THE RUCK

BY KEVIN FEGAN

From the Golden Mile to the Gold Coast: A new play inspired by the real life story of the first UK girls rugby league team to tour Australia.

All the way from Yorkshire UK, the original "County of Origin" of Rugby League, comes a new force to be reckoned with in the sport: the mighty Batley Girls Under 16 team.

This group of girls from a small Yorkshire town have grown up together and are ready for tough challenges on and off the pitch; but are they prepared for what’s in store on the other side of the world?

Follow the story of these inspirational young women as they overcome boy (and girl) problems, friendship dramas, racial discrimination and deep-hidden family secrets, all set against the backdrop of a changing community in a diverse industrial town.

"Kevin’s script it’s fantastic. The Ruck is a truly original piece of theatre. It’s great to know there are such wonderful plays like this out there celebrating women in sport. Beautifully written with characters who’s antics are as colourful off the pitch as on. It’s real, honest and funny. These are the kind of women I’d want to spend a night at the theatre with.”  Maxine Peake
"THE RUCK" BY KEVIN FEGAN

First performed at Lawrence Batley Theatre Huddersfield on 15th Sept 2017
Directed by Joyce Branagh
Commissioned by Creative Scene
"THE RUCK" BY KEVIN FEGAN

CHARACTERS

SHELLEY - team player for Batley Girls' Rugby League Club.

EMLEY - team player for Batley Girls.

HEATON - team player for Batley Girls.

IFFY - Muslim Asian Girl and latest recruit to Batley Girls.

SPEN - Team Coach for Batley Girls and Shelley's Dad

NAN - Heaton's Grandma

KIWI PETE - Emley's Dad

CALDER - Emley's Boyfriend and friend of Iffy.

UNCLE LOGAN - Heaton's Australian "uncle".

HAZEL - Australian Team Coach for Smiley High State School

(CHORUS AND ALL OTHER PARTS ARE PLAYED BY THE CAST)

CAST OF 8

5 Female and 3 Male

SUGGESTIONS FOR DOUBLING

NAN/HAZEL

KIWI PETE/UNCLE LOGAN

RAPS & SONGS

Life is a Ruck

Jihadi Rap

Heritage Road

Kick It Into Touch

Parents & Teenagers

Second Family
"THE RUCK" BY KEVIN FEGAN

PROLOGUE: "COUNTY OF ORIGIN"

A TRAINING SESSION WITH BATLEY GIRLS RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB.

THE GIRLS (SHELLEY, EMLEY AND HEATON) ARE WARMING UP WITH
COACH, SPEN, BEFORE THE SESSION STARTS. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF
THE CAST ARE WATCHING THE GIRLS TRAINING.

CHORUS

FROM THE BOUNDARY OF MOUNT PLEASANT,
looking out across the valley,
ilies a classic sweep of northern industrial archaeology.

This settlement, called Batley,
is carved from brutal rock.
The blackened brick
of Victorian viaducts and rolling mills
defines the shape of our society.

There was a time these valleys
were the playground of kings
who claimed their sport was ordained by God,
until their power was tackled by noblemen
in battle after bloody battle.

In time, the birthright of the aristocracy
was snatched from them by the industrialists
who easily out-paced them with their power of money
and went on to score a lasting victory.

But then the working man created a ruck
and with his labour forced the bourgeoisie
to share their wealth and settle for democracy.

Finally, in these epic Heartlands,

Woman wrestled free from the rib-cage of Man
to take her place in the arena and stake
her claim in the game we call society.

There are those who would turn back the clock,
but the genie is out of the box,
the sport can never be the same again.

There have been too many game-changers;
but, wait, here comes the latest stranger
to take the stage, determined to play the Northern Game.
SCENE ONE

"IFFY", A 16 YEAR OLD ASIAN GIRL, AND THE TEAM'S LATEST RECRUIT, STEPS FORWARD TO JOIN THE GIRLS.

EMLEY  Wedding reception's upstairs.

IFFY  I'm not here for a wedding.

SHELLEY  Cricket pitch is over there.

IFFY  Very funny.

SPEN  This is our new girl, Ifra. Apparently it means "to fix and improve something".

EMLEY  She can't play rugby.

IFFY  Why not?

EMLEY  Because Asians don't play rugby.

SPEN  This one does.

IFFY  Frightened we'll take over the rugby - like we did the cricket?

EMLEY  That's not going to happen on my watch.

IFFY  I mean, we've moved into drugs and organised crime, why not rugby?

EMLEY  She can't play rugby in a headscarf.

IFFY  It's an hijab.

SPEN  Right, you know the drill. "Touch and Pass" around the field until you find out five things about the new girl.

GIRLS  (CHANTING WHILE THEY RUN WITH THE BALL)

Touch and pass, kick some ass,
whatever it takes, they will not pass.
EMLEY    Where you from?

IFFY    Heritage Road.

EMLEY    No, I mean "originally"?

IFFY    Duh, Batley - born and bred.

IFFY    I know what you meant. Grandad came here from

Pakistan without a penny in his pocket to work

in textiles. My dad went on to own the mill. He turned it

into a furniture warehouse when textiles went down the

toilet.

GIRLS    Touch and pass, kick some ass,

whatever it takes, they will not pass.

Making contact keeps us strong

touch our hearts and pass it on.

SHELLEY    So this is you trying to make a name for yourself, is it?

Playing rugby?

IFFY    Why not?

SHELLEY    What position?

IFFY    Scrum half - I like to boss it.

GIRLS    Touch and pass, kick some ass,

whatever it takes, they will not pass.

Making contact keeps us strong

touch our hearts and pass it on.

IFFY    (TO EMLEY) Why do you play? You strike me as a
bit of a "girly girl".

EMLEY I am not.

IFFY You're wearing make-up for training.

EMLEY Foundation is not make-up.

SHELLEY Slapper.

IFFY I suppose you never know who's watching, do you?

SHELLEY Yeah, we get loads of modelling scouts at the rugby.

EMLEY Shurrup lesbo!

SHELLEY Tart!

SPEN (CALLING) Hey! You never heard your father using language like that!

IFFY Is Coach Spen your dad?

SHELLEY Yeah.

IFFY Bet he started this team for you, didn't he?

SHELLEY No.

GIRLS Touch and pass, kick some ass,

whatever it takes, they will not pass.

Making contact keeps us strong

touch our hearts and pass it on.

IFFY Who's the quiet one?

SHELLEY Heaton - we call her "Hanging Heaton" -

EMLEY 'Cos she's morbid.

SHELLEY She's a good Prop Forward.

IFFY (TO HEATON) Why do you play?

EMLEY She enjoys the bruises.
HEATON  So what if I do? They're badges of honour.
IFFY  Bet you let your anger out on the pitch, don't you?
EMLEY  Like when you head-butted that Wigan Full Back.
HEATON  She fell onto me.
EMLEY  Yeah, right.
SHELLEY  She was defending me.
GIRLS  Touch and pass, kick some ass,
whatever it takes, they will not pass.
Making contact keeps us strong
touch our hearts and pass it on.
EMLEY  (CALLING) Ready, Coach!
SHELLEY  We've only found out four things about the new girl.
SPEN  It'll have to do.
THE GIRLS RETURN TO SPEN.
"THE RUCK".
SPEN  Life is a ruck
But you make your own luck in this world.
Enjoy the battle,
Go in hard on the tackle,
Turn defence into attack.
So what if life sucks?
Who gives a flying...Prop Forward?
Be a play-maker,
Not an undertaker.
Make like a Hooker
Cashing in on a scrum,
On a dummy run;
Where there's muck, there's money,
Make a fast buck,
Look for those opportunities,
You gotta be duckin' and divin'
Or you'll come unstuck.
Not everyone's a crook,
So don't play the victim,
Don't swallow the rhetoric,
Hook, line and sinker.
Have no truck with defeat,
Pluck up the courage,
If you're in at the deep end,
Down on your luck,
Last line of defence,
Take aim,
Right pass at the right time,
Swing it out to a safe pair of hands,
Running with the ball, down the wing
Towards the goal line
And try! Try again!

IFFY STEPS UP AND PLACES THE BALL FOR A KICK AT GOAL. EMLEY STEPS UP TO TAKE IT AS USUAL BUT COACH SPEN INDICATES HE WOULD LIKE
IFFY TO HAVE A GO. EMLEY IS NOT BEST PLEASED. IFFY KICKS A GOAL.
THEY ALL CONGRATULATE HER, EXCEPT EMLEY.

SPEN I think we've found ourselves a new kicker!

EMLEY (TO IFFY) What you really doing here?

IFFY LAUNCHES INTO HER "JIHADI RAP"

IFFY

What's a matter, girl,
Am I upsetting your view of the world?
Worried I'm some kind of infiltrator?
A spy in the camp? A people-hater?
Well, let me tell you this:
We're not all "Jihadi brides", me and my sisters,
on a one-way ticket to Syria, off to join I.S.I.S.
Yeah, I'm on a mission,
But look - no bombs,
We're in this together,
Who gives a shit where you're from?
Batley's not Jihad,
More like rehab,
Like a broken Fox's biscuit,
It's up to us to fix it,
There'll be no game left to play
If you and me can't mix it.

EMLEY Muslim!

IFFY Kafir!

EMLEY What's that?
IFFY  Non-believer.
SHELLEY  Is that bad?
IFFY  Depends.
SHELLEY  Are there any good Kafirs?
IFFY  Some. Are there any good Muslims?
SHELLEY  There could be you?
 I'm Shelley.
HEATON  Heaton.
EMLEY  (BEGRUDGINGLY) Emley.
SHELLEY  Do you want to hang out with us, after, at Tescos?
IFFY  There's something else about me you should know: you
might be the present, but I'm the future. So that's five
things you know about me now.
SPEN  Right ladies, listen up, I've got some big news for you.
 I know we're U.K. Champions - no one can take that away
from us; but, truth is, only one or two clubs have ever
been a match for us. You girls are good, don't get me
wrong, but we're not used to playing teams who are more
than a match for us. That is, until we faced those Ozzie
girls at the end of the season. They taught us our biggest
lesson of last year: that we can be beaten. I know we
could've beat them, but the fact is we didn't.
HEATON  They were tough: they went swimming in the sea at
Whitby in Winter.
SPEN  Beating teams who are better than us, that's our real
challenge. The standard of competition in Australia is obviously higher; which is why I've been talking to your parents about going to Queensland on a pre-season tour.

EMLEY
Queensland? Where's that?

HEATON
Australia, stupid.

EMLEY
What? Us? Going to Australia? We can't do that?

SPEN
If those Ozzie girls can tour the U.K., why can't we tour Australia?

HEATON
My nan won't be able to afford it.

SPEN
For a while now we've been busy fund-raising up at Soothill Working Mens' Club. We didn't want to say until we were confident we could afford to take the whole team. Those who can afford to pay are paying, those who can't will be subsidised; so I don't want girls worrying about the money. We're still ten grand short, but with your help, I think we can do it.

I've been in touch with their Coach, Hazel, and she's happy to host us for a pre-season tour. We'll be staying on the Gold Coast, in a hotel, and travelling around Queensland, playing some of their top teams.

Any questions?

EMLEY
Is there a beach?

SPEN
It's called the "Gold Coast" - what do you think?

EMLEY
I think I need a new bikini.

SHELLEY
Can we train on the beach?
Every morning. The hotel's walking distance to the beach.

When are we going?

End of October - for three weeks. It's the start of their Summer so it'll be hot - which is another advantage they'll have over us, if we're not super fit.

What about school?

We're going over half-term, but you will miss a week of school.

Hey, you lot, listen up: I've had to fight hard for this. I've promised your teachers you'll catch up on your work. I expect you all to do as well in your exams as in your rugby. Treat your brain like a muscle and exercise it.

