## **MUSICAL** SYNOPSIS

Time: Now
Place: Knapely Village, Yorkshire

### ACT I

Scene 1: The Dales / Knapely Village
- YORKSHIRE ..... Company

Scene 2: Knapely Village Hall
- MRS. CONVENTIONAL ..... The Girls

Scene 3: Annie's Garden
- LIGHTING THE SUNFLOWERS ..... Chris & John
- SCARBOROUGH ..... Annie

Scene 4: School Field
- DANNY-FESTO ..... Danny

Scene 5: Village Hall
- WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT? ..... Cora & Company
- AFTER SILENT NIGHT ..... Tommo

Scene 6: Hospital / Flower Shop
- VERY SLIGHTLY ALMOST ..... Annie

Scene 7: Village Green
- SPRING FÊTE ..... Company
- GIRLS / HELLO YORKSHIRE, I'M A VIRGIN ..... Tommo & Danny

Scene 8: The Dales
- TIME PASSING ..... Company

Scene 9: Hospital

Scene 10: School
- DANNY-FESTO 2 ..... Jenny

Scene 11: Flower Shop
- SUNFLOWER ..... Chris

Scene 12: On the Hill
- DARE ..... The Girls



### ACT II

Scene 1: Village Green
- GIRLS (VILLAGE GREEN) ..... Colin, Denis & Rod
- PROTECT ME LESS ..... Jenny & Danny

Scene 2: Village Hall
- KILIMANJARO (VILLAGE HALL) ..... Annie
- SO I'VE HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE ..... Celia
- WHAT AGE EXPECTS ..... Jessie

Scene 3: Flower Shop
- DRUNKEN DANNY ..... Danny

Scene 4: Annie's Garden
- KILIMANJARO ..... Annie

Scene 5: Flower Shop
- DON'T GO OUT WITH CHRISTINE BUTLER ..... Rod

Scene 6: Conference Hall
- SCARBOROUGH (REPRISE) ..... Annie
- DARE (CONFERENCE) ..... The Girls

Scene 7: Ruth's House
- MY RUSSIAN FRIEND AND I ..... Ruth

Scene 8: Village Hall
- FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY ..... The Girls
- SUNFLOWER OF YORKSHIRE ..... Company
- BOWS ..... Company

## NOTES

### ACCENTS

The women of the real calendar in truth came from many parts of the country. Actors should resist the pressure to perform any kind of Yorkshire pyrotechnics. Nothing compromises the truth of comedy like a slavish attention to vowel-sounds and dipthongs. It will become a pebble in the shoe. If you can flatten the 'a' so that *giraffe* no longer rhymes with *scarf* then that will be more than sufficient; but even that should not be championed over the intrinsic rhythm of the line. People travel. Communities are now gloriously multi-instrumental. We've had accents from Glasgow to Texas make the same part their own.

### A BRIEF WORD ON NUDITY

As in the best tradition of vaudevillian fan dances, the art of the musical's nudity lies in what is withheld. The choreography of this section is best described as 'fabulous concealment'. Should we see anything we oughtn't, the scene will deflate like a soufflé on which the oven door has been too quickly opened. The scene in many ways epitomises the whole endeavour; it is a fast moving team effort, perhaps the greatest team effort you can witness outside of a circus tent, one in which everyone around the subject is arranging the props and into whose hands that girl entrusts her modesty. So in a sense perhaps it is in fact best described as a fan dance where someone else is holding the fans.

### NOTES ON THE TEXT

An ellipsis (…) denotes a thought left hanging or incomplete

A dash (–) denotes an interruption by another character

A forward slash (/) denotes the next character beginning to speak and overlapping the previous speaker

–Tim & Gary





## ACT I

### Scene 1 – The Dales/Knapely Village

*(The first Autumn leaves fall on the Dales. Birdsong. Sunlight pencils through morning mist.)*

**MUSIC 1: YORKSHIRE**

*(JOHN walks up, opens the gate, walks through it, breathes it all in.)*

**JOHN**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE
JANUARY, FEBRUARY, APRIL, MAY
SEPTEMBER AND JULY
GOD BLESS YOU YORKSHIRE
THE SEASONS COME AND GO
AND YET THE DAYS DON'T CHANGE

**ROD**

Sunflowers! Sunflowers incoming!

**JOHN**

Have you seen that river this mornin'?

**ROD**

I have. Question is, have you seen my bloody wife?!

**CHRIS**

*(Pulling on flower shop pinny.)*
I'm here, stop nagging! Danny! School bus!

**DANNY**

I'm here, stop nagging.

*(DANNY passes in school uniform.)*

**CHRIS**

*('Kiss please'.)*
Excuse me! You are never too old.

**DANNY**

*('God, mum'.)*
Nrrr–r...

*(ROD also lines up for a kiss, which DANNY declines to give.)*

**JOHN**
MONDAY TEN PAST EIGHT THE SEVEN-THIRTY BUS TO SCHOOL IS LATE AGAIN
STUCK BEHIND A TRACTOR SOMEWHERE UP THE HILL

*(CORA enters as her school-averse son TOMMO is loaded for battle.)*

**CORA**
Book! Toast!

**JOHN**
ANGRY SCHOOL KIDS TEXTING DON'T APPRECIATE
THE MIST THAT'S HOVERING ON THE RIVER

**+ CHRIS**
BUT ONE DAY YOU HOPE THEY WILL

**TOMMO**
*(Presents cheek for a kiss.)*
Y're never too old.

**JOHN**
STOPS BEHIND THE TRUCK THAT DROVE TEN HOURS

**DANNY**
Run, Tommo!

**JOHN**
FROM AMSTERDAM TO YORKSHIRE FULL OF FLOWERS

*(DANNY and TOMMO race off. DENIS appears with a golf bag. CELIA follows, pulling on golf wear with difficulty.)*

**ROD**
*('Morning John'!)*
Ha hey!

**CHRIS**
WHERE A GUY BUYS THE SAME BOUQUET

**DENIS**
Johnny lad!

**CHRIS**
HIS WIFE HAD ON HER WEDDING DAY

*(CELIA enters dragging a golf club.)*



**DENIS**
Tell y' what. Her swing is really coming on!

*(DENIS gives the flowers.)*

**JOHN**
A WIFE WHO EV'RY TUESDAY TAKES A LESSON
LOSES THREE BALLS IN THE LAKE AS USUAL
SAYS –

**CELIA**
OH CRAP, SHIT, BOLLOCKS

**JOHN**
THEN HEADS HOME BY THREE

**CELIA**
NIPS IN THE CHIP SHOP

*(RUTH enters with chips.)*

**JOHN**
WHERE THE GIRL WHO WORKS
A HALF DAY AT THE DOCTOR'S SURGERY
EV'RY TUESDAY BUYS HER HUSBAND CHIPS FOR TEA

**RUTH**
*(Offers JOHN one.)*
Go on. I won't tell him!

*(JOHN nicks one as CORA reappears.)*

**CORA**
SEVEN FORTY-FIVE, ST WILFRED'S CHOIR
TRY AGAIN TO HANDLE THE MESSIAH

*(CORA assembles the choir of MISS WILSON and the other MISS WILSON.)*

**JOHN**
WITH THE TWO SISTERS WHO APPEAR
AND SING TOO QUIETLY TO HEAR

**CORA**
Come on ladies! It's 'forte!'

**MISS** WILSON TEA **& MISS** WILSON COFFEE
*(Timidly)*
HALLELUJAH!

*(JESSIE appears.)*

**JOHN,** CHRIS, RUTH, C**ORA,** CELIA, MWT, MWC **& DENIS**
ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

**JESSIE**

*(Like a teacher, to JOHN.)*
John Clarke.

**JOHN**

*(To attention, like schoolboy.)*
Mrs Raistrick!

**CHRIS,** RUTH, CORA, C**ELIA,** MWT, MWC **& DENIS**
JANUARY, FEBRUARY, APRIL, MAY, SEPTEMBER AND JULY

**JESSIE**

*(As she 'inspects him'.)*
You'll do.

**CHRIS,** RUTH, CORA, C**ELIA,** MW**T, MWC & DENIS**
KEEP ROLLING YORKSHIRE

**+ JOHN**
WHERE ALL THE FIELDS ARE GREEN
THE DAYS DON'T SEEM TO CHANGE
THE SEASONS COME AND GO
AND YET THE DAYS DON'T CHANGE

*(COLIN appears.)*

**COLIN**

Mrs Raistrick!

**JOHN**
TEN-THIRTY WEDNESDAY IN THE TEA SHOP
THE RETIRED HEADMISTRESS FROM THE INFANT SCHOOL
TRIES TO BEAT HER HUSBAND TO THE CROSSWORD CLUES

**COLIN**

'Attractive'. Four letters.

**JOHN**
SAYS 'HI' TO THE SISTERS BUYING
FLOWERS FOR THE WAR MEMORIAL

**JESSIE**

Morning!



**CHRIS**

*(To JOHN.)*
TAKE THREE HOURS TO CHOOSE
THE ONES THEY ALWAYS CHOOSE

**JESSIE**

'Sexy'.

**COLIN**

Not bad yourself, love.

**JESSIE**

I mean twelve across is –

**JESSIE**

God's sake, Colin.

**COLIN**

Oh right I'm with y'.

*(She hits him with the paper as he winks at JOHN and as ANNIE appears on the hill.)*

**ANNIE**
AN' EV'RY SUNDAY MORNING WITHOUT FAIL

**JOHN**

Here she is!

**ANNIE**
ONE PAIR WALK EACH SQUARE FOOT OF THE DALE

*(JOHN points to a flower.)*

**JOHN**

C'mere, c'mere.
SO HER HUSBAND CAN BEND HER EAR

**ANNIE**

Oh god, John–n–!

**JOHN**
NAMING EV'RY FLOWER

**ANNIE**

Harebell!

**JOHN**

Latin name?

**ANNIE**

*(Mock-admonishingly.)*
'Campanula Rotundifo-lia?

**JOHN**

*(Kisses her.)*
Yes!

**GIRLS**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

**JOHN**

SO PROUD!

*(ANNIE play-hits JOHN for being patronising!)*

**GIRLS**

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, APRIL, MAY, SEPTEMBER AND JULY

**+** JOHN

KEEP ROLLING YORKSHIRE
THE SEASONS COME AND GO, AND RISE AND FALL
WHAT WILL BE WILL ALWAYS BE

**JESSIE**

THE VILLAGE GREEN

**RUTH**

THE CHIP SHOP TEA

**CELIA**

THE CHRISTMAS FAYRE, THE SPRING FÊTE

**CORA**

AND THEN LATE EACH MONTH

**ANNIE**

AND ALWAYS ON A THURSDAY NIGHT
THE STRANGEST THING

**CHRIS**

THE CALENDARS ON ALL THE KITCHEN WALLS
HAVE GOT TWO TINY LETTERS

**RUTH**

'W' AND 'I'!



**CHRIS**

REMINDING EACH THAT THEY ARE
MEMBERS OF AN OLD SOCIETY

**ANNIE**

THAT ALL THEIR MOTHERS KNEW

**RUTH**

AND ALL THEIR MOTHERS' MOTHERS

**CORA**

AND THEIR MOTHERS TOO

**CHRIS**

A THING NO AGE CAN WITHER

**CELIA**

NO YEARS CONDEMN

**ANNIE**

A THING AS BRITISH AS JERUSALEM

**GIRLS**

*(Salute a beat.)*
THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE!
THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE
JANUARY, FEBRUARY, APRIL, MAY,
SEPTEMBER AND JULY
KEEP ROLLING YORKSHIRE

**MEN**

*(The HUSBANDS enter with coats.)*

WALK FORTH UPON-

AND WAS THE HOLY-
LAMB OF GOD

**ALL**

LATE SEPTEMBER STANDING HERE
SAME PLACE AS WE STOOD LAST YEAR
NEXT YEAR WE'LL BE STANDING ON THIS
GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND
TO START YET

**GIRLS**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

**MEN**

'TIL WE HAVE BUILT

**ANNIE** & CHRIS

AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER
NOVEMBER AND JANUARY AND JULY

**GIRLS** GROUP 1 | **GIRLS** GROUP 2 | **MEN**

JANUARY
JANUARY
JANUARY,
AUGUST AND JULY | AUGUST AND JULY | JERUSALEM!

**ALL**

GOD BLESS YOU YORKSHIRE
KEEP ROLLING ONWARDS AND FOREVER
EVERGREEN AND PLEASANT –

**MEN**

LAND!

*(The husbands clear as the song melts into just CORA on the piano and with the ladies singing.)*

**Scene 2 – Knapely Village Hall**

**GIRLS**

… BUILT JERUSALEM
IN ENGLAND'S GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

*(In strides MARIE. All sit like guilty kids.)*

**MARIE**

Ladies welcome, welcome to tonight's meeting of Knapely Women's Institute, indeed our harvest festival meeting! Thanks Ruth for opening up the hall, and also coming in early to turn the boiler on!

**RUTH**

*(Batting it off.)*
Oh that's nothing honestly -

**MARIE**

Also thanks to Ruth for decorating the hall so beautifully on a theme of harvest!

**RUTH**

*(Batting small applause off.)*
No, no happy to, happy to.

**MARIE**

And I hear we also tonight have some harvest festival scones! Who baked those?

**EVERYONE** (VARIOUSLY)

Ruth.

**RUTH**

Seriously it's no trouble / at all-



**CHRIS**

Can I just say I organised liquid refreshments!

*(Everyone pointedly applauds as CHRIS bows. Car horn offstage.)*

**MARIE**

And that'll be tonight's guest speaker! What's her name again?

**RUTH**

Brenda Hulse.

**MARIE**

And she's given a talk here before?

**RUTH**

Last time was May, just before you joined.

*(MARIE exits.)*

**CELIA**

Oh god. It's gonna be a bad one. Jessie's got her knitting out.

**CORA**

We can all see y've got a book behind there, Jess.

**CELIA**

She's been knitting that scarf for three years.

**JESSIE**

I don't know if you recall but Brenda Hulse is the one who talked for ninety minutes about her collection of tea towels.

**CORA**

Oh my god.

**ANNIE**

Y're kidding.

**CELIA**

*(Rising.)*
Right well have a nice time, I've left an egg on–

**JESSIE**

*(Knitting.)*
Sit down please.

**EVERYONE**

*(All sit.)*
Yes, Mrs Raistrick.

**JESSIE**

We will be polite and endure our boredom with dignity because that is what it is to be British and in a Women's Institute.

**RUTH**

Remember the motto. We joined for 'Fun, Friendship and Enlightenment'.

**CHRIS**

I didn't.

**RUTH**

Why did y' join?

**CHRIS**

Lust.

**CELIA**

Hello I've suddenly started listening.

**MUSIC 2: MRS. CONVENTIONAL**

**CORA**

You had a burning desire to make plum jam?

**CHRIS**

I had a burning desire for my husband.

**CELIA**

*(to JESSIE.)*
Sorry, did we have a talk on lust?

**JESSE**

You were away. It was fantastic.

**CHRIS**

I ONLY STARTED GOING 'CAUSE HIS MOTHER USED TO GO

**CORA**

Did she?

**ANNIE**

Oh yes.



**CHRIS**

TO MAKE HER THINK I WAS RESPECTABLE

**CORA**

DID SHE?

**CHRIS**

NO.
She was your classic conventional W.I lady.

**ANNIE**

WE PEERED THROUGH THE WINDOW IN THE REAR DOOR
ALL YOU COULD SEE WERE MOTHERS-IN-LAW!

**CHRIS**

THIS WAS NOT THE FUTURE 'ME' THAT I HAD INTENDED
I MEAN, I WAS 'MISS YORKSHIRE–!'

**ANNIE**

WELL, 'HIGHLY COMMENDED'.

*(CHRIS and ANNIE lock eyes.)*

**CELIA**

You joined just to impress her!?

**JESSIE**

Ev'rybody sit back there's a tale to be told.

**CORA**

Here we go. She joined when she was 22 apparently.

**JESSIE**

I STARTED DOING THIS WHEN I WAS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD

**CELIA**

The year was 1608…

**JESSIE**

*(In her own bubble.)*
A LITTLE TRAINEE TEACHER I WAS JOINING THE PROFESSION
CND badge. Unconventional hair.
I THOUGHT: 'JOIN THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE,
AN' MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION'

**CELIA**

*(In her own bubble.)*
My god I'd never thought!

Y' MEET A LOVELY FELLA, Y' RELOCATE
HE JOINS A FANCY GOLF CLUB, WHICH IS – GREAT
YOU KNOW THAT PEOPLE KNOW YOU WERE AN AIR HOSTESS – GOD!
WAS I TRYIN' TO IMPRESS THEM BY SEEMIN' THIS
MRS CONVENTIONAL, MRS RESPECTABLE
MRS 'OH MAUREEN THOSE SCONES ARE DELECTABLE'!

**CHRIS**

*(In the room.)*
MRS TRADITIONAL, RURAL PARISHIONER
SMELLING OF LAVENDER FABRIC CONDITIONER.

**CORA**

HEY! YOU LOT HAD A CHOICE IN IT, Y'KNOW? ALRIGHT FOR SOME.

**ANNIE**

C'mon Cor. Ev'ryone has a choice!

**CORA**

ER, NOT IF YOUR DAD'S A VICAR AND YOU'RE A SINGLE MUM.

*(In her own bubble.)*
HE MADE IT VERY, VERY CLEAR THAT IF I WISHED TO STAY –
Young. Pregnant. Scared.
HE SAID IMPROVING MY IMAGE WAS THE PRICE I'D HAVE TO PAY

*(In the room.)*
The thing was:
I HAD THIS PRECONCEPTION THAT THE AWFUL TRUTH
WOULD BE IT WAS FULL OF WOMEN LIKE RUTH

**RUTH**

Oi.

**CORA**

HOME-MAKERS! FABULOUS BAKERS AN' SEWERS
TOMATO PLANT GROWERS.

*(RUTH laughs then abruptly stops and goes into a bubble.)*

**RUTH**

*(In her own bubble.)*
In fairness I did join for baking! My Eddie said no-one made scones like his mum an' I thought 'I will meet that challenge!'

**CORA**

*(In the room.)*
MRS CONVENTIONAL



MRS 'OH MY GOODNESS
PAULINE THIS STITCHING IS QUITE UNDETECTABLE!'

**CHRIS**

MISS CONSTITUTIONAL

**CELIA**

HONEST AND TRUE-TIONAL

**CELIA,** CHRIS **& ANNIE**

DOING THE THINGS THAT OUR MUMS USED TO DO-TIONAL

**JESSIE**

LADIES, SALUTE BEING PART OF THE FOLD OF A
GREAT INSTITUTION, A HUNDRED YEARS OLD
THAT BEGINS WITH A HYMN AN' TURNS INTO A TALK
ON THE ART OF MACRAME OR HIST'RY OF CHALK
THEN A CRAFT CONTEST RUTH SETS AND ENTERS ALONE
Tonight–?

**RUTH**

*(Holds up.)*
'Make a celebrity out of fir cone'.

**CHRIS**

*(Shooting herself in mouth.)*
SOMEBODY RESCUE THIS FORMER MISS YORKSHIRE

**ANNIE**

YOU WEREN'T

**CHRIS**

YES I WAS

**ANNIE**

SHE WAS NOT

**CHRIS**

YOU WEREN'T THERE

**ANNIE**

SHE CAME LAST IN THE EV'NING WEAR

**CHRIS**

FIRST IN THE SWIMSUIT!
HOW DID THIS STUNNING MISS YORKSHIRE –

**ANNIE**

CONTENDER!

**CHRIS**

END UP IN A VILLAGE HALL LIST'NING TO –

**MARIE**

Brenda Hulse evr'body! Ruth, can you help–? Brenda welcome back to the liveliest, most exciting WI in Yorkshire!

*(Over the bustle and welcome we reveal JENNY, looking in.)*

**JENNY**

LOOK THROUGH THE WINDOW IN THE REAR DOOR
ALL YOU CAN SEE ARE MOTHERS-IN-LAW…

**MARIE**

Ladies shall we all turn our chairs?

**CHRIS**

Eh move back, I paid for premium seats. Anyone bring popcorn?

**ANNIE**

*(Hits her.)*
Shutttupp

**JENNY**

D'YOU THINK SOME GIRLS GET BORN LIKE THAT?
COMPLETELY BYPASS ALL THEIR TEENS?
THEY JUST 'TURN UP' AT SIXTY-TWO
IN ILL-ADVISED AND HIGH RISK JEANS?

**BRENDA**

Ladies! Come with me please...

*(The lights dim to allow a projector to come on. JENNY stays in light spill.)*

**JENNY**

D'YOU GET THIS SUDDEN BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHTS
AN' COME ROUND IN BROWN NINETY DENIER TIGHTS?
WALK LIKE A ZOMBIE ALL TWIN-SET AND PEARLED / INTO –

**BRENDA**

Into the fascinating world of broccoli.

