

**SOMETHING INSIDE SO STRONG**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Draft – 19 February 2017**

**A Musical**

**Music and Lyrics:  
Labi Siffre**

**Play:  
Danny Braverman**

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## **Characters**

### Three Friends

Jess Youngblood  
Frankie  
Michael Addison

### Their Families

Tracy (Jess' Mum)  
Frankie's Mum  
Frankie's Dad  
Mr Addison  
Mrs Addison

### People Involved With 'Hear My Voice' Talent Show

#### *Judges:*

Nicky Voltore  
Maggie Magpie  
Leticia Swan

Gemma Parrot

#### *Contestants And Their Entourages:*

Conor  
Naomi  
Ben – Conor's Boyfriend  
Naomi's Mum

### Nicky's Backing

Vocalists/Dancers  
Seema – a Floor Manager  
6 X Hopefuls  
Auditionees

Violet – a South African midwife

Mrs Livingstone  
Young Jess  
Young Frankie  
Young Michael  
Delia  
A boy  
Other children  
Mr Treadway

Juliet  
India  
Carl

Fast Food Manager  
Homeless man  
Commuters

Doctor.

## **A production note**

The central theatrical convention of the show is flashbacks occurring from within the frame of the Hear my Voice TV talent show. Projection on a screen is used to facilitate smooth transitions.

The screen can be used for a number of purposes: to show the short films that may be part of Hear My Voice; to signify a shift to flashback; to relay text messages between the central characters; to show Michael's drawings; and to signify other locations (e.g. Poundsville) that are not the TV studio.

During flashback sequences, location can also be signified by costume changes and additional settings.

The band are the house band for Hear My Voice and where possible could be actor/musicians who play other parts – adding to the convention that flashback sequences shift to ensemble storytelling by the cast.

## SCENE 1

As the audience come in, it is as if they're entering the studio for the talent show *Hear My Voice*.

The house band is playing an overture, which interprets songs from the show to come in a glitzy style congruent with a talent show.

A Floor Manager enters.

The band vamp the riff from *I Got The* used by Eminem for *My Name Is* behind the Floor Manager.

The house lights come down.

FLOOR MANAGER

(To audience)

Just to remind you, ladies and gentlemen, we go live in a few moments. So, let's do a quick rehearsal of some of your responses. When you see this ...

A sign comes up on the screen: Applause!

... you clap enthusiastically. You can do better than that!

(Indicates the need for better  
applause)

That's better. And when you see this ...

A sign comes up on the screen: Whoop!

... big whoops of appreciation. Thank you! And this ...

A sign comes up on the screen: Boo!

You get the idea! Good!

A message comes through on the Floor Manager's headphones.

Yup. We're ready to go. And ... three ... two ... one!

The riff for The Vulture.

The Floor Manager exits.

The screen: Wild Cheering!

BV

(Singing)

Oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear My Voice!

VOICEOVER

Ladies and Gentlemen. Your host for Hear My Voice tonight. The ever-colourful, ever-vibrant, ever-exotic ...Gem-ma Parrot!

BV

(Singing)

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – she’s a Parrot!

Enter Gemma Parrot.

GEMMA

(Singing)

They call me the parrot,  
I spend my days,  
Reading an autocue,  
Whatever it says.

(Speaking over riff)

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to ‘Hear My Voice’. The show where truth is sung and songs are the truth. And tonight we give you the final leg of our journey to find the voice of the nation. We’ve whittled down to the final three. And it’ll be up to you, yes you, to vote for the one whose life will be transformed ...

BV

(Singing)

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

GEMMA

But first, let’s go back to where it all began. When the hopefuls were in their thousands ...

The scene transforms into an audition. The riff from The Vulture transforms into the riff from You’ll Let Me Know.

On the screen: Queues of hopefuls outside the venue, waving at the camera etc.

Auditionees enter.

CHOREOGRAPHY 1

The auditionees include all-sorts and their friends and supporters. Jess, Conor and Naomi are amongst them. The choreography reflects the dreams and disappointments of people looking for a break into showbiz.

ALL

Don't turn me away, oh no,  
Please gimme a part to play,  
Don't tell me to go, oh no,  
And please don't say you'll let me know,  
Please don't say you'll let me know,  
Please don't say you'll let me know.

NAOMI

I walk the streets with a hopeful smile,  
It hurts my feet but it's all worthwhile,

AUDITIONEE 1

I hardly eat but I don't need food.

AUDITIONEE 2

Upon a stage maybe in the nude.

AUDITIONEE 3

I could be so good, I could be the best.

AUDITIONEE 4

I wanna be a star, brighter than the rest.

CONOR

Gimme half a chance,  
Mister, gimme a chance,  
Please gimme a chance.

ALL

Don't turn me away, oh no,  
Please gimme a part to play,  
Don't tell me to go, oh no,  
And please don't say you'll let me know,  
Please don't say you'll let me know,  
Please don't say you'll let me know.

JESS

I practice hard each and every day,  
It hurts my fingers nearly wears them away,

AUDITIONEE 1

But I don't give a damn 'cause I feel so free,

AUDITIONEE 2

Upon a stage the world is waiting for me.

AUDITIONEE 3

I can see it now,  
Wearing Yves Saint Laurent,

AUDITIONEE 4

Or maybe Mary Quant,  
Or maybe nothing in front,

NAOMI

Gimme half a chance,  
Mr, gimme a chance,  
Please gimme a chance.

ALL

Don't turn me away, oh no,  
Please gimme a part to play,  
Don't tell me to go, oh no,  
And please don't say you'll let me know,  
Please don't say you'll let me know,  
Please don't say you'll let me know.

JESS

I'm getting older day by day,  
I'm nearly seventeen the time is running away,

AUDITIONEE 1

I gotta make it soon, gotta make it soon,

AUDITIONEE 2

If you don't help me mister I don't know what I'll do.

CONOR

I could be so good,

NAOMI

I could be the best,

JESS

I wanna be a star,  
Brighter than the rest.

ALL

Gimme half a chance,  
Mister, gimme a chance,  
Please gimme a chance.

ALL

I could be so good,  
I could be the best,  
I wanna be a star,  
Brighter than the rest,  
Gimme half a chance,  
Mister, gimme a chance,  
Please gimme a chance.

The Vulture riff returns.

We're back at the Hear My Voice studio with Gemma.

The screen: Applause!

BV

(Singing)

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

GEMMA  
(Speaking)  
And without more ado .... Our judges! Leticia  
Swan!

The screen: Whoop!

LETICIA  
(Singing)  
They call me The Swa-an,  
Jus' look at me glide,  
I'm all 'bout appearance,  
Don't care what's inside.

GEMMA  
(Talking over riff)  
Now that's a frock, Leticia!

LETICIA  
Oh! This little thing!

GEMMA  
Ladies and Gentlemen – Leticia Swan!

BV  
(Singing)  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – she's a Swa-an!  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

Leticia takes her place at the judges' station.

GEMMA  
And here to jangle her magnificent jewelry in  
appreciation of tomorrow's stars ...

Maggie cackles from off stage.

GEMMA  
I'd know that laugh anywhere ... It's Maggie  
Magpie!

The screen: Chant "Maggie! Maggie!"

The Floor Manager encourages from the side.

Maggie Magpie stumbles on, dripping with jewelry and laughing semi-  
drunkenly.

MAGGIE  
(Singing)  
They call me the Magpie  
I like things that shine,  
Show me something that glitters,  
And I'll claim it for mine.

GEMMA  
(Speaking)  
So, what are you looking for tonight, Maggie?



MAGGIE

(Speaking)

What? Other than a large gin?

(She cackles)

A star, my darling, a radiant shining star!

GEMMA

Ladies and Gentlemen – Maggie Magpie!

BV

(Singing)

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – she's a Magpie!

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

Maggie takes her place at the judges' station.

GEMMA

And here he is... The man you've all been waiting for. The man with the best stardar in the business. Our judge-in-chief ... making dreams come true ... Nicky Voltore – The Vulture!

The screen: Boo!

Nicky Voltore swoops on surrounded by eye-candy.

BV

(Singing)

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – he's a Vulture!

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – he's a Vulture!

Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

NICKY

(Singing)

They call me the Vulture

Cos that's my name,

I fly high around the town,

Looking for game.

GEMMA

(Speaking)

So how thrilled are you to be here at the final, Nicky?

NICKY

(Speaking)

Beyond thrilled, Gemma. This is by far the most talented field we've ever had.

GEMMA

Is there a stand-out winner for you?

NICKY

Oh yes! There's one here who I think could be the biggest star in the world.

GEMMA  
And you're not saying ...

NICKY  
Let's see if he - or she - steps up tonight.

BV  
(Singing)  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – he's a Vulture!  
Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear my voice!

GEMMA  
But, before we focus on our finalists ... Let's just see the ones that got away ...

The Vulture riff segues into You'll Let Me Know riff. Hopefuls come forward.

HOPEFUL 1  
This is my one hope of moving on from chartered surveying ...

LETICIA  
We'll let you know.

HOPEFUL 2  
I think the show needs a pensioner. Someone who'll appeal to the Frank Sinatra lovers.

MAGGIE  
We'll let you know.

HOPEFUL 3  
Nah, man, you wouldn't know talent, man, if it bit you in the ...

NICKY  
We'll let you know.

HOPEFULS 4 & 5  
We're identical twins. We do everything together.

MAGGIE  
And do you always speak in unison?

HOPEFUL 4 & 5  
(Speaking different lines at the same time)  
Yes/No.

LETICIA  
We'll let you know.

HOPEFUL 6  
I like to think I'm sort of a cross between Adele, bit a Michael Jackson, bit a Elvis and sort of spirit of Meatloaf.

NICKY

Hmm. Let's hear from Maggie?

MAGGIE

(Cackling uncontrollably)

Stop... It's a... a ... no ... sorry ... no ...

NICKY

Leticia?

LETICIA

I don't know why you're laughing, Maggie. I think, you know, if you showed a bit more flesh, let yourself be sexy ... It's a yes from me.

NICKY

So, it's down to me... And I think ...

(Big pause)

We'll let you know.

CHORUS

(Singing)

Don't turn me away, oh no  
Please gimme a part to play  
Don't tell me to go, oh no  
And please don't say you'll let me know  
Please don't say you'll let me know  
Please don't say you'll let me know

GEMMA

And so ten weeks later, we've ended up down to our final three. A big hand ladies and gentlemen for ...

Naomi Eaton ...

Conor Snitterfield ...

And Jess Youngblood!

The three finalists come forward into the spotlight.

GEMMA

But, before we hear you sing tonight ... And after the break ... We'll be sharing some memories and speaking to those special people in our finalists' lives.

Floor Manager enters.

FLOOR MANAGER

OK. You can relax, folks. We've gone to the break.

The judges come forward and mingle with the three finalists. Nicky is very obviously only interested in Jess.

MAGGIE  
Darlings, darlings! You'll all be magnificent!

LETICIA  
You all look a trillion dollars!

MAGGIE  
Above all, we want to see passion ...

