

CHARACTER: Cora (f) - around 40

DESCRIPTION: Cora's past is the most eclectic. She is the joker in the pack, but never really plays the fool. Her wit is deadpan. It raises laughter in others, but rarely in herself. Her relationship with her daughter is more akin to that between Chris and Annie. Cora doesn't need to sing like a diva but must be able to sing well enough to start the show with Jerusalem and sing the snatches of other songs required. The piano keyboard can be marked to enable her to play basic chords should she not be a player. Ideal car – who cares, as long as the sound system is loud. Ideal holiday – New York.

CORA “Can we just stand by?”! This must be what it feels like to be Kylie. *(She claps)* D’you think they’ll want a bit of Jerusalem in the background? I could jazz it up a bit.

RUTH Cora, don’t mess round with it. It’s a religious song.

CORA It’s not “messing around”, Ruth. It’s bloody jazz. It’s the blues. That’s where it was all born, spiritual music. That’s why it’s all – *(she gestures “linked”)* – related. God, our band at college, me and Ruby’s dad, all the time we’d be in and out – rock to blues, bit of classical, hymns ... He said when it comes to music, there should never be any rules.

JESSIE Absolutely. That’s why at my leaving service I scrapped all hymns and taught the kids to sing The End by The Doors.

CORA Eh it’s sodding dangerous though, Jess, if you end up a church organist. I tell y’ one time, someone’s funeral, Dad’s in the pulpit, I’m playing on grief autopilot. *(She starts plonking out “Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind” on the piano like a steamhammer. Singing)* “Dear Lord and Father Of Mankind –” *(Speaking)* Suddenly I look down at Ruby in her carry-cot and honest to God, next thing I know I’m playing – *(She starts playing “Stormy Weather” and sings the first two lines; then, speaking)* Looked round, the congregation are going “What the HELL - ?”