

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

By

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OPEN:

In the blackness we hear the sound of two cats wailing and meowing, making noises like they're either mating or being skinned alive.

LIGHTS UP:

The stage is sparse with a pile of firewood center and a bizarre, large, empty cardboard box covered in rope, tree branches, duct tape and other debris off to one side. Some of the rope can be run from the box to the stage floor and taped there. Along the side of the box the word "TENT" is crudely painted with the "N" backwards.

Squatting by the pile of wood are DONNY and DANNY. They are lethargic, dim-witted, "dumb as a burlap sack of hammers" twin brothers. They wear matching striped polo shirts, glasses, khaki shorts, long white socks, hiking boots, scouting caps and scouting scarves around their necks. They each have sashes with hand made badges on them. Danny is rubbing two small cats together furiously over the pile of wood as Donny looks on. From offstage the hoarse, angry voice of their MOTHER shrieks out.

MOTHER

Jesus H. Christ, Holy Mother of God
damnit! Will you two circus freaks
stop stirring up such a ruckus and
go to bed?!!!

DONNY

(Calling off stage.)
But Mom...you said we could camp
out in the yard!

DANNY

Yeah, and we got to start a
campfire or we're not gonna get our
merit badges, eh?!

DONNY

Duh!

MOTHER

Do not get me out of this Lazy-Boy,
mister!

DONNY

All right!

DANNY

Whatever!

DONNY

Duh!

Danny stands and tosses the cats on to the ground.

DANNY

Well, this isn't gonna work. Bright idea, Einstein.

DONNY

I swear I heard you could start a fire by rubbing two cats together.

DANNY

And where did you hear that, pray tell? Out your butt-hole?

DONNY

Well, duh!

DANNY

Duh squared!

DONNY

Ha, ha! You said "butt", eh?

DANNY

Ha! I know...classic.

Donny picks up the cats and throws them off stage right, as if over a fence. He walks back to Danny, pointing towards the "fence."

DONNY

Old Lady Johnson's gonna be pissed.

DANNY

Fer what?

DONNY

Fer rubbin' her cats together like eighty grit sandpaper till their guts opened up, eh?

DANNY

Aw, she won't care. She's got a...a riding lawn mower and shit. Whatever.

DONNY

I know, eh?

DANNY

So now what? We gotta start a fuckin' fire or we don't get our merit badges, eh?

DONNY

Well tell me about it. I came up with the cat idea.

DANNY

Yeah, and fat lotta crap that did, eh? Now the wood's gonna be harder to start with all that feline bile on it.

DONNY

Duh!

Stumbling quickly on stage is ALICE. She is frail, with long blonde hair, a blue dress and a white apron (remind you of anyone?)

ALICE

Oh!

DANNY

(Startled.)

Wha!

DONNY

(Equally startled.)

Yah!

ALICE

I'm so sorry I...I didn't mean to scare you.

DANNY

Holy geeze, give me a heart attack, eh?

DONNY

Cripes, I think I shit myself.

DANNY

Really?

Donny reaches into the back of his shorts, pulls out his hand and looks at it.

DONNY

No, false alarm.

DANNY

Whatever.

DONNY

You're in our yard, eh?

DANNY

Yeah..we could call the cops and whatever, right?

ALICE

No...No, please. Don't do that. You see, I...I don't have anywhere else to go.

DONNY

Huh?

ALICE

You see I'm...I'm running away.

DANNY

From what?

DONNY

It ain't a cow is it?!

They look offstage where she entered.

DANNY

No-how! God, I hope not!

ALICE

(Confused.)

No...

DONNY

No friggin way!

DANNY

Cows and shit? They act all nice, like on the side of the milk carton and everything? Givin' milk and mooing and shit?

DONNY

Bovine bullshit!

DANNY

But if you get alone with a cow? Like in a pasture? They would fuckin' stomp you and eat you like a ham sandwich.

DONNY
With bacon on it.

DANNY
Nice...

ALICE
No...No, I'm running away from
home.

DANNY
(Laughing.)
Ha!

DONNY
Ha, ha! Yeah...like your house is
gonna chase you, eh? That's logic!

ALICE
No, not my house. My home. I'm
running away from my home. My
family. My parents. They...they
just don't understand me anymore.
My wants, my needs, my dreams. It
was just too much. So I knew I had
to leave.

DONNY
Wow...fucked up, eh? I'm Donny.

He approaches her with his hand out. She shakes it.