LETICIA  
Bring the sexy!

NICKY  
Remember, you've made it this far because the public believe in you. Jess ... a word ...

Nicky takes Jess to one side. The others look uneasy.

NICKY  
I'll just pop by your dressing room again in a bit.  
Just a pep talk. No need to look anxious.

JESS  
Er ... OK ...

NICKY  
You're not worried I'm going to swoop on you again, I hope.

JESS  
No.

NICKY  
You've made your feelings perfectly clear.

JESS  
Yes.

FLOOR MANAGER  
OK, all. Positions please.

The judges make their way back to their positions. Nicky smiling reassuringly at Jess. The others looking on concerned.

NAOMI  
That's it. She's won. Cow.

CONOR  
It's a public vote.

NAOMI  
It's fixed.

MAGGIE  
Oh, don't talk rubbish, girl. Just concentrate on your performance.

They're all back at their positions. Gemma in the spotlight.

FLOOR MANAGER

And ... three, two, one ...

GEMMA

And now, before we hear those final songs, we've got some special film showing the three incredible journeys that have ended up in this final for Hear My Voice.

On the screen: a montage of moments from the three finalists' "journeys".

NAOMI

(Voiceover)

I remember where it all started for me. I was always a princess...

CONOR

(Voiceover)

My older brother Seb introduced me to the great songwriters.

NAOMI

(Voiceover)

I loved to look good from a young age.

JESS

(Voiceover - unconvincing)

It was tough being brought up just by my Mum, but she's given me so much ... so much love.

Suddenly, the film on the screen and actors freeze and Jess comes forward.

SCENE 2

We get a short phrase from *I Got The...*

JESS

(To audience)

You can tell, can't you, this film story isn't going to be the whole truth. I mean, I didn't tell them everything. It's far too complicated to be reduced to a five-minute film. And some things are private. Yes, of course my Mum's been important ...

Tracy enters

TRACY

Bus leaves in five.

Jess starts warming up.

JESS

A-one, a-two, a-three and stretch.

TRACY

Nice to see you doing a proper warm-up.

JESS

I'm doing those stretches Mandy taught me.

TRACY

But, my darling, I did tell you to get up earlier. Then we wouldn't be in this rush.

JESS

a-four, a-five, a-six ...

TRACY

I just don't want you to make the mistakes I did.

JESS

I won't Mum.

TRACY

I spent too much time chasing boys ...

JESS

Heard it before, Mum.

TRACY

Or should I say, them chasing me ...

JESS

And that's how you threw away your talent ...

TRACY

Oh. Sorry if I'm boring you.

JESS

Sorry if I'm the cause of your wasted life.

TRACY

Darling, no. You're the reason I get up every morning.

JESS

No pressure then.

TRACY

The bus! Get a move on!

Tracy leaves.

JESS

(To audience)

'Cos more than my Mum, you need to understand what Frankie and Michael mean to me to understand me. The real story, well that starts with an amazing coincidence. It starts at the Queen Victoria Hospital. It's the day Frankie was born. The day Michael was born. The day I was born.

Give Love starts.

Tracy appears in her hospital bed. She has no flowers or cards. Violet, the midwife, tends to her by her bedside.

JESS

My Mum. Just 16. My Dad? Nowhere to be seen. And Michael's Mum. Old enough to be my Mum's mum. And Violet, the midwife at the hospital who delivered me. She'd also play an important part in our story.

Michael's Mum and Dad appear. They're beaming. Flowers and cards surround Michael's Mum's bed. Then, Frankie's Mum and Dad appear. Frankie's Dad is dressed in workmen's clothes, looking anxious. Frankie's Mum looks exhausted. There are a few cards and one bunch of flowers.

JESS

And Frankie's parents. They're ordinary. There was no sense then that they'd given birth to, well, someone very different ...

#### CHOREOGRAPHY 2

The scene builds as midwives, other health workers and friends and relatives appear. The choreography reflects the themes of the song: about the wonder, joy and sadness of bringing new lives into the world.

VIOLET

(Singing)

Every day follows a night,  
And every day the sun gives his light,  
And every minute a new life begins,  
A new life begins with love.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
Every heart has room for a baby

MICHAEL'S MUM  
And everyone has room for a heart

FRANKIE'S DAD  
Remember when you are with someone who may  
be.  
Once was a baby,

FRANKIE'S MUM  
Give love.

MICHAEL'S MUM &  
DAD/FRANKIE'S MUM & DAD  
Give love. don't let the chances pass you by,  
Give love. you'll find that love will multiply,  
Making you smile.  
Making you smile.

TRACY  
Every life begins with a tear,  
And every life should end without fear,

VIOLET  
And every moment that flows in between,  
That time should have been with love, Give love.

ALL (EXCEPT TRACY)  
Don't let the chances pass you by,  
Give love. you'll find that love will multiply,  
Give love. don't let the chances pass you by  
Give love. you'll find that love will multiply  
Don't let the chances pass you by Don't ... don't ...  
don't let ... let the chances pass you by.

The riff continues as Jess speaks again to the audience.

JESS  
(To audience)  
But did the three of us start with equal chances?

MICHAEL'S MUM  
It's amazing isn't it? This little bundle could be  
anything he wants to be.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
As long as he's a lawyer, doctor or accountant(!)

MICHAEL'S MUM  
Oh, Jim!

TRACY  
Excuse me?

VIOLET  
What is it?



TRACY

I'm tired.

FRANKIE'S DAD

(Tearful)

You know we're blessed?

FRANKIE'S MUM

I know, darling.

FRANKIE'S DAD

I want to admit something to you?

VIOLET

Well, you have a little sleep.

FRANKIE'S MUM

What is it?

VIOLET

I'll hold baby.

FRANKIE'S DAD

I'm well relieved, actually.

TRACY

(Drifting off)

I've thought of a name.

FRANKIE'S MUM

Relieved?

TRACY

Jessica.

FRANKIE'S DAD

That she's normal. Nothing wrong with her. Look at her. Perfect.

VIOLET

That's a very pretty name.

FRANKIE'S MUM

Me too.

MICHAEL'S DAD

Just so long as he's handy with both bat and ball, I'll be satisfied.

TRACY

You hold Jessica, then.

MICHAEL'S MUM

And supports QPR, of course.

MICHAEL'S DAD

Michael's a good solid name.

FRANKIE'S DAD

My little girl. Little Francesca. Pretty as a picture.

TRACY

I'm going to sleep now ...

VIOLET

Sweet dreams, young lady.

TRACY

Sweet dreams, Jessica. Thank you, Violet.

JESS

(To audience)

Of course, we didn't know each other then. But we soon did ...

#### CHOREOGRAPHY 2 (CONTINUED)

Over the next section of song, through movement/dance we see Jess, Michael and Frankie grow up between the ages of 0 to 10.

Some suggestions:

At home: Jess having tantrums, dancing in front of the mirror, singing along to her personal stereo. Michael being distracted all the time. Frankie refusing to wear girly clothes, complaining about injustices.

Outside: Jess doing handstands. Michael on his own with a sketchbook, Frankie playing physical games (skateboarding?)

Seeing specialists: Jess with a dance teacher, Michael with a doctor giving him pills, Frankie at a therapist.

Parents: Tracy being pushy, the Addisons frustrated by Michael's ADHD, Frankie's parents concerned.

CHORUS

Give love, don't let the chances pass you by,  
Give love, you'll find that love will multiply  
Give love, don't let the chances pass you by  
Give love, you'll find that love will multiply  
Don't let the chances pass you by,  
Don't . don't ... don't let the chances pass you by.

### SCENE 3

The song finishes with Young Jess, Young Frankie and Young Michael in a Year 6 classroom. Young Michael is sitting on his own, fiddling, intent on drawing in his sketchbook. Young Jess is lively, messing about with other girls, being the centre of attention. Young Frankie is with the boys trying out paper plane designs.

Mrs Livingstone comes in.

The whiteboard appears on the screen, written on it: Thank your lucky star.

JESS

(To audience)

We kinda knew each other existed through most of primary school, but we had nothing in common. One day, Mrs Livingstone decided to give us all a conscience. It was the day before our tenth birthday.

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Pipe down, 6L.

All go quiet except for Young Jess who is still showing off, singing:

YOUNG JESS

(Singing)

It must be love, love, love!

All laugh.

JESS

(To audience)

Wasn't I a show off?

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Jessica!

YOUNG JESS

(Still singing It Must Be Love)

Der-da!

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Someone turn the fridge light on?

YOUNG JESS

Such a good song, miss!

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Save it for break.

YOUNG JESS

Anyway, what d'ya mean about the fridge light?

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Any excuse to perform. Right, let's get on.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
(To boy next to her)  
Isn't she brilliant?

BOY  
What, Miss? She's boring.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
No, dingbat. Jess. She's funny.

BOY  
Annoying! Thinks she's Beyonce or somefink.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
She's really pretty ... her voice is ... really pretty.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
I don't remember saving it's discussion time.  
Honestly, I don't know what's got into you this  
Friday afternoon, 6L. Right! First off, in pairs.  
What does the phrase 'thank your lucky star'  
mean? And ... Someone you don't usually work  
with. So, Melinda, you're not to work with  
Jasmine. Nor Stefan K. with Stefan Z.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
(Nervously approaching Jess)  
Hello.  
(Beat)  
Thought I'd work with a girl for a change.

BOY  
(Singing)  
It must be love, love, love.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Shut up, Wazzock!

YOUNG JESS  
Come on. Seen the state of your knees?!

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Yeah – fell over in the playground.

They're all paired off except Michael, who's still doodling furiously.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Michael Addison!

YOUNG MICHAEL  
(In a world of his own)  
Uh?

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Earth to Michael Addison? Are you receiving me?

Class laugh. Michael realises that he's the centre of attention and tries to hold back the tears.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Pairs. But, of course, we have an odd number.  
So, you'll have to join an existing pair.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Yes, Miss.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Well move yourself then.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
(Stays still)  
Miss?

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Michael?

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Sorry, miss. What're we doing?

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Someone tell Michael Addison.

Delia puts her hand up.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Delia.

DELIA  
We're discussing the phrase: 'Thank your lucky  
star', Miss.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Thank you, Delia. Now, Michael, how about you  
join ... let me see ...

The class all look awkward as no one wants Michael to join them. Then  
Young Jess speaks.

YOUNG JESS  
He can join us. Come on, Michael Addison.  
'Thank your lucky star' you've got me and ... er ...

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Frankie.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Good. Michael hurry along now and work with  
Jessica and Francesca.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
(To Michael)  
Frankie.

JESS  
(To audience)  
So, we finally started to talk about 'thank your  
lucky star'.

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Think about the fact that there's someone somewhere much worse off than you are.

YOUNG FRANKIE

She's right you know.

YOUNG JESS

Who?

YOUNG FRANKIE

Mrs Livingstone. There are people lots worse off. In Africa.

YOUNG JESS

Is it?

YOUNG FRANKIE

Yeah. They have to walk like twenty miles every day, just to get to school.

