

TEEN

By Kristen Doherty.

ABOUT TEEN

Teen examines social and emotional issues faced by contemporary teenagers. Designed to be performed and watched in a high school context, *Teen* consists of a selection of short scenes and monologues written within the genre of Epic Theatre. Issues such as bullying, body image, peer group pressure, jealousy, love, anxiety, friendship struggles, sexuality, relationships with parents, sexting and the loss of a parent are explored. With 22 scenes and over 60 characters, *Teen* is designed for large casts with each actor playing multiple roles. Every scene is based on real life accounts and events; some funny, some challenging, some heartbreaking, but all real.

“Epic Theatre: A form of didactic drama presenting a series of loosely connected scenes that avoid illusion and often interrupt the story line to address the audience directly with analysis, argument, or documentation. Epic Theatre is now most often associated with the dramatic theory and practice evolved by the playwright-director Bertolt Brecht, Germany, from the 1920s onward. Brecht’s intention was to appeal to his audience’s intellect in presenting moral problems and reflecting contemporary social realities on the stage.”
Encyclopedia Britannica.

SUGGESTIONS ON STAGING.

All actors remain onstage for the entire piece. They sit in a row of chairs downstage in a neutral position, when their scene begins, they stand, walk upstage (with or without their chair) and are immediately in character. When the scene is completed, they return to their seat and resume neutral position.

Alternately Physical Theatre/ Frantic Assembly techniques can be integrated.

Or more simply actors can make exits and entrances.

Songs and dance numbers could be added.

Music that compliments each scene should intersperse the action and bookend each piece.

It is permissible that scenes can be swapped or deleted, and new scenes written by the students about their own experiences can be slotted in. Likewise, terminology and language can be adapted to suit the location and cohort.

- Please note - The content of some scenes are aimed at issues that senior students face, some may be inappropriate for juniors. It is permissible by the playwright that scenes can be omitted for length of production and suitability for performers and audiences.

TEEN

SCENES

** The number in bracket denotes how many characters are in each scene.*

- 1) SAME (4)
- 2) MIRROR IMAGE (1)
- 3) WELCOME TO WOMANHOOD (2)
- 4) FRIENDZONE (2)
- 5) UNFRIENDED (6)
- 6) WALNUTS (3)
- 7) MY BROTHER (1)
- 8) NEVER BEEN KISSED (3)
- 9) LEAVING HOME (2)
- 10) REJECTED (12)
- 11) REGRET (2)
- 12) BETRAYED (2)
- 13) THE FRIENDS (1)
- 14) RESTAURANT SHOES (2)
- 15) UNDER PRESSURE (2)
- 16) ANGSTY (1)
- 17) WHIPPED (4)
- 18) THE GIRL (1)
- 19) FOOLISH GAMES (3)
- 20) CONFUSED (1)
- 21) THE SLEEPER (5)
- 22) SAME (Reprise) (all actors)

SCENE 1 - SAME

BEAUTY
GAMER
FREAK
NERD

Four actors who fulfil stereotypes stand downstage and address the audience directly. Intensity builds as they overlap, trying to be heard. Dialogue can overlap or be said in unison in spots. More actors could be added to the scene to echo, repeat, share lines.

BEAUTY I just want someone who likes me for me... Not some notion who they think I am. Guys/Girls just don't speak to me. I don't get it. I try to make an effort. I really do. Someone told me once I'm intimidating, but I'm not... I'm actually really lonely. People take one look at me and judge me. No one understands... I'm just me. I'm a really decent person. People would see that if they just gave me a chance. Just give me a chance. See me. I'm right here.

GAMER I just want someone who likes me for me... Not some notion who they think I am. Guys/Girls just don't speak to me. I don't get it. I try to make an effort. I really do. Someone told me once I'm intimidating, but I'm not... I'm actually really lonely. People take one look at me and judge me. No one understands... I'm just me. I'm a really decent person. People would see that if they just gave me a chance. Just give me a chance. See me. I'm right here.

FREAK I just want someone who likes me for me... Not some notion who they think I am. Guys/Girls just don't speak to me. I don't get it. I try to make an effort. I really do. Someone told me once I'm intimidating, but I'm not... I'm actually really lonely. People take one look at me and judge me. No one understands... I'm just me. I'm a really decent person. People would see that if they just gave me a chance. Just give me a chance. See me. I'm right here.

NERD I just want someone who likes me for me... Not some notion who they think I am. Guys/Girls just don't speak to me. I don't get it. I try to make an effort. I really do. Someone told me once I'm intimidating, but I'm not... I'm actually really lonely. People take one look at me and judge me. No one understands... I'm just me. I'm a really decent person. People would see that if they just gave me a chance. Just give me a chance. See me. I'm right here.

SCENE 2 – MIRROR IMAGE

TAYLOR

Taylor's bedroom - She walks forward and faces the audience as if looking into a mirror. Transfixed by her reflection, she touches her face, stands to the side and examines her body from

all angles. She gradually becomes more and more distressed, not liking what she sees. She breaks down in tears.

TAYLOR I'm so ugly.

SCENE 3 - WELCOME TO WOMANHOOD

LIV
STACEY

Stacey enters and gestures for Liv to join her.

STACEY Liv. Pst. Come here.

LIV What's up?

STACEY I think I have my period.

LIV Hahaha sucked in.

STACEY It's not funny.

LIV It is. Late bloomer much?

STACEY No, I can't be.

LIV I got mine two years ago.

STACEY That's horrible. Wait. What if it leaks onto my pants?

LIV It won't... use this.

Liv pulls a tampon out of her pocket and holds it out for Stacey.

STACEY (*embarrassed*) Liv stop Don't be stupid! Put that away, there are people around.

She grabs the tampon and throws it offstage.

LIV Oi! Stacey they're expensive! Don't treat them like rockets.

STACEY (*through gritted teeth*) I am not using one of those.

LIV Don't be silly.

STACEY Don't you have a pad that I can have, or something?

LIV No, I don't use those.

STACEY What do I do then?

LIV Why don't we just go to the office and ask for one?

STACEY Don't be fricken ridiculous. Go to the front office? That's the last thing I want to do. I'm not telling a teacher.

LIV Who cares?

STACEY Who cares. Who cares? I do!

LIV Oh wait, I think I might have one in my bag from ages ago (*opens bag*) Oh, yep here you go, oh it's a bit dusty.

STACEY Oh, thanks... I think. (*stashes it*) Ewh, why does my stomach feel like this?

LIV Because that's what happens.

STACEY Are you serious? What else happens?

LIV Stacey you're in for a treat. You get cramps which can be so bad that you feel like you're dying. And your skin will break out like volcanos are coming out of it. And the mood swings... You will cry all of the time, for no reason.

STACEY What? No. I didn't sign up for that.

LIV And you think I did? (*beat*) Awh...It's not all that bad, my parents let me have days off when my cramps are bad, and mum sometimes buys me chocolate, that always helps.

STACEY Ugh, how long does this go for? A couple days?

LIV Nope. Another thirty to forty years roughly.

STACEY Gah! This blows.

LIV Welcome to womanhood, my friend.

SCENE 4 - FRIENDZONE

TOM
MARY

Tom and Mary stand on opposite sides of the stage with mobile phones and text or speak to each other.

MARY Hello?

TOM Hey.

MARY Hey.... Um who's this?

TOM Guess.

