

MAKE A MAN

Created by Osman Ozgun and Jack Petheram

Based on music by *Fear, the Man*

CAST LIST

ALEX- Shapol S

BRAIN- Ava G

VICKY- Deeya B

ZACH- Jayden A

LIVVY- Yvaine O

LIVVY'S FRIEND- Toirese K

COOL KID 1- Vincenzo VP

COOL KID 2- Eser B

MR FISHER/ KEEN STUDENT- Nathan P

MS HUGHES/ MUM/ UNSPORTY KID- Sophia L

MRS WHATSHERFACE/ SPORTY KID- Ruby M

MR VALENTINE/ DAD/ SLEEPY KID- Leo G

Prologue

An empty stage in darkness. Spotlight appears DSC which ALEX enters and walks into. The following monologue is delivered by BRAIN offstage whilst ALEX reacts to his internal narration.

BRAIN: And go. Speak. Say anything. Any words that come to mind. Use that mouth and say something. (*Beat*) Why am I still not speaking? They're all looking at me, the show is waiting to start. My show by the way, about my life and my journey and blah blah blah. Come on you've got this. Do something, smile? Not like that you look weird. Try and be cool. You're not that cool! Just do anything but stand awkwardly in the spotlight sweating. And don't acknowledge your sweat! Oh my gosh you are standing there sweating, not speaking and acknowledging your sweat. That's it I'm taking over, lighting change please.

BRAIN enters.

ALEX: What are you doing?

BRAIN: Oh now he speaks!

ALEX: Why are you here?

BRAIN: Well someone had to start the show...

ALEX: No. Why are *you* here?

BRAIN: Because you're here. I am you, you are me. Last time I checked you can't detach your brain from your body. Except maybe after death... but I'm really tired of thinking about the afterlife. Can we please think of something else?

ALEX: *You're* the intrusive thought at the back of my head!

BRAIN: Our head! And is that really the name you're giving me in this show? 'The intrusive thought'. T-I-T? Although actually when you were standing there not speaking, you did look like a right-

ALEX: Only because you made me. You're my conscience, that's how it works.

BRAIN: I think, you speak.

ALEX: Exactly.

BRAIN: Right. It just seems I'm the one doing the talking for you/me/us.

ALEX: Because you don't let me speak. I overthink everything. Every little decision in each day of my existence is cross-examined, analysed and evaluated and whenever I try to open my mouth to articulate how I'm feeling I can't. Words fail me. My brain fails me.

BRAIN: Rude. But isn't that the crux of the show? An epic journey of a teenage boy overcoming his intrusive thoughts T-I-T and learning how to be himself in the form of a musical-

ALEX: No. This is not a musical.

BRAIN: But everyone loves a musical. Don't you audience?

ALEX: And it is absolutely not a pantomime. I don't mind a couple of songs but none of this he's behind you crap. (*looking at the audience*) Just pretend we're not here.

BRAIN: Don't we mean the other way around?

ALEX: Yes, yes. That. Is this really what I look like? Last time I looked in the mirror I don't remember seeing (*some noticeable difference between the actors*).

BRAIN: Yeah but that's because you imagine stuff from your perspective. You're not looking at yourself when you dream. You're experiencing it. Or at least you think you are.

ALEX: Wow. I can be quite philosophical.

BRAIN: I know right!

ALEX: So are you gonna let me do this show myself or will you intrude on that too?

BRAIN: It is your/mine/our show so we're in it together. I'll be with you, that's what a conscience is for, but you can lead.

ALEX: Thank you.

BRAIN: Unless I think you're doing a bad job.

ALEX: Great.

BRAIN: Or want a musical number.

ALEX: Shall we get on with the show?

BRAIN: On with the show! Hit it guy up there in the tech box.

Opening to 'Make a Man' plays as the rest of the cast enter the stage in a montage showcasing their characters and ending with a cafeteria setup, ready for Scene 1.

Scene 1-New Term, New Me

BRAIN: It was September of 2000 and something and the start of a new year at Fullback Academy. I was ready to start the year with a newfound confidence and look to mask the same old insecurities. You can guess how well that went...

ALEX: Hey gang.

VICKY: What the hell are you wearing?

ALEX: This? It's something new I'm going for.

VICKY: You look ridiculous.

ALEX: What do you mean? It's totally on trend right now.

VICKY: Right... Please take it off.

ALEX: Why can't you back me on this? Zach, you get it don't you?

ZACH: Your fashion faux pas I can deal with. Your weird new walk I cannot.

VICKY: Yeah why are you walking like a giraffe fresh out the womb?

BRAIN: Zach and Vicky. My two best friends in case you couldn't keep up. Vicky I've known since primary, has a resting bitch face but is very sweet once you get to know her. But don't tell her I said that, she will kill me. Zach we met at secondary and has this weird, mysterious energy going on. Occasionally he'll drop a mad story and you're never quite sure if he's being serious or not but somehow you believe him.

VICKY: You're doing it again aren't you.

ALEX: Doing what?

VICKY: Talking to yourself in your head.

ALEX: No. *(turns to brain whispering)* Go away.

Cool kids enter the stage speak loudly to brag about CK1's party.

COOL KID 2: Mate your party last week slapped.

COOL KID 1: I know.

CK2: Like it was literally insane.

CK1: I know.

CK2: And when the police turned up-

CK1: Shh. Don't let Ms Hughes hear you or she'll kill me.

VICKY: That would be a shame.

CK1: Sorry did you say something?

VICKY: Just it sounded like a great party.

CK2: It was, you missed out.

CK1: (to *ALEX*) What are you staring at?

ALEX: Nothing. Not you.

CK2: You sure about that?

ALEX: Yeah my guy. Absolutely positively nothing. Know what I'm saying.

VICKY: Dude chill.

CK1: Come on let's find the girls (*exits*).

VICKY: Mummy's calling you.

CK2: Your mum's calling you (*exits*).

BRAIN: (to *audience*) Cool Kid 1 and Cool Kid 2. There's some in every school.

ALEX: How you can talk to them like that?

VICKY: They were being rude, I just spoke my mind. Why do you care so much about that group? All you're doing is inflating the one brain cell containing their ego.

ZACH: She's right.

ALEX: Look you two are besties. I'm not trying to trade you for them but-

VICKY: I should hope not!

ALEX: But it's always us against them. The cool ones and us lot.

VICKY: You're on fire today.

ZACH: I think it's the new walk.

ALEX: I get it, you don't like the walk!

ZACH: Not on you no.

ALEX: What I am trying to say is it doesn't have to be this way. Every year we miss out on the cool kid's parties and it sucks. I'm fed up with sitting at home with you guys, imagining the great party we're missing out on whilst Zach tells another questionable story. No offence.

ZACH: None taken. I just won't tell you the next time I meet Richard Branson in a lift.

VICKY: Did you really?

ZACH: Well-

ALEX: No. This year we are going to make friends with the cool kids so we are actually invited to the party, instead of waiting to find out the gossip the next day.

ZACH: How would you suggest we accomplish that?

ALEX: We'll have to make some changes. *(to Vicky)* You're gonna have to learn to smile and turn down your sarcasm dial. *(to Zach)* And you, please be more normal. Stop with the wild stories and weird looks. Just be yourself!