She'll have to find hers first.

Look who's talking.

Pack up your kit and get some rest. Training three times a week from now on, until Oz.

Spen, am I going?

You're in the team, aren't you?

I don't want you worrying about the money, okay?

Thanks, Coach.

Let me see your arms.

SHE SHOWS HIM.
HEATON    They're healing.

SPEN    Good girl. I told you the rugby would help. Off you go.
SCENE TWO

SPEN IS OUTSIDE BATLEY BULLDOGS’ STADIUM ON HERITAGE ROAD, LOOKING DOWN AT THE SURROUNDING AREA OF MOUNT PLEASANT.

SPEN

It were wool 'round here, cotton in Lancashire. The "shoddy trade", they called it: woollen rags and clothes recycled into blankets, carpets and military uniforms.

There were some very wealthy "shoddy barons" made their money on the sweat of others. They still call the League 'round here, the "Heavy Woollen".

Mount Pleasant was a temperance area because of the Methodist influence. I suppose the Muslim community are continuing that tradition. But Batley has always been a heavy-drinking town. Still is, especially at weekends along the "golden mile". It were Batley Variety Club what put the town on the map, with international superstars like Louis Armstrong, Eartha Kitt, Cliff Richards, The Bee Gees, Roy Orbison...the list goes on.

I have a theory that all the sweat from the mills gave rise to Rugby League. You see, hard labour, well, it builds a man up, physically, like a warrior. Mix that with a sense of social injustice and you've got one very aggressive and righteous individual. And all that aggression has to go somewhere. Best not twat your boss; better to find yourself an arena and charge like a bull at another bloke built like a brick shithouse. In times of war, throw a
weapon into the equation and you've got yourself a soldier. In peace-time, throw a ball in there and you've got a rugby league player. That's why it was created here, in Kirklees, down the road at the George Hotel in 1895. This is the "County of Origin". The following year, Batley were the very first winners of the Northern Union Challenge Cup - "Champions of the North" they called us. Those were the days, when the town's brass band would turn out for the team and the railways would sound a salute.

I remember my dad bringing me here, standing me under his crombie to keep warm. His dad used to take him when there were anti-aircraft guns on the hills opposite.

Me dad says,
"You knew where you were in those days. Rugby Union for the toffs and Rugby League for the roughs."

Of course, now you've working-class kids like me been to university and playing Rugby Union as well as League.

Dad says,
"They had the money, but we were faster, more physical and they used to come to us for the best coaches.

Players would work a twelve-hour shift, then come straight to a match to play. You could tell a player by how they ran or threw a ball. You never knew what might emerge from a scrum. They used to score tries from 80 yards out.

Wingers would play wide like Wingers. Nowadays it's
driven by possession and the six-tackle rule. They just seem to get down for a rest in a scrum."

It's a different game since Super League. Much harder for us little clubs to compete against the big money-teams. It's not a level playing field. Mind you, it never was at The Mount, with our infamous slope down to the "Nine 'Ole". Training is fierce for these full-time professionals. I reckon the players are getting bigger and fitter, but the body contact takes its toll and leads to more injuries.

This area, where the Club is, on Mount Pleasant around Heritage Road, used to be a white working-class area. Players used to live local and play local. The community used to turn out for the home games. We used to belong here. Now one ghetto's been swopped for another: we're surrounded by mosques and madrasses. I've nothing against the Muslim community, but they're not interested in rugby, are they? Apart from Iffy, of course. I don't know what's going on there.

On match days the ground still comes to life, but the rest of the time the Club looks like the museum on the hill. And "The Taverners", next to the ground, where we all used to meet for a few pints, well, supporters stopped going 'cause they don't live 'round here no more. It was taken over by Asian businessmen and, well, it's burned down now. What can we do? We can't turn the clocks back. We
can't move the stadium. I don't know what the future has in store.

SONG: "HERITAGE ROAD"

SPEN & CHORUS

The future grows, the past erodes,
History uploads on Heritage Road.
The people sweat and the people play,
In the rolling valleys of green and grey,
Migrant workers come and go,
communities change but the landscape don't.
The time has come, mills and mines all gone,
We must adapt our lives and try to move on.

Changes to work, changes to play,
In the rolling valleys of green and grey.
As the future grows and the past erodes,
History uploads on Heritage Road.
Looking back at all we've done,
Goods produced and tournaments won,
We face the challenge of a brand new day
In the rolling valleys of green and grey.
The future grows and the past erodes,
History uploads on Heritage Road.
SCENE THREE

THE GIRLS ARE GATHERING OUTSIDE TESCO IN BATLEY..

SHELLEY Coach says we have to think up a name for the team.

EMLEY We've got a name - Batley Girls.

SHELLEY No, stupid, a nickname. Like the men are "Bulldogs".

IFFY What? Like "Batley Poodles"?

EMLEY Can we be "Batley Labradoodles"?

SHELLEY This is serious. We have to sex it up -

HEATON (TO EMLEY) That's your department -

SHELLEY Like Kerry Packer did when he got the clubs to choose animal names.

HEATON Does it have to be an animal?

SHELLEY No, there's "Huddersfield Giants" and -

HEATON We could be insects -

EMLEY "Batley Bumble Bees".

HEATON Or vegetables -

EMLEY "Batley Brussels".

IFFY Birds?

EMLEY "Batley Blackbirds".

IFFY Cheap gag.

HEATON "Batley Dinosaurs".

SHELLEY Go on, take the piss; see how you feel when the new kit arrives.

EMLEY You never said we were getting a new strip?

SHELLEY Well, we are. When we choose a name. We've got
ourselves a sponsor for Oz.

HEATON Who?

SHELLEY Morley Waste.

EMLEY Oh, great, we're gonna be "Batley Dustbins".

SHELLEY They've said we can suggest something. Otherwise, it will be their choice.

CALDER ARRIVES WITH A COUPLE OF MATES (PLAYED BY KIWI PETE, SPEN AND NAN). THERE IS A STAND-OFF BETWEEN THE GIRL AND THE BOYS.

IFFY I know that boy.

EMLEY You do?

IFFY Yeah, Calder, he used to live on our street before all the white boys left.

EMLEY He's my boyfriend.

IFFY Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to -

EMLEY That's all right, it's nothing serious; he's just some boy.

GIRLS CHORUS Things girls like about boys:

they're funny

they're not so bothered about their appearance

not as bitchy as girls

make you feel protected

nice bums

show their feelings when they're on their own

have ideas and thoughts about things

a shoulder to cry on.

BOYS CHORUS Things boys like about girls:
hair and eyes
they have the babies
do things boys don't want to do - like cleaning
they're more caring
put a lot of effort into their appearance
make us feel happy and horny
they smile
you can talk to them about personal shit.

CALDER  Someone got shot here.
EMLEY  Yeah, we heard.
CALDER  You shouldn't be hanging 'round Tescos.
IFFY  It wasn't here, it was down near the garage.
CALDER  And you would know.
EMLEY  What's that supposed to mean?
CALDER  This is not a place for girls.
SHELLEY  This is not a place for boys.
GIRLS CHORUS  Things girls don't like about boys:
can get obsessed with you
show off in front of their mates
send you dirty pictures on Instagram
ignore you and insensitive
immature and big-headed
don't listen and selfish attitudes
jealous and they have affairs
too loud and sexist.
BOYS CHORUS  Things boys don't like about girls:
gossiping and constant nagging
too much perfume and too pink
go to the toilet in pairs
drag us into town shopping
take too long getting ready
they don't answer your texts
can't understand them and too emotional
expect us to be mind readers.

GIRLS MIMICK THE BOYS' POSTURES AND ATTITUDES.

BOYS MIMICK THE GIRLS' POSTURES AND ATTITUDES.

GIRLS CHORUS  "Get your tits out for the lads!"
BOYS CHORUS  "Does my bum look big in this?"
GIRLS CHORUS  "If you really loved me, you'd let me."
BOYS CHORUS  "Haven't you had enough to drink yet?"
GIRLS CHORUS  "Yeah, I've done it loads of times."
BOYS CHORUS  "I want you to want to."
GIRLS CHORUS  "Can we go out with each other and still see other
people?"
BOYS CHORUS  "Were you staring at her?"
GIRLS CHORUS  "You decide for us."
BOYS CHORUS  "Sorry isn't good enough."
GIRLS CHORUS  "Bitch, ho, bird, chick, the wife!"
BOYS CHORUS  "Huh, men!"

SHELLEY AND EMLEY STICK TOGETHER. IFFY GOES OVER TO CALDER.
Emley's very pretty.
Do you think so?
Well, you obviously do.
She's not like you.
What do you mean?
Nothing.
No, come on? You mean, Asian?
No! I mean she wears lots of make-up.
And?
And perfume. We were in the cinema the other night and I could hardly breathe. I was choking on the stink, it was that bad.
Tell her.
I don't want to hurt her feelings.
And she's got sharp nails.
That is more information than I need to know.
Come out with us tomorrow night?
I'm not playing gooseberry.
Don't be daft, it'll be a laugh.
Not for Emley, it won't.
Come on, we used to have a right laugh together.
Yeah, we did. Now go and see your girlfriend, Calder; you're doin' my head in.

EMLEY (TO CALDER) Let's find somewhere private we can make
out.

SHELLEY (TO IFFY) So what about this name?
SCENE FOUR
HEATON'S HOUSE.
HEATON Did you know about this tour, Nan?
NAN I've told Spen we can't afford it.
HEATON We don't have to, he's raising the money.
NAN We're not a charity case.
HEATON Dunt stop you using the Food Bank.
NAN That's different. You don't want to be going to Australia.
HEATON Can you let me decide what I want?
NAN No good'll come of it.
HEATON Just cos it didn't work out for you and grandad. I'm not migrating, you know; I am coming back.
NAN We came back so you could have a decent life here.
NAN We didn't know how things would turn out.
HEATON I'm going and you can't stop me.
HEATON GOES TO HER ROOM AND WAITS BY HER LAPTOP FOR A FACE-TIME CALL. ON SCREEN WE SEE A VIDEO CALL COME THROUGH, WHICH SHE ANSWERS AND LOGAN APPEARS ON SCREEN.
LOGAN Is that you, Heaton?
HEATON Uncle Logan?
LOGAN Too right it is. Good to see you, girl, finally.
HEATON Good to see you too.
LOGAN So you're the rugby player?
HEATON Yeah.
LOGAN Cool. I'll have to come and see you play.
HEATON Really?
LOGAN If you're coming all the way to Queensland, we'll have to meet up.
HEATON I'd love that.
LOGAN No dramas. We love our rugby league over here.
HEATON My friends'll be dead jealous.
LOGAN We can work on that if you want. I'll show you a few places to make your friends turn green.
HEATON I can't wait to meet you.
LOGAN You really look like your mother when you say that.
HEATON Do I?
LOGAN How is she?
HEATON In a bad way. Don't you know?
LOGAN You're the first one in the family to get in touch.
HEATON We don't see much of her, she's too busy drinking herself to death.
LOGAN Sorry to hear that. I was always very fond of your mother.
HEATON I've never heard anyone say that before.
LOGAN You said you live with your Gran?
HEATON Since mum lost the plot.
LOGAN What about your grandad - he's my uncle?
HEATON He left Nan, not long after they all came back from Oz; but I was just a baby so I'm not sure.
LOGAN Sounds like you guys have had it pretty tough.
HEATON Do you remember them?
LOGAN Sure do.

HEATON HEARS HER NAN APPROACHING.

HEATON Shit! Nan's coming. Sorry, I've got to go, I'll be in touch soon.

HEATON ENDS THE CALL. NAN ENTERS.

NAN Look, we should talk about this.

HEATON Do we have any relatives in Queensland?

NAN We don't have anything to do with your grandad's side of the family.

HEATON Why not?