**JENNY**

LIKE SOME



**JENNY, CHRIS,** ANNIE, RUTH, **CORA,** CELIA **& JESSIE**

MRS CONVENTIONAL, MISS INSTITUTIONAL
DOING THE THINGS THAT OUR MUMS USED TO DO-TIONAL

**BRENDA**

The story of broccoli begins, ladies, in the year of the French Revolution!

**JENNY, CHRIS,** ANNIE, RUTH, **CORA,** CELIA **& JESSIE**

LIBERTY! EQUALITY!

**JESSIE**

Let's have a cuppa tea.

*(BANG! The projector blows up. In the melee we lose JENNY.)*

**MARIE**

Oh my goodness. Ruth!

**RUTH**

It'll be the fuse! My Eddie always says 'Check the fuse! Nine out of ten times it's actually I think the bulb's gone.

**BRENDA**

Oh well I can't do it then. I think it might get a bit boring without the slides.

**JESSIE**

*(Still 'knitting'.)*
Surely not.
*(ANNIE hits her.)*

**MARIE**

Brenda I'm so sorry. I really - Miss Wilson and Miss Wilson?

**MISS** WILSON **TEA**

*(Auto pilot.)*
Tea?

**MISS** WILSON **COFFEE**

*(Auto pilot.)*
Coffee?

**MARIE**

No, do we have any spare bulbs?
*(to BRENDA.)*
Sorry Brenda I'm still not entirely au fait with where things are..

*(As the MISS WILSONS assist BRENDA out.)*

**CHRIS**
See this is it, Marie. We did warn y'. Rule one of Knapely WI. 'Never volunteer to be Chairman'!

**MARIE**
Third time that projector's blown for a guest speaker.

**CHRIS**
Oh I know it's terrible…

**MARIE**
Well look we can instead, while we wait, Ruth, use the time to update diaries?

**RUTH**
*(Finding WI diary.)*
Diaries! We can, yes! Diary, diary –

**MARIE**
The first thing – I seem to recall December sixteen there's a 'Christmas Fayre on the village green'. Do we do anything on that night?

**CELIA**
Well I drink a vat of mulled wine an' eat a pork bap.

**MARIE**
As a W.I.? Could we not try some carol singing? Especially seeing, as I believe, we have someone in our midst who studied at Leeds Academy of Music!

*(They all pointedly turn to CORA.)*

**CORA**
*(Rabbit in headlights.)*
Sorry?

**MARIE**
Wonderful! May first is 'Spring Fete' – now am I right, Knapely has never won a trophy in the cake baking competition?

**RUTH**
It's true. The shame.

**CHRIS**
Annie once got second with a cheesecake but it later failed a drugs test.

**MARIE**
No no ladies fear not! At my previous WI in Cheshire I found cake competitions are all about presentation. Leave that to me. June nineteen is annual WI Conference in London which will only concern me as chair, so all that remains is our calendar! Now I notice last year you had 'views of local churches'. I was thinking, next year, how about the twelve most beautiful views of / the –



**CHRIS**
Of George Clooney.

**MARIE**
Sorry?

**JESSIE**
*(Looks up from knitting.)*
Oh yes. Eleven fully-clothed with a little 'lift the flap' for December.

*(In bursts JOHN with a flagon!)*

**JOHN**
New girl in the room!

**CHRIS**
'Liquid refreshments'!

**MARIE**
What?

**CHRIS**
First thing you have to learn round here, Marie. Annie's husband makes a killer harvest punch!

**MARIE**
John, / look, what I –

**JOHN**
Got any glasses?

**MARIE**
Could you not give us a talk / instead?

**JOHN**
Me? That'd be good! I've not done anything in my life worth talking about except marry her.

**ANNIE**
And work for the National Park. / That's worth –

**MARIE**
Well that, yes! A talk on the National Park!

**JOHN**
*(Deadpan to ANNIE.)*
Thanks.

**MARIE**
It's just for me, John, the modern WI isn't so much about handicrafts and jam-making. I really feel young girls nowadays are short on moral beacons / and –

**JOHN**
And you are that, Marie my love. First thing I said to my wife when you arrived in this village, 'there goes a moral beacon' and believe me this is the most moral thing that could ever pass your lips. An elixir of the natural beauty of this county!
*(Briskly to CHRIS)*
D'y bring them seeds?

**CHRIS**
Leftover sunflower seeds from our shop!

**JOHN**
Watch this, Marie. Girls! Gotta do this in three distinct phases.

**MUSIC 2A: LIGHTING THE SUNFLOWERS**

*(He clicks a lighter on and creates an illuminated group of lit drinks.)*
One, soon as it's alight drop a sunflower seed on the top! Two. Fire roasts the seeds, warms the elderberries and nettles...Three. Down it in one, you get 'Liquid Yorkshire'!
*(ANNIE does the honours with the seeds.)*
A toast girls! To new horizons in the mind an' new coastlines in the heart! Do we dare?
*(They look at each other, dare, knock it back. And recoil.)*

**CELIA**
God almighty.

**CORA**
You alright, Jess?

**JESSIE**
I've lost me peripheral vision. But on the plus side, I've found something that'll clean the shower head.

**MARIE**
*(Struggling.)*
I think in the absence of a projector bulb that might be enough for tonight..

**JOHN**
C'mon Jess, I'll walk y' back! Annie–?

**CHRIS**
S'alright, John. I'll look after y'r wife.
*(Takes the flagon.)*
And this little fella!



*(Over the flurry of the girls leaving, and the underscore, CHRIS and ANNIE walk outside, into moonlight, to the river bank, take shoes off and put their feet in to share the flagon. In the moonlight they could be 16.)*

**CHRIS**
Looks alright, y'r bloke. V' you had any comeback?

**ANNIE**
*(Immediately a slight chilling.)*
Hospital haven't rung.

**CHRIS**
Oh well there y'go! Rule one of blood tests. If the hospital's not straight on the phone they're not worried. An' if they're not, we're not.
*(Beat)*
Are we?!

*(Underscore KILIMANJARO verse, spritely colla.)*

**ANNIE**
Midgey round this river.

**CHRIS**
Gonna do as I tell y'?

**ANNIE**
I always do what you tell me. That's how I ended up in the bloody W.I.

**CHRIS**
You do the exact opposite of what I tell y'. You always did. S'how I decided you were gonna be my best friend.

**ANNIE**
An' what a lucky day that was.

**CHRIS**
Teacher asks 'so tell us Chris where Mount Kilimanjaro is'. I say 'give us the answer or I'll beat you up at playtime'. You looked me in the eyes an' said –?

**ANNIE**
'It's in Wales'.

**CHRIS**
'It's in Wales, Miss'. I got detention for that!

**ANNIE**
You got detention because you'd already got a reputation.

**CHRIS**

*(Mock offended)*
Me? A reputation?

**ANNIE**

On which subject can I jus' warn y' – Marie's gonna get suspicious if these projector bulbs keep blowing ev'ry time we have a dull guest speaker.

**CHRIS**

*(Goes off waving, deadpan, super-innocently)*
ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

**CHRIS**
JANUARY, FEBRUARY…

**ANNIE**
She'll find you ou-ut!

*(ANNIE shakes her head knowingly as the world pivots round her and in the moonlight JOHN enters with a customised wooden wheelbarrow, reg plate 'CLARKEY 1'.)*

**Scene 3 – Annie's Garden**

**JOHN**

...APRIL, MAY, SEPTEMBER AND JULY
KEEP ROLLING –

**ANNIE**

So.

**JOHN**

*(Jumps in shock.)*
Bloody hell! Don't do that! How long've you been watching?

**ANNIE**

'bout eight pots.

**JOHN**

Well don't just sit like a lettuce.

**ANNIE**

What y' doing?

**JOHN**

Chris's sunflower.
*(Holds up.)*
These are the seeds we didn't drink! Never let beauty go to waste!

**ANNIE**

So how was your day?



**JOHN**

Oh, y'know. Put up a few fences. Mended a few stiles.
*(Plants another.)*
Then on the way home I nipped in the hospital to see the charming Doctor Blakey.

**ANNIE**

*(Stops dead.)*
The hospital rang?

**JOHN**

*(Beat, nods at her efforts.)*
Bit deep, that.

**ANNIE**

*(Over-casually.)*
So they've had all the- ? You got the results back?

**JOHN**

I said 'plant' them, not 'bury' them, soft girl. I'll get some water.

*(He goes off. ANNIE is alone, her mouth drying.)*

**ANNIE**

Not that it matters that much 'cause it's fixable anyway, isn't it? With blood. Whatever. There's transfusions and god knows what. Transfusions and – and –

**MUSIC 3: SCARBOROUGH**

AND SUDDENLY THERE'S A NEW GIRL IN THE ROOM
AND SHE'S EIGHTEEN AN' NERVOUS, AND - AND - AND - AND FILLING EACH
POSSIBLE PAUSE WITH A HANDFUL OF 'ANDS'
STOOD OUTSIDE THE ODEON HOPING THIS BOY CALLED JOHN CLARKE
WON'T DETECT IT'S HER FIRST EVER DATE BUT IN
FACT SHE'S MATURE AND SOPHISTICATED
BUT JOHN CLARKE'S THE SON OF A FARMER AND THEY HARDLY
SPEAK AT THE BEST OF TIMES SO ALL HER SENTENCES
START RACING OFF LIKE SOME DOG IN A PARK
DOING CIRCLES AND LOOPING AND FALLING BECAUSE SHE HAS
NOT GOT A CLUE WHAT SHE SHOULD SAY
THAT GIRL IS BACK
IN THIS GARDEN NOW

**JOHN (OFF)**

Where's the attachment for this hose? Someone has moved the end of this hose.

**ANNIE**

THE DUVET WE BOUGHT IN THE NEW YEAR SALES,
IT'S PATTERNED AND BRIGHT AND THE SIZE OF WALES
WHO HOLDS THE TOPS WHILE I'M FOLDING THE TAILS IF YOU DON'T?

THE DOOR TO THE KITCHEN'S A PAIN IN THE BACK
IT SWELLS IN THE RAIN AND IT'S CRACKED, SO WHO'LL PRESS ON THE
GLASS WHILE I'M GIVING THE BOTTOM A WHACK IF YOU WON'T?

THE TOWELS WE USE ONCE A YEAR FOR THE BEACH ARE ALL
STORED ON A SHELF ONLY YOU CAN REACH, AND IF WE
CAN'T GET THE TOWELS, HOW THE HELL ARE WE GOING TO DO SCARBOROUGH?

WHICH, BY THE WAY, WE'VE HAD PLANNED FOR A YEAR. ALL THE
TICKETS ARE BOUGHT, IN THE DRAWER, THEY'RE RIGHT HERE.
WHAT THE HELL WOULD I GO AND DO ALL OF THAT FOR IF YOU'RE NOT H–?

*(She's interrupted by JOHN battling on, talking to the hose, hose to nose.)*

**JOHN**

Right now you behave, alright? No recoilin' at ninety mile an hour an' smashing me plant pot like last time.

**ANNIE**

Honestly isn't this just typical, eh?! This was Chris's idea, this sunflower! How come I'm the one up at midnight / potting –

**JOHN**

*(Points hose nozzle at her.)*

Oi. I will not have a word said against that woman's stupid ideas! If she hadn't jumped on a table in a Chinese restaurant to sing 'Jumping Jack Flash'..you and I would never've met. I only plucked up courage to ask you to the cinema 'cause I was picking noodles out of your hair.

*(JOHN waters the seedlings. ANNIE watches him.)*

**ANNIE**

WHEN THE WEATHER-GIRL WARNS THAT TONIGHT THERE'LL BE
'A PATCHY RAIN ON THE IRISH SEA'
WHO'LL MAKE A NOISE LIKE A CHEROKEE IF YOU CAN'T?

AND IF THAT MASSIVE SPIDER BEHIND THE SINK
ONCE AGAIN USES OUR BATH AS A SKATING RINK
WHO'LL RELEASE IT HUMANELY? 'CAUSE I'M TELLING Y' – I SHAN'T

PLUS, WE'VE ONLY JUST CRACKED OUR INGENIOUS WAY TO GET
OUT OF THAT JUNCTION WHERE CARS WAIT ALL DAY:
YOU RUN DOWN, PRESS THE ZEBRA, JUMP IN, TRAFFIC STOPS AND WE SAIL AWAY!

**JOHN**

*(To the seedlings.)*

Ok fellas. Over to you.

**ANNIE**

AND WHO WILL INSPECT ME FOR BAGS ROUND MY EYES?



WHO WILL CORRECT MY I-E'S TO E-I'S?

**JOHN**

Hey. Everything's gonna be alright.
*(He goes.)*

**ANNIE**

AND WHO WILL PROTECT ME BY TELLING ME LIES
IF YOU'RE NOT HERE?

## **Scene 4 – School** Field

*(School bell. DANNY enters at speed.)*

**DANNY**

Tommo! Are you helping me hand out these manifestos or not?

**DANNY**

Everyone's going in for registration an' the bell's gone an' I've got to–

**TOMMO**

Yes yes yes I know the bell's gone…

**TOMMO**

Danny Danny Danny!
*(TOMMO has spotted JENNY, a girl far too cool for school, idly putting litter into a binsack with a litter picker.)*
New girl. One who's turned up here from boarding school. Sorry, got 'asked to leave' boarding school. Straight on detention for bringing in drink!
*(As JENNY clocks them.)*
Oh hello. Eye contact. Here we go. Good impression, lad. Strong first impression…

**DANNY**

*(Swallows hard.)*
Do you have a manifesto?

**TOMMO**

*(sv, sarcastically.)*
Oh you smooth-talking bast–

*(DANNY pushes TOMMO aside.)*

**DANNY**

Dunno if you know this 'head boy and girl' thing we have going on here?
*(She says nothing. At all.)*
So anyway I'm campaigning – for head – Well, me manifesto says it –
*(She hasn't taken it, so he reads the flyer.)*
'I see a school where no-one ever feels constrained. Er. No-one ever feels withdrawn. Er. Potential is always embraced.

**MUSIC 4: DANNY-FESTO**

Ambition is never scorned.
I SEE A BRAND NEW DEMOCRACY
I SEE A LASTING FRATERNITY
I SEE A –

*(JENNY clicks the flyer with her litter picker and slowly puts it in the bin sack. And walks off. TOMMO pats DANNY in a conciliatory way on the shoulder, which doesn't go down well. DANNY goes. TOMMO stays, puts on coat –*

**Scene 5 – Village** Hall

*– as CORA enters in a winter coat amidst much bustle of tree and piano moving.)*

**MUSIC 4A: MUSIC BOX YORKSHIRE**

**JOHN**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE –

**CORA**

Merry Christmas, fellas! So here's a thing, my gorgeous glorious son. At our Christmas WI I noticed Chris has the words 'parents evening' on her calendar. Now weirdly I don't seem to have those on mine –

**TOMMO**

Yeah actually they said single parents didn't have to bother.

**CORA**

Oh is that right?

**TOMMO**

Yeah. Y'know. 'Two chairs'. 'Are we waiting for dad to com-oh there isn't one'. 'Aw-kward'. That kind of / thing –

**CORA**

Come here. I've warned y'. Mess me round an' I am so telling your grandad.

**TOMMO**

Not Grandad. Anything but grandad.

**CORA**

And as I can testify, there is nothing a vicar loves more than giving long sermons on how much you're letting him down.

**TOMMO**

Alright alright I'll sign you up.



**CORA**

Thank yoooo...

**TOMMO**

I'm calling Childline on y'. I know the number.

*(JOHN watches him go smiling.)*

**JOHN**

Y've done a good job with that kid.

**CORA**

*(Hymn sheets.)*
Grab these would y'.

**JOHN**

*(At the carol sheet.)*
Oh not this one, please.

*(As ANNIE enters with CELIA.)*

**CORA**

Stop moaning. It's the easiest / to –

**JOHN**

She's got us mopin' round the green singing Silent Night.

*(She tries to swap hats for a woolly one which he resists, revealing his bald head, as the MISS WILSONS enter.)*

**CELIA**

*(Greeting them.)*
Merry Christmas! Miss Wilson. Miss Wilson.

**MISS** WILSON TEA

Tea?

**MISS** WILSON COFFEE

Coffee?

**ANNIE**

The doctor said wear a proper hat, John Clarke–!

**CELIA**

*(After them.)*
No, you're alright. D'you know I don't think I've ever heard them two say anything except the words 'tea' and –

**JOHN**

*(Notices CELIA looking at his head and rescues the moment.)*

Hey. None of that. Me treatment's goin fine and I tell you what's cheering me up?

*(Arm round her.)*

Your WI calendar with its 'views of local churches'. Being able to mark me chemotherapy appointments under images of misty graveyards.

*(CELIA, CORA and ANNIE laugh in spite.)*

**ANNIE**

Put this hat on –

**JOHN**

See thing is Celia I have seen the dark side of the vicar's daughter. Oh yes. Christmas Eve carols? Age nineteen. I'm sitting in the choir stalls trying to pretend I haven't been in the pub and I suddenly hear the organist singin' –

**CORA**

John –

**JOHN**

Tell Ceel what you were/ singing.

**CORA**

I can't remember what I was / singing!

**JOHN**

Y'RE ALL A LOAD OF DRUNKEN / SLOBS

**CELIA**

Cora!?

**CORA**

I didn't sing that!

**CELIA**

I should hope not, in a house of God.

**CORA**

'Course I didn't sing that. What I sang was –

**MUSIC 5: WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT?**

*(Plays piano:)*

GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN
LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY
FOUR AND TWENTY VICARS WENT TO
YORKSHIRE FOR THE DAY



TWENTY-THREE WENT HOME AGAIN BUT
ONE PRAT CHOSE TO STAY

**CELIA**

Cora!?

**CORA**

NOW HIS DAUGHTER IS STUCK HERE
AND SHE PLAYS EVERY DAY!
SHE SITS AT THIS SODDING ORGAN AND SHE PLAYS

**CELIA**

With your dad in the pulpit?!

**CORA**

He couldn't hear! Believe me, I had loads!

**RUTH**

*(Entering.)*

Hi everyone!

**ANNIE**

Hi Ruth!

**CORA**

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY
WHEN THEY WERE BOTH FULL GROWN

**RUTH**

I know this!

**CORA**

THEY WERE OLD ENOUGH TO GO CLUBBIN'
BUT THEIR DADDY SAID STAY AT HOME

**RUTH**

Oh I don't/ actually –

**CORA**

THE RISING OF THE SUN
AN' THE RUNNING OF THE DEER
WE ARE PULLIN' OUT ALL THE STOPS, GIRLS
LIFT THE WINDOW AND DISAPPEAR!

**RUTH**

Cora!?

**JOHN**

*(Throwing away carol sheet, to CELIA.)*
That one! Don't y' wanna hear that one!?

**ANNIE**

No, / John shush!

**CORA**

WHOA!

**JOHN**

Here we go!

**CORA**

WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT?
WHEN ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT
GET MERRILY ON HIGH!

*(The MISS WILSONS enter with the tea urn which CORA turns into percussion.)*

**MISS WILSON TEA**

Tea!

**MISS** WILSON **COFFEE**

Coffee!

**CORA**

WHOA!

**MISS** WILSONS

Argh!

**CORA**

RIGHT FROM THAT FIRST NOEL
UNTIL THE FINAL BELL, 'CAUSE HONEY
WHO WANTS A GUY WHO WANTS A GIRL
WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT?!

*(CHRIS enters with ROD bearing between them a sack of gifts to distribute.)*

**CHRIS**

It's Christmas-s!

**ROD**

Presents for Playgroup! Where d'y want 'em?



**RUTH**

Oo over here, Rod. I'll sort them –!

**CORA**

WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE
BEARING GIFTS WE TRAVERSE AFAR
LEFT OUR QUEENS BACK HOME WITH MAGAZINES
FOLLOWING YONDER STAR!

**CHRIS**

What's this?!

**CORA**

OH...
STAR OF WONDER STAR OF LIGHT
WHEN THEIR KINGS WERE OUT OF SIGHT
THREE QUEENS ALL GOT TIRED OF WAITIN'
HIRED A FULL STRETCH CAMEL AND SCREAMED LET'S
*(Points.)*
GO! GO! GO! 'CAUSE WHOA!

*(All join in on her point, finding percussion where they can.)*

**CORA**

WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT?
WHEN ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT
GET MERRILY ON HIGH!

HERE WE GO!
FIRST NOEL
FINAL BELL

**ALL**

SILENT NIGHT?
STARS ARE BRIGHT

WHOA
RIGHT FROM THE FIRST NOEL
UNTIL THE FINAL BELL
'CAUSE HONEY

**CORA & ALL**

WHO WANTS A GUY WHO WANTS A GIRL –
BOYS!

**HUSBANDS**

WHO WANTS A GUY WHO WANTS A GIRL

**CORA**

GIRLS!