YOUNG JESS

What? That's mad, that is.

YOUNG FRANKIE

They don't even have water.

YOUNG JESS

'magine! Walkin' all that way to school every day.

YOUNG FRANKIE

I know.

YOUNG JESS

You'd get really sweaty an' your hair would be a real mess.

YOUNG FRANKIE

What d'you think, Michael?

YOUNG MICHAEL

What?

YOUNG FRANKIE

People worse off?

YOUNG MICHAEL

Just leave me alone.

YOUNG FRANKIE

Think about all those kids our age starving in Africa. 'least we're not them.

Michael's doodling again.

YOUNG JESS

What's wrong with you?

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Just leave me out of it.

YOUNG JESS  
Maybe you'd stop being so miserable if you  
thought 'bout other people for a minute.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Shut up!

YOUNG JESS  
You're not the only one gets picked on.

Michael doodles more furiously.

YOUNG JESS  
You can thank your luck star you're not me.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
What? There's nothing wrong with you.

YOUNG JESS  
I'm a single parent family. Me mum had me when  
she was sixteen. Sometimes we haven't got  
enough food, actually.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
But, you're so popular.

YOUNG JESS  
Only 'cos I'm so pretty and talented. They're all  
jealous really. Anyway, Michael Addison, what is  
wrong with you?

YOUNG MICHAEL.  
Just SHUT UP!

Michael runs out.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Michael Addison. Come back in this classroom  
this instant!

6L is starting to get out of control.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Settle down, 6L!  
(Shouting to Michael)  
You will come back here, Michael! Delia, go and  
fetch him back.

Delia goes out to fetch Michael.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
So, Jessica? Francesca? How did that happen?

YOUNG JESS  
He's weird miss.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
That's not kind, is it Jessica?

YOUNG JESS  
But he is, Miss.

Jess' cronies are laughing.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Will you lot pipe down and behave!

Delia comes back with Michael, who is red in the face with anger and embarrassment.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
So, Michael Addison. What's all the fuss about?

Michael says nothing, but looks daggers at Jess.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Right. Jessica Youngblood. Michael Addison.  
You are both to report to Mr Treadway's office and  
do test papers.

Frankie sticks her hand up.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Yes ... Francesca.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
I wanted to say 'bout caring for others and that,  
Miss.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
Good. But first, you two. Mr Treadway. Now!

Jess and Michael slope off to classroom titters.

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
So, Francesca ...

YOUNG FRANKIE  
So, Miss, do you think it's more important for  
people in, like, powerful positions to understand  
the less fortunate and that?

MRS LIVINGSTONE  
(Brightening)  
What a good question, Francesca. Try maybe to  
say 'and that' less often.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
What? Oh, right.



MRS LIVINGSTONE

Yes. So, we thank our lucky star, don't we, that we're living in a country where most people have enough to eat. You all, 6L, also have this wonderful school ...

YOUNG FRANKIE

Miss, Miss ... But don't you think that adults should listen to children?

MRS LIVINGSTONE

And your point is, Francesca?

YOUNG FRANKIE

Frankie, Miss. My name's Frankie.

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Quite. Kindness is one of the school's core values, isn't it, 6L?

YOUNG FRANKIE

So, miss, you sending out Michael and Jess without, like, really listening to them. That wasn't very kind, was it?

MRS LIVINGSTONE

I'm sorry, young lady, but ...

YOUNG FRANKIE

Jess actually doesn't always have enough to eat and she gets bullied because she's so pretty and Michael, well ... he can't help himself ... and that.

MRS LIVINGSTONE

OK. That's enough from you, Francesca.

YOUNG FRANKIE

Didn't I tell you my name's Frankie?

MRS LIVINGSTONE

That's not what it says on the register. Now, this is your last chance, Francesca, to apologise for your rudeness to me.

YOUNG FRANKIE

It's you who's rude. You won't even call me by my name!

MRS LIVINGSTONE

Well, it looks like you've chosen to spend some time with Mr Treadway along with your friends.

YOUNG FRANKIE

Well, I don't see how you can teach us about kindness and that if you send us out every time we don't agree with you. We don't learn nothing by doing tests outside Mr Treadway's office.

MRS LIVINGSTONE

I'll have to disagree with you, Francesca. What you might learn is some respect for your teachers. Off you go to Mr Treadway.

Frankie starts to sidle off.

MRS LIVINGSTONE

And, Francesca, it's not, "won't learn nothing". You won't learn *anything*.

YOUNG FRANKIE

You're right there, Miss.

Frankie leaves.

CHORUS

So if your stabbed in the back say "ta,  
Que sera sera",  
Cos you can thank your lucky star,  
There's someone, somewhere, much  
worse off than you are.

JESS

(To audience)

So that led to the three of us sitting outside Mr Treadway's office.

Young Jess and Young Michael are sitting outside Mr Treadway's office in silence. Young Michael has been crying. Young Frankie joins them.

YOUNG FRANKIE

I've come to join the bad kids.

YOUNG JESS

What happened to you?

YOUNG FRANKIE

Jus' arguing wiv Miss and that. Sticking up for you two.

YOUNG JESS

Is it? Michael's been crying.

YOUNG MICHAEL

Have not.

YOUNG JESS

Whatever.

(Beat)

Well, this is a rubbish start to my birthday weekend. Bet Miss will tell my Mum and she'll cancel my party.

YOUNG MICHAEL

Least you were gonna have a party.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Is it your birthday too?

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Tomorrow. Don't really care about it.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Me too! Tomorrow too! I'm gonna some film with  
my little brother and that.

YOUNG JESS  
(Laughing)  
Ha! That makes us triplets! All born on the same  
day!  
(To Young Michael)  
Let's see that book, then.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Just my drawings.

YOUNG JESS  
Go on. Give us a look.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
's private.

YOUNG JESS  
(Grabbing the book)  
You gotta share your art with the world, man!

JESS  
(To audience)  
Wasn't I horrible? So sorry, Michael.

Young Michael tries to wrestle the book back. But Young Jess runs away  
with it.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Come on, Jess. Give it back to him.

Michael's drawing appears on the screen.

YOUNG JESS  
(Looking at Young Michael's book)  
Woah! This is amazing!

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Give it back.

YOUNG JESS  
You're a genius!

YOUNG MICHAEL  
It's not for people to see.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
That's enough, Jess.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
You like it?

YOUNG JESS  
Like it? I love it!  
(Beat)  
There's a whole world here.

Young Jess shows the book to Young Frankie. It's covered in intricate doodle-based drawings of creatures, flowers and mythical characters.

YOUNG JESS  
Michael, man. I'm glad you're my brother.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
What?

YOUNG JESS  
My triplet brother.

YOUNG FRANKIE  
Am I your sister, then?

YOUNG JESS  
Yeah, why not? My triplet sis. And 'cos we're family now, right, we stick by each other.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Can I have my book back now?

YOUNG JESS  
Only if you promise to be my little bro.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
But we're the same age. Exactly.

YOUNG JESS  
So?

YOUNG MICHAEL  
So, how can I be your little bro?

YOUNG JESS  
Because, Michael, you need looking after.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
My book.

YOUNG JESS  
Promise you'll be our bro.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Uh?

YOUNG JESS & YOUNG  
FRANKIE  
Promise?

YOUNG FRANKIE  
We love you, Michael.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
I dunno.

YOUNG JESS  
Just say you'll be our brother. Not hard.

YOUNG MICHAEL  
And you'll give me my book back?

YOUNG FRANKIE  
You win both ways. You get your book back and  
you get us!

YOUNG MICHAEL  
OK.  
(Pause)

YOUNG JESS & YOUNG  
FRANKIE  
Ple-ease!

YOUNG MICHAEL  
Gosh. OK. It would be a great honour ... to be  
your brother.

The three hug and dance and laugh.

YOUNG FRANKIE, YOUNG  
JESS & YOUNG MICHAEL.  
(Singing)  
So if your stabbed in the back say "ta,  
Que sera sera",  
Cos you can thank your lucky star,  
There's someone, somewhere, much  
worse off than you are.

Mr Treadway comes in. The three fall silent.

MR TREADWAY  
Ah, the usual suspects. Making a bit of a fuss, I  
see.

YOUNG JESS, YOUNG  
FRANKIE & YOUNG MICHAEL  
Sorry, Mr Treadway.

MR TREADWAY  
Well, let's see if you can be silent. Just for a  
couple of minutes. Then we'll get on with learning  
something, shall we?

YOUNG JESS, YOUNG  
FRANKIE & YOUNG  
MICHAEL.  
Yes, Mr Treadway.

The three settle down quietly. Mr Treadway leaves. They laugh. Blackout.

#### SCENE 4

Back in the Hear My Voice studio.

The screen: Applause:

Jess, Conor and Naomi are standing on the stage with Gemma. The three judges at their station.

GEMMA

So, we've found out a bit about your early years.  
Conor, how did it feel seeing your Dad after all that time?

CONOR

Oh. Yes. It was emotional.

GEMMA

And Naomi. We'd never have guessed that you were such an ugly duckling as a kid.

NAOMI

I can honestly say, Gemma, that I can't believe the journey I've been on.

GEMMA

And last but not least. Our singing songbird from the council estate.

JESS

I just hope that I can share the gift I was given with everyone here and at home tonight.

The phrase from *I Got The* is repeated as Jess comes forward.

The screen changes: Poundsville.

(To audience)

Of course, they interviewed my teachers, who all pretended they knew I was talented all along, when all they really did was tell me off. But I couldn't tell them the real story, could I? It wouldn't be fair on Frankie and Michael.

The older Frankie and Michael appear.

JESS

(To audience)

At secondary school, we stuck together. But it was hard to stick up for them.

Three secondary school kids – India, Carl and Juliet - appear.

INDIA

What d'you see in that Frankie?

JESS

She's my sis, India.

(Jess crosses her fingers)  
We're like that.

INDIA  
You know what she is, don't ya?

JESS  
She's a better friend than any of you will ever be.

INDIA  
Frankie and Jess, sitting in a tree ...

CARL, INDIA & JULIET  
K.I.S.S.I.N.G!

JESS  
You're pathetic.

CARL  
We may be pathetic, but at least we ain't gay!

JESS  
I'm sorry, Carl, but what are you bugging me for?

CARL  
I've seen her, looking at you with her puppy-dog eyes.

Michael ambles on to a short phrase from Ask Me to Stay.

INDIA  
Oh-oh. Here comes the freak!

MICHAEL  
Jess! Oh, hello, Juliet.

JULIET  
Sorry ... Do I know you?

India and Carl laugh.

MICHAEL.  
Michael. Michael Addison. Your Mum works with my Dad.

JULIET  
That doesn't mean I know you.

MICHAEL  
We went on holiday once. To Cornwall. You don't remember?

JULIET  
Vaguely.

MICHAEL  
We made sandcastles.



JULIET

It's coming back to me. Worst holiday ever. It rained all the time.

MICHAEL

Actually, there were two days of rain. One of drizzle, and the rest of the time it was actually quite clement.