NAN They're a bad lot; you keep away.

HEATON What about "Uncle" Logan?

NAN Who told you about - ?

HEATON I found him myself, online.

NAN What have I told you about talking to strangers on the internet?

HEATON He's not really my uncle; he's mum's cousin.

NAN I know who he is.

HEATON What's your problem? Do you think he's "grooming" me?

NAN Don't joke about things you know nothing about.

HEATON Yeah, cos no one tells me fuck-all.

NAN Language!

HEATON STORMS OUT.
SONG: "KICK IT INTO TOUCH"

HEATON

I don't want to be the next big thing,
I don't want to end up like my mum,
I don't want to meet no pervy celebrities,
I don't want a Staffie called Tyson.
I don't want millions of followers and friends
or drink myself stupid, living for the weekends.
I don't really care what's #trending
or the latest hits YouTube are recommending.
Constantly broke,
And I've no phone credit,
life is one big joke
and I just don't get it.
I need to kick it into touch!

CHORUS

Constantly broke,
up to our necks in credit,
life is one big joke
and we just don't get it.
Kick it into touch!

HEATON

I don't want to have no superpowers
or be a vampire zombie head,
I don't want to star in a brat movie,
And I don't want to talk to the dead.
Constantly broke,
and no phone credit,
life is one big joke
and I just don't get it.
I need to kick it into touch!

CHORUS
Constantly broke,
up to our necks in credit,
life is one big joke
and we just don't get it.
Kick it into touch!

HEATON
I don't want to wish my life away
on x-box games and virtual play.
I don't want to wake up some guy's "ho"
and end up screaming on the Jeremy Kyle show.
Constantly broke,
and no phone credit,
life is one big joke
and I just don't get it.
I need to kick it into touch!

CHORUS
Constantly broke,
up to our necks in credit,
life is one big joke
and we just don't get it.

We need to Kick it into touch!
SCENE FIVE

SOOTHILL WORKING MENS' CLUB.

PARENTS' MEETING.

SPEN Thanks to parents and family members for coming along.

Welcome to Sothill Surfers' Club. We've tried to bring a little taste of the Gold Coast tonight to the "rhubarb triangle".

KIWI PETE "Batley by the Sea" - now that's asking a lot of climate change.

SPEN Thank you, Kiwi Pete. We have to wrap up business in time for the bingo at 9.30pm so I'll crack on. Big thanks to everyone who took part in the parents' "touch rugby competition" - even though we finished last.

KIWI PETE Someone put whiskey in our water bottles.

SPEN And the "pig racing" was a big success.

KIWI PETE I heard it was won by a pig this year.

SPEN Thanks to all those who have made and sold over a thousand designer doggy-poo bags.

We are so near, yet so far from our fund-raising target. If we can't find another five grand by the end of the Summer holidays, we won't be going anywhere. We need one last push, people. The girls are down Tescos every weekend on the tills, packing bags in exchange for donations. We've some fabulous prizes tonight, donated by local businesses: you can win a day out at the assault
course at Rothwell, afternoon tea at the local garden centre or a piercing of your own choice at Kick Lane Tattoos.

KIWI PETE There y'are, Nan, you’ll be able to get the other nipple done.

NAN I'll swing for you, Kiwi Pete.

SPEN I've had a new tattoo done for the occasion - and it's itching like hell.

KIWI PETE Try pile cream. Worked for me.

SPEN (SHOWING A RHUBARB TATTOO ON HIS LEG) The girls have decided on their tour name for the new strip: the "Batley Rhubarbs".

KIWI PETE The girls want to know when they're getting the new kit?

SPEN When I get it. I'm sure you'll miss them while they're away and, I'm speaking as a parent now, some of them will be feeling more lonely than others. Obviously pastoral care is down to me. I'm responsible for safety and welfare - it's my coaching badge on the line; but I need your support. I need you to let me know if there's anything I'm not aware of.

KIWI PETE What's the time difference?

SPEN They're ahead of us in Oz by nine hours.

KIWI PETE Three years ahead in the rugby.

SPEN I appreciate they'll be 10,000 miles away, but what I don't want is parents 'phoning up any time they like.
KIWI PETE: What time's lights out?

SPEN: Straight after "Neighbours".

KIWI PETE: I suggest you phone between 9 - 10am, which will be tea-time in Oz. Or you could phone at midnight and help me get them out of bed of a morning.

KIWI PETE: Good luck with our Emley, you'll need it.

SPEN: Right, any questions I'll be at the bar. We've a beer raffle tonight - everyone who buys a ticket for a tenner wins a drink.

AT THE BAR.

KIWI PETE: I hope you'll take good care of my little princess.

SPEN: Your Emley's more than able to take care of herself.

KIWI PETE: This lad, Calder, she's seeing; I don't want him pestering her while she's away.

SPEN: I'll look out for it; boyfriend trouble's the last thing I need.

NAN: Can I have a quiet word, Spen?

SPEN: 'Course.

NAN: I don't want our Heaton to go.

SPEN: I told you I'd sort the money.

NAN: It's not that. Look, thanks for everything you've done; it wouldn't be a problem if it wasn't Australia.

SPEN: We wouldn't be going, if it wasn't Australia.

NAN: It's a family matter. We've relatives out there I don't want her to see.

SPEN: Nan, you can't deny the girl an opportunity of a lifetime?
NAN: I've already told her.

SPEN: We need her in the team.

NAN: I never thought you'd raise the money. I came tonight because I wanted to tell you in person.

SPEN: She's your grand-daughter, I can't force you; but you're making a big mistake. I'll look after her in Oz; I'll make sure she doesn't get into bother.

NAN: I'm sorry, I can't allow it. I've got to go.
SCENE SIX
THE GIRLS ARE GATHERING FOR TRAINING. CALDER CATCHES UP WITH IFFY ON HER WAY TO TRAINING.

CALDER Do you miss me?
IFFY No.
CALDER I don't believe you.

Do you remember our first kiss?

IFFY No.
CALDER At the swimming baths.
IFFY It tasted of chlorine.
CALDER I miss "swimming" with you.
IFFY You dumped me.
CALDER You didn't tell me 'bout your dad.
IFFY He's still my dad.
CALDER I've changed.
IFFY I haven't.
CALDER Come on, I'm cool with it now.
IFFY That's big of you.
CALDER I want you.
IFFY You're loss, not mine.
CALDER Don't be like that. Forgive and forget.
IFFY You're with Em.

CALDER TAKES HER MOBILE PHONE AND TYPES IN HIS NUMBER.
IFFY Give that back.

I didn't ask for your number.
CALDER  Text me. You know you want to.

IFFY RUNS AWAY.

AT THE TRAINING SESSION.

EMLEY  She hangs out on "Greenway" with the older boys.

SHELLEY  How do you know?

EMLEY  Calder told me.

HEATON  Did he used to go out with her?

EMLEY  He says "no".

SHELLEY  Where's she from?

EMLEY  Savile Town. She lives with her aunty.

IFFY ARRIVES. SHE IS WEARING PIECES OF MATERIAL AROUND HER WRISTS. SPEN WANTS A QUIET WORD. HE TAKES HER BY THE WRISTS.

SPEN  Not you as well?

IFFY  What?

SPEN  Let me see your arms.

IFFY  Why? What's up?

SPEN  What are these?

IFFY  They're prayers.

SPEN  Take them off.

IFFY  You think I'm cutting up?

SHE TAKES THEM OFF AND SHOWS HIM.

Satisfied? I'm not like Heaton, okay?

SPEN  Sorry, Iffy, no offence.

IFFY  None taken. I know you're looking out for us. The prayers help keep me safe.
SPEN Didn't see your folks at the Parents' Night?

IFFY My dad really wanted to be there; but he's in prison.

SPEN Seriously? I thought your dad owned a furniture business?

IFFY He does.

SPEN I can't tell when you're telling me the truth and when you're winding me up?

IFFY Mum's signed the Consent Form - here.

SHE HANDS HIM THE FORM.

It's all right, her English is very good.

SPEN They've no objections to you going on tour?

IFFY Dad says he'll pay what you need to reach your target.

SPEN Yeah, right, it's around five thousand quid.

IFFY I know.

SPEN Wow, that's very generous. Tell him to email me his business logo and we'll put it on the new strip. That is, if they let him email from prison?

IFFY He said give me your bank details and he'll transfer the money -

SPEN I've heard that before.

IFFY If you don't want it?

SPEN I'd really like to meet him; thank him in person.

IFFY He's not a big rugby fan.

SPEN But he'll come and watch you play?

IFFY Let's see how his season goes, shall we?

SPEN Is this straight up?
IFFY: It's real money, all right. My dad don't fuck about.

SPEN: No strings attached?

IFFY: None.

SPEN: No comeback on us? You know I won't have that.

IFFY: I promise.

SPEN: Why rugby, Iffy?

IFFY: Someone says I can't do a thing for no good reason, I'm gonna do it. I tried boxing, but it wasn't for me. I prefer to go to war as a team, don't you?

SPEN: Do I need to sort out a Prayer Room for you at the hotel?

IFFY: I don't think we'll win by praying, do you?

SPEN: I don't know?

IFFY: I'm not like other Muslim girls. I don't get lifts everywhere; I have a bike. My dad isn't a taxi driver; my mum isn't a housewife. I love Christmas. We have a dog. We have a tv; I watch the News and documentaries. I don't stay at home, cooking and cleaning all day; I'm going to be a Criminologist and marry for love.

SPEN: It can't be easy for you, going against your Muslim upbringing?

IFFY: Listen: I've not turned my back on anything. I'm proud of my culture. You want us to integrate; well, here I am. Just teach me the rugby, coach.

IFFY JOINS THE GIRLS.

GIRLS: Touch and pass, kick some ass,
whatever it takes, they will not pass;

making contact keeps us strong,

touch our hearts and pass it on.

IFFY We going down Tescos again after?
EMLEY Maybe.

IFFY I could take you to the Asian supermarket, if you like?
SHELLEY We daren't go in there.

IFFY You'll be all right with me, they're really friendly.

EMLEY We thought you might take us on Greenway?

IFFY Who's been talking about me?

EMLEY Calder says you got suspended from school.

IFFY Did he? What else did he say?

EMLEY He says a group of Asian girls organised a trip to the seaside with a group of older lads.

IFFY If you must know, I typed a letter on school paper and forged the Head's signature. We posted it to our parents, asking them for their permission to go on a school trip and £20 towards costs.

HEATON Hey, what a great scam.

IFFY We'd have got away with it too, if one of the parents hadn't phoned the school for more information.

HEATON I told you this girl was cool.

IFFY (TO EMLEY) Did Calder tell you he was one of the older lads?
EMLEY DOESN'T ANSWER. THE GIRLS RETURN TO TRAINING, LEAVING IFFY ON HER OWN. CALDER ARRIVES AND SIGNALS TO IFFY TO JOIN HIM.

IFFY What you doin' here? You'll get me shot.
CALDER Just one date, see how it goes?
IFFY No.
CALDER Give me one hour, that's all I'm asking.
IFFY No.
CALDER If it's not right, I'll never bother you again.
IFFY Calder, if you're serious, you need to tell Em first.
CALDER I will, I'm just waiting for the right moment.
IFFY Before we go to Oz.
CALDER All right, I'm on it.
SCENE SEVEN

EMLEY'S BEDROOM.

SHELLEY Why do they call your dad "Kiwi Pete"?

EMLEY Pete Black - the "All-Blacks". It's Dewsbury logic.

SHELLEY Oh, I get it. Funny you being called Emley "Black".

EMLEY Why?

SHELLEY You know? The way you've been with Iffy.

EMLEY That's not about race; it's about Calder.

SHELLEY Whatever you say.

EMLEY He's coming 'round in a bit.

SHELLEY You didn't say.