MARY I don't recognise your number.

TOM You know me well.

MARY Do I?

TOM Yes. I'm in your English class.

MARY With Mr Jones at St Joseph's?

TOM Yes.

MARY I shouldn't have told you that....

TOM What?

MARY My school. My teachers name...Bugger. Now if you are some weird stalker, I've just gone and told you everything about me. You can't be too careful nowadays.

TOM I'm not some weird stalker! We are studying Romeo and Juliet.

MARY Everyone studies Romeo and Juliet in year 10.

TOM Good point... Well things were pretty funny in class yesterday.

MARY What was? Give me actual events.

TOM Ok... Yesterday Jack stacked it and spilt his iced coffee all over Fiona's script. She screamed at him and called him a moronic caveman. Mr Jones kicked him out. Jack stood there in protest because it was an accident, then sat on the floor with his legs crossed for almost the whole lesson refusing to budge. Jones just continued teaching until he tripped over Jack. He had to call in Mrs Burbank and Jack still didn't move until she threatened to expel him.

MARY Ha. That was a classic!

TOM So?

MARY Ok, ok I believe you. Who are you then?

TOM Someone who thinks you're pretty special.

MARY What.

TOM ...I like you, Mary.

MARY You like me?

TOM Yeah...I do... heaps.

MARY Wow. Ok. Awh, that is so sweet.

TOM Thanks.

MARY I'm so flattered that you'd message/call me out of the blue.

TOM It's not exactly out of the blue. I've liked you for over a year now.

MARY A year? Wow really? Well, we have to meet up then. Are you free later today?

TOM (*shocked/thrilled*) Today? Oh. Sure... I'd love to... Where?

MARY I dunno, how about Macca's?

TOM Absolutely...

MARY About 4? (*beat*) So are you going to tell me who you are?

TOM I... I'm a bit nervous...

MARY Don't be nervous. I think it's sweet.

TOM Ok... Well, I still think you should guess.

MARY Ok. Um... Zac?

TOM (*disappointed*) No.

MARY Damn... Ok... Johnno?

TOM (*upset*) Nope.

MARY Um... Mackenzie?

TOM Really?... No.

MARY Gawd. Who else is there? Um, Jordan?

TOM (*sad*) Maybe I'll just go.

MARY No, this is fun. Um Brock? Frank? Giuseppe? I don't know...

TOM Look. This isn't how I actually pictured this conversation going.

MARY I can't think of anyone else.

TOM *(blurts out)* It's Tom, ok!

MARY Tom? Tom who?

TOM Tom Jackson. I sit behind you in English... *(exasperated)* Our parents are friends. We spent Easter together this year... camping.

MARY *(gasps)* Tom! ... Oh. Sorry... I didn't think.

TOM It's ok. You don't have to say anything.

MARY Tom. I'm so sorry... I just don't see you like that.

TOM *(big breath)* Yeah. That's ok.

MARY I feel really bad. I mean, I'm sorry, ok?

TOM Yeah. No worries. It's all good. I've gotta go, ok?

MARY Ok... Bye Tom. I'll see you in English tomorrow.

TOM Yeah...Bye Mary.

Tom dissolves into sadness.

Mary texts/rings someone else.

MARY Janice. You will never believe who just professed his un-dying love for me. Tom Jackson. *(laughs)* I know! What a weird stalker.

SCENE 5 - UN-FRIENDED

MIA
LIZ
ELLA
MOLLY
NIKKI
TEACHER
LUCAS
TOMAS

A classroom. Molly and Nikki sit at the front, Tomas and Lucas at the back, the mean girls in between. Mia leans forward and whispers to Molly in fake niceness.

MIA Hey, Molly. What are you doing on the weekend?

Mia friends giggle. Molly tries to ignore them

MIA Hey Moll. I said what are you doing on the weekend?

ELLA *(laughs)* Is she deaf?

MOLLY Nothing. I'm doing nothing.

LIZ Got a hot date with Lucas?

Mia laughs.

ELLA Psht. She wishes.

NIKKI Leave her alone.

MIA Shut up, Nikki. We're not hurting her. We were simply asking her whether she has a hot date with Lucas.

LIZ Come on Moll, we're friends, aren't we?

TEACHER Shh!

They ignore the teacher.

NIKKI You're not acting like her friend.

Mia ignores Nikki

MIA *(to Molly)* You like him, don't you?

MOLLY Umm, no.

ELLA *(scoffs)* Yeah right!

LIZ It's so obvious.

NIKKI So what if she does?

The mean girls laugh.

TEACHER Girls! What have I told you?

MIA *(sickly sweet)* Sorry, Mrs Spencer. *(to Nikki, cruelly)* Because she doesn't have a snowball's hope in hell of him ever liking her back.

ELLA Ha! Can you imagine?

LIZ It would never, ever happen.

MIA He's got standards. He wouldn't even look at someone like you.

NIKKI You're just bitter because he dumped you, Mia.

MIA Shut up! That's not what happened.

NIKKI I know exactly what happened. Three weeks ago, you guys were besties and now you have unfriended her on everything and are trying to make her life hell because she likes the same guy as you.

MIA Keep out of it, Nikki. It has nothing to do with you.

MOLLY I don't like him.

LIZ Then why does it say it on this letter? *(gleefully holds a letter up)*

MOLLY How did you get that?

LIZ *(reads loudly, mocking, for all to hear)* "Dear Lucas, this is a letter I will never send because it tells the truth of how I feel about you". Awhh...

Chaos as the following dialogue overlaps as they keep the letter away from Molly, Liz passes it to Mia.

TEACHER Girls! Sit down.

MOLLY Give that back to me.

NIKKI Give it back.

TOMAS *(to Lucas)* They're talking about you, mate.

LUCAS *(embarrassed)* Shut up.

MIA "Lucas. I can't stop thinking about you. I go to bed thinking of you. I wake up thinking of you. You're in my dreams."

ELLA Probably his nightmare.

TOMAS *(to Lucas)* You're in buddy.

MOLLY *(crying now)* Stop... Please stop!

MIA I just wish that you would see me for who I truly am.

TOMAS Send him some pics then. Bikini shots. *(laughs)*

LIZ Or maybe don't! Ewh. *(laughs)*

LUCAS Leave off, Tomas.

TEACHER Mia Carmichael. Give that paper to me.

MIA Oh wait, one last bit.... I actually think I love you.

Everyone reacts loudly laughing, mocking Molly.

MOLLY (*humiliated*) No. no. no. no.

MIA Awh, so sweet....

TOMAS Awkward.

Lucas looks embarrassed.

TEACHER Mia! This behaviour is completely unacceptable. You need to listen to instructions. Now if I hear a peep out of you again...

MIA (*sicky sweet*) Sorry Mrs Spencer. (*she sits, satisfied*)

TEACHER Right, everyone get on with your work.

Molly rushes out of the room in tears.

MIA What's her problem?

Everybody laughs. Nikki shakes her head in disgust.

SCENE 6 - WALNUTS

WENDY
BELLA
LAUREN

A schoolyard. The girls are sitting around scrolling on their phones.

WENDY (*shocked*) O.M.G. No way. Ewh. Help.

BELLA Woah, take a chill pill. What's going on with you?

LAUREN Oh no... I think I know what this is about.

WENDY (*disgusted*) Samuel asked me if I wanted to see his...his... thingy.

LAUREN Ha, I knew it!

