

Read-Your-Own Romance
THE BIG DAY OFF

by Adam Deverell

Read-Your-Own Romance - The Big Day Off!
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Read-Your-Own Romance

Have you ever had to make a decision? Not something really important. Just a simple decision. Like, which jeans to wear out Saturday night. Or what TV show you'll watch tonight.

Insignificant?

Maybe.

But every decision you make can lead you down different paths.

Some paths are golden and syrupy.

Some are rocky and treacherous.

This series is about decisions such as these.

**Are you ready to read
and make your choices?**

1 Dream Lover

'And, ACTION!'

'I love you,' says Kyle, as he cups his hands gently around your face and draws your lips to his.

You're going to kiss Kyle Kissmore! Is there anything in the universe more beautiful, more cosmically delicious, than this?

Ever since you became a famous actor in Spunky Hunks, one of the world's most popular soaps, there has never been a dull moment. You've had glossy photographs in Teen-Zeen Magazine and an economy brand of perfume named after you. And, of course, you get to kiss heart-throbs like Kyle Kissmore.

You have such a wonderful life!

Oh Kyle!' you sigh. But before your eager lips can touch his, he suddenly grasps you by the shoulders and begins to shake you.

'Do I have to drag you out of bed?' he shouts.

Kyle, what are you doing?'

'Getting you out of bed, lazy.'

Why is Kyle treating you this way? 'But I want to kiss you,' you cry.

You open your eyes.

Instead of the smooth adoring face of Kyle, you're staring at . . . your mother.

She shakes her head and mutters, 'I don't think I can cope with much more of this.'

You lie despondently under the covers. It should have been the perfect ending to the greatest dream ever. But now the dream has ended and reality awaits. And that means school!

Worse still it's Monday morning. So it's Calculus and Science. Another day of thinking up reasons for not having done your home-work. Then on to dissect innocent little frogs. Is there anything worse than Mondays?

'Morning, ugly!' yells your brother, barging into your room.

'Get out you little centipede!' you scream diplomatically.

'What're you doing today?' he demands.

Boy, what a totally zero-head question!

Reluctantly you answer him. 'I'm going to school.'

'Why?'

He's getting dumber by the day. 'Because it's Monday and on Mondays I go to school. Weird, isn't it?'

'But it's Curriculum Day.'

Curriculum Day! C-Day is for teachers from your school, Lower Heights College, to sit in their staffrooms, complain, and dream up more tortures for innocent students.

You'd completely forgotten. It's C-Day! There's no school. THERE'S NO SCHOOL!

'I love you!' you cry, giving your shocked brother a kiss. 'THERE'S NO SCHOOL!'

You collapse back into bed feeling almost as happy as if you'd found your special shade of super-brill lipgloss on sale for half price.

You lie in bed feeling great. It's C-Day. What to do with an entire day alone? It doesn't get any better than this. Your mother and father at work, and your brother, as always, playing video games with his zero-head friends.

Right, when your family is gone, the fun begins.

Meantime, your dad's having his usual early morning panic attack. 'Has anyone seen my tie? It's disappeared off the face of the earth!'

'Are you wearing it?' your mother asks helpfully.

'Thanks dear, I'm not that stupid. I'm sure if I was wearing my tie I'd notice . . . ' his voice trails off as he looks down at his tie.

Several hectic minutes later they're ready to leave. As usual, everyone takes turns giving you advice.

'Keep the house tidy and the door locked.'

'Have a constructive day doing homework.'

'If you look in my drawers, I'll kill you.'

Today nothing can spoil your mood. 'See you all tonight,' you chirp.

Now, how to spend a glorious day alone?

What a pity your best friend Petula Silver has the measles, or together you would take C-Day apart.

You're on your own and right now you feel like doing two things, both requiring low levels of brain power and energy – sleep and TV!

If you want to stay in bed and continue your affair with fame, fortune and Kyle Kissmore, slip under the covers on

[11 Dream On](#)

OR

Today is perfect for catching up on TV so grab the remote control and turn to

[16 Switch On](#)

2 Freaky Fallout

Your bedroom cupboard looms ominously over you. You reach out to tug the door open, feeling like an explorer ready to begin a journey of awesome discovery.

But the cupboard door won't move.

You pull a little harder, and then you tug with all your might.

It's no good. The door is stuck fast.

Maybe, if you wedge your metal ruler between the cracks, you could pry it loose. You slide the ruler in and give it a good shake.

You hear the wood screech angrily as it resists. Slowly, very slowly, the door is opening. Your hand shakes nervously. What lies waiting to be found within these dark inner recesses?

You grasp the handle and with several violent jerks the door opens at last.

Clothes, school folders, shoes, sport equipment, dolls and old CDs come tumbling down like a huge wave. It dumps you onto the ground with force and fury.

You scream and flay your arms around trying to keep afloat, but it's no good. This thing is bigger than you.

Beneath the sea of debris it is dark, and you fear you may drown. After a quick bout of hysterics you settle down. You can't move your arms or legs. You can only lie still, hope and wait.

Six desperate hours pass and you have almost lost any hope of rescue.

Where are your parents when you need them? They're probably on a coffee break at work, fighting over triple-layered chocolate cookies.

Finally the door opens and you hear the welcome sound of footsteps.

'Boy, is your sister's room messy!'

It's Ronald, your brother's best friend. You desperately try to cry out, but your voice is just a muffled squeak.

Your brother is with him. 'Yeah, she's a real pig. Wow, this is really messy, even for her. Dad's gonna kill her. C'mon Ronny, let's go look at my basketball cards.'

Your longed-for rescuers hurry away down the hall.

'Get back here you little creeps,' you wheeze.

It's too late, they're gone. An entire C-Day spent under a mound of rubbish. What a waste.

Still, you've learned a valuable lesson. Some things in life are better left unopened.

End

3 Love and Kisses

'No, Dean, stop!'

Dean reluctantly pulls away. You may have ruined your chance of kissing one of the most gorgeous guys on the planet.

'Sorry dude. I drive in the fast lane, looks like you're stuck in first gear.'

'I beg your pardon?'

'You're a babe, don't get me wrong. But you're a ba-by as well. Know what I'm sayin'?'

You know what Dean is saying, and it's absolute rubbish. You're not going to put up with this, even from a Surf-God. 'Are you calling me immature just because I don't want to get with a pizza boy I hardly know?'

'Hey dude,' says Dean, 'sorry for upsetting ya. I'm out of here.'

He jumps from the sofa and makes for the door. Wow, does he have the best set of legs ever. How can you let a pair of legs like his walk out of your life?

'Dean, wait.'

'Yeah dude?'

'Um.' (Think, girl, think. You've got to make Dean see you're not a baby, but you're not one of his beach bimbos either.) 'Have you ever had a girlfriend you really liked?' You're not really sure where you're going with this. At least it stops Dean before he leaves.

He thinks this over. 'You mean really like?'

You nod your head.

'Man, that's a tough one. Um, there've been a few girls I liked a lot, but not really, really liked.'

'So you've never been in love?'

'Yeah, I'm in love right at this moment. I'm in love with my board and my jeep.'

'I meant with a girl.'

'Oh,' says Dean getting your drift, 'right, with a chick. Nope, I haven't. Weird, hey?'

Now you have him. 'Do you know why you've never been in love?'

'Cause I haven't met a supermodel yet?' he replies seriously.

'No,' you sigh. (Dean is as shallow as a rock pool when the tide's out.) 'It's because you go for looks and not the person. And you're too fast. You should get to know the girl first. No one can fall in love with somebody just because they're a great kisser.'

You expect him to say, 'Well, I could.' Instead he shakes his shaggy dog hair. 'Yeah, I see what you're sayin'. Cool idea.'

'Then you can kiss them.' You still haven't forgotten Dean's luscious lips so close to yours.

'Gnarly idea. I'm gonna try it. Thanks dude!'

You're disappointed to see him leave. Still, sorting out Dean's love life gives you a feeling of satisfaction. Maybe you could be a relationship therapist when you're older? Not as good as a surfie-chick, but worth thinking about.

End

4 The Poetry of Love

You can feel the cogs slowly grinding inside your brain. You never thought that it could be so difficult writing about happy and joyful feelings. Why is it you can't think of one good thing in your life?

There must be something!

How about –

- shopping
- shooting three-pointers in basketball
- gossiping about cute boys
- getting full marks in an Algebra test.

Oh sure, how can you possibly write a poem about Algebra?

Question five is driving me up a tree,
What on earth is the answer to $4x-8b$?

No, that's silly.

Real poetry is about love, leaves falling upon wet grass and the rising moon. The only problem is you don't care about trees or the sky. You want to write about something that interests you.