EMLEY He's got something to tell me.

SHELLEY I'll go when he comes.

EMLEY You don't have to.

SHELLEY I think I do.

EMLEY How come dad lets you stay, why not Calder?

SHELLEY It's right, we could be up to no good.

EMLEY That would shut him up.

SHELLEY Would you go with a girl?

EMLEY No way.

SHELLEY Why not?

EMLEY 'Cause my whole world revolves around boys - and shopping.

SHELLEY And the team.

EMLEY Well, yeah, and the team.
SHELLEY: Who are girls, right?

EMLEY: Yes, of course they're girls; it's a girls' team.
Oh my god, would you go with a girl?

SHELLEY: I might.

EMLEY: You dark horse.

SHELLEY: It's not such a big deal nowadays.

EMLEY: Isn't it?
Have you been with a girl?

SHELLEY: Might have.

EMLEY: Have you been with a boy?

SHELLEY: Might have. I don't see why we have to choose.

EMLEY: Woo, get you. Bloody hell. How long have I known you? I had no idea.

SHELLEY: I don't feel the need to broadcast it.

EMLEY: I won't tell a soul, I swear.
What was it like?

SHELLEY: I thought you and Calder -?

EMLEY: Yeah, 'course. I meant, you know, with a girl?

SHELLEY: Different. You should try it.

EMLEY: Do you fancy me?

SHELLEY: No.

EMLEY: Why? What's the matter with me?

CALDER ARRIVES. SHELLEY LEAVES.

CALDER: Can we go somewhere?

EMLEY: See a movie?
CALDER: Can't afford it.
EMLEY: We could go to yours?
CALDER: No.
EMLEY: What's a matter with here?
CALDER: Your dad doesn't like me.
EMLEY: Dad lets me have whatever I want. I'm going to ask him if you can start stopping over.
CALDER: Really?
EMLEY: I think it's time he accepted we're a couple.
CALDER: (LEAVING) Call me when you've spoken to him.
EMLEY: What was it you wanted to say?
CALDER: It'll keep.
CALDER LEAVES.
SCENE EIGHT
HEATON IS AT NAN'S HOUSE, EMLEY IS AT KIWI PETE'S AND SHELLEY IS AT SPEN'S.

HEATON'S HOUSE.

HEATON        You told Spen I'm not going?
NAN           It's for the best. I don't expect you to understand.
HEATON        I don't need your permission. I've got it off mum.
NAN           When have you seen your mum?
HEATON        She comes onto the estate to buy her weed.
NAN           You're in my care, Heaton; she has no rights.
HEATON        She says she wants to go back to Australia, but she can't
               because of her criminal record.
NAN           We took her away for her own good.
HEATON        I've got a copy of me Birth Certificate for me passport.
               I know mum was pregnant with me when you dragged her
               back to Britain.
NAN           She was only a girl herself, she didn't know her own mind.
HEATON        Like me, you mean? Well I'm not letting you ruin my life,
               like you ruined hers.
NAN           How dare you? You wouldn't have a life if it wasn't for me.
HEATON        What's that supposed to mean?
NAN           You think your mum wanted you?
HEATON        That is so cruel.
NAN           She hasn't been able to look after you, has she?
HEATON        You're the reason she's an alcoholic.
NAN: Your bloody father's the reason, not me.

HEATON: What d'you mean? Who was he? It says "Father Unknown". I have a right to know.

NAN: Why don't you ask her?
SCENE NINE
SPEN'S HOUSE.

SHELLEY  Em's dad spoils her rotten.
SPEN  He can afford to.
SHELLEY  I'm glad you don't spoil me.
SPEN  I can't believe you just said that.
SHELLEY  It's true.
SPEN  Shell, what do you know bout Iffy?
SHELLEY  What do you want to know?
SPEN  Well, who does she live with?
SHELLEY  Her aunty in Savile Town.
SPEN  She told me her mum signed her Consent Form.
SHELLEY  She calls her aunty, "mum".
SPEN  Why, is her mum dead?
SHELLEY  No, her aunty brought her up. Her mum and dad had lots of kids and her aunty didn't have any, so they gave Iffy to her to look after.
SPEN  Keeps it in the family, I suppose.
SHELLEY  Better than Care, like we do.
SPEN  Is her dad in jail?
SHELLEY  She's never said. Why?
SPEN  He's sent us a £10,000 donation for the tour.
SHELLEY  Great, you should be happy.
SPEN  Yeah, I s'pose. I think it's been in the wash.
SHELLEY  What? The money?
SPEN        Laundered.
SHELLEY    Oh, right, dirty money.
SPEN        Yeah.
SHELLEY    That's been in the wash? Sorry.
SPEN        I never know where I am with her.
SHELLEY    She's all right.
SPEN        I want to accept it. God knows it's the difference between
going and not. But I can't go public with it.
SHELLEY    It could be anonymous, a donation?
SPEN        Do you know, you're a very sensible young girl, Shell?
SHELLEY    Am I?
SPEN        Must get it off your mum. I was saying to her last night,
you never bring us any bother. We're really proud of you.
SHELLEY    Do you want me to? I can if you like?
SPEN        Your such an innocent. I still think of you as a little girl
holding balloons on a string.
SHELLEY    I asked you how many balloons it would take to lift me off
my feet.
SPEN        Did you?
SHELLEY    You never gave me an answer.
SCENE TEN
EMLEY'S HOUSE

KIWI PETE     You all right, Princess?
EMLEY         Dad?
KIWI PETE     What're you after?
EMLEY         Nothing.
KIWI PETE     Do you want some money?
EMLEY         It's not money.
KIWI PETE     Do you want a horse?
EMLEY         I never said.
KIWI PETE     Guitar lessons?
EMLEY         No.
KIWI PETE     Playstation?
EMLEY         You bought me one.
KIWI PETE     Motorbike?
EMLEY         No.
KIWI PETE     New carpet for your room?
EMLEY         No.
KIWI PETE     Holiday?
EMLEY         Not yet.
KIWI PETE     New trainers?
EMLEY         No.
KIWI PETE     What then?
EMLEY         Can Calder stay over?
KIWI PETE     No!
EMLEY        Why not? He's 18, I'm 16 now.
KIWI PETE    I'm not discussing it.
EMLEY        Your girlfriend stays over.
KIWI PETE    Er, who's the parent here? Whose house is it?
EMLEY        It's my house as well.
KIWI PETE    No, you live here.
EMLEY        Thanks very much. I have rights.
KIWI PETE    When you pay some rent, then you can have some rights.
EMLEY        I thought you wanted me to stay on at school?
NO RESPONSE. I'm not trying to be funny, dad, but you're so old.
KIWI PETE    Not that old.
EMLEY        You were born last century. You don't know how kids
today think.
KIWI PETE    I was sixteen once.
EMLEY        Things have changed.
KIWI PETE    Growing up doesn't change.
EMLEY        Yes, it does.
Dad, I think Calder's going to finish with me.
KIWI PETE    And you think letting him stop over will make him decide
to stay with you?
EMLEY        I want you to treat me more grown-up.
KIWI PETE    You want to sleep with him, you mean.
EMLEY        It's not like it would be the first time.
KIWI PETE    What? I can't believe I'm even discussing this with you.
EMLEY  How old were you when mum had me?
KIWI PETE  That's quite enough.
EMLEY  Dad, I'm not your little princess any more.

EMLEY IS JOINED BY HEATON, SHELLEY AND IFFY AS THE TEENAGERS;
KIWI PETE IS JOINED BY SPEN AND NAN AS THE PARENTS, FOR
"PARENTS V TEENAGERS RAP".

TEENAGERS  Parents and teenagers

   Are like perfect strangers.
   Teenagers are going through different stages,
      Passing phases, needing praises,
   Feeling like they're living in cages,
   Taken hostage by hormones
   And parents in beige trousers,
   Forgetting what it was like to be their age,
   Ripping through rites of passage
   At a furious pace,
   Turning pages in the book of life,
   Trying not to do themselves a damage.

PARENTS  Parents and teenagers

   Are like perfect strangers.
   Parents who bring home the wages
      Are flying into rages
   Cos the teenagers are not able
   To guage the dangers,
   Teenagers always in our faces,
Lying around like wasters,
Hanging out in all the wrong places,
Racing around in car chases,
Battling with neighbours and legal cases,
No manners, no respect, no social graces.

PARENT 1 While you live under my roof, it’s my rules.
TEENAGER 1 That’s sooo unfair.
PARENT 2 You must think money grows on trees.
TEENAGER 2 I’m telling mum.
PARENT 3 Act your age and not your shoe size.
TEENAGER 3 It wasn’t me.
PARENT 4 You’re not going out dressed like that.
TEENAGER 4 Whatever.
PARENT 5 Watch your lip.
TEENAGER 5 In a minute.
PARENT 6 Get off that computer.
TEENAGER 6 I’m bored.
PARENT 7 In my day.
TEENAGER 7 Am I bothered?
PARENT 8 And what time do you call this?
TEENAGER 8 And your point is?
PARENT 9 Where do you think you’re going?
TEENAGER 9 Do it yourself.
PARENT 10 You treat this house like a bloody hotel.
TEENAGER 10 It was already like that.
PARENT 11  Watch your language.
TEENAGER 11  You never let me do anything.
PARENT 12  Your room is like a bomb-site.
TEENAGER 12  It’s not that bad.
PARENT 13  Don’t use that tone of voice with me.
TEENAGER 13  She started it.
PARENT 14  Less of your back-chat.
TEENAGER 14  It's the fashion.
PARENT 15  What did your last slave die of?
TEENAGER 15  LOL (Laugh Out Loud).
PARENT 16  When did you last have a bath?
TEENAGER 16  ROFL (Rolling On the Floor Laughing).
PARENT 17  I am not a bloody taxi.
TEENAGER 17  OMG (Oh My God).
PARENT 18  Get off that phone.
TEENAGER 18  Why is it always my fault?
PARENT 19  If I had a pound for every time.
TEENAGER 19  Get out of my room.
PARENT 20  Do I look like a bank manager?
TEENAGER 20  I hate you.
PARENT 21  If you’re not happy with it, phone child-line.
TEENAGER 21  I’m on the phone.
PARENTS/TEENAGERS  Parents and teenagers
                                are like perfect strangers
SCENE ELEVEN

AT THE TRAINING GROUND

SPEN Girls, I've got an important announcement. I'm thrilled to say we've had an anonymous donation from a very generous supporter of this club of £5,000.

IFFY (TO SHELLEY) Anonymous?

SHELLEY Didn't think your dad would appreciate going public.

SPEN We are living in divisive times. There are some out there who want us to fail - as a team and as a community. There are some who would divide this team, divide this community. But there are some who choose to pull together. I have faith in this community. I have faith in you girls. No girls' team has done it before. They said it couldn't be done. But I know you girls can do it.

GIRLS’ CHORUS They said we couldn't do their work,
They said we shouldn't ride their bikes,
They said we couldn't wear their trousers,
They said we shouldn't be impolite,
They said we couldn't have the vote,
They said we shouldn't fight,
They said we couldn't have equal pay,
They said we shouldn't have equal rights,
They said we couldn't be educated,
They said we shouldn't be taught,
They said we couldn't make their laws,
They said we shouldn’t play their sports.

SHELLEY Well, this girl can.

HEATON And this girl can.

EMLEY And this girl can.

IFFY And this girl can.

SPEN Pack your bags, ladies; we're off to see the wizard; we're going to Oz!

INTERVAL.
PART TWO
QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA.

SCENE 1
THE GOLD COAST. ON THE BEACH. THE GIRLS ARE TRAINING IN TOPS OVER THEIR SWIMWEAR. HAZEL ARRIVES.

GIRLS Touch and pass, kick some ass, Whatever it takes, they will not pass. Making contact keeps us strong, Touch our hearts and pass it on.