WENDY I texted back said no...Ewh. But look at this. This is what he sent me.

The girls all look at the phone, cringing.

BELLA Oh gawd, Wendy. That is disgusting.

WENDY And this. And this.

They all look to the side at once trying to work out the pic.

LAUREN Eww! They look like wrinkly walnuts.

WENDY What the hell do I say to that?

LAUREN Um. Tell him stop it, I don't like it?

BELLA Don't be ridiculous. Obviously, you have to send them to the police.

LAUREN You can't send it to the police. Everyone sends dick-pics.

WENDY No! Why? No one wants to see that.

LAUREN I know. It ain't pretty!

BELLA Ok... Well, threaten to send them to his mum to make him stop.

WENDY That's gross Bella. His poor mum. Yuck!

BELLA Just saying... She raised him.

LAUREN You can't send it on otherwise your distributing child porn.

WENDY What the actual?

LAUREN True story.

WENDY Well, what do I do with it?

BELLA You've got to go tell a teacher, or something.

WENDY I agree. A teacher. Who though? It's not like I'm going to go up to Mrs Lock and go "Samuel sent me this, Miss" and shove the picture in her face.

LAUREN Do not do that! She's so old you'll give her a heart attack. She probably hasn't seen one in like a million years.

BELLA Okay, but we need to go tell someone.

WENDY I agree... and she is his Home Group teacher.

LAUREN Alright. Mrs Lock here we come.

BELLA I hope she's taken her medication.

SCENE 7 - MY BROTHER

SOPHIE

SOPHIE When I was in year eight, my brother Jack had just left high school. We were really close. I looked up to him so much. I think he was the coolest person I'd ever met. He was always so fun and happy. But leading up to Christmas that year, I noticed that he wasn't himself, he had been really down... I thought it might be because he was feeling a bit overwhelmed about finishing high school and needing to apply for Uni and everything... but then one afternoon I found him crying in the kitchen. I was shocked. He always seemed so brave and strong. He told me he was gay, that he had come to terms with the fact he was, that he had come out to a few close friends who were all fine and really supportive, but now he was panicked about how he was going to tell me... and Mum and Dad.

I admit, I was shocked at first. I didn't know what to think. I mean he'd had girlfriends. Plenty of them. I always imagined that one day he would bring home some beautiful girl, and we would also become best friends and I'd be a bridesmaid at their wedding. Stupid year eight stuff, you know. (*shrugs*) Anyway, he seemed so relieved to tell me and I was really happy that he had. He still wasn't ready to tell Mum and Dad though.

Soon after he met a guy who he thought was cute and they started going out. He knew then that he had to tell my parents and one night at dinner he just blurted it out. Mum was quiet for a really long time, then she started to cry and told him that whilst it was a shock, he's her son and she loves him no matter what. But my dad didn't say anything for a long time, then finally he told my brother that he "didn't understand it and he didn't think he ever would... It made him feel uncomfortable". My brother tried to encourage him to educate himself more, to see that being gay isn't a choice. It's just the way he is... the way he's always been. But no, Dad just got up and left my brother there crying.

After that we just kinda went back to normal, pretending that Jack's love life didn't exist. Then he moved to Sydney. He hasn't come back once. We've been to visit a couple of times and he takes down the photos of that same boyfriend and pretends that they've not been living together for three years. They're happy. Really happy... My brother hopes that Dad will understand one day. I hope so bad he will too. Dad reads a lot and he's a really smart guy but I don't think he really tries... The thing is... (*cries*) I really miss my brother. I really do... He is the best person I know.

SCENE 8 - NEVER BEEN KISSED

ELLIE
SHAZ
BEX

Ellie stands in a spotlight and speaks directly to audience as if she is speaking to a trusted friend.

ELLIE Ok! I'm just going to come right out and say it. I feel like a massive loser because I've never been kissed. I am 16 years old, and I haven't even come close. Every single one of my friends has been kissed... Except me. It's embarrassing. I mean until last Saturday night it was both Bex and me that hadn't been kissed, so it was ok. But then at Anne-Marie's sweet 16 she hooked up with Daniel Macpherson.

Flashback

Elle is at a party with Shaz. They are joined by Bex. They embrace her like she's just done something pretty huge.

ELLIE That was quick!

SHAZ Did you kiss him?

BEX Yes.

ELLIE Oh my gosh.

SHAZ He is so hot.

BEX I know, right?

ELLIE How was it?

BEX Umm... good... I mean um...ok...kinda not what I was expecting...hoped for.

SHAZ What?

ELLIE Oh no.

BEX It was kinda gross, really. I mean it was pretty... wet... Can I say slimy? His tongue had a mind of its own. It was like he was trying to eat my face off.

Girls are horrified.

ELLIE/SHAZ Ewh!

BEX He had been eating something weird, like gum leaves or something.

SHAZ What?

ELLIE Ewh. No.

SHAZ Gum leaves? Why?

BEX Either that or like a whole pack of really strong gum. It was like pashing a koala.

They laugh

SHAZ Maybe he thought your tongue was a gum leaf.

BEX: Maybe he just wanted to have mint fresh breath?

ELLIE *(she squeaks it out)* Eucalyptus!

They laugh hysterically.

...Eventually

BEX Well at least I got it over and done with.

SHAZ And Daniel Macpherson is super-hot.

They all high five each other.

BEX Yeah, he is.

SHAZ ...My first kiss was with Dwayne you know?

ELLIE/BEX We know.

They sigh, they've heard this story many times.

SHAZ It was wonderful. I was so totally in love with him at the time. It was perfect. He was such a good kisser. Then he went off with Gloria.

BEX Ahh Gloria.

ELLIE Again.

SHAZ Then I didn't love him... Then I just wanted to rip his testicles off.

BEX We know sweetie.

End of flashback - Ellie resumes speaking directly to audience.

ELLIE Do you see what I mean? Now I'm just really put off! But I'm 16 for God's sake and I feel like I just want to get it over and done with. *(pause)* but then

I think, why can't I wait? Why can't my first time be special? What's the rush? What suits my friends may not suit me, you know. Some of us just take a bit longer at some things... And that's ok. There's nothing wrong with anticipation. Maybe I just want my first kiss to be with someone special who I actually like. Or at least someone who doesn't eat gum leaves first. *(laughs)*

SCENE 9 - LEAVING HOME

LYDIA
GRACE

A bedroom. Lydia is packing a suitcase; her mum enters tentatively.

GRACE What are you up too Lyds?

Lydia doesn't respond.

GRACE Why are you packing your stuff?

LYDIA I'm just going to Jackie's for the weekend.

GRACE Look. Don't lie to me. Charlie called me; he told me you were intending to try and find your father again.

LYDIA He told you? That traitor! I knew I couldn't trust him.

GRACE He's your friend and he's worried about you, that's why he called. I can't believe you were going to go without telling me. I know things have been tense between us, but I thought....

LYDIA Tense! That's an understatement.

GRACE Lyds... You don't need to do this... Why do you think I'm not on your side? You are such a smart girl, but you are being so ridiculous right now. Can't you see you are just setting yourself up for a fall? You know what happened the last time you tried to find your dad. I don't want you to get hurt again.... Please, baby.

LYDIA Mum, back off! I am not your baby anymore. I don't need you to protect me. I have lived with just you for eight years now. Eight years of your nagging and complaining about everything and I am sick of it.

