

**BOUNCE THEATRE**

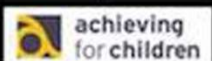
# emoji

Co-created by Bounce Theatre and Anstee Bridge

## **THE SCRIPT**



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## **EMOJI**

Written by  
Louise Pendry with students from Anstee Bridge

### **Characters:**

CHLOE 16 YEAR OLD GIRL

JORDAN 16 YEAR OLD BOY

CHANNAH 16 YEAR OLD GIRL

**LANGUAGE NOTE: THE STORY WAS WRITTEN WITH STUDENTS IN 2018. VERNACULAR WILL HAVE CHANGED AND IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO SUBSTITUTE SOME OF THE WORDS FOR THE CURRENT AUDIENCE.**

**BOUNCE THEATRE**

(1) INT: PROM NIGHT. CORRIDOR.

(MUSIC. LIGHTS CHANGE. CURTAINS OPEN. SONG-THE PRIZE. STUDENTS GETTING READY FOR THE PROM - HAIR / GETTING DRESSED / HAVING A DRINK ETC. SONG ENDS. LIGHTS CHANGE. CHLOE AND JORDAN LEFT ON STAGE IN A FREEZE.)

CHLOE: You dickhead.

JORDAN: Calm down.

CHLOE: I can't believe you.

JORDAN: Look it's no big deal. Why did you run out like that?

CHLOE: Are you serious? I had to get out of there.

JORDAN: Why?

CHLOE: If you were you paying any attention, they just announced we were King and Queen of the Prom.

JORDAN: Yeah. So?

CHLOE: Whilst you had the cheek to leave me alone because you were chattin' with another girl.

JORDAN: (KISSES TEETH) Ah. It wasn't like that.

(HER PHONE GOES OFF. SHE LOOKS AT IT.)

CHLOE: I'm getting so many messages on snap. Watch. Everyone's talking about us.

JORDAN: Why you panicking? Don't worry about what people say...

CHLOE: You know, it's difficult being your girlfriend.

JORDAN: What's that supposed to mean?

CHLOE: All the girls want to go out with you.

JORDAN: So what? I want to go out with you.

CHLOE: It's hard ... reading all these comments online.

JORDAN: Ignore it.

CHLOE: It's not that easy.

JORDAN: I'm with you. That's all that matters.

**(SHE SHRUGS. HE TUTS. SILENCE.)**

So... Are we going back in, or what?

CHLOE: Are you ok?

**(SILENCE. HE SHRUGS. SHE TUTS.)**

I'm not going back in there.

JORDAN: Why?...

CHLOE: Because!

**(SHE THROWS HER MOBILE PHONE IN HIS FACE)**

JORDAN: Who cares what they think?

CHLOE: It's not you they get at though is it?

JORDAN: We won the stupid thing.

CHLOE Stupid?! Do you know how much effort has gone into tonight? We've been having weekly meetings to come up with an idea to keep it fresh. Two years ago, they had a magician. No one liked him and everyone went home. Then we actually win something and you can't even get up on stage because you're chattin' with some other girl.

JORDAN: I'm telling you, it's not like that.

CHLOE: Of course that's what you're gonna say...

(SILENCE)

JORDAN: So, what do you want to do now?

CHLOE: I don't know. You've been moving mad lately. One day you're snappy and the next you're all over me. Yet you've barely spoken to me tonight and then you do this. It was meant to be a special night and you've ruined it.

**(SHE NEARLY TRIPS AS SHE MOVES TOWARDS HIM)**

Shit. Fuck. Arrrrgghhh. I knew I'd end up tripping up in these heels.

JORDAN: Then why the fuck are you wearing them?

CHLOE: I don't know! Maybe because it's what girls do. Do you know how much effort a girl puts into prom? Everyone starts talking about their prom dress in Year 10. We all see the pictures of the Year 11 girls in their dresses and we all want to be as beautiful, or more beautiful. The one in the picture that everyone points to and says, "Wow. Look at her..." I've been dreaming of my prom dress since the end of Year 10. There is so much work involved. It's not just the dress, it's the shoes, the hair, the jewellery... I like to put in effort sometimes, but beauty is hard work.

JORDAN: Look, prom ain't all that. Plus, you're beautiful without all this.

CHLOE: (IGNORES HIM) On top of that pressure, all I see is pictures of perfect, slim, dressed up women in tight-fitted clothes and high-heels on my feed. Do you know how many girls went crazy on a diet for prom? No feed paints a picture that a girl can rock up in her casuals for a special occasion. So, this is what we do.

Apparently, it's meant to make sure you notice me! Only me.

JORDAN: What are you talking about?

CHLOE: I saw that picture of you on Channah's story. Just hanging were you?

JORDAN: Um, yeah actually... In double science. What's gotten into you?

CHLOE: She's been preeing you for months. Don't think I don't know.

JORDAN: I think you need help love.

CHLOE: Don't love me.