HAZEL Figured I'd find you guys on the beach.

SPEN The girls can't believe we're actually training by the sea.

HAZEL Bit of a culture shock, I suppose.

SPEN I don't know how you coped so well coming to England in Winter, playing on frozen pitches?

HAZEL We loved it when it snowed. It was an honour to play in the County of Origin, where it all started.

SPEN Yeah, but just because you start a thing, doesn't give you the right to stay ahead of the game: Batley might have won the first ever Cup, but look at us now: can't even make the Super League.

HAZEL And you started the women's game in the UK.

SPEN Now we're playing catch-up with you. Good to see you again, Hazel.

THEY SHAKE HANDS.

HAZEL Same goes, Spen.
The girls are looking healthy.

THE GIRLS HOLD HANDS AND RUN INTO THE SEA WITH A "1,2,3, CHARGE!"

SPEN  They're a credit to their sex. Look at them, all shapes and sizes - that's "girl power" for you; bollocks to the media images of what girls should be like.

HAZEL  All body-types welcome in rugby.

SPEN  When you see them like that, you can't imagine them smashing into each other, can you?

HAZEL  Our girls are looking forward to the re-match.

SPEN  We've a few games to go, first; see if we can get into our stride by the time we play you again.

HAZEL  Ipswich first up, is it?

SPEN  Any tips?

HAZEL  Watch out for the heat in that part of Queensland.

SPEN  We're expecting to have to defend more than we're used to, while we're here.

HAZEL  They're big, Polynesian girls. And fast. They'll try to stretch you wide, then smash straight through the middle.

GIRLS RETURN FROM THE SEA.

SHELLEY  It's amazin' here!

SPEN  Girls, you remember Coach Hazel from Smiley High School?

HEATON  Aye up, cock.

HAZEL LOOKS TO SPEN FOR A TRANSLATION.

SPEN  Figure of speech.
HAZEL  Enjoying the sunshine, girls?
SHELLEY  Like we've died and gone to heaven.
HAZEL  We have two types of weather on the Gold Coast:
      sunny and glorious.
EMLEY  Perfect.
HAZEL  As long as you stay between the red flags.
HEATON  We're not little children.
HAZEL  Seriously, if the sharks don't get you, the riptide will.
IFFY  Sharks?
HAZEL  (LEAVING) See you up at the school in the morning. The
      girls want to say hello. And the boys want to get a good
      look at you.
EMLEY  Why haven't we tanned?
HEATON  We've only been here a day, stupid.
EMLEY  I think I've got stretch marks on my legs.
SPEN  What? From when you gave birth?
EMLEY  That's not funny.
IFFY  It's "chub-rub" that - you wanna lose some weight off them
      thighs.
HEATON  You're joking, she's no further through than a crisp.
EMLEY  It's not my fault the shops are full of goodies.
IFFY  It's not the shop's fault you eat too much.
SPEN  Listen up, ladies. Remember, we're making history here.
      We are the first girls team ever to tour Oz. It's up to us
      to set the standard for all those who come after us - both
on and off the pitch.

EMLEY IS SHOWING SHELLEY A MESSAGE ON HER PHONE, BUT DIRECTING HER COMMENTS AT IFFY.

EMLEY Look, Calder's text "I love you" - that's "l-o-v-e y-o-u" not "l-u-v u"; he's actually spelt it out proper, like it means something. He sent me this great photo.

SHE SHOVES HER MOBY INTO IFFY'S FACE.

Don't you think we make a great couple?

IFFY Get out of my face.

EMLEY All the girls fancy him. But he's mine.

IFFY You can keep him.

SPEN I can't wait for that first whistle. Let's get on with what we do best.

SHELLEY I love it here. I think I've used up a year's worth of smiles in one day.
SCENE TWO

SMILEY HIGH STATE SCHOOL.

HAZEL  A big, warm welcome to our friends from the UK - the "Batley Rhubarbs". We hope you'll enjoy your stay on the Gold Coast and your tour of Queensland. You made us all welcome when we toured the UK last year and it's an honour to return the compliment. I know you're looking forward to the return leg with Smiley High at the end of your tour. The Batley Rhubarbs are UK Rugby League Champions. Smiley High are State School Champions. It promises to be a big match. I understand the ambition of many of you Rhubarbs is to one day play for your women's national team, the "Lionesses". Well, I have to tell you that one of our girls won a Gold Medal at the last Olympic Games with our national women's team, the "Jillaroos".

We pride ourselves on our sport, here at Smiley High, because we pride ourselves on our "can do" attitude. "Negative people have a problem for every solution."

That's why we're positive people. We don't believe in "under-achievers" at Smiley High. Everyone achieves at something here: "See it and believe it, you can achieve it."

Or, as our Head of Positive Behaviour is fond of saying: "Life's a game - it matters that much."

SHELLEY  They greet us like long-lost cousins. Everyone's so
friendly. They have names like Axel, Asia and Savannah. Their first lesson of the day is swimming - in the outdoor pool. Every kid looks like an athlete. The canteen serves sushi and salad - not a baked bean in sight. Second lesson's rugby. The changing rooms are called "dressing sheds". They have square practise shields. Third lesson's outdoor gym. When do they do maths? The boys wear weird clothes and have longer hair than me. They're a bit loud, but tons nicer than lads back home. And the girls have perfect skin. It's unreal. I wonder if they all turn into zombies at night?

JUXSTAPPOSED IS A SCENE BETWEEN EMLEY ON THE PHONE TO CALDER AND CALDER ON THE PHONE TO IFFY.

EMLEY Do you miss me?
CALDER 'Course I do.
EMLEY Why don't you phone me then?
CALDER You're in Australia.
EMLEY You worried about the cost?
CALDER No.
EMLEY Am I not worth it?
CALDER I didn't say that.
EMLEY You could text me.
CALDER I have text you.
EMLEY You should text me everyday.
CALDER I never know what time it is there.
EMLEY

No excuse.

IFFY ANSWERS THE PHONE FROM CALDER.

IFFY

What're you ringing me for?

CALDER

I miss you.

IFFY

I don't miss you.

CALDER

Don't be so cruel.

It's the middle of the night. I can't sleep, thinking about you.

IFFY

I'm busy.

CALDER

Come on, I know it's morning there. Where are you?

IFFY

At a school.

EMLEY ON THE PHONE TO CALDER (CONTINUED).

CALDER

Are you on your own?

EMLEY

Why?

CALDER

No reason.

Just wondering if the rest of the girls are with you?

EMLEY

What're you asking about "her" for?

CALDER

Who?

EMLEY

You know "who".

CALDER

I'm not.

EMLEY

Do you know what, I'm sick of the sound of your voice.

CALDER ON THE PHONE TO IFFY (CONTINUED).

CALDER

Has Em said owt about us?

IFFY

What's to say?

Look, you need to tell her.
CALDER  I don't want to hurt her feelings.

IFFY  Don't be such a coward.

CALDER  I think she thinks it's over.

IFFY  Stop trying to be emotionally intelligent, it doesn't suit you - you're male.

CALDER  I can't live without you.

IFFY  You'll survive.

CALDER  I've always loved you.

IFFY  Stop it now.

CALDER  Your voice is like treacle pudding.

IFFY  And I suppose you're the custard?

EMLEY AND IFFY BOTH HANG UP.

SHELLEY  No one stops me wandering off the school field. I go for a walk around the grounds. There's lilac blossom on the trees and bats the size of crows sleeping upside down in the cool of the palms. They don't have pigeons, they have these big Ibis birds with, like, scythes for beaks. I find a complete snakeskin at the side of the road. The snake must have crawled into the hedge and shedded its entire skin. I'm amazed it can just leave its old self behind and start again with a new one, like it's re-inventing itself with a brand new identity. I meet someone called Charlie, with a red car - a convertible. It's our secret.

I'd better get back; they'll be missing me.
SHELLEY RETURNS TO THE GROUP. EMLEY AND IFFY TURN AWAY FROM EACH OTHER.

IFFY Where you been?
SHELLEY Nowhere.
What's going on with you and Em?
IFFY She thinks I'm trying to steal her boyfriend.
SHELLEY Are you?
IFFY It's not my fault he keeps texting me.
SHELLEY You don't have to reply.
IFFY He's my mate. I've known him longer than her.
SHELLEY She's jealous, you can't blame her.
IFFY One minute she's not bothered about him, the next she's all possessive. She blames me for encouraging him.
SHELLEY He's playing you both, can't you see?

IFFY TURNS AWAY AND EMLEY TURNS BACK TO SHELLEY.

SHELLEY You should dump him.
EMLEY Why should I? He's not dumped me.
SHELLEY He's no good for you.
EMLEY We are the perfect couple.
SHELLEY In looks, maybe; but that's all.
EMLEY Are you saying I'm stupid?
SHELLEY You're both stupid.
EMLEY I don't want her to win.
SHELLEY It's not a competition.
EMLEY Yes it is.
SCENE THREE

THE TEAM ARRIVE AT THE IPSWICH GROUND.

SHELLEY  Wow, it's a proper stadium.

SPEN  Respect.

EMLEY  Is this where we're playing, coach, on a pro' pitch?

SPEN  They're obviously treating us like the champions we are, ladies. Off you go and find the changing rooms.

SONG: “LET’S PLAY!”

CHORUS  Welcome to the Ipswich sports pavillion,

the Brothers and Sisters Stadium,

where one dollar could win you a million,

at life's casino, come on,

Let's play!

Pokies, keno,

bookies, lotto,

sports and gambling

at life's casino.

This is the lucky country,

where you can double your money

in a land of opportunity.

No dramas, no problems,

place your bets here;

we're feeding the pokies
$12 billion a year.

Life's a gift so gamble away,
pokies people play everyday.
at life's casino, come on,
Let's play!

THE GIRLS PREPARE FOR THE MATCH.

HEATON Em, have you got a mirror app on your i-pad?

EMLEY PASSES IT TO HEATON SO SHE CAN CHECK HER APPEARANCE.

IFFY Has anyone got a spare bobble I can use?

EMLEY TURNS AWAY FROM IFFY.

IFFY Fine. Be like that. Shell?

SHELLEY LENDS HER A BOBBLE FOR HER HAIR.

SPEN (CALLING) Are you decent?

EMLEY No, but you can come in.

ENTER SPEN, TIMIDLY.

SPEN Em, what're you doin'?

EMLEY Painting me nails, coach.

SPEN It's rugby league, Em, not Strictly Come Dancing.

EMLEY There might be cameras.

SPEN There's no such thing as an attractive action shot when your head is half-way up another girl's ass

CHORUS Feeling hot-shot?
Fancy a long-shot?
Step inside,
drop your coins in the slot.
Play the field,
these odds it's a steal,
deal or no deal?
Everybody knows that winners have sex appeal.

Live your life to the full,
you could be hit by a train;
it's an adrenalin rush
and you'll never be the same.
Pokies, keno,
bookies, lotto;
sports and gambling
at life's casino.
This is the lucky country,
where you can double your money.
At life’s casino, come on
Let's play!

SPEN Come on, you're not kids now, some of you could be playing for your country in a couple of years.

HEATON Coach, can you help me strap me tits up?

SPEN No, I bloody can't; I'm not your mother -

HAZEL (ARRIVING) Sounds like you could use a feminine touch?

SPEN Hazel, you're an angel.

HAZEL TAKES OVER HELPING HEATON WHILE SPEN TURNS AWAY.
SPEN You never said you were coming to watch?

HAZEL Spy in the camp, Spen. Just doing my job.

There you go, Heaton, see if you can put a few eyes out with those bazookas.

HEATON IS A LITTLE EMBARRASSED AND FLATTERED.

SPEN Thanks, Hazel.

HAZEL No dramas. Advantages of being a female coach.

