

## ACT TWO

### Scene One

*(The Annual WI conference, London.)*

*(The stage is in darkness. At the front is a small lectern and a line microphone. On the lectern is a crude traffic-light warning system for letting speakers know when their speeches are over-running.)*

*(All the **GIRLS** enter. **RUTH, JESSIE, CORA** and **CELIA** wait in the darkness out of the lectern spot, ready for Scene Two Over the lights-down we hear a politely dogmatic female voice.)*

**FEMALE VOICE ON TANNOY.** Ladies, if you can just take your seats please...welcome to this afternoon's session of this year's Annual WI Conference. We'll start with the emergency motions for general voting. Quite a number of these to get through this afternoon, so please could all proposers keep to the time limit. First is the delegate from Knapeley WI.

*(A sudden harsh spotlight slices through the darkness.)*

*(**ANNIE** walks with trepidation towards it, into the limelight. The warning light pings to green. She can go.)*

**ANNIE.** Ladies of the WI.

*(It echoes "WI ... WI ... WI ..." It freaks her.)*

We of the Knapeley Branch have been asked here to National Conference, to - to - *(She swallows.) explain... (She breathes in.)* what we're trying to do is a calendar... *(She nods.)* A WI ...to sell at the Yorkshire Show. To buy a seat. *Settee.* For the hospital. Skipton Gen -

*(There's a buzz. The amber light comes on. It throws ANNIE completely.)*

General. Which is where John... *(Beat.)* My John...

*(ANNIE loses all speech when she says that name. It is still like a bee sting in her mouth. A short buzz for the red light makes her jump. The warning light changes to red.)*

*(This cues a warrior-like CHRIS to storm into the spotlight with ANNIE.)*

**CHRIS.** HOLD ON. HOLD ON A MINUTE WITH YOUR BLOODY BUZZER. *(She takes the stand.)* Sorry but the OTHER delegate for Knapeley's got something to say and she's about to commit heresy. *(Loudly.)* I HATE plum jam. I only joined the WI because it made my mother-in-law happy. End of story. *(Counting on her fingers.)* I'm crap at cakes, I hate *knitting* - and in fact seeing it's unlikely George Clooney would ever come to Knapeley to give a talk on his collection of slightly-too-small swimming trunks, there seems very little reason for me to STAY in the WI. *Except* - SUDDENLY I want to raise money in memory of a man we all loved. And to do that I'm prepared to take my clothes off on a calendar. *(Beat.)* And if you guys don't agree then I'm going to do it without council approval because FRANKLY, guys, some things are bigger than council approval. And FRANKLY if it meant we'd get - *(She gestures a "tiny amount".)* - THAT-T much closer to

killing off this shitty, cheating, sly, conniving, silent bloody disease that cancer is then God, I tell y'. I would run round Skipton market smeared in plum jam with a knitted tea cosy on my head singing *Jerusalem*.

*(There's a sudden snap back to full light.)*