JORDAN: You're acting like a crazy woman. Are you on your period?

CHLOE: Swear down... you did not just say that.

JORDAN: I don't know what to say. Someone has taken my girl and replaced her with a mad one.

CHLOE: I'm not going to stand in the corner and take it whilst you talk to any girl you like!?!? I'm not no doormat.

JORDAN: True that.

(PAUSE)

CHLOE: I have thought about tonight for months. Prom has been EVERYTHING for weeks. I put a lot of work into tonight.

JORDAN: I didn't even want to come to prom but I did it for you.

CHLOE: See, you don't even care.

JORDAN: Aaagghhh. You're not listening. I never wanted to be King of the Prom but I want to see you happy.

CHLOE: Well it's turned out well for you then innit?

JORDAN: You know what, this isn't you. This is not what I'm interested in. I prefer you when you take off all that make up and are just yourself.

CHLOE: Oh my god. Did you not just hear everything I said?

JORDAN: I'm trying to say I prefer you natural...

CHLOE: You're so not making this any better.

JORDAN: Ok. Look. All I'm trying to say is...

CHLOE: Maybe you shouldn't say anything.

(PAUSE)

JORDAN: I thought you were different to all the others, but maybe I was wrong.

CHLOE: What?

JORDAN: Forget it. I'll talk to you later.

**(HE WALKS OFF)**

Her. LOL. OK. Bye then.

**(HE DOESN'T LOOK BACK)**

CHLOE: Jordan?

**(HE LEAVES AND RETURNS TO PROM. WE HEAR A BIT OF MUSIC BEFORE THE DOOR SLAMS. CHLOE LOOKS STUNNED AND THEN BURSTS INTO TEARS. SHE CALMS DOWN. THEN GETS OUT HER BAG TO DO HER MAKE UP. SHE REALISES SHE'S FORGOTTEN A MIRROR, SO GETS OUT HER MOBILE. SHE CAN'T HELP BUT LOOK AT HER SOCIAL MEDIA FEED.)**

CHLOE: My gals.  
LOL. Have you seen this picture?  
Oh my god. That's so bad.

**(SHE STARES AT THE PHONE FOR A WHILE. THEN SWITCHES IT TO CAMERA, SO SHE CAN USE IT FOR A MIRROR AND STARTS TO TRY TO FIX HER FACE. SHE IS STRUGGLING TO KEEP HERSELF TOGETHER. DOORS OPEN AND WE HEAR SOME OF PROM. CHANNAH ENTERS. SHE IS SURPRISED TO SEE CHLOE. SHE IS TORN AS SHE DOES NOT WANT TO GO BACK IN AND SHE DOES NOT WANT TO TALK TO CHLOE. THE DOOR CLOSES. MUSIC OFF. CHLOE NOTICES CHANNAH.)**

CHLOE: What are you doing?

CHANNAH: No law saying I can't hang out in the corridor, is there?

(PAUSE)

CHLOE: Seriously, stop looking at me.

CHANNAH: Don't flatter yourself.

CHLOE: Why are you out here then?

CHANNAH: Um. The world does not revolve around you.

CHLOE: Heard us arguing did you?

CHANNAH: What?

CHLOE: Come to rub it in my face?

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CHANNAH: I came out for some air.

CHLOE: I don't believe you.

CHANNAH: Are you feeling alright?

CHLOE: I know you've been after Jordan.

CHANNAH: (LAUGHS) As if.

CHLOE: Admit it. You've been chasing him for weeks.

CHANNAH: Darling, you're lost.

CHLOE: Don't darling me. Why are you posting pictures of you and him on your Insta then?

CHANNAH: Picture. It was a picture.

CHLOE: Are you trying to wind me up?

CHANNAH: No. We were having a laugh in science that was all.

CHLOE: Liar.

CHANNAH: Ok then, I'm a liar.

CHLOE: Do you think I'm an idiot?

CHANNAH: Right now? Yes I do.

CHLOE: You put a purple devil emoji in the comments when you posted the picture.

CHANNAH: So?

CHLOE: So? Do you even know what a purple devil means?

CHANNAH: It's an emoji. It could have meant anything.

CHLOE: It was a purple devil.

CHANNAH: Calm down.

CHLOE: Are you serious? It was a PURPLE DEVIL.

CHANNAH: Get over yourself. It was just an EMOJI!



CHLOE: It's not *just* an emoji. It was the purple devil emoji. *Everyone* knows what that means.

CHANNAH: Well obviously everyone is as stupid as you. It meant nothing.

CHLOE: It means you want to get saucy with my man.

CHANNAH: What the actual fu/ (SHE GETS CUT OFF)

CHLOE: /Well look, he's gone now!

CHANNAH: You seriously need to calm down.

CHLOE: So he's all yours.

CHANNAH: I don't want him. You're winding yourself up over NOTHING.

CHLOE: As if you care how I feel.

CHANNAH: I don't.

