

“WAN2TLK?”

by

Kevin Fegan

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LIST OF CHARACTERS

JADE – cyberchick: Mercedes’ computer friend

1ST.MOBY – mobile fones

2ND.MOBY

3RD.MOBY

4TH.MOBY

CYBERDUDES CHORUS – Jade’s mates

MERCEDES – girl

MRS.DYSON – Mercedes’ mother

GUCCHI – leader of Allerton Boys

BEEMER – Allerton Boy

DIESEL – Allerton Boy

NIKE – leader of Allerton Girls

CREAM – Allerton Girl

CHELSEA – Allerton Girl

ALLERTON BOYS CHORUS

ALLERTON GIRLS CHORUS

ALEXANDER – Mercedes’ boyfriend

1ST.SHOPLIFTER

2ND.SHOPLIFTER

3RD.SHOPLIFTER

SHOPLIFTERS CHORUS

TETLEY – Alex’s dad, a security guard @ Tesco

TEENAGERS CHORUS

PARENTS CHORUS

REEBOK – Mercedes’ dad

GIRLS CHORUS

LIST OF SONGS

“Beautiful People”

“Allerton Boys, Allerton Girls”

“Shoplifters’ Song”

“Teenagers v Parents Song”

“Wan2tlk”

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SCENE 1.

CYBERSPACE. A COMPUTER GAME. ENTER

CYBERCHICK, JADE.

JADE

Hi, I’m Jade.

Welcome to the cyber-arcade.

It’s my pleasure to teach you

everything you need to know

to become a first-class “babe”.

Like all great computer games

there’s only one golden rule

you have to follow to survive your teenage:

two words, “be cool”.

It’s that easy.

Okay, so you can’t all be a superstar like me,

not everyone has a body to die for like mine,

not everyone has this face, it’s a shame;

but, hey, we can all aspire to be cool.

Just be yourself, that’s all you have to do

and everything else will fall into place.

Don’t worry, I’m here to help you.

There are four accessories you must acquire

before you can successfully aspire

to be a top babe.

Accessory No.1 – every girl needs a moby:

A SELECTION OF MOBILE PHONES RUN ON.

MOBILES

Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!

JADE

Now, which one shall it be?

MOBILES

Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!

JADE DESELECTS THEM, ONE AT A TIME.

JADE

Avoid the building brick –

pick one for its good looks, not as a weapon.

Nothing too small – after all,

people should see you making fone calls.

No obvious posers and no looney choons –

“The Simpsons” is okay but not “Clare de la Lune”.

JADE CHOOSES THE MOST HANDSOME

MOBILE AND FLIRTS WITH HIM.

What a girl really needs is service:

a good strong voicemail,

one you can keep on standby,

a peak user with one-touch keys

and a full style pack,

a power charger, vibration alert

and ultra compact,

rollover and roaming

and total connectivity –

mmm, you’ll do for me.

JADE WALKS OFF, LINKING ARMS WITH HER

CHOSEN MOBY.

Can you imagine life without a mobile?

It just wouldn't be worthwhile.

*THE OTHER REJECTED MOBILES ARE LEFT TO
COMPLAIN.*

1STMOBY They should upgrade their friends not us.

2NDMOBY I wish we could all be handsfree.

3RDMOBY Their talk is cheap, their conversation dull.

4THMOBY No one considers the poor moby.

MOBILES Our lives in the palms of their hands,
the pay-as-you-go generation,
there's only one thing matters to them:
communication, communication, communication.

1STMOBY It's, who's got the biggest memory?

2NDMOBY And how many choons can you play?

3RDMOBY Trouble with people is they have too many fascias.

4THMOBY How many messages can you send in one day?

MOBILES Our lives in the palms of their hands,
the pay-as-you-go generation,
there's only one thing matters to them:
communication, communication, communication.

1STMOBY All they want is an easylife.

2NDMOBY Talk the talk, walk the walk.

3RDMOBY Nothing real to say to each other.

4THMOBY Just talk, just talk, just talk.

MOBILES

Our lives in the palms of their hands,
the pay-as-you-go generation,
there's only one thing matters to them:
communication, communication, communication.

EXIT MOBILES.

JADE

Accessory No.2 – the right clothes:

A FULL COSTUME RAIL IS WHEELED ON.

always go for a designer label,
as expensive as possible,
doesn't matter if it's a fake, no one will know,
beg steal or borrow,
not yesterday's look or tomorrow's,
what matters is today:
is white the new black?
is blue the new grey?
And don't forget the underwear, girls,
when your bits feel well cared for,
you can take on the world.

Accessory No.3 - the right mates:

JADE IS JOINED BY THE CYBERDUDES.

SONG: "THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE"

CYBERDUDES

Cool and rude,
we're the Cyberdudes.
Let's hear it for the beautiful people:
we're havin' it funky

we're havin' it safe

we're havin' it sexy

we're havin' it straight.

Checkout the choons

checkout the dress code

checkout the dancing

a la mode.

Cool and rude,

we're the Cyberdudes.

No messin' in our funky dressin',

tops and t-shirts ironed and steamed,

we're havin it clean,

no room for crusties.

Creases in our hankies

creases in our hair

creases in our jeans

creases in our underwear.

We're havin' it rich,

sophisticated,

we're havin' it stylish,

up-to-dated –

you gotta look like somebody famous.

Checkout the choons

checkout the dress code

checkout the dancing

a la mode.
Cool and rude,
we're the Cyberdudes.
Take you for a spin on the dance floor,
then you'll want more
and you can have more
'cause we're dancin'
'til the break of dawn,
yes we're dancin'
from the day we're born
'cause the dancin'
is a feel-good factor
and we're beautiful,
yes we're the people,
we're the beautiful,
the beautiful people.
Cool and rude,
we're the Cyberdudes.

JADE

Accessory No.4 – a cool boyfriend:
now then, girls, this is a gender issue.
What you have to remember
is that the male of the species
is about as subtle as a 12-pound hammer.
The art of being amorous
is to be glamorous.

Believe me, with your essential moby,
the right clothes and the right mates,
boys will be queuing up at your gate.
So be choosy.

Males are a potential source of money:
choose one who likes to spend
spend spend on his girlfriend.

Preferably one with a decent set of wheels
to take you out for romantic meals.

JADE LOOKS INTO THE AUDIENCE FOR A MAN.

AT THE SAME TIME THE FACE OF

"MERCEDES" APPEARS ON A BIG SCREEN.

JADE Let me see, somewhere around here
there must be a half-decent male.

MERCEDES Hang on a minute, Jade, get real:
that might work fine in cyberspace
but out here in the real world,
you've got no chance.

JADE Who's that?

