



Segment 8 (Units 13–26)

Small talk

Genre: Situation comedy

Viewing Time: 2:51

Background Information

The humor in this piece comes from the contrast in attitude and use of language between Sigourney and Max, and Sylvia and Carrie. The first two are very formal, whereas Sylvia and Carrie are very relaxed. This contrast is exemplified by how they introduce themselves: Maxwell (most people would say "Max") and Sigourney. On the other hand, Carrie calls her friend "Sig," and Sylvia calls Maxwell "Maxie." The exchange between Carrie and Sylvia ("Too many phonies in one place" / "On that I'll agree wholeheartedly") summarizes the opposing attitudes.

Vocabulary for Comprehension

Preview the vocabulary with your students.

- an old bat: *a derogatory label for an old person, usually referring to an old woman*
- Charmed, I'm sure: *extremely formal way to greet someone you have just met*
- holdup: *a delay*
- How ya doin'?: *very colloquial greeting; not proper other than with close friends*
- lousy: *very bad (informal)*
- my cup of tea: *something you like or enjoy*

- Open mouth, chew on foot: *(actual expression: "open mouth, insert foot") expression meaning, "the moment I say something, I embarrass myself"*
- phony: *(pl.: phonies) false and not real, and intended to deceive someone (informal)*
- wholeheartedly: *involving all your feelings*

Answer Key

Previewing (Answers may vary—as long as they are appropriate guesses, accept them for now.)

1. Sigourney and Max, who have just met. They are later joined by Max's mother, Sylvia, and Sigourney's friend Carrie.
2. They are in an art gallery.
3. They are attending a reception.
4. "Real" versus "phony" people: authentic, natural people as opposed to people who live in a "make believe" world.

In-Depth Viewing

1. a 2. c 3. c 4. b 5. a





Video Script

Max: Fascinating piece.

Sigourney: Yes. Quite.

Max: It speaks to me, you know? You can just feel . . . the artist's . . . pain.

Sigourney: Absolutely. The angles . . .

Max: It's so very . . .

Sigourney: Deep! It's . . . deep. Hmm. Sigourney Masterson. Pleased to meet you.

Max: Maxwell Croft. The third. The pleasure's mine, Sigourney.

Sigourney: So, Maxwell, have you seen any other interesting pieces at the . . . ?

Sylvia: Maxie? Maxie? Oh, darling. There you are!

Max: Mom! I've asked you not to call me Maxie. It's embarrassing!

Sylvia: Mothers do embarrassing things, dear. Now, come on. We can still make the movie . . .

Max: Oh, please, forgive me. Sigourney Masterson, Sylvia Croft. My mother.

Sigourney: Charmed, I'm sure.

Sylvia: I'm sure. Now, let's go. We were on our way to the movie. And would you like to come with us?

Max: Mother!

Sylvia: Well, she seems like a nice girl. And we would have been there already if they had more than one waiter. Can you imagine that? One waiter for all these people. And all I wanted were two lousy little hot dogs.

Max: Mom, please! I'm begging you—

Sigourney: No, it's quite all right, Maxwell. There's no need to—

Sylvia: Maxwell! Would you believe that! The last time I called him Maxwell was when he was seven. And he cried for a whole week!

Max: Sigourney, I'm so sorry—

Carrie: Sig! Hey, Sig! There you are! I've been looking for you everywhere. Who's your cute friend?

Sigourney: Maxwell, Mrs. Croft . . . I'd like you to meet . . . my friend. Carrie Wang.

Carrie: Hey! How ya doin'? Sorry for the holdup, Sig. It took me half an hour to get a lousy stuffed mushroom. I swear, it's easier to find food in the woods!

Sigourney: Carrie, please . . .

Carrie: I almost got us a couple of those little hot dogs. But the waiter told me some old bat took them all.

Sylvia: That old bat was me.

Carrie: Oops. This is why I don't do small talk. Open mouth, chew on foot.

Sylvia: That's alright. Would you like one?

Carrie: Ooh. Hey, thanks! Listen, Sig, can we leave now? I've had enough of this. Too many phonies in one place, if you ask me!

Sylvia: Oh, on that I'll agree wholeheartedly!

Max: Sigourney, Carrie . . . my mother and I were just on our way to the new Johnny Depp film.

Sylvia: Oh, I love a Johnny Depp film! Now that's my cup of tea. Let's go!