*(JESSIE and COLIN enter.)*

**CHRIS,** ANNIE, CELIA **& RUTH**

WHO WANTS A GUY WHO WANTS A GIRL

**CORA**

*(Points at JESSIE.)*
I GOT JESSIE, THERE, SHAKING HER MONEY MAKER!

**JESSIE**

What?

**CELIA**

Y'r tin, love. Y'r tin!

**CORA**

RUTH, THERE, SHAKING HER MONEY MAKER

**RUTH**

Yay! Oh, there's nothing in it.

**CORA**

CELIA!

**CELIA**

SHAKIN!

**CORA**

ANNIE!

**ANNIE**

SHAKIN'

*(MARIE enters dressed like something out of Dickens!)*

**CORA**

AND MARIE!

**MARIE**

I went for a Dickensian theme!
*(Beat of silence.)*
What?

**EVERYONE**

*(Loudly.)*
WHOA!

**MARIE**

*(Jumps.)*
Oh my god!

**EVERYONE**

WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT?



WHEN ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT
GET MERRILY ON HIGH!

**MARIE**

What's happening?

**EVERYONE**

WHOA. RIGHT FROM THE FIRST NOEL
UNTIL THE FINAL BELL
'CAUSE HONEY,

**CORA**

ALL THE WAY BACK TO THAT FIRST NOEL
UNTIL THEY'RE FINALLY RINGING THE BELL
I GOT TO TELL YOU HONEY

**ALL**

WHO WANTS A GUY WHO WANTS A GIRL WHO WANTS A –
*(In pile TOMMO and DANNY.)*
SILENT NIGHT!

**MEN**

YOU MERRY GENTLEMEN!

**GIRLS**

HOLD TIGHT!

**MEN**

GOOD CHRISTIAN MEN REJOICE!

**CORA**

HARK! THE YORKSHIRE ANGELS SING!

**EVERYONE**

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH, YEAH, YEAH!

*(It ends with everyone having had pretty much the best time ever with a carol.)*

**MUSIC 5A: AFTER SILENT NIGHT**

**JOHN**

*(Slightly.)*
Do that! Rod get ev'ryone...

**ROD**

*(Takes over. Shouting.)*
Ev'ryone get on the green and do that!

**MARIE**

*(Being hustled out.)*
No, John we're collecting for charity –

**JOHN**

Trust me. Y'll collect more doin' that - ladies can y' walk and shake?

**CELIA**

Jessie does that already.

**JESSIE**

Oi.

*(The exits leave CORA with TOMMO, who is speechless.)*

**TOMMO**

Where the bloody hell did all that come from?

**CORA**

*(Panting.)*
You have just forgotten you ever saw that.

**TOMMO**

I am so telling grandad.

**CORA**

No no no you bloody don't you dare! Tommo!

**TOMMO**

OHH! WHO WANTS A PARENTS' NIGHT
WHEN ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT
GET MERRILY ON HIGH…

*(He goes out with CORA as LAWRENCE, a hospital porter, presents a sofa…)*

**MUSIC 6: VERY SLIGHTLY ALMOST**

**Scene 6 – Hospital/Flower Shop**

*(…which ANNIE sits on. She looks pretty upbeat. The settee is a little uncomfortable.)*

**LAWRENCE**

Ward 18?
*(Re the sofa.)*
Sorry, that's as comfy as it gets!

**ANNIE**

'VERY'. THAT CONSULTANT WASN'T 'PLEASED' – HE WASN'T JUST 'PLEASED'
HE WAS 'VERY PLEASED!' WITH PROGRESS. ABSOLUTELY. AND LIKE, GOD, THIS IS A
GUY WHO'S SEEN IT ALL BEFORE AND WOULDN'T PUT A 'VERY' IN
BEFORE A 'PLEASED' WITHOUT HIM BEING SURE!



AND 'VERY PLEASED' IS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS THAN 'OVERJOYED'
AND 'OVERJOYED' IS NEAR AS DAMMIT 'YES, WE'RE ALL CONTENT'
AND IF THEY'RE ALL CONTENT WITH PROGRESS HALLELUJAH! OFF WE'RE SENT AS
ALL ALONG THE CORRIDORS THE NURSES WAVE GOODBYE AND WE FLY HOME...
NO WE WON'T! WE'LL GO TO TESCO!
FRIDAY NIGHT, LIKE WE DO, WE'LL GO TO TESCO

*(LAWRENCE comes back in with JOHN who directs him to take a photo.)*

AND I'LL SEND YOU TO GET THE MARGARINE WHILE I GO AFTER BREAD
AND YOU'LL COME BACK WITH CHEAP STUFF, I'LL SAY 'THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID'
AND THEN WE'LL HAVE A ROW WHILE PEOPLE TRY TO REACH FOR CHEESE
AND YOU'LL SAY 'HOLY COW, THE SAME DAMN FACT'RY MAKES BOTH THESE'

Are we havin' a photo?
*(He's nicked a sign saying GERIATRICS with an arrow pointing up at the two of them.)*
Oh for g - ! You should not be messing round with hospital property! Where's Chris? I told her to keep an eye on you –

*(CHRIS enters in a wheelchair with a tray of coffees on her knee.)*

**CHRIS**

Annie! Seriously you have no idea how quickly I just got served.

**ANNIE**

Get out of th- Lawrence, I do apologise...

**CHRIS**

But I –

**ANNIE**

*(Points.)*
Out.

**LAWRENCE**

See y' next month, Mrs Clarke.

*(JOHN pushes CHRIS off, LAWRENCE goes too, as ANNIE smiles and watches. ANNIE stays on sofa. Sits in dark, as ROD enters FLOWER SHOP, offloading flowers to DANNY.)*

**ROD**

Carnations incoming!
*(To DANNY.)*
Stick 'em with the marigolds.

**DANNY**

Not very 'green', this, is it, for a flower shop? Having some massive truck drive from Holland twice a week?

**ROD**

No, but on the other hand, it does mean once a year we get these complementary calendars featuring young Dutch girls posing with tulips.

*(Gives him a calendar.)*

Which I hand to you now, my son, as a rite of passage. Read it with care. It will teach you a lot about the difference between us and Europe.

*(In the hospital, LAWRENCE pushes a wheelchair on. ANNIE is less upbeat.)*

**ANNIE**

'SLIGHTLY!' NOT 'INCREASED.' NOT JUST 'INCR-' OW!
*(The settee bit her.)*
IT'S ONLY 'SLIGHTLY!' THAT CONSULTANT SAID –
I'M ALMOST ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT I HEARD A 'SLIGHTLY'
FLOATING ROUND BEFORE HE SAID 'INCREASED'
I'M FAIRLY DEFINITELY –

*(JOHN is helped on by LAWRENCE. He doesn't want the wheelchair, has a stick instead.)*

**JOHN**

Annie!

**ANNIE**

SO WE'LL FLY HOME –

**JOHN**

Look at this!

**ANNIE**

NO WE WON'T –

**JOHN**

*(To LAWRENCE.)*
Show her!

**ANNIE**

WE'LL GO TO SCARB'ROUGH!

**LAWRENCE**

*(Reluctantly produces magazine.)*
It's now't, really it isn't –

**ANNIE**

WITH ROD AND CHRIS

**JOHN**

Give it here!



**ANNIE**

LIKE WE DO

**JOHN**

"It's now't really". Listen to y'. Stop being a shrinking violet!

**ANNIE**

AND WE'LL ALL GO MACK'REL FISHING!
AND AGAIN WE'LL ALL IGNORE HOW YOU
NIP INTO THE FISHMONGER'S AN HOUR OR SO BEFORE

**JOHN**

Look...

**ANNIE**

SO WE'LL BE CATCHING TIDDLERS, AS YOU SHOUT 'OH MY GOD'
AND REEL IN THIS BLOODY MASSIVE EIGHT POUND COD!

**JOHN**

'Amateur photography awards. Portrait winner. Lawrence Sugden. Entitled 'Beryl, aged 87'

**ANNIE**

Lawrence that is beautiful!

**JOHN**

Yeah. Sadly when he took it, he forgot to put her wheelchair brakes on and she rolled into the canal but her family are so pleased they got her last smile.

**LAWRENCE**

It's just me gran, y'know.

**JOHN**

*(Hobbles off with stick.)*
He's agreed to be official photographer when we do Tibet.

**ANNIE**

When are we doing Tibet?!

**LAWRENCE**

See y' next week, Annie.
*(ANNIE stays on, smiling at JOHN's joke. Sits in dark, as in the flower shop CHRIS drags in DANNY to meet ROD, emerging with flowers.)*

**ROD**

Tulips incoming!

**CHRIS**

*(Takes flowers.)*
Tell him. Tell y'r dad!
*(Does it for him.)*
This new girl who's turned up at school, ok? Rumour is at boarding school she had an affair with her physics teacher!

**ROD**

Physics?

**CHRIS**

*(Beat)*
Rod, that was the least important part of that sentence –

**ROD**

No I'm just saying it's never normally the science guys. Is she a bit geeky?

**DANNY**

*(Bit of a smile.)*
Total opposite.

**CHRIS**

Rod! D'you mind? Your son is trying to get head boy by being a model of good behaviour. What happens if he gets led astray by some sex-crazed adolescent?

**ROD**

Well in my experience he ends up running a flower shop.

*(They leave with a scuffle, CHRIS hitting ROD with flowers, much to DANNY's scorn. Back in the hospital.)*

**ANNIE**

'ALMOST'. NOT YET 'OUT OF OPTIONS', WE'RE JUST…
*(Beat.)*
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HURT CHILDREN, THERE ARE
PEOPLE WHO SELL DRUGS TO, TO, TO CHILDREN.
WHO STEAL MONEY OFF THE ELDERLY AND ALL JUST WALKING
'ROUND COMPLETELY HEALTHY! BUYING MARGARINE AT TESCOS!
GOING OFF TO, TO, TO... MACK'REL FISHING...
*(Beat.)*
BUT EV'RYTHING'LL BE ALRIGHT!
A TIME MAY COME TO SAY 'OK THE SUN HAS SET'
BUT CLARKEY, IT'S NOT YET

**TANNOY (SFX)**

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to Knapely Spring Fête!



## MUSIC 7: SPRING FÊTE

**Scene 7 – Village** Green

*(A spring fete! Music, brightness, a maypole with tannoy on it is brought on by the men during a bit of* God Save The Queen. *COLIN holds two elaborate cakes and is directing operations.)*

**TANNOY (SFX)**

I said Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to Kn- it's not on, Jeff. Jeff they can't hear m-oh they can, Denise is waving. Welcome to Knapely Spring Fête!

**JESSIE**

Colin watch that cake!

*(JESSIE CELIA, CORA, THE MISS WILSONS and CHRIS all bearing cakes, with much "hello" and "whoa that's a nice one" as the men string out the bunting.)*

**TANNOY (SFX)**

And I've got a lost child already.
*(The ladies listen.)*
I've got a lost child by the name of - what's your name love? 'Mia'? Seriously? Is that a name?

**CELIA**

ONCE EVERY YEAR ON THE FIRST DAY OF MAY

**TANNOY (SFX)**

Sheepdog trials two fifteen.

**CELIA**

ENGLAND PUTS ENGLISHNESS OUT ON DISPLAY

**TANNOY (SFX)**

Sheep shearing two forty five.

**CORA**

BY RECREATING WHAT 'FUN' USED TO BE
SOMETIME AROUND SIXTEEN HUNDRED AND THREE

**TANNOY (SFX)**

Can all meringues register in tent five.

*(CELIA is ushered off to register as ROD and DENIS help MARIE with her prop.)*

**ROD**

CONVENTION DICTATES THAT TRADITIONALLY
THE TUG OF WAR STARTS AT A QUARTER TO THREE

**DENIS**

FOLLOWED, OF COURSE, BY THE HOSPITAL TRIP
AND SIX HOURS IN LEEDS A AND E

*(MARIE swoops past.)*

**MARIE**

OK this is good. The other WI's are just putting their cakes on plates. We're the only ones with a display cartwheel.

*(She whips the cloth off the contraption with businesslike efficiency and leaves. CHRIS, JESSIE and CORA look at her creation, deadpan.)*

**CHRIS**

What the hell is that?

**CORA**

You may recall at her previous WI she learned 'cake competitions are all about presentation'.

**JESSIE**

Just to warn you, Ruth probably won't make it.

**CORA**

What? There's a spoke here that says 'Ruth's scone'!

**JESSIE**

Word has it last night Eddie has once again...
*(She gestures 'vamoosh'.)*

**CHRIS**

Oh he's not?

**CORA**

Not again?

**JESSIE**

*(Nods.)*
I'm afraid.

**CHRIS**

Same woman as last time?

**JESSIE**

New one..

**CORA**

Y'know I'm not a violent woman –

**CHRIS**

Hey what are y' doing?



*(CHRIS spots JENNY – we've hardly noticed her either – casually take the slice of CHRIS's cake.)*

This isn't the catering tent!
*(Retrieves it.)*
This is the WI! These are in competition.

*(JENNY, deadly, puts it back as CELIA enters with meringues to see the wheel.)*

**CELIA**

Beautiful meringues arriving, watch out. Where does Marie want the – what the hell is that?

**CHRIS**

You may recall at Marie's previous WI she learned 'cake competitions are all about presentation'.

**CORA**

Why are you wearing a sweater? It's 28 degrees!

**CELIA**

Indeed it is. And there are also ladies milling round from my husband's golf club, one of whom last night put up a sign in the ladies' locker room requesting members 'monitor their cleavage'.

**CORA**

No! God's sake, Ceel, do they not realise how much you spent on yours?

**CELIA**

Pardon?

**JESSIE**

Just to fill you in, Eddie walked out again last night.

**CELIA**

What?

**JESSIE**

We may be down an entry in the scones.

**CELIA**

God give me two minutes with that man and some sheep shearing tools-

**RUTH**

Hi everyone!
*(RUTH enters, full of the joys and with a huge see-through storage tub overflowing with scones.)*
Bit of help here please, ladies! I need to know which of these is me best scone to enter.

**CHRIS**

Bloody hell Ruth, how many 've you done?

**RUTH**
Oh y'know what it's like! I set out last night to make 3 an' 'whoosh'! Before I knew, sun was up and I'd made a hundred and forty seven.

**COLIN**
*(Eating one.)*
What d'y think?

**JESSIE**
Stop eating those!

**DENIS**
Not sure about the baking but y've got a strong chance in the dry stone walling.

**CELIA**
*(Shoos them out.)*
Oh get out.

*(MARIE swoops past followed by TOMMO, bearing CELIA's [now registered] meringues...)*

**MARIE**
OK, Joyce Tinsley from Barden's entered 'Victoria sponge'. Was she the one who was /on –?

**RUTH**
*(Nods.)*
'Bake Off'.

**MARIE**
Ok so we won't win Victoria sponge but we're still strongin meringues.
*(Directs.)*
Tommo can you return them? Celia can you position them attractively. Ruth?

*(MARIE whisks RUTH off to duties unknown. TOMMO and CELIA meet over meringues.)*

**TANNOY (SFX)**
We are now judging entries in the vegetable competition.

**CELIA**
Alright, Tommo?

**TOMMO**
Celia.

**CELIA**
You entering any competitions today? Don't tell me. 'Straightest courgette'?



**TOMMO**
Sorry?

**TANNOY (SFX)**
ALL TUGGERWAR TEAMS TO THE GREEN!

**TOMMO**
Tug Of War! I'm in that!

*(TOMMO races off past an incoming ANNIE.)*

**ANNIE**
..ooOOHH MY GOD CHRIS-S! THE STALL! THE CAKE! I haven't baked one! I knew there was something I was supposed to do today/an' –

**CHRIS**
Tan tan ta– RA!

**ANNIE**
*(Beat.)*
What?

**CHRIS**
I reckoned you had enough on your plate.

**ANNIE**
You baked something?

**CHRIS**
Eh I'm not a total dead loss as a woman y' know. I can't knit or make plum jam but I can bake a bloody Victoria sponge.

**ANNIE**
Alright, alright. Thank you.

**CHRIS**
I mean I haven't baked this one, like. I got it from Marks And Spencers, but in principle/ I –

**ANNIE**
What?

**RUTH**
Marks and Spencers?

*(CORA and CELIA fall about.)*

**ANNIE**
You are not entering a bought cake!

**CHRIS**
Get off!

**TANNOY (SFX)**
TUG OF WAR!

**DANNY**

*(Entering with resin.)*
OK TEAM KNAPELY! HERE WE GO! LET'S GO OUT THERE AND DO THIS!

*(CHRIS is pursued off by ANNIE and the others as TOMMO enters at speed.)*

**TOMMO**

*(Grabs DANNY.)*
Oh my god I am in. I am in!

**DANNY**

With who?

**TOMMO**

Celia.

**DANNY**

Celia?

**TOMMO**

Your mum's mate with the impressive rack of…
*(Mimes hooters.)*

**DANNY**

Yeah alright Tommo, I know what she's got –

**TOMMO**

I am being groomed, mate. I am being groomed. It can only mean one thing when an older woman looks deep in y'r eyes and starts talking about courgettes.

**MUSIC 8: GIRLS / HELLO YORKSHIRE, I'M A VIRGIN**

GIRLS.
Let me tell y' Dan
MEDIC'LY RECOGNISED FACT

*(In another part of the fete, JENNY appears, disinterestedly wielding a small white flag.)*

JUST WHEN MENS' SEX DRIVE GOES - PFFRT.
WOMEN'S DRIVES....GET RE-TARMAC-ED
SO, HOLY SHIT, MAN, IF OLDER GIRLS OFFER, SAY 'YES'
EXPERIENCE COUNTS FOR A LOT. BEFORE YOU GO OUT IN A YACHT
TAKE SOME TRIPS ON A TUG BOAT…

**DANNY**

Tommo just - you're talking like I've never... I'm not..y'know.. 'cause I have actually.. Out the two of us, you're not the only –



**JENNY**

*(Deadpan.)*
Hello boys.

**DANNY**

HELLO YORKSHIRE, I'M A VIRGIN.
D'YOU THINK IT SHOWS?
IS IT, LIKE, GLOWIN' ON ME FOREHEAD?

*(ROD wields one end of a large rope, now in a 'TEAM KNAPELY' vest.)*

**ROD**

Ok Team Knapely! We're up!

*(DENIS and COLIN come on with their end of the rope.)*

**DANNY**

THERE WAS LAURA FROM THE CHIP SHOP
BUT THAT WAS MORE A SORT OF 'POWER-FUMBLE'.
THEN SHE LOST HER FLIP FLOP.
*(Coolly nods at JENNY.)*
Alright.
*(Then turns away.)*
Oh god –
WAS 'ALRIGHT' THE RIGHT EXPRESSION
TO CREATE A CREDIBLE IMPRESSION
I'VE DONE WHAT SHE'S PROBABLY ALREADY DONE?

**ROD**

Are y' comin', Danny?

**DANNY**

Yeah, I'm ready, let's go! We are absolutely absolutely-

THAT FRENCH GIRL ON THE EXCHANGE TRIP
WE SNEAKED OFF TO THE BEACH AND HAD A WAFFLE.
AN' LADS, Y'KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!
*(Deadpan.)*
IT MEANT WE HAD A WAFFLE.

*(COLIN and DENIS pass down the rope which now stretches across the green.)*

**COLIN, DENIS & ROD**

Ready!

**DANNY**

D'YOU THINK SHE CAN TELL I'M AS VIRGIN AS HELL?

**COLIN, DENIS , ROD &** JOHN

Set!

**DANNY**

D'YOU THINK SHE CAN SEE I'M INTO NON-OGAMY?
*(The rope goes taught.)*
SHE'S BEEN ALL THE WAY TO WATERLOO
WHEN I'VE ONLY BEEN AS FAR AS CREWE
IS SHE SITTING THERE EXPECTING ME TO-

**JENNY**

*(Drops flag.)*
PULL.

**DANNY**

Sorry?

**ROD**

Danny!

**DANNY**

Arghhh!

*(As the team are dragged across the stage, it pulls into view JOHN at the back in 'anchor' position in his wheelchair! DANNY replaces him.)*

**ROD**

*(Laughing to JOHN.)*
Hit y'r brakes! John, hit y'r bloody brakes!

*(JOHN is creased up with laughter.)*

**JOHN**

Danny Danny Danny-y!

**DANNY**

I'm there! I'm there! Dig in! Dig in!

**TANNOY (SFX)**

*(Very slurred.)*
AN' OFF THEY GO! And off they g-OVER the line! LOOK AT THAT! MARVELLOUS TUGGIN'. EX-CELLENT TUGGIN'...

**MUSIC 8A: BRASS BAND UNDERSCORE**

*(JENNY has gone. JOHN pulls away. ANNIE enters. Her heart could break seeing JOHN in that bloody wheelchair.)*

**ANNIE**

So Clarkey. What y' been up to?



**JOHN**

Well. In a massive upturn of events, I won the fell race.
*(Beat.)*
Wasn't so good going up hill but I came down in eight seconds.

*(JOHN still makes her laugh. She takes the sunflower seed bag.)*

**ANNIE**

What's this?