CHLOE: (SMIRKS) Nothing changes then.

CHANNAH: Chloe, I/ (SHE GETS CUT OFF)

CHLOE: /Truth hurt?

CHANNAH: Are we going to do this? Seriously?

CHLOE: Do what?

CHANNAH: Drag over the past.

**(THEY MOVE TOWARDS EACH OTHER)**

CHLOE: I'm just saying as it is. You turned your back on me in Year 7. Now you want my man. What else? Honestly, just tell me are you jealous of me? Is that it?

(CHANNAH LAUGHS)

CHANNAH: You think you know what you're talking about.

CHLOE: I saw the stuff online about you.

CHANNAH: 'Cause that's all true innit. Believe what you like, internet gangsta.

CHLOE: I thought you were better than that.

CHANNAH: We're not all as perfect as you Chloe.

**(THE GIRLS SQUARE UP TO EACH. CHLOE TRIPS ON HER SHOES. CHANNAH LAUGHS.)**

CHLOE: (TO HERSELF) These fucking shoes.

CHANNAH: Guess you're not so perfect after all.

**(CHANNAH LAUGHS. CHLOE SLAPS HER. CHANNAH SLAPS HER BACK. THEY BOTH STAND IN SILENCE.)**

CHANNAH: You are so up yourself.

CHLOE: What happened to you?

CHANNAH: As if you care.

CHLOE: You used to be...

CHANNAH: I used to be a lot of things. Before...

CHLOE: Before what, Channah? Before what?

CHANNAH: Ah listen. Miss Perfect.

CHLOE: I never said I was perfect.

CHANNAH: LOL. Look at you.

CHLOE: What happened to you?

CHANNAH: What do you care?

CHLOE: You left me.

CHANNAH: I made a mistake.

CHLOE: You saw what they did.

CHANNAH: I tried to say sorry.

CHLOE: Sorry? Sorry for what? Sorry for the names they called me? Sorry for standing by while they hit me? Sorry for leaving me alone after they threw me in the nettles? Which bit exactly are you sorry for?

**(CHANNAH LOOKS DOWN AT THE FLOOR.)**

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CHLOE: Lost for words are you?

CHANNAH: All of it. I'm sorry for all of it.

CHLOE: 'Cause I told you everything... I told you before that day what they were like. I told you how it started in P.E. They made comments in the changing rooms about my trainers. 'Cause they were the cheap ones from the market. How my cheap trainers meant I must be cheap.

CHANNAH: What?

CHLOE: Don't pretend you don't remember.

CHANNAH: It was a few years ago.

CHLOE: A shit excuse.

CHANNAH: Chloe, I...

CHLOE: Wait, I'm not done. Remember what we were like then. We were going into Year 7 happy. Best friends forever. Going to start our own girl band. Me and you against the world. When you're 12, shit like that's all that matters. We're all trying to just fit in. Only with my cheap trainers I didn't. I thought I could take it at first. I ignored it. I thought, "Channah has my back. I'll see this off." We'd message at night. Remember? You'd tell me it would be alright.

**(CHANNAH TRIES TO INTERRUPT BUT CAN'T)**

Cause I didn't want to worry my parents. Enough was going on at home. Dad was made redundant. Mum's nurses' salary was barely enough for us all to get by on after the bills were paid. They were struggling. I knew it even though they never told me. Food was disappearing out the cupboards and wasn't replaced. Mum would pretend she wasn't hungry sometimes when we had dinner. Things were bad. They didn't need to know about all this. It would be more pressure. So, yeah, it was ok...

(PAUSE)

Until they stepped it up a bit. Hid my shoes so

I had to keep my trainers on. That stressed mum out. Couldn't explain to her why I'd lost my shoes. She went mad thinking I was just being careless. I had to keep wearing the trainers. I fucking hated them by the end of Year 7. It was like putting them on in the morning meant giving up on the day cause it would be shit. They made comments in the corridors about how I was cheap, so must go shopping in charity shops. Then they ramped it up about my appearance. My hair needed a cut. My buck teeth were because my parents were too cheap to get my mouth fixed. I told you all of this. Remember? I cried at your house. You said it would be fine. Told me to ignore it.

CHANNAH: I know.

CHLOE: You know?! So you know that day when I couldn't find you and I walked home alone after school... they followed me. I carried on walking, ignoring the fact they were calling out my name, chanting, "Cheapo Chloe" whilst doing rabbit impressions. One of them caught up with me and gave me a push. Yet, when I turned around, it wasn't them I focused on. It was your face in their crowd. It was all I could see whilst they were slapping me about. You. In all the faces and the phones, there were you. I couldn't figure out why you'd suddenly turned your back on me. I couldn't stop looking. When they gathered in and started to push me around, I didn't think you would stay silent. When they pushed me to the ground and started kicking me... I thought I'd hear you tell them to stop... but I didn't. When they pushed me into the stinging nettles, I didn't expect to not see you there when I stood up. When I went home and saw it online for everyone to laugh at, I didn't expect silence from you. So, you tell me Channah, why you saying you are *really* sorry should mean fuck all to me?!