GRACE What are you talking about? This is you and me, come on, you remember. Thelma and Louise, we don't need anyone, just you and me against the world.

LYDIA Stop it mum. How come I never saw it before? You are so pathetic. You joke about being some kind of rebel, but you're so not. What sort of life do

you have? You bury yourself in your work, so you don't have to see me, or anyone else. You've lived your life afraid of meeting somebody after dad left. You drove him away and you have been trying to do the same to me for years.... Well, here you go, this is what you have always wanted.

GRACE *(shocked and hurt)* How can you say that? I have given up everything for you. Why can't you see that? Honestly, sometimes you drive me insane. I work two jobs to make sure you have everything you want and need. I haven't tried to find someone else because you have always been my priority.

LYDIA So it's my fault? Well, I won't be around anymore getting in your way. With me gone you go and live the life you have always wanted.

GRACE Please Lyds.... Don't do this.

LYDIA I've told you before the guilt thing doesn't work. I'm going, and you can't stop me.

Lydia starts to go, Grace grabs after her.

GRACE Lydia stop! You are making a mistake...Your father...he is not who you think he is...there are things that you don't know. He didn't//

LYDIA *(interrupts)* Stop lying to me! You drove him away, you threw him out of the house, I remember. Now I know why he never tried to come back. In fact, I don't blame him for not trying. He hates you and so do I.

GRACE Lydia that is not what happened. He//

LYDIA Stop it mom, I know my own dad. He wants me, he is just waiting for me... I know it. Last time I was too young, I can take care of myself now, he doesn't have to worry about me. I am older.

GRACE *(pleading)* Lyds...please listen to me baby...

LYDIA Leave me alone. I am tired of wasting my time trying to be nice to you. I can't take it anymore. I hate you. I can't live like this. Don't try to find me, I'm not coming back.

Lydia leaves, Grace looks after her, shocked.

SCENE 10 - REJECTED

BAZZA
KIRRI
KIRSTY
DEREK
KERSTIN

PETE
ISAAC
SARAH
BETH
CARLIE
ANTON
MICHAEL

Actors spread across the stage and speak directly to audience.

- BAZZA I am the ultimate wingman... Well, that's what I tell people anyway. It takes the attention off the fact that no girl actually wants to speak to me. My mates... I don't even know how to say this without sounding like a massive douche... My mates are pretty good-looking lads. They lift... If you know what I mean? I don't even know what I mean... Do you see what I mean? I'm the clown... The comic relief... The one that the hot girls pat on the head and say "awh isn't he cute", as they go off with some other bloke! It's messed up man. Kinda over it to be honest. Oi! Don't laugh!
- KIRRI I never feel good enough... All the girls at school are so beautiful, and skinny... I don't fit in. Literally! I don't feel comfortable wearing the clothes they wear. It takes me hours to get ready for parties... Then I don't end up going anyway, cause I just feel like shit. They've all got boyfriends or have kissed boys and I just feel like a big loser in the corner with clothes that don't fit.
- KIRSTY I asked him to meet me at the beach in the holidays and he said yes. I was so excited. I spent days getting ready for it. I bought three new outfits so I could see on the day which would be best. How pathetic is that? My mum dropped me down there, she was excited for me too... I got there early, and I waited and waited and waited... but he never came. I sat there for hours just waiting. I texted him, tried phoning, checked his Facebook, his snapchat, Instagram. But nothing. I saw him on the Monday. I said I waited. He acted like he didn't even know what I was talking about... The thing is, it's just so embarrassing. I told everyone about it... I wish I could just disappear.
- DEREK I can't believe she dumped me... I thought things were going so well, you know? We used to do everything together. Now what am I going to do? There's like this massive hole in my life and I just really miss her. We used to do everything together. She was so funny and smart and so beautiful. I never felt good enough for her. I used to tell her that all the time. Well, you know, maybe I wasn't... or maybe she just started to believe me when I told her.... Not good enough. She said she wants to stay friends, but I don't want to be friends with her... That'd be weird.
- KERSTIN I always feel like the third wheel. She always has some new boyfriend and I'm always expected to come along... Just tag along behind them... like a little puppy dog. One day there's going to be a time when she's tagging

along with me and my boyfriend. A boyfriend who adores me, and she's just invisible. One day it'll be my turn.

PETE I've never felt good enough, for anything or anyone. Sometimes I wonder if I disappeared if anyone would notice... I mean sure my parents would be upset for a while but at school I reckon it'd be like, "Who? Oh, that's sad" Then that'd be it. Forgotten.

ISAAC It scares me. Thinking about my future. Geeze even those words "My. Future." I mean, I know what I'd love do... but I can't... It'd be too hard to get into and my parents want me to have a "proper job." One with security. I mean in a perfect world I could do what I wanted. I have dreams, just like everyone else... I see other kid's parents supporting them... But mine just want me to do what they want me to do. I have no say. So, my dreams are going to remain just that... dreams.

SARAH There's these girls at my school, these bitches. And they're horrible, they are so mean about everyone, but everybody loves them... Or maybe they don't, maybe they're just scared of them. But people just like laugh and go along with them being awful because they don't want them to turn their sarcastic horrible bitchiness onto them. I hang out with them for that very reason, and I hate it. But I don't know who else I could go to. Like it or not, those girls are my only friends.

BETH It's like he doesn't know I exist anymore. We said we'd stay friends but now he doesn't even look at me. I miss what we had. It feels so strange that I can't just go up and kiss him anymore you know? We used to belong to each other. We were something... Now it's like all that never happened. Maybe it was never real to start with if I'm that easy to forget.

CARLIE I've never had a boyfriend. Oh, I've had lots of experiences with boys, but none of them have actually ever led to any sort of you know, relationship... commitment. I tell myself it's much me as them. I'm all about my independence. Calling the shots. Getting what I want. Being young free and single... but deep down, and I really hate to admit this, deep down, I just want someone who will always be there for me. Like what my parents didn't have. I don't always want to party. I guess I get lonely sometimes and I'd just like a boyfriend.

ANTON I want to know what love is like... but I'm scared to think that what I see as love won't be accepted by my friends or family. I know that most people would be cool, but I'm terrified to think of who won't be. If only I knew that it'd be ok, nothing would change, no one would judge me, I'd say something... tell someone. Hopefully one day soon I'll get brave.

MICHAEL There's this girl at my school... (*looks around*) I don't want to say her name in case someone hears.... I mean I do want to say her name... I want to shout it out-loud, so the world can hear it! But it terrifies me to the point of being sick... I mean what if she laughs at me? What if she doesn't want me? I am totally in love with her. To the point of infatuation. I mean, I think

about her constantly; I'm eating my breakfast, munching down on some Coco Pops and bang! There she is in my head and I'm wondering what she's having for breakfast, and I'll bet it's not Coco Pops, probably some exotic Bircher Muesli, with poached pears and organic Greek yoghurt. (*exasperated*) Poached Pears! I'm frickin' imagining her sitting across from me when we're 80 years old eating breakfast together on our balcony eating those poached pears. This is not normal. It's like a disease... this love thing. It's horrendous, man.

SCENE 11 – REGRET

DJ
JOSH

A DJ is taking calls for a late-night talk back radio station. Josh rings.

DJ So tonight we are talking about biggest regrets... And we have another caller. Hello. You're on the air.