DANNY
And I'm Danny.

He shakes her hand, roughly. Then, for some reason, Donny and
Danny shake hands, then hug each other. They turn to her with
their arms around each others' shoulders.

DONNY
We're twins, eh?

DANNY
Brothers.

ALICE
Nice to meet you. I'm Alice.
So...are you two camping out?

DANNY
Ha! No lie, eh?

DONNY
We're trying for a new merit badge.

ALICE
Are you two in the Boy Scouts?

They two men turn sullen and look down at their feet, pouting sadly.

DONNY
(Sadly.)
No...

DANNY
(Equally as sadly.)
They won't let us in the Boy Scouts.

DONNY
Fuckin' rules.

DANNY
Fuckin adult diapers...

DONNY
Inappropriate hand cream...

DANNY
Life threatening sharp objects...

DONNY
Sexual innuendo....

DANNY
Uncontrollable spastic fits...

After a pause.

ALICE
Oh...I see.

The two men break their sullen mood and tilt their heads back up, happily.

DANNY
So we started our own scout troupe, eh?

DONNY
We're called the Big Time Big Boy Back Yard Scouting Association. I came up with that one.

DANNY
I wanted REO Speedwagon.

DONNY
Freakin' lame.

DANNY
Shut up! They rock!

DONNY
We're not an official scouting
group, though.

DANNY
Not yet, no.

ALICE
Oh. So, when will you get
sanctioned?

DANNY
(Confused.)
What?

ALICE
When will you...you know, get
sanctioned?

There is a long pause as the two men try and wrap their minds around what she just said. They stand, slack-jawed. They look at her. They look at one another. They look at her again. Then...

DONNY
I had my tonsils out.

ALICE
Oh...okay.

DANNY
Hey, we have an official song. Want
to hear it?

DONNY
Ha! Yeah, want to?

ALICE
Sure.

Donny and Danny look at one another, ready to begin. Then...

DONNY AND DANNY
(Singing.)
THE BIG TIME, BIG BOY BACK YARD
SCOUTS!
WE KNOW WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!
(MORE)

DONNY AND DANNY (CONT'D)
 THIS AND THAT AND SOMETHING ELSE!
 FUCKIN' LA DEE DA DA...

The song dissipates into slurred, unsure lyrics; with Danny singing "crackers, crackers, crackers and cheese", and Donny just singing "la-la-la-la" over and over. They fade the song out clumsily.

ALICE
 Wow, that's...very nice.

DONNY
 Really?

DANNY
 We haven't rehearsed in a while.

ALICE
 So, now you have to start a
 campfire, huh?

DANNY
 Yeah. To get our merit badge. We
 got all different kinds. Look...

He points to the crude, hand-made badges on his sash.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Golf carting, dish washing, gas
 relief...

Donny points at his badges.

DONNY
 Gas relief, gum scraping, leg
 waxing...

DANNY
 Leg waxing, passive aggressiveness,
 tub draining...

DONNY
 Tub draining...but the fire making
 one's really hard to do.

DANNY
 Yeah...fuckin' hard.

DONNY
 We tried everything. Fire dances.

DANNY
 Magnifying lens.

DONNY
Encyclopedias.

DANNY
Face squinching.

DONNY
Cat rubbing. But nothing's working.

DANNY
I think the wood might be bad.

DONNY
Spot on.

ALICE
What about rubbing two sticks?

DONNY
What?

ALICE
You know, starting a fire through
the friction of rubbing two sticks
together? It's an old Indian
method.

DANNY
That sounds so crazy it just might
work.

DONNY
Excellent! You guys stay here and
I'll go get some sticks from Old
Lady Johnson's yard.

DANNY
And we'll stay here.

DONNY
Ditto!

DANNY
Ditto-ditto!

Donny exits. Alice smiles and turns toward the pile of wood.
Danny approaches her, frantically. He suddenly speaks with an
intelligent, refined British accent.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Oh God, you have to help me!

ALICE
 (Startled.)
 What?!

DANNY
 Please, please take me away from
 here! I can't take it anymore!

ALICE
 I...I don't understand!

DANNY
 They kidnapped me! I'm not his twin
 brother, for Christ's sake, look at
 me!

He takes off his glasses.

ALICE
 (Shocked.)
 Oh my God...