India, Carl & Juliet contort themselves with laughter.

CARL

"And the rest of the time it was actually quite clement." What does that mean?

MICHAEL

It means that the weather was actually quite ...

JESS

Don't rise to it Michael. They're just being pathetic. Let's stroll on.

MICHAEL

Oh. OK. Bye Juliet.

JESS

Michael!

JULIET

Whatever.

(To her mates)

I don't really know him. That holiday was ages ago.

All disappear leaving Jess on her own.

JESS

(To audience)

And we all had battles to fight at home in our teenage years.

Frankie appears with her Mum and Dad. The screen image changes to indicate domestic environments. The tune to Give Love underscores.

VIOLET

(Singing)

Every day, follows the night.

FRANKIE'S MUM

You know you left your Facebook page open on the computer?

FRANKIE

You what?

FRANKIE'S DAD

And your mother couldn't help but notice ...

VIOLET  
(Singing)  
And every day, the sun gives his light

Michael appears playing a computer game. Michael's Dad comes in.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
Michael?

MICHAEL  
I'm busy.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
Can you give me a moment?

MICHAEL  
No, Dad. I'm busy.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
We need a talk, young man?

Michael ignores his Dad and keeps playing.

JESS  
(To audience)  
And things at home with Mum were really getting to me.

Tracy appears.

TRACY  
Right, I've got your itinerary for next week.

VIOLET  
(Singing)  
And every moment that flows in between

Tracy produces a laminated sheet.

TRACY  
You've got an audition on Tuesday after school and a talent show at the weekend. But you needn't worry about that because you'll easily win.

VIOLET  
(Singing)  
That time should have been ...

JESS  
(Looking at schedule)  
Can't do dance on Wednesday night ...

VIOLET  
(Singing)  
With love ... Give love.

TRACY  
I saw that Celia's Mum at the shop and she's  
entering.

JESS  
Mum...

TRACY  
So the competition won't be that good.

JESS  
Mu-um!

TRACY  
What is it, darling?

JESS  
I can't do Wednesday night dance class.

TRACY  
Oh? So, what's more important, then?

JESS  
Going round Frankie's.

TRACY  
Worth throwing away our future for, is it?

JESS  
*Our future!*

The Give Love underscore cuts out.

Back with Frankie and her Mum and Dad

FRANKIE  
Have you been looking at my Facebook.

FRANKIE'S DAD  
You left it open, Frankie.

FRANKIE  
Not on! Seriously not on!

FRANKIE'S MUM  
So, who's this Seema?

FRANKIE  
Just a friend ...

FRANKIE'S MUM  
She looks quite ...

FRANKIE  
Quite what?

FRANKIE'S MUM  
Well ... Old

FRANKIE'S DAD  
Unsuitable.

Back with Michael and his Dad. Another short instrumental phrase of Give Love.

MICHAEL  
Just five minutes. I'll be at the next level.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
I know your five minutes. You should be doing your homework.

MICHAEL  
Don't keep hassling me.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
At least have a bit of time away from a screen.

MICHAEL  
You don't understand. I've put all my time into this. It's at a critical stage.

MICHAEL'S DAD  
So's your life, Michael.

MICHAEL  
I'm feeling depressed, alright?

Back with Jess and her Mum. Another short Give Love phrase.

JESS  
Well, that's the whole problem, isn't it? This is more about you than me?

TRACY  
How can you say that?

JESS  
I know: "after all you've done for me."

TRACY  
It's not like I've been able to have a normal life, you know?

JESS  
I haven't stopped you. You could've had boyfriends. A husband?

TRACY  
Don't be ridiculous! There isn't a mighty man in the world'd take you on as well as me?

JESS

Mighty man?

TRACY

There are no knights in shining armour, Jess? We girls have got to fend for ourselves.

Back with Frankie and her Mum and Dad. Another short phrase from Give Love.

FRANKIE'S DAD

How'd yer meet this Seema, then?

FRANKIE

Online.

FRANKIE'S MUM

Have you, well, er ... actually met her?

FRANKIE

(Lying)

No.

FRANKIE'S DAD

Frankie?

FRANKIE

What?

FRANKIE'S MUM

We have seen ... Darling, we just want to protect you.

FRANKIE

I am fourteen. I can look after myself.

FRANKIE'S MUM

It's not that this Seema is, well, a ...

FRANKIE

Yeah, she's gay Mum.

FRANKIE'S MUM

It would be the same if this was a grown man.

FRANKIE

She's only eighteen.

FRANKIE'S DAD

(To Frankie's Mum)

Well, not really the same as a man, honey.

FRANKIE

Great! So your problem, Dad, is basically that I'm making friends with a female. Bet you wouldn't say that if I was straight.

FRANKIE'S MUM

The thing is, you *are* young. But you seem so definite ... about ... well ... your lifestyle.

FRANKIE

You two knew you were straight when you were teenagers, right? Exactly.

FRANKIE'S DAD

Right. Nuff of this. Yer losin' yer internet privileges.

FRANKIE

Like I can't get online at the library. Just get off my case!

Frankie storms out. We see her elsewhere texting.

Back with Michael and his Dad. A short phrase from Give Love.

MICHAEL'S DAD

Look, Michael. I know you haven't taken your Dexytripton.

MICHAEL

I've decided to stop taking it.

MICHAEL'S DAD

You need it. It helps you with your concentration.

MICHAEL

It gives me headaches. Stops me from drawing.

MICHAEL'S DAD

It could be the computer giving you headaches.

MICHAEL

(Losing it)

Alright! I will stop playing if you want. And I'll go out! Just get off my case?!

(He slams down the lid of his laptop)

MICHAEL'S DAD

Michael! Where are you going? Michael!

Michael storms out. We see him elsewhere on stage texting.

Back with Jess and her Mum. Another short phrase from Give Love.

JESS

I love singing, Mum. I love dancing. But, I just want to spend some time with my friends occasionally.

TRACY

Hang out with boys more like.

JESS  
Give it a rest ...

TRACY  
And if you want the edge over the others ...

Frankie's text pings into Jess's phone. The screen changes to reveal the text:  
"M & D on my case."

JESS  
Sorry, Mum. Love to stop and argue, but I'm  
needed elsewhere.

TRACY  
Something more urgent than your future cropped  
up, then?

JESS  
Frankie needs me.

Michael's text pings into Jess's phone. The screen changes to: "My father has  
finally gone too far. I must see you now! Aaaarggh!"

JESS  
Michael too. Must fly.

TRACY  
Be back by nine, then. Still time to go through  
your song before bed.

JESS  
'pparently their parents are on their cases. Funny  
that.

Jess saunters off. A faster phrase from Give Love underscores Jess' next  
speech.

JESS  
(To audience)  
So that's what would happen. Our homes became  
hells, parents on our cases, so we'd meet up on  
the square outside Poundville and put the world  
to rights. 'specially Frankie.

The scene changes, the screen is back to Poundville.

FRANKIE  
So, Seema was saying that she's going down  
Occupy Saturday and that and I thought we should  
all go down.

MICHAEL  
Why?

FRANKIE  
What? Michael? Don't ya know what's goin'  
down?

MICHAEL

No.

FRANKIE

Well, for a start there's poverty, mate, you might not be aware of it, but there's people down food banks. That's people with jobs and that, on zero hours. Not just those out of work. Then there's the way they treat trans people. I mean how would you feel if there was no public toilet for you?

MICHAEL

Yes, that would be bad.

FRANKIE

Exactly. Not to mention homelessness, war and climate change. What's more important than all that?

JESS

I got a talent show Saturday.

FRANKIE

Oh. I guess you've got to do that. You'll be amazing. Michael?

MICHAEL

Will there be a lot of people there? I don't like crowds.

FRANKIE

Yeah. That's kinda the whole point.

MICHAEL

And anyway ... I might be seeing a friend.

JESS

What? What friend?

MICHAEL

There's a girl I know, that's all.

JESS

What're you not saying?

FRANKIE

Is she hot? I mean, is this someone special, Michael?

MICHAEL

No-no-no-no.

FRANKIE

OK. We won't intrude.



(Pause)

MICHAEL

I've just made a drawing. I thought that she might like it.

Michael gets out his sketchbook. The drawing appears on the screen.

MICHAEL

It's the Kingdom of Wallcorn. Sort of based on Cornwall with all these crazy rocks and big waves. But it's got its own specific species, related to its microclimate. It's ruled over by the Dexvtrip Dvnastv. They keep the population sedated by poisoning the water supply. But ...

JESS

You've worked out this whole world, haven't you?

MICHAEL

I don't see how I could draw it if I didn't know about it.

JESS

Yeah, I can see that.

FRANKIE

But who's this picture for?

MICHAEL

Just a friend.

JESS

I know. Oh no, Michael. Not Juliet. Say it's not Juliet.

Underscore: It Must Be Love.

MICHAEL

I'm not going to hassle her. I'll just post it through her door with a letter.

JESS

She's not very nice to you, Michael.

MICHAEL

She just shows off in front of her friends. She's really very nice.

FRANKIE

She's gotta love Michael's art. Has she ever seen your drawings?

MICHAEL

No.

FRANKIE

You give this to her, Michael. It's amazing. Your best yet. She'll come round.

JESS

Hm.

FRANKIE

Can't hurt, can it?

MICHAEL

I've already written her a letter.

(He tears a page out of his sketchbook with the picture on it. He takes a letter in an envelope out of his satchel. He writes 'To Juliet' on the letter.)

Voila! I'll pop it through her letterbox ... She won't hate me, will she?

FRANKIE

No one could hate you, Michael.

JESS

We love you, Michael.

MICHAEL

No. I can't do it. Changed my mind.

FRANKIE

What's the worst that can happen, mate?

MICHAEL

She'll hate me.

JESS

Then, that'll be her loss.

FRANKIE

You won't find out unless you do something. We can't live our whole lives not risking everything for love! If you love someone, you've got to tell 'em. Right, Jess?

JESS

Sure.

(Jess and Frankie have an awkward moment)

MICHAEL

You're right. I must woo this maiden!

Michael runs off. Underscore stops.

JESS

He's a worry.

FRANKIE

He'll be alright. I'm sure he'll be alright.

Jess alone back at Hear My Voice. A phrase from I Got The.

JESS

(To audience)

So that was the beginning of Michael's crush on Juliet.

The riff for Ask Me To Stay starts up on a ukulele.

JESS

(To audience)

He wrote her endless letters, each with one of his drawings in it. It took him hours.

Michael's drawings appear on the screen.

We see Michael posting letters and Juliet picking them up, looking amused and a bit uncomfortable. On one letter, she opens the door just as he's posting.

JULIET

Michael.

MICHAEL

Yes.

JULIET

Your drawings are really nice ...

MICHAEL

It's ... erm ... what I do.

JULIET

I've just not got any more room for them.

MICHAEL

Oh.

JULIET

So, that's enough now. OK?

JESS

(To audience)

So Michael stopped the drawings, but somehow got her number.