JOSH I think I am the most selfish person alive, and I hate myself for it.

DJ Ok man, let's just back up a bit... Who am I speaking to?

JOSH I'd rather not say my name.

DJ Yeah, no worries. You can remain anonymous... How old are you, mate?

JOSH Fifteen.

DJ Fifteen? You're up late.

JOSH I don't sleep well.

DJ Ok.... What's your story?

JOSH Ok... (*deep breath*) Here goes.... When I was ten my mum had a baby with her new husband. A little boy. I hated him straight away. He was really annoying. You know, in only the way little brothers can be. He used to follow me everywhere. He would play with all my stuff and mess up the levels on my games. He once spilt a whole tray of bottles of model paint my carpet. And it stank! We couldn't get it up no matter how much we scrubbed and scrubbed, and we had to rip up the carpet because I couldn't sleep in there. I had to use the disgusting rug from my stepdad's shed for almost a year. Geeze I really hated him after that.

He used to get away with everything. He had the cutest mop of blonde curls and the biggest bluest eyes you've ever seen. So, people would just melt when he'd ask for something with his annoying little voice. He always wanted to go everywhere with me. Mum was working heaps, and my

stepdad was away as usual, so mum would always make me take him with me or stay home. It used to make me so angry, so I started not taking him when I went out with my mates. Locking him in the house... Not for long. Twenty minutes, half an hour max, just when we went down to the shops on the corner or for a skate at the park, that sort of stuff. He used to get so upset when I'd grab my board because he knew I would be leaving him there alone. He'd scream and cry and bang on the door and the windows when I left. It didn't matter how many lollies I brought him back.

This one day recently, he was giving me such a hard time about not bringing him along, worse than ever. I couldn't stand it anymore and I stormed out. I could hear him all the way down the street... (*big breath*) As it turned out I forgot to latch the back door properly and he got out, into the backyard... The thing is (*pause, he's struggling*) we had a pool... He was only five. We actually had an alarm on our back door, but because no one was there to hear it, no one was there to stop him in time.

I got back from the shops. I had him a Kinder Surprise because he really liked the little toys you get in them... But I could see flashing lights, an ambulance in my driveway. Police cars. And I could see my neighbour sitting on our front lawn sobbing. I felt sick!

I ran around the back and there were a whole heap of people standing around. They were in front of the ambulance men who were working on someone... I couldn't see who, but I knew. I knew it was him and I knew it was my fault.

Then I saw mum, she was rushing towards the crowd, trying to get through, her eyes were wild, she was desperate, screaming out his name.

She knew too.

People, I don't know who... our neighbours maybe? Police? People were holding her back, telling her she didn't want to see him. "My baby!" She screamed... "Let me see my baby!" I tried to stop her, but she pushed me away with so much hatred in her eyes.... I will never get that image out of my head. When she got through, they held her back, she grabbed him and held him to her chest screaming like a wounded animal. Everyone was crying. I was on my knees, praying to God that he'd be ok. All of a sudden, he started coughing and spluttering. He was ok! Thank God, he was ok!

DJ (*overwhelmed*) Thank God!

JOSH Yes. Thank God... But no thanks to me. It was my fault! My little brother almost died, and it was all my fault.

DJ But he's ok?

JOSH He's fine. I was grounded for months. But I didn't care! I am just so grateful to spend time with him, and that he's ok... But I can't stop that picture of

him, screaming out my name when I left him and then seeing him all blue, going round and round in my head. And I can't un-see the hatred in mum's eyes... I let her down... I let them both down so badly.

DJ So you blame yourself, is that right?

JOSH Yeah, of course. It was my fault. (*angry tears*) My fault!

DJ Yeah, ok. Maybe it was. Maybe because of your stupid decision to leave the house that day and go off with your mates your brother almost died... (*a beat*) But he didn't! ... He is ok. You are only fifteen. Mistakes happen. You never planned for this to happen, right?

JOSH Just because I didn't plan for it doesn't mean I'm not responsible. I'm such an idiot!

DJ Yep, ok, you're an idiot. You made a mistake... But we all make mistakes. We really do. You need to see this for what it was, a stupid, irresponsible error in judgement. You need to forgive yourself man (*silence*) Hey, are you still there?

JOSH Yeah

DJ Are you listening to me?

JOSH Yeah... I don't know how anyone can forgive me and not judge me.

DJ What's your name?

JOSH ...Josh.

DJ Josh... I forgive you.

JOSH (*breaks down in tears*) Thank you.

DJ: You know you have your whole life to make it up to your brother. You can start to love yourself again by showing him how much you love and adore him. Always be there for him. Always protect him.

JOSH I will.

Disconnect

SCENE 12 - BETRAYED

GINNY
MITCH

Direct to audience.

GINNY I feel like such a fool. I had completely fallen for this guy at my school and we started texting each other... I was just so thrilled that he would contact me. I mean he'd never even looked at me before. But then all of a sudden it was like we were having this secret on-line relationship. Sending funny snap-chats back and forward. He was so funny and flirty and would say all these lovely things to me... Made me feel like I meant something to him. This went on for a few nights... I was so caught up in it... In him... so when he asked me to send a pic... I did. And of course he shared it! I trusted him....and now... now, I feel like such an idiot. I confronted him about it. I said what I needed to say.

Flashback

Mitch sits downstage. He is approached by Ginny. She is upset and pushes him.

GINNY How could you? I trusted you!

MITCH Ginny. What's happening? How could I what?

GINNY Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about. The photo I sent you.

MITCH Which photo?

GINNY Oh give me some credit, Mitch. The photo.

MITCH What about it?

GINNY You shared it.

MITCH Nah, I didn't.

GINNY You bastard! How can you deny it? Maggie told me she saw it on Dan's phone. How could you do this to me?

MITCH I didn't send it. Well, I didn't mean to. Gibbo had my phone in study, just getting me up a level in Tiny Wings and he went through my photos. He didn't tell me til afterwards that he sent it to himself.

GINNY And he sent it to Dan and God knows who else. I am so, so humiliated.

MITCH Look, I'm sorry... I should have deleted it.

GINNY Yes you should have. You convinced me to send it and you promised me you would delete it straight away. I am such an idiot for trusting you.

MITCH Don't be like that.

GINNY Don't be like that? Are you joking me? What if my mum sees it? My dad... My grandparents. My teachers. My friends...I just... I just feel really

exposed. Like everyone is looking right through me. Judging me... I don't know who's seen it... I feel like everyone has.

MITCH Look I'm sorry.

GINNY You're sorry? Sorry doesn't take it back.

MITCH I didn't realise... I didn't think. I feel like an asshole.

GINNY You are an asshole.

MITCH I know.

Mitch exits ashamed and exits. Ginny resumes speaking direct to audience.

GINNY So yeah... The boys that had the picture were suspended. They had to delete the photo of course.... But who knows if they had already shared it somewhere else? What makes me sick is the thought that I'll be going for a job or something and it'll keep popping up.

I think I just got caught up in the moment, I felt beautiful, and I liked how I looked in the pic, and I thought he'd like it too. I felt safe and in control... I felt alone in my room... It felt private. Instead, it was anything but.

(a beat) But do you know what? ... I'm glad I stepped up and gave him a piece of my mind. I let him know in no uncertain terms that what he did was wrong and that he should feel ashamed of himself... Not the other way around. You know, I'm going to make more mistakes in my life. Hell, we all are, but the mistakes in my life don't define me. My character defines me. My heart defines me.

