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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **SITTING WITH BERTIE**

By  
RIC AVERILL

Inspired by the Fifth Commandment

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ISBN: 1-58342-241-2

## CHARACTERS

WILL  
MOM  
DAD  
LIZ

SETTING: The action takes place in three areas: One—a kitchen table with four chairs, Two—several chairs arranged to look like a “bus” and Three—a pool of light on the other side of the bus representing “Day Camp.”

TIME: Summer.

## Sitting With Bertie

AT RISE: *Lights come up on area One. DAD is reading a Civil War magazine and MOM is chopping some vegetables. WILL enters, flopping down a fish wrapped in newspaper. MOM opens it up, grimaces slightly.*

WILL. I really caught two, but the other got away. (*DAD smiles and nods.*)

MOM. I'll fry it up if you like.

DAD. Bones and all it's at least twelve ounces—camp record?

WILL. My first fish this summer, Pops—so I suppose that makes it a record.

DAD. Catch two tomorrow, set a new one.

WILL (*in DAD's face*). I'd be better if you'd ever taken me fishing as a kid.

DAD. You are a kid. And I paid for camp.

MOM. *We* paid for camp?

DAD (*smiles at her*). That's true, so true. (*To WILL.*) You man enough to scale it?

WILL. We did the gross stuff at the dock—slit it, gutted it and washed it off with the hose. I'm gonna dry the scales and hot-glue them to Iggy.

MOM. In the garage. Dry them in the house and it'll smell worse than Libby's diapers.

WILL. No. Nothing smells worse—

DAD. Iggy will be the world's first fish-a-saurus.

WILL. He's a dragon, Dad, not a dinosaur. Dragons have scales. You had no childhood.

MOM (*handing DAD a piece of carrot*). He's still in it.

DAD. Ah, I forgot the progression—you give up dinosaurs when you notice girls and... (*Looks at MOM.*) you don't need dragons once you're married.

WILL (*pause*). I wanna take two Fishing sessions tomorrow. Will you write me a note?

MOM. What would you have to miss?

WILL. Just Horsemanship.

DAD. You love Horsemanship. I'm making a trophy case for all your badges.

WILL. If I catch three fish we can all have one for dinner tomorrow. Please.

DAD (*looks up at MOM*). Just follow the normal rotation. It can't hurt to do what the counselors expect.

WILL. Maybe I don't even want to go.

DAD (*looks up from magazine*). Really. (*Pause.*) What's going on? Horses bite or something.

WILL. No. It's just fishing's more fun.

DAD. More fun. And?

WILL. Paul Kahn isn't there.

DAD. Don't let him give you any trouble this year.

WILL. Too late. Him being there is trouble.

MOM. What about Liz? She'll be riding, won't she?

WILL. She's hardly talking to me. Will you just write the note?

DAD (*looks at MOM, they come to a silent agreement*). Just stay in the rotation and I'll take you fishing Sunday.

Really—borrow Uncle Tom’s gear. Promise. (*WILL thinks for a minute, looks up, nods reluctantly.*)

MOM. Give it one more day.

WILL. I suppose. (*WILL walks over to area Three—“Day Camp”—where LIZ walks into the scene.*) Hey, Liz, walk you to Fishing?

LIZ (*a little surprised, looks around*). Will. No, I mean, uh, I’m not going. I’m taking double Horsemanship. (*Holds up a note.*) Dad wrote me a note.

WILL. Why?

LIZ. Fish smell.

WILL. Horses don’t?

LIZ (*looks around*). Look, I gotta go. I don’t want to be late. (*Starts to leave.*)

WILL (*stops her with his voice*). For Paul? What’s he been saying about me?

LIZ. Nothing, I don’t know. (*Pause.*) I guess you just gotta think a little before you pick your friends.

WILL (*slightly sarcastic*). Yeah, well I’m sure Paul’s a fine friend.

LIZ. Look, I’ll see you at Youth Group, OK? Just not here. I really gotta go. (*She leaves. He kicks the ground.*)

WILL. Stupid. (*He walks to area One—the kitchen.*) Stupid, stupid, stupid me.

(*MOM is standing, arms crossed. DAD is seated, doodling with a pen. WILL sits across from him.*)

MOM. A fight. That’s just not like you.

WILL. Is today.

DAD. Don’t take that tone with your mother.

WILL. Sorry, can I go?