

(**ROD** leaves. *That's answer enough.*)

(**ANNIE** watches where he went for a beat, then takes the sunflowers out.)

Scene Six

(*The church hall. The next day.*)

(*New day. New girl. Elaine enters, a younger beautician, stunningly white in a pharmaceutical dress.*)

ELAINE. No no no no, this is fine, ladies, there's enough light in here. We'll do it in here.

(**RUTH** and **JESSIE** enter from the kitchen. *They have paper collar-protectors round their necks.*)

(*Steering JESSIE to a chair.*) This is where they're going to be filming you so if you look all right in here, we're winning aren't we, hey?! Just wait one second. I'll get the magic make-up.

(**ELAINE** exits.)

(**RUTH** and **JESSIE** watch her go.)

JESSIE. D'you think people like her get a kick out of treating people like they have Special Needs? D'you reckon it's some kind of psychological inversion that makes her feel younger if she treats everyone else like they're senile?

RUTH. Well I suppose in fairness she/ just -

JESSIE. Ruth, I have never met anyone who uses the phrase "in fairness" as much as you do.

RUTH. Well, I'm sorry,/ I -

JESSIE. No no, don't apologize. It's not wrong. It's the better way. (*She fiddles with her collar.*) Don't get drawn into agreeing with my bitter ruminations. That's just me, grown venomous by years of exposure

to schoolchildren. *(She rubs RUTH's arm and smiles.)*
Much softer is our Ruth.

(ELAINE returns with her magic box.)

ELAINE. Right. HERE we are, ladies-s! How are we *doing*?

JESSIE. *(In a gummy senile way.)* Who's moved me television?

ELAINE. *(Stopping and frowning.)* What was that?

JESSIE. Never mind. *(She nods at RUTH.)* Do her first. I'm going round the back to score some crack.

(JESSIE leaves.)

ELAINE. *(A little confused.)* Right-t. SO. Let's just pop yourself down on that-t, my love, make you comfy. *(On autopilot she produces a pink business card.)* I'm Elaine from the Craven Health Spa-a... *(She offers RUTH the card.)* There's my card.

RUTH. I've already got one.

ELAINE. Lovely. What I'm going to be doing for the television is a little basic T-Zone and A-Zone. Have you ever had that done before?

RUTH. No.

ELAINE. Oh, you'll love it. 'Cause you're the lady – wasn't it the organizer, Chris, wasn't she telling me they were all going to do it and you WEREN'T and then you suddenly changed your mind at the last minute? Is that right?

(RUTH doesn't reply.)

Suddenly got the confidence up! It's funny how that happens, isn't it? You know, a lot of ladies find that when they've had our "Dead Sea Salt treatment", they get this *(Gesturing loosely.)* inner kind of – "wha"? To do things!

RUTH. Possibly.

ELAINE. Absolutely.

RUTH. Although I think with me it was likely more finding your underwear in the map pocket of Eddie's Peugeot.

(Pause. ELAINE stops the beauty treatment.)

You know? The little red ones? I mean I'm not surprised you didn't notice you hadn't got them on afterwards, they couldn't've provided much insulation. But there was one of these? Little business card. Must've fallen out of your bag in the whole... *(She "smiles".)* ...mêlée, you know? And that's when I thought, "Well maybe he'd see me in a different light if I went and did this calendar!" Pointlessly, as it turns out. 'Cause what I hadn't realized is that a woman who takes her clothes off on a calendar is a "tart" whereas one who does it in a lay-by is a really good sport. But hey. *(She stands.)* What I DID get to realize is that Eddie Reynoldson is one of those guys who wouldn't understand beauty if it was staring him in the face. And you know how I worked that out, love? *(Beat.)* Because it was. Now in fairness fuck off back to him.

(ELAINE exits in record time.)

(To herself, in total disbelief.) I did it!

(CELIA bursts in, wearing her new black dress, ahead of CORA, in a swirl of excitement and cross-talk.)

CELIA. No, but they say that, don't they?

CORA. That's rubbish.

CELIA. Honestly, they say that about television. The camera puts about ten pounds on you.

CORA. Let's hope there's only one bloody camera.