SCENE 13 – THE FRIENDS

MADDY

Maddy sits downstage on the floor and speaks directly to the audience. Music is essential, quietly backing this scene to illicit emotion.

MADDY The day I turned eleven was the worst day of my life.... It started really well, my Mum woke me up early so we could have a birthday breakfast together... *(she smiles gently)* pancakes. Dad was away at work, so we skyped him. I was pretty upset that he couldn't come home for my birthday, and on the way to school mum and I got into a really dumb argument about it. When I got out of the car, she tried to give me a hug. I told her I was too old for it, and pushed her away. I guess I was just upset that she would defend him, and probably embarrassed at who would see me. As I slammed the door she said "Please Maddy, it's your birthday! I didn't even turn around. I just walked off.

That is the biggest regret of my life

At lunch my friends and I put all our food together and we made a birthday picnic on the oval. The kids playing footy got so mad and started kicking balls at us, but we just laughed at them and didn't budge. Then Mr Jones turned up and said he had to take me to the office. At first, we thought those dumb Year 4's had gone and told on us for ruining their game, but then he said he only needed me to come. We all laughed and thought it was really weird that they didn't just wait til I got back to class. But then I saw Mr Jones's face.... Will was joking that I had done something really bad. Mr Jones said for them to stay but they followed anyway, Cameron and Michael teasing me the whole time that I was going to get suspended or something... Ange didn't. She saw Mr Jones's face too, and held my hand the whole way there. I asked if Jess could come into the office with me... Mr Jones said no.

When I got into the office my dad was there, and other teachers, I don't even know who. Dad was crying... I knew as soon as I saw him that something had happened to Mum. He couldn't look at me.... He just looked down and kept crying...His body was shaking. He was making these really weird little hiccupping noises and I almost laughed at him.... Can you believe that? I knew what was about to happen and I felt like laughing. I knew. Someone asked me to sit down...Then someone said it...Not my dad...He couldn't...but someone said the words. (*quietly*) And then my world went black and a part of me died too.

When they took me outside to go home, they were all waiting. My friends. The bell had gone ages ago but they all had refused to move. They knew something had happened ...something bad...and they wanted to be there for me. And that's how it was from then. Through all the really bad stuff, they were there...They made me feel like I still had a family, even though mine had been ripped apart. They cared. They care. Even though our lives are going in different directions now we're in high school, I know they will always be there for me and I will be for them. Always.

SCENE 14 – RESTAURANT SHOES

HOLLY

EMMA

Holly and Emma totter onstage. Holly's shoes are way too high for her.

EMMA

Come on Holly. We are already late, get a move on.

HOLLY

Bloody hell, why did I wear these shoes? They're too high. I never wear shoes this high.

EMMA

So why did you wear them tonight?

HOLLY

Because they match my dress and my legs look better in heels.

EMMA But you can't even walk. You are the clumsiest person I know.

HOLLY Gee thanks.

EMMA And those are restaurant shoes!

HOLLY Restaurant shoes?

EMMA Restaurant shoes. You know, the sort of shoes you wear from the house, to the car, to the restaurant, and then back to the car and then home. That's it. No more.

HOLLY When I get there, I'll be fine.

EMMA But you can't sit down all night! No-one will talk to us.

HOLLY I won't sit down, I'll just lean.

EMMA You can't lean all night. You promised you'd dance with me.

HOLLY Dance! Psht! These are not the sort of shoes you dance in. I'd break my neck.

EMMA Then why did you wear them?

HOLLY Oh my God! I wish you'd listen for once. They match my dress and my legs look better in heels. You even told me that when I asked you.

EMMA What?

HOLLY I said, "do you think my legs look better in heels?" and you said yes, you said yes, so it's actually your fault that we won't be dancing tonight.

EMMA What are you even talking about?

HOLLY I'm sorry my feet hurt; can I lean on you?

Holly sighs and shakes her head but allows her friend to lean on her. They walk (limp) off.

SCENE 15 - UNDER PRESSURE

JAMES
BRETT

The schoolyard.

JOSH Have you finished that Science assessment?

BRETT Nah, course not.

JOSH It was due yesterday.

BRETT You know me.

JOSH You should probably focus on that. It's worth a lot of marks.

BRETT I don't care.

JAMES You should care. It's important.

BRETT I have other things on my mind.

JAMES Like what?

BRETT I dunno, just things.

JAMES Well that assessment was pretty serious. It was worth like 30%. Mr Thompson will kill you if you haven't done it.

BRETT I don't care! I never handed in the first assessment. So, it won't make a difference if I hand this one in.

JAMES Yeah it does. If you don't hand it in, you'll fail science completely.

BRETT Who gives? It's only science. No one cares about bloody Chemistry.

JAMES Well your future does.

BRETT Well screw it, I'll just be homeless then.

JAMES Why are you getting so worked up about it?

BRETT Because you won't shut up. You are as bad as my dad. Telling me I'm not good enough, that I'll never amount to anything, that my education is a waste of his money. And he's right, I'm not smart enough. I can't keep up. Everyone says I'm an idiot and they're right. So, what's the point of trying? I give up.

JOSH Well how about I throw a pity party for you then?

BRETT Shut up!

JOSH Nah. I'm serious man. Do you know what's worse than failing?... Not even trying. Come on... It's never too late. There are people you can ask for help. The teachers... Me. I'll help you. You just got to let us. It doesn't matter if you don't get a good grade, at least you'll know that you didn't just give up. Who cares if you are terrible at Science? You're great at Art. I'm crap at it. We've all got to be bad at something don't we? You gotta take the bad with

the good and just get through. Before you know school will be over and you'll be out in that big bad world and never have to look at a Chemistry book again as long as you live.

BRETT And that will be too soon. (*sighs*) Ok. Will you go through it with me?

JOSH Yeah... Of course.

Return to neutral position.

SCENE 16 - ANGSTY

MONIQUE

Direct to Audience.

MONIQUE I can't remember ever not feeling anxious or sad. It's always been my reality. It started when I was a kid... I broke my arm at footy. It was a bad break and I was in hospital for a few days... After that everything changed, my arm healed, but it was like I broke my nerve. I became really jumpy, anxious about even the littlest things. Everything scared me. I did not want to leave my mum's side, and I certainly did not want to go back to school... Just the thought of it made me feel sick to the stomach.

Mum would try to make me to go, and it would just turn into a huge fight. I would start crying, I'd struggle to breathe, my chest would feel tighter and tighter, and I would slip into a full-blown panic attack, hyperventilating, throwing up, sobbing... Mum would end up in tears right alongside of me. She could see how much I was hurting and there was nothing, nothing she could do to stop it. I remember her just holding me, telling me "It's all going to be ok, it's all going to be ok" over and over again until I'd calm down and she'd send me back to bed where I felt safe. This happened every single day, and I ended up missing months of school. It caused lots of fights in our family... Dad didn't understand and thought Mum was pandering to me. I could hear him yelling at her at night. "This is ridiculous! What are we paying school fees for? Just make her go."