SPEN Next time I'm bringing Shelley's mum.

Right, ladies, we need to get out there and warm up.

Remember to pace yourselves; this game's all about the heat.

SHELLEY We'll be fine, Coach; this is what we've trained for.

HEATON "Come on you Batley!"

GIRLS LEAVE FOR THE PITCH.

SPEN Have you seen the clubhouse? It's like a casino: bookies, horse-racing, card tables, slot-machines...

HAZEL How do you think they pay for the facilities?

SPEN You're big on gambling out here, aren't you?

HAZEL Are you a betting man, Spen?

SPEN Not really.

HAZEL You will be before you leave Oz. What do you think the odds are against Ipswich?

CHORUS Who's gonna win?

20 free spins,

it gets under your skin
this thing called gambling.
Fancy a flutter, 
first game of the tour? 
Have yourself a guess at the final score? 
How many games will they win out of four? 
At life’s casino, come on
Let's play!

ON THE PITCH THE GIRLS ARE SUSSING THE OPPOSITION.
SHELLEY Is that them warming up?
EMLEY No way, they're boys.
IFFY Men, more like; they're fucking massive.
EMLEY Who asked you?
HEATON Not on the pitch, you two.

SPEN AND HAZEL ARRIVE. SPEN CLOCKS THE OPPOSITION.

SPEN Shit! You need to wear your skull-caps, ladies. And your gum-shields. That's everyone.

SPEN LOOKS AT HAZEL.
HAZEL What can I say? It's an industrial area.
SPEN So is Batley, but we can't grow rhubarb that big.
HAZEL Did I mention the Sisters of Ipswich are State Club Champions?
SPEN Now you tell us.

GIRLS TAKE UP THEIR POSITIONS FOR THE OFF. THE REST OF THE CAST TAKE UP FULL-SIZE PRACTICE-SHIELDS TO REPRESENT THE IPSWICH TEAM AND FACE THE GIRLS LIKE A ROMAN ARMY.
IFFY
A team full of black girls - awesome.

HEATON
Look ’em straight in the eye, girls.

SHELLEY
I don't know, it might be rude in their culture.

IN TURN, THE GIRLS SMASH INTO THE SHIELDS AND ARE KNOCKED TO THE GROUND AS THE SHIELDS ADVANCE. THEY KEEP GETTING UP AND TRYING AGAIN.

CHORUS
Smash! 4-0.

Come on you Sisters!
Come on you Rhubarbs!
You're showing them too much respect.
They're scared of you.
They're in front, ref!
Smash! 8-0.
Through the middle.
Hands-off.
Over the top.
Out wide.
Up 'n' under.
Smash! 12-0.
Get stuck in.
Keep at it.
Play it.
Kick it.
Catch it.
Run with it.
Smash! 16-0.
Feed the ball.
Break them down.
Breakout.
Smash! 20-0.
Move up, move out,
drop in, drop out,
in, in, in,
out, out, out.
Smash! 24-0.

HEATON They keep chopping us in half, Coach.

SPEN You're a Prop Forward, Heaton, it's your job to keep hammering away. Draw players in, create a space for the others to run into.

CHORUS Smash! 28-0.

SHELLEY We're used to goin' forward, not defendin'.

CHORUS Smash! 32-0.

SPEN What have I told you, ladies? Quick passes and move up.

WHISTLE BLOWS FOR A PENALTY.

IFFY Why is it a penalty when we tackle above chest-height?

HAZEL It's the Safe Conduct Code.

SPEN Thanks. I'll recommend it to the RLF when we get home.

WHISTLE BLOWS AGAIN.

EMLEY Ref says we can't pull their shirts, Coach?

CHORUS Smash! 36-0.
LOGAN Come on you Rhubarbs!
SPEN Good man, we could do with the support.
LOGAN No bother, mate.
SPEN Are you local?
LOGAN Beenleigh. Ex-Pat family, Yorkshire originally.
SPEN One of us.
LOGAN (SHAKING HANDS) Logan.
SPEN Spen. Pleased to meet you. We're playing Beenleigh, game after next.
LOGAN I know.
SHELLEY They're tacklin' in pairs, Coach.
SPEN Do the same!

(TO HAZEL) What's the matter with them? We've done all this in training.

CHORUS Smash! 40-0.
LOGAN Bit like watching Batley play Leeds Rhinos, eh?
SPEN They're so strong.
HAZEL That's the Polynesians for you.
SPEN What's their secret?
HAZEL They say it's a love of root vegetables - taro for the Maoris, cassava for the Fijians; the Tongans and Samoans are just strong, whatever they eat.
LOGAN You think these girls are big; you should try playing against their fathers.
CHORUS Smash! 44-0.
HAZEL  They start them off from knee-high to a crocodile.

IFFY  I don't care if we're losing, I love it here: it's not a white-people sport. Imagine a British Muslim girl, from the time she could walk, given a rugby ball and told to run. Imagine a team of them from Batley and Dewsbury, fed potatoes for the next fourteen years and growing up into big women. Imagine a marauding gang of these Muslim girls, in glorious flight, charging down the middle, in full burka and nicab, smashing all before them. One day, sisters, we will be the Polynesians of the rhubarb triangle!

IFFY CHARGES AT THE SHIELDS.

CHORUS  Smash! 48-0.

WHISTLE BLOWS FOR END OF THE MATCH. THE GIRLS LIMP OFF THE PITCH.

EMLEY  Aargh, Coach, I've been kicked in the Ossett.

CHORUS  Another win for the bookies - now who would have thought that?

The players all gather at the end of the match.

No bad feelings exist as the teams swop photos and gifts.

A quick post-mortem on the performance and all bets are off for the rest of the tournament.

SPEN  I want smiles in defeat, girls!

SHELLEY  First time we've never scored in a match.

SPEN  We were out-muscled and out-played.
HEATON They battered us.

SPEN I can't teach you what you've learned here today.

HAZEL "Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want."

SHELLEY Has she got a saying for everything?

LOGAN COMES TO SEE THE TEAM. HEATON THINKS SHE RECOGNISES HIM.

LOGAN No shame, girls. They're a warrior people. Rugby is a way of life - for males and females. From an early age, siblings are taught to battle with each other to toughen them up.

EMLEY Can we just go shopping tomorrow, Coach?

LOGAN Is that our young Heaton?

HEATON Uncle Logan!

SPEN Oh shit, he's "that" Logan.

HEATON You came.

LOGAN Wouldn't miss it for the world.

HEATON Everybody, this is my Uncle Logan.

SHELLEY Seriously? I thought she made him up.

HEATON Logan's me mam's, er -

LOGAN Cousin.

SHELLEY You don't sound very Yorkshire?

LOGAN Second generation.

IFFY Did you watch the game?

LOGAN It was a close call.

IFFY 48 - Nil?

LOGAN I've seen teams do a lot worse against those girls.
SPEN That's what happens when you don't play as a team, ladies - you know who I mean.

IFFY AND EMLEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

EMLEY Well, excuse us, Coach, while we synchronise our periods.

LOGAN It's a real achievement coming out here, representing your country.

SHELLEY Doesn't feel like it at the moment.

IFFY I want to play them again; I reckon we could do a lot better next time.

HEATON Can we spend some time together?

SPEN Sorry, ladies, the coach is waiting.

HEATON Will you come to the next match?

LOGAN If it's all right with Coach, I'd like to treat you girls to a trip to Australia Zoo.

GIRLS CHEER.

SPEN I don't know if that's such a good idea.

GIRLS COMPLAIN.

LOGAN The Zoo's next to the Beerwah ground. The girls could relax for a while before the match?

GIRLS PLEAD.

SPEN Okay, okay. Zoo in the morning, match in the afternoon.

SHELLEY All the way back to the hotel, I can hear the kookaburras in the trees laughing at us.
SCENE FOUR
SHOPPING CENTRE. EMLEY CATCHES UP WITH SHELLEY. SHE IS LOADED UP WITH BAGS. SHELLEY IS ON HER MOBILE PHONE.

EMLEY I can't tell you how great it is to be shopping again; and in a totally different country; I found the NRL shop, I've bought some amazing tops; and Pandora's, half-price; here, look, I got this little koala; what you got? Who you talkin' to?

SHELLEY Someone.

EMLEY Who?

SHELLEY Just someone I met.

EMLEY Where? Let me have a look?

SHELLEY No.

EMLEY You're on a dating site?

SHELLEY And?

EMLEY It'll be full of creeps.

SHELLEY Charlie's not like that.

EMLEY Really? Boys from Oz are different, are they?

SHELLEY I wouldn't know.

EMLEY Come on. They're all "fuck-boys" like back home; that's all they're interested in. Tell me you've not agreed to meet?

SHELLEY None of your business.

EMLEY Yes, my business, I'm your mate.

SHELLEY Then you should be on my side.
EMLEY          What's your dad gonna say?
SHELLEY        Nobody's gonna find out - unless you tell them?
               I'm sure I can find you a mate, if you wanna come?
EMLEY          With a complete stranger, Shell? Really? It's dangerous.
SHELLEY        I'm not stupid. We met at Smiley High.
EMLEY          I never saw you! How old?
SHELLEY        Twenty-five.
EMLEY          Twenty-five! What're you playin' at?
SHELLEY        It's just a holiday romance.
EMLEY          You can't meet up again.
SHELLEY        You're not my dad. You're just jealous.
EMLEY          Well, if that's what you think...
EMLEY STORMS OFF IN DISGUST.
SCENE FIVE

SPEN Right, you lot, "Kangaroo Court".

SHELLEY Awe, do we have to?

SPEN Yes, we have to. You know the drill.

THEY SET UP A "DOCK" FOR THE ACCUSED AND A SEAT FOR THE JUDGE.

HEATON Who's on trial?

SPEN Em -

EMLEY Me? What've I done?

SPEN And Iffy.

IFFY What for?

SPEN Get in the dock, the pair of you.

Shelley, you're the Judge today.

THEY TAKE UP THEIR POSITIONS.

HEATON What about me?

SPEN Star Witness.

HEATON Cool.

SPEN (PASSING A NOTE TO SHELLEY) These are the charges, Judge, if you can read them out.

SHELLEY (READING) Emley and Iffy, you stand accused of allowing "boyfriend trouble" off-the-pitch to affect your game on-the-pitch against the Sisters of Ipswich. How do you plead?

EMLEY (TO SHELLEY) What you been saying?

SHELLEY I haven't said anything. I swear.

SPEN Answer the charges, ladies.
IFFY Not Guilty.

SHELLEY Not Guilty, "Your Honour".

IFFY & EMLEY Not Guilty, Your Honour.

SPEN Call the Star Witness.

HEATON TAKES UP HER POSITION. SPEN WHISPERS INSTRUCTIONS INTO SHELLEY’S EAR.

SHELLEY Star Witness, can you tell the Court if, in the changing rooms before the match, Emley lent you her i-pad mirror so you could see to brush your hair?

HEATON Yes, Your Honour. We all like to look our best before a big game because we come off looking like shit.

SHELLEY And did you hear Iffy ask Emley for a bobble for her hair?

HEATON Yes, Your Honour.

IFFY I asked everyone.

SHELLEY And what was Emley’s response to the request?

HEATON She blanked her.

SHELLEY Why do you think she blanked her?

HEATON Dunno, they’ve been arguing about Calder for ages; it’s getting on everyone’s nerves.

EMLEY Hey, that’s not fair!

SHELLEY In your opinion, did this affect our performance against the Sisters of Ipswich?

EMLEY Watch it, Shell, I could easy ditch the dirt on you, remember?