VICKY: Oh the irony. Why don't you limp around again for us?

ALEX: Dial down.

ZACH: What about you, what are you going to change? Or is your tactic to finally ask out Livvy and get into the group that way?

ALEX: Actually, my change is that I've decided I'm not into her anymore. I realised over the summer that it wasn't to be and so I'm just going to be my cool, casual self around her and less, excited puppy dog.

VICKY: What a load of crap.

ZACH: Here she comes, you've got a chance to be cool and casual.

VICKY: Yeah go on. Look at her and then tell us you've not done that thing where you imagine that you're in some sort of cheesy music video with her.

ALEX: I'd never do that.

ALEX turns around to see LIVVY whilst BRAIN enters and recreates a cheesy music video until it cuts out abruptly on LIVVY'S line.

LIVVY: Hi. You alright?

ALEX: Yeah, yeah totally. Just chilling and sitting here with my two pals who are also chill.

LIVVY: Nice.

BRAIN: Ask her a question.

ALEX: So here's a question.

BRAIN: You fool.

LIVVY: Okay...

Pause

BRAIN: How was...

ALEX: How was... your...

BRAIN: I have no thoughts.

ALEX: Summer. How was your summer?

BRAIN: There you go, that's normal.

ALEX: Yeah how was your summer? You look tanned. Not that I was staring, I just couldn't help but notice. Because there's a glow. Not that you're on fire or anything. Just really tanned. Don't worry, you don't look orange or unnatural. Not that there's anything wrong with fake tanning either. I did it once at a wedding. Not at the actual wedding but the night before. I went a bit orange.

BRAIN: What is wrong with me.

LIVVY: It's a real tan thank you for noticing. I went to France, it was nice I guess. (*bell rings*) I better be going. Bye guys. (*exits*)

VICKY: So cool.

ZACH: So casual.

MS HUGHES: Shouldn't you three be going?

BRAIN: Ms Hughes. The most fearsome teacher in the school. Legend has it she made an exchange student cry from just a glare...

ALEX: Come on!

Scene 2-Meet the Teachers

Classroom scene with Mrs Whatsherface, the music teacher. She is hopeless at controlling the class who mostly talk over and ignore her.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Can everyone listen please? Stop throwing paper and focus on the lesson. We're meant to be learning the G major scale and all of the chords you can use when you're writing in it.

BRAIN: Mrs Whatsherface. The teacher so bad that no one actually knows her name. Nothing ever gets done in her lessons and its generally a time to catch up with friends or nap for an hour before maths. Unless of course you're Keen Student where "every opportunity to learn is a chance to grow."

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Some common chords you can use are C and D which are the fourth and fifth chord in the scale. Can anyone tell me what the sixth chord in the scale would be and whether its minor or major?

KEEN STUDENT: I can Miss.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Yes, go on then Keen Student.

KEEN STUDENT: The sixth chord in G major is E minor.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Correct. Can someone wake up sleepy kid.

CK1 throws ball of paper at SLEEPY KID who wakes up.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Can you try to stay awake please Sleepy Kid? We're in a lesson.

SLEEPY KID: Yeah, yeah. I was just thinking about what you were saying but had my eyes closed.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: What's the answer then?

SLEEPY KID: Err... drum and bass?

MRS WHATSHERFACE: No that's just wrong. If you were thinking with your eyes open you may have heard Keen Student share the correct answer.

SLEEPY KID: Sorry Mrs Whatsherface, I won't do it again.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Thank you. Now I'm sorry to be that teacher who gives you an assignment on the first day back but- (*groans and general sounds of annoyance*)

CK1: Really miss?

CK2: Yeah we expect this of Ms Hughes not you.

KEEN STUDENT: I'm happy to do it miss.

CK1: Shut up, you don't even know what it is.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: I'm sorry but I'm giving it to you now because you've got the whole term to work on it. I want everyone to find a piece of music that they feel represents them. Something you can relate to or chimes with an emotion or something. Then you need to present it to the class as a short essay or a PowerPoint or even playing it on an instrument of your choice. Does that make sense? Good, you can go.

School bell rings. Ensemble exits. ALEX goes to see MR FISHER

BRAIN: Music lessons were awful but thankfully I could always go to Mr Fisher for help. He taught history but was also in a band so could help my musical needs. Fisher sort of gets me and I visit him during his office hours a lot to chat about music and life. Here I am now!

MR FISHER: Hey Alex, how you doing?

ALEX: I'm good thanks. Did you have a nice summer? Sorry I was going to pop into your office hours earlier this week but then I thought you might be busy with stuff in the first week back.

MR FISHER: Don't be silly, you know my door is always open for a chat. I had a nice break thank you and time to pick up the guitar again. Did you check out that indie band I told you about at the end of last term?

ALEX: Oh it was actually when I was away with my parents so couldn't make it.

MR FISHER: Maybe next time.

ALEX: Yeah. Mrs Whatsherface has given us this assignment to work on this term about finding a piece of music that's important to us. I'm not sure what I'll do.

MR FISHER: Well you've got plenty of time to think about it. It sounds like a fun thing to get into. So, are you looking forward to this year? How's your first week back been?

ALEX: Alright. Nice to be back and to see Vicky and Zach again.

MR FISHER: Ah the trio is reunited!

ALEX: I think this year will be a good one. I've decided it will. I tried a new look at the start of the week but the trio weren't a fan.

MR FISHER: That's a shame. I know how close you guys are. Did you like it though? Did you feel comfortable in it?

ALEX: Not really. I thought it would be good to reinvent myself for this year.

MR FISHER: I would say it's more important that you didn't feel right than what anyone else thought. You should be comfortable in yourself so there's no point changing to be the opposite. Especially if it is just for other people.

ALEX: Thanks sir, I'll try. See you next week (*exits*).

Scene 3- The Stump

Break time. VICKY and ZACH have gathered at their usual hangout spot waiting for Alex. They sit DSC and are visible if not audible to the cool kids USR.

VICKY: That was so not fair, why did I have to get detention?

ZACH: You did throw a rubber at someone's head.

VICKY: She flicked it in my direction first!

ZACH: But did you need to throw it back?

VICKY: I was returning it like the good classmate I am.

ZACH: At her head?

VICKY: It's not like I was aiming for her head. If it wasn't so big, I wouldn't have hit it.

ZACH: Yes, I'm sure that's the reason and it had nothing to do with her being your "nemesis."

VICKY: She is my nemesis. Alex gets it. Where is he anyway? He disappeared quickly after the lesson.

ZACH: Maybe he's with the love of his life.

VICKY: Helplessly following her maybe but he won't be *with* her.

ZACH: Quite right.

VICKY: I wish he'd move on from her. A few weeks ago, he's all 'new year, new me, I'm not in love with Livvy anymore.' That lasted about a day.

ZACH: Not even until lunch time.

VICKY: It's nothing against her, even if her best friend's big head has just landed me in detention. I just don't want him to get hurt.

ZACH: Maybe he needs to.

VICKY: What do you mean?

LIVVY and LIVVY'S FRIEND enter. LIVVY'S FRIEND offers a fake apology to Vicky.

LIVVY'S FRIEND: Hey Vicky, I just wanted to say no hard feelings for earlier.

VICKY: No none at all.

LF: It's just such a shame you were the one to get detention for it.