We see Michael texting Juliet. The texts appear on the screen. The script below is what is said, but the text appears using appropriate icons etc.

MICHAEL

(Texting)

Hi Juliet. It's Michael Addison. Just texting to say hello. Smiley face. Three kisses.

JULIET  
(Texting)  
Can't chat now. Homework. No kisses.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
OK. Chat when you've finished? Worried face. ...  
Two kisses.

JULIET  
(Texting)  
Not today. Too tired. No kisses.

MICHAEL  
(On 'phone)  
Juliet?

JULIET  
(On 'phone)  
Michael.

MICHAEL  
(On 'phone)  
(Beat)  
Star Wars retrospective is on at the Picturehouse.

JULIET  
(On 'phone)  
I'm busy.

MICHAEL  
(On 'phone)  
OK. (Beat). It's on for a whole week.

JULIET  
(On 'phone)  
Michael. You're very sweet ...

MICHAEL  
(On 'phone)  
Do you really think so?

JULIET  
(On 'phone)  
'Course. ... Just that my parents want me to  
study. And my Mum says you've got to stop  
'phoning me.

MICHAEL  
(On 'phone)  
OK. No phone. No letters. I'll pop round though.  
If I'm passing by.

We see Michael at Juliet's door. During the song we see Michael knocking on Juliet's door and getting turned away with increasing annoyance.

JULIET

(Singing)

You're not supposed to write me letters,

MICHAEL

(Singing)

And not one letter have I written,

JULIET

You mustn't call me on the 'phone,

MICHAEL

And on the 'phone I've left you strictly alone.

JULIE

But, here you are, you're knocking on my door,  
I keep turning you away,

MICHAEL

Well, I don't mind,

JULIET

You keep coming back for more,

MICHAEL

Won't you ask me to stay,  
Ask me to stay.

It's hard when love becomes a daily fight,  
Still I can't believe this is the end,  
When I'm alone and lonely in the night,  
It's just no good to pretend.

JULIET

So, here you are, you're knocking on my door,  
I keep turning you away,

MICHAEL

Well, I don't mind, I keep coming back for more,  
Won't you ask me to stay  
Ask me to stay.

Over a scatted verse.

JULIET

Michael. We're moving away.

MICHAEL

Oh. Where are you going?

JULIET

Somewhere called Peterborough.

MICHAEL

That's miles away.

JULIET

I've got to make new friends.

MICHAEL  
I'll message you. I'll miss you.

JULIET  
(Singing)  
Well, here you are. you're knocking on my door,  
I keep turning you away,

MICHAEL  
Well, I don't mind. I keep coming back for more,  
Won't you ask me to stay,  
Ask me to stay.

We see Juliet and her family packing bags and leaving.

MICHAEL  
(Singing)  
It doesn't matter who was right or who was wrong,  
I'll take the blame - I just don't care,  
But on my own I just can't get along,  
Since you've been gone I think I'm losing my hair.

MICHAEL/JULIET  
So, here I am/you are,  
I'm/you're knocking on your/my door,  
You/I keep turning me/you away,  
Well, I/you don't mind, I/you keep coming back for  
more,

MICHAEL  
Won't you ask me to stay,  
Ask me to stay.

We see Michael's messages to Juliet as he sings. A series of messages appear on the screen: "How're things xxx?" "What's the weather like in Peterborough? Xxxx" "Did you know that Peterborough United are known as The Posh? ☺ Xxxxx" "Maybe you've changed your number? X" "I've not messaged for a while, 'cos I've been on a drawing binqe. Thought you'd like to know." "Just get back to me when you've got a moment. Regards, Michael Addison (remember me?)"

Perhaps it's wrong for me to bother you this way,  
Maybe you've really gone for good,  
But I can't help the way I love you more each day,  
I wish you'd come home, I really wish you would.

Well, here I am I'm knocking on your door,  
You keep turning me away,  
Well, I don't mind, I keep coming back for more,  
Won't you ask me to stay,  
Ask me to stay.

At the end of the song, we see Michael texting as it appears on the screen:  
"Missing you a bit still. Xx"

## SCENE 5

The screen displays teenage pictures of Jess, Conor and Naomi and the riff from The Vulture comes back.

Jess, Conor and Naomi are in the spotlight and the judges are at their station.

BV

Oh-oh-oh-oh – Hear My Voice!

GEMMA

Wow! Amazing films of your teenage years, contestants. Judges, what did you make of these three incredible journeys?

MAGGIE

I just wanted to say, particularly, to Conor. Conor, love. I think we can all stand up and applaud your courage to burst out of the closet.

CONOR

I didn't really *burst* out ...

LETICIA

I love the way you're not worried about losing girl fans.

CONOR

I've just never been anything else really. I'm just me. I love to sing.

NICKY

Yes, but don't be worried if girls fall in love with you too.

GEMMA

And Naomi. Has your Mum finally come round to you being star-material?

NAOMI

Yeah ... yeah. She is pleased for me.

LETICIA

Listen, gorgeous, you can be an egghead *and* a star. Study for those exams, baby! I can dig you out some exquisite face furniture – and you can really rock that sexy schoolgirl look.

NAOMI

I think my Mum'd still prefer I got a sensible job.

MAGGIE

Darling! Look around you! You. Are. On. The. Final. Of. Hear My Voice! Yes you, little nerdy Naomi!

NAOMI

Thanks for the advice. I'll cherish it always.

GEMMA

And Jess. We've seen how your best friend – your wonderful Mum – has been with you through thick and through thin.

JESS

She's been great, my Mum. I have had other friends, of course ...

MAGGIE

But it's Mum, isn't it honey, who's been the rock, hasn't she? You'd never be here without her?

JESS

S'pose not.

NICKY

I want to say something special to Jess. You've got star quality, no doubt about it.

GEMMA

I hear a 'but', Nicky.

NICKY

Yes. There is a 'but'. I detect a bit of attitude in you, young lady. An unwillingness to listen to those of us who know this business.

JESS

I thought you liked a bit of fighting spirit, Nicky.

NICKY

I'm just saying, don't fight with your mentors. I could take you a long way in this business.

GEMMA

So, er, thank you our judges! We're almost there with the sing off to see who will win this year's Hear My Voice.

BV

Oh oh oh oh – Hear My Voice!

GEMMA

But first, just one last re-cap on all their performances up to this point.

The screen and actors freeze. Jess comes forward with a short phrase from I Got The.

JESS

(To audience)

I had to big up my Mum with everyone at Hear My Voice. But, truth is, she needed more support than me. She certainly wasn't going to help me fend off The Vulture.

Underscore: Sparrow in the Storm.



It was our sixteenth birthday and I was trying to get us all together. After Michael was dumped by Juliet, he locked himself in his room for ages. That day, Frankie was volunteering, doing an old lady's shopping.

Violet appears reading a book. Frankie brings her a cup of tea. The screen shows framed photos of Violet's family: her white husband, mixed heritage son, in her midwife's uniform etc.

FRANKIE

It was one sugar, wasn't it, Violet?

VIOLET

Lovely of you to visit. You seem fidgety. You have time for a chat?

FRANKIE

Maybe five minutes. Sorry. I've got induction for my Sandwich Junction apprenticeship in a bit. Then, I'm gonna meet me mates for a 16<sup>th</sup> birthday drink.

VIOLET

Well, happy birthday to you!

FRANKIE

And it's their birthdays too. So, we're triplets. All born on the same day at Queen Victoria Hospital.

Violet laughs. Gentle underscoring of the Give Love theme.

FRANKIE

Why's that funny?

VIOLET

Well, you know I was a midwife?

FRANKIE

No.

VIOLET

At Queen Victoria. Sixteen years ago! Hmmm. I might well have brought you three into the world.

FRANKIE

Stop it!

Underscoring stops.

VIOLET

So, Frankie, I may be old, but I have not lost my curiosity. So, please don't think I'm rude – just interested. Can I ask you a question?

FRANKIE

Sure.

VIOLET

Are you a boy or a girl? It's so hard to tell these days.

FRANKIE

(Amused)

I'm not either, really. I was born a girl. But I like to think I'm somewhere on a spectrum and that. It's not a black and white thing.

VIOLET

(Laughing)

Oh, I know all about those black and white things. They like to put you in a box, no?

FRANKIE

You see. You get it.

VIOLET

My late husband Arthur. He was English – I told you last time?

FRANKIE

Mm-hmm.

The screen shows a film/montage of life under apartheid. Gentle underscoring of Something Inside So Strong.

VIOLET

We met back in South Africa. It was very dangerous for us to fall for each other. But love is love is love, right?

FRANKIE

Right!

VIOLET

I remember landing at Southampton. I was shocked – there were whites ... Europeans ... emptying dustbins!

FRANKIE

What, only black people were bin men in South Africa?

VIOLET

Some coloureds, of course.

FRANKIE

That's really racist! Calling people coloured.

VIOLET

Back home coloured was a specific legal category – a box for many who didn't fit in with either black or white. So, of course my son Victor was "coloured". When we went back to see my mother, Arthur had to walk on the other side of the road and pretend he didn't know us. Once, when the police came by, I didn't drop Victor's hand and pretend I didn't know him - like I should have. I clutched him tight.

FRANKIE

So, what happened?

VIOLET

Arrested, of course!

FRANKIE

What?!

VIOLET

Aren't you supposed to be at your sandwich place?

FRANKIE

Oh my gosh! The time!

VIOLET

I'll tell you more next time. And you can tell me more about you too.

Frankie and Violet freeze. Jess appears to a short phrase from I Got The.

JESS

(To audience)

So, Frankie now had herself a refuge at Violet's.

And me ... I rushed to meet Michael and Frankie outside Poundsville for our birthday. But they didn't show.

The following texts appear on the screen.

(Texting)

Where r u?

FRANKIE

(Texting)

Late for stupid induction. Gotta tell you about Violet! Our midwife!

Frankie is changing into a Sandwich Junction uniform.

JESS

(Texting)

Confused face.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
Not coming out.

Michael is at his computer.

JESS  
(Texting)  
It's our sixteenth birthday cake icon!

FRANKIE  
(Texting)  
Can't get out of it.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
Finishing a drawing.  
(He's still on the computer)

FRANKIE  
(Texting)  
I'll be as quick as I can.

JESS  
(To audience)  
So, I was left there on my own with a bottle of  
WKD and a battered chocolate cake. That was  
until Carl Clark came by ...

Carl appears.

CARL  
Alright, Jess? Where's yer sidekicks?

JESS  
They'll be here in a bit.

CARL  
Oh.

JESS  
Where's yours, then? No India?

CARL  
Don't see India no more.

JESS  
Oh.

CARL  
Didn't like the way she went on about everyone.

JESS  
She's a bully, Carl.

CARL  
Yeah. I know. Like I said ...

JESS  
... you don't see her anymore. You were no better, you know?

CARL  
Weren't I?

JESS  
Back in the day. Horrible to Michael and Frankie.

CARL  
Well, I've grown up now.

JESS  
Is it?

CARL  
You gonna share that WKD or what?