(SILENCE)

CHANNAH: I should have had your back and I didn't. It's mad, I feel bad.

CHLOE: Poetic.

CHANNAH: Fuck. What do you want me to say?

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CHLOE: I don't know.

CHANNAH: Well shut up then.

CHLOE: You really don't care about much do you?

CHANNAH: I care about plenty Chloe. I tried to say sorry. I text.

CHLOE: Cause a text would make that alright, wouldn't it?

CHANNAH: I came around your house, but you didn't want to see me.

CHLOE: What did you expect? You let them do it.

CHANNAH: I couldn't take them on.

CHLOE: So you just let them beat me up? You could have called for help.

CHANNAH: I could have done a lot of things.

CHLOE: Do you even care?

**(THE GIRLS SQUARE UP TO EACH OTHER)**

CHANNAH: It was years ago, get over it.

CHLOE: You cow.

CHANNAH: Takes one to know one.

**(THE GIRLS SCREAM AND GO AT EACH OTHER. DOORS OPEN. MUSIC. OPTION FOR STUDENTS TO APPEAR AND FILM THE FIGHT.)**

CHLOE: Let go of me!

**(CHLOE RETALIATES AND GRABS HER HAIR. THEY STRUGGLE.)**

CHANNAH: You are so up yourself.

CHLOE: Pull out my hair and I'll/

CHANNAH: /Always were precious about your dutty hair.

**(THEY FIGHT)**

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CHLOE: Let go!

CHANNA: No.

CHLOE: I hate you.

CHANNAH: Good. I fucking hate you too.

CHLOE: Why are you so horrible?

CHANNAH: You don't know the whole story...

CHLOE: What happened to you?

CHANNAH: Listen Miss Perfect.

CHLOE: I never said I was perfect.

CHANNAH: Look at you.

**(CHLOE SCREAMS AND GOES IN FOR A HIT. JORDAN ENTERS. HE IS MOMENTARILY THROWN BY THE GIRLS FIGHTING. HE GETS RID OF THE PEOPLE VIDEOING, THEN TRIES TO INTERVENE.)**

CHLOE: You left me.

CHANNAH: I made a mistake.

CHLOE: You saw what they did.

JORDAN: Chloe!

CHANNAH: I tried to say sorry. You can't just blame me.

JORDAN: Chloe. This isn't you.

**(THE GIRLS MOMENTARILY ARE DISTRACTED, BUT REMAIN ENTANGLED.)**

CHLOE: Leave me alone!

JORDAN: Look babe/

CHLOE: Don't babe me.

CHANNAH: What do you want?

JORDAN: To talk to Chloe.

CHLOE: I don't want to talk to you. Just go.

**(JORDAN TURNS)**

CHANNAH: Is that it? That's all you have?

JORDAN: What?

CHANNAH: You're not actually meant to leave when a girl tells you to leave. You two don't even know how good you have it.

CHLOE: Just be quiet.

**(SHE PUSHES CHANNAH AS IF TO GET HER OFF. CHANNAH TAKES IT AS A SIGN THE FIGHT ISN'T OVER. SHE PULLS CHLOE AND RAISES HER HAND TO SMACK HER. JORDAN RUSHES INTO HER DEFENCE AND GETS PUNCHED BY CHANNAH. WITH THE IMPACT HE KNOCKS INTO CHLOE, WHO PUSHES HIM AWAY. HE FALLS INTO CHANNAH. SHE FALLS ONTO THE FLOOR WITH A THUD AND DOESN'T GET UP. JORDAN AND CHLOE START TO PANIC.)**

JORDAN: Get up.

CHLOE: Stop messing.

CHANNAH: I can't.

JORDAN: You've made your point.

CHANNAH: I can't.

**(JORDAN GOES TO GET HER UP.)**

JORDAN: Let me help you up.

CHANNAH: Don't touch me.

CHLOE: You're being weird.

CHANNAH: I'm pregnant!

**(CHLOE AND JORDAN STEP BACK IN SHOCK)**

JORDAN: Fuck off.

CHLOE: What?

CHANNAH: I'm pregnant.

CHLOE: How...?

CHANNAH: I think we all know how don't we?

JORDAN: You can still use your legs though, right? Get up.

CHANNAH: I've landed on my tummy. I can't move 'cause what if the baby is hurt?

CHLOE: Let us get someone then. A teacher. Someone needs to help.

CHANNAH: No!

CHLOE: What?

CHANNAH: No one knows. No one can find out like this.

CHLOE: You need to get checked out.

CHANNAH: No, I just need to stay still. I can't lose my baby. I'll just wait a bit. It'll be alright.

**(SILENCE. THEY STAND AND WATCH)**

CHLOE: Right. Go and get her a chair Jordan.