MERCEDES It's me, Mercedes, I'm the one playing the game,
remember?

JADE That's the trouble with interactive software, there's
always somebody there with a joystick trying to
spoil your fun. If you just played the game you
might learn something.

MERCEDES You live in a computer, what can I possibly learn
from you?

JADE That's prejudice and you know it. You think you're
better than me because I'm made of numbers
and you're made of water with a bit of carbon
thrown in for good measure.

MERCEDES I haven't got time to argue with a two-dimensional
perfectionist, I'm late for school as it is.

JADE That's it, don't bother to switch me off, I'm leaving.

SCREEN GOES BLANK. JADE LEAVES.

SCENE 2.

BREAKFAST AT THE DYSONS' HOUSE.

MRS.DYSON Where is that girl? (*CALLING*) Mercedes?

MERCEDES (*ARRIVING*) Sorry, mam, I was just switching off
me computer.

MRS.DYSON You should do your homework at night, not in the
morning.

MERCEDES A bit of last-minute research, that's all.

MRS.DYSON You're leaving yourself late.

MERCEDES It's only school.

MRS.DYSON You used to like school, I don't know what's got
into you?

MERCEDES Mam, can I have a new moby?

MRS.DYSON You've got a phone.

MERCEDES That thing, it's embarrassing.

MRS.DYSON It works, doesn't it?

MERCEDES Not if I let the bus run over it.

MRS.DYSON Don't you dare, I paid good money for that phone.

MERCEDES Mam, it's two years old, it needs upgrading.

MRS.DYSON And? You're fifteen years old but we don't upgrade
you.

MERCEDES Dad 'ld buy me one.

MRS.DYSON Don't start.

MERCEDES If he was here.

MRS.DYSON Well, he's not here, is he?

MERCEDES No.

MRS.DYSON Even when he was here, he was good for nothing.

MERCEDES That's not true.

MRS.DYSON It was him who left us, remember?

MERCEDES You drove him away.

MRS.DYSON That's not fair.

MERCEDES If you were a bit easier to live with, he wouldn't have left.

MRS.DYSON You don't know the half of it.

MERCEDES Because you won't tell me.

MRS.DYSON You think your dad's so perfect, well he's not.

MERCEDES Neither are you.

MRS.DYSON I'm glad he's gone.

MERCEDES I wish I was living with him.

MRS.DYSON Go on then, go to him. See for yourself if him and his fancy woman would have you. You'd be in for a bit of a shock, I can tell you.

MERCEDES You're jealous 'cause she's younger than you.

MRS.DYSON Don't you dare speak to me like that. If you're father really cared, he'd be phoning up asking to see you.

MERCEDES How can he? He doesn't know where we live?

MRS.DYSON 'Course he does. He wants nothing to do with us, he's made that very clear.

MERCEDES He phones me up on my moby.

MRS.DYSON Does he really? Well then, you can ask him for a
new phone, can't you?

MERCEDES (*LEAVING*) I will.

MRS.DYSON (*CALLING AFTER HER*) And while you're at it, ask
him for some new clothes and a school uniform
and dinner-money and trainers and coats and
everything else he doesn't pay for.

SCENE 3.

SCHOOL.

SONG: “ALLERTON BOYS, ALLERTON GIRLS”.

BOYS

On the streets of New Heys
you will find us cruisin’,
young and cool and hard
we’ve got a lot to prove.

GIRLS

On the streets of New Heys
you will find us flirtin’,
girl meets boy meets girl
we’re in the mood for love.

GUCCHI

The name’s Gucci, this is my crew.

BEEMER&DIESEL

He’s in charge, we’re the sidekicks.

NIKE

The name’s Nike, a girl with a point of view.

CREAM&CHELSEA

This is Cream and this is Chelsea.

GUCCHI&NIKE

You can have the image, adopt the style.

BEEMER&DIESEL

Create an impression and wear the smile.

CREAM&CHELSEA

You can shed the tears of a crocodile.

BOYS&GIRLS

But you ain’t gonna get that Valentine’s kiss
without the right connections.

BOYS

On the fone in New Heys
you will find us textin’,
fun and rude and loud,
we’ve gotta lot to say.

GIRLS

We’re the girls of New Heys,

you will find us sexy,
sending messages
and teasin' boys all day.

GUCCHI

My girl's Nike, she is the perfect mate.

BEEMER&DIESEL

He's the king and we're the generals.

NIKE

My boy's Gucci and I like to make him wait.

CREAM&CHELSEA

She's the queen and don't we know it.

GUCCHI&NIKE

You can have the image, adopt the style.

BEEMER&DIESEL

Create an impression and wear the smile.

CREAM&CHELSEA

You can shed the tears of a crocodile.

BOYS&GIRLS

But you ain't gonna get that Valentine's kiss
without the right connections.

*A NEW LAD, ALEXANDER, ARRIVES AT
SCHOOL. MERCEDES IS WATCHING.*

GUCCHI Here y'are, boys, who's the new kid on the block?

DIESEL Hey kid, what's your name? How old are you?

ALEXANDER Alexander, I'm 14.

BOYS *(MIMMICKING)* "Alexander, I'm 14".

ALEXANDER Can I join your gang?

BEEMER Er, I don't think so. Look at you. 14 years old going
on 40. Where did you get them clothes – Age
Concern?

GUCCHI Hang on a minute, let's give the kid a chance.

ALEX Thanks.

GUCCHI If he can pass the special Valentine's Day
challenge.

ALEX What do I have to do?

GUCCHI You have to trap off with one of them girls over
there.

ALEX They might not like me.

GUCCHI Don't be daft, they're gagging for it. Go on, ask
one of them out, if you dare.

ALEX APPROACHES THE GIRLS.

GUCCHI They'll eat him for breakfast.

ALEX Excuse me, erm, I hope you don't mind, but, I was
wondering, if, erm, oh hell, I don't know how to say
this.

NIKE Spit it out.

CREAM He’s blushing.

CHELSEA Arhh.

NIKE Get on with it, we can’t wait around all day for your balls to drop.

ALEX Would one of you like to go out with me?

SILENCE.

ALEX On a date.

SILENCE.

ALEX We could just pretend, if you like, as long as it was in front of my mates.

GIRLS LAUGH.

NIKE I don’t think so.

ALEX RETURNS TO BOYS’ LAUGHTER.

GUCCHI Try the old fogies’ home next door, Alexander, you might have better luck there.