It took a while, but I finally went back. Gradually at first, half days once a week then more and more. I didn't want to. But I had to... I wanted to be normal so badly. That didn't stop my panic attacks though. I stress about the stupidest of things... A teacher telling me off, a boy saying a smart comment, the thought of going on camp, of walking through a crowd. My friends don't understand, they tell me to calm down and to stop worrying. It's easy enough for them to say but they just don't get it. Some people think it's all crap... My maths teacher actually called me an attention seeker. And I'm not. I'm really not. It's real, and I try... I really do, but people just don't understand how hard it is... They make stupid throw away comments like "Oh I'm so anxious and depressed" and don't think they realise how that affects someone like me, who really feels it, all of the time.

I know the symptoms now, sweaty hands, nausea, struggling to breath, tight chest, freezing, not being able to move and I've learnt some techniques to manage my anxiety. Breathing exercises, finding a place or a person who I know I can trust... But every day is still a battle. I have horrible negative thoughts that scare me, but I hope that one day... One day soon, I can start feeling normal... But what is normal anyway?

SCENE 17 - WHIPPED

SHANE
RAD
PAUL
DYLAN

Direct to audience.

SHANE I'm in love.... I think about my girlfriend all the time. My friends give me a hard time because I'm so into her. I want to be with her all the time. They hate me being in a relationship. They call me whipped because I'd prefer to hang out with her, rather than with them anymore. I've outgrown them I guess... They just don't get it. They are so disrespectful to women in general. The way they speak about them. The way they treat them. It's embarrassing. But the other day I walked in on them disrespecting Maddison. My Maddy. I did my nut at them.

Flashback.

Rad, Paul and Dylan enter the scene.

RAD She is fine. If only I had gone to pick up the pizza that night, I would have got in first.

PAUL I'm sure when he's finished with her, you'll get your turn.

DYLAN After me mate.

PAUL That Maddison ass!

RAD I bet she goes.

DYLAN Shh. He's right behind you.

Shane approaches them. He has heard what they've said about his girlfriend.

SHANE Hey lads. Who are you talking about?

PAUL Ahem... No one you know...

The boys smirk.

SHANE Is that right?

DYLAN Yeah mate. Some chick Rad banged on the weekend.

RAD Yeah what a ho.

SHANE (*furiously*) You know what, mate? I think it's time you grew the hell up. I know you were talking about my girlfriend because I fricken heard you. It's not ok for you to talk about her like that... It's not ok for you to talk about any chick like that. You are going to be a very lonely old man if you don't get your act together.

All laugh make whipping sounds.

RAD Lighten up man. Bros before hoes.

SHANE (*Angry*) You listen to me! I want to be with her. I enjoy being with her. I fricken love her man. When my dad died, she was there for me... She was there for my sister, and she was even there for mum. She helped organise everything, while we all fell in a heap. Mum was a mess. My little sister didn't stop crying for a month and I was like a zombie, and she was our rock. That girl is my best mate. She's twice the friend you guys have ever been!

PAUL Oh come on man.

DYLAN Yeah, we were just mucking about. We didn't mean it.

He tries to put his arm around Shane

RAD Most chick's ain't like Maddison

PAUL Hell no!

SHANE (*exasperated*) Yes they are! Don't you get it? Are you that thick? If you stopped disrespecting them for one second you might just get a clue. I never thought I could be so happy. That's it. I have found the person that I want to be with. I feel home when I'm with her. I can't describe it any other way... But you will never feel like I do if you keep talking about girls like that. No one is going to want you. Sure, some girl might put up with your crap for a while, but she'll wise up and leave you.

Respect man. Sending things like dick-pics, asking for nudes, that crap misogynistic gangster rap music you listen to... the porn... That's not real man. That's not how girls want to be treated. What I have is real and you poor losers are missing out.

He walks out, his friends are left a bit dumfounded and embarrassed, Shane's words have hit home. Rad does the whipping sound effect. The other boys push him over, irritated.

SCENE 18 - THE GIRL

JENNY

Jenny speaks directly to audience

JENNY

On the day that I found out that my dad had left I went to school because I didn't want to be at home.... Without him. How could he not love us enough to want to live with us anymore? It was too real at home. Mum was a mess. She'd kicked him out when they had a fight, but she thought he'd come back. He had always come back before... But this time he didn't.

School felt more normal... I was really upset... for a long time. My friends didn't know what to say. At the start it was all hugs and "awh's" and "poor you" ... And "I know how you feel" because, you know, everyone's parents break up and for most people it didn't really seem like a big deal. But I just couldn't get over it... It really affected me. I felt like something I loved was broken and there was no way to fix it. And I felt like a freak because I kept bursting into tears in class. At first people felt sorry for me but then they started avoiding me.

But there was this one girl... I don't even remember her name now...She was a new girl in Year 10. She knew. She helped me... Even if it was just to listen when I was sad... which was a lot of the time. And after a while I guess I just became ok again.

I'm in a good place now, a really good place. That broken little girl feels like she has the world at her feet now. All of this though, everything in my life, is all thanks to that girl who's name I don't remember...You know, I can't even recall her being there after that time; she must have moved school again, or something... It's funny, she'll never realise how much she helped me, just by listening. And I'll probably never be able to tell her... I just wish I had.

SCENE 19 - FOOLISH GAMES

AMANDA

JOHN

The School Counsellors office. Amanda sits opposite John.

AMANDA

I didn't know else I could talk to...

JOHN

That's why I'm here.

AMANDA Ok...This guy, I thought I meant something to him, but he used me and now I feel worthless.

JOHN No one can make you feel useless unless you let them. Talking about it is a great way to start taking back your power.

AMANDA How could I be so stupid? He made me say that I loved him... and I did... I really did. But he didn't love me... I don't even know if he actually even liked me... But he made me believe he did.

JOHN What happened?

AMANDA I should have never invited him back to my house that afternoon.

Flashback.

Amanda's loungeroom. Brad follows her into the room.

BRAD So where did you say your parents are?

AMANDA Out at a BBQ. They're not going to be home 'til really late.

BRAD Oh so that gives us some time to ourselves then. *(steps closer)*

AMANDA So we could... watch a movie maybe?

BRAD I'm not really in the mood for a movie.

AMANDA Well we got a new pool table the other day.

BRAD I don't really know how to play pool.

AMANDA Well I could teach you.

BRAD Nah.

AMANDA It's pretty easy.

BRAD Amanda, do you love me?

AMANDA Of course. You know I do.

BRAD How much?

AMANDA This much *(hugs him)*

BRAD Could you do something for me?

AMANDA Anything.

Brad whispers in her ear.

AMANDA (*pulls away from him*) Are you serious?

BRAD Why wouldn't I be? You said you loved me.

AMANDA But I'm not sure. I don't think I'm ready for that sort of thing.

BRAD I'll show you how ready you are.

He holds her hand and goes to lead her off.

Brad Exits.

Flashback ends.

Amanda sits back down opposite John.

AMANDA And of course, he dumped me the next day. Got what he wanted.

JOHN What a tosser!

AMANDA (*laughs*) Are you allowed to say that?

JOHN I don't know... (*laughs*) Look, you may regret what happened but you need to forgive yourself. Put it all down to experience. Let it make you wiser... Next time you come across a player you'll be able to spot him.

AMANDA It sucks. I've loved him for as long as I can remember.

DJ It wasn't love.... You'll know when its love because they'll feel it too. What you are having is just a crush...

AMANDA Argh... It's killing me.

JOHN That's why they call it a crush... If it didn't hurt, they would have called it something else.

AMANDA Whoah... That was pretty good.

JOHN I know, right?