JORDAN: What?

CHLOE: Go back in there. Get a chair. Get a cushioned one. Some water too. A snack. Get her a snack. She's shocked, that's it. Listen, we ordered cakes. Get a cake. Go. Now.

JORDAN: Um, ok.

CHLOE: Now, Jordan.

JORDAN: Ok. Ok.

**(HE LEAVES, THERE IS A SENSE OF THE DOORS OPENING AND SOME OF THE PROM MUSIC PLAYS. CHLOE SITS DOWN NEXT TO CHANNAH AND STROKES HER HAIR. SLOWLY, CHANNAH GETS UP. SHE CRIES. JORDAN REAPPEARS WITH A CHAIR. THEY MOVE CHANNAH TO ONE. THEY MAKE HER HAVE SOME WATER. MUSIC DRIFTS AWAY)**



JORDAN: There was no cake left.

CHLOE: Brilliant.

**(THEY ALL TAKE THEMSELVES IN FOR A MINUTE.)**

JORDAN: I'm going to go back in.

**(HE STARTS TO TIDY HIMSELF UP)**

CHLOE: Right.

JORDAN: I'm just not good at...

CHLOE: Sure.

JORDAN: I'm sorry.

CHLOE: Me too.

**(HE KISSES HER ON THE CHEEK. SHE TURNS AWAY FROM HIM.)**

CHLOE: Just go.

CHANNAH: I thought you were made of better stuff Jordan.

JORDAN: Yeah. Well. Sorry to disappoint you.

CHANNAH: You're all the same.

**(HE LEAVES. WE HEAR A HINT OF MUSIC. CHLOE WIPES A TEAR AWAY.)**

CHANNAH: You ok?

CHLOE: I'm fine.

CHANNAH: Don't lie. You're crying.

CHLOE: Shit. Well... It's the night of the prom I spent a year helping organise... I get crowned Queen and my "King" did a disappearing act on me *twice*...

CHANNAH: Yeah. That's shit.

CHLOE: Then I get in a fight. I remember something I've tried really hard to forget. My hair that cost bread got ripped out. I can't stand in these shoes that I spent a month choosing. I'm

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stressed. You're pregnant. It's not my finest hour.

CHANNAH: Point taken.

(SILENCE. CHLOE LAUGHS. CHANNAH IS SURPRISED.)

CHANNAH: What's funny?

CHLOE: This whole night *is* ridiculous. Like I never thought it was going to end in the corridor with you. In my head, it was going to be like a fairy tale.

CHANNAH: You'd be his Princess.

CHLOE: What a joke.

CHANNAH: I wouldn't worry. The prom is shit anyway.

CHLOE: Thanks, I was on the prom committee.

CHANNAH: Sorry.

CHLOE: Anyway. There are more important things to think about. What are you going to do?

CHANNAH: What do you mean?

CHLOE: About the...

**(NODS TO INDICATE BABY.)**

CHANNAH: The baby? I don't know. I haven't figured it out yet.

CHLOE: How far gone are you?

CHANNAH: 8 weeks.

CHLOE: Are you feeling ok?

CHANNAH: Yeah.

CHLOE: No pains in your tummy?

CHANNAH: No.

CHLOE: Good.

CHANNAH: Why are you being nice? I thought you hated me.

CHLOE: I don't hate you Channah. You hurt me in a way that I've never hurt before. It was harder to take than being beat up. Never understood why you did it.

(LONG SILENCE.)

CHANNAH: I was in Spanish that day. One of those girls, they started talking to me. She was proper, bussing bare jokes. I thought maybe she's not too bad. She hadn't posted anything online. I made sure of that. The other sent out a snap about what they were going to do. She told me to come. I thought I'd be able to stand up to them, change their minds. I watched what they did and it was like some slow motion horror. I just froze.

CHLOE: They beat me up Channah. Then threw me in a pile of stinging nettles.

CHANNAH: I know.

CHLOE: You didn't even come back to see if I was ok.

CHANNAH: I know.

CHLOE: I had to walk home on my own. Stung, bleeding and ripped up.

CHANNAH: I'm... (STRUGGLES FOR WORDS) sorry.

CHLOE: My dad's face when I opened the door. I'll never forget it. He called out for my mum. She patched up my cuts and sorted me out. I told them what had happened. She was very calm until the end. Then a rage took over her like I'd never seen before. She called the school. I'd never heard her so mad. I imagined the teacher on the other end shaking in fear. Dad sat at the kitchen table calmly. He put his hand over mine and we drank hot chocolate whilst mum carried on giving them grief.

CHANNAH: I'm...

CHLOE: Don't say sorry again. There's no need. I get it.

