the kitchen. Norman watches her go. He looks out at Charlie.)*

NORMAN. I see you broke the screen door, Charlie.

CHARLIE. *(Coming back in.)* Yuh, well, I think you need a couple of little thing-amabobbers for the hinges.

NORMAN. Oh, I don't know about that. It's been working all right. You must have yanked at it. Let's have the mail.

CHARLIE. Oh. Yuh. *(Holding it out.)* Got a package for you. *(Ethel comes back in with a glass of milk.)*

ETHEL. Here, Norman. Drink this. *(She hands it to him.)*

NORMAN. Thank you, nurse.

NORMAN. Tsk. *(He walks over and transfers a few items from Billy to the floor.)*

ETHEL. You two need constant supervision, I declare. *(Billy spots Chelsea.)*

BILLY. Hey! Look at you.

CHELSEA. Hey, kid. *(She steps to him and hugs him.)*

BILLY. How ya' doin'?

CHELSEA. Not too shabby.

BILLY. Where's the dentist?

CHELSEA. He went ahead. He's going to call you tonight.

ETHEL. *(Taking Billy by the collar.)* Would you please march upstairs and deposit yourself in a warm shower? Chelsea has news for you which you can't hear till you're dry. *(She prods him up the stairs.)*

NORMAN. What news?

BILLY. *(Turning back.)* Chelsea, you should have seen the bass I caught this morning. *(He holds his hands wide apart.)*

NORMAN. Ha!

BILLY. Five pounds easy.

NORMAN. Ha!

BILLY. But then I saw this depressed look on Norman's face so I decided to let it go.

NORMAN and BILLY. Ha! Ha! Ha! *(Billy exits.)*

ETHEL. Are you two going to be all right alone? I'm sure you can find something to talk about.

NORMAN. Yes. We can talk about the fact that the little person gets to take a shower while I develop pneumonia.

ETHEL. You're a tough old buzzard. Aren't you? *(She exits. Norman scowls after her, then he turns to Chelsea.)*

NORMAN. Tough old buzzard. Don't these little endearments make your heart go pit-a-pat?

CHELSEA. Yes. *(They study each other a moment.)*

NORMAN. Did you hear what the stupid Yankees did?

CHELSEA. No. *(Carefully.)* I don't want to talk about baseball.

NORMAN. Oh. I was just going to mention something you might have found interesting, but it doesn't matter.

CHELSEA. I want to talk about us.

NORMAN. What about us?

CHELSEA. You want to come sit down?

NORMAN. Should I? I've already started a puddle here; perhaps I'd better stand.

CHELSEA. I just wanted to say ... that I'm sorry.

Chelsea
Start

NORMAN. Fine. No problem.

CHELSEA. Don't you want to know what I'm sorry about?

NORMAN. I suppose so.

CHELSEA. I'm sorry that our communication has been so bad. That my ... that I've been walking around with a chip on my shoulder. I think it would be a good idea if we tried ... to have the kind of relationship we're supposed to have.

NORMAN. What kind of relationship are we supposed to have?

CHELSEA. Like a father and a daughter.

NORMAN. Ah. Well. Just in the nick of time, huh?

CHELSEA. No.

NORMAN. Worried about the will, are you? I'm leaving everything to you, except what I'm taking with me.

CHELSEA. Stop it. *(She steps to him.)* I don't want anything. We've been mad at each other for too long.

NORMAN. Oh. I didn't realize we were mad. I thought we just didn't like each other. *(Direct hit. Chelsea turns away, hurt. After a moment, she regroups, stepping back to him.)*

CHELSEA. I want to be your friend.

NORMAN. Oh. Okay. Does this mean you're going to come around more often? I may not last eight more years, you know.

CHELSEA. Tsk. I'll come around more often.

NORMAN. Well. It would mean a lot to your mother.

CHELSEA. Okay. *(They look at each other a moment, nothing more to say.)* Now you want to tell me about the Yankees?

NORMAN. The Yankees? They're bums. Your mother said you had some news, what is it?

CHELSEA. I got married in Brussels.

NORMAN. You did? In Brussels. Isn't that nice?

CHELSEA. It is. It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. He makes me very happy.

NORMAN. That's good. He speak English?

CHELSEA. Tsk. I married Bill.

NORMAN. Oh, Bill! That *is* nice.

ETHEL. *(Offstage.)* Next!

NORMAN. What is she screaming about?

CHELSEA. You're next in the shower.

NORMAN. Oh. *(He turns to go. Turns back to Chelsea.)* Talk to you later. *(Chelsea nods, pleased. Ethel appears on the landing.)*

ETHEL. Next!

NORMAN. Good God. This place is starting to sound like a

End

BILL. Oh, no. That's okay.

NORMAN. I like talking about sex. Anything you want to know, just ask me.