How about puppy dogs? They're so cute and cuddly, you're sure you could write a poem about puppy dogs.

We had a beautiful pup named Jip,
But the back of the sofa he loved to rip.
Also Dad's paper and his shoes,
The morning papers and a computer fuse.
Finally when he smashed our best china dish
We had to settle for a boring goldfish.

You like this poem, though it makes you sad to think about Jip being sent away to Uncle Derick's farm and replaced with a goldfish. Your dad said he'd be happier rolling in cow manure than stuck inside sleeping by your brother's feet. You can't see why. Your brother's feet would be just as smelly.

Oh, what's the use? If the most interesting thing you can write about is Jip, you must lead a boring life. Why can't you write about Hawaii in summer, or travelling down the Nile in a bark canoe?

Because you're just a schoolgirl and only grown-ups get to do anything remotely exciting. But all that's ages away, and you don't want to wait that long.

And why should you?

You can look like a sophisticated woman if you want to! In fact you're going to begin dressing and behaving like one today. Then you'll be able to write truly wonderful poetry.

There's a sale at Sunnyworth Shoppingtown. In search of a more mature wardrobe, turn to
[40 Shop Till You Drop](#)

OR

You've read that a woman's greatest weapon is her cosmetic bag. To check your mother's
artillery, turn to
[10 It's a Cover-Up](#)

5 Pedal to the Metal

'Here goes nothing,' you shout and jam down the accelerator.

Your go-kart surges towards a tight corner.

Vic slows to a crawl as he negotiates the tricky turn giving you your chance. With the engine revving like a chainsaw, your kart nips between Vic and the inside of the track.

You're going to pass him on the curve. What a fantastic manoeuvre, and against the National Champion.

You are too confident. You come out of the corner sharply. The kart spins out of control, hits the barrier at high speed and strikes a safety tyre.

You crash out of the track and soar into the air. All you can do is hold on.

You might be okay, if it wasn't for the concrete wall ahead. You strike it hard and somebody turns off the lights.

'Yes, it's a miracle she's not seriously injured. But what I'm worried about is whose car she'll be learning to drive in.'

'She can't drive my little car. It couldn't take a knock like that go-kart received.'

'Well, she certainly isn't driving mine. It took eleven years of overtime to save for that car. I'm not having her smash it into some great concrete pole.'

'It's your fault she drives like a maniac, she takes after you!'

You struggle to shake off the pile of bricks that seems to be strapped to your head. Where are you? Who are you? And who are these two loud, vulgar people arguing by your bed?

'Go away, I want to get some sleep. My head hurts,' you cry.

'Thank goodness you're okay. We were so worried,' says the woman with a nose like a toucan bird.

'Did you hit your head?' asks the man with a bad hairstyle.

'Of course I hit my head you silly baboon, what do you think this bump is? A mosquito bite?'

'Why you cheeky little . . .' says the baboon crossly.

'Dear, remember she's had a nasty accident. She's not herself.'

'Yeah, listen to what granny is saying, pops.'

'Granny!' the toucan bird screams. 'I'm not even fifty.'

'Calm down,' says the baboon. 'Remember, she's not herself.'

'Of course I'm myself, who else would I be?' you cry. What a ridiculous thing to say. Everybody knows who you are – the most famous racing driver ever who's just about to win your fifth race in a row.

If you could only get back to the race . . .

'Will you two go and check the engine's air pressure and change the oil in the car? Wet slicks would be best for the next big race.'

Now, where are the brakes and steering wheel in this bed?

End

of this story and your chance of learning to drive in your dad's car.

6 Glorious Food!

The kitchen cupboard is like a display centre of the food groups. Sorted in neat rows are apples, wholemeal pasta, muesli, health bread and free-range eggs.

Just the sort of food for a growing girl watching her figure and facial blemishes.

Then why do you have such a craving for gooey, oily hamburgers and a can of Passion-Pop?

Face it, today is the perfect chance to guts out. You're ready to whack together something high in calories and sugar, while incredibly low in nutritional value.

You have the entire day, so why not make a meal of it? But, what to make?

In cooking classes you blitzed with sweet pancakes. Your mouth waters as you imagine a stack of golden pancakes dripping with syrup and melted ice cream.

Then again pancakes means cooking and cooking means work. Slaving over a hotplate surrounded by messy bowls and leftover ingredients tends to spoil things.

Now home-delivered pizza, that's different. There's nothing like a Super Eater Beater from Big Tony's Pizza, especially with extra garlic bread and a free bottle of Passion-Pop.

You have to decide fast. Your stomach tells you to hurry up. It wants food and it wants food now.

If you feel pancakes smothered in syrup are the way to go, turn up the heat on

[46 Stack 'em Up](#)

OR

It's not often you can gorge an entire Super Eater Beater by yourself. If you want to ring Big Tony's, pick up the phone and start ordering on

[41 Extra Cheese, Please](#)

7 Junk Out!

Discarded school reports, old birthday cards and bent photographs and the like are thrown onto the floor, as you begin to sift through what amounts to the treasures of your life.

It's a sad story.

Your life has been one of third placings in swimming carnivals and the odd achievement award for grade six spelling tests. But hey, you are happy enough dog paddling in the pool of averageness.

The few kids you know who can whiz through algebra problems in less time it takes you to eat a bowl of cornflakes can't even dribble a basketball. And those who play basketball as if they play for the National Team think calculus is an old-fashioned calculator.

Maybe it's a good thing to be middle of the road.

As you hastily sort your dubious collection, you find a bag full of love notes written to you by admiring boys. You don't know why you've kept them. They're really lame. They're not even real love notes! Just things like –

*What team do you support?from Bobby &
Have you ever played Space Muncher II? It's cool! Cya, Alex*

Boys don't get much better with age. Now they just write crude jokes that make you groan. Still, a note of silly scribbling is better than no note at all. You'll just have to wait until the guys in your class grow up, which admittedly may be a long time.

On top of your drawers is just as untidy. You sweep away the tissues and sort out the CDs into their containers. You find two junk mail offers you've only glanced at before. One has a picture of a go-kart and screams at you:

**DRIVE LIKE THE WIND AT NEW CENTURY MOTORWAY!
5 FREE LAPS!!**

Your brother would love go-karting. You make a mental note not to give it to him.

The second is a 25% discount at any shop in the new Sunnyworth Shoppingtown. Great! Your babysitting money never lasts long there.

Going out for the day would be a lot better than sifting through your junk. Go-karting sounds exciting and you're a sucker for a shopping bargain.

Go-karting could be the perfect chance to start learning for your drivers test. If you want to drive like your father (fast with a lot of rude signs at the driver in the slow lane), grab the bus
on

[18 Life in the Fast Lane](#)

OR

You were born to shop, and with 25% off, your savings could buy proper cosmetics. If you decide Sunnyworth Shoppingtown is a great way to spend the day, turn to

[40 Shop Till You Drop](#)

8 Star Struck

'You only go out with Virgo chicks? Hey, what a coincidence. Guess what? I was born on September the . . . ' (What month are Virgos born? It's around August or September.) Taking a lucky stab you say, 'Um, 1st?'

'Hey, you are a Virgo Chick!' Dean says. (You sigh with relief.) 'I knew you were, I could feel the vibes.'

Dean moves closer, which immediately sends you into a spin. You've never sat so close to a Surf-God before.

He leans over and whispers in your ear, 'I love Virgos. They're so, tuned in. I met some real hot Virgos last summer. They do it for me, you know what I'm sayin?'' (You're not sure if you do.) 'And you know what I really like about Virgos?' Dean asks.

You shake your head and gulp.

His mouth is close to your ear now. 'They're the greatest kissers ever.'

'Are they?' you stammer.

Dean places a strong hand on your leg and his other arm slides snake-like across your shoulder.

'Dean, would you like another slice of pizza? There's a load left,' you say desperately.

It's silly really. When you see a cool guy at school you think how great it would to be alone with him. Now you're sitting next to a surf-god and you're scared.

Hey, you hardly know each other!

Dean kisses your earlobe and slowly lets his mouth wander across your cheek. In a few more seconds he'll have reached your lips and what then? You're out of your depth. You could stop now, but do you really want to?

It's obvious Dean isn't interested in the Super Eater Beater. If you feel you should turn his burners down, go to

[3 Love & Kisses](#)

OR

If you want to sail the raging seas of love,
cast off on

[48 Kiss & Miss](#)

9 Dean Unplugged

You gargle with peppermint mouthwash, and try to rid yourself of the terrible aftertaste from Dean's Super Eater Beater kiss.

You'll think twice before ordering pizza next time!

