

Jack Benny's Not 39 Any More

Marv Siegel



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ArtAge Publications

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FREEVIEW
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JACK BENNY ISN'T THIRTY-NINE ANY MORE

by

Marv Siegel

CAST

NORMAN BENDER: 72 years old. Feisty, always scheming to get rich quick.

EDNA BENDER: 70 years old. Norman's wife of 40 years. Tolerant of his eccentricities but willing to go toe to toe with him when necessary.

ROSEMARIE DICARLO: 70-year-old attractive widow. Edna's new friend and next door neighbor.

MARCIE SILVERMAN: Norman and Edna's divorced daughter, a fiftyish attractive lawyer.

RAYMOND DICARLO: Rosemarie's divorced son, a fiftyish attractive lawyer.

HARRY CONNEGHY: 72 years old. Retired sock magnate who was married only to his career.

RABBI TEITLEBAUM: 95 years old, he drifts in and out of reality.

JUDGE KRAUTHAMMER: Male or female, middle aged and quirky.

Place

A retirement community in New Jersey.

Time

The present.

ACT ONE
Scene 1

Setting: A neatly furnished living room in the New Jersey retirement home of Norman and Edna Bender. The room has a sofa, end tables, one with a cordless telephone, and an armchair with a small footstool in front of it. Upstage Center is some sort of rowing machine. The front door and main entrance is Down Right. A window is beside the door. The exit to the master bedroom is Upstage Left. The exit to the kitchen and the rest of the house is Down Left.

At Rise: Al Jolson's Anniversary Song plays in the background. Seventy-year-old EDNA BENDER, wearing a brightly colored jogging outfit, is seated at the rowing contraption. She tries to row but her actions are grotesque and not what they are supposed to be. Yet she perseveres.

Her husband, seventy-two-year old NORMAN BENDER, enters Down Right carrying a shopping bag. He wears white bermuda shorts with black socks and black shoes. He watches her row for a moment. The song fades.

EDNA: Oh, dear. Do you think I'm doing it right?

NORMAN: Of course you are.

EDNA: It doesn't seem right.

NORMAN: What's the difference? You're getting exercise. That's what matters.

EDNA: *(stops rowing)* But if I'm doing it wrong I could hurt myself. I wish we had the instruction booklet.

NORMAN: They don't always have instruction booklets at garage sales.

EDNA: Maybe we can write to the company. Do you know what this thing is called?

NORMAN: I think it's the Thighmaster.

EDNA: No, it's not the Thighmaster. There's nothing for thighs here.

NORMAN: Maybe it's the Super Abs Burner.

EDNA: I don't think this has to do with abs.

NORMAN: What the hell are abs anyway?

EDNA: I don't know, but this doesn't look like a burner. It looks like a rower.

NORMAN: Maybe it's called the Super Abs Rower.

EDNA: Maybe you can ask the people that you bought it from.

NORMAN: I think I bought it at that brown colonial where the dog didn't stop barking.

EDNA: No, that's where you bought the stationary bike with no bike seat.

NORMAN: I thought I bought the stationary bike with no seat at the white split level.

EDNA: You bought the stationary bike with no seat where the dog didn't stop barking. Remember I asked you why you bought a stationary bike with no seat? You said the dog was making you crazy, and you couldn't think straight.

NORMAN: Oh, right. So where did I buy this gizmo?

EDNA: That's a mystery for the ages. Help me up. I have to dust. Our new neighbor is coming over.

NORMAN: *(helping her up)* Who is that?

EDNA: A missus something or other. Her husband died, and she just moved in. She's renting the Golden's house.

NORMAN: How old was the husband?

EDNA: Old.

NORMAN: Older than me?

EDNA: Much older than you I'm sure.

NORMAN: I don't like hearing about younger men who die. I especially don't like hearing about men my age who die.

EDNA: I'm sure he was in his eighties or maybe even his nineties. (*points to the shopping bag*) What did you buy this time?

NORMAN: Why do you always accuse me of buying? I'm not always buying.

EDNA: You go to the flea market. You come home with a filled shopping bag. It doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to figure out that you bought something.

NORMAN: I didn't buy anything, Dr. Watson. I was going to buy one of those wooden bird feeders that looks like a house, but the guy wanted four bucks. It wasn't worth more than two.

EDNA: Why would you buy a bird feeder? You hate birds.

NORMAN: For two bucks I could keep it in the closet.

EDNA: For what?

NORMAN: What's the difference for what? I didn't buy it. Get on with your life.

EDNA: (*frustrated*) So? What's in the shopping bag?

NORMAN: All right. Now you're asking an intelligent question. (*He carries the shopping bag to the sofa and sits. EDNA sits on the sofa beside him.*) You remember Harry Conneghy?

EDNA: The butcher?

NORMAN: The butcher? The butcher was Harry Krause.

EDNA: No. You're thinking of Herb Krauthammer the dentist.

NORMAN: Dentist? I said butcher. I didn't say dentist. Did I say dentist?

EDNA: No, you said butcher. Now what about the butcher?

NORMAN: Butcher? Who's talking about the butcher?

EDNA: You were just talking about the butcher, weren't you? I said dentist, you said butcher! *(They stare at each other for a moment. SOUND CUE: Telephone. She looks to the heavens.)* Every interruption is a blessing from above. *(She answers the phone.)* Hello. *(listens)* Just a minute. *(handing the phone to Norman)* It's for you.

NORMAN: Who is it?

EDNA: How should I know?

NORMAN: Don't you ask?

EDNA: Did you see me ask?

NORMAN: A person's supposed to ask. Give me the phone. *(She hands the phone to him. He answers gruffly.)* Hello. *(listens; smiles)* Oh, yes, sir. Right. Yes, sir. I can be there Monday morning at ten. Wonderful. Yes, sir. Thank you. *(hangs up)*

EDNA: So who was that?

NORMAN: That was Mister Albano.

EDNA: Who's Mister Albano?

NORMAN: He's the human resources manager at Continental Egg Crates.

EDNA: Human resources?

NORMAN: You know. The employment manager.

EDNA: Why is an employment manager calling you? *(realizing)* Oh, no. Have you been sending out resumes again?

NORMAN: A man doesn't have to sit home waiting to die. A man can go out and get a job.

END OF FREEVIEW
You'll want to read and perform this show!