

Two small tents are pitched in a clearing, upstage. There are a number of bags and sundry items piled between the tents. At rise ROGER, dressed in jeans and a polo shirt, is seen slouched in front of a campfire, downstage centre, which has not yet been lit. CAROLINE, her back facing downstage and dressed in an ensemble more befitting a cocktail party, is busying herself with the items heaped between their tents. Momentarily, CAROLINE turns and approaches ROGER.

CAROLINE

Roger, I don't wish to sound like an alarmist, but I'm afraid I must admit to being more than a little concerned about the ice situation.

ROGER

What ice situation?

CAROLINE

Well it seems to be melting. Now, I know you keep it sealed up in that special plastic box thing, but each time I open it there seems to be more and more water and less and less ice.

ROGER

Then don't keep opening it, darling.

CAROLINE

Oh don't be ridiculous, Roger, I have to check on things.

ROGER

What things?

CAROLINE

Well, the Chardonnay for one. I mean, one wants it to be chilled, but not *over* chilled, for heaven's sake. And then there's my gelatin facemask, not to mention-

ROGER

Your what?

CAROLINE

My gelatin facemask. Roger, if we're going to be drinking wine all evening I don't want to wake up tomorrow looking like some sort of church gargoyle. Frankly I doubt you'd be too keen on it, either. And if it's not cooled to the correct temperature it doesn't work properly: you still wake up looking blanched and puffy.

ROGER

But, darling, we're camping, that's part of it. It doesn't matter if we wake up looking blanched and puffy. In fact, that's the whole point. We've chosen to sacrifice three days from our hectic schedules in order to convene with nature and realise ourselves more fully, as human beings. At least, that's what it said in the pamphlet. And what that means in basic terms – in the debit column, Caroline – is that we must forgo all our little comforts and conveniences and...and yes, even our masks, and reacquaint ourselves with this simple earth from which we sprang.

CAROLINE

(Bursting into laughter.)

Oh, Roger, you are clever. I wish you'd write these things down. I'm sure you could write a book or something one of these days.

(As she reaches into her purse to retrieve her mobile phone.)

Wait, I must tell Anastasia, she'll wet herself.

ROGER

Oh why did you bring that? You're defeating the whole purpose.

CAROLINE

(As she's dialing.)

I hope she's back from her cousin's funeral – I'd hate to catch her at an awkward moment. What time is it?

ROGER

(With a sigh.)

I thought we were supposed to be roughing it?

CAROLINE

(Into the mobile phone.)

Hello?

(To Roger.)

What?

ROGER

I thought we were supposed to be roughing it?

CAROLINE

We are roughing it, darling. For God's sake, look around – there's dirt everywhere.

ROGER

I'm not sure that you're fully grasping the essence of this event.

CAROLINE

Why isn't it ringing?

ROGER

It's probably out of range.

CAROLINE

Out of range? But this is the Lake District, not Lake Victoria? Oh honestly, why is it we can whiz people up into space every five minutes and yet I can't even pick up the phone for a quick natter with Anastasia? I mean, what's the point?

(Throwing her mobile phone to the ground.)

Oh, I hate modern life!

ROGER

That's more like it. Don't think about it, just go with the flow. Get back to basics – back to nature.

CAROLINE

Oh please don't put it like that, Roger, you make it all sound so...so plain and depressing.

ROGER

That's because you're not opening yourself up to it.

CAROLINE

(Reaching for her phone again.)

Wait a minute...perhaps it's the battery? Perhaps it needs charging?

ROGER

Perhaps it does. Why don't you plug it in?

CAROLINE

Yes, I think if I...Oh, very amusing. Look, Roger, I want this little experiment of yours to be a smashing success every bit as much as you do. This is our first 'just us' time since we started seeing each other and I want it to be memorable – but in the right way. And, quite frankly, the way things are going, I doubt I'll-

(She suddenly clasps her hands to her face.)

Oh my God!

ROGER

What?

CAROLINE

(With dread in her voice.)

Oh no!

ROGER

What is it?

CAROLINE

It's just struck me: If the phone's not working then...then I've no way of reaching Dr. Carlyle.

ROGER

But, darling, surely you can go three days without talking to Dr. Carlyle?

CAROLINE

(With genuine concern.)

Perhaps? I don't know. I never have before.

ROGER

Well then, think of me as Dr. Carlyle. Talk to me.

CAROLINE

Oh don't be absurd, darling, you haven't the qualifications.

ROGER

But I can listen, can't I? I'm sure that's at least half of it. So if you suddenly find yourself coming over a bit peculiar, you start talking and I'll start listening.

CAROLINE

Oh, darling, I know you mean well, but what you're suggesting is a complete nonsense. You don't know the first thing about psychoanalysis. Talking to you would be like...well, like talking to a bar of soap.

ROGER

Thank you. Thank you very much.

CAROLINE

Now don't get all prickly – you know what I mean. It's just that with Dr. Carlyle beyond reach, I shall...

(Beat. Suddenly she stands.)

Oh balls to it all, I need a drink! I'm going for a bottle – temperature be damned. Why don't you light the fire?

ROGER

Good idea.

(As CAROLINE moves upstage to fetch a bottle of wine, ROGER begins to search his pockets for a box of matches. Gradually his search becomes more frantic. After a moment CAROLINE returns with a bottle and two glasses.)

CAROLINE

Darling, I can't find the corkscrew, where've you hidden it?

ROGER

In the same place I hid the matches, I expect.

CAROLINE

Oh, you didn't forget to bring it? And just as I was getting in the mood. Oh, Roger, honestly, asking me to go primitive for a day or two is one thing, but this is beginning to have all the appeal of an Ethiopian refugee camp.

ROGER

(Pointing to the glasses, horrified.)  
What are those?

CAROLINE

Wine glasses of course.  
(Affronted.)  
Or would you prefer we drank from the bottle?

ROGER

But they're from my Riedel 'Sommelier Series.' Why didn't you bring the plastic ones?

CAROLINE

Plastic? I'd hardly call that convening with nature. Anyway, they're just glasses – if they break you can replace them.

ROGER

But they're from the 'Sommelier Series' – they cost a bloody fortune. Each piece is hand-blown in Austria by...by old men.

CAROLINE

Oh, well if you're going to be like that over a few cups, then I may as well just-

ROGER

(Hurriedly.)  
No, no, no, no, no! I was just...they were just...let's just open the bottle.

CAROLINE

And how are we supposed to do that without a corkscrew?