BILL. Okay. I ... I do want to make sure I have this little matter clear in my mind. Chelsea and I *can* sleep together, right?

NORMAN. Yes! Please do! Just don't let Ethel catch you. *(There is the sound of footsteps on the porch steps, and Billy comes bounding in the door.)*

BILLY. Dad! I paddled a canoe! It's a boat, just like the Indians had! *(Bill stands.)*

NORMAN. Actually the Indians used a different grade of aluminum.

BILLY. Chelsea wants you to come down, Dad. She and Ethel are going skinny-dipping.

BILL. Skinny-dipping? *(He barely looks at Norman.)* Um ...

NORMAN. Go ahead. Permissiveness runs rampant up here on Golden Pond. *(Bill walks slowly to the front door. He turns.)*

BILL. Are there ever any bears around these parts?

NORMAN. Oh, sure. Black bears and grizzlies. One came along here last month and ate an old lesbian.

BILL. Uh ...

BILLY. Go on, Dad. He's bullshitting you.

BILL. Heh. *(He nods. Takes a deep breath and steps bravely out.)* God, I hope I live through the next few days. *(He exits. Norman watches Billy explore the room, picking up whatever makes him curious.)*

NORMAN. You like that word, don't you? Bullshit.

BILLY. Yeah.

NORMAN. It's a good word.

BILLY. You going skinny-dipping?

NORMAN. Nope. You?

BILLY. Naw. I try to be selective about who I flash in front of.

NORMAN. *(Not following.)* Oh?

BILLY. Chelsea says you're a real heavy-duty fisherman. She calls you The Old Man of the Sea.

NORMAN. Ah. I've caught a few. You fish?

BILLY. No.

NORMAN. Want to go sometime?

BILLY. Maybe.

NORMAN. All right. We'll see. What do you think of your father?

BILLY. To tell you the truth, he's not bad.

NORMAN. *(Watching him critically.)* Why do you walk with your

Billy
Start

shoulders all bent like that?

BILLY. I have a lot on my mind.

NORMAN. Oh. *(He studies Billy for a moment.)* Well, what do you do out there in California, since you don't fish? I mean, what does one do for recreation, when one is thirteen and not in school?

BILLY. Cruise chicks.

NORMAN. Um...?

BILLY. Meet'em. Girls. Try to pick them up.

NORMAN. Oh. And what do you do with them when you have them?

BILLY. Suck face.

NORMAN. I beg your pardon?

BILLY. *(Explaining.)* You know. Kiss. Suck face — kiss.

NORMAN. Oh. *(He stares at Billy, then looks at the book he still holds.)* Ever read this book? *Swiss Family Robinson*?

BILLY. No.

NORMAN. Go read it.

BILLY. Now?

NORMAN. Yes. Go upstairs and read the first chapter. And give me a report tomorrow. *(He hands Billy the book.)* Go on.

BILLY. Well, I thought we were going to have a party.

NORMAN. I'll call you when the party's underway, if it ever is. Go on. Read the first chapter. You'll like it. *(Billy obeys. There's something in Norman's authority that Billy responds to, not unfavorably. He marches up the stairs.)* Let me see you stand up straight. *(Billy stops and scowls at Norman.)* Come on. Nobody has that much on his mind. *(Billy straightens.)* Ah! Very good! You should try that more often. It will make it easier to bear your heavy load.

NORMAN. *(Billy exits. Ethel comes bursting in the upstage door, fully dressed, and swatting at the moths.)* I thought you'd be nude.

ETHEL. Sorry. The water feels lovely, but I didn't want to overwhelm Chelsea's friend on his first night here. *(She comes down into the room.)* Have you been picking on him?

NORMAN. Yes. He found me fascinating. He said they want to sleep together.

ETHEL. I expected that. Well. Why not? They're big people.

NORMAN. Yes.

ETHEL. You and I did it. Didn't we?

NORMAN. Yes, I told him that.

ETHEL. *(Blushes.)* Well, you didn't have to tell him. I think I better get us some dinner together. You must be starved half to death.

End

a filling?

BILL. Um. Start at about [ninety-five dollars].

NORMAN. [Ninety-five dollars]?! Good God! My brother charged [fifteen dollars] a filling right up until [1988] when he raised it to [twenty]. That's when I stopped going to him.

BILL. Your brother is a dentist?

NORMAN. He was. When he was living.

BILL. Isn't that amazing?

NORMAN. I don't know. I think every family has one. *(He returns to his book. Bill studies him, then chooses his words with care.)*

BILL. Norman. Um. I don't want to offend you, but there's a rather important little topic that I feel I have to broach.

NORMAN. *(Looking up.)* I beg your pardon?

BILL. I don't want to offend you, but ... if it's all right with you, we'd like to sleep together.

NORMAN. What do you mean?

