



NOT MORE BANANAS

BY

COLIN BARROW

Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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NOT MORE BANANAS!

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A ONE ACT PLAY

By

COLIN BARROW

NOT MORE BANANAS

This one-act play, with its simple but interesting stage dressing, gives an amusing day in the life of an old lady who is temporarily residing in a nursing home having had a minor stroke. The on-stage requirements are easy, as any furnishings can look as if they are personal property and brought from home. A gentle comedy, which the author has witnessed in real life between various visits to hospitals or residential homes. The compilation of these events or situations has been written into a one act play script. Alice, has a visitor, Marion, who talks incessantly and, as she does not listen at all, is quite frankly the last person you'd want to visit. Julia, a good friend, and, Peter, another good friend, Alice depends on Julia a little to bring her things and do her washing, etc. And then finally Karen who appears right at the close of the play which brings the climax. The crux of the play is that everyone feels bananas are the best thing to bring as a gift and Alice hates them, which means the nurse spends valuable time removing these bananas along with some other patient requirements rather than having a well-earned tea break.

Duration:- Thirty five to forty minutes approximately

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CAST

1 male, 4 females, 1 either

Alice:- Elderly and has had a minor stroke. Quite a well classed person who hates bananas who also has a slight '*standard*' with how things should be. Peter is the one person that she finds funny and willing to laugh with or play a joke with him.

Marion:- She is a lady that should be played aged middle fifties and upwards. An unwanted acquaintance of Alice who's in a slight hurry, talks incessantly, never listens and is quite forthright.

Julia:- Could be any age, but probably best at least forty and upwards. A good friend of Alice with a kind and helping nature.

Peter:- Any age from forty upwards and ex-army. Good and close friend to Alice, and they have a warmth between them. Quite fun and not too serious.

Nurse:- Any age and could be male or female. Quite bright and cheerful.

Karen:- Any age and with a name change could be a male. Enters with one line right at the end of the play. At a push through costume change, the person who played Marion could also double up and play this character too.

THE STAGE SET

No actual set scenery is required for this play, although if you wish to use modules for the doors that is your own option. Use an exit/entrance one side of the stage for the main room entry and an entrance/exit the other side of the stage for the bathroom. As this is a nursing home and patients can bring items of furniture from their own houses, the dressing can be quite homely looking. To dress the set (*required by the script*) Middle up stage, a single type bed assembled or constructed to suit logistics, it does not have to be medical. It can be an actual bed (*divan or similar*) or a number of cubes, or supported board to form a base, etc, with an inflatable mattress or thick padding. Bedding and pillows will also be required. One side of the bed is a cupboard/cabinet that clothing can be placed in during the performance. On top of it is a fruit bowl/basket containing only an orange and an apple. And a shoulder strap bag or handbag belonging to Alice. On the other side of the bed is a fireside or high-backed type of chair and next to it a small table. There is a call bell button type device on a long cable next to the bed. It does not have to be operational as sound effects can deal with the ringing. Additional furnishing and dressing is optional according to space and venue.

NOT MORE BANANAS!

Up middle stage a single bed is set, beside it is a fireside or high back chair. Beside the chair is a small table. On the other side of the bed is a cupboard or cabinet. On the cupboard/cabinet is a fruit bowl/basket containing an apple and an orange. Additional set furnishing at your own discretion

Alice is sat up in the bed flicking through a quality/expensive type magazine

Marion (*poking her head on stage or through a door*) Yoo hoo, Alice! Thought I'd come and say hello. (*Enters with a shopping type bag that contains some run of the mill magazines and some bananas. She has a hand or shoulder bag*)

Alice (*slumps back into the pillows; quietly*) I really wished you didn't!

Marion (*comes right up to the bed*) I heard you were in here. Jackie told me the news. Thought you might need cheering up!

Alice There was no need, Marion. I'm quite alright.

Marion I hate these places, most of the folk look like they're going to die at any moment. I've brought some bananas. (*Removing them from the bag*)

Alice shows a dislike on her face to the bananas

Alice Thank you.