AMANDA I just wish my first time was special... That I'd waited for my soul mate to come along... Do you believe in soul mates?

JOHN I don't know... I hope there is someone out there for everyone. I believe that I am loved, even if I don't have a partner at the moment... Yes, I got dumped too... It sucks. But I have wonderful friends, and family...

AMANDA So do I... Even though they drive me crazy sometimes...

JOHN They're family... that's their job.

They both laugh.

Return to neutral position.

SCENE 20 - CONFUSED

JEANNIE

Jeannie speaks to the audience directly like she is speaking intimately to a couple of close friends.

JEANNIE Okay so, I was on Insta right and saw Pete McIntire's name online. I don't know what possessed me, but I got brave and just wrote "Hi" ... I know! ... I can't believe I did either... Anyway, he writes back! Straight away, almost, and said "Hi Jeanie... How R U?" Just the letters R U... Ok pay attention to that because it becomes important later in the story... Ok? So anyway, I wrote "Great!" but with an 8 instead of the letters... so like Grr and then the number 8. Because I thought that sounded cooler... and he just used RU... Are you keeping up? Yes? Good! Because then he wrote "We should totally catch up and watch a movie or something!" Yes! He actually did. I couldn't believe the words that popped up on the screen. Pete McIntire asking me to hang out... and see a movie with him ... In a dark cinema, where he could totally like want to kiss me or something.

And anyway, I was like you know, trying not to get too excited. Because this is Pete! Pete McIntire. So, I just like waited for like a whole minute, which was torture... But I didn't want to be too keen, so I was patient for like 68 agonising seconds... Then finally I wrote "Yeah, I'm up for that". So, all casual like when I felt like screaming "Yes! Yes! Yes! I'll have your baby Pete McIntire!"

Anyway... Now this part is what I need your advice on... Because now it gets confusing.... Ok, so he wrote. "I can ask Steven to come and you can ask Stace" Boo! Double date... Harder to get a pash when we have our besties in tow. Anyway, I'm thinking "at least I will be on a date with Pete McIntire" ... But then I thought "Does he mean a double date like as in 'him and I' and 'Steven and Stacey?'... Or a double date of 'Steven and me' and 'him and Stacey?' Does he like Stacey? ... He's never met Stacey... or has he? Are they secretly together? I mean she would have told me, right?... She tells me everything... But then why would he call her Stace if they've never met? Stace is a nickname, and you only give people nicknames if you know them personally and generally like them... If you are friends... Or more than friends.... Do you think they are together, and Stacey hasn't told me because she knows I am totally in love with him and have been for months?

Anyway, then it got really, really confusing because I said. "Sure, I'll ask her" I know! I showed so much restraint because I really wanted to scream

at him “Are you cheating on me with my best friend? ... But I didn’t I just said “sure.” Then anyway, then he wrote “Thanks Jeannie, I love you.” What the actual? I love you! Exclamation point. Spelt out. ‘I L.O.V.E you.’ Not just ‘L.U.V’. That means something right? I mean it’s got to mean something! And this relates to the RU reference from earlier. If he is the sort of guy to use letter abbreviations in his texting like RU, why would he use the actual word LOVE if he didn’t actually love me... Like for real? Okay. Then it gets really, really complicated because he put one love heart emoji and one laughing crying emoji. Does the laughing crying emoji cancel out the love heart, or is it the other way around? Because it changes the whole meaning if it does. I don’t know what to think about any of this! I am so confused.

SCENE 21 - THE SLEEPER

MONICA
JADE
FIONA
JAY
ERIN

A schoolyard.

Three girls walk pass another girl who is asleep on the floor.

JADE Oh wow! Is she asleep again?

MONICA *(laughs)* Yes! She is. She has to be on something.

JADE She is so weird isn’t she, always late to school, never stays and talks with anyone. And look at her. She is dirty, never has clean clothes, and her uniform is always torn or something.

FIONA You know... now that I think about it, I don’t think I have ever even seen her eat lunch or anything here...she is probably anorexic.

JADE Or a junkie. There is definitely something wrong with her.

MONICA What’s that thing, where you fall asleep all the time...narcissism?

JADE Narcolepsy.

FIONA Do you think we should wake her up or something?

JADE As if! I’m not going near her. I might catch something.

They laugh and pass Jay who enters as they exit. He realises they are mocking Erin and heads over to her.

JAY (*gently shakes Erin awake*) Hey, are you alright?

ERIN (*wakes up*) What...oh no...What's the time? Did I fall asleep?

JAY It's just after 3:40. Are you feeling ok?

ERIN Yeah, I'm fine.

Erin rushes to pack her bag and looks at her watch.

ERIN Oh no! I missed my bus. I'm going to be late to pick up Elliot.

JAY Who's Elliot?

ERIN He's my little brother.

JAY Does he go to school here?

ERIN No, he is at a primary school on the other side of town. Oh, this can't be happening; he is going to freak out. He is only in year two.

JAY Could one of your parents pick him up. Isn't there someone else who can help?

ERIN No, I need to do it.

JAY A neighbour or something?

In the panic Erin drops the content of her bag. Jay crouches to help her pick it all up.

ERIN (*frustrated, close to tears*) Look! I just need to get to my little brother, or he is going to go off the deep end again.

JAY What do you mean?

ERIN (*angry*) Look, I know you're new, but people usually don't get involved in my life... It's complicated.

Jay nods for her to continue.

JAY I've got the time.

ERIN Fine. If you really want to know my Mum left three years ago. My brother is autistic and my dad...well.... yeah. Let's just say...I'm the closest thing my brother has to a parent. I wouldn't expect you to understand.

JAY Is there anyone helping you?

ERIN We don't need anyone's help!

JAY There are people who can make things easier.

ERIN Yeah, and they are the same people who will take my brother away from me. Why am I bothering? It's not like you care anyway...no one does! People at this school are so selfish. Do you know how hard it is to listen to people talk about where they went on holidays? I spend my holidays looking after my brother, cleaning up after him. You know what? None of that is too bad... The hard part is looking after my dad. He's like a ghost. He just gave up, he sleeps most of the day, and stares into space the rest of the time, he was so... happy a couple of years ago. Then mum left and dad couldn't cope, and now...now it is just me looking after the three of us. *(cries)* It's so hard and people here don't understand. There is no one I can turn to, no one I can trust, no one to rely on, I am all alone. I'm 17 and I just want my family back.

Jay holds her, she lets him comfort her.

JAY I am so sorry. You shouldn't have to deal with all this. That sounds so hard. I can't make it better...But I do have a car. Let's go get your brother and if you ever need to go anywhere, I'll take you. You can rely on me.

ERIN Really?

JAY Yeah, I lost my dad a few years ago...I guess I feel that I can kinda' understand.

ERIN I believe you.

JAY Come on, let's go get your brother.

SCENE 22 - SAME (Reprise)

ALL ACTORS

All actors step forward in turn, each taking or sharing a line from the opening scene SAME.

I just want someone who likes me for me...

Not some notion who they think I am.

Guys/Girls just don't speak to me.

I don't get it...

I try to make an effort I really do.

Someone told me once I'm intimidating.

But I'm not!

I'm actually really lonely.

People take one look at me and judge me.

No one understands,

I'm just me.

I'm a really decent person...

People would see that if they just gave me a chance.

Just give me a chance.

See me.

I'm right here.

End.