JESS  
It's for later.

CARL  
I'll get us another one. Go on, crack it open.

Jess opens up the WKD.

JESS  
Why not? Think I've been stood up anyway.

CARL  
Jess?

JESS  
Yeah.

CARL  
Why don't you go out wiv no one?

JESS  
Not found the right mighty man.

CARL  
You what?

JESS  
Doesn't matter, Carl. Something my mum said.

CARL  
Oh, OK. So, anyways, while you're waiting ... for your mighty man...

JESS  
(Laughing)  
You askin' me out Carl Clark?

CARL  
Just thought we'd get another WKD 'n find  
somewhere nicer to sit. I'm not doing nothing.

JESS  
You really know how to make a girl feel special.

CARL  
We could get outa here and go down the swings.

I Got The underscore.

JESS  
(To audience)  
So we went down to the swings. And snogged.

Jess in a clinch with Carl.

Frankie appears at Poundsville.

FRANKIE  
(Texting)  
I'm here now. Sad face.

Jess disentangles herself from Carl and checks her 'phone as the text pings.

JESS  
Hang on. Text.  
(Texting)  
Stay there. On my way.

FRANKIE  
(Texting)  
Where you been?

JESS  
(Texting)  
Snogging Carl Clark. Awkward face.  
(To Carl)  
Sorry, Carl. Gotta go.

Frankie looks at her 'phone devastated. She wanders off. Underscore  
seques into For the Lovin'. Jess appears at Poundsville. She looks for  
Frankie.

JESS  
Oh Frankie!  
(She texts)  
I'm here. You've gone.

Elsewhere, Frankie sees the texts. Starts to text back, but can't think of  
anything to write.

JESS  
(Texting Michael)  
I'm coming round. Smiley face.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
I feel like steaming poo icon.

JESS  
(Texting)  
Me too. More reason for me to come round.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
What's the point?

JESS  
(Texting)  
We can feel steaming poo icon together.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
You're too good to me.

JESS  
(Texting)  
Be strong. I love you, Michael. Kiss kiss.

MICHAEL  
(Texting)  
Me too. You. Kiss kiss.

FRANKIE  
(Texting)  
I love you, Jess.  
(Thinks)  
Delete.

Screen: We see the "I ♥ You" text being deleted.

## SCENE 7

Jess in her dressing room. Phrase from I Got The.

JESS

(To audience)

And that was just a few months ago. Now look where I am. In a dressing room, waiting to sing for my life. But I've got a plan if Nicky comes perving back in my dressing room.

Jess gets her phone out – puts her headphones in.

Nicky elsewhere with BVs/entourage. Segue into Vulture riff.

### CHOREOGRAPHY 3

Nicky is elsewhere with his entourage. This is staged as a 'number'.

NICKY

(Singing)

They call me The Vulture 'cause that's my name,  
I fly high around the town looking for game,  
Any girl whose lost her man,  
I'm by her side as fast as I can,  
And I tell her things that she wants to hear,  
I'm an evil man.  
Oh, I'm a vulture  
Oh, I'm a vulture.

The riff continues under the following scene.

NICKY

Mind if I come in?

JESS

Please yourself.

NICKY

Oh I will. Are you ready for the big sing-off?

JESS

'Spose.

(Showing her 'phone)

Just making sure I get the words right. Hang on.

(Jess makes as if she's turning her music off.)

NICKY

To be honest, I think you've blown it. You just never seem to get your tuning right ...

JESS

Why don't we see what the public think?



NICKY  
(Laughing)  
Oh that's good!

JESS  
What d'yer mean?

NICKY  
Since when did the public matter?

JESS  
I can still win the vote.

NICKY  
Oh, don't be so naïve!

JESS  
You've got masses of people counting the votes!

NICKY  
Window-dressing, my dear. I decide.

JESS  
So, I can't win.

NICKY  
You've got one last chance.

JESS  
If I give you a blowjob, you mean?

NICKY  
You said it.

JESS  
You sad git!

NICKY  
Make that a sad, rich, famous git.

Hit it!

BVs and entourage appear.

NICKY  
(Singing)  
I say, now that it's over what you gonna do?  
I'm so sad that you're on your own and your heart  
is a shade of blue,  
That man is gone and is gone for good,  
He's gone and he's never coming back,  
And that love that you had that was beautiful,  
But it's dead and that is a fact.  
If you're looking for consolation, You don't have to  
look no more,  
And I fold my wings around the girl,  
I've made it for sure.

BV  
(Singing)  
Oh, He's a vulture.  
Oh, He's a vulture.

When he flies into town, the word gets around.  
The Vulture's here, you better tie your baby down.

NICKY  
(Speaking over instrumental break)  
One small sacrifice, Jess.

JESS  
(Speaking)  
Bet you say that to all the girls.

NICKY  
What if I do? The choice is yours now.  
(Singing)  
Take a girl for a drink,  
Take her out for something to eat,  
Leave her just for a little while,  
Take a nature retreat.  
By the time I make it back,  
I've got a name address and a date,  
And you can see by the faraway look in her eyes,  
That you've made it there much too late.  
Oh, I'm a vulture.  
Oh, I'm a vulture.

BV  
Vulture's got class,  
Vulture's got style,  
Vulture can kill her,  
With a look or a smile.

Vulture's in town,  
So you better beware,  
Married or single,  
He just don't care.

NICKY/BV  
Oh, I'm/he's a vulture,  
Oh, I'm/he's a vulture,

NICKY  
Oh, I'm a vulture.

The rest of the scene happens over the riff.

JESS  
I could tell the papers.

NICKY  
I'd just love that. Free publicity. Bigger viewing  
figures.

JESS

People should know the truth about you.

NICKY

Think you feel violated now? Wait 'til my lawyers get hold of you.

Nicky leaves.

JESS

(To audience)

So here I am. Doesn't matter how well I sing, my 'journey' will end in failure. Well, there may be an upside?

Jess is seen sending a message to Frankie with a link. It comes up on the screen. "Check this out! Whatever you do, don't let it get into the wrong hands "

## SCENE 8

The scene changes to commuters travelling into the city for work. Frankie is amongst them in her Mac uniform.

### CHOREOGRAPHY 4

Samaritans starts up. Commuters initially are on their way to work. They are all sorts, business-people, rich and poor, uniformed workers, media hipsters etc. An old homeless man is sat on the floor. The choreography follows the narrative of the song.

#### COMMUTER 1

Old man I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do,  
Well I got to walk on past you,  
Your shoes are broke and your coat is made of  
holes,  
And the police soon will move you.

#### COMMUTER 2

Well I'd like to help you, but I don't know what to  
do,  
Truth is, I'm late for the job  
and the mortgage you have escaped,  
Here we come, here we come ...

#### CHORUS:

Here we come marching from the eight fifteen,  
You get our glances, some sympathy,  
Yeah we're the good guys, but understand,  
Bottom line? We don't give a damn,  
Here we come marching from the eight fifteen,  
You get our glances, some sympathy,  
Jesus meant well but he didn't understand,  
We're commuters not Samaritans,  
We're commuters not Samaritans.

#### COMMUTER 3

One time I dropped some silver to your hungry  
hand,  
I put it there to comfort me,  
We work hard for our pay,  
My friend says,

#### COMMUTER 4

"Why can't they?  
This is the land of opportunity"

#### FRANKIE

Now the snow is falling,  
I hope you'll be OK,  
No ignoring, I don't have what it takes to survive  
your day ... no way  
Here we come ...

CHORUS:

Here we come marching from the eight fifteen,  
You get our glances, some sympathy,  
Yeah we're the good guys, but understand,  
Bottom line? We don't give a damn,  
Here we come marching from the eight fifteen,  
You get our glances, some sympathy,  
Jesus meant well but he didn't understand,  
We're commuters not Samaritans,  
We're commuters not Samaritans.

Through the next section the old man gets up. He's shouting at the commuters. He falls over weak from cold and hunger.

FRANKIE

(Singing)

I hear you cursing, I hear you call a name,  
Then through the crowd I see you falling,  
We are the Israelites, you are Moses, I see the  
parting of the waves,  
As we step around you carefully,  
As we step around you carefully.

Over the riff, Frankie arrives at her fast food job. The Manager is there.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

(Speaking)

So, Francesca. See all those sandwiches there.

FRANKIE

(Speaking)

Yes.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Best before date?

FRANKIE

Yesterday.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

So, what do we do?

FRANKIE

Give 'em to someone who can't afford 'em?

MANAGER

What? And risk a health and safety catastrophe?

FRANKIE

Really?

MANAGER

Really. Bin's out the back.

We see Frankie taking the sandwiches out to a bin. She opens the bin and thinks again and stuffs them into a rucksack.

She's now out and about looking for the old homeless man to give him sandwiches.

FRANKIE

(Singing)

Old man where are you?  
Winter's like a fist, and your house,  
the bench, is empty,  
I search the doorways,  
Does the subway shelter you?  
Is this the ending of your story.

Now the snow is falling  
I hope you'll be OK,  
No ignoring, I don't have what it takes to survive  
your day ... no way ... no way.

CHORUS

Here we come, here we come.

Over the riff, Frankie is back with the Manager.

FAST FOOD MANAGER

What did I say?

FRANKIE

What've I done?

FAST FOOD MANAGER

We have got CCTV, you know.

FRANKIE

By the bins?

FAST FOOD MANAGER

How else do we protect ourselves from theft?

FRANKIE

Theft?

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Sorry, Francesca. I can't turn a blind eye. You've  
stolen from the company. Please return your  
uniform.

FRANKIE

You were throwing away perfectly good food!

FAST FOOD MANAGER

Francesca, this is a business, not a charity.

FRANKIE

But how will I get another job now?

FAST FOOD MANAGER

You should've thought of that earlier.

Over the next chorus Frankie takes off her uniform and gives it back to The Fast Food Manager. She slumps.

CHORUS:

(Singing)

Here we come marching from the eight fifteen,  
You get our glances, some sympathy,  
Yeah we're the good guys, but understand,  
Bottom line? We don't give a damn,  
Here we come marching from the eight fifteen,  
You get our glances, some sympathy,  
Jesus meant well but he didn't understand,  
We're commuters not Samaritans,  
We're commuters not Samaritans.

Over the next section the commuters are on their way home.

## SCENE 9

Jess is still in her dressing room.

Till Night Time Comes Along starts up. Michael in his room drawing.

JESS

(To audience – over song intro)

And while Frankie was wondering how she'd ever afford to live. Michael was a lock-in. Still sending weirder and weirder drawings to Juliet in Peterborough.

A tortured Michael picture appears on the screen.

MICHAEL

(Singing)

It seems like tomorrow's never going to come,  
I've been here for so long, waiting in the gloom is  
just no fun,  
Oh, it's easy to say be strong,  
Till night time comes along,  
Till night time comes along.

Over an instrumental verse, we see Michael reading a note from Juliet. Juliet appears elsewhere.