Marion (*placing them in the fruit bowl or basket*) It's always difficult to know what to bring. (*Placing them near Alice*) Still, most people like a banana, don't they?

Alice Actually, I don't like them!

Marion Don't you? Never mind at least they look bright. How are you anyway? (*Sits in the chair*)

Alice Well - you know -

Marion I heard it was all touch and go. Then, at your age you must expect to die.

Alice (*not amused*) I wasn't banking on that just yet.

Marion Well let's hope not 'cause I'm going away after next week for a three-week holiday and would hate to miss the funeral.

Alice I'd hate to cause you that disappointment.

Marion Nothing like a good funeral and a nosh up afterwards to catch up on all the tittle tattle.

Alice Attending funerals is a hobby for you isn't it?

- Marion** Most of the deceased I don't know personally, but if I know someone who is going to the funeral, it's nice to give them support, don't you think?
- Alice** I can't think of anything worse!
- Marion** Your nephew Brian was extremely rude to me. And I thought he was very out of order to do so.
- Alice** What did he say?
- Marion** "That I should not come to visit you as I get right up your trumpet!" I said, "if Alice feels that way, she can tell me herself."
- Alice** (*with sternness*) I'd prefer if you didn't come and visit me you get right up my trumpet!
- Marion** (*totally ignoring*) These nursing homes always seem dirty. A lick and a promise and do better next time. There's always a germ or bug somewhere ready to jump down your throat. (*Looking across the stage*) Is that an en-suite bathroom you have? (*Stands*)
- Alice** (*sighs with a fed-up tone*) Yes.
- Marion** (*crossing and looks off into the bathroom; Turns to face Alice*) Usual basic fittings, nothing to write home about. (*Exits into the bathroom*)
- Alice** (*quietly*) Just go away and leave me alone. (*Glances at the Bananas pulling a face and pushes them away*)
- Marion** (*re-enters from the bathroom*) That toilet has not had a good clean for ages, the shower looks fairly dismal too. (*Sits*)
- Alice** It seems perfectly fine to me.
- Marion** What did the last occupant die of? I expect the cause is lurking in that bathroom, I'd be very careful not to let your bum touch that seat!
- Alice** Can I offer you to use it?
- Marion** No dear. I don't like using a toilet that's not my own. And if I have to, I always have a few disposable seat covers in my bag for protection.
- Alice** And a pack of disposable wet wipes no doubt?
- Marion** All essential equipment along with my own toilet tissue. I brought some magazines. Not the type you normally look at, just the usual tat. Cross words, agony aunts, a love story to get you going, if you like that sort of thing.
- Alice** Not at my age, thank you.

Marion There's a Doctors page with letters of ailments and answers. Maybe worth a read to see what you got before you die. What's the food like?

Alice Well, you know ...

Marion (*cutting in*) Grim I expect. They tend to be quite grey and dismal, no real nutritional value.

Alice I can't argue there.

Marion (*stands*) I bet the bed bugs eat better than you? I expect there are bed bugs? (*Lifts a corner of the bedding and if possible tips Alice noticeably*)

Alice Do you mind!

Marion Can't see any running about, but I expect there's swarms of them there. (*Sits without tidying the bed*) Have you heard about Mr Dawson?

Alice (*alert*) No. What about him?

Marion Been on the floor for a couple of days apparently and carted off to hospital.

Alice (*with concern*) The poor man. I do hope he is okay?

Marion Might be dead by now. I'll keep my eye in the paper for an announcement and I'll be happy to represent you if he has.

Alice (*a little concerned*) He has such a pleasant manner. I should organise a get-well card for him.

Marion (*flatly*) I wouldn't waste your money! (*Looking keenly*) Does a nurse pop in?

Alice From time to time.

Marion What if you need a wee and can't make the toilet? (*Stands*) Should I get a bed pan? Are they called bed pans nowadays? Probably PPP's, personal private potties, or something like that.

Alice (*sternly*) I have a call bell. (*Firmly*) And I am taken to the toilet!

Marion Wouldn't fancy that myself. (*Sits*)

Alice I don't fancy it, but have to put up with it!