ALEX’S MOBILE RINGS. IT IS A VERY UNCOOL TUNE. ALEX MOVES DOWNSTAGE AWAY FROM THEM. BOYS AND GIRLS LAUGH AND EXIT. MERCEDES APPEARS DOWNSTAGE OPPOSITE WITH HER MOBILE. A TEXT MESSAGE SCROLLS ON THE BIG SCREEN:

“don’t listen to them, they’re a bunch of losers”

ALEX TYPES IN HIS REPLY. THEIR TEXT CONVERSATION APPEARS ON THE SCREEN:

"can u c me?"

"of course"

"where r u? who r u?"

"i'm your girlfriend stupid"

"r u? gr8. when can we meet?"

"2nite. Tesco's 7pm. b there"

"it's a date"

*"remember, Alex, sex is like pringles: once u pop u
just can't stop!"*

ALEX

(SUDDENLY ULTRA COOL)

Wow! Boss news, I've got me a girlfriend!

Safe, sound, sorted.

Who'd 'ave thought it?

Me, Alex,

this close to sex.

I bet she's drop-dead gorgeous,

into bondage and orgies.

She must really fancy me.

Who can blame her?

I'm handsome, I'm witty.

Oh shit, what am I gonna wear?

Look at the state of me hair,

I can't go out like this,

She'll think I'm taking the –

I need some advice.

Who do I know that's nice?

Who do I know that's female?

Me sister? No.

Me mam? No. That's just too sad.

I know, I'll ask me dad.

EXIT ALEX.

MERCEDES

Wish me dad would get in touch. Not even so much as a text message. I'm not going on a date with this ridiculous fone – "moby dick" Jade calls it, it's like a building brick. Well if me mam won't buy me one and dad doesn't exist any more, I'll just have to nick one, won't I? I'll go down Tesco's early and rob one of them new Nokias, slip my own sim card in and I'm away.

EXIT MERCEDES.

SCENE 4.

TESCOS. SHOPLIFTERS WHEELING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE AISLES, HELPING THEMSELVES TO GOODS. A SECURITY GUARD, TETLEY, IS OBLIVIOUS TO THEIR THIEVING.

MERCEDES JOINS THEM TO ROB A NEW MOBILE.

SONG: "SHOPLIFTERS' SONG"

1ST.SHOPLIFTER

To pay for your goods is the height of folly,
life as a thief is terribly jolly,
drifting down aisles with our shopping trollies,
filling them up with sweets and ice-lollies.

CHORUS OF

No time to stop

SHOPLIFTERS

'cause it's shop 'til we drop,
everything's free
for the career thief,
why pay for your gifts?
It's much cheaper to shoplift.

2ND.SHOPLIFTER

Rows and rows of goodies and clothes,
all for the taking at your local Tesco's,
push your luck as far as it goes,
I think I'll have these, no I think I'll have those.

TETLEY

I stand by the door
guarding the store,

watching for trouble,
upholding the law.
As everyone knows
there are people at Tesco's
who prefer not to pay
their own way in this world,
there are those who will steal
anything they can,
girl or boy, woman or man,
well, it's my job to catch them.

3RD.SHOPLIFTER

Biscuits and tea, chesse puffs and kiwi
all taste nicer when you get them for free,
egg fried rice, leg of lamb cut-price,
no need to worry which flavour curry,
we're all in a hurry
for faster foods, pasta and pot-noodles,
diet coke and artichokes,
a right turn here for chicken tikka masala
then a left at the cakes to the ice-cream parlour,
everything's within reach so grab one of each,
toys and clothes, music and videos,
custard and mustard,
tissues and booze -

MERCEDES

And mobile fones,
without the need for a bank-loan,

I'll take this one please.

CHORUS

No time to stop
'cause it's shop 'til we drop,
everything's free
for the career thief,
why pay for your gifts?
It's much cheaper to shoplift.

TETLEY

I stand by the door
guarding the store,
watching for trouble,
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As everyone knows
there are people at Tesco's
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anything they can,
girl or boy, woman or man,
well, it's my job to catch them.

*ALEX ARRIVES FOR HIS DATE AND GREETES
HIS DAD, TETLEY, THE SECURITY GUARD.*

ALEX

Oh, hi dad, busy?

TETLEY

Very quiet tonight, son, nothing much happening.
You're looking a bit pukka, what you up to?

ALEX

Dad, I've got a girlfriend.

TETLEY Good for you, son, what's her name?

ALEX Dunno.

TETLEY Dunno? What sort of name's that?

ALEX I've not met her yet.

TETLEY What sort of girlfriend's that?

ALEX I'm meeting her tonight.

TETLEY At Tescos?

ALEX She should be here any minute. I wondered if you'd
got any hot tips for me, dad?

TETLEY Yeah, tuck your shirt in. Here, you can borrow my
tie.

ALEX Thanks, dad.

*MERCEDES EMERGES FROM THE SHOP AND
TAKES ALEX TO ONE SIDE.*

MERCEDES Who's your mate, Alex?

ALEX That's me dad. Are you my date?

MERCEDES Your dad's security?

ALEX Yeah, cool uniform, innit? Shall I introduce you?
Wait a minute, I don't know your name?

MERCEDES Another time, let's go. The name's Mercedes.

ALEX Built to last.

MERCEDES Alex, I've heard it before.

ALEX Sorry. Wow, that's a cool fone.

MERCEDES Do you like it? I've just bought it.

ALEX Let me show it my dad. See if he'll buy me one.

MERCEDES No, I don't think so.

ALEX Did your dad give you the money?

MERCEDES Yeah.

ALEX You must have a cool dad. My dad's really sensible.

MERCEDES My dad's a bit wild; but he really loves me.

ALEX You can tell.

MERCEDES He's always sending me mad text messages.

ALEX My dad's opened a savings account for me.

MERCEDES Why? What is there to save for?

ALEX Dunno. He says I can have the money when I'm 20 'cause then I won't be a teenager any more and I'll know what to do with it.

MERCEDES Parents are weird.

ALEX Thanks for, you know, earlier at school.

MERCEDES I don't know why you wanna join Gucci and his crew.

ALEX I thought I might, you know, find a girlfriend if I teamed up with them.

MERCEDES They're like dogs chasing cars, they have no idea how to catch girls.

ALEX Did you get any Valentines' cards?

MERCEDES No. Don't want none.

ALEX Oh. I bought you this.

HE HANDS HER A CARD.

Tear it up if you like.

MERCEDES

(READING) “Sex is evil,

sex is a sin,

sins are forgiven

so get stuck in!”

ALEX

Sorry, I was just picking up on your text message

about pringles.

MERCEDES

That was a joke.

ALEX

What’s the difference between a woman and a supermarket trolley? A trolley has a mind of its own.

MERCEDES

That is a crap joke.

ALEX

Sorry.

MERCEDES

Where’d you get it from – a Xmas cracker?

ALEX

Me dad told it me.