VICKY: Did you not?

LF: No. He asked me to stay behind afterwards to explain what happened and I said it was all a misunderstanding.

VICKY: And yet I still have detention and you don't?

LIVVY: (*trying to diffuse the situation*) I can see Cool kid 1 and Cool kid 2 over there.

LF: Yeah you did get me right in the head, which he saw, and even though it was an accident, it did still really hurt.

LIVVY: Maybe we should go over and say hi.

VICKY: You cow.

LF: Excuse me?

LIVVY: Or not.

VICKY: Didn't you tell him that I was just throwing back your rubber which you flicked to me in the first place?

LF: I told him it was an accident. I know you didn't mean to hurt me.

VICKY: Trust me if I wanted to hurt you I would've thrown something a lot harder than a rubber.

ZACH: Like a hole-punch.

VICKY: Yeah.

LF: I'd like to see you try.

VICKY: Don't tempt me.

CK1 and 2 having tried to listen in on the conversation, come to join in the fun.

CK1&2: Fight, fight, fight, fight!

LIVVY: What are you doing?

VICKY: Exerting their one brain cell.

CK1: We heard you were gonna fight.

CK2: Saw you were gonna fight.

CK1: And we weren't gonna miss that.

CK2: No way.

LIVVY: They're not actually going to fight, they were just messing. Right?

LF: Yeah as if I'd fight her. It's not worth my time.

VICKY: I can literally think of 57 better things to do.

LIVVY: Not 58?

VICKY: No fighting her would be 58.

LF: Someone's got her priorities right.

VICKY: Yes and you're clearly not one of them.

CK1: Ohhh. Burn!

CK2: Fight, fight, fi-

CK1: No man they're not fighting.

CK2: But I thought-

CK1: Keep up!

CK2: Sorry.

LIVVY: Okay I feel like we've all learnt something valuable this break time. I believe it's P.E next so better go. Come on (*LF fake smiles and they exit*).

CK2: I didn't think we had P.E on Tuesdays?

CK1: We don't. Today is Wednesday.

CK2: Oh man I've not got my kit again. Mr Valentine is going to kill me.

CK1: Let's find you something.

VICKY: Mummy to the rescue again.

CK2: Your mum needs a rescue.

They exit. ALEX and BRAIN enter having been trying to find the gang.

BRAIN: I told you they'd be at the stump. They're always at the stump. It's literally where you always go with them every day. One dodgy bowel movement and I forget everything.

ALEX: What did I miss?

Scene 4- PE

Ensemble onstage with varying degrees of enthusiasm ahead of their PE lesson.

BRAIN: PE. The two letters guaranteed to make most squirm with teenage anxiety. I of course am no exception. There's just so many worries and concerns associated with PE. Do I wear a polo shirt or rugby top? How can I get changed in front of everyone? What if I have PE the same day as food tech? Yep, PE is the lesson I really go into overdrive and propel any small doubt right to the front.

ALEX: I'm so happy you're here.

BRAIN: You are most welcome.

MR VALENTINE: (*blows whistle*) Okay everyone. Have a quick warm up then we'll start the lesson. Try not to get too distracted with chatter.

BRAIN: Mr Valentine, our PE teacher. He tries to take a tough approach like Ms Hughes but whilst she genuinely breathes fire, he much prefers to listen in and keep up to date with the school gossip. Now Mr Valentine like every PE teacher will one day assign you as either sporty or unsporty based on your natural ability. This reputation will stick throughout the entirety school and is almost impossible to change. Isn't that right Unsporty kid?

UNSPORTY KID: Hi, I'm Unsporty kid. I really don't care for PE. I walk to and from school every day which is enough exercise for me.

BRAIN: And how does it make you feel to be branded unsporty by your peers and even your teacher?

UNSPORTY KID: It's alright I guess. I'd rather that than maths nerd.

ALEX: But that guy's fine with being unsporty, they own it. What about people who aren't the most talented but are just pretty decent at sport?

BRAIN: Like who? Us? No. We're mildly average at PE so you won't get remembered for it. You're either bad or good, like this guy.

SPORTY KID: Hi I'm Sporty Kid. I'm the star of my class and brought up in every assembly to be presented with a new trophy. My school use my face on all their booklets and open day posters. I'll probably be elected head boy one day. I have no say in any of this. I just run fast.

BRAIN: How does it feel to be defined by the singular attribute of you being sporty?

SPORTY KID: It would be nice to be seen for who I really am. Under all the trophies and muscles, I'm quite the softy at heart. I go bird-watching with my nan every month.

ALEX: Bird-watching. Really?

BRAIN: Hey these are your thoughts, he might do. But this is the two-tier society that exists in every school PE lesson. Sporty kids are likely to be celebrated for their achievements and be all round successful teenagers. The unsporty ones exist on the fringe and consist of nerds, rejects or asthmatics. No offence Unsporty kid.

UNSPORTY KID: None taken.

ALEX: But I don't feel like either. I'm somewhere in the middle.

BRAIN: The empty space, void of masculinity.

SPORTY KID: That's embarrassing.

ALEX: Offence taken.

BRAIN: But it's what you're thinking. This is all just a distraction whilst you wait for the teacher, remember?

MR VALENTINE: *(blows whistle)* Right you lot. Finish your warm-ups and let's get going. That includes you too Alex.

ALEX: He actually knows my name?

BRAIN: You're standing in the middle talking to yourself, you hardly blend it. Look sporty.

ALEX does a series of weird stretches.

SPORTY KID: Looking good there.

MR VALENTINE: Alex. What on earth are you doing?

ALEX: Just warming up sir.

MR VALENTINE: Right. If you say so...

BRAIN: I'm warming up like he'd need to if he wasn't wearing fifty layers. Why do PE teachers do this? Stand there barking orders in oversized coats whilst we freeze in PE kit. But if you dare question it...

UNSPORTY KID: It's too cold sir, I can't feel my toes.

MR VALENTINE: Real men don't feel the cold. Everyone do a lap of the field.

BRAIN: That happens.

ALEX: Look I'd prefer to get through PE without more intrusive thoughts than usual.

BRAIN: Now we both know that what you'd actually prefer is a musical number to imagine an easier way of doing PE rather than actually being able to throw a ball.

ALEX: I can throw a ball.

BRAIN: Please don't kid ourselves. Let's cover our anxieties with music.

MR VALENTINE: Come on. Don't just stand there like Mickey Mouse. Run!

PE musical montage. At the end of the montage a ball falls to ALEX which belongs to LIVVY.

LIVVY: Alex could you throw the ball back please?

BRAIN: Now we both know that you can't but this is an opportunity to prove yourself to Livvy. Don't mess it up.

SPORTY KID: *(trying to save Alex the embarrassment)* Do you want me to?

ALEX: Nope. I've got this.

ALEX tries to throw the ball but spectacularly fails. The group laughs at him but LIVVY smiles.

UNSPORTY KID: Even I can throw better than that.

MR VALENTINE: Oh Alex. You've not got the best throw have you. Your stance was all wrong and you need to follow through with your body. Step aside and let me show you how it's done (*he throws ball to Livvy and the class applauds him*).

BRAIN: Nice one. Now Mr Valentine gets to look like the real man in front of Livvy. And you know he doesn't need an excuse to show off for the girls...