(SILENCE)

CHLOE: You know my parents ended up broken at the thought they were responsible for the reason I was bullied. They were so sad I didn't tell them. I saw my mum cry for the first time. Ended up feeling guilty. So, I agreed when they insisted on going in to school and ensuring it was all sorted out. It was hard going through it all over and over again with the teachers and the police. Knowing that the girls would know I had spoken out. Some of the girls were suspended and the two that beat me up were excluded. It was all tidied up as far as everyone was concerned, but not in here (POINTS TO HER HEAD). They all know I told. I have this shitty anxiety ever since, made worse by this.

**(SHE HOLDS UP HER PHONE)**

It's starting again. That's what Jordan doesn't see. More crap.

CHANNAH: They are jealous of you now 'cause of Jordan.

CHLOE: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CHANNAH: You never needed the right trainers you were really pretty...that's what they couldn't stand, so they made you feel ugly instead. You fought back though Chloe, that's the thing. You did stand up to them. I always admired the fact you did that. You made new friends and you've done stuff since. Shit, I mean you were even on the prom committee and still cool.

CHLOE: Maybe.

CHANNAH: Chloe, tell Jordan how you're feeling.

CHLOE: Why? We're done.

CHANNAH: I don't think you are. He really likes you. I can tell.

CHLOE: He's not interested in me. He's already in there, probably having his picture taken with other girls. I tried so hard tonight to be the perfect prom princess. I wanted to fit in. Just once. I wanted to come here and feel like I fit.

CHANNAH: You don't need to fit in Chloe. You're brilliant just the way you are.

CHLOE: It's hard not to feel like that girl who was thrown in stinging nettles sometimes. It's hard to escape the past.

CHANNAH: Yeah, I get that.

CHLOE: What do you mean?

(CHANNAH STRUGGLES TO START HER SENTENCE)

CHANNAH: When they slapped you, I wanted to call out. I wanted to yell. I wanted to stop it. But nothing would come out of my mouth. It was like I was frozen and all I could was watch. I was 8 all over again. Standing at the top of the stairs listening as my dad slapped my mum around, again and again. We both knew when it would start. He'd come home drunk. She'd tell me, "Get in your bedroom, baby girl, and shut the door". I managed it most of the time. I'd put my hands over my ears and sing Girls Aloud songs at the top of my voice, trying to block it out. Sometimes I'd stand at the top of the stairs. I felt like I should do something, but I didn't know what. I was 8 and I was already scared of my dad. So I'd freeze in silence. Then there was this one night I didn't make it to the top. He was yelling so loud it made me turn around. He pushed her out of the living room, into the hall. They were at the bottom of the stairs. I could see everything. I was going to run to her but just at that moment he raised his hand and made contact with her head. He was so big. She looked tiny next to him. She fell against the big mirror in our hall with the impact of his slap. It shook against the wall before falling down. She dropped to the floor with it, bruised and bloody as these shards of glass fell down around her bouncing the light around. She didn't get up. I wanted to call out but I couldn't. My voice had disappeared. He looked up and saw me. We stared at each other for a minute. Then he told me to get out of his fucking sight unless I wanted a smack. Mum stirred, she told him to leave me alone. He kicked her. He left the house.

CHLOE: Oh my god. I had no idea.

CHANNA: I never talk about it.

CHLOE: You said your dad was dead.

CHANNA: He is... to me. After he had gone, Mum didn't move for a long time. I thought she must be dead. I didn't know what to do. So, I sat on the step and waited to see if she'd get up. Don't know how long for. Then she called my name. I went to her and stood carefully at the edge of the broken glass. She told me to get her phone. She picked herself up and I will never forget the sight of her face. Her eye was turning purple and there were little shards of glass in her cheek. She couldn't move very well. She called my Auntie J again. We both sat there surrounded by the glass until she arrived. It was different this time. Mum packed up more of our stuff than usual. Auntie J swept up the glass and then started to look for papers, passports and stuff. Then we all bundled into her car and drove into the night. I remember watching the stars trying to think where we might be going, cuddled up under the blanket in the back of the car. We ended up at a refuge. Auntie J cried when she left us. She told us to look after each other. She hugged me and said she would never let him put a finger on me, ever. She hugged me tight and covered me in kisses. Mum held my hand as she went. The ladies at the refuge were kind. They gave us warm tea and showed us our room. I'm not really sure how long we lived there for. I know they rebuilt my mum. I had lots of time to play with sand and talk about my feelings. I never knew what to say though. I didn't want to tell anyone I thought it was all my fault, so I said I was fine. So I just watched my mum. She was like this whole new person. She was bounding about the place, making plans, deciding what job she'd get and how we'd decorate our new flat. She didn't look so small anymore. I never knew my mum had such a voice. She never stopped talking. She'd just talk to me for days on end about everything and how life would be different now. When we arrived at our new house, just the two of us, it was the most amazing thing. Still, I was shit scared when I

had to start a new school. The teacher took me to my desk and I sat down next to...

CHLOE: Me.

CHANNAH: Yes. I'd gone from scared to sitting next to this smiley girl with pink ribbons in her pigtails. You even showed me around and took me out to play at playtime so I wasn't alone.