Dean comes back carrying a guitar. The shoulder strap is embroidered with tepees and buffaloes. 'I bought it in Nebraska at a totally cool Indian reservation. They reckoned it was blessed by the spirits,' says Dean proudly.

'That's nice,' you reply.

You wonder if you can have homework blessed? You'd love to see Mr Pirak's face when you hand him a 10/10 algebra assignment six weeks in a row.

Dean sits the guitar on his knee and strokes it affectionately. You see a gentle side of him you didn't guess was there.

'These tunes are gonna go off. You wanna rap along?' he asks.

'No, I'm not much of a singer,' you say.

Dean strums a chord.

He's wonderful. The guitar really must be blessed! From it comes a dreamy, melodic smoothness, which reminds you of caramel chocolate. Smooth notes, blissfully surrounding by a sweet cream.

'I've searched for the right girl for so many years, and now I've found her,' Dean sings in an angelic voice that gives you the shivers. 'But she don't love me, she'd rather eat a pizza from a pizza place.'

He breaks into a wistful and heartfelt instrumental break.

'Beautiful,' you sigh as Dean finishes. 'I've never heard music like that before. You could be a professional.'

'Yeah, I guess I could. Not that I want to.'

'Why not? With the truckloads of money rock stars make you could buy your own beach.'

'It'd be a drag. I'd be hassled everywhere I went. And all those chicks! They'd be swarming around me even more than they do now!' (And if your head got any bigger it'd burst into a million pieces, you think.) 'I'm happy surfin', travellin' and deliverin' pizzas.'

'Don't you want to be famous?' you gasp.

'Nah, I don't. I just wanna spend my life shootin' the breeze and playin' tunes to chicks like you.'

Dean certainly has a way with words.

You could get to really like him, even if he does kiss like an elephant. He begins a fresh tune and you lean back on the couch and let yourself drift along the sweet-flowing river of love.

End

10 It's a Cover-Up

You rummage through your mother's cosmetics bag which is filled with bottles of dried up nail gloss and mascara.

When was the last time she bought some new gear – the late seventies?!

The solitary bottle of perfume looks suspiciously like last year's Christmas present from your father. When your mother opened it she said sarcastically, 'Thank you dear. And such a bargain too.' (Your dad had left the price on the bottle.)

What a disappointment. You may not have a load of great cosmetics, but you have more than your mother!

How can you become a succulent beauty, whose smile brings cameras to life, without the right make-up? And it could have been so much fun modelling in front of the mirror.

Still, you can't blame your mother. What more can you expect from a middle-aged woman who wears last century fashions?

Tanya Markworthy listens to your moaning with sympathy. There's nothing better than having a good complain on the phone. And since your best friend Petula is sick, a phone call to Tanya is the next best thing.

'And I know with the right shade of lipgloss and eye shadow I could look really great,' you say to Tanya.

'You'd look abso-terrific in pastels,' Tanya replies.

'And if I dyed my hair . . .'

'I think your hair is wonderful as it is, it's really natural.'

'And if I had better clothes and became more confident . . .'

'The guys like you already. You're really popular.'

You've always wondered why you like Tanya. Now you know. She sucks up to you and says all the right things.

'Tanya, I just feel like a little kid. I want to be a sophisticated, sexy woman.'

'Hey, I know. Why don't you come around to my place and I'll give you a make over. I've got the Teen-Zeen Make-Me-Up special and I bet my sister would let me use her curling gear.'

'That'd be great Tan, but the olds will be home soon. Besides, I should be getting my homework done.'

'Come on, it'll be cool. Forget about homework, it's C-Day. You're supposed to be having fun!'

Who spends C-Day at home? Only no-zones and brains. You don't want to be either. If you go to Tanya's house, turn to

[45 Café Raven](#)

OR

Tanya is famous for her Frankenstein beauty experiments. She once made Elisa Murlock's eyebrows turn white. If you feel homework is safer, turn to

[29 Crammer Jammer](#)

11 Dream On

Hugging Sunny, the fluffy bunny, you slide back into the misty world of dreams.

Kyle Kissmore materialises before your bewitched eyes wearing a suit as white as frosted marzipan. He sips a cocktail and stares at the tropical paradise of palm trees and rolling surf beyond your luxury home.

You've just come back from the Starwell Casino where you've lost millions on the roulette wheel and you don't even care – there's plenty more where that came from. How will you spend the rest of the night? You shiver in anticipation.

As you approach Dream Boy you see someone at his side. Strange, you could have sworn he was by himself. Then you see his companion. It's Petula Silver!

She looks like a 50s movie star in a fabulous low-cut red cocktail dress, diamond necklace and frizzy perm. She cuddles up to your beloved Kyle.

'Honey bungle, when's the Beastie coming back?' she purrs.

'Don't remind me,' Kyle snarls. 'I curse the day I met her on Spunky Hunks!'

'At least you have me.' Petula rubs her hands up and down Kyle's back.

How could Kyle and Petula act like this? What a pair of backstabbing ferrets! Kyle loves you! You know he does.

'Until I can get rid of her, we'll just have to keep meeting in secret,' Kyle croons as he embraces Petula under the Caribbean moon.

'You traitor, Petula!' you want to cry, but the two lovers have swept away into the balmy night. You break down in tears.

'Stop crying, I have a question for you.'

You look up. Mr Pirak, your Algebra teacher, stands in front of you.

'What is $4x+3x-3y$?' he asks.

What is he talking about? Everything is so confusing, so awful. You feel mascara streaming down your face.

'Answer me this. If ten apples represent 'y' and eight oranges 'x', then what do five bananas equal?'

You want to escape from this crazy world, but Mr Pirak is waiting for your answer. 'I, um, I don't know. I talk during classes,' you stammer. 'I don't know the answer. I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER!'

You wake up sweaty and hotter than the sealed section of Teen-Zeen. You always did get bad dreams when you sleep in.

You need to wash away these terrible dreams.

After a refreshing shower, you decide to do something constructive with your day.

If you feel cleaning your bedroom is in the interest of public health to clean it up right now, grab the dustbuster and turn to

[21 Clean Up Your Act](#)

OR

Just thinking about housework has made you ravishingly hungry. If you feel cleaning out the kitchen cupboards would be more fun, get chomping on

[6 Glorious Food!](#)

12 My parents are SO not cool!

You eagerly dial the number. The Georgie-Louise Dareby operator answers.

'Hello caller, this is the Georgie-Louise Dareby Show. You are on next. Please don't give your name. Feel free to sob into the phone anytime. Thank you.'

Wow! You're going to be heard right around the country on the most popular talk show on TV.

'Hello caller, go ahead please.'

It's Georgie-Louise! You can see the television from your phone. Georgie-Louise is on the television right in front of you.

'Hello Georgie-Louise. My parents are SO not cool!' you say.

Wooah, it's really weird hearing your voice on TV. You sound like you have a cold.

'Give us an example caller,' asks Georgie-Louise.

You've waited a long time for this.

'For starters my dad wears daggy old tracksuit pants and then tucks his T-shirt in! And then he hitches his pants up to his stomach!! He laughs like a hyena at his own jokes, and when my friends are over he always complains about our music. And he once knocked over the school bike shed when he drove me to school. That's not all, he . . .'

Georgie-Louise cuts you off. 'We only have a few minutes caller. What about your mother?'

'My mother's even worse.' (Boy, humiliating your parents in public is so much fun!)

'She makes tuna casserole twice a week even though my brother and I think it tastes like sick. She drives a complete bomb, which doesn't even have a CD player in it. When I'm picked up at school I hide in the library because I'm too embarrassed to be seen near it, and . . .'

'Whooh there, a little slower, please.'

You take a deep breath. 'Sorry, my parents get me so worked up.'

Georgie-Louise asks, 'Do any of our audience members want to respond to this caller with troubled parents?'

Georgie-Louise gives the microphone to a fat woman in heavy cosmetics and a big balloon dress.

'I think this girl is selfish and bratty. She deserves a good kick in the behind.'

The audience cheers.

'Yeah, you should go on a crash diet,' you respond.

The woman looks most upset and a few of the guys in the audience hoot.

'Audience, are the parents to blame here?' asks Georgie-Louise.

'Madam, what do you think?'

She gives the microphone to a woman wearing tacky brown slacks.

'I happen to know the caller's parents, Georgie-Louise. In my opinion their daughter should be a more grateful.' She looks straight into the camera menacingly. 'Isn't that right caller?'

Your Auntie Mel hands back the microphone to a standing ovation.

You can't believe she's in the Georgie-Louise Dareby studio audience. Of all the luck! She's bound to tell your parents what happened.

You hang up the phone and turn off the TV.

'It's just a dream, just a dream,' you tell yourself.