JULIET

(Speaking over an instrumental verse)

Dear Michael.  
Please stop sending me drawings.  
Just stop.  
I can't be your girlfriend.  
I can't even be your friend.  
Please get on with your life.  
Be a brilliant artist.  
Find other friends.  
Please just forget me.  
Juliet.

MICHAEL

(Singing)

And now the rain falls soaking my soul,  
Filling the hole in my heart that your note couldn't  
start to heal,  
Is this really all I get?  
The sound of your voice on a paper regret.

There's an instrumental verse. Michael puts a note in an envelope and addresses it to Jess and Frankie. He leaves it with his sketchbook. He takes some pills and falls asleep.

Through the next chorus – Jess and Frankie come in and find him and his note.



CHORUS

(As Michael sleeps)

It may be easy to find another friend.  
Right now it's easier to cry out loud: "I'll never try  
again".  
Oh, it's easy to say the end.  
When night time comes along.  
When night time comes along.

JESS/FRANKIE

And now the rain falls soaking my soul.  
Filling the hole in my heart that your note couldn't  
start to heal.

Is this really all we get?  
The sound of your voice on a paper regret.

It may be easy to find another friend.  
Right now it's easier to cry out loud: "I'll never try  
again"  
Oh, it's easy to say the end,  
When night time comes along.  
When night time comes along.  
When night time comes alo-o-ong.

The scene transforms into Michael asleep in a bed at A&E. Jess and Frankie  
by his side.

JESS

Why didn't we see this coming?

FRANKIE

Too busy with our own stuff.

JESS

We promised to look after him.

FRANKIE

Yeah, but ... he should've known we'd be there for  
him. He should've found some ...

JESS

What?

FRANKIE

Strength. From somewhere.

JESS

He wasn't born with it, Frankie. Not like we were.

Michael starts to stir.

FRANKIE

Michael.

Michael grunts.

JESS  
Michael. Can you hear us?

MICHAEL  
Where am I?

JESS  
You're in hospital.

FRANKIE  
You gave us a fright.

Michael starts to cry. Underscore It Must Be Love.

JESS  
It's OK. We're here for you. Now.

FRANKIE  
We're your triplet sisters, don't forget.

MICHAEL  
Can you promise me something?

JESS/FRANKIE  
Anything.

MICHAEL  
I know we can't be together all the time. Jess,  
you've got to win that competition. You've shown  
so much perseverance.

JESS  
I'll do my best.

MICHAEL  
And Frankie. You need to pack in that stupid  
apprenticeship.

FRANKIE  
Don't worry, mate. It packed me in already.  
(Beat)  
Long story.

MICHAEL  
But ...

FRANKIE  
What?

MICHAEL  
Can you promise, we'll never miss our birthday  
again? Wherever we are in the world. We'll  
always be together on our birthday.

FRANKIE/JESS  
Promise.

A doctor comes in.

DOCTOR  
Are you tiring him out?  
(Beat)  
Time to go now. You can come back in the  
morning.

JESS  
(To audience)  
So, Frankie and me kissed Michael goodbye.

Jess and Frankie kiss Michael on the forehead. He smiles and closes his eyes. Underscore stops.

JESS  
(To audience)  
And then we bought some beers. And went back  
to my house.

## SCENE 10

Frankie and Jess are in Jess' bedroom, sitting on the bed. There are beer cans. Jess picks up an instrument. She's playing the chords to My Song.

JESS

(Singing)

This is my song  
And no one can take it away.  
It's been so long.  
But now you're here, here to stay ...

FRANKIE

That's lovely.

JESS

I wish I could sing my own songs on the show.

FRANKIE

You could.

JESS

It's against the rules.

FRANKIE

So break them.

JESS

Ha! I love you, Frankie. But you're not realistic.  
(Beat)

FRANKIE

If I'd been realistic, I'd still have a job.

Tracy shouts from offstage

TRACY

Who've you got in there?

JESS

Frankie.

FRANKIE

Only me, Tracy.

TRACY

Jessica, you've got the finals tomorrow!

JESS

I know, Mum! Frankie's helping me rehearse.

FRANKIE

You did ought to rehearse.

JESS

I've been singing that song since I was 10. Should know it by now!

She passes over a beer can.

JESS  
Here's to Michael.

FRANKIE  
Michael!

JESS  
(To audience)  
So, instead of rehearsing, we drank a few toasts to Michael. Got a bit sentimental.

Intro to For the Loving starts.

FRANKIE  
You won't forget us when you're famous, will ya?

JESS  
Never, never, never, never.

FRANKIE  
Or run off with some bloke?

JESS  
If my Mum got one thing right, it's that mighty men don't exist.

Beat.

FRANKIE  
I want you to fly, Jess.

JESS  
But I'll still stay close to the ground.

FRANKIE  
Yeah.

JESS  
It was a close thing tonight.

FRANKIE  
Yeah.

JESS  
I'm just gonna shut my eyes a bit.

Jess puts her head in Frankie's lap.

Frankie sings For the Loving.

FRANKIE  
(Singing)  
To lead a better life, you know as well as I  
that falling down is easy when you're close to the  
ground,  
So I pack up my pride and start again.

There is no big reward, no super mighty man to  
carry you off,  
I was hoping that you'd settle for me,  
I'm still the scruffy kid with the dirty knees.

But here's a kiss for your fingers,  
Here's a kiss for your toes,  
Here's a kiss for the loveliness under your clothes,  
Here's a kiss for the singer who has given me life,  
Here's a kiss for the lovin'  
I hope that we'll be making tonight,  
Here's a kiss for the lovin'  
I hope that we'll be making tonight.

I do believe in love,  
I do believe in something stronger than  
the people trying to push us around,  
They're only greedy and afraid.

They tell us what to do,  
Don't listen, live the life that's right for you,  
Don't worry if you're not with the crowd,  
Often the crowd have lost their way.

During the next chorus, Jess opens her eyes, Frankie hugs her and kisses her fingers. Jess smiles, kisses her fingers back, and goes back to sleep.

And here's a kiss for your fingers,  
Here's a kiss for your toes,  
Here's a kiss for the loveliness under your clothes.  
Here's a kiss for the singer who has given me life,  
Here's a kiss for the lovin'  
I hope that we'll be making tonight,  
Here's a kiss for the lovin'  
I hope that we'll be making tonight.

Tracy comes into the room and sees the beer cans and Jess and Frankie slumped in a heap on the bed.

TRACY

What the hell d'ya think you're doin'?

JESS

What?

TRACY

Frankie! Out!

JESS

She's staying here.

FRANKIE

I better go.

TRACY

You gonna ruin everything when we've come this far?

JESS  
I've come this far, you mean?

TRACY  
No. I do mean we.

FRANKIE  
I really better go.

TRACY  
So, what's keeping you?

FRANKIE  
I'll be there tonight. 'Night.

Frankie leaves.

TRACY  
It's not just me, Jess. You've had help from everyone. Yer dance teachers, drama teachers, singing teachers. You've even had Nicky Voltore backing you up.

JESS  
He's a slimy creep, Mum!

TRACY  
I give up! You get some sleep and let's hope you don't have the mother of all hangovers tomorrow.

Tracy leaves.

JESS  
(To audience)  
So, the night before the final sing-off, I was on my own again. We were all on our own.

## SCENE 11

In separate parts of the stage – Jess in her room, Michael in his hospital bed, Frankie on the street.

They text each other over the intro to Sparrow in the Storm.

JESS

(Texting)

Mum's a nightmare. Angry face.

MICHAEL

(Texting)

Hospital a prison. Sad face.

FRANKIE

(Texting)

Thank your lucky star. Jobless. Skint. Frightened face.

JESS

(Singing)

In the beginning lives the end,

MICHAEL

(Singing)

Can the foe become your friend?

FRANKIE

(Singing)

Easy answers there are none,  
Though frightened grown ups search for one.

JESS

In these broken bloody times,  
We need more than TV smiles,

MICHAEL

Behind the eyes the door is tight shut,

JESS

Behind the makeup, just more makeup,

FRANKIE

When the pain is such, feelings turn to dust,  
Are there tears enough to wash all of us?

MICHAEL/JESS/FRANKIE

I'm a sparrow in the storm,  
Without your love to keep me warm,  
Seasons come and seasons go,  
That you love me is all I need to know.

I'm a sparrow in the storm,  
Without your love to keep me warm,  
Hold my hand and time will show,  
That you love me is all I need to know.



They continue to text over an extended instrumental break.

JESS

(Texting)

M. Wish u cld come tonight.

MICHAEL

(Texting)

Love to see you win. TV by the bed though.  
Smiley face.

FRANKIE

(Texting)

We'll spring you.

JESS

(Texting)

Stay put. We're coming.

#### CHOREOGRAPHY 5

The choreography depicts the themes of the song, alongside a choreographic telling of Frankie and Jess springing Michael from hospital.

FRANKIE

(Singing)

The message written on our walls,  
For the strong to climb, the weak must fall.  
This is heresy I guess,  
But could the strong perhaps learn to live with  
less.

MICHAEL

When the pain is such, feelings turn to dust,  
Are there tears enough to wash all of us?

JESS

When I need a friend, here you are again,

FRANKIE

You let me comfort you like only lovers do.

Over the chorus, we see Jess and Frankie help Michael to escape from hospital.

CHORUS

I'm a sparrow in the storm,  
Without your love to keep me warm,  
Seasons come and seasons go,  
That you love me is all I need to know.

They stop their escape to sing.

JESS/FRANKIE/MICHAEL

As the birthdays come and go,  
The more I understand, the less I know,  
As the birthdays come and go,  
Only one thing I know.

They continue their escape over the next chorus, they end up in Violet's living room.

CHORUS

I'm a sparrow in the storm,  
Without your love to keep me warm,  
Seasons come and seasons go,  
That you love me is all I need to know.

I'm a sparrow in the storm,  
Without your love to keep me warm,  
Hold my hand and time will show,  
That you love me is all I need to know.

SCENE 12

VIOLET

So, Frankie, what brings you here at this hour?

FRANKIE

Told you 'bout Michael.

VIOLET

You did not tell me he lives in a hospital gown.

FRANKIE

We had to liberate him and that. They were holding him captive.

MICHAEL

I've been holding myself captive.

VIOLET

You are a sensitive young man, I can see. And this is ...?

FRANKIE

Jess.

VIOLET

Ah! The songbird from the television.

FRANKIE

'Cept she's being harassed by this slime ball. And I got fired.

VIOLET

From Sandwich Junction? Ooh!

FRANKIE

You'd've been proud of me though.

JESS

We need advice, Violet. I've got to be at the studio in a few hours ...

FRANKIE

I can't tell my parents I've been fired from the worst job ever.

VIOLET

And Michael. Do you want to tell me why you were in hospital?

JESS

(To audience)

So, we stayed up drinking tea and telling Violet how we'd ended up in such a mess. She just listened and nodded. Then finally she said ...

VIOLET

The answer to your problems is simple. There is no answer. But there is a question you must always ask: where is the power?

JESS

Parents! Adults!

FRANKIE

Capitalists!

JESS

Rich, arrogant, men!