ALEX: She smiled. When I threw the ball, or tried to throw the ball, Livvy smiled. Do you think...

BRAIN: She likes you back. 100%. You can't argue with that. I think we're in.

Scene 5-Home Time

ALEX'S home. The trio are discussing ALEX'S interaction with LIVVY in PE and what it means for the future of his dating life...

VICKY: And you're sure she smiled at you?

ALEX: Positive.

VICKY: You know that just because a girl smiles at you doesn't mean she's in love with you.

ALEX: I know that but maybe she finds me endearing.

VICKY: Endearing?

ALEX: I made her smile!

ZACH: He's probably been browsing engagement rings already.

ALEX: Don't be silly, I know which one I want.

VICKY: Alex!

ALEX: I'm not saying I'm going to propose! I've just casually thought about what kind of future proposal or wedding I'd want.

ZACH: I went to a nudist wedding once.

VICKY: Wouldn't that be illegal at our age?

ZACH: I was a baby. I don't remember it but there's pictures at home somewhere.

ALEX: I do not want to look at those.

VICKY: I do!

Alex's MUM enters

MUM: Knock, knock. How's everyone doing?

ALEX: Mum most people actually knock rather than saying it when walking into a room.

MUM: Well my way is more unique. You kids alright? How was school?

VICKY: It was good thanks.

ZACH: Ended with PE.

MUM: (*concerned*) Oh how did you get on Alex?

ALEX: Why does everyone think I'm completely hopeless at sport?

MUM: You're not completely hopeless darling, you've just got other gifts.

ALEX: Thanks for the vote of confidence in front of my friend's mum.

MUM: They're hardly strangers Alex. I've known Vicky since she was little and Zach writes to me often.

ZACH: Did you get my last one?

MUM: I did thank you. Work's been so busy lately but I promise I'll reply to you soon.

ALEX: You write to my mum?

ZACH: Yes, amongst many others. (*to MUM*) Don't worry, I know how things are.

Alex's DAD enters

DAD: I thought I heard voices.

MUM: Hello love.

ALEX: Yeah sure, everyone come in.

DAD: Everyone alright in here?

VICKY: All the better now we've seen you.

ZACH: Steady.

VICKY: How are you? Work alright?

DAD: It's fine thanks. I thankfully managed to get out of a boring meeting hence why I'm home early.

VICKY: You're such a hard worker, you deserve to come home and rest.

DAD: Thank you, see someone appreciates me around here.

ALEX: Why don't you have her as your daughter then.

DAD: Vicky's welcome round anytime she wants. In fact, she can come over on Saturday to watch the match if she's free. I know football is more her thing than yours.

VICKY: I would love to.

MUM: Are you two staying for dinner? I've got plenty of chilli to go around!

ZACH: Well that's very hard to say no to but I've got to get home for a meeting later.

ALEX: What meeting?

VICKY: And I would also love to but I'm babysitting tonight.

DAD: That's a shame. Another time maybe.

MUM: Come on then, let's leave them alone before Alex kicks us out.

DAD: It's my house.

ALEX: It's my room. (*they exit*) What the hell was that?

VICKY: What?

ALEX: Since when are you two so close with my parents?

ZACH: Your mum and I have been writing for a while now.

VICKY: What can I say, your dad's hot.

ALEX: I'm confused and want to throw up.

VICKY: We're just messing. Tell us more about your decision to propose to Livvy.

ALEX: I'm not proposing! But I am going to ask her out tomorrow...

VICKY: What? You can't base a big decision off of a smile!

ALEX: We've had a moment. Guys I've been pining over the girl for so long now and I finally feel like it's the right time.

ZACH: I think it's a great idea. It's about time you acted on your feelings.

VICKY: His feelings, not hers.

ALEX: There's a good chance she feels the same way. I've got a hunch.

VICKY: A hunch?

ZACH: Follow it. Go with that hunch.

VICKY: This is mad.

ALEX: I'm going to do it tomorrow lunchtime at the stump, so if you two could make yourselves scarce that would be much appreciated.

VICKY: Unbelievable.

ZACH: I have other things I could do.

ALEX: I'm ready guys.

BRAIN: Are you telling them or yourself?

Scene 6-The Note

The next day in Mrs Whatsherface's class. Ensemble onstage in classroom formation. Ms Hughes has arrived to threaten the class to behave themselves.

MS HUGHES: Right you lot. I am fed up with hearing complaints about misbehaviour in this music lesson. It is completely unacceptable for you to be disrespecting this lesson and the school with loud, rowdy behaviour like a bunch of ferrets. I will be sitting outside this class doing marking and if I hear anything untoward from any of you it will be a straight detention. Have I made myself clear? *(scared nods from the class)*

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Thank you Ms Hughes.

MS HUGHES: Take it away Mrs Whatsherface *(she exits)*.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Erm yes so if everybody could use the remainder of the lesson to do their projects that would be great.

CK1: Sick.

KEEN STUDENT: But miss all we've done is answer the starter task. We have forty minutes left.

CK1: Shut up Keen Student.

CK2: Yeah.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Don't worry I'll be floating around helping those who want it and making sure you stay on track.

LF: Basically, she'll be pretending to teach and we can do anything as long as it's quiet.

SLEEPY KID: Sounds good to me (*immediately falls asleep*).

VICKY: Come on then. What's the Livvy plan?

BRAIN: Try not to panic.

ALEX: I've got it all figured it.

BRAIN: Liar.

ALEX: I'm going to arrange to meet Livvy by the stump, tell her how I feel, ask if she feels the same way and hope she wants to go out with me.

ZACH: Sounds foolproof. What could go wrong.

BRAIN: This guy gets it.

VICKY: Okay but how are you going to get her to the stump? Surely you won't ask her directly.

BRAIN: Are you mad? I'm not that brave.

ALEX: I've actually thought of a better, more romantic idea.

BRAIN: Yeah tell her, it's a good one.

VICKY: Oh no, what have you done?

ALEX: I've written a note.

BRAIN: The note.

ALEX: Well I didn't actually write it. I cut out individual letters from a magazine and stuck them together to make the note.

BRAIN: The note.

ALEX: I slid it into her bag this morning. She'll find it soon and know to meet me at the stump. It's like some sort of spy-romance movie!

BRAIN: The Note.

ZACH: I'd watch that.

VICKY: I have so many questions.

ALEX: Don't you think it's a good idea?

VICKY: I think you're mental. Why have you made a note?

ALEX: *(to Brain)* Don't. *(to Vicky)* I thought it would be romantic.

VICKY: You cut out letters from a magazine, it sounds like a ransom note.

ZACH: I got one of those once. Never give them what they want, stand your ground.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Are you guys getting on okay? You don't need help do you?

VICKY: Not with music...

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Good. People have been asking so many questions.

ZACH: I'm stuck between which instrument to play for the presentation.

ALEX: You play multiple instruments?

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Go with whichever one you think you play the best.

VICKY: Can I play the recorder then?

MRS WHATSHERFACE: No, the recorder is very annoying.

VICKY: Short essay it is.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Do you have any ideas yet Alex?

VICKY: He's been occupied by other things.

ZACH: Notes from the heart, some might say.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: That's good. Let your heart speak to you. Don't listen to your brain too much.