This could only happen in a nightmare.

Two months later as another spoonful of slimy, sickening tuna casserole slides slowly down your throat you know for certain that the nightmare is real. Very real.

End

13 Rising Star

Dean slides to the corner of the sofa. The bubble of passion that you were so happily floating on suddenly pops. Maybe you should have told him you were Virgo.

'I knew we weren't compatible, I could feel the negative vibes,' says Dean.

You feel really angry that you're about to lose such a cute boy to a load of superstitious rubbish.

You're not going to let Dean slip from your grasp that easily. You surprise him by grabbing the leather friendship bands on his wrist.

'Wait Dean. I think it's stupid you'll only go out with Virgo girls. I bet there's lots of great girls (like you) out there that weren't born in August or September.'

'You have to be compatible or else you bum out,' says Dean.

'So, if I was born in February, we could never get along?'

'Hey, I don't make the rules, dude.'

'I think that's crazy, and you're crazy too.'

You can't believe you just called Dean crazy. Goodbye to summer afternoons lazing together on the beach.

'Man, you're really fired up. Are you a Taurus?'

'Yes I'm fired up, and no I'm not a Taurus!'

'Okay, what type of guy turns you on then?' There's an edge to Dean's voice. It seems he doesn't like being told off.

'I like a guy who is honest, fun and caring.'

'Oh yeah?' Dean says with a sneer. 'And I suppose a guy five years older than you who burns around in a convertible and looks like one of those jerks from Spunky Hunks doesn't interest you?'

'Looks aren't everything,' you lie.

'Garbage. Girls always say that, but I get all the chicks I want. And do you know why? It's because I look great, never mind my personality. Chicks put up with anything if a guy is cute.'

'So I guess that means you've got a lousy personality.'

'I drink, I swear, I use chicks and I'm interested in my board more than anything else. Dig?'

Dean puts his head into his hands. He doesn't look like a Surf-God, more like a lost kid at the supermarket. 'I'm a creep and chicks still dig me.'

You squirm uncomfortably. You're as guilty as any girl for liking a guy because his muscular body and easy smile makes you feel funny inside.

What if Dean really is a creep? Would you still be willing to run away with him to a tropical island?

Probably.

'Can't you change?'

'Why?' sighs Dean. 'It gets the chicks. Why change?'

'Maybe the girls you get aren't the type you want.'

'What type of chick do I want?'

'Oh, I don't know,' you say as if you're about to pluck any old girl out of the air. 'A girl who lives with her boring parents, goes to Lower Heights College and eats too much pizza?'

Dean looks up and laughs. He places his hands on your shoulders. 'Sounds cool. I might just give it a whirl.'

Dean, the Surf-God, and you talk on for hours. In a glorious afternoon you unearth the real guy beneath the blue eyes, gleaming muscles and bleached hair.

A Glorious Ending

14 Guy Magnet

'We're not interested,' you tell the man coolly.

'You wouldn't stand a chance anyway,' he sneers, and walks off.

'Creep!' Tanya yells after him.

'Ignore him. He was just trying to pick us up,' you say.

'Was he?' says Tanya excitedly.

It's just possible that Tanya's beauty ideas aren't as far off the planet as you first thought. For the next hour or so, you and Tanya ward off the attentions of half a dozen different guys.

As you grow more confident you dismiss them with a wave of your hand or a roll of your painted eyes.

'I thought all angels were in heaven until I met you two,' says a guy with wax caked through his hair.

You both burst out laughing as the guy slinks away from your table.

'This is great fun!' you say, flicking your hair and laughing (you've noticed that this catches a guy's eye).

You've both decided you had better get home before your parents do, when Tanya suddenly gasps.

'Look over there!' she says. 'It's that actor from Shellfish Beach.'

You look to a table in the corner of the café. A guy in a tight black sweat shirt and floppish brown hair slumps in his chair next to a friend. It is him!

'Go and talk to him,' Tanya says. 'He's famous!'

Feeling overly confident after all the attention you've been getting, you walk over to his table.

'Hi,' you purr, 'do you mind if I sit down?'

'Sure, if you have a permission slip from your daddy.'

His friend sniggers.

'I . . . I really like your character in Shellfish Beach,' you stammer, put off.

'Little girls shouldn't be watching big people's TV,' his friend says. 'Wouldn't Rudy the Rascally Rat be more your style?'

They both think this is hilarious as you turn and storm back to Tanya.

'Those two jerks! How dare they speak to me like that,' you say.

It's only on the way back home you get it – they weren't the only two dopes in Café Raven.

End

15 Puppy Love

Even though all the cages in Kitty Katz's Pet Corner are clean and filled with freshly shredded paper, you can't help feeling sorry for the animals. It's like being locked up in a prison cell. The rabbits and guinea pigs look happy enough, but the cats and dogs seem to be crying out, 'Take me home, please!'

A large sign says –

**WE DON'T WANT YOUR GERMS!
PLEASE KEEP YOUR PAWS TO YOURSELF.**

But you can't help stroking each animal.

Ever since Jip, your over-enthusiastic dog, went to live on your uncle's farm you've always wanted a pet that would chase plastic balls up and down the hallway and sleep at the end of your bed.

Not a selfish, vicious animal like your cat Twinkles. But a friendly, sweet puppy or kitten.

Of course you'd feed and clean it for the first month, after which the job would be officially handed over to your mother.

Passing by the Persian kittens and pug pups you see a Labrador pen. Four golden-haired and overly playful pups go crazy as you approach.

What catches your eye, however, is a sad, little pup buried in the paper at the back of the pen. It rests its delicate head on its paws and looks at you with dark, wet eyes.

You always feel sorry for the odd one out. Girls like Veronica Smitz, who eats her lunch alone, or the runty pig that the farmer never wants.

Why can't this pup be playing with its brothers and sisters? What makes it a loner? You fall in love with the gloomy little thing, and you make up your mind right there in the pet store that you're going to buy it and give it a loving home.

'Can I help you?' asks a sales assistant.

'Yes. How much are the Labrador pups?'

'Hmm, which one were you after?'

You point out the sad pup that pricks up its ears.

'Oh, him. He's the runt of the litter. He's a depressing little sod, isn't he?'

'I'd love to have him.'

'Really?' says the sales assistant. 'Okay, I'll make you a deal.'

'He's wicked!' says your brother, rubbing Jip-Jip's stomach.

'I'll say he is. You've only had him five hours and already he's chewed the sofa and taken a whiz on the carpet,' growls your father.

'Do you know how much it costs to own a dog?' asks your worrywart mother.

'I'm sure Dad can easily work a few more hours at the office,' you say cheerfully.

'Can I now!' splutters your father.

Jip-Jip barks happily. It feels great to have your own pup. And you know that once your father cleans up the stain and your mother stitches the torn sofa, they'll fall in love with Jip-Jip too.

End

16 Switch On

Your dad doesn't like spending money. He'd wear the same underpants for a week if it meant saving a few bucks. So it was a complete surprise when he arrived home with a Top Tone Surround Sound TV, complete with the most complicated control unit ever.

'I got a little excited,' your dad had said sheepishly, as the family crowded around the sleek, futuristic box.

It's given you many a happy evening watching Spunky Hunks and television's most popular soap, Shellfish Beach.

You turn on the TV to check out what's on.

The Drop the Flab Workout Show sounds strenuous. Still, you've been worried about your figure ever since Auntie Mel said you have your mother's legs. Your mother has cellulite thighs that resemble plucked chicken wings! Maybe a half-hour of aerobics will halt the expansion of your lower regions.

You'll give Rudy the Rascally Rat a miss.

What about The Georgie-Louise Dareby Show? It's a tacky talkshow with topics like "My boyfriend loves his motorbike more than me!". Still, today's topic "Children tell – My parents are so unreal!" sounds unusually riveting.

Now you can relate to that!

But you're still undecided.

There's always your priceless video collection of Spunky Hunks. Last week's episode, Move over Romeo, here's Kyle, was drama at its best.

Such an important decision. You don't want to waste an hour of your valuable holiday.

If you decide The Drop The Flab Workout Show is worth the pain, slip on a sweatband and turn to [26 Pain Before Gain](#)

OR

If you feel Georgie-Louise Dareby may tell all, turn to [30 Are My Parents for Real?](#)

OR

You can never get enough of Spunky Hunks. If you grab the videotape and a bag of popcorn, turn to [35 True Love](#)

17 Sweet as Sugar

'Hi Ambrose.'

'Hi. What're you doing?'

'Oh nothing much. I was just watching Georgie-Louise.'

'Yeah so was I. Man, I felt like phoning up. My parents are heaps worse than Justine's. Like, they're totally, duh!'