MERCEDES

A little tip, Alex. Don’t use jokes by parents or teachers or any adults for that matter.

ALEX

Sorry.

MERCEDES

And stop saying “sorry” all the time.

ALEX

Sor- okay.

MERCEDES

Why are parents and seagulls alike? You should never look up to either of them.

ALEX

I like you.

MERCEDES

You don’t have to play games now, I’m not like Nike and the rest of them.

ALEX No, I mean it, I really like you.

*THEY MOVE CLOSER TO KISS BUT ARE
INTERRUPTED BY NIKE AND HER POSSEE.*

NIKE What’s going on here, then? Look at the pair of
lovebirds, eh girls?

CREAM Trapping off with the new boy again, Mercedes?

MERCEDES Shut up.

CHELSEA *(TO ALEX)* She likes the taste of new blood.

NIKE You wanna watch her, Alex, she’s a right vampire
when she gets going.

MERCEDES Look who’s talkin’?

ALEX You’re only jealous of her.

NIKE Yeah, right, I really want to make it with a spotty
little oick like you. Come on girls, before she gets
her “daddy” onto us.

THEY LEAVE, LAUGHING.

ALEX What does she mean by that?

MERCEDES Nothing. She’s being a bitch. Thanks.

ALEX What for?

MERCEDES Stickin’ up for us.

ALEX Is it true?

MERCEDES What?

ALEX That you trap off with every new kid at school?

MERCEDES Go ahead, take their side, see if I care, you’re just
like the rest of them.

SHE LEAVES.

ALEX

Don't go. I'm sorry, I didn't mean –

HIS MOBILE RINGS. A MESSAGE APPEARS ON THE BIG SCREEN. THERE IS THE IMAGE OF A REVOLVER FOLLOWED BY THE WORDS:

"u r the weakest link. We know where u live"

ALEX TEXTS BACK. THE CONVERSATION SCROLLS ON THE SCREEN.

"who is this? leave me alone"

"Alex, you puff, have you done it with her yet? everyone else has. Gucci."

"course. I did it with her lots of times"

ALEX LOOKS UP AT WHAT HE'S SENT AND PANICS.

ALEX

What have I done? I shouldn't have wrote that.

HE SWITCHES OFF HIS FONE AND RUNS AWAY.

SCENE 5.

CYBER-ARCADE. ENTER JADE.

MERCEDES APPEARS ON THE BIG SCREEN.

JADE Hey, Mercedes, my main woman.

MERCEDES Hiya, Jade.

JADE Where you been? What's buggin' you?
I thought you'd pulled the plug on the modem.
A girl gets lonely here in the cyber-arcade.

MERCEDES I thought you were too cool to feel lonesome.

JADE Yeah, well, that's in front of the other guys.
You look like you caught a virus?

MERCEDES It's nothing.

JADE If it's nothing, it must be boys? Or rather, a boy?

MERCEDES There is a boy – Alex.

JADE Good for you, it's long overdue. Tell me all.

MERCEDES Alex isn't the problem. He's a bit daft but he's
honest enough. He wouldn't do anything to hurt
me.

JADE Believe me, they haven't invented the male
who isn't trouble for us females.

MERCEDES It's me dad.

JADE That's where being a cyberchick is a definite
advantage – no mam, no dad. Can't for the life of
me understand why you people bother with them?

MERCEDES Can you help me find him?

JADE Are you sure about this? You’ve already got one parent telling you what to do, do you really want another?

MERCEDES Jade, I think you’re a chip missing on the family values front.

JADE You saying I’m emotionally retarded?

MERCEDES Erm, yes.

JADE Thanks very much. What I lack in family values, I make up for in fun.

MERCEDES Well? Can you help me or not?

JADE Easy. Input all the data you have on your dad, I’ll find him.

MERCEDES Thanks, Jade, you’re a star.

MERCEDES DISAPPEARS FROM THE SCREEN.

JADE I worry about that girl,
 she goes around carrying the world
 on her shoulders.

 Trouble is, no one’s ever told her
 life is supposed to be fun,
 especially when you’re young.

 Girls and boys
 get out there and enjoy your teens,
 it’s a laugh, it’s a scream,
 it’s only obscene
 if you waste it.

Let's face it, the only thing sadder
than a grown-up trying to act like a teenager,
is a teenager trying to be grown-up.
Makes me wanna throw-up.

SCENE 6.

DYSONS' HOUSE.

MERCEDES You look tired, mam.

MRS.DYSON I am tired. If you did a bit more around the house it
 might help , instead of leaving everything for me to
 do.

MERCEDES I've tidied my bedroom.

MRS.DYSON Hallelujah!

MERCEDES Put your feet up, I'll make you a brew.

MRS.DYSON What you up to?

MERCEDES Nothing. You're so suspicious.

MRS.DYSON Years of practice. I could do with a holiday.

MERCEDES Why don't you?

MRS.DYSON I can't afford for the both of us –

MERCEDES Go on your own. I'll be all right.

MRS.DYSON I'm not leaving you.

MERCEDES I could stay with me dad.

MRS.DYSON No.

MERCEDES Why not? At least tell me where he lives?

MRS.DYSON He knows where to find you.

MERCEDES I know he's in Wales – which town is it?

MRS.DYSON I don't want you running away down there.

MERCEDES I won't, I promise. Just tell me which town?

MRS.DYSON He's not in Wales, he's on the Wirral: New
 Brighton. I don't know the address.

MERCEDES You deserve a holiday, mam. I could always stay
with a mate.

MRS.DYSON *(NOTICING HER NEW FONE)* What’s that?

MERCEDES It’s not mine.

MRS.DYSON Where’d you get that fone?

MERCEDES I borrowed it, off Alex.

MRS.DYSON Who’s she?

MERCEDES It’s a boy.

MRS.DYSON Boyfriend?

MERCEDES Yeah, I suppose.

MRS.DYSON You’d better be telling me the truth?

MERCEDES Ask him. His dad’s a security guard at Tesco’s.

MRS.DYSON So what? It’s not him I’m worried about, it’s you.

MERCEDES Mam, I’ve had boyfriends since I was three at
nursery.

MRS.DYSON Is it serious?

MERCEDES Oh yeah, we’re gonna elope to Australia next week
and live on “Neighbours”.

MRS.DYSON I don’t know what you get up to behind my back?

MERCEDES Mam, I’m not sleeping with him.

MRS.DYSON I should hope not; you’re not 16 yet.

MERCEDES Didn’t stop you and dad.

MRS.DYSON Who’s told you that?

MERCEDES No one. I just guessed.

MRS.DYSON Well, you guessed wrong.

MERCEDES Yeah, mam, whatever.

