

me, I won't mind. I know how much your family means to you. I should tone it down a bit, shouldn't I? You can say.

MATTHEW. Well, it's not rocket science, Carrie, just don't be vulgar.

CARRIE. Vulgar? You think I'm vulgar?

MATTHEW. No, I don't think you're vulgar.

CARRIE. Then who does? Did your mum call me vulgar?

MATTHEW. No, no, I just meant that the things we joke about together aren't necessarily the things to joke about in front of my family. Not everybody has the same sense of humour.

CARRIE. Yes, hello, I know that. I paid a lot of money to learn all about that. Do I walk into your office and tell you how to be a lawyer?

MATTHEW. No, but you'd ask me to tone it down if I went to stay with your family and dispensed legal advice five minutes after walking through the door.

*Beat.*

CARRIE. Wow. Say what you really feel, why don't you?

MATTHEW. Carrie –

CARRIE. You sure know how to make a girl feel better about herself.

MATTHEW. Honey, you just said I should be honest.

CARRIE. No, no, don't let me stop you. But on the subject of honesty, might I remind you, that if you wanted a wallflower for a girlfriend, you shouldn't have picked me!

### Scene Two

*The following rule is displayed to the audience for the duration of the scene:*

#### Rule 1: Matthew must sit to tell a lie

*When it is indicated that MATTHEW either sits or stands, he must remain either seated or standing until stated otherwise.*

MATTHEW. Carrie, that's... that's what you got from what I just said? That I want a wallflower for a girlfriend? I didn't say that. I'd never say that. Honey, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you. Hey, look at me. Carrie, honey, please don't do this, not today, it's Christmas –

CARRIE. I'm sorry. I hate being like this. I don't want to be this irritating, whining person. I just... I just really want your family to like me.

MATTHEW. I know, I know. (*Sitting.*) And they do. They do like you.

CARRIE. They don't know what to make of me. I'm never going to fit in.

MATTHEW (*remaining seated*). Of course you're going to fit in. You do. Fit in. Currently.

CARRIE. You're just saying that.

MATTHEW. I'm not just saying that.

CARRIE. What about your mum, what does she say about me? Does she say I'm funny?

MATTHEW (*standing*). Mum said you're always seeing the funny side of things.

CARRIE. And she said she liked that?

MATTHEW (*sitting*). Absolutely.

CARRIE. Really? Because I get the feeling she sees me as your... act of rebellion: in everything else you made the sensible decision. And then you met The Actress.

← Start

MATTHEW (*standing*). Carrie, we've been over this: before I went to law school I appeared in no less than fourteen amateur musicals. The only surprise to my family is that you're an actress not an actor. So just relax. This isn't an audition: you don't need to entertain them; you could just try talking to them. Or better yet, listen. As a general rule, people think you're a really interesting person if you let them talk *at you* about something of real interest *to them*.

*They smile at each other.*

CARRIE. I'm sorry that we keep having this same conversation.

MATTHEW (*sitting*). That's okay. I don't mind. We'll keep doing it until we get it right.

CARRIE. That's what you said to me the first time we made love.

MATTHEW (*standing*). Yeah, that's the kind of joke you can't make in front of my mother.

CARRIE. Got it. No probs. Hey, Matthew? I know I must drive you a bit nuts, but you're so patient with me, and I want you to know that after a whole year, I'm still so in love with you.

MATTHEW (*sitting beside her*). I'm still so in love with you too.

*They kiss. SHEENA enters.*

(*Standing, breaking away from CARRIE.*) Sheena! Hey, hey. How's Emma? Shall I go up?

SHEENA. Could you give her half an hour? She's just having a little rest.

MATTHEW. Sure, sure no problem. Whatever you want, whatever you need.

SHEENA (*referring to their contributions*). Well, look at all this: you've brought so much. These look... what are these?

CARRIE. Mince pies. I make them with filo pastry. It's more like a mince *parcel*.

SHEENA. A *mince parcel*, that's hilarious. I bet they're delicious.

MATTHEW (*sitting*). They really are.

CARRIE. Thanks, baby.

MATTHEW (*standing*). So how can we help? What can we do? Give us jobs.

SHEENA. Yes, jobs – wouldn't be Christmas without them. There's still a list as long as my arm despite your mother having it all prepared and in the freezer by last January!

SHEENA and MATTHEW *laugh*. It unsettles CARRIE; she *adjusts her appearance*.

Edith is the most organised woman you'll ever meet.

CARRIE. I've met her four times.

SHEENA. I know, I mean in general. Christmas Day in this house is carried out with military precision.

MATTHEW. There's a very strict timetable.

SHEENA. And she only uses the twenty-four-hour clock.

MATTHEW. We don't eat at 1 p.m., we eat at –

SHEENA/MATTHEW. Thirteen hundred hours!

SHEENA and MATTHEW *laugh*. CARRIE *smiles along*; she *adjusts her appearance*.

SHEENA. Actually we should get moving. Your mum's concerned there aren't enough carrots.

MATTHEW. That is concerning.

SHEENA. I know. And we haven't laid the table.

MATTHEW. Shay, I think that's a Code-Red Situation.

SHEENA. Crimson alert!

MATTHEW. Lock down the building. Evacuate non-essential personnel! ← Stop

SHEENA and MATTHEW *share a generous laugh*.

CARRIE *laughs along and adjusts her appearance*.

SHEENA. So, Carrie, d'you want to do the carrots, and, Matt, you and I can lay the table? Carrots are in the bottom of the fridge; there should be a peeler in the utensil drawer.