'Mine too! They're, like, totally bogus.'

You both have one thing in common, at least.

There's an awkward silence so you decide to get off the subject of parents. 'How's that big zit on your chin, Ambrose?'

'Oh, I squeezed it on Saturday. Man, wasn't it huge! Hey, since we've got the day off maybe we could celebrate the popping of my pimple by going to the movies?'

You can't believe it! An older boy asking you out? Wait till Petula hears about this. She'll look like a cooking apple, she'll be so envious. You try not to sound too eager.

'I'd love to go Ambrose. What do you want to see?'

'I want to see Creeping Flesh of the Zombie Cannibals, but it's up to you.'

Oh no, you think, that sounds gross. Horror movies are okay for sleepover parties, but not for first dates.

You'd much prefer to watch the new romance-comedy, Red Roses Spell Love. But Ambrose might hate it. Teen-Zeen said that couples who watch a bad movie on their first date have an 85% chance of not going out together again.

You can make yourself like Zombie Cannibals, even if it does mean wasting your pocket money on the ticket.

'Um. We might as well see . . . '

If you want to sacrifice two hours of your time to watch lots of blood, gore and bad acting for the sake of Ambrose, go to Creeping Flesh of the Zombie Cannibals

[23 Popcorn & Zombies](#)

OR

Ambrose did say it's up to you. If you say, 'I heard Red Roses Spell Love is great. Shall we see that?', turn to [31 Love Wins](#)

18 Life in the Fast Lane

'Careful around the corners! Watch out for the barricade!' was Ernie's advice.

But you zip past him and take the hairpin curve sharply, narrowly missing the tyre stack and tilting the go-kart on two wheels. Ernie, owner of New Century Motorway, shuts his eyes.

You drive up to him after another lap and stop with a screech. 'How was that Ernie?'

Ernie wipes his brow. 'Girl, you are the craziest driver.'

You place your yellow helmet on your lap. 'And the best.'

It's true. What a surprise to find yourself a natural driver. Acceleration and braking took a few laps to get used to, but by the fifth you were driving like a top-notch professional.

'I hope you're not going to wear my karts out,' Ernie says.

You can tell he's impressed.

'She's nothing special.' A guy in blue overalls and a grease-streaked face walks up to Ernie. 'I've been watching her. She can drive fast, so what? Put her up against other drivers and she'll go to pieces. All the girls do.'

Ernie doesn't agree. 'She's a mighty fine driver, Vic.'

You glare at Vic. 'Hey, you think because I'm a girl I can't drive? Well, pal, I could beat you!'

Vic thinks this is a great joke. He laughs so much you can see the heavy metal in his top teeth. 'You think so? If I didn't have to fix those karts I might just take a few minutes to whip your butt.' He walks back to his garage.

'Chicken!' you yell.

Vic stops.

'Don't call him that!' Ernie hisses. 'He hates it.'

Vic looks at you with angry eyes. 'You're on.'

'Vic is the national champion, he'll cream you,' says Ernie.

But you don't scare easily.

You drive your kart to the starting line. Vic joins you. He is wearing a black helmet with sparkling lightning bolts and driving his own kart called Destroyer.

What a poser.

Ernie holds a flag. 'This is a five-lap race. Ready?'

Ready to brown your pants, but you've got a point to prove now.

'Go!'

The flag drops and Vic streaks away leaving you far behind. Maybe you were a bit hasty in challenging him.

You increase your revs and try to catch up the lost ground.

Vic is confident. He deliberately slows down and lets you catch up.

You take the advantage and whiz past.

Your go-kart vibrates madly as you accelerate down the straight.

Three laps flash by and you are still leading. But Vic isn't national champion for nothing. He overtakes you on the hairpin curve, forcing you to brake suddenly.

Angry at your lack of concentration, you push your go-kart to the limit and eventually catch him along the straight.

There's only half a lap to go. You know you must make your move soon. The straight turns into a very sharp corner. Vic may slow down on the curve, giving you a chance to pass. Otherwise you'll have to tail him patiently until you reach the home straight, surprising him just before the finish line.

Vic enters the corner. Your hand twitches on the accelerator, the other on the brake.

You're driving fast, and overtaking on a corner at high speed is risky. If you enter the corner full throttle, turn to

[5 Pedal to the Metal](#)

OR

Patience can pay off. If you decide to tail Vic until the home straight and then hopefully pass him at the finish line, turn to

[20 The Chequered Flag](#)

19 Rock On!

Dean slips a CD into your dad's expensive stereo system. 'Heard The Curry Powders' new CD I Think I'm Brain-dead?' he asks. (You haven't.) 'I love moshing to it.'

You know what moshing is. It's where kids break their necks by jumping onto each other in front of an ear-splitting band. You're not sure if moshing in your parent's living room is such a good idea.

'Dean, wouldn't it be better if we sit on the sofa and finish off the pizza?' you ask.

Dean isn't listening. He seems to be in a trance as the music slowly begins with acoustic guitar and a faint drum beat.

You've decided not to invite pizza delivery boys into your home again.

Bass guitar joins the drums, then the guitar. You feel nervous, as if a thunderstorm is about to erupt. Suddenly a lead guitar breaks in and – BANG! – the stereo explodes with the fury of a tornado. You are thrown backwards by the force of guitar feedback and booming drums.

Dean gives an excited "Yeah!" and leaps off the sofa. He jerks around the room, looking like Frankenstein.

'Yeah!' he yells as he sings along to lyrics that sound something like "I wanna ram my head into a goldfish bowl . . ."

'Settle down,' you yell, 'you'll break something!'

That's exactly what Dean does. He crashes into a table, sending your mother's expensive porcelain ballet statuette to its doom.

'You're wrecking the house!' you scream.

'C'mon, sing!' Dean screams. "I wanna rock'n roll and nobody's gonna stop me . . ."

This is getting serious. The Curry Powders' music has possessed Dean.

He jumps onto the couch before madly leaping off like Superman onto the coffee table, then gets up and does it again. You've got to do something before the place is a total wreck.

Inspired by his lyrics, you pick up the bowl with your goldfish in it. This should cool him down. As Dean rushes past you go to throw it over him.

Unfortunately he runs hard into the bowl and falls to the ground knocked unconscious.

You've killed him, you're sure of it. 'Dean, Dean, are you okay?' you cry.

He moans pitifully.

You help the groggy mosher onto your bed before cleaning up the remains of the living room.

You now have several very difficult things to explain to your parents why –

- Your mother's vase is in pieces
- The left stereo speaker has blown up
- You need to replace the goldfish
- A good-looking boy is lying on your bed

It's going to be a long night!

End

20 The Chequered Flag

You follow Vic as he negotiates the tight curve. Trying to pass Destroyer would have been impossible around such a sharp corner.

You take it slowly, allowing Vic to keep a length in front. The corner widens onto the long home straight. You bring the kart to the outside of the track, opening a path for you to pass Vic and win the race.

You accelerate, but so does he. You push your kart on towards the finish line where Ernie and another man are watching. You both zoom past, Vic winning by a kart length.

'Great race kid. It was close, real close,' says Vic after you stop the kart. He seems impressed. You shake his hand disappointedly. It would have been great to beat him.

Ernie comes over and slaps you on the back. 'Great race. Hey, I'd like you to meet somebody.' A man in an elegant navy suit and red racing cap shakes your hand. 'This is Mr Thomas Tortelli. He's president of the national junior team.'

'Pleased to meet you,' he says. 'I just came over to see my old racing partner Ernie here and I caught your race with Vic. I'd like to offer you a chance to join our national junior go-karting team.'

Is he for real? This is the first time you've driven a go-kart and he wants you to join his team? 'I'm not really experienced,' you tell him.

'We'll train you,' Mr Tortelli says.

'And you can use New Century Motorway free of charge,' Ernie chimes in.

'Gee, it sounds cool. I'm not sure my parents will let me though.'

'Let's have a talk with them then, shall we?' says Mr Tortelli, grinning like an infomercial.

'As parents of a junior go-carter, you'd receive free tickets to major racing events,' Mr Tortelli tells your mother and father.

'Is that right?' asks your dad eagerly.

'Of course, you'll be watching from the VIP tents.'

'Mmm, free champagne and lobster,' says your mother.

Mr Tortelli certainly is persuasive. At first your parents were totally against it, but he's soon won them over.

'Obviously the little champ takes after me behind the wheel,' beams your father.

'I want to be a racing driver too,' cries your young brother.

You're going to be a go-karting champion. You can see it all now –

- trophies
- prize money
- a helmet with your name in gold
- and cute mechanics at the racetrack!

In ten years, who knows, the first female champion driver in history?

Go for it!