MRS.DYSON You shouldn't be quizzing your own mother about
those things.

MERCEDES Who else is there to ask?

MRS.DYSON Maybe it's time we had a talk.

MERCEDES It's a bit late for the biology lesson, mother.

MRS.DYSON I'm talking about relationships.

MERCEDES What can you teach me – you failed.

MRS.DYSON That is so cruel.

(TEARFUL) I am not a failure.

MERCEDES I'm sorry, mam. I didn't mean that. You've done
your best, at least you've stood by me.

MRS.DYSON Your dad'll soon realise how much he misses you.

MERCEDES Too late. It's too late.

THEY HUG.

SCENE 7.

SCHOOL. THIS TIME, ALEX IS STANDING WITH THE BOYS. AS MERCEDES ENTERS, THE GIRLS SHADOW HER. SHE IGNORES THEM AND APPROACHES ALEX.

MERCEDES You comin', Alex?

BOYS AND GIRLS LAUGH.

ALEX I'm, erm, hangin' out with the lads tonight.

GUCCHI Get stuck in, Alex, you can always text us again with your progress.

MERCEDES What's he saying?

ALEX I can't see me bird when I'm with me mates.

MERCEDES What did you just call me?

GUCCHI Did he not show you his little message?

NIKE Whereabouts did you do it, Mercedes? At the back of Tescos in the car park?

CREAM Among the fruit and veg?

CHELSEA Down by the spicey sauces?

GUCCHI Alex, show Mercedes what you sent us? He was so proud of his latest conquest, weren't you Alex?

MERCEDES How could you?

MERCEDES STORMS OFF. ALEX CHASES AFTER HER.

SCENE 8.

*AT TESCOS. ALEX IS LOOKING FOR
MERCEDES BUT RUNS INTO HIS DAD.*

ALEX Dad, have you seen Mercedes?

TETLEY I need to talk to you about that young lady.

ALEX Later, I have to find her.

TETLEY This won't wait. Come with me.

ALEX What's happened?

*TETLEY ESCORTS ALEX TO A DVD
RECORDER AND INSERTS A DISC.*

TETLEY I want you to watch this.

ALEX What is it?

TETLEY Just watch it.

*ON THE BIG SCREEN RECORDED C.C.T.V.
FOOTAGE APPEARS OF MERCEDES
SHOPLIFTING HER FONE THE DAY BEFORE.*

TETLEY It is her, isn't it?

ALEX Yes.

TETLEY She's in big trouble.

ALEX What you gonna do?

TETLEY What can I do? She's robbed from the store, I'll
have to report her to the police.

ALEX She'll be arrested.

TETLEY Serve her right, might teach her a lesson.

ALEX You can't. Don't report her, dad, please? She's my

girlfriend.

TETLEY I don't have any choice. My job's on the line here.

ALEX Does any one else have a copy of the disc?

TETLEY No.

ALEX You could mislay it.

TETLEY Alex, I'm surprised at you. I thought you were more responsible than that.

ALEX Don't tell the police.

TETLEY She'll do it again. I can't let her off scott-free.

ALEX Go and see her mam, give her the disc; let her deal with it.

TETLEY I don't know about that.

ALEX Please, dad, for my sake, if not hers.

TETLEY I'm making no promises. If Mrs.Dyson doesn't deal with the matter satisfactorily, I'll have to report it.
I shouldn't be doing this.

ALEX Thanks, dad, I'll come with you.

TETLEY No. You go home, I'll sort this out, it's my job.

SCENE 9.

DYSONS' HOUSE.

*MERCEDES IS IN HER BEDROOM IN
CONVERSATION WITH JADE WHO APPEARS
ON THE BIG SCREEN THIS TIME.*

*ELSEWHERE, MRS.DYSON ANSWERS
THE DOOR. IT IS TETLEY. WE DON'T HEAR
WHAT'S SAID BUT SHE INVITES HIM INSIDE.*

MERCEDES

I hate him.

JADE

That's lads for you.

MERCEDES

I hate boys. They're such cowards when it comes
to their feelings.

JADE

How many lads does it take to screw in a lightbulb?
Ten. One to screw it in and the other nine to brag
about it.

MERCEDES

I thought Alex was different. He called me his
"bird".

JADE

Girls are only called birds because of the worms
they pick up.

MERCEDES

How could he lie about me sleeping with him?

JADE

Men are like computers: they're always trying to
solve problems when they usually are the problem.

MERCEDES

I really thought we had a good thing going between
us. We could talk to each other.

JADE Why does it take millions of sperm to fertilize one egg? ‘Cos not one of them will stop and ask for directions.

MERCEDES I wouldn’t have him back now if he crawled on his hands and knees.

MRS.DYSON AND TETLEY SIT DOWN TO VIEW THE DISC. WE DON’T HEAR THEIR CONVERSATION.

JADE Little boy crying in the street. Policeman asks him “what’s wrong?” “I’ve lost me dad,” says the boy. “What’s he like?” says the policeman. “Beer, fags and women,” says the little boy.

MERCEDES Me dad’s the same – what is it with fellas?

JADE I’ve got an address for you. And a telephone number.

MERCEDES You’ve found me dad? Why didn’t you say?

JADE You never asked. I was trying to cheer you up.

MERCEDES How did you find him?

JADE Mercedes, I am a top of the range cyberchick with full-on intellect – and very sexy with it.

MERCEDES You’re amazin’.

JADE That as well.

MRS.DYSON AND TETLEY HAVE FINISHED WATCHING THE RECORDING.

MRS.DYSON I don’t know what to say. I feel so ashamed.

TETLEY Would you like me to leave you alone with your daughter, Mrs.Dyson?

MRS.DYSON No, please stay. I'll fetch her.

(CALLING) Mercedes, I want you down here straight away.

JADE DISAPPEARS FROM THE SCREEN.

MERCEDES GOES TO HER MUM.

 This is Alex's dad.

MERCEDES I know who he is – what's he doing here?

MRS.DYSON You told me that fone belonged to Alex?

MERCEDES So I lied.

MRS.DYSON You're not only a liar, my girl, you're a thief.

MERCEDES You what?

MRS.DYSON Don't try and deny it. This gentleman has a recording of you stealing that fone.

MERCEDES I suppose Alex has put you up to this?

TETLEY Quite the opposite. Alex persuaded me to show it to your mum rather than report it to the police.

MRS.DYSON The man is doing you a favour.

MERCEDES Do what you want.

MRS.DYSON How can you say that? We need assurances this will never happen again or I'll take the disc to the police myself.

MERCEDES You would and all, wouldn't you? Shop your own daughter.

MRS.DYSON If I thought it would stop you thieving – what’s got into you?

