

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?