LF: Livvy what's this?

BRAIN: Oh no.

LIVVY: What's what? *(LF hands her the note, she reads it aloud)* "Meet me at stump at lunch. Tell no one."

LF: How did that get into your bag?

LIVVY: I have no idea.

LF: I think you've got a stalker...

CK2: Lemme see.

VICKY: This is going well.

LIVVY: I don't have a stalker.

CK1: I bet you've got an admirer.

CK2: Is it you?

CK1: If I wanted to ask Livvy out, I'd be man enough to do it to her face.

LIVVY: Keep dreaming.

CK2: Ohhhh.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: What's going on?

CK1: Livvy's got a secret admirer.

LIVVY: Shut up. Nothing miss. Just excited for the music project.

MRS WHATSHERFACE: Keep it down. Ms Hughes will hear you. The lesson's actually happening.

LF: Are you going to go?

LIVVY: Yeah. It's not signed from anyone so I want to know who it's from.

VICKY: You didn't sign it?

ZACH: A good ransom note doesn't need a signature.

ALEX: I didn't want to make it obvious.

VICKY: Maybe you should just tell her?

BRAIN: It's going terribly, abort mission, abort mission!

ALEX: No. I'm sticking to the plan. I can do this.

Scene 7-A Love Twist

The ensemble moves out of classroom formation. LIVVY is by the stump waiting for the mystery notemaker. Ensemble loiters nearby, eager to see the drama. ALEX enters and sees his plan hasn't gone accordingly. He notices VICKY and goes over to her.

VICKY: Are you okay?

ALEX: What's everyone doing here?

VICKY: Well your note was revealed publically so everyone's here to watch. Even Mr Valentine.

ALEX: Great. That's just, great.

VICKY: You don't have to do it you know. Pretend the note was just a joke by the cool kids and ask her out a different time. In private.

BRAIN: Don't back out now. A real man would do it.

ALEX: I decided I was going to do it now and that's it.

VICKY: Alex I think-

ALEX: You know I half expected some of those lot to turn up but I did ask you and Zach to stay away. At least he listened.

ALEX turns and then meanders on his approach to LIVVY who is waiting with LIVVY'S FRIEND. He pretends not to see LIVVY and almost walks past her.

ALEX: Oh hey there Olivia.

LF: Why are you full naming her?

ALEX: Sorry I-

LF: No one calls her that apart from her grandad. It's weird.

LIVVY: It's fine leave him alone. Are you alright?

ALEX: Yes. What brings you to the stump?

LF: As if you don't know about the note.

LIVVY: It wasn't you who wrote it was it?

ALEX: Me? No definitely not. I don't know who would do that.

BRAIN: What am I doing? Why did I say that?

LF: I find this whole note thing really weird. Then again, you're a bit weird aren't you Alex?

ALEX: Not really. A pretty normal person I am.

LF: Totally.

LIVVY: *(to her friend)* Why don't you go talk to CK1 and 2 over there. See who they think wrote it.

LIVVY'S FRIEND begrudgingly exits. Awkward pause.

BRAIN: Please say something.

ALEX: Who do you think wrote it?

LIVVY: I really don't know. I've been waiting here a while for someone to turn up but nobody has.

BRAIN: You've royally messed this up.

LIVVY: I know my friend said it was a bit weird but I found it kind of sweet.

At being called sweet, ALEX tries to play it cool. BRAIN dances around the stage.

ALEX: Sweet?

LIVVY: Yeah whoever it was clearly went to a lot of effort.

ALEX: They must have to cut out all those letters.

BRAIN: You're not supposed to know that. Why did you say that?

ALEX: If that's what they did. I only got half a glimpse in class.

BRAIN: Good save.

ALEX: Thank you.

LIVVY: For what?

ALEX: For... turning up. I'm sure whoever wrote the note would appreciate you turning up and seeing who it was. Whoever wrote it. I don't know.

LIVVY: Right.

BRAIN: Why am I this awkward? Just ask her out.

ALEX: Do you think it was one of them? *(gestures to the cool kids)*

LIVVY: No. I went on a date with CK1 once but it was awful. He took me to McDonalds and it was a really awkward. We decided to just be friends.

BRAIN: Woah she went out on a date with one of the cool kids and turned him down. That means she's got standards. He took her to McDonalds. You can do better than that.

ALEX: Is there anyone else that you've got a crush on?

LIVVY: Crush? I don't think I've had a crush since I was eight.

BRAIN: Don't say crush. Be cool.

ALEX: Well you know what I mean. Someone that kind of takes your fancy, floats your boat, want to get to know more.

LIVVY: You're funny. But no, I don't think so.

BRAIN: She said I'm funny! Ask her out now. She said you're sweet and funny. Do it, man up.

ALEX: What about me?

LIVVY: You?

ALEX: Yeah. Would I be someone you could potentially, hypothetically go out with?

LIVVY: I never thought that you-

ALEX: I was just wondering. No big deal. Obviously, I could take you somewhere nicer than McDonalds.

LIVVY: Alex you're a nice boy but-

ALEX: Not what you're looking for?

LIVVY: You're a really good friend. I...I wouldn't want to ruin that.

ALEX: I get that, that's fine.

LIVVY: I'm sorry. I think might go grab some food before they run out. I don't think the note guy is coming. See you around (*she exits*).

ALEX: Of course. See you later.

The others who had been watching come over to the stump.

CK1: Did you just ask out Livvy?

LF: No way did you do that.

CK2: That's rogue. I wouldn't expect that from you.

CK1: Oi leave him alone. That took guts to ask out Livvy in front of everyone.

ALEX: Thanks...mate?

CK1: Why didn't you tell me about it though? You know I would've helped to set you guys up. I'm a great wingman.

CK2: You never helped me.

CK1: You're hopeless that's why. Look, Alex, I'm having an end of term party on Saturday night. Why don't you come along? Livvy will be there, I'll talk to her. Maybe you've still got a shot?

ALEX: You're inviting me to your party?

LF: Really? Him?

CK1: Yeah, I want you there. It's going to be a great night. Oh, and it's a masked party so you gotta wear one.

MR VALENTINE having heard everything excitingly approaches.

MR VALENTINE: Guys, unfortunately lunch is almost over so start heading in. *(to CK1)* Did I just hear you say you're having a masked party? It sounds great, tell me more.

They exit as VICKY, who has witnessed both interactions, comes over.

VICKY: Hey, are you okay?

ALEX: You'll never guess what just happened.

VICKY: I saw... I'm sorry Livvy didn't say yes.

ALEX: What? Oh yeah that happened too but not that. CK1 just invited me to his party.

VICKY: He invited you?

ALEX: Yeah! And he said he would help with Livvy. I wasn't sure at first but he was actually being so nice. I'm finally going to one of the cool kids' parties. *(Pause. VICKY doesn't know what to say)* Sorry, I'm so stupid. I should've asked if you could come. I'm sure you can be my plus one. There'll be so many people there he won't even notice!

VICKY: Are you sure you're okay? You haven't had time to think about what happened with Livvy yet.

ALEX: I'm fine. Trust me. Now we gotta go find Zach and fill him in on everything. He won't believe it!

They exit. BRAIN is apprehensive and then follows.