BILL. We'd like to sleep ... together ... in the same room ... in the same bed. If you don't find that offensive.

NORMAN. All three of you?

BILL. What? Oh, no. Just two.

NORMAN. You and Billy?

BILL. No.

NORMAN. Not Chelsea and Billy?

BILL. No, sir.

NORMAN. That leaves only Chelsea and you then.

BILL. Yes.

NORMAN. Why would I find that offensive? You're not planning on doing something unusual, are you?

BILL. Oh, no. Just ... *(He can't go on.)*

NORMAN. That doesn't seem too offensive, as long as you're quiet.

BILL. Great.

NORMAN. Chelsea always used to sleep in the same bed with her husband.

BILL. Oh, I'm sure.

NORMAN. And Ethel and I do, you know. We sleep together. Been doing it for years.

BILL. Well, of course. But you're married and all.

NORMAN. So?

BILL. Well ...

NORMAN. I think I'm beginning to see this more clearly. It's a moral issue, isn't it?

Bill
Start

BILL. Well, it's just that we're of different generations, different mores ...

NORMAN. What is a more? I've never known.

BILL. Um ... a custom, I'd say. Or something.

NORMAN. Go on. Forgive me for interrupting.

BILL. Well, it's just a matter of points of view ...

NORMAN. (*Interrupting.*) I shouldn't have interrupted.

BILL. Oh. Of course. (*Starting again.*) It's just that I don't want our relationship to ...

NORMAN. It's a terrible social problem, I think.

BILL. Um...?

NORMAN. Interrupting. Not listening. The art of conversation went out with radio probably.

BILL. Yes.

NORMAN. Or maybe with mirrors.

BILL. Um ...

NORMAN. Ever notice how people start to check themselves out in a mirror or a window or your eyeglasses when they're supposed to be listening?

BILL. Yes, I have noticed that.

NORMAN. It's a shifty sort of quality, I think.

BILL. Yes.

NORMAN. Or perhaps it's just a form of egocentricity.

BILL. Yeah.

NORMAN. I do it.

BILL. You do?

NORMAN. Sure. Conversations bore me to tears. I always look for a little divertissement while I'm waiting for my turn to talk.

BILL. Huh.

NORMAN. Pretty shabby, huh?

BILL. Well ...

NORMAN. I don't do it with Ethel. She's so pretty, isn't she?

BILL. Yes.

NORMAN. After all these years I still can't get over how pretty she is. Or how handsome I am. That's the real reason I always look for a mirror. I like to keep checking. Make sure I haven't faded.

BILL. Oh.

NORMAN. They say you fade with old age. They say your looks just go. Haven't seen a sign of it.

BILL. No, indeed.

NORMAN. What were we talking about?

BILL. Um ...

NORMAN. Sex, I believe. You were concerned that my morals somehow wouldn't mesh with yours.

BILL. Yes.

NORMAN. Don't be silly. I'd be delighted to have you abusing my daughter under my own roof.

BILL. Um ...

NORMAN. Would you like the room where I first violated her mother, or would you be interested in the master bedroom?

BILL. Norman ...

NORMAN. Ethel and your son and I could all sleep out back and you could do it right here on the hearth. Like that idea?

BILL. *(He's embarrassed, but he's also heard enough. He smiles at Norman and shakes his head.)* You're having a good time, aren't you?

NORMAN. Hmmmm?

BILL. Chelsea told me all about you, about how you like to have a good time with people's heads. She does it, too, sometimes, and sometimes I can get into it. Sometimes not. I just want you to know that I'm very good at recognizing crap when I hear it. You know, it's not imperative that you and I be friends, but it might be *nice*. I'm sure you're a fascinating person, and I'm sure it would be fascinating to get to know you. That's obviously not an easy task. But it's all right, you go ahead and be as *poopy* as you want, to quote Chelsea, and I'll be as receptive and as pleasant as I can. I just want you to bear in mind while we're sitting here smiling at each other and you're jerking me around that I know precisely what you're up to and that I can take only so much of it. Okay? Good.

(He pauses. Waits for a reaction. Norman has been listening very intently.) Now. What's the bottom line on the illicit sex question?

NORMAN. *(He stares at Bill for a long moment, then smiles.)* Very *nice*. Good speech. I liked that a lot. So, bottom line, huh? You're a bottom-line man. All right. Here's the bottom line: oh-kay. Ethel and I haven't always been married. It just seems that way. We tipped over a canoe or two in our day, trying to accommodate another generation's *mores*. *(He pauses.)* You seem like a nice person, a bit verbose perhaps, a bit outspoken, but ... nice.

BILL. Thank you.

NORMAN. And you're right about me. I *am* fascinating.

BILL. I'm sure you are.

NORMAN. I didn't mean to weight down our conversation. We can go back to talking about sex if you like.

End