

Group scene - Mr and Mrs C, Linda, Steve, Cousin George, Rel 1 and 3, Priest

STEVE

Why can't you just be happy for me? I want to share this feeling with everyone, my mum, my dad, but I can't. So why can't you just -

He notices George.

STEVE

- Oh shit, its him.

Who?

LINDA

STEVE

Cousin George. He's about to come and talk to us. He's always teasing me because I don't go out with girls. And he says irritating things like "Pas de probleme". And he calls me -

GEORGE (Coming over)

Einstein! How you hanging? How are the old exams going?

STEVE They've gone.

GEORGE You confident?

STEVE Pas de probleme.

GEORGE Sorry, you must be -

STEVE

George this is Linda. Linda this is boring.

He goes and stands aloof.

GEORGE What's eating him?

LINDA

Oh, he's just thinking about his man. I mean his Nan.

GEORGE

So you're Einstein's girlie. I've heard a lot about you.

LINDA

I've heard a lot about you.

GEORGE All bad I hope.

LINDA Oh yeah.

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GEORGE

So Steve's finally found someone to make an honest man of him.

LINDA

He's the most honest man I've ever met.

Lights down on rest of the stage. Light only on Steve. The relatives talk to each other in small groups.

MRS. CARTER

Well, yes, Steven was always a bit shy when it came to the opposite sex.

MR. CARTER Linda's a lovely girl.

REL 1

It was a lovely service.

GEORGE

How many kids have you got now?

REL 2

Nice of the priest to say what a close family we are.

MRS. CARTER

I don't think we've seen you since Tracy's christening.

REL 3

Well, she took him back, after what he'd done. I wouldn't have.

PRIEST

if you can't turn to the family in a crisis who can you turn to?

GEORGE

The rest of the family are dropping sprogs left, right and centre.

REL 1

And we have her first birthday party last week. She looked so cute in her little dress with all her friends round her.

The remainder of the conversation should happen almost simultaneously the following words being clearly audible, building to a crescendo.

GEORGE

White wedding?

RELATIVE 2 If you can't turn to the family -

RELATIVE 3 What a close family we are -

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MRS. CARTER Only child.

MR. CARTER Opposite -

GEORGE Can I get anything for anyone?

MR. CARTER Sex. Christening.

GEORGE Wedding.

RELATIVE 3 Babysitter.

PRIEST Lovely girl.

MRS. CARTER Lovely service.

RELATIVE 1 Lovely

MR. CARTER Lovely -

ALL FAMILY. Lovely

The lights change immediately back to normal. Steve rushes forward to join Linda.

STEVE

Lins, I've got to get out of

here.

LINDA

Okay, let's go for a walk.

STEVE

No. I mean OUT. I want to go back to Basingstoke.

LINDA

Sweetheart, no one ever go back to Basingstoke.

STEVE

I do.

LINDA

Oh, Steve. He'll still be there when you get back.

STEVE

And so will my parents.

LINDA

So tell your dad you're back tonight.

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STEVE

He'll freak. He says I belong here. Well I don't. I fucking belong here.

LINDA

Darling, you're cracking up.

STEVE

Don't be melodramatic. (Pause) Faint.

LINDA What?

STEVE Just do it.

LINDA

"Don't be melodramatic. Just faint." ?

STEVE

I'll do the same for you one day.

LINDA

Steven Carter, I really -

STEVE

Hate me, loathe me, detest me, just faint!

Linda faints, melodramatically.

STEVE

Linda! My God, she's fainted. Lins. Linda.

The family crowd round.

MRS. CARTER Linda. Linda love.

GEORGE Loosen her blouse.

PRIEST

Make sure she hasn't swallowed her tongue.

MR, CARTER Get her some water.

REL 3 Give her some air.

REL 1

Get her on her back.

GEORGE Sit her up.

MRS CARTER She's coming round.

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LINDA Where am I?

STEVE Are you alright?

LINDA What happened?

ALL You fainted.

MRS. CARTER

Now what's all this about?

STEVE

She was fine a minute ago.

LINDA

I was fine a minute ago.

MRS. CARTER

Do you want to go upstairs and lie down. That's alright, isn't it, Bridie?

STEVE

No it isn't! I mean, you've got to be back in Basingstoke tonight.

LINDA

I do? Oh yes, I do.

MR. CARTER

Well you're not going home on the train alone. Steven, you'll have to go with her.

STEVE Oh. I guess so.

LINDA

It's okay, I can manage.

STEVE No you can't!

MRS. CARTER Steven's right, love. Let him take you home. I'll get you some tea.

STEVE

You were brilliant. Drink your tea and then Basingstoke here we come.

LINDA

Git. He'd better be worth it, that's all I can say.