End

21 Clean Up Your Act

During a dreary family barbecue your young cousin, Tane, crawled from the living room into your bedroom. It took four hours of searching underneath old underwear, school books and crumpled magazines to find him.

During this time your Auntie Mel suffered an emotional breakdown and your dad was ready to call Search & Rescue. That was Christmas two years ago, and now your bedroom looks worse than ever!

You begin to pick your clothes up from the floor. Underneath a bunch of tops you find the denim shirt you haven't seen in six months.

Underneath the shirt are the sick pink trainers which you were positive you left at Petula's. And underneath them you find a coffee-stained note that says –

Jason and I aren't an item, okay? When you caught us at the dance we weren't doing anything. Jase had a cashew nut caught in his braces and I was trying to pick it out. You might have thought it might have been something more because I had to look closely for the nut. But it wasn't. I know you think Jase is hot, so he's yours. Please write back, because if you don't I suppose we aren't friends any more.

That dance was at the Lower Heights College last year and now Heather has moved to Glenlake College. She must have put that letter in your folder at school one day.

It's definitely her handwriting. You could kick yourself because you've never spoken to Jason or Heather since.

The lost letter, and the destroyed friendships it caused, has made you even more determined to clean your pigsty of a room. But cleaning your room is like a 50% off sale at Denim-Heaven, where do you start?

Piles of clothing and school books need to be put away. This is a problem since your cupboard and drawers are as full as your brother at an all-you-can-eat restaurant, and they'll need vaccinating first.

It's going to be a dirty and dangerous job. Perhaps you should invest in a gas mask and safety overalls?

If you want to clean up your clothes first, the cupboard will have to be opened. Gulp!

Turn cautiously to
[2 Freaky Fallout](#)

OR

All the magazines and school work on the floor looks like a paper factory's recycling department. If you feel your drawers should be sorted first,

turn to
[7 Junk Out!](#)

You never did like the word “share”. It is something everybody says but hardly anyone means. Why pretend you’re generous and kind when you’re not?

‘I’ll be okay by myself,’ you say.

‘Man, your stomach must be bottomless.’

‘Well, I’m about to find out. Goodbye.’ You close the door on one of the cutest guys who’s ever rung your doorbell, and you don’t even care.

The Super Eater Beater smells delicious as you set it down on the coffee table. There’s nothing like fresh, hot pizza. The aroma of ham, pineapple and melted cheese makes you want to dive headfirst into the box.

You open the box and breath deeply. Your body is strengthened by its magical, healing properties. Surely it is the food of the gods.

Soon you’ve shoved in three slices. You relish the delicious, oily, calorie-loaded morsels. A slurp of bubbling Passion-Pop washes them down wonderfully.

But gluttony is a very powerful and demanding master. ‘More! More! I want more,’ it commands.

You attack a fourth and fifth slice.

You should really stop now. The herbs are beginning to make your mouth numb and the cheese is starting to clog your throat.

A few more glasses of Passion-Pop fixes that. The sixth and seventh slices vanish. You can’t look at the pizza any more. Just a whiff of ham and olives makes you feel sick, but like an ice-breaker steaming through a frozen wasteland, you grimly struggle on.

‘Just one more. Do it. Do it for me,’ Gluttony coaxes.

You wish Gluttony would shut its mouth. But there’s only one slice left. Just one.

Your shaking hand reaches for the cold, sickly- looking thing. Your stomach feels like a concrete mixer. ‘Must eat, must eat,’ you groan.

The pizza never reaches your mouth. It falls from your shaking hands to the ground, where your cat eagerly munches the last few bites.

Two hours later you are rolling across the floor with the worst stomach ache in the history of the world. It feels like your insides are on fire, burning away as you cry out. Before you reach the bathroom the pizza makes an exit all over the carpet.

Funny, it still looks much the same!

Never again will you put food before cute guys.

And never ever again will you touch a Super Eater Beater.

End

'Nick! Are you down there?'

Cassandra steps into the dark cellar and walks slowly down the creaky stairs. The light bulb hanging from a twisted thread sways gently from side to side. Shadows dance around the cellar like ghosts.

'I hope that light doesn't black out when I reach the bottom of the stairs. I don't have a torch,' Cassandra whispers to herself.

You sit with your hands over your eyes and your bottom firmly clenched. How can Cassandra be so stupid? She must know the bug-eyed Zombie is lurking just below the stairs. Why would anyone go down there alone?

Ambrose seems to be enjoying himself. He looks as if he wants Cassandra to become the Zombie's twelfth victim.

You are a bit worried about Ambrose. At the bus stop he seemed so nice and sensitive, yet here he is laughing and clapping like a child as each victim is disposed of by the gruesome Zombie. Is it normal for someone to enjoy this kind of thing so much?

Cassandra continues down the stairs. 'Nick are you down there?'

No answer. Good, you think, she can get back to the house.

Instead she decides to rummage through the boxes and garbage in the cellar. 'No you fool!' you groan. 'Get out of there.' But Cassandra doesn't hear you.

It's no surprise to you whatsoever when the lightbulb blows.

'Nick! Nick, stop kidding around.'

You see a huge shadow move from underneath the stairs. The psycho Zombie! You close your eyes as it plods towards the unsuspecting Cassandra. Next to you Ambrose bounces on his chair with excitement as Cassandra's days as a blonde-haired bimbo look like they are about to come to a gruesome end.

The Zombie reaches out and places a clawed, boiled hand on the pretty girl's shoulder. Cassandra turns around with a smile. 'Nick, don't try and give me a fright, I know it's you.'

She lets out a shrill scream as the Zombie clasps her head and lifts it off as if he was picking a plumb from a tree. Cassandra keeps screaming even though her head is three feet above her body.

Ambrose cracks up. 'Use it as a bowling ball!' he shouts and laughs grotesquely.

You've had enough. This is the sickest thing you've seen since your mother made tuna casserole last week. 'Ambrose, I'm going.'

He looks surprised. 'Why?'

'Because this is garbage. If I wanted to feed my brain with junk I'd stick a Super Eater Beater pizza deal in my ear.'

You take your jumper and leave. Ambrose hesitates and you think he might follow you out. He doesn't.

What a waste of C-Day, and it promised so much. You feel let down as you catch the bus back home. It seems not all creepy monsters are on the cinema screen. Some are named Ambrose and go to Lower Heights College.

End

24 Try Before You Buy

'Try a little of this. It's just heavenly.'

You let Patricia dab some Black Orchid on your wrist. The perfume reminds you of a dreamy summer days and soft silk.

'I love it,' you say, smelling the fragrance again.

'Isn't it wicked? I wear it all the time.'

'Is it expensive?'

'Yeah, it costs mega bucks.'

'How can you afford it?'

Patricia gives you a sly wink, which you're not sure how to take.

You had been looking enviously at the neat array of exotic perfumes at Spenbucks & Sons when you met Patricia. She is in your class at school, but you don't talk to her much. She is very pretty, with skin like smooth milk chocolate, and spends most of her time with the senior boys.

You and your friends feel out of it with her. She's always wearing the very best perfume, expensive rings, necklaces and seems years older than the rest of the class.

You feel privileged that such an elegant girl would bother to share her cosmetic secrets with you.

'Of course Black Orchid is great when you're out clubbing, but for school, men's aftershave gives you a really natural smell. I like Adventure.'

She picks up a bottle. You can't help but notice the hefty price tag.

'In fact I could do with some more.' She waits until the sales assistant is helping another customer and quickly drops the bottle into her handbag. She gives you a smug smile. 'See you later.'

Patricia is a shoplifter! Now you know why she has a permanent supply of expensive perfumes. And look how easy it was. Like picking apples from a tree. Even you could do it.

You eye the next bottle of Black Orchid on the counter. There's no way you can afford it. Anyway, Spenbucks & Sons is so big they wouldn't miss one bottle of perfume.

'Can I help you?' asks an assistant.

'No, just stea . . . I mean just looking,' you choke. She gives you a strange look and moves to the other side of the counter.

Now is your chance. The perfume would easily fit into your coat pocket, and you'd be out of the store in half a minute. It'd be so easy.

If you plan to take the bottle of Black Orchid, and drop it into your pocket, turn softly to

[34 Crammed Pockets](#)

OR

Shoplifting never appealed to you before. Even though you're really, really tempted this time, if you simply can't go through with it, turn to

[28 Keep Walking](#)

25 Born to Ride

You don't need anyone telling you how to ride. How difficult can it be? You just grip the reins tightly, say 'Giddy-up horsie' and hang on. And Fiona thinks you need a costly training session. Ha!

'I'll be okay on the trail ride, thank you. Now where is my horse?'

You follow Fiona with your head held high.