Marion Who's your Doctor?

Alice Dr Rumbold.

Marion He's mine too. Don't rate him much. I saw him a couple of weeks ago and I

may as well not have bothered.

Alice I find him most acceptable and understanding.

Marion He hardly said a word! I ended up speaking for the whole ten-minute appointment. I gave all the conditions, symptoms and even the cure. He just pressed a button on his computer, out came a prescription and buzzed for the next patient.

Alice Quite frankly I can't blame him.

Marion What did he say was wrong with you?

Alice Usual old age ailments. Then he said, "I have had..."

Marion (*cutting in*) You should get a second opinion. You may have got Green Parrot disease. They told Mrs Marshal she had stomach ulcers and that turned out to only be worms.

Alice Well I've certainly not been nowhere near any green parrots!

Marion Your nephew seems to think it was slight stroke. Not that I'd take much notice of that. I believe Doctors use one condition to cover a multitude of ailments.

Alice Maybe in the old days, but now they are much more informed through science and research.

Marion And bung you full of pills and see if the condition improves. What have they given you?

Alice (*un happily*) None of your bloody...

Marion (*cutting in*) Pops them down your gullet before you got chance to know what they are I expect. They do that in places like this.

Alice I have no reason for concern with my medication or treatment.

Marion (*brightly*) Well, you're still alive, so there's hope for you yet. I expect you're bored to tears?

Alice At this precise moment, (*firmly*) yes I am!

Marion I'd be driven mad if it were me. And the visitors, most you can't stand. I believe they only visit because what's on television is so bad, rather than leave you in peace.

Alice (*through gritted teeth*) How right you are.

Marion (*looking at her watch*) Goodness, is that the time? (*stands*) How it goes when in deep conversation. (*Preparing to depart*) You've not said much, how do you feel?

Alice (*with gusto*) Pissed off!

Marion Ask for a tonic, won't do no harm. (*Starting to exit*) Look on the bright side, there's a chance that you may recover. (*Just as about to exit*) Bye. (*Exits*)

Alice (*throws a magazine the best she can at the door area in anger*) That bloody woman and her ruddy bananas! If I ever see her again it will be too soon! (*Sinks back into the pillows in great exhausted relief*)

Alice presses the call bell. In a moment or two the Nurse enters

Nurse (*coming into the room and picks up the magazine*) What's your problem Mrs Drummond? I can't stay long, 'cause I got a cup of tea getting cold.

Alice I wish to sit in the chair, could you help me?

Nurse (*placing the magazine down*) Did I see you had a visitor?

Alice What I've had, is a visit from hell. If you see her here again, tell her I've moved to the other end of the country.

Nurse (*chuckles*) Let's get you out of bed. Friend of yours, is she?

Nurse assists Alice out of bed and gets her into a chair. The following dialogue is spoken as this is done

Alice Just an acquaintance that I met at a small art group. She's an absolute nightmare and seems to latch onto people.

Nurse But it was nice of her to call.

Alice (*harshly*) It was not! (*Less harsh*) Just because one of my nephews lives near her, she seems to think we are good friends.

Nurse Maybe she feels she's done her duty and won't visit again.

Alice She'll be here, she's the kind that don't listen and has skin as thick as an old boot.

Nurse There, nearly got you sorted out.

Alice I hate being in bed all day. It's most unnatural and not nice for receiving visitors.

Once settled Alice in the chair, nurse tidies the bed but leaving some ruffle on the covers

Nurse It's quite acceptable, especially in your condition.

Alice It also makes me feel quite lazy.

Nurse You'll adjust in time, all our residents do.

Alice I don't intend to stay in here! There's so many things that I need to attend to at home.

Nurse Nothing that can't wait.

Alice To convalesce in a nursing home is all very well, but I'd feel much better at home.

Nurse If only I had a pound for every time I heard that said! (*Placing the call bell in reach of Alice and the magazines on the table beside the chair*) I'll put these here for you. (*Begin to exit*) Just ring if you need help. I'll get back to me tea. (*Exits*)

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