

Now if that makes you feel good, fine, but it makes *me* feel like a bloody feudal peasant.

Ruth Jessie.

Jessie Sorry.

Jessie tips the basket upside down so all the flowers fall out

Ruth Well what song's that?

Jessie "Where Have All The Flowers Gone?"

Jessie exits

Chris comes in with a tray of bottled beers which seems also to feature a small green-flamed candle

Chris Rod? Is he in...? Rod? G-argh! I will KILL him. I told my husband QUITE clearly, "Take cake tin to church hall. Do not pass beer tent. Do not LOOK in beer tent — " (*nodding perfunctorily*) Sorry, Ruth. Well done on the ferret.

Ruth I'm not a fer — Argh. (*Seizing the tray*) That's Cora's "Tea Tray On An International Theme".

Chris Is it? I wondered what the cotton reels were.

Ruth They're palm trees. The cotton reels are palm trees and the Ferrero Rocher wrappers are "the golden waves of Montego Bay." (*She bends the green "palm leaves" back into position*)

Chris (*staring at Ruth*) You know if more people did WI there'd be half the need for hallucinogenic drugs.

Rod appears with a cake tin, having had a couple of beers

Rod HA HEYY! Has anyone ever told you you're the most byyyoootiful wife a man could ever have? (*He hugs Chris*)

Chris (*smiling as he hugs her*) Yes. You, every time y've had more than two pints. Give!

Rod Are you aware that Marie is walking round in a hat the size of a NASA satellite dish?

Chris She'll be tracking Lady Cravenshire. Any money, by now Marie will have started speaking like she's at the Cheshire Polo Club.

Ruth How are we doing out there?

Rod The latest results from Knapeley Spring Fête. (*Into a beer bottle microphone*) High Ghyll have scored five point sevens in the baking with a display of synchronized flapjacks. West Hebden however have been disqualified from Garden Produce after their winning courgette was found to have been born a cucumber.

Chris (*turning him one-eighty*) Y'know what, go back to your beer tent.

Rod Final results from the lemon curd are delayed until the judge has finished being sick —

Chris Look, don't — (*"take the mickey"*) I am only here at ALL 'cause of you, Rod Harper. I only joined the WI to make your mother think I was respectable.

Rod Didn't work.

Chris (*pointing*) OUT.

Rod scuttles out

I hope you're keeping an eye on your Eddie in that tent.

Ruth Oh no, no. He's at the gym. Craven Health Spa. Pumping iron.

Chris The Craven Spa? God. That's a bit pricey.

Ruth Well it's the equipment, Chris. Like he says, you pay for the quality of the aerobic equipment.

Chris He should be here. With you. (*Beat — how to say this...?*) Ruth, he's not playing around again is he?

Instant deflector shields go up

Ruth This isn't your event. Wasn't Annie down for the baking?

Chris Annie has currently got more on her plate than cakes.

Ruth Oh, but still she won't forget. Normally Annie is the/ one who NEVER —

Chris Ruth, she's spent the last three months on the A59 running John in and out of Skipton Hospital. "Normally" has gone out of the window.

Annie bursts in, panting, carrying a basket

Annie CHRIS-S! THE CAKE! OH MY GOD! THE STALL — OUR ENTRY — I WAS SUPPOSED TO BAKE A CAKE!

Chris (*to Ruth*) Told you.

Annie I GOT OUT OF THE CAR AND THOUGHT, "I WAS SUPPOSED TO DO SOMETHING FOR TODAY"/ AND I —

Ruth It's all right. Chris has saved the day.

Chris Ta-da!

Beat

Annie You baked something?

Chris Look, I'm not a total dead loss as a woman you know. I can't knit or make plum jam but I can bake a bloody Victoria sponge.

Annie All right, all right. (*She hugs Chris in gratitude*) Thank you.

Chris I mean I haven't baked THIS one, like. I got it from Marks and Spencers, but in PRINCIPLE —

Annie (*trying to get it off her*) WHAT?

Ruth MARKS AND SPENCERS?

Chris We have to enter something for the points.

There is a tussle over the illegitimate sponge

Annie You can't enter a bought cake!

Celia pushes in John in a wheelchair. They both have bottles of beer

Chris Why not?

Celia BEEP BEEEP.

Annie I am not entering a BOUGHT CAKE.

Chris Right. Then I will. Make way for my glorious cake.

Chris exits

Celia I think he's putting on a bit of weight, your fella.

Annie Absolutely he is. He's not allowed beer though, Celia.

Celia Oops. (*She takes it off John*) Marie's fault. She should never have put me in charge of a putting competition. My mind turns to alcohol as soon as I get near a golf bag.

Ruth Why d'you play it, then?

Celia Because otherwise I'd never get to see my husband, Ruth. And I quite enjoy the "golf". It's just the bags I have to play it with. (*As she swigs beer*) Come on.

Ruth Oh I can't, Ceel. I can't play golf.

Celia I don't want you to play. I want the kids to think you're one of the prizes. (*Ushering her out*) "Get a hole in one, win a gerbil."

Ruth For the last time, I'M A RABBIT!

Celia and Ruth exit

Suddenly it's just Annie and John. Her heart could break seeing him in that wheelchair

Annie (*taking a carton of fruit juice from her basket and wielding it at John*) Vit-a-mins. (*She sits by him and gives him a drink*) And you mustn't get cold. (*She takes a rug from her basket and puts it on his knee*) How's it going out there?