**JOHN**

Speech. I promised W.I. 'Bout me job.
*(As ANNIE reads, he looks at her.)*
Hey.
*(Beat.)*
Everything's gonna be alright.

**TANNOY (SFX)**

An' fin'lly ladies, gentlemen for the final awarding of final cake trophies will you please welcome.. Lady Cravenshire!

*(Huge hubbub as everyone enters.)*

**MARIE**

Oh my god! 'Lady Cravenshire'! They got Lady Cravenshire to do th –
*(Too loudly again.)*
JESSIE! LADY CRAVENSHIRE!

**CELIA**

Marie, she reads The Guardian. She's not interested in royalty.

**ROD**

JOHNNY-Y!

*(The husbands roar in another way, en bloc and squiffy. DANNY and TOMMO follow. ROD has a large ceremonial wooden spoon for last place.)*

**MARIE**

No Rod, please. We have Lady Cravenshire / coming!

**ROD**

As our team's anchor you get to keep our last place wooden spoon – oops.
*(As LADY CRAVENSHIRE enters everyone suddenly behaves and smatters applause.)*

**LADY** CRAVENSHIRE

Ladies! Thank you so much for inviting me here. I do so love coming to this part of dale.

**JESSIE**

*(Bows, somewhat Dickensian.)*
An' we loves 'avvin y', ma'am.

*(CORA and CELIA surreptitiously mock-hit her to stop it.)*

**LADY** CRAVENSHIRE
I'm here to announce the results of the cake baking, and this year's winner of the May Wilkinson memorial rosebowl for Victoria sponge is entry 213.

*(Everyone, including CHRIS, claps.)*

**MARIE**
Oh my God. '213'! Chris!

**ANNIE**
Oh god.

**CHRIS**
No no no

**MARIE**
Come on! You've won!

**ANNIE**
Oh my god...

*(A horrified CHRIS is ushered towards the trophy. She accepts it as quickly as possible...)*

**CHRIS**
Thankyouverymuch.
*(...and is heading back to share the horror with ANNIE.)*

**LADY** CRAVENSHIRE
Listen I know I shouldn't technically ask but the lightness of that sponge. Is there a thing, a technique how you got that?

**ANNIE**
*(sv, to the frozen CHRIS.)*
Don't even try.
*(But MARIE steers CHRIS back.)*

**CHRIS**
*(Swallows.)*
Well I basically stuck to my mother's advice about cakebaking. Line the bowl with butter. Always use a warm spoon.
*(Beat.)*
And if it's a special event, get it from Marks & Spencers.



*(The GIRLS stare in silent horror. Then ANNIE laughs to cover. This makes LADY CRAVENSHIRE laugh. Which makes MARIE laugh out of panicked relief. CHRIS turns to encourage more laughter.*

**MUSIC 8B: GROUP PHOTO**

*They all fall about laughing. And as they have a go at taking a selfie with CORA's phone, it leaves JOHN a sudden bystander, watching this glorious moment.)*

**MUSIC 8C: UNDERSCORE**

**Scene 8 – The** Dales

**JOHN**
The flowers of Yorkshire are like the women of Yorkshire.

*(The selfie group goes still and each find their place, almost as if they were in different parts of an invisible church. But the church is the Yorkshire Dales.)*

Every stage of their growth has its own beauty. But the last phase is always the most glorious.
*(Beat.)*
Then, very quickly, they all go to seed.

*(JOHN stands and walks unseen between them.)*

**ANNIE**
'Which makes it ironic that my favourite flower isn't indigenous to the British Isles, let alone Yorkshire…

**CHRIS**
I don't think there's anything on this planet that more trumpets life than the sunflower. For me, that's because of the reason behind its name. Not because –'

*(CHRIS can't. So again, JOHN steps in.)*

**JOHN**
Not because it 'looks like' the sun. Because it follows the sun.
*(JOHN passes the HUSBANDS, makes the four, then passes on, leaving a space.)*
During the course of each day, the head tracks the journey of the sun across the sky. A satellite dish for sunshine. Sow those seeds and you'll see that wherever light is, these flowers will find it. Which is such an admirable thing.
*(Beat.)*
And such a lesson in life'.

*(JOHN turns his collar up. Looks to the sky. Says goodbye to his beloved Yorkshire with a last look. And walks over the hill.)*

**COLIN,** DANNY, DENNIS **& ROD**
Bye lad. /Uncle John./ Johnny boy./ See y', Clarkey.

*(LAWRENCE collects the wheelchair. Everyone stands to the call of some annoyed peewit. It's almost as if they've lost track of how long they've been standing there.)*

**MUSIC 9: TIME PASSING**

**CORA**
TUESDAY THE TWENTY-NINTH

**CELIA**
WEDNESDAY THE THIRTIETH

**JESSIE**
THURSDAY THE THIRTY-FIRST

**RUTH**
FRIDAY BECOMES
FRIDAY AFTERNOON–

**CORA**
SATURDAY SLIPS INTO
SUNDAY–

**JESSIE**
SUNDAY AND
OVERNIGHT

OVERNIGHT TURNS
INTO

**CHRIS**
MONDAY MORNING TEN PAST EIGHT
THE SEVEN THIRTY BUS IS LATE AGAIN
*(Peers.)*
STUCK BEHIND…

*(No-one moves until they speak.)*

**DANNY**
Y're kidding?

**CELIA**
'GOLF CLUB LADIES' DAY'?

**ROD**
OUR FLOWER TRUCK.

**CELIA**
*(Sarcastically.)*
HOORAY.

**CHRIS**
TWO SISTERS PLACE THE –



**WILSON** SISTERS
MORNING!

**CHRIS**
ROSES ON THE
WAR MEMORIAL

**DENIS**
MORE FLOWERS FOR THE
GUY WHO FOUND AN ANGEL IN THE
SKY
STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HIS LUCK

**CELIA**
TRYING TO CONFORM SHE BUTTONS UP HER DRESSES
GOLF CLUB LADIES DON'T LIKE FORMER AIR HOSTESSES

**ANNIE**
THE DUVET WE BOUGHT IN THE NEW YEAR SALES...
IT'S PATTERNED AND BRIGHT AND THE SIZE OF WALES

**RUTH**
TUESDAY IS A…
*(Nods to CELIA.)*
HI LOVE

**CELIA**
*(Waves to RUTH.)*
HI LOVE

**RUTH**
- HALF DAY
FISH AND CHIPS FOR ONE TONIGHT

**ANNIE**
WHO HOLDS THE TOPS WHILE I'M FOLDING THE TAILS –?

**CORA**
Learn this book, and then this book and if you don't pass then I –

**CORA**
- hit you with this book.

**TOMMO**
'Hit me with that one.

**TOMMO**
Didn't Jesus talk about tolerance?

**CORA**
Believe me, if Jesus'd had teenage kids, the Bible would've been very diff'rent.

*(TOMMO goes.)*

**CORA**
WEDNESDAY HALF PAST EIGHT ST WILFRED'S CHOIR

**JESSIE**
*(Sees COLIN in a reverie, holding paper.)*
Mr. Raistrick?

**CORA**
SINGLE MUM MANHANDLES THE MESSIAH

**JESSIE**
*(Into his arms.)*
One down.

**COLIN**
*(Finds a smile.)*
Indeed, Mrs Raistrick.

**Scene 9 – Hospital**

*(ANNIE takes the books from CHRIS. She sits.)*

**CHRIS**
*(Kick-starts breeziness.)*
What're y' doin' back in this hospital?! It's W.I. night, y'r missin' all the excitement! We had a talk on the history of the milk marketing board an' Celia won the egg decorating competition.

*(ANNIE smiles. Which feels like flight.)*

**ANNIE**
Brought John's gardenin' books for the relatives' room. D' you think they might want them?

**CHRIS**
*(Sits gently.)*
I think it's time you stopped coming to this hospital.
*(Re: the sofa.)*
If nothin' else y'll get piles from sitting on these bloody...They're gonna need a new relatives' room soon, for relatives of people who got injured in the bloody relatives' room. Also I've had another great idea.

**ANNIE**
Oh god-d-

**CHRIS**
No really good one, this one. John's seeds? Sunflower seeds we didn't drink, currently in your greenhouse? We lead a mission, plant 'em up on Knapely Fell!



*(ANNIE smiles, as you would to a child.)*

**ANNIE**
I'll wait to see if they want them. You go.
*(Beat.)*
I'm alright, Chris.

**MUSIC 9A: I'M ALRIGHT, CHRIS**

*(She's an adult, she can't force her. CHRIS has to leave ANNIE in the hospital. The U/s VSA reprise is sharply interrupted by…*

**Scene 10 – School**

*...a school bell. DANNY strides out to rehearse.)*

**DANNY**
*(Behind hand.)*
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. CANDIDATE THREE FOR HEAD BOY. DANNY HARPER!
*(He goes for 'stern'.)*
Students of Knapely High. My name is Daniel Harper.
*(Tries suave.)*
Hi, students of Knapely. The name's Harper. Danny Harper.
*(Behind, with litter picker and sack, appears JENNY. She watches.*
*Tries 'cool'.)*
Yo, yo, students of Knapely. Wass'up! Dan the man is h-oh for f- what is that?

**JENNY**
Students!

**DANNY**
*(Jumps.)*
Bloody hell-o

**JENNY**
Vote for 'Danny Harper'.

**DANNY**
Alright?

**JENNY**
An' d'y know why you should?

**MUSIC 9B: DANNY-FESTO 2**

'CAUSE IT WILL MAKE HIS MUMMY PROUD.

**DANNY**

Have you –? Did you read the er…

**JENNY**

IT WILL MAKE HIS GRANNY PROUD

**DANNY**

*(Swallows, sv.)*

..manifesto?

**JENNY**

IT WILL MAKE HIS AUNTIES PROUD

**DANNY**

*(sv.)*

Can I count on your vo-...?

**JENNY**

IN FACT ALL OF HIS LITTLE VILLAGE WILL BE PROUD! OH SO PROUD OF OUR DANIEL!

*(She pulls the litter clicker from the bin sack with a piece of paper on it. TOMMO appears, rooting in school bag, to notice them from afar.)*

**DANNY**

No no that's- Y'can't give me y'r vote. You have t' put it in.

**JENNY**

Yeah well y'know. Might slip off later. Take advantage of the whole election...

*(Mockingly.)*

...'frenzy'!

**DANNY**

Y'gonna bunk off?

**JENNY**

*(Smiles.)*

Bless.

*(Heads off backwards)*

I'd ask you t' come an' all, but I understand.

THAT WOULD MAKE HIS MUMMY CROSS.

*(She smiles and heads off.)*

**TOMMO**

Oh my god you are in. You are in! That is exactly what Celia's doing to me.

*(Takes the card.)*

You have to bunk off with her. You absolutely have t- oh my god she's put a kiss next to your name!



**DANNY**

*(Heads off.)*

She voted, Tommo you dicksplash.

*(And TOMMO follows...)*

**Scene 11 – Flower Shop**

*(...as CHRIS drags in a flower bucket and chair, which has a schoolbag containing assorted clobber on it.)*

**CHRIS**

Oof..argh...god's sake.

*(Calls.)*

Don't worry fellas! I'll bring the flowers in off the green!

*(No response.)*

ROD? DANNY? I'm home! From WI! Sure you're desperate to hear the result of the egg decorating.

*(Takes off coat.)*

I came last. Apparently my 'Yul Brynner' showed a 'distinct lack of effort'.

*(As CHRIS puts her coat down she sees the discarded Dutch bulb calendar in the assorted clobber.)*

Oh f'r god's sake.

*(Looks, laughs.)*

My my 'Gretta' you are proud of those tulips.

*(CHRIS grabs some tulips to copy the pose. Behind her, DANNY enters in pyjama bottoms, t-shirt with headphones and a ring file. He stops on seeing her, removes the headphones.)*

'Hello boys.' 'Gretta from Eindhoven'. 'Welcome to Janu–'

**DANNY**

Mum?

**CHRIS**

-arhello, love. How's it all gone today?

**DANNY**

What are y' doin?

**CHRIS**

Oh y'know.

*(Re. the calendar.)*

They rang to see if I'd be on next year's Dutch calendar, and I was just checking to see if I'd still 'got it'. Did I ever tell you I was a former / 'Miss–

**DANNY**

Yes.

*(DANNY retrieves his schoolbag.)*

**CHRIS**

So was it today, your final rehearsal?

**DANNY**

*(Packing his ring file - 'yes')*

Mm.

**CHRIS**

Can't believe all this, y'know. When I was at that school, 'head boy and girl' was like a diff'rent planet. All I could ever do to impress anyone was bunk off up Knapely Fell.

*(DANNY looks at her, struck by the echo. CHRIS offers him the calendar.)*

**DANNY**

*('Keep it', clicks file.)*

S'alright. You keep checking if y've 'still got it'.

*(DANNY goes. CHRIS resumes the flowers.)*

**CHRIS**

's alright, love. If I did have it once, I'll've lost it by now.

**MUSIC 10: SUNFLOWER**

*(Tidying flower debris.)*

BUT THEN AGAIN. BUT THEN AGAIN. BUT THEN AGAIN...SAYS WHO?
GRETTA FROM EINDHOVEN CAME OFF THE LINE WITH THE
SAME FAC'TRY FITTINGS AS YOU
OK SHE MAY NOT LOVE HANDLES, STRETCH MARKS
CROW'S FEET EACH SIDE OF HER EYE
BUT GRETTA, I BETCHA, HAS NOT WON A CAKE BAKING TROPHY AT THE W...

*(CHRIS stops. Magic is suddenly abroad.)*

...OH GOD OH GOD IT'S STARTED HAPPENING.
THE HAIRS GO UP. THE LITTLE LIGHTS APPEAR.
NEWTON HAD THIS. EINSTEIN HAD IT. ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL AND ME,
EACH TIME I GET A GREAT IDEA!
THE SAME WAY MICHAELANGELO LOOKED AT THE SISTINE ROOF AND SAID
'KNOW WHAT? I'D THOUGHT 'MAGNOLIA' BEFORE.
BUT STANDING HERE THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING MORE'.

PHASE ONE: TAKE A SINGLE SEED
A LITTLE RAIN, A LITTLE SUN, IS ALL Y' NEED.
ONE SMALL GERM OF AN IDEA.
LEARN TO HOPE BEFORE YOU LEARN TO FEAR

PHASE TWO: GROUND STARTS BREAKING
DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE RISK IT'S TAKING
SO LONG BURIED IN THE NIGHT
WITH JUST A MEMORY OF DAYLIGHT



*(She sees a sunflower in the flower bucket.)*

LIKE A SUNFLOWER FOLLOWING THE SUN
HOLDING OUT UNTIL THE DAY IS DONE
JUST THE ONE RAY - ALL IT'S GONNA NEED
*(Gets and presses phone)*
LEARN THE LESSON IN THE SEED AND TURN LIKE A
SUNFLOWER. FIGHT TO FIND THE SUNLIGHT IN THE SKY

*(CHRIS grabs her coat and heads out into the night.)*

DON'T STOP TO THINK YOU MIGHTN'T MAKE IT
IF THERE'S HALF A CHANCE TO TAKE, THEN TAKE IT
ONE EYE FOLLOWING THE LINE
LIKE A SATELLITE DISH FOR SUNSHINE!

SUNFLOWER FOLLOWING THE SUN
HOLDING OUT UNTIL THE DAY IS DONE
FOR THAT ONE RAY - ALL I'M GONNA NEED
LEARN THE LESSON IN THE SEED AND TURN LIKE A
SUNFLOWER. FIGHT TO FIND THE SUNLIGHT IN THE SKY

AND LET ME RISE! MRS CONVENTIONAL
SORRY BUT SOMETIMES A LITTLE ATTENTION IS FUN
LET ME SURPRISE! MRS TRADITIONAL
SORRY NOT ALL OF US WANT TO KEEP HIDDEN AWAY FROM DISPLAY
THINGS THAT SHOULD HAVE THEIR DAY IN THE SUN! WHOA!

SUNFLOWER!
HELLO YORKSHIRE D'Y HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?
OK SO I'M NO BOTTICELLI!
BUT I'M SURE AS HELL STILL WORTH DISPLAYING!
SUNFLOWER OF YORKSHIRE! A WOMAN OF YORKSHIRE!
MY GOD SHE AMAZES IN ALL OF HER PHASES
WHEREVER THERE IS SUNLIGHT IN THE SKY
JUST WATCH HER RISE!

**Scene 12 – On** the Hill

*(We are now on the hill in daylight. ANNIE is called on, clearly mid planting.)*

**CHRIS**

Annie come here ok ok ok. We're gonna buy a settee for the relatives' room in memory of John!

**MUSIC 10A: YORKSHIRE BELLS**

**ANNIE**

Oh my god.

*(Beat.)*
Oh my god Chris Harper in forty years of knowing you that is the first non-stupid idea you've ever had!

**CHRIS**

I know!

**ANNIE**

How're we gonna raise the money?

**CHRIS**

By doing a nude calendar!

*(ANNIE stares at her. Almost instantly we hear the ladies loom with laughter. And up through the gate come CELIA, RUTH, CORA and JESSIE. They have trowels, soiled hands and faces from planting. ANNIE drifts aside.)*

**CELIA**

*(Hits RUTH.)*
Did you hear this, Chris? She only asked Marie to come an' help plant John's sunflowers!

**RUTH**

Oh she's on her own Ceel an' it can get lonely, y'know? Sometimes some of us who've got fellas can forget that.

**CHRIS**

*(Holds up a brass plate.)*
TA-DA!

**RUTH**

*(Reads it.)*
'The John Clarke Memorial Settee'.

**CELIA**

Oh now actually -

**JESSIE**

When d'you get that done?

**CHRIS**

Half nine this morning. Key cutting place.

**CORA**

D'you mean 'bench'?

**CHRIS**

No no, settee. Fabulous comfy sofa for the relatives' room at Skipton General! Bought by us! IF we can raise the money. For which...



*(Hands out.)*
…according to Roy in the post office, these last year were his best-selling calendars. You will see that they all have one thing in common. And it isn't local churches.

*(They all look at what they're holding.)*

**JESSIE**

What's yours got on, Cora?

**CORA**

Not a lot, Jess.

**RUTH**

Oh I get it! I see what you're doing. Ok well look I have to say it's not - as you'll appreciate - normally my kind of thing, but if it helps raise money for a good cause, I don't mind buying one.

**CHRIS**

*(Beat.)*
Ok so here's the thing Ruth, we're not talking about buying one. We're talking about appearing in one.

*(Pause. RUTH starts laughing.)*

**RUTH**

Ahahahahaha
*(Becoming slightly hysterical.)*
I'm laughing out of fear, here.

**CHRIS**

Now Ruth –

**RUTH**

What the hell are you thinking Chris?

**ANNIE**

That's what I thought.
*(They all turn to her.)*
And then I thought...'The last phase is the most glorious'.
*(Beat.)*
John sort of suggested this, Ruth.

**CORA**

With respect, John didn't say 'whip your bra off'.

**ANNIE**

Well, no –

**CELIA**

And sit on a Kawasaki.

**ANNIE**

I know..

**JESSIE**

Holding a python.

**MUSIC 11: DARE**

**CHRIS**

*(Mimes a toast.)*
TO UNEXPLORED HORIZONS IN THE MIND!

**ANNIE**

That's what he said!
NEW COASTLINES IN THE HEART!

**CHRIS**

SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, COULD WE SET OFF? COULD WE START?

**ANNIE**

TO FIND THE RULES YOU KNEW.

**CHRIS**

AND BREAK THEM.

**RUTH**

It's not about rules, Chris, it's about...I dunno...

**ANNIE**

FIND EXCUSES.

**CHRIS**

BUT DON'T MAKE THEM

**RUTH**

I'm not 'making excuses'. I'm saying here and now / I'm not gonna –

**ANNIE**

WHATEVER'S TELLING YOU NO

**JESSIE**

*(Nods..'the answer being'.)*
Common sense.

**CHRIS**

WHATEVER'S CHANGING YOUR MIND



**JESSIE**

*(Beat.)*
Common sense.

**ANNIE**

THERE'S A COURAGE YOU ONLY EVER FIND IS THERE
IF YOU DARE

**CHRIS**

JUST FOR ONCE DON'T STOP AND STARE

**ANNIE**

SPREAD YOUR WINGS AND TRUST THE AIR

**CHRIS**

WHEN YOU FEEL YOU'VE GONE TOO HIGH

**CHRIS** & ANNIE

KEEP CLIMBING IF YOU DARE.
TAKE IT ALL ONE STEP TOO FAR
THEN LOOK ROUND AT WHERE YOU ARE
THERE ARE VIEWS YOU ONLY SHARE
IF YOU DARE.

**CELIA**

*(Returning calendar, heads off.)*
Well good luck with that, Chris.

**CORA**

*(Following.)*
Indeed.

**JESSIE**

Those of us who are sadly not the Venus De Milo, let us head home.