CHLOE: I remember.

CHANNAH: Look, I know I let you down that day. I just want you to know I understand what it's like to live with bad memories. They come back to haunt you when you least expect it.

CHLOE: Why didn't you tell me this sooner? I might have understood and we might have...

CHANNAH: Coulda, woulda, shoulda.

CHLOE: What?

CHANNAH: I haven't talked about it for years, Chloe. Not since they made me try at refuge. Not a word to anyone. I run away instead. After that day with you... I knew I fucked up. Things weren't going to be the same. I lost the girls at the shops. I just walked around for hours. I was ashamed and I was angry. I was angry that I didn't go back to you. I was angry with my dad all over again. I ended up wondering around for ages, trapped in this anger and I stayed in it for a few years. I never made proper friends again, I just drifted til this one weekend where I was sat in McDonalds with a milkshake. This guy sits down next to me. He's peng. We start talking. He's a little bit older and I'm flattered he's showing an interest in me. He goes to a different school. It's like someone is giving me a chance to start over again, after I've messed up. We have a bit of banter. Then he asks for my number. So I give it to him.

CHLOE: Is he the?

CHANNAH: He starts texting that night. I think, "he's keen." Can't lie, felt pretty good he wanted to pay me some attention. We shared some stories.

He was living at home with his dad. His parents were divorced. I felt like he was really opening up to me. Different from the lads at school. So I agreed to meet him again. It was really good, you know. We had some dinner at Nando's. I felt he was really treating me well, it all felt proper good. We started to date. He was my man. I was proud because he was good and kind. Things started to get serious between us. I thought we have a real connection. Then he starts trying to take things up a level.

CHLOE: What do you mean?

CHANNAH: We go to some parties. There are drugs passed around. He tells me it'll be ok and we should give it ago. He's trying to impress his new friends. So, I dabble as I don't want to upset it. Turns out it's like a release and another escape, so we fall in with this crowd. They are volatile. A bit edgy. They get into fights, but we can handle ourselves.

CHLOE: The stuff online?

CHANNAH: Yeah.

CHLOE: How can you fight? If you went through? I don't...

(CHANNAH SIGHS)

CHANNAH: 'Cause I am half my dad (PAUSES) I have his temper. I know it. My mum knows it. I can scare her if I want to. That scares me. I hate myself for it. She went through enough already. I hate the feelings of rage, so I run away from them into a new problem. I thought I stopped running when we moved to the refuge, but I was just hiding. Now home, well it's all messed up. Mum and I have started to talk less and less. It's like the less we say the less we'll destroy ourselves.

CHLOE: So, you haven't told her about?

CHANNAH: God. No.

CHLOE: Are you going to?

CHANNAH: She'll find out soon enough.



CHLOE: So you're keeping it?

CHANNAH: How can I not?

CHLOE: You have options.

CHANNAH: It's a baby, Chloe. I can't...

CHLOE: I just meant.

CHANNAH: (SADLY) I know. It's just that this baby, it feels like my chance to stop running, you know. Someone who I will love and will love me back until my bones hurt in a good way. I think I would be a good mum.

CHLOE: You would be. What about the dad?

CHANNAH: He's not interested.

CHLOE: What?

CHANNAH: I told him before prom. He agreed to come with me. I'd made a plan. We'd get help coming off the drugs. We'd get a flat. He'd get a job.

CHLOE: And he said?

CHANNAH: He's not interested. I'm on my own. He dumped me. So I take your crappy fairy tale ending and I raise you one.

CHLOE: So you'll do it alone?

CHANNAH: Yeah. Plenty of people do.

CHLOE: Wow. Don't you want to go college still?

CHANNAH: Nah. I'll be lucky if I scrape a GCSE.

CHLOE: But it was always you that was going to be the lead singer in the girl band... You were the talent.

CHANNAH: Stop it.

CHLOE: I'm serious.

CHANNAH: As if.

CHLOE: No lie.

CHANNAH: I gave up those dreams a long time ago. It's gone Chloe. All that confidence. I just have a headful of unhappy memories until now... maybe.

**(SHE TOUCHES HER STOMACH.)**

CHLOE: I think I better go get someone check you over you know.

CHANNAH: No, I don't want.

CHLOE: You can't do this alone. You need to talk to someone about all of this. The baby and just, well everything.

**(SHE GOES TO THE DOOR. WE HEAR THE PROM MUSIC. JORDAN COMES OUT. CHLOE STEPS BACK IN SURPRISE. CHANNAH LOOKS UP. THEY ARE ALL FROZEN FOR A MOMENT, FIGURING EACH OTHER OUT AGAIN. DOOR CLOSSES. MUSIC ENDS.)**

CHLOE: Sorry, I was just...

JORDAN: I came out to find you both. Someone took a clip of you fighting. Teachers will see it soon. You better get yourselves cleaned up.

CHANNAH: Nice of you to tell us. Thanks.