Fiona takes you to a dumpy little chestnut named Cutie Pie.

What a let down!

Cutie Pie looks as harmless as a wingless fly. 'I'm not riding a child's pony. Where are the real horses?' you ask.

You want a brave and dashing beast, not a rocking horse!

Fiona suggests Cutie Pie because she is gentle with inexperienced riders. You tell Fiona to save it for those dummies, meanwhile you want a powerful steed.

Fiona mutters something about girls who are too big for their riding boots and takes you to another stable.

There it is, The Black Stallion itself! A magnificent horse, snorting and prancing about its stable like a caged panther. 'I want him,' you say.

'Sorry. Thunder is only ridden by professionals. He's very difficult to manage.'

You give Fiona a steely glare. 'I – want – him.'

Fiona reluctantly leads Thunder from his stable. Now this is a real horse.

'Follow me please,' Fiona says as she mounts her horse and walks it across the paddock.

You nudge Thunder forward. It's a long way down to the ground from the saddle.

Fiona takes it easy. It is almost as if she doesn't trust your riding ability. Thunder strains at his bit. He wants to break free from this sleepy walk and you don't blame him.

'This is boring. When do we gallop?' you ask Fiona.

'Not today,' she replies.

We'll see about that, you think. You suddenly kick Thunder in the stomach and whip the reins. 'Come on Thunder, let's ride!' you yell.

Thunder snorts deeply and takes off like a rocket.

You have no control. You jerk about like a string puppet as Thunder tears across the paddock. You clench the reins as he gallops even faster.

'Stop! Please stop!' you cry as Thunder heads straight for a high fence.

But he isn't going to stop.

Thunder launches himself into the air, jumping higher, higher, and with a thud lands on the other side.

You lose your grip and plunge forward, desperately trying to grasp onto his mane. He breaks your grip and you fall to the ground where you lie motionless on the wet grass.

'Should I go and get Cutie Pie?' asks Fiona, looking down from her horse.

You nod your head with a moan. 'She matches my riding gear better.'

End

26 Pain Before Gain

Wearing a pair of bright pink Lyra shorts and a loose top you clear the lounge room and get ready to pound your excess flab into the plush carpet. Maybe aerobics will give you the cover-girl body you've always wanted.

You turn on the TV.

The Drop the Flab Workout Show explodes with pulsating music. Trish, the trim and taunt host, is giving you a big smile as she demands to see 'Pain! Strain! Gain!'

Trish encourages you to "start pumping" with some simple hamstring stretches. You sit on the floor desperately trying to touch your toes. You manage to almost reach your shinbone before your hamstrings feel like they're elastic, about to snap.

Trish saves you with a series of stomach stretches followed by side stretches, a painful neck roll, bicycle kicks and star jumps.

At last Trish stops.

How can people do this for fun? Those exercises were really tough but at least they can't get any tougher.

Trish thinks they can. 'Feeling loose yet? Those few exercises are a great way to warm-up. Hang on though, after these messages, be ready for some real Pain! Strain! and Gain!'

An ad for a chocolate bar comes on as you collapse to the floor and try to control your breathing. It comes in small, sharp wheezes like your mother's car trying to start in the cold mornings.

Can you really be this unfit?

Yes.

And do you care?

No.

What unhealthy girls like you need is pizza. If you're going down in a gasping, sickly ball of blubber, Big Tony's Pizza is the only place in town. What's wrong with a little heartburn anyway?

As you grab the phone and begin to dial, you hesitate.

What's the secret of success? Sticking with the job. Right? Never give up. Right?

Aerobics is tough work, but when you're lean and slender, and guys are drooling over you, that's when you'll be glad you didn't give up.

But the Drop the Flab Workout Show is such a tough way to achieve a flawless figure. While a deal from Big Tony's is much more tempting.

If you feel staying with aerobics now is better than joining Crash Dieters Anonymous later,
grit your teeth and turn to

[36 Flab Busters](#)

OR

If you want to eat a pizza defiantly in front of Trish and her friends, ring Big Tony's Pizza,
and ask for

[41 Extra Cheese, Please](#)

27 Wipe Out

'Yeah, a Super Eater Beater might be too much. Want to help me eat it, if you're not too busy?'

'What? Waste my time with a pimply high school kid? Eat my shorts!'

At least that's what you thought he would say. Instead he says, 'Yeah sure. My name's Dean.'

Isn't life full of pleasant surprises?

Surf-God parks his bottom on your couch.

You haven't sat next to a real hunk before, and you find yourself tongue-tied. Here's the perfect guy and you don't know what to say. What do surf-heads talk about? Surfboards? The rad waves at Waikiki Beach this time of year?

Dean saves you. He talks about his bummer of a part-time job delivering pizzas for his uncle. The reef that cut his stomach open in Hawaii. The shark that bit his old board in two.

You hang on every word. Dean is the most interesting guy you have ever met. You munch on your pizza and gaze wondrously at him and sigh as he flips his bleached blonde hair away from his face. Would there be any chance of running away to become a Surfie-Chick? You'll ask your dad when he comes home.

'And in Fiji I was given this totally excellent necklace for surviving the most tubular wipe-out ever,' Dean is saying. He stops talking and shows you his necklace. It's a small crystal ball tied to what looks like an old shoelace.

'It's beautiful,' you say, leaning forward for a better look. It looks cheap and tacky, but you've learnt compliments go a long way with guys.

'It belonged to a Fijian fisherman. My star sign is Pisces, so they sorta' go together. I only go out with Virgo chicks. What star sign are you?'

'Oh, um . . .'

You're not Virgo. If you tell him the truth this wave of love will come crashing down on you. But it does seem silly choosing a girlfriend just because of the month she was born in. And Pisces are supposed to be egotistical and dull!

Do you say, 'Yeah, I'm Virgo and I only go out with Pisces. They're so romantic and creative,' in the hope of capturing Dean, the Surf-God?

If so turn to

[8 Star Struck](#)

OR

You can say 'I think astrology is stupid, but you can still stay and finish the pizza, even if we aren't compatible.' This way you can gaze at Dean for just a few minutes on

[13 Rising Star](#)

28 Keep Walking

How could you even think of stealing? When someone stole your purse from your schoolbag last year you wanted to strangle them. And yet you were thinking of doing the same thing!

You walk away from the counter feeling relieved, but also a bit confused. Should you tell somebody about Patricia? If she keeps stealing she'll only end up in trouble. Maybe you could have a talk to your coordinator, Mrs Berkowitz. She's very understanding and would be more than willing to help Patricia. Anybody who steals as much as Patricia must have some real problems.

'You look worried.'

You notice the well-groomed lady talking to you. She has a stiff, wavy hairstyle and a pink two-piece suit.

'Sorry?'

'I was just saying you look worried. Is it your pimples?'

'My what?'

'Let me introduce myself. My name is Margaret and I'm the store rep for La Gunk skin products. I was wondering if you would like a free skin balance restoration cleansing make-over?'

'A what?'

'It's a series of creams which rid your face of the oily build-up that can turn into pimples.'

You cover the emerging red zit on your chin with your hand.

'Pimples are troublesome pests, but with new La Gunk Cleansing Gel and Moisture Lotion you'll have the face you've always wanted.' She motions you to a stool near the La Gunk product display.

Before you know it, she has you sitting on the stool and has begun to apply an icky, cold porridge-like substance to your face.

'Do you have a boyfriend?' the sales assistant asks. You shake your head. 'I'm not surprised with all these pimples. Now, we wipe off the gel, we apply the cream.' This she does. 'You know my daughter had a face like a dot-to-dot puzzle. Then she used La Gunk products and a month later she won the Teen-Zeen Cover Girl Contest.'

'Did she really?' you say in awe.

'Yes. And after a few weeks using La Gunk products you will look good enough to be this year's Cover Girl.'

She must know you are paranoid about pimples. You'd do anything to get rid of the pesky little monsters.

'There, finished. And completely free. Although of course we do have kits for half price this week.'

Half price and be rid of acne forever? What a deal! Without thinking you open your purse. Margaret smiles brightly.

Patricia isn't the only scammer in Spenbucks & Sons!

End

29 Crammer Jammer

'Sorry Tanya. I haven't finished my history project. It's due on Friday so I had better get started.'

'Cool,' says Tanya. 'I might go and catch the last few minutes of The Bitchy and the Beautiful. See you tomorrow. Good luck with the project.'

You hang up. You didn't want to tell Tanya you'd feel safer paddling in a pool of sharks than letting her have free reign with your face. Sharks would probably do less damage. Besides, you really should get going on the project.

The only thing you've done so far is half of the front cover. Now it's time for the hard work, which you're not looking forward to.