**ANNIE**

*('We're losing them!')*
Chris-s do something!

**CHRIS**

Ok Cora, get your camera and I will here and now prove a naked older woman can look artistic!

*(JESSIE, CORA and CELIA freeze.)*

**JESSIE**

I have to see this.

**CELIA**
Me too.

**CORA**
And me.

**RUTH**
No. What?

**ANNIE**
TAKE YOUR PARACHUTES AND CUT THEM

**CELIA**
Ruth, I don't think y'll regret this.

**ANNIE**
FIND THE EXIT ROUTES AND SHUT THEM

**RUTH**
Well you lot can stay if you like but I am going home-

**ANNIE**
*(Going after RUTH.)*
WHOEVER'S TALKING YOU DOWN

**JESSIE**
As you know I'm not a betting woman...

**ANNIE**
WHOEVER'S PRESSING YOUR BRAKE

**JESSIE**
*(To CELIA and CORA.)*
Fiver says she won't.

**ANNIE**
THERE'S A ROAD YOU WILL ONLY EVER FIND TO TAKE

**CELIA & CORA**
You're on.

**ANNIE**
IF YOU DARE

**ANNIE, CHRIS & CELIA**
JUST FOR ONCE DON'T STOP AND STARE



**RUTH**
Don't, Ceel!

**ANNIE, CHRIS, CORA & CELIA**
SPREAD YOUR WINGS AND TRUST THE AIR
IF YOU THINK THE ICE LOOKS THIN
RUN FASTER

**RUTH**
Cora, don't!

**+JESSIE**
*(Start to clap CHRIS on.)*
IF YOU DARE.

**RUTH**
Don't dare her!

**ALL GIRLS (MINUS RUTH)**
TAKE THE JUMP WITHOUT THE FEAR
AND THE FAR SIDE WILL APPEAR

**RUTH**
Annie, stop them!

**ALL GIRLS (MINUS RUTH)**
OF A LAND YOU FIND IS THERE

**RUTH**
Seriously!

**ALL GIRLS (MINUS RUTH)**
IF YOU DARE

**RUTH**
Can I just point out this is a public footpath!

**ALL GIRLS (MINUS RUTH)**
DARE! JUST FOR ONCE
DON'T STOP AND STARE
SPREAD YOUR WINGS
AND TRUST THE AIR
IF YOU THINK THE ICE LOOKS THIN
RUN FASTER

**RUTH**
*(Unusually, slightly hysterical)*
It's a public footpath!

**CHRIS**
Ha-HEY!

*(CHRIS throws her bra from under her top over her shoulder. JESSIE, CORA and CELIA cheer as RUTH catches it.)*

**RUTH**

Oh for god's sake.

**JESSIE**

You caught it. You're next.

**ALL** GIRLS (**MINUS RUTH)**

WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE GONE TOO HIGH
KEEP CLIMBING! IF YOU DARE!

| **GIRLS** (**MINUS** RUTH) | **CHRIS & ANNIE** |
|---|---|
| TAKE A RUN AND LEAVE THE GROUND | LEAVE THE GROUND |
| TAKE A SECOND AND LOOK DOWN | |
| SEE A PAIR OF ARMS ARE THERE | SEE A PAIR OF ARMS ARE THERE |
| IF YOU DARE! | IF YOU DARE! |

*(As the GIRLS huddle round the process of CHRIS's disrobing, DANNY appears, somewhat nervously looking for this mystery girl, in a red head boy blazer he is half-thinking of divesting.)*

**ANNIE**

THERE ARE COASTLINES IN THE HEART

**GIRLS**

IF YOU DARE!

**ANNIE**

YOU WON'T REACH IF YOU DON'T START

*(JENNY appears, vodka in hand.)*

**JENNY**

Look at the new 'headboy'!

*(DANNY spins round, the ladies hear, apart from ANNIE and CHRIS.)*

**GIRLS**

IF YOU DARE

*(CELIA, CORA and JESSIE turn on hearing JENNY. MARIE appears at the hill gate.)*

**MARIE**

Alright ladies! What are we planting?!



*(All except ANNIE and CHRIS turn to MARIE.)*

**MARIE**

Jenny?

**JENNY**

Mum?

**ALL** GIRLS

'Mum'?!

*(CHRIS is revealed in a vaguely classical topless pose.)*

**CHRIS**

Now honestly, can ANYONE see my nipples?

**DANNY**

*(Head in hands)*
OH FUUUUUUUU...
*(Blackout.)*

**END OF** ACT **I**

## ACT II

**MUSIC 12: ENTR'ACTE**

**Scene 1 – Village** Green

*(Entr'acte music reveals COLIN, ROD and DENIS statues, stunned. DENIS and ROD have full pints, COLIN's is half empty and he has a wet bottom on his shirt. MARIE enters with a beer towel.)*

**MARIE**

There we are... there we are.
*(Gives it COLIN to wipe.)*
Bit of a shock, I know! I'd suggested '12 views of Yorkshire Bridges.' Not surprised you spilled your pint, me dropping that in the conversation. I sort of presumed your wives would've discussed doing a nude calendar beforehand but hey! As I know to my cost you can never be quite sure what your partner is up to! Anyway! Lovely chatting. Best get home.

*(They stand, stunned.)*

**COLIN**

Has your wife mentioned anything at all regarding/ a...

**ROD**

Colin. Don't panic, ok? They're never gonna do a nude calendar.

**DENIS**

Oh cryin' out loud no. No.

**COLIN**

No. NO. God 'course they – no.

*(A beat of thought.)*

**COLIN**

I mean-

**MUSIC 13: GIRLS (VILLAGE GREEN)**

JESS. MY JESS. THE THING THAT YOU HAVE TO...OK.
*(Breathes in.)*
YOU NEVER QUITE SEE HER UNDRESS.
IT'S IMPRESSIVE.
SHE'S THERE FULLY-CLOTHED
YOU POUR TEA, THEN LOOK UP
AND SHE'S THERE IN A NIGHTDRESS.
IT'S NOT THAT WE NEVER..

**DENIS & ROD**

No no.



**COLIN**

See each other in…
*(Gestures loosely.)*

**ROD**

'In the -' er..

**DENIS**

Right.

**COLIN**

SOME SITUATIONS. IT'S JUST..
WE TEND TO DO NUDITY MORE
ON A 'NEED TO KNOW' BASIS

**DENIS**

WELL CELIA –
WHEN WE MET
LONDON-DUSSELDORF
AS AN AIR HOSTESS SHE WOULD REVEAL-

**COLIN**

*(Nods.)*
Yes.

**DENIS**

NOT TOO MUCH.

**COLIN**

*(Shakes head.)*
No.

**DENIS**

TO A MARK

**ROD**

Absolutely.

**DENIS**

THE SAME WAY THAT IN THE FILM 'JAWS'
YOU NEVER SEE ALL OF THE SHARK.
*(Lost in a moment.)*
AND NOW YOU FEAR THE GIRL WHO WALKED THROUGH LIFE
LIKE SHE WAS WALKING THROUGH AN AIRPORT
BROUGHT BACK UP HERE SHE SLIGHTLY...HIDES HER WORTH.
SHOULD YOU EVER BRING AN ANGEL DOWN TO EARTH?

**ROD**

Look lads my wife, ok, she has these ideas one minute, next minute-
*(Gestures 'evaporate'.)*
Believe me, by tomorrow she'll be plannin' a charity sky dive. Come on, Den.

*(ROD and DENIS go off.)*

**COLIN**

AND MINE, WHO TAUGHT KIDS FOR FIFTY ODD YEARS
TO BE WHAT THEY DREAMED THEY COULD BE
DOES CROSSWORDS EACH NIGHT BY THE FIRE
HER CLASS NOW, ALAS,

**DENIS (OFFSTAGE)**

*(Calls.)*
Colin!

**COLIN**

- ONLY ME

**MUSIC 13A: DISMAYED DANNY**

*(DANNY wanders out, sits legs in river.)*

**DANNY**

'Can anyone see my nipp-'oh for gods' sake.

*(JENNY appears. She offers drink.)*

S'alright. I don't.

**JENNY**

Y've just seen y'r mum get her gongs out on a hill.

*(He still doesn't. 'Suit yourself'.)*

Tell y' what though. Won't stop her telling you how you should behave. S'like mine. Havin' a car crash of a marriage doesn't stop her givin' relationship advice.

*(DANNY is drawn down to sit by her.)*

**DANNY**

Serious? D' your mum say that t' you an' all?

**MUSIC 14: PROTECT ME LESS**

**JENNY**

*(Swallowing 'er yeah'.)*
Mg! First thing she said when we came down off the hill was-

**JENNY**

'Jennifer?'

**MARIE**

Jennifer?



*(In a memory, MARIE enters with her spade and takes off the coat she had on the hill.)*

**MARIE**

In the lounge, please. I need a very important word.

**JENNY**

ONCE A FAMOUS POET WROTE
AN' BELIEVE ME
IT'S THE ONLY QUOTE I EVER KNEW

**MARIE**

Settee.

**JENNY**

*(Mimes the quotation marks.)*
'THEY FUCK YOU UP, YOUR MUM AND DAD
THEY MAY NOT MEAN TO, BUT THEY DO.'

**MARIE**

Ok...

**JENNY**

AND SINCE MY DAD LEFT HER ON THE SHELF
MUM'S HAD TO FUCK ME UP BY HERSELF.

**MARIE**

You're not to hang round with that boy.

**JENNY**

AN' EV'RY DAY YOU SIT AND SMILE

**MARIE**

D'you hear, love?

**JENNY**

EV'RY DAY YOU SIT AND NOD

**MARIE**

An' d'you know why?

**JENNY**

QUESTIONS WANTING NO RESPONSE

**MARIE**

How can I put this?

**JENNY**

COMMANDMENTS STRAIGHT FROM GOD

**MARIE**

His mother.

**JENNY**

AND WE GRADU'LLY BOTH CONCUR

**MARIE**

*(Trying to figure words.)*
Thing is Jenny..

**JENNY**

I'M SO LUCKY THAT I'VE GOT HER.

**MARIE**

She doesn't set the kind of example I want for you. Which is why I'm taking you to WI Conference!

**JENNY**

*(Shoots herself in the head.)*
DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO
AND LOOK WHAT FUTURE OPENS UP TO YOU

**JENNY**
LET ME SHOW SO YOU CAN SEE

**MARIE**
Women to aspire to!

**JENNY**

THE KIND OF WOMAN YOU SHOULD AIM TO BE
CHECK MY HAIR, CHECK THE LENGTH OF MY DRESS
GIVE ME STRENGTH! GIVE ME AIR!
AND PROTECT ME A LITTLE LESS!

*(MARIE walks out of the spotlight and it disappears.)*

**DANNY**

No god right well my mother comes down off the hill, right -

**CHRIS**

Danny?

**DANNY**

And it's all like...

**DANNY**
...exactly the same!

**CHRIS**
Get in here please I need an important word.

*(In a memory, CHRIS appears in the clothing she had on the hill, bra in hand.)*

**CHRIS**

What you saw on that fell was – was…



**DANNY**

'DIGNITY AND SELF RESPECT'

**CHRIS**

...actually about respect.

**DANNY**

THAT'S WHAT IT WAS ALL ABOUT

**CHRIS**

Female dignity.

**DANNY**

SHE'S GOT HER BRA STILL IN HER HAND

**CHRIS**

*(Realises this and hides it.)*
Oh for god's sake.

**DANNY**

HER TOP IS ON INSIDE OUT.

**CHRIS**

*(Realises this too.)*
Oh for god's sake!

**DANNY**

BUT THE LAST THING I NEED OF COURSE

**CHRIS**

*(Struggling to change)*
The last thing a headboy needs…

**DANNY**

IS TO HANG WITH A GIRL WHO'S COARSE.

**CHRIS**

…is gettin' distracted by a girl with low morals. Hang on a minute, let me put my bra back on.

**DANNY**

DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO
AND LOOK WHAT FUTURE OPENS UP TO YOU
LET ME SHOW, SO YOU CAN SEE

**JENNY**

Oh yes.

**DANNY**
THE KIND OF BOY, OR GIRL, HE, SHE COULD BE

**JENNY**
PLEASE DELIVER MY CHILDREN FROM EVIL AND LET THEM BE
LESS UNCONVENTIONAL PLEASE!

**DANNY**
PAY MORE ATTENTION - ALL THESE RULES ON THE WALL:
'DON'T RUN FAST OR YOU'LL FALL;'

**JENNY**
'DON'T JUMP HIGH OR YOU'LL BREAK;'

**DANNY**
'DON'T GO RUN THROUGH THE GRASS 'CAUSE THERE MIGHT BE A RAKE'

**JENNY**
YOU MIGHT GET YOUR DRESS CAUGHT
LIKE THE TIME I ONCE DID SO IN SHORT
LEARN FROM ALL MY MISTAKES AND JUST-

**DANNY & JENNY**
DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO
AND WHAT A SAFE PATH OPENS UP TO YOU

**DANNY**
LET ME RISE!

**JENNY**
LET ME FLY!

**DANNY**
LET ME STAND UP AT SUPPER
LOOK IN THE EYES OF MY DEAR FUCKER-UPPER

**JENNY**
*(Makes him repeat:)*
TELL HER, FROM NOW ON 'WHAT I
NOT WHAT YOU SAY IS WHAT-

**DANNY**
'WHAT...'

**JENNY**
I –



**DANNY**
'I...'

**JENNY**
DO'!

*(JENNY leaves him with this lesson to exit in his own pool of thought.)*

**MUSIC 14A: OUT OF PROTECT ME LESS**

**Scene 2 – Village** Hall

*(Much bustle and jabber as JESSIE, CORA, CELIA and RUTH pile in with hula hoops.)*

**CELIA**
...No the thing is Ruth, you just have to say. You just have to be dead firm with Chris. If you start to feel dizzy you just have to stop.

**JESSIE**
I'm just saying we both had a go before I came out and I got motion sickness.

**CORA**
Well I just hope it causes less damage than her Thai kick boxing class.

*(CHRIS and ANNIE enter.)*

**RUTH**
Chris you're going to be gentle with us on this first lesson aren't you?

**CHRIS**
*(Beat, swallows.)*
Ok at this point girls I have to tell you I haven't got you here to do an exercise class.

**CELIA**
Oh my god. It's a trap.

**ANNIE**
Lawrence?

*(In comes LAWRENCE with an art folder, as a gazelle to a watering hole where lions are drinking.)*

**ANNIE**
Ladies, this is Lawrence. John's porter at the hospital.

**CHRIS**
Also amazing award-winning... photographer.

*(Uproar.)*

**ANNIE**
No no no no –

**CHRIS**
Wait, wait, wait –

**LAWRENCE**
I thought you said everyone was in agreement about doing this calendar!

**ANNIE**
Girls! Give us a chance…

**CHRIS**
They are, they will be when they hear - girls! Please! Look. What happened on the hill was a learning curve –

**RUTH**
Yes and what we learned was 'don't try and do a nude calendar'.

**CHRIS**
Exactly! 'On our own'. 'Cause we'd need a proper photographer.

**ANNIE**
Like Lawrence!

**CHRIS**
Who's talented, an' award-winning -

**CELIA**
..and a man..

**CHRIS**
..and a man, yes, but who'd set up the photos then leave the room and we'd press the thingy!

*(There is a little calm, a la a pack of confused lionesses at a watering hole.)*

**ANNIE**
Lawrence this is Celia, Cora, Jessie and Ruth.

**CHRIS**
You alright?

**LAWRENCE**
Yeah it's just - y'know. You wait years for a live model then a bus load turn up.

**RUTH**
*(Heading out.)*
They bloomin' don't –



**CHRIS**
*(Holds her back.)*
Ruth just wait 'till- Lawrence! Show everyone how it'd look!

**ANNIE**
The photos. You had chance? To think?

**LAWRENCE**
I d- Yes. Ok. Right, ok. So.
*(Beat.)*
Ok.

**CORA**
God love if you're intimidated by Celia with her clothes on –

**CHRIS**
*('Shut up'.)*
Cora.

**LAWRENCE**
I do wildlife. I only did that portrait of me gran 'cause John got me to. Well, nagged.
*(Looks at his tattoos.)*
Most people never ask what I do. Y'know? They mostly talk about themselves. But he was the opposite.
*(Holds up camera.)*
An' I won this. So I reckon I owe him one.
*(Beat.)*
Also he said he reckoned the W.I. counted as 'wildlife'.

*(There's a beat where the room feels momentarily warmed by JOHN's humour. It gives LAWRENCE confidence.)*

Which made me think. That's what your calendar should be. 'Creatures in their native habitat'.

*(He gets drawings out. All crowd round.)*

At first glance, your classic WI calendar. All your traditional... cakes, jam, sewing an' that. Everything y'd expect. Except for one tiny thing. The person doing it... is nude.

*(The first person to receive a sheet is ANNIE. Each creates a moment of wonder, as if radiating light.)*

**MUSIC 15: KILIMANJARO (VILLAGE HALL)**

**ANNIE**
CLARKEY, ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

**CHRIS**

*(Whisper.)*
Oh my god-d…

**ANNIE**

SEE WHAT YOU'VE GONE AND STARTED?
WHAT YOU'VE GONE AND BLOODY DONE?

**CHRIS**

Cora!

**ANNIE**

IT'S FINE FOR YOU UP ON A CLOUD
I'M THE ONE DOWN HERE WHO'LL BE STARK
NAKED STOOD BEHIND A CURRANT BUN

**LAWRENCE**

*(Swaps sketch.)*
Or maybe you could be this one.

**ANNIE**

OR A TEAPOT. NOT MUCH DIFF'RENCE, TO BE FRANK

**LAWRENCE**

So each month y'd get a different girl.

*(As he distributes, girls have their own thoughts in private.)*

**RUTH**

I CAN'T DO THIS. I CAN'T –

**CORA**

BLOODY NORA!

**JESSIE**

WOW!

**RUTH**

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS!

**JESSIE**

Where's all the cellulite?

**CORA**

It's there. It's just in shadow

**JESSIE**

Remind me to spend the rest of my life in shadow.



**LAWRENCE**

Is it you who plays the organ?

**CORA**

Not like that. I'd get arrested.

**RUTH**

I CAN'T DO IT. SAY IT RUTH
HE WOULDN'T LIKE IT, EDDIE WOULDN'T, JUST DON'T
GET DRAGGED IN JUST 'CAUSE YOU THINK YOU SHOULD

**CELIA**

WELL I QUITE LIKE MY PHOTO.

**RUTH**

*(Without thinking.)*
WELL YOU WOULD.
It's not the same for people who / aren't -

**CELIA**

I'm sorry?
*(Beat.)*
'Well you would'?!

**RUTH**

*(Mortified.)*
No, Ceel, I didn't mean…

**LAWRENCE**

Look it doesn't / really –

**RUTH**

- didn't mean it like that! I meant..I only…

**CELIA**

What?

**LAWRENCE**

- doesn't really matter which –

**CORA**

*(To RUTH's rescue, wry smile.)*
Come on, Ceel. I think we all know what she means.

**LAWRENCE**

- matter which poses / you –

**CELIA**
Oh do we now? And exactly what do we 'all think she means'?
*(Beat.)*

**CORA**
That at some point as an air hostess you upgraded your baggage allowance.

**JESSIE**
Oh bravo!

**CORA**
Increased the capacity of your overhead lockers.

**JESSIE**
And again!

**CORA**
You inflated your life jacket to attract attention.

*(CORA mimes this.)*

**LAWRENCE**
*(sv)*
Listen maybe I / should just –

**MUSIC 16: SO I'VE HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE**

*(CELIA opens up initially to LAWRENCE.)*

**CELIA**
SO I'VE HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE

**LAWRENCE**
*(ssv)*
Ohmygod.

*(Then turns it out to the girls.)*

**CELIA**
AND THOUGH I CAN'T RECALL QUITE WHAT I SPENT, GIRLS
WE ALL KNOW WHERE IT WENT, GIRLS
SO I HAD A LITTLE SURVEY
WHICH FOUND SOME CRACKS AND COUNSELLED I SEEK GUIDANCE
TO COUNTERACT SUBSIDENCE

NOW SOME PEOPLE SAY THE WORK OF GOD WE OFFEND
THE DAMAGE OF TIME IS NOT FOR HUMANS TO MEND
BUT GOD'S SORT OF DROPPED THE BALL HERE LATELY



AND HOMES THAT START OFF STATELY ALL NEED
EXPERT SCAFFOLDING IN THE END.
*(LAWRENCE makes to go but JESSIE restrains him.)*

**JESSIE**
Don't go now, sweetheart! I've waited years for this.

**CELIA**
SO I'VE HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE
THERE'S BEEN NO BOOM AND BUST, JUST SPECULATION
I'VE RISEN WITH INFLATION
TAKE WHAT HELP A GIRL CAN RALLY
IF IT PRESERVES THE VIEW, THEN FRANKLY WHO CARES
HOW SILICON THE VALLEY?