Scene 8-Pep Talk

ALEX goes to visit MR FISHER at the end of the school week. FISHER is onstage collecting his things for the weekend

ALEX: Hi sir.

MR FISHER: Oh hi Alex. Sorry excuse me, I'm just packing up. I've got a ton of marking to do so my weekend will consist heavily of the Russian Revolution. Hopefully yours is more exciting.

ALEX: Well actually I've got a party tomorrow night.

MR FISHER: A party?

ALEX: Yeah CK1 invited me earlier this week. It's a masked one which should be fun.

MR FISHER: Sounds it. The last party I went to was the staff one at the end of last year. Mr Valentine hosted and it was Club Tropicana themed.

ALEX: Wow.

MR FISHER: Yeah it was terrible. Really not my sort of thing. I had a quick drink with Ms Hughes then left.

ALEX: Ms Hughes was at a party?

MR FISHER: We do have lives outside of being a teacher you know Alex.

ALEX: I know that and I know you do. But Ms Hughes...

MR FISHER: Sometimes people can surprise you, don't be so quick to judge. So, are you looking forward to your party then?

ALEX: Absolutely. I've always wanted to be invited to one of CK1's parties, they're legendary. And now I'm going to one...

Beat. Fisher picks up on Alex's nervousness.

MR FISHER: Is it your first big party?

ALEX: Yep.

MR FISHER: You'll be fine. Don't worry. Can't be any worse than Mr Valentine's! How's your music project coming along?

ALEX: I've actually not done a lot on it.

MR FISHER: Alex...

ALEX: I know, I know. I've had the whole term and it's due in after the break. I just haven't found the right song yet. Mrs Whatsherface was so vague with what we could do and I just can't think what.

MR FISHER: You must have some ideas, music is such a big thing for you.

ALEX: You might think that but no one else does. I'm not the music boy.

MR FISHER: You don't have to be. I keep telling you, it doesn't matter what other people think. If it's important to you then that's all that matters.

ALEX: Thanks sir. I'll have a think about it.

MR FISHER: Yes you should. You know what you like. Find something that strikes a chord. Pun intended!

ALEX: I will. Have a good weekend Fisher.

MR FISHER: You too Alex. And remember, just enjoy the party. Don't get too stressed about it. What's the worst that could happen?

Scene 9-Before the Party

Saturday Night. Pre-party. Alex's house. The trio are gathered ahead of the party. ALEX offstage choosing what to wear. VICKY is trying to hurry him up. ZACH isn't going to the party but is there for encouragement beforehand.

BRAIN: The night of the party. The moment had finally arrived. The moment I had been waiting so long for and I knew it was going to be the best night of my life. I just really don't know what to wear...

VICKY: *(to offstage)* Just choose something. We've been waiting an hour!

ZACH: An hour and thirteen minutes to be precise.

ALEX: *(from offstage)* Almost ready.

ZACH: I knew this would happen

VICKY: He's so indecisive. I thought it would take him a while to pick an outfit but not this long. There's being fashionably late and then there's just missing half the party.

ZACH: That's not what I meant. He knows Livvy will be there and he still thinks he has a chance with her.

VICKY: But she turned him down. I told you what happened.

ZACH: You said she friendzoned him. Politely said they're friends and she didn't want to ruin it.

VICKY: Exactly, she said no.

ZACH: In as many words but she didn't say the word no, did she?

VICKY: Well, I guess not. Do you think she might actually like him because she didn't explicitly say no?

ZACH: No I don't think he has a chance at all. Livvy's not interested. But by her not saying the word no, she has inadvertently left the door ajar for Alex's feelings to come through. It's the tiniest of chances for him but now that he's been offered help by one of the cool kids, it's kept the door open. Plus, he's finally been invited to one of these parties so the boy is a hormonal wreck. Hence why I'm here for moral support.

VICKY: Why don't you tell him any of this then?

ZACH: Because he needs to work it out for himself. I can't make decisions for him. All I can do is support and give my opinion when he's ready.

VICKY: I hope he doesn't do anything at the party. Are you sure you don't want to come?

ZACH: 100%.

VICKY: What am I going to do if he's off making puppy eyes at Livvy then?

ZACH: You can talk to her friend...

VICKY: You're funny.

ZACH: Maybe this is your chance to make amends?

VICKY: Don't be stupid. She made her bed, she can lie in it.

ZACH: Are you planning on holding onto this grudge forever?

VICKY: Yep.

ZACH: I respect it.

VICKY: Thank you. One day you'll have a nemesis of your own and then you'll understand what it's like.

ZACH: I don't think it's quite my style.

VICKY: Why does she have to be there anyway?

ZACH: She is friends with the host.

VICKY: She's a tagalong.

ZACH: Like you tonight?

VICKY: You know that's not true. Don't say anything in-front of Alex.

ZACH: Why won't you just tell him?

VICKY: You know why. I'm sparing his feelings, it'll crush him.

ZACH: He might surprise you.

VICKY: I doubt that. And I'm not the only one keeping things from him, am I?

ZACH: True but there's a difference. My thing isn't about me. Yours is.

VICKY looks guilty as ALEX comes back.

ALEX: Okay I'm ready! Are you sure we can't persuade you to come out with us Zach?

ZACH: If we were just hanging here all night I'd be happy to stay. But a party filled with everyone in the year and lots pointless drama, I genuinely couldn't think of anything worse.

ALEX: Suit yourself, but I know tonight is going to be brilliant. The moment we walk in...bam.

VICKY: We die?

ALEX: It gets going!

VICKY: You've imagined it like a music video, haven't you?

ALEX: I have a rough idea...

The trio freeze as ALEX imagines how the party will go. Dream montage of ALEX (played by BRAIN) going to the party, being loved by everyone, talking to Livvy and being friends with the cool kids.

VICKY: And that's how you think it's going to be?

ZACH: If it is then I'll have to come.

Enter MUM and DAD

MUM: Knock, knock.

DAD: Are you guys ready to rock n roll?

VICKY: Always.

MUM: Darling I've left a bottle of fizz in the car. You can't go to the party empty handed.

DAD: Don't get too excited kids. It's non-alcoholic.

MUM: I don't want his parents to think I'm sending the wrong message.

DAD: Do you want a lift home Zach after I drop these two off?

ZACH: That would be great thanks.

MUM: Now be safe tonight darling. Text me when you get there and when you need picking up.

DAD: Why? Are you going to pick them up?

MUM: No. It's so I know when to send you. Actually, you should give your number to Vicky because we know he's terrible with his phone.

VICKY: Fantastic idea.

DAD: Right let's go.

ALEX is excited but glances back at BRAIN who is concerned.

Scene 10-The Party

Party time. Ensemble fills the stage fills in masks for CK1's party. ALEX and VICKY enter, with BRAIN following. It's nothing how ALEX imagined it to be, nobody acknowledges him.

VICKY: Here we are. Is it just how you imagined?

BRAIN: This is terrifying.

ALEX: Yeah, this is great.

ALEX bumps into CK2 and LF.

CK2: Hey watch it.

ALEX: Sorry.

CK2: Is that you Alex?

ALEX: Yeah.

CK2: I couldn't tell under the mask.

LF: Hello Vicky.

VICKY: Hello Livvy's Friend.

LF: Nice to finally see you here.

ALEX: We're excited to be here! Where's CK1?