MERCEDES I don’t have to sit and listen to this.

MRS.DYSON You stay there. I’ve not finished with you yet.

MERCEDES I’ve finished with you. I’m out of here.

MRS.DYSON Get back here, young lady.

MERCEDES LEGS IT.

TETLEY Do you want me to go after her?

MRS.DYSON There’s no point. She’ll be back when she’s calmed down. What can you do with them when they’re like that?

TETLEY I have my own problems with Alex.

MRS.DYSON I do appreciate you giving her a second chance, even if she doesn’t deserve it.

TETLEY She might have gone to see Alex?

MRS.DYSON Sounds like they’ve fallen out.

TETLEY Look, Mrs.Dyson, here’s my mobile number. Give me a call if I can be of any help or if you just want a friendly shoulder to cry on.

MRS.DYSON You’ve been a great help already. Thanks. It’s not easy when you’re on your own.

TETLEY I know, I’m in the same boat.

MRS.DYSON I’m sorry, I didn’t realise –

TETLEY His mum died when he was ten years old.

MRS.DYSON That must have been awful for you both.

TETLEY I've just about got over it now. I'm not so sure
about Alex.

MRS.DYSON You'll have to call around another time, in more
pleasant circumstances. When Alex and Mercedes
have made up, bring him over, I'll cook us a meal.

TETLEY I might take you up on that. Listen, I won't keep
you. I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news; but,
hopefully, it'll turn out all right?

MRS.DYSON I'm sure it will. Good night.

TETLEY Night then.

SCENE 10.

ON THE BIG SCREEN IS A PRE-RECORDING OF TEENAGERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR PARENTS. ENTER MERCEDES AND A CHORUS OF TEENAGERS AS THE RECORDING FINISHES AND IS REPLACED BY ANOTHER ONE OF MERCEDES' DAD, REEBOK, IN HIS LIVING ROOM. IT IS FILMED AS IF MERCEDES IS LOOKING IN THROUGH HIS WINDOW.

SONG: "TEENAGERS V PARENTS"

MERCEDES

That's my dad in there,
sitting in his armchair
with a new family, a new wife,
he's getting on with his life.
No room for me
or my melancholy,
he's moved on a chapter, lost the plot,
I'm the child he forgot.

TEENAGERS' CHORUS

Why do we bother with mams and dads
when all they do is make us feel small?
Do they forget so soon what it is to be young?
Do they have no memories at all?
What do you do when your dad's gone mad?
When your mam stands by so helpless?
Where do you go to find a superhero

When the adults refuse to help us?

RECORDING OF REEBOK IN HIS LIVING ROOM

IS REPLACED BY A PRE-RECORDING OF

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEENAGERS.

ENTER REEBOK AND A CHORUS OF PARENTS

OPPOSITE THE TEENAGERS.

REEBOK

Somewhere out there is my daughter.

If blood is thicker than water

I should go out and search, in the rain,

become her father again.

I can't believe

I've let her be deceived,

So why don't I phone her,

tell her I love her,

I made a mistake,

I'm the dad she must hate.

PARENTS' CHORUS

Why do we bother with kids at all

When what they do brings heartache and pain?

Do they not see how hard it is for mams and dads?

Do they know how great is our shame?

What do you do when your child goes missing

When you can't help thinking the worst?

Where do we go to help our children to grow

When the children blame us for divorce?

*AS SONG ENDS, MERCEDES LEAVES. REEBOK
CALLS AFTER HER BUT SHE IS LOST IN THE
CROWD.*

SCENE 11.

*MERCEDES MEETS ALEX AND TRIES TO
AVOID HIM.*

ALEX Don't run away, please, I need to talk.

MERCEDES What's up? Your new mates dumped you?

ALEX I was bang out of order, I'm sorry.

MERCEDES Forget it, Alex, it's over.

ALEX I can't forget you.

MERCEDES You don't wanna know me, I'm trouble.

ALEX I tried to help.

MERCEDES You sent your dad round to my house.

ALEX To stop him going to the police, I did you a favour.

MERCEDES Thanks for nothing. You lied about me to your mates.

ALEX You lied to me about your dad.

MERCEDES Yeah well, I haven't got a dad any more. As far as I'm concerned he doesn't exist.

ALEX At least your dad's alive; you shouldn't take that for granted.

MERCEDES I'm sorry, I heard about your mam, you should have told me.

ALEX It was a long time ago.

MERCEDES It was really insensitive of me.

ALEX How could you rob from my dad's store?

MERCEDES I didn't know your dad worked there, did I?

ALEX He says if you give back the fone, he won't press charges.

MERCEDES He can have it. Here.

SHE HANDS THE FONE TO HIM.

ALEX He's give your mam the disc; but don't say anything to anyone, he could get the sack.

MERCEDES He's all right your dad, isn't he?

ALEX He won't let you off next time.

MERCEDES There won't be a next time – well, not from your dad anyway.

ALEX I don't know how you can joke about it?

MERCEDES Why not? It's a laugh.

ALEX Why do you want to get into trouble?

MERCEDES I don't care.

ALEX I care about you.

MERCEDES Why?

ALEX I like you. Look, can we start again?

MERCEDES I dunno.

HER FONE RINGS. SHE TAKES IT OFF ALEX.

THERE IS A MESSAGE WHICH APPEARS ON

THE BIG SCREEN: “hi it's dad. sorry not been in touch. wan2tlk?”

MERCEDES It's him, it's me dad, he's text me. He's not disowned me, he does care, I told you.

ALEX I thought you just said –

MERCEDES

Never mind what I said, I have to text him.

THEIR MESSAGES APPEAR ON THE BIG

SCREEN:

“yes.gr8 2 hear from u. how r u?”

“let’s meet 2nite?”

“ok where?”

“rear entrance 2 park nr macdonalds @ 10pm?”

“ok. c u l8r.”

“bcnu luv dad x”

MERCEDES

Look, he says ‘luv dad’ and a kiss.

ALEX

It’s a bit of a funny place to meet, isn’t it?

MERCEDES

Why is it?

ALEX

It’s a bit spooky round there. I mean, why not the front entrance?

MERCEDES

He’ll have his reasons. Probably doesn’t want anyone to see us, in case he cries.

ALEX

Why so late?

MERCEDES

I dunno. He’s busy, I s’pose.

ALEX

It’s just a bit odd, that’s all.

MERCEDES

I’m not spooked. Stop trying to put a damper on things. He’s been in touch, that’s all that matters.

ALEX

Be careful.

MERCEDES

Alex, he’s my dad; what you trying to say?

Here, take this lousy fone back to your dad’s and collect your reward.

ALEX

What reward? Can I see you tomorrow?