SHELLEY Silence in Court! I’ll have you for Contempt.
HEATON Well, now you mention it.
IFFY Heaton! We were all pussies against the Sisters.
SPEN Verdicts, Judge?
SPEN WHISPERS AGAIN INTO SHELLEY’S EAR.
SHELLEY Guilty, as charged. Both of you.
SPEN Sentences, Judge?
HEATON I've got an idea.
HEATON, SHELLEY AND SPEN CONFER.
SHELLEY Are you sure?
HEATON NODS.

Right, you've got to jump in the pool, fully-clothed.
IFFY No sweat.
SHELLEY And your mobies are confiscated until after the next game.
EMLEY No way!
SPEN Yes, way. The Court's decided. There's no Appeal. Hand them over.
EMLEY AND IFFY HAND SPEN THEIR PHONES.
SPEN (TO SHELLEY) Tell you what, I admire your ability to find a girl's weak point - both on and off the pitch.
EMLEY (TO SHELLEY) Remember, you, what goes around, comes around, like that riptide.
SCENE SIX

AT THE HOTEL. EMLEY IS FACE-TIMING HER DAD ON HER I-PAD.

EMLEY           Dad?
KIWI PETE       Where's your phone?
EMLEY           It's been confiscated.
KIWI PETE       What? Who by?
EMLEY           It's a long story.
KIWI PETE       I'll get onto Spen.
EMLEY           No, don't cause trouble.
KIWI PETE       Well, buy another phone; I can transfer you the money.
EMLEY           I've got me i-pad. I'll get it back after the next match.
KIWI PETE       I'm not happy.
EMLEY           Neither am I.
KIWI PETE       What's up, peach?
EMLEY           I wanna come home.
KIWI PETE       Has something happened?
EMLEY           No. I'm homesick.
KIWI PETE       Is this about that bloody boyfriend of yours?
EMLEY           It's a mess; I don't know what to do.
KIWI PETE       I told Spen to watch out for him bothering you.
EMLEY           You shouldn't do that; you'll get me thrown off the team.
KIWI PETE       I'm not having you upset; not when you're so far away from us.

EMLEY SHEDS A TEAR.

That's it; I'll buy a ticket for you online. Pack your bags,
you're coming home.

EMLEY
No, you're over-reacting again. I can't desert the team, it'll be all right.

KIWI PETE
Are you sure?

EMLEY
I just needed a little cry. I miss having you there for a moan.

KIWI PETE
I know, peach. I miss you moaning at me.

EMLEY
We're going to Australia Zoo.

KIWI PETE
Send me photos.
SCENE SEVEN
AT AUSTRALIA ZOO, THE GIRLS ARE HAVING THEIR PHOTOS TAKEN WITH THE ANIMALS.

EMLEY This is me with a koala.
SHELLEY This is me with an Emu.
IFFY This is me with a crocodile.
HEATON This is me with Uncle Logan. And a kangaroo.
LOGAN There's no tastier meat than 'roo meat.
HEATON Urgh!
LOGAN It's true.
HEATON But they're so cute and cuddly, how can they do that?
LOGAN 'Roos are considered pests in the Bush. You're allowed to cull them if they threaten your crops.
HEATON How can a kangaroo threaten anybody?
LOGAN You wouldn't say that if you were faced with a mob of roos. They live in groups of ten or more.
HEATON That's not a "mob", that's a family.
LOGAN Not sure what that means, Heaton. Long time since we were a family.
HEATON What happened to us?
LOGAN How much don't you know?
HEATON Are you my dad?
LOGAN Hell, no. Who's told you that?
HEATON There's no name on my Birth Certificate; Nan said to keep away from you; I thought - sorry; shit, I'm embarrassed.
LOGAN  Look, Heaton, if I was your dad I'd want the world to know how proud I was of you.

SPEN  Right, ladies, we've got ourselves something to prove today. Now, you can get the crap kicked out of you again or you can give it to them this time while getting the crap kicked out of you - which is it to be?

AT THE MATCH.

CHORUS  Beerwah Bulldogs Stadium,
in the valleys of green and gold;
against the All-Stars of the Sunshine Coast
the next game unfolds.
The All-Stars score first,
but Batley are on a roll:
Heaton wrestles and breaks away,
Iffy kicks to Emley, it's still in play;
the defensive line are foiled
as she swings it out to Shelley and touchdown!
Batley's first try on Ozzie soil.
20-16 to the All-Stars, Final Score,
but the Rhubarbs have finally made their mark, for sure;
a force to be reckoned with, sport;
who knows what's in store?
Watch out Beenleigh,
prepare for some "shock 'n' awe".
SCENE EIGHT
BACK AT THE HOTEL.

SPEN    Well done, ladies; that was a county team you played
today - a bit like us playing Yorkshire - and it was a close
call. Main thing is we got on the score sheet. I'm proud of
yous.

EMLEY   Thanks, Coach. Can we have our mobies back now?

SPEN    I've left them in your rooms. I suggest you all go for a
post-match swim, keep those muscles toned.

EMLEY AND IFFY GO TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROOMS TO FIND THEIR
MOBILES.

EMLEY   Hang on a minute, this isn't mine.

IFFY    Shit, this is Em's moby.

EMLEY   (CHECKING IFFY'S MESSAGES) I know I shouldn't, but -

IFFY    (CHECKING EMLEY'S MESSAGES) I wonder what
Calder's been saying to her?

ON SCREEN APPEARS A TEXT FROM CALDER TO IFFY.

EMLEY   (READING) "I want us to be "mates" like on the Discovery
        Channel.

ON SCREEN APPEARS A TEXT FROM CALDER TO EMLEY.

IFFY    (READING) "You're the only one for me."

IFFY&EMLEY The two-faced little shit.

ELSEWHERE IN THE HOTEL.

SPEN    Shell's missing.

HAZEL   Are you sure?
SPEN        She's not in her room, she's not in the pool, she's not in the cafe. None of the girls have seen her since they got back from the match.

EMLEY OVERHEARS THEM AS SHE GOES TO IFFY’S ROOM.

EMLEY        I think I know where she is.
SPEN          Where?
EMLEY        I'm sorry, Spen; she's gone to meet Charlie.
SPEN          Who the fuck's Charlie?
EMLEY        Someone she's met.
SPEN          You knew about this?
EMLEY        I told her not to go.
SPEN          You don't tell her, you tell me!
HAZEL        Calm down, Spen, she's telling you now.
SPEN          Yeah, when it's too late. Where's she meeting him?
EMLEY        I don't know.
SPEN          Who is he?
EMLEY        I've not met him.
SPEN          How old is he?
EMLEY        Twenty-five.
SPEN          Twenty-five! What-the-fuck! How did she meet him?
EMLEY        Online.
SPEN          Oh that's just great!
HAZEL        (LEAVING) I'll call the police.
She's only just turned sixteen and she's gone awol with a twenty-five year old pervert. We're 10,000 miles away from home and her mum'll be ringing me at any minute.

(TO EMLEY) Look, this is serious; what else do you know about him?

EMLEY  He drives a red car. It's a convertible, that's all I know.

SPEN  She could be anywhere by now. Anything could have happened.

HAZEL  (RETURNING WITH THE OTHER GIRLS) They're on their way.

SPEN  We have to look for her. You stay here for the police. I'll go to the shopping centre. Girls, go to the beach - take your phones.

SHELLEY RETURNS, UNAWARE OF THE CHAOS. SPEN RUNS TO HUG HER.

SPEN  Come here! Has he hurt you? I'll kill him!

SHELLEY  I'm all right, dad. What's the panic?

SPEN  Where the fuck have you been?

SHELLEY  For a walk on the beach.

SPEN  Don't lie to me! We know you were meeting him. The police are out looking for you.

SHELLEY  What? I decided not to go.

SPEN  Are you telling me the truth?

SHELLEY  Yes, I swear down.

SPEN FALLS TO HIS KNEES. HAZEL CONSOLES HIM.

SHELLEY  I'm sorry, dad; I didn't mean -
HAZEL  Go to your rooms, girls.
SHELLEY  I'm not a child!
SPEN  You're acting like one, in front of Hazel.
HAZEL  It's all right, Spen.
SHELLEY  Grow up, will you!
SPEN  Me, grow up? That's rich coming from you, young madam.
SHELLEY  You don't know anything about me!
SPEN  I'm not sure I want to know.

SHELLEY AND THE GIRLS LEAVE.

SPEN  Who, in their right mind, would take on looking after a group of young women?
HAZEL  A pimp?

EMLEY AND IFFY MEET TO SWAP PHONES.
EMLEY  I didn't...did you?

IFFY SHAKES HER HEAD.
EMLEY  I might have just... by mistake.
IFFY  Me too.

THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE BOTH READ EACH OTHER'S MESSAGES.

IFFY  Nothing's happened, I swear.
EMLEY  I know.

IFFY  If he behaves like that with you, he'd be the same with me, or anyone.

EMLEY  I was thinking, maybe we should teach Calder a lesson?

IFFY  Let's hatch a plan...
SCENE NINE

ON THE COACH TO BEENLEIGH.

SPEN What’re we up against today, Hazel?

HAZEL Bit of a mixed bunch, really. Lots of migrant families: Brazilian Africans, Philipinos and, of course, Polynesian.

And the "Murri Sisters" - aboriginal girls.

SPEN This is one hell of a country.

HAZEL A lot of the girls come from the government housing estate on the edge of town -

SPEN Like our council estates?

HAZEL Some of them take up rugby to avoid the drugs and teenage pregnancy.

SPEN Not so different then to Batley.

HAZEL The school has its own farm. They rear "droughtmaster" cattle and sell their produce to the local abattoir, where many of the local kids end up working.

SPEN Sounds like I’d better go and psyche ’em up for the match.

SPEN TURNS TO THE GIRLS.

IFFY AND EMLEY ARE LAUGHING AND JOKING TOGETHER.

SHELLEY You two seem very matey today?

EMLEY What do you mean? Me and Iffy are best mates, aren’t we?

IFFY Got loads in common, we have.

SHELLEY Like Calder, you mean?

EMLEY Like girly revenge on that douche-bag.
SHELLEY: What have you two done?

IFFY: Nothing. Just shared our feelings with the world.

EMLEY: We posted all his texts to both of us on Facebook.

IFFY: So everybody can see what a two-faced little player he is.

SHELLEY: Yeay, girl power; I'm loving it.

HEATON HAS HER HEAD DOWN, LISTENING TO MUSIC.

SPEN: What's up, Heaton?

HEATON: Nothing. I'm listening to "angry" music to get me in the mood for the match.

SHELLEY: Show us your angry face, Heaton?

HEATON OBLIGES AND THEY FALL ABOUT LAUGHING.

SPEN: Come on, ladies, let's lift those spirits: Team Song, everyone. Heaton, why don't you lead the charge?

CALL AND RESPONSE CHANT.

HEATON: Everywhere we go-o,

CHORUS: Everywhere we go-o,

HEATON: People want to know-o,

CHORUS: People want to know-o,

HEATON: Who we are?

CHORUS: Who we are?

HEATON: Where we come from?

CHORUS: Where we come from?

HEATON: Shall we tell them?

CHORUS: Shall we tell them?

HEATON: We're the Batley,
We're the Batley,
The Batley Batley Rhubarbs,
Batley Batley Rhubarbs...
BATLEY!

Batley versus Beenleigh:
two teams, evenly matched,
two towns, both with changing identities.

Beenleigh: on the Logan and Albert Rivers;
Brisbane overspill into agricultural lands -
traditionally sugar cane and rum distilleries;
taken over by new industries.

Batley: Danish settlement,
near the River Calder,
mentioned in the Doomsday Book;
up on its history, down on its luck;
coal mines and mills given over to retail.
First try goes to Batley: 4-Nil.

Early German and Anglo-Saxon settlers
are joined by the latest migrant labour;
in good Lutheran tradition,
we're all foreigners here.
Second try to Beenleigh: score 4-4.