DANNY
 I was selling vacuum cleaners door
 to door. It was nineteen
 ninety...God, I don't know. It was
 so long ago. Clinton was President.
 I came in to do an Ultra-Suck
 demonstration...and he hit me from
 behind. The next thing I knew I was
 bound, with a rag stuffed in my
 mouth. They put me in a box under
 the old woman's bed. I was under
 there for years. At night she used
 to...do things to me.
 (crying.)
 Oh God...I wanted to die!

ALICE
 You poor man!

DANNY
 They made me play his twin. All
 these years. The foot massages, the
 open sores, the scouting...please,
 please don't leave here without me!

ALICE
 (Looking offstage.)
 Shhh! He's coming back! I'll do
 what I can, I promise!

Danny puts his glasses back on and reverts to his dullard
 twin act. Donny enters with two large sticks.

DONNY
I got 'em! Hot off the presses!

DANNY
Excellent!

Alice approaches Donny and takes the sticks from him.

ALICE
Here, I'll show you how to do it.

Donny gives her the sticks, then slowly brushes the back of his hand against her cheek.

DONNY
Wow...your face feels like Pudding
In A Cup.

ALICE
(Blushing.)
Thank you.

DONNY
Hey...My weiner's gettin' hard.

ALICE
What?

DONNY
Yeah. Feels like a three-quarter
inch stainless steel lag bolt.

He grabs her by the wrist.

DONNY (CONT'D)
(Leering at her.)
I think you and me should go in the
tent.

He starts to drag her to the tent.

ALICE
(Shocked.)
What?! No!

Danny grabs her by the other wrist, stopping them.

DANNY
Hey, no way, Jose! My wiener's
gettin' hard, too.

DONNY
Bull-cookies!

DANNY
 Fer truth! It's like a concrete
 cocktail frank. I'm gonna take her
 in the tent.

They start a tug of war with her.

DONNY
 Bull-shitticus!

DANNY
 Am so, eh?!

DONNY
 Bull-slammajamma!

DANNY
 Yes way, eh?!

DONNY
 Bull-crappinstance!

DANNY
 Abso-tively, eh?!

They both let her go.

DONNY
 All right then! We shall do battle
 for her!

ALICE
 No!

DANNY
 Accepted!

DONNY
 And in doing so I will cut your
 frickin' head off and shove it in
 your face!

DANNY
 And that would be a near impossible
 thing to do with your head up your
 butt!

DONNY
 Ha, ha! You said "butt."

DANNY
 Ha! I know...classic.

They exit to ready themselves. Alice stands fearfully by the wood pile.

ALICE

(Pacing.)

Oh, Jesus, what am I doing? So my Mom and Dad didn't like my prom date, is that such a big deal? Worth running away for? But...that poor man. Trapped for so long. I have to help him, somehow.

She looks over at the "Tent."

ALICE (CONT'D)

Oh God...just don't let me end up in the tent.

Donny and Danny re-enter. Donny wears shoulder pads and a bucket on his head. He carries a pitchfork. Danny wears a bike helmet and some rag rugs tied around his chest. He carries a baseball bat. They wear mismatched gloves.

DONNY

Are you ready, sir Danny?

DANNY

Have at you, sir Donny!

ALICE

No, please!

DONNY

I mean, I've got a headache and everything, but even with a migraine I will still ass-kick you.

DANNY

Same here, 'cept it's a bad tooth. Throbbin' like a mother-fucker. So let's do this.

ALICE

No!

The two circle each other, cautiously, not really wanting to fight.

DONNY

I will...

DANNY

I will, too...

DONNY
Just say the word...

DANNY
You say the word...

DONNY
You say it...

DANNY
I will...

DONNY
I will, too...

As they circle each other, Alice grabs the sticks and rubs them together over the wood pile. A fire begins. They two begin to rush each other, but--

ALICE
Wait, look!

The fire grows brighter. The brothers stop and look at the campfire.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(Singing.)
THE BIG TIME, BIG BOY BACK YARD
SCOUTS!
WE KNOW WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!
THIS AND THAT AND SOMETHING ELSE!
FUCKIN' LA DEE DA DA--

Danny walk up behind her hand strikes her on the back of her head with his bat. She crumples to the ground, unconscious. The two men take off their helmets and look down at her. They put their arms around each other's shoulder.

DONNY
Did you pretend to be the kidnapped
guy?

DANNY
Yeah, I talked like a British fag
and everything.

DONNY
Sweet...

There is a pause as they look down at her. Then...

DANNY
I wonder what she tastes like, eh?

They both smile.

BLACKOUT.

THE END.