NOT EV'RY FORCE WORKS GRAVITATIONALLY
NEWTON WAS WRONG: NOT ALL FRUITS DROP FROM THE TREE
SO IF YOU WANT TO WALK AROUND TOWN LOUD AND PROUD WITH
EV'RYTHING YOU WERE - OR WEREN'T - ENDOWED WITH,
WHY THE HELL ARE YOU NOT ALLOWED?

'CAUSE IF A GIRL CAN TURN ON ALL THE LIGHTS
WITHOUT A STITCH OF CLOTHING AND LOOK
IN HER MIRROR WITH NO FEAR OR LOATHING, THEN LIKE
*(Clicks fingers)*
THAT, HER CARDIGAN FROM TESCO FEELS LIKE PRADA.
AND HER DRESS FROM M AND S LIKE
THAT, BEGINS TO FEEL LIKE GUCCI, AND HER
PAIR OF 'THAT'LL DO' BLACK SHOES BEGIN TO
RAISE HER UP LIKE JIMMY CHOOS IN THE
NIGHT ON A SORT OF AN INTERNAL FLIGHT
WHICH IS - YES, OK…

WHY I'VE HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE!

*(The other girls start to salute the confession and cheer!)*

**CELIA**
SOME SMALL BUT QUITE IMPRESSIVE
WORK DONE!

**GIRLS** (V**ARIOUSLY)**
Yes!/Whoo!/Alright!

**CELIA**
AND I DON'T GIVE A F-..NIP AND TUCK WHO KNOWS IT NOW!

**ANNIE** & CHRIS
Miss July!

**CELIA**

Oh no no y' don't!

**CHRIS**

Hear what she's saying, girls? 'We are proud of what we are, whatever we are!'

**CELIA**

She's not, Lawrence.

**ANNIE**

Which is what her photo would be saying, wouldn't it, Lawrence?

**CHRIS**

*(Re. CORA's sketch.)*
And this one's perfect for Cora!

**CORA**

Is that right?

**CHRIS**

Honestly Lawrence you should've seen this girl at Christmas!

**LAWRENCE**

*(Under siege.)*
What?

**CHRIS**

*(Takes sketch from LAWRENCE.)*
We collected so much money 'cause of her alternative carol...

**CELIA**

*(Returning sketch to LAWRENCE.)*
My husband's social circle has a problem with cleavage.

**CORA**

*(Gives it back.)*
An' sadly 'alternative' is not a good thing to be if y'r a single mum whose dad's the vicar.

**CHRIS**

*(A tussle over the calendar.)*
Don't listen to her Lawrence she's been a great mum / and-!

**CORA**

Chris, I started my career as a mother round the back of Morrisons with a blues guitarist. How can I be a 'great' moth–

*(Ooops. Cat's out of the bag.)*



**CELIA**

A who?

**LAWRENCE**

*(ssv)*
Anyway-y..

**CHRIS**

You told us you met Tommo's dad studying classical music.

**CORA**

I did. I did.
*(Beat.)*
I did. In the blues club where I went to escape the other people studying classical music.

**CELIA**

Cora?

**JESSIE**

Y'know when I woke up I had no idea this day was going to be so exciting.

**CORA**

My dad's a bit of a snob, Lawrence. I needed a roof. I knew he could just about cope with the idea of me being seduced by a classical violinist.

**CELIA**

Whereas in truth..?

**CORA**

*(Pictures the memory.)*
God could that guy play the blues.

**RUTH**

*(Beat, makes a break for the door.)*
Anyway I'm not exactly a size 8 so /I don't think anyone -

**CHRIS**

No but Ruth!

**ANNIE**

Hold on -!

**CHRIS**

This isn't about showing off fabulous bodies, is it Lawrence?

**RUTH**

My Eddie always jokes I'm like that girl out of 'The Sound Of Music' only I'm size sixteen going on seventeen.

**ANNIE**

*(She's not.)*

You?

**CHRIS**

Yeah well then you bloody show Eddie what 'fabulous' really is, Ruth. You bloody do this to show him you're not just sittin' there ev'ry night bakin' an' waiting for him to come home! This calendar, Ruth, will show him –

**RUTH**

I'M NOT DOING THAT!

*(Beat.)*

WHO SAYS I'M DOING - ? WHY WOULD I BE DOING THAT?

*(RUTH looks round a room in which she suddenly feels naked. She flees.)*

**CHRIS**

*(sv, angry at herself.)*

Oh f'r god's sake Chris –

*(JESSIE defaults to teacher and follows.)*

**JESSIE**

I'll go. I'll go.

**CHRIS**

God's sake…

**CELIA**

*(Pinches eyes.)*

Urgh.

*(Beat.)*

**LAWRENCE**

Right. Well. Looks like me bus load just left.

*(He looks at the redundant sketches.)*

Y'can keep - if y' want.

*(Hands them to CORA and goes.)*

**CORA**

Sorry Annie, I just..

*(Passes sketches to CELIA.)*

I'm not sure what it'd be telling my son.

**CELIA**

*(Looks at her sketch)*

Yeah. I think I've made things hard enough for Denis round that club without doin' this.

**CORA**

Y'could ask the Miss Wilsons?



**CELIA**

*(Passes sketches to ANNIE.)*

I've a feeling the Miss Wilsons probably shower with their clothes still on.

**CORA**

Jess?

**ANNIE**

No, I was never..I wouldn't.

*(Looking at sketches.)*

Doin' something like this is a very different deal for a woman who's - a woman with - a woman of Jess's...

**JESSIE**

'Age'?

*(They swing to see JESSIE at the door.)*

Was 'age' the word cowering at the end of that row of dots?

*(It was.)*

**ANNIE**

Actually 'generation' I was going to / say –

**JESSIE**

I keep telling you, my dear. By the time I was compelled to retire I had been a teacher nearly fifty years.

**ANNIE**

Precisely! That's what I mean. So you have a reputation / to –

**JESSIE**

Had I finished?

**ANNIE**

Sorry Mrs Raistrick.

**JESSIE**

Being a teacher is a very singular profession. You watch the years advance with lengthening legs and shortening skirts in a relentless calibration of time passing. And what, you may ask, does it make you?

*(No takers.)*

An expert at being old.

**ANNIE**

Jess I really was just / meaning –

**JESSIE**

And the thing is girls –

**MUSIC 17: WHAT AGE EXPECTS**

HOW SILENTLY IT BEGINS.

*(JESSIE has formed a small class.)*

HOW SOFT COMES THE FIRST ATTACK
THE HAND RAISED TO HELP YOU STAND
THAT HOVERS AT YOUR BACK
NEXT THE GIRL WHO DOES YOUR HAIR
TALKS LIKE TWO OF YOU ARE THERE.
'SHALL WE' THIS, AND 'SHALL WE' THAT
SLOWLY CLANGS THE BELL OF DOOM
AN OLD GIRL'S IN THE ROOM

SO FIGHT, GIRLS, TO CLIMB THE STAIR
DON'T USE THE LIFT BECAUSE IT'S THERE
DON'T ACT THE COLOUR OF YOUR HAIR
ACT THE COLOUR OF YOUR HEART.

DON'T MAKE THE GREAT MISTAKE
BELIEVING THE NUMBERS ON YOUR CAKE
CUT DOWN THE FOOLS WHO BID YOU DO
WHAT AGE EXPECTS OF YOU

**ANNIE**

*(Puts her hand up.)*
Mrs. Raistrick what I –

**JESSIE**

*(Gently puts Annie's hand down.)*
SOON, FACED WITH HARDER DEEDS
SOME HELPFUL BUGGER INTERCEDES
AND GRADU'LLY YOU LET THEM DO
THINGS THAT ONCE WERE ASKED OF YOU
BUT GOD HELP THE AGED LEARN
TIME ONLY LEAVES A FRICTION BURN
AGE IS A FLESH WOUND ON THE SKIN –
NOT THE HEART, GIRLS, NOT THE HEART

SO DON'T MAKE THE GREAT MISTAKE
BELIEVING THE NUMBERS ON YOUR CAKE
CUT DOWN THE FOOLS WHO BID YOU DO
WHAT AGE EXPECTS.

SO WAKE AND BEWARE THE DAY
WHEN LIFE STARTS ARRIVING ON A TRAY
FACE FATHER TIME AND FOLLOW THROUGH!
FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT! TAKE UP HIS SCYTHE



AND CUT DOWN THE FOOLS WHO BID YOU DO
WHAT AGE EXPECTS OF YOU!

*(She climaxes with an air of Wesleyan zeal, as though the lesson ended up being personal to the teacher. And it has helped her reach a decision.)*

**ANNIE**

Sorry, Jessie. Just to clarify –?

**JESSIE**

No front bottoms.
*(Beat.)*
I'll do your calendar as long as there's no front bottoms. That's a sight I've reserved for only one man in my life.

**ANNIE**

Right. D'you think your husband will mind?

**JESSIE**

Good god, love, it wasn't my husband.

*(The girls fall about, bumping into MARIE who is entering.)*

**CHRIS**

Whoa my god!

**ANNIE**

Marie!

**CHRIS**

Sorry about th–
*('Marie's here'.)*
Girls?

**ANNIE**

You alright Marie? You in to do paperwork?

**CHRIS**

We did warn y'! Never volunteer to be chairman!

**MARIE**

*(Watches them remove chairs.)*
No no no! I'm just - passed Ruth outside the Co-op, asked where she'd been and she told me what you were all doing in here!
*(CHRIS and ANNIE swap looks.)*
Could almost see her thinking 'should I tell her, should I say?' But she can't lie, can she, Ruth? So accommodating. But then isn't everybody round here? This 'gang'. This poor little beaten-down group who've lived their entire life in the tornado path of your great ideas.
*(By now everyone has stopped.)*

**CHRIS**

*(Beat.)*
Sorry?

**MARIE**

Tell me Chris out of interest seriously.. is there part of you that actually believes people might want to spend January looking at you naked behind a malt loaf?

**CHRIS**

Ok look Marie, I know this calendar doesn't fit your image of the W.I./ but -

**MARIE**

But the truth is who cares?

**CHRIS**

- in many ways that's the point.

**MARIE**

Who cares what other people want as long as they get to see 'Chris Harper'!

**CHRIS**

What?

**MARIE**

'Former Miss Yorkshire'!

**CHRIS**

*(Beat, this hurts.)*
I am doing this for John /Clarke-

**MARIE**

Oh at <u>least</u> be honest for once...

**CHRIS**

I am doing this -

**MARIE**

…you are doing this for Chris Harper!

**CHRIS**

And you are doing <u>this</u> because you want a conventional Jerusalem-singing WI / with-

**ANNIE**

Ok/ look-

**MARIE**

We are!

**CHRIS**

-jam-making and willow-weaving and calendars of wet churches -

**ANNIE**

*(Pouring balm.)*
Also John suggested it!



**MARIE**

Did he, Annie? Or is he just being used to justify it?

**CORA**

Y' know I could <u>kill</u> a drink!

**MARIE**

And look who am I to wade in here, why should I care if you try to attach the name of the Women's Institute'?! I mean I'll have to tell National Conference of course, that's my duty as chair -

*(She turns to head out.)*

**CORA**

*('What does she mean'?)*
What?

**JESSIE**

Marie why don't we all sit down -

**MARIE**

-but actually it's not the damage it'd do to the reputation of the WI. Or the reputation of-
*(Gestures CORA, JESSIE…)*
-a single mother, or a respected teacher or a -
*(Reaches CELIA...)*
..or <u>any</u> of that -

**CELIA**

*(sv at not making the list.)*
Cheers.

**MARIE**

It's your child.

**CHRIS**

I'm sorry?

**MARIE**

The damage to him –

**CHRIS**

Steady-y –

**ANNIE**

Is this 'my child' who's head boy?

**MARIE**

The damage / to his –

**CHRIS**

Of a school where your child's on detention for bringing in alcohol?

**MARIE**

*(Swallows poison, rears up.)*
If you feel your duty is to strip off behind a malt loaf you knock yourself out Chris, but please appreciate mine is to protect an Institute I love.

**CHRIS**

*(Mock-salutes.)*
Absolutely and you do that, Marie!

*(She sings A capella at MARIE as MARIE leaves.)*

**CHRIS**
AND DID THOSE FEET IN ANCIENT TIME-

**ANNIE**
OK everyone I think we'd better -

**CORA**
Pub. Let's –

**CELIA**
Yeah. Christ –

*(All leave, shepherded by ANNIE.)*

**Scene 3 – Flower Shop**

**ROD** (OFF)
CHRIS!

**CHRIS**

*(A capella)*
-WALK UPON ENGLAND'S MOUNTAINS GREEN
AND WAS THE HOLY LAMB OF –
God so help me Rod you have no idea what Marie just said to m -

**ROD**
Later, eh? Got a bit of an issue on our hands...

**CHRIS**
What?

*(DANNY reels in, pissed, in school uniform.)*

**DANNY**
Helloo!

**CHRIS**
What's - ? Where's his blazer? Where's his head boy blazer?



**ROD**
Probably on the new head boy.

*(This meant so much to CHRIS.)*

**DANNY**
Do you wanna know something? Brilliant thing. Br-rilliant little -

**ROD**
Danny -

**DANNY**
No, serious.

**CHRIS**

*(sv)*
Where's your blazer?

**DANNY**
You get a little sambuca. And you light the top an' drink it. And this a-mazing thing happens!
*(Beat.)*
Double physics goes dead fucking quick!

*(CHRIS goes to slap him, the first time she's ever raised a hand to her son. ROD intercedes.)*

**ROD**
Whoa!

**DANNY**
WoHOOOO!

**CHRIS**
Sorry, I'm sorry I didn't mean-

*(As if from a tiger.)*
...no no fair enough. Fair do's. 'Cause I did something bad.

**ROD**
Come with me…

Really bad things.

**MUSIC 18: DRUNKEN DANNY**

**DANNY**
I DANCED ON TABLES IN A CHINESE REST-
Oh no, that was you, wasn't it.

**CHRIS**

*(Beat.)*
What?

**DANNY**
I CHEATED AT THE SPRING FETE 'CAUSE I BOUGHT A C-

Oh no, that was you an' all wasn't it!

**ROD**

Come on sunshine / let's-

**DANNY**

I CLIMBED ON TOP OF KNAPELY FELL
AND GOT MY TITS OUT SHOUTING BLOODY
HELLO YORKSHIRE I AM PROBABLY NOT A VIRGIN -

**ROD**

Go to your room mate!

*(DANNY eyeballs them, or tries to.)*

**DANNY**

BUT WE'RE PROUD, OH SO PROUD OF OUR DANIEL!

*(He goes. ROD pours a little calm.)*

**ROD**

It'll be this girl. This 'Jenny.' Trying to impress her. It's his first time really, isn't it?

*(ROD goes after DANNY. CHRIS stays, reeling. The world turns around her…*

**Scene 4 – Annie's Garden**

*…to ANNIE backing out with John's customised wooden wheelbarrow, tending seedlings in the place he once did.)*

**ANNIE**

*(To the seedlings.)*
OK, fellas. I've done my bit. Over to y- OH MY GOD! How long have you been there?
*(CHRIS doesn't answer.)*
Actually 's good y'came 'cause I've been thinking about all that... Marie, yeah? Trying to throw a spanner in at National Conference, which we can't let her, ok, 'cause we have to get the WI to agree, 'cause it all only works if it's a 'W.I. calendar'. SO! What about this?! / We go -

**CHRIS**

I can't.

**ANNIE**

You haven't heard the suggestion yet! You an' me go to London /and -

**CHRIS**

The calendar. The whole... idea.



**ANNIE**

Hold the faith, Chris! It's your first ever not-stupid idea! Unlike the vodka-tasting night this might actually work!

**CHRIS**

*(Smiles.)*
Yeah well just 'cause something 'works' doesn't mean it's right to do it / and -

**ANNIE**

Not 'right'?!

**CHRIS**

Annie -
I know -
I just -

**ANNIE**

It's a settee!
A bit of comfort to people in-
-the darkest hours and I know you know this as well, so I'm now playing the 'forty years of friendship' card -

**CHRIS**

Danny's going off the rails. At school.

**ANNIE**

Because of this girl?

**CHRIS**

Because of 'a' girl, yeah.
*(Beat.)*
An' I think y'r looking at her.

*(Beat. The ramifications hit ANNIE.)*

**ANNIE**

I can't do this on my own.

**CHRIS**

An' I mean a settee isn't that expensive. We could just have a raffle / or a -

**ANNIE**

Oh a raffle's what they'd do at High Ghyll W.I.! Craven W.I.! Our WI had John Clarke in it!

**CHRIS**

Plus -

**ANNIE**

Chris Harper, former Miss Yorkshire.

**CHRIS**

Precisely. Like Marie says, maybe charity's wrong if part of you's doing it for your own benefit.

**ANNIE**

*(Dead sure.)*
Doesn't matter.

**CHRIS**

Plus you don't need this now.

**ANNIE**

We all -

**CHRIS**

You need time to grieve and -

**ANNIE**

We all benefit and don't tell me how I need to grieve, Chris 'cause this is it. It's happening now. It's Wednesday. I'm grieving.

**CHRIS**

Also John / wouldn't -

**ANNIE**

No no-

**CHRIS**

-wouldn't've wanted you to be going off to-

**ANNIE**

Do not even - don't go near that name as justification for backing out.

**CHRIS**

I want to sort my son out, is that OK?

*(Pause.)*

**ANNIE**

'Course.

**CHRIS**

*(Beat.)*
Right.

*(On this oddest of moments in a 40 year friendship, CHRIS leaves.)*

**MUSIC 19: KILIMANJARO**

**ANNIE**

CLARKEY, ARE YOU GETTING THAT?
SORRY, MATE. THAT THING YOU WENT AND STARTED?



SOUNDS LIKE IT WON'T GET DONE
SO ON THE ONE HAND - NO SETTEE. BUT ON THE OTHER
WORLD GETS SPARED THE SIGHT OF ME BEHIND A CURRANT BUN

*(Beat.)*

'CAUSE GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN IS - THERE ARE 'CHRIS-ES', AND THERE'S 'ANNIES'.
IN THIS LIFE YOU'RE BORN POSSESSING WHAT IT TAKES
TO GET PEOPLE GOING, OR GET PEOPLE CAKES
SEE NOW'S THE KIND OF TIME TO DO TIBET
AND I'D LOVE TO BE A GIRL WHO DOES TIBET. BUT I'M NOT...
AND YET… AND YET…

TAKE A THREE PIECE SUIT A MAN YOU LOVED ONCE WORE
TAKE IT IN A BAG TO OXFAM, THEN WALK OUT THE DOOR
TAKE A PAIR OF SHOES THAT DANCED LAST NEW YEAR'S EVE
HAND THEM TO A GRATEFUL STRANGER, TURN AROUND AND LEAVE

THEN GO AND BUY A BACON JOINT TO HAVE FOR TEA
CONVINCE YOURSELF THERE'S STILL SOME POINT IN HAVING TEA
MAKE IT THROUGH THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES. ENDLESSLY...

AND YOU KNOW WHAT? THERE IS NOTHING, THERE IS NOTHING IN NEPAL
MORE SCARY THAN THE STEP UP FROM THE KITCHEN TO THE HALL
THERE'S NO MOUNT KILIMANJARO YOU CAN SHOW ME THAT COMPARES
TO CLIMBING SOLO WITH SOME COCOA UP A FLIGHT OF STAIRS

YEAH, GO BATTLE WITH PIRANHAS IN THE JUNGLES OF PERU
OR HARDER - COOK A MEAL FOR ONE YOU USED TO COOK FOR TWO
YOU CAN WALK THE KALAHARI WITH STILETTOS ON YOUR FEET.
OR HARDER, TAKE A BUS TO TOWN AND SIT DOWN N-
*(Beat, rallies.)*
-NEXT TO AN EMPTY SEAT

AND IF 'THE GIRL WHO ONLY MAKES THE CAKES' CAN COPE
WITH GETTING WEDDING RINGS BACK IN AN ENVELOPE
A DAY WILL COME TO SAY 'OK THE SUN HAS SET'

BUT IT ISN'T YET
IT ISN'T YET
IT IS NOT YET

*(She goes, the lesson taught.)*

**Scene 5 – Flower Shop**

*(CHRIS appears with flowers to wrangle.)*

**CHRIS**

*(Calls.)*
Rod? Ro-d?

*(ROD appears behind her with a mug, leans on something and watches her.*

*Unaware of him as yet, calls.)*
Dutch lorry's been.

**MUSIC 19A: DON'T GO OUT WITH CHRISTINE BUTLER**

*(Half-heartedly sorts flowers.)*
Didn't order enough gypsophila. Or gerberas.

*(She notices him finally.)*

D'y hear what I said? Don't stand like a lettuce.

**ROD**

'DON'T GO OUT WITH CHRISTINE BUTLER'
THAT'S WHAT MY MUM SAID -

**CHRIS**

*(Tending flowers.)*
What your mother said was 'that girl's got a name for herself.'