VICKY: It's not like you to be without your mummy.

CK2: I don't know, I can't tell who's who with these stupid masks on!

LF: It's really not that hard.

CK2: It is for me! I'm gonna go find him (*he exits*).

VICKY: Good luck.

LF: Don't be so bitchy.

VICKY: Well it takes one to know one.

CK1 enters

CK1: Alex! I was wondering where you were. How you doing man?

ALEX: Good, good, very good.

BRAIN: Stop saying good.

ALEX: Great party you've got going on. I love the mask idea.

CK1: Thank you, I like the element of surprise. Speaking of, great that you're here Vicky.

VICKY: Well I couldn't let you have all the fun without me, could I?

LF: You could, I bring plenty of fun.

VICKY: You're about as fun as a tea towel.

CK1: Have one of these Alex (*he hands him a shot*).

BRAIN: Alcohol...

ALEX: Thank you! I'll drink it.

BRAIN: Be cooler than that. It's actual alcohol.

CK1: I was a bit shocked when you asked out Livvy the other day mate. I always thought you two (*gestures to Vicky*) were a thing...

VICKY: I would rather die.

ALEX: No, we're just friends. Have been since primary. Close friends but nothing more.

LF: Well *I* knew you liked Livvy. You're always staring at her. It's kinda weird.

BRAIN: I keep telling you not to stare!

ALEX: I hope I haven't made her feel uncomfortable.

CK1: Nah don't listen to her. She's just salty.

VICKY: Finally, something we can agree on.

CK1: Anyway, enjoy the party, mingle and I'll make sure you get a moment with Livvy later.

LF: Have fun you guys (*LF and CK1 exit*).

ALEX: Thank you I will. (*looks around and is lost*) So how many people do we know here?

VICKY: Erm... a few,

BRAIN: No one. Literally just each other.

Awkward pause as they stand in the corner watching the others have fun

VICKY: I need to top up my lipstick. Do you want to come?

ALEX: No it's okay I'll wait here.

VICKY: You sure?

ALEX: Yes I don't need babysitting.

VICKY exits and a masked partygoer approaches ALEX. He doesn't realise it is actually LIVVY.

LIVVY: Hey Alex.

BRAIN: Who the hell is this?

ALEX: Hello...

LIVVY: You enjoying the party?

BRAIN: It's a female.

ALEX: Yeah it's funky.

BRAIN: Funky?

LIVVY: Yeah I guess it is.

BRAIN: What is wrong with me.

LIVVY: Do you know who you're talking to?

BRAIN: You could be Mother Teresa for all I know.

ALEX: Yeah of course.

LIVVY: I just wanted to say no hard feelings for the other day.

ALEX: No, not at all.

BRAIN: Who is this person?

LIVVY: I hope you weren't upset with me.

ALEX: Come on, I'd never be upset with you.

BRAIN: You are playing this surprisingly well considering you've got no idea who she is.

LIVVY: You're such a sweet guy.

BRAIN: Wait.

LIVVY: Not many guys take rejection this well.

BRAIN: Is this?

LIVVY: Especially in-front of everyone.

BRAIN: Oh no.

LIVVY: (*pulling her mask up*) I'm just happy we can still be friends. I was worried you weren't going to come tonight because of me but then I heard Vicky was actually coming this time and I knew you'd be here. I don't know why she's never brought you before as a plus one to be honest.

ALEX: What?

VICKY re-joins ALEX and LIVVY.

VICKY: Sorry big queue for the toilet. Hi Livvy, you alright?

ALEX: You were invited?

VICKY: To what?

ALEX: Tonight. You were invited tonight, you're not just my plus one?

VICKY: Alex let me-

ALEX: So have you always been invited? All these parties you could have gone too but didn't tell me about?

LIVVY: Sorry I didn't realise it was I secret, I shouldn't have said anything.

VICKY: You think?

ALEX: No, I'm happy she did. At least she's honest with me.

VICKY: It's not how you think it is.

LIVVY: Maybe I should go...

ALEX: You're always invited and you never told me. Every time we're sat in my room wishing we were invited but actually you had been all along.

VICKY: You wish, I don't. Neither does Zach. That's why he's not here.

ALEX: He's invited too?

VICKY: No he's not. He's just secure enough not being invited unlike some people. *(Beat)* Sorry I didn't mean that.

ALEX: No I think you meant exactly what you said.

CK1 comes over.

CK1: *(to Alex and Livvy)* There you two are.

LIVVY: Not now.

CK1: I've been looking for you two lovebirds all night. Come on.

CK1 pull ALEX and LIVVY CS. Ensemble gathers around them. VICKY and BRAIN look on panicked.

CK1: Here we go everyone. Our very own Romeo and Juliet. Why don't you show us all a kiss?

PARTYGOER 1: You know you've been dreaming of it.

PARTYGOER 2: Livvy can do so much better than you.

PARTYGOER 3: Go on Alex.

PARTYGOER 4: You're pathetic if you don't kiss her.

Ensemble starts chanting 'kiss, kiss' as ALEX starts to have a panic attack and LIVVY stands awkwardly. Voodoo Child begins over BRAIN'S monologue.

BRAIN: Guys stop. Stop it. It's not funny. I don't like this. It's too much. Please. Get out. Go. I don't like it. I can't breathe. I'm scared. I've been set up. They set me up. Livvy doesn't care. I can't breathe. Vicky betrayed me. I'm lost. I don't have anyone. I need help. Where's Vicky? Can anyone help me? Please. Got to get out. I can't breathe. Go. Go. I can't. Get out. I can't.

ALEX has a sensory and emotional overload as the ensemble close in. Blackout then lights up on a solo ALEX curled up on the floor. BRAIN helps him up and they exit

Scene 11-The Aftermath

It is the first day back at school. ZACH is onstage and passes CK1&2 in the school corridor.

CK1: Oi you. Have you seen your friend Alex yet?

CK2: No one's heard from him all over the break.

ZACH: I didn't think you guys were friends with him?

CK1: I wanted to check up on him after his cry at the party.

CK2: That was so embarrassing. What was he even crying for?

ZACH: He had a panic attack.

CK2: Embarrassing.

ALEX enters.

CK1: Alex! Where you been man?

CK2: Yeah you like disappeared into the Bermuda Square or something.

CK1: Dude. It's a triangle.

ALEX: I've just been at home.

CK2: Aw you been at home with mummy and daddy after your little cry at the party?

CK1: If you knew you couldn't handle a cool party, you shouldn't have come. Like this guy.

ZACH: I can handle a "cool" party fine thank you. It's the imbeciles that attend them that I don't care for.

CK2: Who are you calling umbilical?

CK1: Your friends got a big mouth on him Alex.

CK2: You think you're the big man yeah?

CK1: If you're such a big man, why are you hanging out with pathetic boys like Alex?

ALEX: Can you not talk to him like that please.

CK1: Or what? You going to start crying again? Like you did over Livvy?

CK2: That was hilarious. Do it again.

CK1: (*pushing Alex*) Come on then, are you going to cry or push back?

CK2: (*pushing Alex on the other side*) Cry, please cry!

Ms Hughes appears having heard the interaction

MS HUGHES: Boys. What is going on here?

