

WENDY, GARY, MOM, DAD, KAREN IV

KAREN:

Merry Christmas!

Wendy sees her and is excited. Gary sees her and is smitten.

START

WENDY:

Karen!

She runs to Karen and they hug. Karen begins taking off her winter wear.

GARY:

(to Mom) Who's Karen?

MOM:

Wendy's best friend from high school. Oh, that's right. She wasn't at your wedding. She was competing for Miss Universe.

GARY:

Oh, that Karen. *(then, sotto)* Hey, Wendy, I'm right.

WENDY:

I've got this.

MOM:

Isn't Karen beautiful?

Before Gary can answer, DAD bounds down the stairs, excited. He's in his 60's, opinionated, curmudgeonly.

DAD:

Karen! What a nice surprise!

MOM:

What the hey?!

WENDY:

Are you kidding me?

KAREN:

Hi, Mr. Collins.

DAD:

Please. It's Frank.

GARY:

(to Wendy) Soooooooooo right.

She glares at him. Then:

WENDY:

Karen, this is my husband, Gary.

KAREN:

(shaking hands) I've heard great things about you.

GARY:

(delighted) Really?

DAD:

From who?

MOM:

(annoyed) Frank!

KAREN:

From Wendy.

DAD:

Oh, right.

GARY:

You're the one in high school who chose not to be a Mean Girl. Wow. How did you withstand the peer pressure?

KAREN:

It was hard, I won't lie. But I had friends like Wendy who didn't care that I was amazing-looking, and I had role models growing up that really centered me. My tennis coach, the Lord...

MOM:

Praise "Him." Praise "Him."

KAREN:

And Oprah...

MOM:

Praise her. Praise her.

WENDY:

(to Karen) I thought you were in Africa.

KAREN:

I am. Well, not at the moment. I'm home for the holidays. But yeah, I'll be going back in a few days. I'm with a UNICEF team in Uganda, and it's so great to be making a difference in these people's lives.

DAD:

Those lucky Africans.

WENDY:

So how does someone go from hotel management at the Radisson to UNICEF worker in Uganda?

KAREN:

I broke up with Stan. It was very bad and I just had to get away and do something totally different.

MOM:

You two weren't married, were you?

KAREN:

No.

MOM:

Thank goodness. Divorce is a sin in the eyes of God.

Wendy gulps.

DAD:

“He” suffered, so must we all.

MOM:

Just so you know—there are no Brine Shrimp in HELL.

KAREN:

No, I was never going to marry Stan. He was sixty for gosh sakes.

GARY:

Sixty?

DAD:

(perking up) Sixty?

KAREN:

Okay, I admit it. I do have some daddy issues.

DAD:

Do ya now?

END

KAREN:

But being away and throwing myself into my work has been a godsend because I don't have to think about men or relationships.

WENDY:

That's great.