**ROD**

'SHE'S GOT A REPUTATION.'

**CHRIS**

*(Mutters to herself.)*
As she sat stirring her cauldron.

**ROD**

'ROD, GO OUT WITH CHRISTINE BUTLER'
THAT'S WHAT JOHN CLARK SAID
'- IF YOU PULL MATE
LIFE WILL NOT BE DULL, MATE'
SO I ASK FOR A DATE

SHE SAYS SHE'S 'BRINGING A FRIEND.'
JOHN SAYS 'TELL HER THAT'S FINE
TELL HER YOU'LL BRING A MATE AND I'LL COME!
JUST DON'T CANCEL!'
AND IN THE END, EGGED ON BY CLARKE-Y
AND A PINT OF WHAT THEY SAID WAS SAKE
SHE'S UP ON THE TABLE-



**CHRIS**

Yeah Rod an' we all know what happened next. I dragged Annie up t'dance an' the table collapsed an' right now I don't need reminding, so/ just -

**ROD**

What 'happened' was John ended up asking his future wife to the cinema.
*(Beat.)*
Our married life has been a series of bad ideas. 'Let's dance on a table.' 'Let's open a flower shop.' 'You can't get pregnant after a curry.' Not one of 'em hasn't worked out.
*(Takes the flowers off her.)*
Your son needs to learn that life is all about coping fabulously with terrible mistakes. And while he learns, I'm not having him change my wife.
*(Beat.)*
I didn't marry you for an easy path, Chris Harper. I married you for crazy paving.

*(He kisses her and goes.)*

**TANNOY**

Thank you ladies and welcome to the afternoon session of the Women's Institute National Conference.

*(A spotlight falls.)*

**Scene 6 – Conference Hall**

**TANNOY**

Would all remaining members take their seats.

*(MARIE leads JENNY on.)*

**MARIE**

Here we go, just follow me. Mind that step. C2, C3. Ah, this is good. Good view isn't it. You can see the whole conference!

**JENNY**

Great. When it starts I might run down the front and join the mosh pit.

**MARIE**

The what?

**JENNY**

Never mind.

*(CELIA, CORA and JESSIE watch from a position of safety.)*

**TANNOY**

The main speeches start at three pm, as per your programme.

**MARIE**

*(Holds up programme.)*
That's me! Look!

**TANNOY**

But first we have the emergency motions for general voting. Firstly the delegate from Knapely W.I. in Yorkshire.

**MARIE**

*(Rising.)*
Oh no heaven's sake that's - they've got that mixed up. I need to get - How do I tell / them -?

**JENNY**

*(Pulls her down.)*
Mum?

*(JENNY has seen ANNIE walk into the spotlight. A timer light pings to 'green' to start.)*

**ANNIE**

Ladies. I've come today to ask..explain...I want to do a calendar. Make one. To raise money for a settee. In a hospital. Skipton general. Which is where John...my John...

*(The light pings 'amber'. The name and the amber conspire to ignite a memory.)*

**CORA**

Keep going love...

**MUSIC 19B: SCARBOROUGH (REPRISE)**

**ANNIE**

…BREAKS INTO A RUN PAST THE CHARITY SHOP

**JESSIE**

Keep going-g…

**ANNIE**

THE LIGHT'S GONE TO AMBER
THE TRAFFIC IS STARTING TO STOP

**CELIA**

Annie-e…

**ANNIE**

JUMPS BACK IN AND WE SAIL AWAY
*(There is a pause. Light pings red.)*



**TANNOY**

Well I'm sure we all wish the delegate from Knapely the best with her settee. Moving on –

*(A warrior-like CHRIS storms out of nowhere!)*

**CHRIS**

Hold on! Hold on a minute with your bloody buzzer!

**MARIE**

Oh no no no no...!

**CELIA,** CORA & JESSIE
*(Variously.)*
Oh my god/what the hell -?/Where's she come from - ?

**CHRIS**

The other delegate from Knapely's here and about to commit heresy. I hate plum jam.

**MARIE**

*(As though shot.)*
Oh for god's sake -

**CHRIS**

I only joined W.I. to try an' make my mother in law happy. I'm crap at cakes, I hate knitting and in fact there seems very little reason for me to stay in the W.I. Except..

**ANNIE**

We want to raise money in memory of a man who...

**CHRIS**

...we loved. Everyone at our W.I loved. And to do that -

**ANNIE**

...instead of a conventional calendar

**CHRIS**

Yes -

**MARIE**

No...

**CHRIS**

We want to do an alternative one.

**MARIE**

No-o...

**ANNIE**

And by 'alternative' we mean 'nude'.

**MARIE**
That's it. I've got to get them off. Come with / me –

**JENNY**
*(Suddenly firm.)*
Mum. Stay.

*(MARIE leaves. JENNY remains.)*

**CHRIS**
And if you guys don't agree then we're going to do it without the approval of this convention because frankly… frankly...

**ANNIE**
Some things are bigger than conventional approval.

**CHRIS**
Yes! And frankly guys, if anything meant we'd get that much closer to killing off this shitty, cheating, sly, conniving, silent bloody disease that cancer is then God, I tell y'. I would run naked round Skipton market, smeared in plum jam with a knitted tea cosy on my head singing 'Jerusalem'.

**ANNIE**
*(sv)*
Hello you.

**MUSIC 20: DARE (CONFERENCE)**

*(ANNIE turns to go but CHRIS holds back.)*

**CHRIS**
*(Turns out.)*
Miss October.

**ANNIE**
*(Beat, copies.)*
Miss February.

*(Up steps JESSIE. She walks to the front and takes ANNIE's hand.)*

**JESSIE**
Miss January.

**CORA**
*(sv)*
Oh for god's sake...
*(Caves, joins the line.)*
Miss September.



*(CELIA can't not cave too.)*

**CELIA**
Miss July.
*(Beat.)*
And August.

**CHRIS**
THERE ARE COASTLINES IN THE HEART
YOU WON'T REACH IF YOU DON'T START
SET A COURSE FOR OFF THE CHART

**+** ANNIE
AND KEEP SAILING. IF YOU DARE

**GIRLS** GROUP 1
JUST FOR ONCE DON'T STOP AND STARE-

**GIRLS** GROUP 2
SPREAD YOUR WINGS AND TRUST THE AIR-

**GIRLS** GROUP 1
IF YOU THINK THE ICE LOOKS THIN

**GIRLS** (MINUS CHRIS & **ANNIE)**
RUN FASTER IF YOU DARE

| **GIRLS** & JE**NNY** | **CHRIS** & ANNIE |
|---|---|
| TAKE A LEAP | DARE |
| AND LEAVE THE GROUND | LEAVE THE GROUND- |
| TAKE A SECOND AND LOOK DOWN | |

**ALL**
SEE A THOUSAND ARMS ARE THERE
IF YOU DARE!

**MUSIC 20A: JENNY'S INSPIRED**

*(They exit. When the girls have left JENNY steps into the place where they were like a fan taking the stage after a concert. In her heart she feels a little of what it must have felt to be there.)*

**JENNY**
Spread your wings and trust the air.

*(Somewhere in that heart, a decision is being made. She leaves.)*

## MUSIC 21: MY RUSSIAN FRIEND AND I

**Scene 7 – Ruth's House**

*(RUTH sits in a pinny which, like her hands and forearms, is dusted in flour. She has some on her cheek. She nurses a water glass.)*

**RUTH**

THE LOVER A GIRL NEEDS TO GET IN HER LIFE
IS ONE WHO WILL LET HER FORGET SHE'S A WIFE
HE'LL FILL HER WITH DREAMS, AND THE COURAGE OF QUEENS
SHOW HER WHAT IT MEANS TO FLY
HE WON'T NEED TO HEAR YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU'VE CRIED
SHOWS YOU COMPASSION, BUT KNOWS THAT YOU'VE LIED
STAYS WITH YOU THROUGH ALL THE LONELIEST HOURS
AND IS GONE WHEN MORNING COMES
BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL MAKE IT 'TIL MORNING

*(She reveals a vodka bottle.)*

OH MY RUSSIAN FRIEND AND I
WE TAKE LIFE IN OUR STRIDE
NO FIGHT I CAN'T FIGHT IF I FEEL HIM BY MY SIDE
SUCH FIRE IN HIS KISS
SUCH SILENCE IN HIS STARE
MAKES YOU FEEL THE DROP BENEATH THE TIGHTROPE ISN'T THERE
WITH HIM I'M INVINCIBLE! WITH HIM I'M STRONG
WITH HIM I FEEL GUILT, BUT NOT A GUILT THAT'S WRONG
MY RUSSIAN FRIEND AND I
MY ONE SHOT IN THE DARK. MY LONE ALIBI.

ALL THE SUSPICIONS AND ALL OF THE FEARS
MAKE EV'RY NIGHT LAST A COUPLE OF YEARS
THE ONE EMPTY CHAIR AND THE UNTRODDEN STAIR
TELL YOU LOVE'S ELSEWHERE TONIGHT
SO YOU TAKE THE COMFORT OF STRANGERS

OH MY RUSSIAN FRIEND AND I
WE TAKE LIFE IN OUR STRIDE
SUNDANCE IF HE'S BUTCH, I'LL BE BONNIE IF HE'S CLYDE
SO WHEN THE FIGHTING STARTS, THE TOUGHEST BLOWS BEGIN
THOSE THAT STRIKE THE HEART BUT DON'T SHOW UPON THE SKIN-
I AM TOO INVINCIBLE TO GIVE A DAMN!
*(Beat)*
OR MAYBE LESS AWARE HOW 'VINCIBLE' I AM...
MY RUSSIAN FRIEND AND I
DEFENDER, CRUSH AND SPY…
*(Beat.)*
Here's mud in y'r eye.



*(She drinks and goes, as up through the gate comes ROD with cut flower boxes bound for recycling.)*

**ROD**

*(A capella)*
ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE.
*(ROD sees an angry schoolkid texting, DANNY.)*
JANUARY FEBRUARY APRIL MAY SEPTEMBER AND-

Here he is! Love's young dream! Whas' the matter? Thought y'were goin' up the hill with little Miss Sambuca?

**DANNY**

She's not there.

**ROD**

Oh. Right. Where's she gone instead? Off with her mates? Out clubbing? Drag racing cars down the A56?

**DANNY**

She's joined the W I.

*(DANNY references the phone where this message has just come in. ROD takes a beat, then pisses himself laughing.*

*Loudly, over)*
Which is fine, y'know? It jus'- proves she obviously in't the right girl for me.

**ROD**

No, what it 'proves' my son is she is exactly the kind of girl for you. She's doing stuff y' don't expect. Keeping y' on y'r toes. And them's the kind of girls you want mate. An' us fellas only get lucky enough to keep 'em by meeting 'em half way.
*(Hand on shoulder.)*
Surprise 'em back. Do stuff they wouldn't expect.
*(Pats his back, leaves casually.)*

Who wants a girl who wants a guy who wants a silent night?
*(Anticipatory underscore starts as DANNY absorbs this.)*

## MUSIC 21A: TO THE VILLAGE HALL

**Scene 8 – Village** Hall

*(In creep CHRIS and ANNIE in dressing gowns.)*

**ANNIE**

This is it, Chris. We're in the hall, but the door's not locked. This is our last chance to back out.

**CHRIS**

*(Not believing it a second.)*
It'll be fine. It'll all be..
*(Nods at light.)*
Let's help Lawrence bring in the lights / and –

**JENNY**

Watch out a sec.

*(JENNY enters with the light, to CHRIS and ANNIE's immense surprise.)*

**CHRIS**

Hold...just...whoa whoa whoa hold on / a sec -

**ANNIE**

Jenny? What are you doing here?

**JENNY**

Did I need to fill somethin' in to join?

**ANNIE**

What?

**CHRIS**

No hold on, sorry. She's not 'joinin'. This is your mother in't it, put you up t' this?

**JENNY**

'Me mother'?! Me mother thinks I'm upstairs revisin'. Hey an' don't tell her I helped y' make this calendar, will y'? I wanna be the one who does that.

**ANNIE**

'Helped / make - '?

**CHRIS**

Look Jenny, y're not fooling anyone love, ok? Girls like you don't join the W.I.

**JENNY**

*(Beat)*
Yes they do. You did.

**MUSIC 22: FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY**

*(She resumes loading in as CHRIS and ANNIE look at each other, JESSIE and CORA enter in dressing gowns.)*

**CORA**

Oh my god. There's lamps. It's happening.



**CHRIS**

GIRLS LIKE ME CAN GET A REPUTATION

**CELIA**

*(Entering.)*
Beautiful people arriving, watch out.

**CHRIS**

ALL THROUGH RUMOUR AND EXAGGERATION

*(JENNY passes them all.)*

**JENNY**

Evenin' everybody!

**CHRIS**

TIME GOES BY, WE GRADUALLY LOSE TRACE

**JESSIE**

*(to ANNIE)*
Was that - ?

**ANNIE**

'She's helping out.'

**CHRIS**

WHO THE 'GIRL LIKE ME' WAS IN THE FIRST PLACE

**CORA**

Interesting.

*(JENNY arranges photo screens)*

**CHRIS**

BUT THEN SUDDENLY OUT OF THE BLUE

**JENNY**

*(Hands them out.)*
There we go…

**CHRIS**

THERE'S A GIRL IN THE ROOM WHO LOOKS NEW

**JENNY**

Ok…

**ANNIE**
AND ALSO A LITTLE LIKE A ‘FORMER MISS YOU’ TONIGHT

*(JENNY goes out as the MISS WILSONS enter.)*

**MISS** WILSON **TEA**
Tea?

**MISS** WILSON **COFFEE**
Coffee?

**CELIA**
*(Produces JOHN’s flagon.)*
Liquid Yorkshire?

**GIRLS (VARIOUSLY)**
Oh yes./Thank god...

**CHRIS**
AND CAN YORKSHIRE FLOWERS

**CELIA**
*(Hands out vodka glasses.)*
Not Jess.

**CHRIS**
FIND THE LIGHT

**CELIA**
I know you don’t normally drink.

**CHRIS**
IN THE DARKEST HOURS

**JESSIE**
Hey.

**CHRIS**
OF THE NIGHT

**JESSIE**
*(Grabs a glass.)*
I don’t ‘normally’ do anything I’m gonna do tonight.

**CHRIS**
THERE’S A NEW GIRL SUDDENLY IN THE ROOM STARING AT THE THINGS THAT SHE SHOULDN’T DO AND
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY



**CELIA**
Cheers.

**CHRIS**
THAT GIRL’S YOU.

*(They all knock one back as...)*

**LAWRENCE**
Ladies?

*(All tighten gowns. Man in the room.)*

**CHRIS**
Lawrence.

*(LAWRENCE holds up some straws to pick.)*

**LAWRENCE**
Pick a straw. I’m not choosing anything after last time.

*(They hesitate...then all pull. CELIA’s is short.)*

**CELIA**
Oh my GOD-D.

**GIRLS** **LAWRENCE**
*(Calls)*
Miss July! July it is!

**CELIA**
No no no!

**JESSIE**
We’re all here for you my love!

**CORA**
LADIES OF THE WI!
HERE’S OUR GIRL WHO’S HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE

**CELIA**
Shut up, Cora. Just/ hold on –

**LAWRENCE**
Home baking!

**CORA**
ON DISPLAY BEHIND A LITTLE ICED BUN.

*(JENNY pushes forward a WI CATERING TROLLY on wheels, under a sheet.)*

**CELIA**
No men in the room! You did say! Chris?

**JENNY**
Cake trolly!

**CORA**
RECENTLY SHE'S HAD SOME RESTORATION

**CELIA**
I told you all that in confidence.

**LAWRENCE**
Trolley round!

**CORA**
THIS JULY SHE'S OPEN TO THE NATION

**CELIA**
Ahahaha yeah it's so funny when it's not you, isn't it?

*(JENNY whips the sheet off a Babylon of cakes.)*

**CHRIS**
IN A GALLEON OF CAKE YOU NOW STAND

**ANNIE**
ON THE SHORE OF A NEW-FOUND LAND

**LAWRENCE**
Places?

**JESSIE**
*(Pats her back.)*
BUT THE FIRST STEP ON THE SAND IS YOURS ALONE

**CELIA**
Cheers, really.

*(CELIA prepares her hair vigorously.)*

**ANNIE**
AND CAN YORKSHIRE FLOWERS FIND THE LIGHT

**LAWRENCE**
Ok.



**GIRLS**
IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE NIGHT?

**LAWRENCE**
I'll leave y' to it.

**GIRLS**
THERE'S A NEW GIRL SUDDENLY IN THE ROOM STARING
AT THE THINGS THAT SHE SHOULDN'T DO
AND FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

**CHRIS**
*(Nods to ANNIE.)*
Go.

**GIRLS**
THAT GIRL'S YOU!

**CORA**
*(Seeing CELIA's front as she's prepping.)*
Good god.

*(She nods CHRIS surreptitiously to sneak a look.)*

**CHRIS**
*(Calls off.)*
Lawrence. We're going to need considerably bigger buns.

*(CELIA grabs two buns to mask her modesty like patisserie headlamps. Music continues.)*

**JESSIE**
No no no no.

**CORA**
Don't do that!

**CELIA**
If they're up they cover more!

*(LAWRENCE bursts in. They all SHRIEK and move to cover CELIA.)*

**LAWRENCE**
Don't - touch - the buns.

*(He retreats.)*

**JESSIE**
Don't - touch - the buns

**ANNIE**

*(To CELIA.)*
Bad girl.

**CORA**

Bun-toucher.

**LAWRENCE** (OFF)

The smile needs to be enigmatic.

*(CELIA tries 'enigmatic'.)*

**JESSIE**

It looks like she's got pelvic floor trouble.

**ANNIE**

*(Calls.)*
How d'y mean, 'enigmatic'?

**LAWRENCE (OFF)**

Left side of the mouth a little up.
*(CELIA tries this.)*
Right side possibly slightly down.
*(CELIA tries this.)*
The central area kind of –

**CELIA**

Oh for God's sake get him in here.

**CHRIS**

Lawrence!

*(LAWRENCE commands the shot matter of fact.)*

**LAWRENCE**

Right. Buns there.
*(Directs the screens)*
Reflector round.
*(Looks at CELIA.)*
What's your husband gonna say when he sees this?

**CELIA**

*(Half-smiles.)*
I don't know.

*(FLASH of a camera!)*



**LAWRENCE**

That - was 'enigmatic!'

*(Cheers from the girls!)*

**GIRLS**

AND CAN YORKSHIRE FLOWERS FIND THE LIGHT

**LAWRENCE**

'September'!

**GIRLS**

IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE NIGHT

**LAWRENCE**

You looked beautiful, Celia.

*(JENNY helps set the piano.)*

**GIRLS**

THERE'S A NEW GIRL SUDDENLY IN THE ROOM STARING AT THE THINGS THAT SHE SHOULDN'T DO AND FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

**LAWRENCE**

Cora?

**CHRIS & ANNIE**

THAT GIRL'S YOU!

**CORA**

Oh holy f-
FATHER SO COMPASSIONATE AND TRUE NOW

**LAWRENCE**

Let's really go for this, Cora.

**JENNY**

Reflectors..?

**CORA**

FORGIVE THIS GIRL FOR WHAT SHE'S GONNA DO NOW!

**LAWRENCE**

There we go. Little more round…

**CHRIS**

AS HER DAY OF JUDGEMENT IS APPEARING

**LAWRENCE**
Loads of attitude, Cora.

**CELIA**
SHE'LL PERFORM THE 'AIR WITHOUT A G-STRING'

**JESSIE**
Make sure your fingers are on the right notes for Jerusalem.

**CORA**
I shall be a bit insulted if they're looking at my fingers, Jess.

*(She preps, then disrobes. She looks in pain.)*

**LAWRENCE**
Give it a bit of emotion, Cora!

**CORA**
*(Pained, gritted teeth.)*
I am.

**LAWRENCE**
Well don't! Think about - I dunno, try to imagine -

**CELIA**
*(Steps in.)*
JUST REMEMBER THAT HIGH A-FLAT
YOU ACHIEVED ONLY ONCE -

**CORA**
When was that?

**CELIA**
That night round the back of Morrisons.

**CORA**
Will you shut up-!

*(This attitude warrants the flash!)*

**LAWRENCE**
That's it!

**CELIA**
*(Bows.)*
I thank you!

**GIRLS**
AND CAN YORKSHIRE FLOWERS



**LAWRENCE**
Move the piano.

**GIRLS**
FIND THE LIGHT

**LAWRENCE**
Set up January.

**GIRLS**
IN THE DARKEST HOURS

**JENNY**
Coming up!

**GIRLS**
OF THE NIGHT

**LAWRENCE**
January!

**CORA**
THERE'S A NEW GIRL SUDDENLY CONTEMPLATING THINGS
HER REPUTATION WOULDN'T DO

**GIRLS**
AND FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

**JENNY**
'Jessie'.

**LAWRENCE**
THAT'S FOR YOU

*(LAWRENCE hands JESSIE two balls of wool on knitting needles. She has a go at all configurations, but it's hard to imagine how these are going to cover all areas.)*

**JESSIE**
Excuse me? What am I supposed to do with this?

**JENNY**
*(Calls.)*
Knitting incoming!

*(JENNY has the other props for JESSIE, to JESSIE's intense relief.)*

**CORA**
ALL STAND PLEASE 'TIL YOUR TEACHER IS SITTING!

**JESSIE**

'Seated'.

