

Edith, Matthew, Carrie, Adam, Sheena (pg 25-26)

The following rules are displayed to the audience for the duration of the scene:

Rule 1. Matthew must sit to tell a lie

Rule 2. Carrie must stand to tell a joke

Rule 3. Sheena must drink to contradict

When it's stated that SHEENA drinks, one sip or gulp will suffice unless stated otherwise.

EDITH (calling from off). Hello...?

ADAM and CARRIE quickly ditch their beer cans. ADAM hands his to MATTHEW, who is forced to hide it behind his back as EDITH enters from the corridor.

EDITH. Hello! Oh you're here! You're here!

MATTHEW. Hi, Mum!

EDITH. Hi, darling. Happy Christmas!

MATTHEW. Happy Christmas, Mum.

EDITH. Oh look at you: there's nothing left of you! You look fantastic. Your father will be pleased.

CARRIE. Hello, Edith.

EDITH. Carrie, darling, Happy Christmas!

CARRIE. Happy Christmas! (Standing.) Can I please give you one of my famously tiny hugs!

CARRIE envelops EDITH in an enormous embrace; it aggravates EDITH's bad back.

EDITH. Oh how lovely... how lovely...

EDITH extricates herself from the hug. CARRIE sits.

EDITH. Carrie, I was just delighted when Matthew told me you'd asked to come. Really delighted. Thrilled. Isn't it wonderful to have Carrie?

ADAM. Yeah, it's great.

SHEENA. It's really great.

EDITH. It's really great.

Beat.

MATTHEW. How was church, Mum?

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EDITH. Oh it was a huge crowd – such a turnout of young. Tom and Sarah were there with their two girls. (To CARRIE.) Tom's a school friend of Adam's. His eldest must be Emma's age – maybe a bit older, fifteen maybe? I didn't expect to see them, Tom has a new job in Geneva frighteningly clever man – but they all turned out in their Christmas best to be with their old mum, the whole family in the pew together, isn't that nice? And all the children were given an orange with a candle stuck into it and they all processed down the aisle – it was too sweet.

CARRIE. Why an orange?

EDITH. Do you know, I'm not entirely sure, but I imagine it must represent something.

CARRIE (standing). It's probably because they're...

MATTHEW (pushing CARRIE back down into her seat).

MATTHEW. Mum, Carrie made mince pies.

EDITH. Oh wonderful, darling, Sheena made a batch, but we were worried there weren't enough – only half of them survived the journey.

CARRIE. Oh, you made some, too?

SHEENA. Yes, gluten-free.