FRANKIE

Straight men!

VIOLET

(Looking at Michael)

Not all maybe?

FRANKIE

White people! Privilege! Imperialism! Landlords! Warmongers!

MICHAEL

The Dexytrip Dynasty.

(Beat)

In the Kingdom of Wallcorn. By poisoning the water supply they sedate us all. They use mind control. So, we imprison ourselves.

Intro to Something Inside So Strong starts.

VIOLET

So, where is your power?

JESS

We don't have any.

FRANKIE

She means: together we have power, yes?

VIOLET

No. It's both. Together and within each of us. Individually. This all my years has taught me. Let me explain how you should speak to the powerful.

VIOLET

(Singing)

The higher you build your barriers,  
The taller I become.  
The farther you take my rights away,  
The faster I will run,  
You can deny me.  
You can decide to turn your face away,  
No matter, cos there's ...

Something inside so strong,  
I know that I can make it.  
Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong,  
You thought that my pride was gone.  
Oh no, there's something inside so strong,  
Oh oh oh oh oh oh.  
Something inside so strong.

The more you refuse to hear my voice,  
The louder I will sing,  
You hide behind walls of Jericho,  
Your lies will come tumbling,  
Deny my place in time,  
You squander wealth that's mine,  
My light will shine so brightly it will blind you,  
'cause there's ...

Something inside so strong,  
I know that I can make it,  
Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong,  
You thought that my pride was gone, oh no,  
There's something inside so strong, oh oh oh oh  
oh oh,  
Something inside so strong.

Brothers and sisters,  
When they insist we're just not good enough,  
Well we know better,  
Just look 'em in the eyes and say,  
We're gonna do it anyway,  
We're gonna do it anyway,

VIOLET/JESS/FRANKIE &  
MICHAEL

There's something inside so strong,  
And I know that I can make it,  
Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong,  
You thought that my pride was gone,  
Oh no, there's something inside so strong,  
Oh oh oh oh oh oh,  
Something inside so strong.

Over the instrumental break, the following dialogue:

FRANKIE

(Speaking)

But that's what I did at work!  
And look where I ended up. With nothing!

JESS

(Speaking)

And The Vulture gets away with it. Every time. No  
female is safe. It's hopeless.

MICHAEL

(Speaking)

And there's no way I can fight my own nature, is  
there?

VIOLET

(Speaking)

It won't be easy. None of it is easy. But it is  
possible.

JESS

(Singing)

Brother and sister,  
When they insist we're just not good enough,

FRANKIE

(Singing)

Well we know better,  
Just look 'em in the eyes and say,

MICHAEL

(Singing)

We're gonna do it anyway,

MICHAEL/JESS

We're gonna do it anyway,

MICHAEL/JESS/FRANKIE

We're gonna do it anyway,

MICHAEL/JESS/FRANKIE &  
VIOLET

We're gonna do it anyway,  
Because there's ...

ALL

Something inside so strong,  
I know that I can make it.  
Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong,  
You thought that my pride was gone.  
Oh no, there's something inside so strong,  
There's something inside so strong,  
I know that I can make it.  
Though you're doing me wrong, so wrong,  
You thought that my pride was gone.  
Oh no, there's something inside so strong,  
Oh oh oh oh oh oh.  
Something inside so strong,  
Oh oh oh oh oh oh.  
Something inside so strong,  
Oh oh oh oh.  
Something inside so strong.

MICHAEL

Can I pose a question at this point?

FRANKIE

Yes, Michael?

MICHAEL

Jess. When are you supposed to be at the studio?

JESS

Shit!

Blackout.

SCENE 13

Lights up on Jess in her dressing room. Phrase from I Got The.

JESS

(To audience)

So, we legged it across town. And it's almost the moment I've waited for my whole life. The chance to show the world I can sing. Except I know I'm going to lose ...

The Floor Manager comes in.

FLOOR MANAGER

It's time, Jess.

A cross fade as a spot comes up on Gemma. The judges in position.

GEMMA

And last up tonight. Trying to claim her place in the final two ... Jess Youngblood!

Jess comes into a spotlight.

NICKY

And what are you going to sing for us tonight, then, Jess?

JESS

Tonight, Nicky, I'm going to sing that great Labi Siffre song: It Must Be Love.

MAGGIE

Is it for anyone special, darling?

JESS

Yes. They know who they are.

(Singing)

I never thought I'd miss you  
half as much as I do,  
And I never thought I'd feel this way,  
the way I feel about you.

As soon as I wake up,  
any night any day,  
I know that it's you I need  
to take the blues away.

It must be love, love, love,  
It must be love, love, love,  
Nothing more, nothing less,  
Love is the best.

How can it be that we can  
say so much without words,  
Bless you and bless me baby,  
and bless the bees and the birds.



I've got to be near you  
every night, every day,  
I couldn't be happy baby  
any other way.

It must be love, love, love,  
It must be love, love, love,  
Nothing more, nothing less,  
Love is the best.

Jess speaks over the instrumental break.

JESS

(Speaking)

I want to dedicate this song to all the people out there who know that money, fame, stardom - the rich and powerful people who judge you - are worth nothing. And if I lose tonight, it doesn't matter. What's worth something is real friends, real love.

(Singing)

As soon as I wake up  
any night any day,  
I know that it's you I need  
to take the blues away.

It must be love, love, love,  
It must be love, love, love,  
Nothing more, nothing less,  
Love is the best.

Jess takes her applause.

GEMMA

Before the vote, judges, in one sentence?

LETICIA

Lovely singing – not convinced by the outfit though, Jess.

MAGGIE

Heartfelt, passionate, truthful. Go girl!

NICKY

I'm not sure if you've done enough. Your tuning was off again. Let's see what the 'phone vote says.

JESS

(To audience)

So, after the break, the votes have been counted for the final two ...

GEMMA

And the first singer through to the sing-off is ...  
Naomi Eaton.

Naomi comes forward. She's now dressed in a glamourised schoolgirl outfit with spectacular designer spectacles.

GEMMA

And now one of our singers must go home. Is it going to be Conor ... or Jess? And our last finalist tonight is ... Jess Youngblood!

Jess comes forward.

JESS

(To audience)

So, now I've got one more song. I know the vote is fixed. So ...

(To Gemma)

I'm going to finish tonight, Gemma ... Nicky ... with my own composition. This song is called, simply, My Song.

(Singing)

This is my song,  
And no one can take it away,  
It's been so long, but now you're here, here to stay,  
And I wonder if you know what it means,  
To find your dreams come true.

This is my song,  
And no one can make it a lie,  
It's been so long since someone  
could make me cry,  
And I wonder if you know what it means  
to laugh as tears go by.

I may not always sing in tune,  
And sometimes you don't hear me,  
But you don't have to be near me,  
To know that I'm singing.

During the next verse, Jess goes into the audience and brings Frankie and Michael down onto the stage. Michael is still in his hospital gown. She sings to them.

This is my song,  
And nothing can make it die,  
It's been so long and it's stronger,  
I know why,  
And I wonder if you really, really know,  
That as long as I live I will sing my song for you.

(Speaking)

This is my friend Michael. He'll sing the next bit.

Michael sings the next verse. While he's doing it Jess holds Frankie's hands. Frankie kisses her fingers and Jess kisses her fingers too. They then kiss each other tenderly on the lips.

MICHAEL

(Singing)

I may not always sing in tune,  
And sometimes you don't hear me,  
But you don't have to be near me to know that I'm  
singing.

There's a break in the music.

JESS

(Speaking)

And this is my ... this is Frankie. I wrote this song  
for you.

(Singing)

This is my song,  
And nothing can make it die,  
It's been so long and it's stronger,  
I know why,  
And I wonder if you really, really know,  
That as long as I live I will sing my song ...  
That as long as I live I will sing my song ...  
That as long as I live I will sing my song for you.

Jess takes her applause and takes a bow with Michael and Frankie.

NICKY

Well, that's all very endearing and I hate to break  
up the love-in. But as well as breaking several  
rules of the competition, I can promise you two  
things. One is, that the public won't forgive you for  
the contempt you've shown me. Even if you're  
lucky enough to make the cruise circuit. The  
second thing is that this stunt of yours, which I  
think you created due to some extraordinary  
personal animus against me, just bumped my  
viewing figures. Which, by the way, will continue  
to rise when you, Jessica Youngblood, have been  
forgotten and crawl back to your pushy chav of a  
mother and that sewer of a council estate where  
you belong!

GEMMA

Oh. Any comment, Jess?

JESS

Yes. I want to find a way to say a big thank you.  
And I know your wonderful backstage team, Nicky,  
who you treat so well, have prepared a special  
thank you. You see, Frankie here happens to  
know your Floor Manager, Seema.

Seema, the Floor Manager, appears. She waves at everyone and makes a  
signal. The screen says: Cheering! Seema takes a bow.

JESS

Seema, did you get the special thank you film?

SEEMA  
Yes, thank you. Roll VT.

On the screen we see an edited film of Nicky in Jess' dressing room.

JESS  
I can still win the vote.

NICKY  
Oh, don't be so naïve!

JESS  
You've got masses of people counting the votes!

NICKY  
Window-dressing, my dear. I decide.

JESS  
So, I can't win.

NICKY  
You've got one last chance.

JESS  
If I give you a blowjob, you mean?

NICKY  
You said it.

GEMMA  
And ... er ... shouldn't we be cutting to a break?

SEEMA  
Oh, yes, sorry. Cut to break!

Oops! Some kind of technical hiccup!

On the screen, we get more of Nicky and Jess in the dressing room.

JESS  
I could tell the papers.

NICKY  
I'd just love that. Free publicity. Bigger viewing figures.

JESS  
People should know the truth about you.

NICKY  
Think you feel violated now? Wait 'til my lawyers get hold of you.

The screen freezes on Nicky looking evil and threatening.

NICKY  
(Off screen)  
Enough of this! This is obviously all faked!

NAOMI

What about me? Have I won?

NICKY

Oh god! No one cares about you! Or any of you!  
There's only ever been one winner of Hear My  
Voice! The only one who's voice ever counted!  
Me! Nicky Voltore! I am Nicky Voltore and no one  
can ever bring me down, you hear me! No one!  
And everyone at home knows that!

GEMMA

(Listening on an earpiece)

Actually, Nicky, I'm hearing that we've *just* gone off  
air. We were running over and so it's gone over to  
Celebrity Pudding Chase.

To an underscore of The Vulture, Nicky screams and runs off through the  
audience.

NICKY

(As he exits)

Think this finishes me? Think you've heard the  
last of me? No! You can boo as much as you like,  
but I'll be back!

They all freeze. Jess comes forward to a phrase from I Got The.

JESS

(To audience)

So that was the year when no one won Hear My  
Voice. And the future? Who knows? Me and  
Michael and Frankie try to meet up every year on  
our birthday – no matter what. And what I do  
know is: they can build their barriers higher and  
higher – but I ... we ... we will always become  
taller.

Final chorus of Something Inside So Strong/It Must Be Love.

END