MERCEDES

Dunno, I'll have to see what my dad says, won't I?

SCENE 12.

AT DYSONS' HOUSE. TETLEY IS VISITING.

THEY'VE JUST FINISHED DINNER.

TETLEY That was a lovely meal, thank you.

MRS.DYSON My pleasure. I've enjoyed your company.

TETLEY Maybe Alex and Mercedes will join us next time?

MRS.DYSON She's never in.

TETLEY Alex is the same.

MRS.DYSON I don't think my daughter really likes me.

TETLEY Nonsense. Alex tells me she never has a bad word
to say about you.

MRS.DYSON That's because she says it all to my face.

TETLEY I think you're a good mother.

MRS.DYSON Thanks.

TETLEY And a lovely woman.

MRS.DYSON You're embarrassing me, I'll fetch desert.

TETLEY Alex and Mercedes seem to have made it up?

MRS.DYSON I am pleased. She needs a few calming influences
does that girl.

THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

MRS.DYSON Who can that be at this time? It's nearly ten o'clock.

SHE GOES TO THE DOOR. IT'S REEBOK.

MRS.DYSON Oh, it's you. What do you want?

REEBOK Can I come in?

MRS.DYSON No, Reebok, you can't.

REEBOK Can I see Mercedes?

MRS.DYSON She's not here.

REEBOK Where is she?

MRS.DYSON Out. I don't know where?

REEBOK Don't you think you should know where she is?

MRS.DYSON Don't come round here lecturing me how to take
care of my daughter.

REEBOK Our daughter.

MRS.DYSON You wouldn't know it, the way you've behaved.

REEBOK I want to make arrangements to see her, I miss her.

MRS.DYSON Tough. You wanted it this way, Reebok.

REEBOK Please, can I come in and talk?

MRS.DYSON Now's not a good time.

TETLEY Is everything all right?

MRS.DYSON Yes, yes, it's Reebok, Mercedes' dad.

REEBOK Who's that?

MRS.DYSON None of your business.

TETLEY I'll leave you two alone, if you like. I don't want to
intrude on family.

REEBOK Good idea.

MRS.DYSON No. I'll decide who I have in my house.
(TO TETLEY) You stay where you are.

REEBOK I've not come here for an argument. Have you got
her mobile number?

MRS.DYSON Here.

REEBOK Can I borrow your phone?

MRS.DYSON You cheeky git; you haven't changed, have you?

REEBOK A quick call, see if she's on her way home?

MRS.DYSON I don't see why I should?

REEBOK Please? I've come all the way, especially.

MRS.DYSON *(HANDING HIM THE PHONE) Make it quick.*
HE DIALS. ELSEWHERE, ALEX APPEARS WITH
MERCEDES' FONE WHICH IS RINGING.

ALEX Hello?

REEBOK Who's that?

ALEX Alex.

REEBOK Alex who?

TETLEY AND MRS.DYSON ARE LISTENING.
Where's Mercedes? Is this her fone?

ALEX Yes, I mean no, I mean it was her fone. Who is
this?

REEBOK Is she there?

ALEX No, she's gone to meet her dad – can I ask who's
calling?

REEBOK This is her dad – what do you mean she's gone to
meet me?

MRS.DYSON What's going on?

ALEX You text her a message earlier.

REEBOK No, I didn't.

ALEX Yes you did, I was there.

REEBOK It wasn't me.

ALEX Oh, hell.

REEBOK Is this some kind of trick?

MRS.DYSON Give it here.

*SHE TAKES THE PHONE OFF HIM AND HANDS
IT TO TETLEY.*

REEBOK Oi, what d'you think you're doing?

MRS.DYSON Alex is his son, let him sort it out.

TETLEY *(ON THE PHONE)* Alex?

ALEX Dad? Where are you? What's happening?

TETLEY I'm round at Mrs.Dyson's. Where's Mercedes?

ALEX I knew something wasn't right. Dad, you've got to
listen to me. Mercedes got a text message from
someone pretending to be her dad. She's arranged
to meet him at the park near Macdonalds at ten
o'clock.

TETLEY It's ten o'clock now.

ALEX She was meeting him at the back entrance.

TETLEY Leave it to us, Alex. We'll sort it out, don't you go
near the park. Wait for me to call.

TETLEY PUTS DOWN THE PHONE.

REEBOK I want to know what the hell your son's done with
her?

ALEX *(ON THE PHONE)* Dad? Dad?

ALEX SIGHS AND RUNS OFF.

MRS.DYSON

Let him speak.

TETLEY

There's no time, I'll explain on the way. Get in the
car, I'll drive,

EXIT.

SCENE 13.

AT THE PARK, MERCEDES IS WAITING. IT'S

VERY SPOOKY.

SONG: "WAN2TLK"

MERCEDES

Let me tell you all the things

I wanted you to say,

let me guard your secrets

and convince you you should stay -

when you're a teenage girl,

all alone,

you just wan2tlk.

Let me wish you happiness

and share my dreams with you,

let me ask you questions

and advise me what to do -

when you're growing up fast,

time goes past,

you just wan2tlk.

Love me,

why won't you be my daddy?

Text me, any kind of message,

call me, tell me that you miss me.

Love me,

why won't you be my daddy?

All I want from you:

sing songs to me,

write poetry,

send messages each day.

Let me take you by the hand,

walk with me down the street,

if you came to visit

you would make my life complete –

when you've so much to give,

so much love,

you just wan2tlk.

Let me show you all the things

I've done while you're away,

if you want your daughter

then you only have to say –

when you're a teenage girl,

all alone,

you just wan2tlk.

Love me,

why won't you be my daddy?

Text me, any kind of message,

call me, tell me that you miss me.

Love me,

why won't you be my daddy?

All I want from you:

sing songs to me,

write poetry,

send messages each day.

MERCEDES

I wish I had me moby.

THERE IS A NOISE FROM THE BUSHES.

Dad? Dad, is that you?

Don't be a tease, you know I hate that.

I'm coming in.

SHE PASSES THROUGH A GATE AND IT

CRASHES SHUT BEHIND HER.

Aaargh!

SHE REALISES IT'S JUST THE GATE.

Scared me to death.

Stop messing about. Dad, if that's you, you're

frightening me now, it's not fair.

I'm warning you, I'll call the police. I've got a moby

here the size of a brick, I'll batter you with it.

ALEX

(CALLING) I've got them! Mercedes, quick, over

here, help me! Aaargh!

MERCEDES

Alex!

ALEX STAGGERS OUT OF THE DARKNESS,

HOLDING HIS GROIN AND GRIPPING A

BLANKET AND ROPE.