CK1: Nothing miss. We were just-

MS HUGHES: I don't want to hear it. (*pointing at CK1&2*) Detention and detention.

CK2: No miss!

MS HUGHES: Go straight to my office and wait there. And if I hear that you've taken any sort of detour then I'll be doubling your detention. Now go.

CK1: Sorry mum- I mean miss!

CK2: (*laughing*) You called her mum.

CK1: Shut up. No I didn't. (*to Alex and Zach*) Please don't tell anyone.

MS HUGHES: Go. I'll be calling both your parents.

CK2: Oh Mummy's going to kill me (*they exit*).

MS HUGHES: Are you alright Alex?

ALEX: Yes Ms Hughes, thank you.

MS HUGHES: You shouldn't let them push you around. You're a good young man with a big future ahead. Much better prospects than those so-called cool kids.

ALEX: You think?

MS HUGHES: I know. I've got my work cut out with those two but with you, I have every faith that you'll succeed in whatever path you choose. Mr Fisher tells me you're into your music. I'd love to see you perform one day.

ALEX: Thanks miss. Hopefully I can get there.

MS HUGHES: You can and you will. Now if you boys will excuse me, I have detentions to deal with. If they haven't got lost in the Bermuda Square that is... (*she exits*)

ZACH: Are you okay?

ALEX: Yeah I'm fine thanks. I expected that to happen first day back. I didn't expect Ms Hughes being nice to me though.

ZACH: That's because she is nice. She's only scary around CK1&2 to keep them in line. When you get to know her she actually really cares for the students. Including you! Look, I know you've been laying low over the break. Vicky's not heard from you either and you guys need to talk. I'm sorry about what happened at the party, it couldn't have been nice. Don't take this the wrong way but I think it was necessary. I don't mean the embarrassment but the realisation that your infatuation of the cool kids and princess Livvy was too much. You were focussing on doing everything to please them instead of thinking about yourself. I said to Vicky before that you might need to get hurt to wake up. Sometimes you need to get burnt to know not to touch the flame.

ALEX: Yeah, I think you're right. It was too much. I mean I wish the realisation didn't have to come as a panic attack in-front of everyone but hey, it is what it is. Thanks Zach. You're a good friend.

ZACH: I know. Now let's go find Vicky. We both know where she'll be (*they exit*).

Scene 12-One Last Song

Final scene. VICKY is sat waiting at the stump. ALEX and ZACH arrive.

VICKY: There you are! I was wondering if you were still alive. I haven't heard from you in weeks.

ZACH: We just saw Ms Hughes giving CK1&2 detentions.

ALEX: It was funny. CK1 called her mum.

VICKY: What are you laughing at? You did that in year 7.

ZACH: Did you?

ALEX: Yes. Fortunately, only one other person heard. Unfortunately, it was Vicky. I thought we agreed to never speak of that again?

VICKY: Yeah but Zach deserves to know.

ZACH: Exactly. I tell you guys everything. Like when I came forth in a ballroom dancing competition.

VICKY: You never told us that.

MR FISHER enters and approaches the trio.

MR FISHER: Hey guys. How we all doing?

VICKY: Good thank you sir.

MR FISHER: Alex, how was your break?

ALEX: It was nice thanks. A needed rest.

MR FISHER: Good I'm glad to hear it.

ALEX: I listened to the new album of that band you recommended. Good stuff. I think they have a gig coming up in the summer so I'm going to look into getting a ticket for that.

MR FISHER: That's fantastic! Be quick because their tickets sell out fast.

ALEX: I will do. See you around Fisher.

MR FISHER: Good to see you Alex (*he exits*).

VICKY: He's cool. I love that he's in a band.

ZACH: I was in a band once.

ALEX: How did I know you were going to say that.

ZACH: You know me well now.

ALEX: I do. Almost as well as I know her.

VICKY: "Her" has a name you know.

ALEX: Yes, yes sorry Vicky. And actually, I am sorry Vicky for how I was at the end of last term. I was so wrapped up in trying to be invited to the party and the Livvy stuff. I didn't treat you the best in that.

VICKY: You were a bit of a prick.

ALEX: I know and I'm sorry.

VICKY: Thank you. (*Zach stares at her to make her apologise too*) It is a very rare occasion when I'm in the wrong but when I am, I hold my hands up. I'm sorry too Alex. I should've told you that I had been invited to a few of the cool kid's parties. I promise I never went, I genuinely didn't want too. You know they're not my kind of people.

ZACH: Including Livvy's Friend?

VICKY: Especially Livvy's Friend. I didn't tell you because I thought it would hurt more if you knew I'd been invited but you hadn't. I should've just been upfront about it. That's what Zach kept telling me to do.

ZACH: Moral of the story is always listen to Zach.

VICKY: I wouldn't go that far.

ALEX: It's fine, I get why you did it. I probably would've got upset. Not at you, at myself. I was becoming a bit obsessed at fitting in that I lost sight of where I already belonged.

VICKY: That's disgusting.

ALEX: Too cheesy?

VICKY: Smothered in mozzarella.

ALEX: Okay. You know what I mean.

VICKY: I do. Thanks.

ZACH: So... the Livvy situation? You got anymore ransom notes to hand out?

ALEX: No, that's done and I mean it this time!

ZACH: Good. Now you can move on.

ALEX: I'm kinda happy just to focus on myself for now.

VICKY: Hallelujah. He's finally putting himself first!

ZACH: This is all getting really sappy. Come on. We've got music with Mrs Whatsherface next. Everyone got their presentations ready?

VICKY: I've got an essay and recorder in my bag. I know she said no but who cares.

As they start to leave BRAIN walks onstage and ALEX lingers behind.

ZACH: You coming?

ALEX: Yeah in a minute.

VICKY: Don't be late. I don't want you to miss my recorder recital (*they exit*).

ALEX: I was wondering when you'd show up again.

BRAIN: I thought we could have a heart to heart.

ALEX: Don't you mean brain to heart?

BRAIN: Nice. You seem a lot more relaxed now.

ALEX: I feel a lot more relaxed now. I feel a lot more like-

BRAIN: Myself?

ALEX: Yes.

BRAIN: It's nice that Fisher came to check up on us.

ALEX: Top teacher.

BRAIN: And Ms Hughes! Where did that come from?

ALEX: I can't believe she's actually nice.

BRAIN: Well maybe sometimes you should go with your gut instinct on people rather than judging on first appearance.

ALEX: You can talk...

BRAIN: Touché. So are you/me/we ready to do the presentation?

ALEX: Yeah, I think so.

BRAIN: Haven't got rid of all the teenage doubt then?

ALEX: Absolutely not.

BRAIN: It's alright in small doses.

ALEX: Well we best be going then.

BRAIN: Yes, go on, you've got this.

ALEX: I do.

ALEX exits leaving just BRAIN onstage.

BRAIN: So there you have it. Our tale has come to an end. Lessons have been learnt. Lives have been improved... and Vicky still hates Livvy's Friend. Not everything changes. I hope you've enjoyed this chapter of my life. And now to end we will have a musical-

ALEX re-enters.

ALEX: That's okay I can take it from here.

BRAIN: You going to lead the song yourself?

ALEX: Yes I am. Hit it guy who's hopefully still up there in the tech box.

The ensemble takes to the stage as 'Make a Man' plays.

The End.