**(SHE STARTS TO TIDY HERSELF UP)**

JORDAN: Chloe.

CHLOE: Go away.

JORDAN: I just want to speak to you Chloe.

CHLOE: I don't want to talk to you.

**(SHE TURNS AWAY. HE MAKES TO GO. CHANNAH EYEBALLS HIM. HE TURNS BACK TO CHLOE.)**

JORDAN: Chloe...

CHLOE: What do you want, Jordan?

JORDAN: I am shit at this.

CHANNAH: You said it.

**BOUNCE THEATRE**

CHLOE: At what?

JORDAN: Talking about feelings. Look. I'm 16 years old. I live in a house of men. We don't do feelings. We do football and a toss up between KFC and McDonalds.

CHLOE: I'm lost.

JORDAN: I'm trying to say I'm sorry. Tonight just went bad. It wasn't meant to be like this. I never not wanted to come to prom you know. It's just that when I started secondary school my mum was here and I'm leaving and she's not. That's hard to take you know. Everyone thinks life is good 'cause you're peng...

**(THE GIRLS LOOK AT EACH OTHER, A BIT STUNNED BY HIS EMOTIONAL OUTBURST.)**

It ain't just about that though, is it? No one sees what's going on up in here. I think about her everyday, you know. I know my dad does too. We don't know how to say we miss her. She was the bit that held us all together. Without her we're just two lost lads who can't cook.

(SILENCE)

I remember sitting on her bed before I started here. She knew she was dying I realise now. She asked me how I was feeling about school. I said I was scared. She held my hand and she said, "It's ok to not be ok sometimes. Just remember to talk and to tell people what is going on."

CHLOE: Jordan...

JORDAN: See that's what I realised tonight Chloe. You are the person that I talk to and I don't want that to go wrong because of some crap on social media. I don't want this to end because school's ending. I've spent enough time with you to know that I want to commit. Your smile puts a smile on my face. You're my girl.

**(BOTH THE GIRLS ARE A BIT EMOTIONAL)**

CHLOE: I don't know what to say.

**BOUNCE THEATRE**

JORDAN: That you don't want to end it?

CHLOE: I don't want to end it.

**(THEY HUG)**

CHANNAH: Thank god for that. There is at least one happy ending tonight.

JORDAN: I know the social media stuff gets to you. They are out of line. I'm sorry I've ignored it.

CHLOE: You've had other things on your mind.

JORDAN: Yeah but still. You have to know Chloe, I know what it's like growing up without a lot. You've seen our house. My dad is a top bloke but we don't have a lot to go around, with my little brothers to look after too. I hide it though. You stood up to them and that says everything about who you are.

CHLOE: It's just...

JORDAN: I'm not ignoring what you are feeling. I'm here for you, to listen. Anytime. I just want you to know that you can face them down but you won't be by yourself.

**(THEY SMILE/HUG/KISS?)**

CHANNAH: Told you he was one of the good ones.

CHLOE: Yeah. He is.

JORDAN: I'm trying, right?

CHLOE: All that matters.

CHANNAH: Can you believe the prom is in there and we've spent most of the night out here?

CHLOE: It's been some night, right? There was me thinking it was all about an emoji and it's ended up with all this.

CHANNAH: Mad.

JORDAN: Feel like me mum would be proud of us right now.

CHLOE: I feel better for talking to you Channah.

CHANNAH: Me too.

**(SILENCE. DOOR OPENS AND THEY HEAR SOME PROM MUSIC)**

CHANNAH: Can you believe schools nearly done with?

CHLOE: I'm ready for that.

CHANNAH: Me too.

CHLOE: What are you going to do?

CHANNAH: Have to think about things really.

CHLOE: I'll be around, if you want to hang out sometime.

CHANNAH: Really?

CHLOE: Yeah. As long as you promise me that will you talk about all the things you've told me tonight. You can't carry do this by yourself. Listen to what Jordan just said. It's ok to not be ok. Don't carry all those feelings by yourself. You are way more than your dad. I will be here for you. Some things have ended tonight. Time for a new beginning, right?

CHANNAH: Yeah, I'd like that. I'd really like that.

**(DOORS OPEN. THEY HEAR THE PROM MUSIC.)**

JORDAN: So, shall we?

CHLOE: Yes.

**(HE TAKES CHLOE'S ARM. THEY LOOK AT CHANNAH AND SMILE.)**

JORDAN: Coming?

CHANNAH: Me?

JORDAN: Yup. You can have the other arm.

CHANNAH: Me?

CHLOE:

New beginnings dipstick. Start now.

(THEY LAUGH. CHANNAH STANDS UP. TAKES HIS OTHER  
ARM. LIGHTS TO BLACKOUT AS THEY  
LEAVE. DOORS OPEN. PROM SONG. CURTAIN CALL.  
BLACKOUT. HALL TRANSFORMED INTO ANSTEE PROM.)