**CORA**

Sorry, Miss Raistrick.

**CELIA**

WHAT'S GOING ON UNDERNEATH ALL HER KNITTING?

**JESSIE**

See me afterwards.

**ANNIE**

THE ONE THING FOR SURE YOUR HEADMISTRESS KNOWS IS…

**JESSIE**

Keep it up, keep it up!

**CHRIS**

THE MORE THAT SHE KNITS, THE LESS SHE EXPOSES

**LAWRENCE**

Don't worry Jessie, you'll be fine.

**JESSIE**

You know what's marvellous is he still hasn't realised.

**ANNIE**

Sorry?

**JESSIE**

So, young Lawrence Sugden! You clearly don't recognise your old school teacher.

*(JESSIE is revealed naked behind a full length piece of knitting.)*

How about now?

**LAWRENCE**

Oh my god.

*(FLASH!)*

**JENNY**

Miss February!

*(CHRIS covers ANNIE's eyes as JENNY wheels in John's customised wooden wheelbarrow which has been turned into a small English country garden of flowers. CHRIS presents her with the prop like a child with a present. The beauty of it, and it being John's, catches ANNIE slightly off guard. They hug.)*



**LAWRENCE**

Just...reflector round...bit higher...there…stop!

**ANNIE**

Clarkey are you seeing this?

*(She steps into the shot.)*

**LAWRENCE**

OK Annie. When you're ready, water the harebell.

**ANNIE**

No, Lawrence.
*(Starts to water it.)*
Campanula rotundifolia.

*(FLASH!)*

**GIRLS**

AND CAN YORKSHIRE FLOWERS FIND THE LIGHT

**JENNY**

Guys?

**GIRLS**

IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE NIGHT

*(JENNY returns with news.)*

**JENNY**

Miss Wilson and Miss Wilson want to know if y'r ready for tea and coffee?

**CELIA**

I think I'm ready for another vodka.

**ANNIE**

No we'd ought t' - y'know, seeing they've come to support.

**JENNY**

*(Calls off.)*
Yes please!

**ANNIE**

I'll take an order. Teas? Coffees?

*(Takes hand count, turns.)*
Ladies, that's three teas, two coff-ARGH!

*(THE MISS WILSONS offer predictable drinks but unpredictably naked.)*

**ALL GIRLS**
*(Variously.)*
Lawrence!

**LAWRENCE**
I'm there!

**MISS WILSONS**
HALLELUJAH!

*(FLASH! They gracefully withdraw with JENNY's help.)*

**LAWRENCE**
October!

**GIRLS**
October!

**CHRIS**
Oct-oh god that's me! I haven't got me props! Lawrence wait on a minute!

**JENNY**
*(Entering another way.)*
I can't find the props for October! Has anyone seen - ?

*(DANNY enters with a prop trophy, on a mission, having taken a deep breath.)*

**DANNY**
October props comin' in.

**ANNIE**
Danny?

**JENNY**
What are you doing here?

**DANNY**
Yeahhh! Right y'see? Yeah. Bet you weren't expecting that.
*(Kisses mum.)*
Or that.
*(Looks round, loses bottle.)*
Soanywaybestofluck.



*(He hot foots it out.)*

**JENNY**
*(Leaving after DANNY.)*
Danny? Danny?

**LAWRENCE**
Hey. Miss October? Are you ready?

**CHRIS**
*(Beat.)*
I am now!
AND LET ME -
*(CHRIS, high on the narcotic of reconciliation, poses wrapped in bunting holding a trophy)*
RISE!

*(FLASH! In fact several!)*

**ANNIE**
Go Miss October!

**CHRIS**
MRS CONVENTIONAL, SORRY BUT SOMETIMES A LITTLE ATTENTION IS FUN!
LET ME SURPRISE!

**CHRIS & GIRLS**
*(As the girls re-robe her.)*
MRS TRADITIONAL,
SORRY NOT ALL OF US
WANT TO KEEP HIDDEN
AWAY FROM DISPLAY -

**CELIA**
That'll do

**CORA**
Put it away, Chris

**LAWRENCE**
November!

**JESSIE**
Jam Making!

**LAWRENCE**
Jam table coming in! Jenny…?

*(A table groaning with fruit, pans and a ladle emerges.)*

**CELIA**
Oh hey hold on a minute! Talking of 'Mrs Traditional' - !

**JESSIE**
Did you not tell him?

**ANNIE**
Oh my god. 'November.' I totally forgot.

**CELIA**
Lawrence there isn't a November!

**ANNIE**
I'm so sorry. It was going to be Ruth, but in the end she said she just couldn't go through-

*(In comes RUTH, knocking stuff off piano in a coat and clearly unsteady.)*

**RUTH**
I'VE HAD LOTS OF RUSSIAN FRIENDS

**JESSIE**
What's that supposed to mean?

**CORA**
Stand back. We're in uncharted territory.

*(She advances round the room, greeting each.)*

**RUTH**
HELLO. HELLO. HELLO. HELLO.
HELLO. MISS JULY IS IN TH-

**ALL** GIRLS (VARIOUSLY)
November.

**RUTH**
MISS NOVEMBER'S IN THE ROOM
AND SHE IS COOKING, COOKING, COOKING!

**CELIA**
*(Directs her)*
THIS WAY!

**RUTH**
'THAT WAY.' 'CAUSE SHE'S -
*(Seeing LAWRENCE, melts.)*
OH HELLO. HE'S NICE. HI, LIAM.

**ANNIE**
LAWRENCE

**RUTH**
MISS JUL-EMBER'S HERE AND READY FOR HER CLOSE UP...



*(She goes to take her coat off in front of LAWRENCE. Girls leap to stop this.)*

**ALL** (VARIOUSLY)
NO!/RUTH/STOP!/AARGH!

**RUTH**
AND I KNOW. AND I KNOW I CAN DO THIS!

**CORA**
Behind the table!

*(They steer her towards the table.)*

**RUTH**
I CAN DO-

**JESSIE**
*(Demonstrates the pose.)*
Like this!

**RUTH**
DOOBY DOO

**CELIA**
Like that!

**RUTH**
WHOOP DI DO THIS!

**ANNIE**
Stand behind the table!

**RUTH**
AND IT'S NOT THE RUSSIAN -
*('Sees' CORA, melts:)*
Hello, darling!

**CORA**
Hello, Ruth!

**RUTH**
NOT ME RUSSIAN -
*(Some fruit is thrown over.)*
Wahey!

**CHRIS**
Catch it!

**RUTH**
RUSSIAN FRIEND WHO MADE ME DO IT, IT'S WAHEY!

**ANNIE**
Stand up!

**RUTH**
IT'S FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY I'VE DE-
*(Sees CELIA, melts.)*
Hello, darling!

**CELIA**
*(Trying not to laugh.)*
Hello, Ruth!

**RUTH**
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY I'VE DECIDED…
*(Sings into wooden spoon.)*
LET'S WALK ON THE WILD SIDE…

**ALL** GIRLS
Ruth! Stand up!

**RUTH**
SO HERE WE ARE AND HERE'S THE SHOW!
I'M STANDING UP!
AM I? NO. I'M

**ALL** GIRLS
Pull her up!

**RUTH**
PULL ME UP!
GET SET AND GO AND…
*(ANNIE pulls RUTH up, but sadly only the coat makes it, leaving RUTH nude in fruit, hiding her modesty with a spoon.)*

…I did it!

*(FLASH! The gang all cheer. RUTH rolls off the back. She bounces back up almost immediately.)*

**RUTH**
I'm up! I'm up!

**LAWRENCE**
Is she alright? Is sh- oh thank god.

**LAWRENCE**
December!



*(The GIRLS all leave except JENNY who is helping LAWRENCE.)*

**JENNY**
WHOA! WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT?
WHEN ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT
YOU SHOULD BE MERRILY ON HIGH

**LAWRENCE**
December prop coming in!

**JENNY**
RIGHT FROM THAT FIRST NOEL
UNTIL THE FINAL BELL
WHAT KIND OF GIRL WOULD WANT A GUY WHO WANTS A SILENT-
C'mon girls!

*(The girls stumble gloriously in struggling with an enormous cracker.)*

**CHRIS**
- NIGHT.

**GIRLS** (OFF)
AND CAN YORKSHIRE FLOWERS
FIND THE LIGHT

**JENNY** & **CHRIS**
IT'S CHRISTMASSS-SS!!

**GIRLS**
IN THE DARKEST HOURS OF THE NIGHT?

**CELIA**
Get off me foot!

**CORA**
You're on mine!

**GIRLS**
THERE'S A NEW GIRL SUDDENLY IN THE ROOM
STARING AT THE THINGS THAT SHE JUST MIGHT,
JUST MIGHT, JUST MIGHT, JUST MIGHT
AND TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS...

**CHRIS**
THE GIRL WHO JUST DID ALL THE THINGS THAT HER FRIEND DID!

**GIRLS**
AND TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS

**ANNIE**
THE FORMER MISS YORKSHIRE!

**CHRIS**

WELL, HIGHLY COMMENDED.

**GIRLS**

AND FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY, TONIGHT...

**RUTH**

God, I look gorgeous.

**GIRLS**

THAT GIRL'S YOU!

*(The cracker splits revealing CHRIS and ANNIE in black dresses. The other girls and the cracker leave.)*

**MUSIC 23: SUNFLOWER OF YORKSHIRE**

**CHRIS**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

**ANNIE**

JANUARY, FEBRUARY

**CHRIS**

APRIL

**ANNIE**

MAY

**ANNIE** & CHRIS

SEPTEMBER AND JULY!
KEEP ROLLING, YORKSHIRE
WHEREVER FIELDS ARE GREEN
THE SCENERY CAN CHANGE

**CHRIS**

WHEREVER THERE ARE GIRLS
THE WORLD CAN CHANGE

*(LAWRENCE enters on a high!)*

**LAWRENCE**

This is it, ladies! I've been given the front cover of the Yorkshire Post!
*(Pictures it.)*
A photo of the new settee in a field of sunflowers!



*(DANNY and JENNY comes in together and dump two loads of sunflowers in pots.)*

**DANNY**

And here's y'r sunflowers!

**JENNY**

Comin' in!

**ANNIE &** CHRIS

*(Various.)*
Whoa! / What on earth - ?!

**DANNY**

Don't worry Mum, everything's gonna be alright.

**JENNY**

We're not doing anything <u>you</u> weren't doing at our age.

*(JENNY and DANNY exit.)*

**CHRIS**

Right. Right.
*(Beat, looks to ANNIE.)*
Oh shit.

**ANNIE**

DO YOU STEP BACK INTO SHADOW
KNOWING THAT THE CAM'RA LIGHT WON'T FIND YOU?
FADE OUT, SIMPLY DISAPPEAR?

**ROD**

Incoming!

*(ROD, LAWRENCE, COLIN, CORA, CELIA, JESSIE, TOMMO and DENIS bring in a tidal wave of sunflowers in buckets.)*

**CHRIS**

OR WERE YOU A GIRL DESIGNED TO BE A…

**ANNIE & CHRIS**

SUNFLOWER! FOLLOWING THE SUN.
WON'T GIVE UP UNTIL THE DAY IS DONE

**DENIS**

*(Has a local paper.)*
Ceel?

**ANNIE & CHRIS**
SUNFLOWER TAKING ON THE NIGHT

**DENIS**
*(Hands on her shoulders.)*
I don't want golf girls bringin' down my air hostess. Let's take up tennis eh?

**CELIA**
Know what honey? I am suddenly dying to get in that locker room.
*(Takes the paper.)*
GOOD DAY LADIES OF THE GOLF CLUB
COULD I PLEASE COMMAND YOUR FULL ATTENTION
IF YOU CHECK THE LOCAL PAPER
YOU WILL SEE ON PAGES NINE, AND TEN, THAT…

*(She throws her coat to the incoming TOMMO, bearing sunflowers, thus revealing the black dress hiding underneath.)*

YES, I'VE HAD A LITTLE WORK DONE!

**CHRIS,** ANNIE, JESSIE **&** CORA
Whoa!/Go Ceel! (etc.)

**CELIA**
AND SAD TO SAY YOUR DRESS CODES DON'T APPLY, GIRLS
WHEN YOU'RE 'MISS JULY', GIRLS
*(Winks.)*
Hello Tommo.

**TOMMO**
HELLO YORKSHIRE, I'M A VIRGIN.

*(The girls start to put sunflower lapels on as more tubs are brought in by all randomly, and also by DANNY and JENNY.)*

**GIRLS**
SUNFLOWER SEARCHING FOR THE SUN

**COLIN**
*(Shows JESSIE.)*
My dear. You're nude on page three of the Guardian.

**JESSIE**
*(She already knows.)*
Are you alright with this Mr. Raistrick?



**COLIN**
*(Takes her face in his hands.)*
Hey, Mrs Raistrick.
NEVER, NEVER, NEVER DO

**COLIN & JESSIE**
WHAT AGE EXPECTS OF YOU!

*(They hug as TOMMO reads a paper.)*

**CORA**
Oh my god can you imagine the sermon I'm gonna get about this.

**TOMMO**
I'll write it for him, mum.
*(Beat)*
I'll tell him you're about the best dad a mother could be.

*(He takes his mum in his arms and sings back her song.)*

**CORA** & TOMMO
WHOA!
WHO WANTS A SILENT NIGHT

GET MERRILY ON HIGH

**GIRLS**
SUNFLOWER REACHING FOR THE LIGHT
GONNA FIGHT FOR EV'RY RAY OF DAYLIGHT
SUNFLOWER TAKIN' ON THE NIGHT

*(RUTH appears in her coat, driven.)*

**RUTH**
SO LONG EDDIE, IT'S GOODBYE!

**CELIA**
Oh my god, seriously?

**CHRIS**
Y'r finally gonna tell him?

**ANNIE**
Finally gonna do it?

**RUTH**
*(Beat)*
I just finally did it!
*(The GIRLS cheer.)*
HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT LAY HERE UNDERNEATH HIS WIFE
BUT IN FAIRNESS, NOR DID I!
AND WHEN YOU'RE MISS JULY…

**GIRLS**

November.

**RUTH**

NOW I'M MISS NOVEMBER HE'S BACK AT MY DOOR
BUT THE GIRL WHO-
*(Reveals the black dress!)*
-WAITS ALL NIGHT AIN'T WAITING ANYMORE;
SHE'S A SUNFLOWER

**GIRLS**

Yayyy!

**RUTH**

MAYBE SHE DESERVES A BETTER PRIZE!

**CHRIS**

AND LET HER RISE-

**CORA,** JESSIE, CELIA **& ANNIE**

AND CAN THESE FLOWERS OF YORKSHIRE FIND THE SUN

**CHRIS**

LET HER SURPRISE…

*(The guys enter steering in a large gift-wrapped object to Lawrence amongst this new field of sunflowers.)*

**ALL EXCEPT GIRLS**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE!

**LAWRENCE**

*(Organising the shot.)*
Sunflowers there… there… spread them out…

| **GIRLS** | **MEN** |
|---|---|
| APRIL, MAY, SEPTEMBER | APRIL, MAY, SEPTEMBER, MARCH |
| OCTOBER | OCTOBER, AUGUST, FEBRUARY |
| KEEP ROLLING YORKSHIRE | JUNE, NOVEMBER, JANUARY |
| | DECEMBER AND JULY! |

*(The entry of the sofa has also delivered the arrival of MARIE.)*

**MARIE**

Well Chris. I have to hand it to you. Y've succeeded in doing something I don't think I could ever have done.



**CHRIS**

Pose naked?

**MARIE**

Get my daughter to join the W.I.

**ANNIE**

*(Beckoning.)*
Lawrence! Marie! 'The John Clarke memorial settee'!

*(The wrapping is whisked off to reveal a sunflower settee. They pose.)*

**LAWRENCE**

*(Wielding remote.)*
Three...two...

*(They all cheer and pose. FLASH!)*

**ROD**

Yeah but girls...girls.
*(Re. a plaque.)*
Y'wanna know what hospital ward they reckon that's going in?

**ANNIE**

Sorry?
*(ROD hands a plaque to ANNIE.)*
'The John Clarke Memorial... wing'.

*(No-one knew this was coming.)*

**ROD**

You sold a lot of calendars.

**ANNIE & CHRIS**

GONNA RISE LIKE A SUNFLOWER LOOKING FOR THE LIGHT
EVERY HOUR OF EV'RY DAY MIGHT BRING THAT
ONE RAY - ALL I'M GONNA NEED
LEARN THE LESSON THAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE SEED

| **GIRLS** | **MEN** |
|---|---|
| SUNFLOWER LOOKING FOR THE SUN | SUN - LOOKING UP HIGH FOR THE SUN |
| WON'T GIVE UP UNTIL THE DAY IS | NEVER GIVE UP ON THE DAY |
| DONE LIKE A SUNFLOWER | |
| TAKING ON THE NIGHT | ALL THAT YOU NEED IS TO FIGHT! |
| GONNA FIGHT FOR EV'RY RAY OF | |
| SUNLIGHT | |

**GIRLS**

November.

**RUTH**

NOW I'M MISS NOVEMBER HE'S BACK AT MY DOOR
BUT THE GIRL WHO-
*(Reveals the black dress!)*
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**ANNIE**

*(Beckoning.)*
Lawrence! Marie! 'The John Clarke memorial settee'!

*(The wrapping is whisked off to reveal a sunflower settee. They pose.)*

**LAWRENCE**

*(Wielding remote.)*
Three...two...

*(They all cheer and pose. FLASH!)*

**ROD**

Yeah but girls...girls.
*(Re. a plaque.)*
Y'wanna know what hospital ward they reckon that's going in?

**ANNIE**

Sorry?
*(ROD hands a plaque to ANNIE.)*
'The John Clarke Memorial... wing'.

*(No-one knew this was coming.)*

**ROD**

You sold a lot of calendars.

**ANNIE & CHRIS**

GONNA RISE LIKE A SUNFLOWER LOOKING FOR THE LIGHT
EVERY HOUR OF EV'RY DAY MIGHT BRING THAT
ONE RAY - ALL I'M GONNA NEED
LEARN THE LESSON THAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE SEED

| **GIRLS** | **MEN** |
|---|---|
| SUNFLOWER LOOKING FOR THE SUN | SUN - LOOKING UP HIGH FOR THE SUN |
| WON'T GIVE UP UNTIL THE DAY IS | NEVER GIVE UP ON THE DAY |
| DONE LIKE A SUNFLOWER | |
| TAKING ON THE NIGHT | ALL THAT YOU NEED IS TO FIGHT! |
| GONNA FIGHT FOR EV'RY RAY OF | |
| SUNLIGHT | |

*(All sit on the settee apart from ANNIE.)*

**CHRIS** & ANNIE

SUNFLOWER

A WOMAN OF
YORKSHIRE
MY GOD SHE AMAZES IN
ALL OF HER PHASES
WHEREVER THERE IS
SUNLIGHT IN THE SKY

**GIRLS**

SUNFLOWER,
SUNFLOWER
FLOWER OF YORKSHIRE
A WOMAN OF
YORKSHIRE
MY GOD SHE AMAZES IN
ALL OF HER PHASES
WHEREVER THERE IS
SUNLIGHT IN THE SKY

**MEN**

SUNFLOWER

MY GOD SHE AMAZES IN
ALL OF HER PHASES
WHEREVER THERE IS
SUN-
SKY

**ANNIE**

CLARKEY ARE YOU SEEING THIS?
SEE WHAT YOU'VE GONE AND STARTED?

**ALL**

JUST WATCH HER RISE!

*(ANNIE is called to join CHRIS. All turn to see a world beyond. Which is right now, thanks to them, a world of sunflowers.)*

**END ACT II**

**MUSIC 24: BOWS**

**GIRLS (MINUS ANNIE)**

ONE MORE YEAR IN YORKSHIRE

**MEN**

'TIL WE HAVE BUILT

**ANNIE**

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER
NOVEMBER AND JANUARY

**GIRLS** GROUP 1

JANUARY

**GIRLS** GROUP 2

JANUARY

**GIRLS GROUP 3**

JANUARY

**ANNIE**

AND JULY

**GIRLS (MINUS ANNIE)**

AUGUST AND JULY

**MEN**

JERUSALEM



**ALL**

GOD BLESS YOU, YORKSHIRE
KEEP ROLLING ONWARDS AND FOREVER
EVERGREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

**MUSIC 25: PLAYOFF**