MERCEDES Alex, you all right? You've been hurt.

ALEX There was two of them.

HE RECREATES THE INCIDENT USING HER TO ILLUSTRATE EVENTS.

ALEX I had my blanket over them like this, I was trying to tie them up –

REEBOK RUSHES ON AND TACKLES ALEX TO THE FLOOR.

REEBOK I've got him! I've got him!

ALEX Aargh! Let me go! It wasn't me, I swear!

MERCEDES *(PULLING REEBOK OFF ALEX)* Dad, dad, put him down, that's Alex.

REEBOK I don't care who it is, I'm having him.

MERCEDES *(BREAKING ALEX FREE)* It wasn't him, let him go.

TETLEY AND MRS.DYSON APPEAR. ALEX RUNS TO TETLEY. MRS.DYSON COMFORTS MERCEDES.

MRS.DYSON Thank god you're all right.

MERCEDES Thank Alex, he saved me.

REEBOK I tried to save you.

MERCEDES I don't understand? What about your messages?

ALEX You were set-up, Mercedes. Somebody's trying to frighten you.

MERCEDES What have I done to deserve this?

MRS.DYSON Let's get you home, we can call the police from
there.

MERCEDES No police!

MRS.DYSON Okay, okay.

REEBOK We don't need police, if I get a hold of them.

MRS.DYSON That's all we need.

REEBOK I'm not having anybody frightening my little girl. I'll
show 'em scary.

MERCEDES Did you really come to see me, dad?

REEBOK I did. I want us to see each other regular.

MERCEDES I'd like that, if mum agrees.

MRS.DYSON I was never the one standing in the way.

ALEX *(TO MERCEDES)* Meet me tomorrow before
school, I think I know who it is.

EXIT.

GUCCHI Somebody explain to him in words of less than two syllables.

CREAM Weren't you frightened?

GUCCHI No way. I kicked him in the nads. I shouldn't think he'll be feeling very pervy for a while.

DIESEL You should have battered him.

GUCCHI We'd blown it by then, we had to get away.

THEY EXIT.

ALEX Did you hear that? They didn't realise it was me.

MERCEDES They think they're so hard.

ALEX I've seen the messages they send to each other, Gucci and Nike, they're well soppo; it's embarrassing.

MERCEDES They're so two-faced, somebody should expose them for who they really are.

ALEX I'm glad you said that. I've got a plan.

MERCEDES Tell me more.

ALEX It's P.E. this morning in the hall. While they're doing gym, we'll nip into the lockers and rob their mobies. I know how to connect the fones to the P.C. that's connected to the digital projector in the hall.

MERCEDES To do what?

ALEX Don't you get it? While everyone's in the hall, we'll project all their text messages and show everyone what they're really like.

MERCEDES

That would be so sweet. I'll rob Nike's, you rob
Gucchi's.

ALEX

I'll meet you in the projector room.

SCENE 15

SCHOOL HALL WHICH DOUBLES AS A GYM. GUCCHI, BEEMER AND DIESEL ARE LARKING ABOUT, PLAYING BASKETBALL WITH NIKE, CREAM AND CHELSEA. OTHER CLASSMATES ARE HANGING ABOUT IN THE GYM. AS MESSAGES START SCROLLING ON THE BIG SCREEN, A COMPUTER GENERATED VOICE READS THE MESSAGES THROUGH LOUDSPEAKERS. THE MESSAGES START WITH GUCCHI AND NIKE SLAGGING THEIR MATES BEEMER, DIESEL, CREAM AND CHELSEA. GUCCHI AND NIKE TRY TO PROTEST ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING BUT THE DAMAGE IS DONE. BEEMER, DIESEL, CREAM AND CHELSEA FALL OUT WITH THEM AND MOVE AWAY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HALL. GUCCHI AND NIKE ARE ISOLATED, FORCED TO LISTEN TO A SERIES OF EMBARRASSINGLY SOPPY MESSAGES TO EACH OTHER. AS A RESULT, THEY FALL OUT WITH EACH OTHER AND STORM OFF AS EVERYONE LAUGHS AT THEM.

SCENE 16

OUTSIDE DYSONS' HOUSE. MERCEDES

AND ALEX ARE MET BY REEBOK. ALEX

RETIRES TO LEAVE THEM ALONE TO TALK.

REEBOK Your mam told me what happened with the
shoplifting and that.

MERCEDES Don't you start, I'm ashamed enough as it is.

REEBOK No, I feel ashamed, I should have been there for
you. I've bought you a present.

HE HANDS IT TO HER.

MERCEDES Thanks.

It's a new moby.

REEBOK Alex told me which one you'd like.

MERCEDES I don't know what to say.

REEBOK Don't say anything, just send me a text message.

MERCEDES I will. I'll send you loads.

REEBOK I won't lose touch again, I promise. Come and visit
me, you're welcome any time.

MERCEDES I will.

REEBOK And bring Alex.

MERCEDES I'd like that.

REEBOK *(LEAVING)* Later.

MERCEDES Later, dad.

*SHE TEXTS A MESSAGE IMMEDIATELY WHICH
APPEARS ON THE BIG SCREEN:*

"luv u dad. M xx"

"luv u daughter. bye. bcnu. dad xx"

SCENE 17.

*ENTER JADE. MERCEDES AND ALEX APPEAR
ON THE BIG SCREEN, LOOKING IN AT HER IN
HER CYBER-ARCADE.*

JADE

You people make me laugh,
you find it so hard to communicate,
you've got gadgets galore,
yet you can't talk straight.

Radios and tvs,
computers and dvds,
telephones and mobile phones,
a million ways to be alone.

You'd think 'I love you' was a virus
it's so hard for you to say it,
how can three little words
seem so toxic.

Thousands of words in your vocabulary
and yet you rely on grunts like
"urgh, er, argh, mmm, innit,
okay, yeah, no,
hiya, seeya, you see,
right, you know".

Open your mouth,
wiggle your tongue
and before very long

you won't be able to stop the words.
You run around like mad-arse flies
as if you're always late
for an important appointment,
you don't know how to communicate.
Just stop for a minute:
try saying 'hello' to a complete stranger,
instead of getting on his case,
or talk to the person next to you
and put a smile on both your faces,
spare a few words as well as pennies
for the beggar on the street,
you'd be surprised how many people you meet
want to tell you their stories.
Take it from me, the Diva of Cool,
one simple rule:
on the catwalk of life,
you need the style of a leopard
and the eyes of a hawk;
but most of all you need to talk the talk.
If you wan2tlk,
just do it,
It's cool to talk.
*END WITH FULL CAST IN A FINAL BLAST OF
"ALLERTON BOYS, ALLERTON GIRLS".*