60% of under 18's in Batley
are now of South Asian origin,
so what do we mean any more by "foreign"?

**BEENLEIGH**

Something you Brits don't have
is an indigenous black population;
but slowly we are "Closing The Gap",
respecting the rights of the native peoples -
the "Custodians of the Land".
That's another try for the home side
and the score stands at 8-4 to Beenleigh.

**BATLEY**

It's true that Life Expectancy is lower in Batley;
there's binge-drinking, drugs and obesity,
unemployment and anxiety,
depression and poverty,
increasing levels of crime -

**BEENLEIGH**

And problems with dentistry -
What? That's why we smile more in Oz -

**BATLEY**

Yes, of course, because of the climate, we know,
and yet, still we try -
8-8.

**BEENLEIGH**

We have our own problems with racism, same as you
guys.

**BATLEY**

And try again -
12-8.

**BEENLEIGH**

And home-grown terrorism.

**BATLEY**

Until, finally, against all the odds,
14-8, 
we achieve our first, historic victory.

HEATON COMES OFF THE PITCH, CARRYING THE BALL. LOGAN

CONGRATULATES HER WITH A HUG.

LOGAN Top banana! You were amazing.

HEATON Thanks; I'm really glad you came.

LOGAN Great game.

HEATON We need to talk.

LOGAN Not now.

HEATON Yes now.

LOGAN Not here.

HEATON Yes here.

THE OTHERS LEAVE THEM ALONE.

LOGAN It's not exactly my place to tell you.

HEATON Well, no other bastard seems willing to.

LOGAN It's like this: your Nan and Grandad came over to live in Queensland to be near your Grandad's brother and his wife - my mum and dad.

HEATON Mum was a teenager, wasn't she?

LOGAN Yeah. Me and your mum, we were cousins. We got on fine, she was a good kid.

HEATON So what happened?

LOGAN Your Nan hated it here, your Grandad loved it; your mum copped for a whole lot of bickering so she used to spend a lot of time at my folks'.

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HEATON With you?
LOGAN I left home, working away for a while. When your mum fell pregnant at 16, your Nan took her back to the UK.
HEATON So why the big secret? Who was my dad?
LOGAN Heaton, my folks are both dead now.
HEATON Who?
LOGAN Mum told me before she died.
HEATON Who?
LOGAN My dad was also your dad.
HEATON That's disgusting.
HEATON RUNS AWAY.
REPRISE OF "KICK IT INTO TOUCH"
HEATON What have I done to deserve all this?
Where did I go wrong?
Who am I really?
And where do I belong?
Lied to by my folks,
I was born to regret it,
my family's one big joke
and I just don't get it.
Kick it into touch!
I'm sick of all the lies,
I don't care about their remorse,
I don't want to be a part of this family,
I don't want to play rugby no more.
Lied to by my folks,
I was born to regret it,
my family's one big joke
and I just don't get it.
Kick it into touch!

SHE PUTS DOWN THE BALL AND LEAVES.
SCENE TEN

AT THE HOTEL. SPEN AND SHELLEY ARE IN ONE ROOM, HEATON AND UNCLE LOGAN IN ANOTHER.

SPEN You said, "I don't know anything about you"; so I’m here to find out.

SHELLEY That doesn't exactly sound like someone who's willing to listen.

SPEN I can't do right for doing wrong.

SHELLEY I know your heart's in the right place, dad.

SPEN Am I paying too much attention to the other girls, is that it?

SHELLEY I do get a bit jealous, that's true.

SPEN I have to be seen to treat you all the same.

SHELLEY I know. And you do. That's not it.

SPEN I started this team for you.

SHELLEY You started it for yourself.

SPEN That's harsh.

SHELLEY I need to feel special. Not on the pitch. Off the pitch.

SPEN Is that why you scared the shit out of me?

SHELLEY Maybe. I'm trying to tell you something.

IN HEATON'S ROOM.

LOGAN Coach tells me you don't want to play?

HEATON How can you accept what they've done to us?

LOGAN What choice do we have? We need to move on.

HEATON No wonder mum's so fucked up.

LOGAN They had an affair. What he did was very wrong. She was
only sixteen.

HEATON
She knew what she was doing. It's your mum I feel sorry for.

LOGAN
I'm sorry for your trouble.

HEATON
You realise, this means we're…

LOGAN
Yeah, I know, I'm your bro'. Scary thought, isn't it?

HEATON
I can hardly think it, let alone say it.

LOGAN
I must admit, I prefer "uncle", given the age gap and all.

BACK IN SHELLEY'S ROOM.

SHELLEY
I don't know if you've noticed, but I'm an incurable romantic?

SPEN
Like me.

SHELLEY
You're a sentimental old cynic.

SPEN
Less of the old.

SHELLEY
I love playing rugby, but I also love stuff like poetry.

SPEN
You can do both.

SHELLEY
I do.

SPEN
I'd like to read some of your poetry, if you don't mind?

SHELLEY
Really?

SPEN
I'm not a complete philistine. Look, you might be romantic but men will exploit that for sex.

SHELLEY
Charlie's not a man.

SPEN
What're you telling me? Em said it was a "he".

SHELLEY
I never said that; she must've assumed.

SPEN
So you're gay now, all of a sudden? Listen to yourself.
SHELLEY  No, you listen to yourself. It's the stereotype, I know; but if 10% of women are gay, some of them will be rugby players. That goes for the men too.

SPEN  10%?

SHELLEY  We're on the "up" - so to speak.

SPEN  Does your mother know?

SHELLEY  Yeah. Well, she suspects, anyway.

SPEN  Am I always the last to be told?  So you did meet up with this "Charlie" woman?

SHELLEY  Yes. I'm not sorry, it was fun.

SPEN  You lied to me.

SHELLEY  I am sorry for that.

SPEN  (LEAVING) You're absolutely right: I have no idea who you are.

SHELLEY  I can't believe I've just "come out" to me dad.

BACK IN HEATON'S ROOM.

HEATON  I don't know what to do now?

LOGAN  You could come and live in Oz? Seriously, I could get you into one of the rugby schools.

HEATON  I've given up on rugby.

LOGAN  You musn't, you're a top player; I've seen you in action.

HEATON  I'm not good enough to play here.

LOGAN  You soon would be. You'd flourish at Smiley High.
HEATON How could I live here?
LOGAN I'd look after you.
HEATON You'd do that for me?
LOGAN Damn right I would, after everything that's happened.
HEATON I don't know if I could ever leave me Nan.
LOGAN The Gold Coast is one of the Top Ten happiest places on
the planet to live.
HEATON Then why are we so unhappy?
SCENE ELEVEN
SMILEY HIGH STATE SCHOOL. THE GIRLS ARE ON THE PITCH, WARMING UP
FOR THE GAME, EXCEPT FOR HEATON. SPEN AND HAZEL ARE ON THE
TOUCHLINES.

SPEN I can't believe the facilities you've got at this school.
HAZEL Yeah, well, we don't sell off our sports fields to property
developers, like you guys in the UK.

SPEN How many girls do you have wanting to play rugby?
HAZEL There's 85 want to get involved - 18 are selected.

SPEN That's amazing.
HAZEL Believe me, we might be State High School Champions,
but it's still a battle with the authorities to keep the
programme going.

SPEN You love your sports more in Oz. There's more respect.
HAZEL We appreciate "The Great Outdoors" - life's a good
barbeque.

SPEN We treat "The Great Outdoors" as a problem.
HAZEL On the other hand, it's an eleven-hour drive out West to
see my son.

SPEN Your girls aren't wandering around the streets or hanging
around pubs, like ours.

HAZEL Yeah, but when our girls toured the UK, they went awol on
me. I had to wait up half the night 'cause they'd been out
clubbing.

SPEN It's hard to keep them focused on their training.
HAZEL  I'm sure your girls will be up for it today: after all, this is your "revenge" match.

SPEN  I like to think it's more good-natured than that. Don't get me wrong, we want to beat you, all right; but we have to be realistic. We've come here to learn.

HAZEL  Bollocks, Spen, you've come here to win.

SPEN  Not at any cost.

HAZEL  You see, that's why we're better at winning.

SPEN  "At any cost" leads to corruption and sports people taking banned drugs and the like.

HAZEL  I don't agree with drugs. I'd have a life ban for everyone using drugs.

SPEN  I'm starting to wonder how many champions will be left, if we do that?

HAZEL  There will always be champions. Sports are about winning.

SPEN  It has to be more than that, doesn't it?

HAZEL  Not in my book.

LOGAN TURNS UP WITH HEATON. SPEN SIGNALS HIS GRATITUDE TO LOGAN AND TAKES HEATON TO ONE SIDE.

SPEN  Good to have you back. Let me see your arms.

HEATON SHOWS HIM. THEY HAVE FRESH MARKS.

I know it's not going to be easy, lass, but we're here for you; this is your rugby family.

HEATON  Thanks, Coach.
HEATON JOINS THE GIRLS.

GIRLS POSITION THEMSELVES AND THE GAME STARTS.

SPEN Good to see a female referee.

HAZEL Times like this, I really miss playing.

SPEN Don't we all? I miss the banter. You were a "jillaroo", weren't you, Hazel?

HAZEL 2008 Runners-Up in the World Cup, at the Sunscorp Stadium, Brisbane. Lost to New Zealand in the final 34-0.

SPEN No shame there.

HAZEL No; but like I tell our girls every week: if you think training's hard, try losing a World Cup Final.

SPEN I hope I can be a better coach than I was a player.

I grew up in a working-class household, the only boy among three sisters. I knew my sisters were more athletic than me, but I was the only one allowed to go professional. I know I'm part of making changes for these girls; that's enough for me.

HAZEL How's it going with your Shelley?

SPEN I think I might have failed her as a dad.

HAZEL At least she's agreed to play.

HEATON RUNS OFF THE PITCH, HOLDING HER CHEST.

HEATON Coach, I'm in trouble.

SPEN What's happened? Are you hurt?

HEATON (WHIPPING OFF HER BRA) Me bra strap's snapped.

SPEN Give me that! What have I told you about wearing a
training bra?

HEATON    Have you got a spare one?

SPEN      No, I bloody well haven't. What do you think I am - a mobile lingerie shop?

HEATON    What am I gonna do?

SPEN      I don't know, do I?

HEATON    I can't play without one.

HAZEL     Here, she can have mine.

HAZEL WHIPS OFF HER BRA AND SHIELDS HEATON, SO SHE CAN PUT IT ON.

HEATON    Thanks, Coach.

HAZEL     No dramas. I think you'd best hang on to it.

SPEN      No wonder we're bloody losing.

HAZEL     You don't get that in the men's game.

CHORUS    Real tough game for one and all,

            Smiley High swing down like a wrecking ball;

            but Batley keep rolling it back up the hill

            in what quickly develops into a battle of wills.

            Despite a late try from Batley,

            final score: 14-4 to Smiley High.

            Life's never like it is in the movies.

PLAYERS LEAVE THE PITCH. SPEN AND HAZEL SWOP GIFTS AFTER THE MATCH. GROWN-UPS FORM ONE GROUP AND GIRLS THE OTHER, FOR "SECOND FAMILY"

CHORUS    Parents and teenagers

            are like perfect strangers
until it comes to the rugby:
it's like your second family.
Learning how to listen to grown-ups,
-facing the unknown;
seeing your kids deal with pain,
getting hurt and bouncing back again;
learning right from wrong,
feeling safe and strong,
honour and decency,
loyalty to your team-mates,
celebrating success and enjoying the game,
appreciating your own body
and your own beauty,
the difference between female and feminine,
discipline and self-discipline;
knowing how to fail,
how to make mistakes and recover,
shaking hands when it's all over,
forgive and forget, get on with it
and respect for the opposition.
Parents and teenagers
are like perfect strangers
until it comes to the rugby,
it's like your second family.