It will mean a trip to the library, though kids like Veronica Smitz would have ravaged the history project titles long ago.

You sigh. Homework was created to bring immense pain and suffering. Whoever invented it should be given an atomic-sized wedgy.

Half an hour passes and all you do is finish the illustrations on your project's front cover.

There's something powerful, like an invisible presence, which is preventing you from doing your project. It whispers to you, 'Don't start the project, it's too hard. Leave it until Thursday night.'

'No,' you tell it. 'I have to start now. I'll enjoy doing it once I get going.'

'You won't,' it whispers, 'it's too tough. Watch TV instead. Where will a history project get you in life? Nowhere.'

You can't bring yourself to watch TV. It would make you feel guilty. After making a chain out of paper clips and swivelling around six times in your study chair in one go (probably a world record) you eventually pick up a pen.

But the project remains untouched. Instead you sit at your desk and do nothing. In the next two hours you –

- Fill in the rest of the the project cover.
- Sharpen all your pencils – twice.
- Re-cover your project folder.

Before you know it your mother walks in the door.

'Hi love.' She dumps shopping on the kitchen table. 'I've had a hectic day. How about you?'

'Oh, just doing my project.'

'I'm proud of you.' Your mother gives you a big hug. 'And to show you just how proud I'm going to shout you to your choice of takeaway and a movie. Does Dreadful Deceit sound okay? I know you like thrillers.'

You nod. 'Sounds great.'

Who said history projects would get you nowhere?

End

30 Are Your Parents for Real?

'Are your parents for real?' asks host Georgie-Louise Dareby.

'No way!' you yell with feeling.

'Twelve-year-old Justine says the same about her father.' Georgie-Louise turns to Justine who's sitting on stage next to her dad. 'Justine, you claim your father is not for real Why?'

'Well, once he came into my classroom to give my lunch to me,' says Justine rolling her eyes.

Now that is bad. You'd rather walk into class in your pyjamas than have your dad handing you cheese sandwiches in the middle of geography.

'He always tries to be funny in front of my friends. They laugh to be polite even though they think his jokes are, like, tragic.'

You cheer Justine, though she won't be getting an allowance for the next few months.

Trevor runs his fingers through his thinning hair. He looks as if he'd like a private word with his daughter.

The camera turns to Georgie-Louise. 'Is Justine's father for real, or is she suffering puberty blues? Let's have some of your calls.' She gives the number.

It would be good to ring up and support Justine, and you'd be heard right across the country. Your parents shouldn't get away with their terrible fashion sense and awful musical tastes! The world must know what you have to put up with.

You reach for the phone just as it rings. Annoyed at losing the chance to ring Georgie-Louise you snap 'Yeah?' at the caller.

'Hi, it's Ambrose here, Ambrose Vanderloft.'

You nearly drop the phone. Cute, blonde-haired Ambrose Vanderloft! You've talked to him at the bus stop, though you never thought he'd be interested enough to phone you.

'Yes?' you squeak, your voice almost failing you.

'I just called to say hi.'

The phone call of a lifetime, but you still want to ring Georgie-Louise! If you talk to Ambrose – gorgeous as he is – you'd have no chance to tell the country how unreal your parents are.

Ambrose is like a chocolate bar, sweet and tempting. If you decide to forget about humiliating your parents on national TV, turn to

[17 Sweet as Sugar](#)

OR

Sure Ambrose is cute, but what an opportunity this is to moan about your parents and have the whole country hear it. If you cry 'Oh no, my chocolate muffins are burning!' and hang up,

you can phone Georgie-Louise on
[12 My Parents are SO Not Cool!](#)

31 Love Wins

What an ending! Red Roses Spell Love is the best romance since Somebody Like You, Loves Somebody Like Me. You're happy you convinced Ambrose to see it.

'That was okay,' says Ambrose as the credits roll.

'It was brilliant!' you laugh. 'Don't you think Tyronne Nicholson is the greatest actor ever? And the ending made me want to cry.'

Ambrose slinks down into his seat. 'Don't do it here, please.'

You punch his arm playfully. 'I'm going to bawl really loud, so loud that boogies come out my nose.'

Ambrose thinks this a great joke. 'You're pretty cool. I'm glad I asked you out.'

You smile at him. 'You're pretty cool too, Ambrose.'

What a date. A great movie, a terrific-looking guy and extra large popcorn and chocolate ice cream. What more could a girl want?

Ambrose leans over to you. Most of the audience has left, but the cinema is still shrouded in darkness. 'You know what part of the movie I really liked?' he whispers.

'What?' you whisper back. You can feel his warm breath on your neck. You begin to feel all hot and sweaty. Maybe you shouldn't have worn your mohair jumper.

'I liked it when Tyronne kissed Tia on top the Empire State Building, and when the Japanese tourists took photos they just kept on kissing.' Ambrose moves even closer.

'I liked the bit when Tia threw the baseball and knocked out Tyronne's front tooth,' you say, stalling for time.

Ambrose closes his eyes and opens his mouth. He wants to kiss you right here in the cinema. He looks quite eager, so it's your move.

He is cute, but his breath smells of popcorn. But it's no good resisting, your mind seems to have gone into automatic. You nervously move towards Ambrose, reaching out and placing your hand gently on his shoulder. He pecks you hesitantly on your upper lip, then finds his balance and explores your lips with his. You move closer still as Ambrose cups your head in his hands.

The kiss lasts a long time, a time in which the cinema disappears and you are in another land far away. A land of sweet smelling roses and golden fields and galloping mares and exotic birds.

When at last Ambrose leans back in his seat you are in love. It was the greatest kiss on earth – even if he did accidentally bite your lip.

'Want to go out?' Ambrose asks.

'I'd like that,' you say, taking his warm hands in yours.

You and Ambrose last two months. At school he's more interested in football. When his best friend tells Petula to tell you Ambrose wants to break up, you're only a little upset. Anyway, Todd Jackson has begun to sit next to you in Algebra, and Todd has the greatest smile . . .

End

32 Model Material

It is three months later. Spring brings with it warm mornings and glorious sunsets. You have now all but forgotten about your modelling fiasco. It seems like a distant nightmare.

You had felt totally stupid standing in front of the camera wearing overalls and work boots.

The photographer, Jake, kept saying lame things like, “The camera loves you baby” and “Work with me, baby”.

He never did explain why you had to hold drills and electric sanders in the photographs.

At least Tania had enjoyed it. She told the entire class about the Famous Photographer. But you still don’t believe he took the photographs of Claudia Schiffer that made her famous. Plus, you didn’t have the heart to tell Tania she posed like a chimpanzee with stomach cramps.

Your father is reading Bill’s Hardwarehouse spring magazine. All men love reading them. They pretended to study the prices of saws and hammers, but they secretly stare at the cute models. Each page has a girl in overalls holding a nail gun or shining spade. “Lookers”, your father calls them.

He turns the page and his eyes widen like a bullfrog’s. He looks at the model holding a ladder, then at you, and then at the model again. ‘Uncanny,’ he mutters.

‘Give me a look,’ you say, snatching the magazine. What you see makes you choke on your cornflakes. It is YOU on page six. It’s the photographs of you taken with Tanya. YOU are in Bill’s magazine!

‘She has the same nose as you,’ says your father.

Your brother, chomping on a banana, stares at the photograph. ‘Doesn’t look anything like her. That girl is much better looking.’

‘Yeah, even with plastic surgery I’d still be ugly,’ you laugh feebly.

There is no way you are going to admit to your family that the girl with the painted-on cosmetics and frizzy hair holding the ladder is you.

But what about school? All the boys in your class cut Bill’s photographs out and glue them in their diaries. They’ll find out for sure. You’ll be laughed out of school!

Don’t panic, you tell yourself. With a face covered in cosmetics and that ridiculous hairstyle nobody can guess it’s you.

As you rush out the door to school, you overhear your father say, ‘And she even has the same birthmark on her right leg! Very strange.’

You see Tanya at school with a Bill’s magazine in her hand. Good, you think. Tanya’s just as mad and embarrassed as I am.

But Tanya is wearing a giant smile. ‘Isn’t it great!’ she screams. ‘We’re models! I’ve shown EVERYONE, even Principal MacDonald. And Brett Williams loves your picture so much he’s stuck it on the notice-board.’

You’re going to become the most ridiculed schoolgirl in the history of the world! The thought sends you into a daze. All you can do is turn to Tanya and say, ‘Bill sure has great prices on ladders, doesn’t he?’

End

33 Cutie Pie

You swallow your pride and tell Fiona you're an absolute beginner.

Fiona commends you on your honesty. 'Too many kids pretend they're experts and end up with their face in horse manure,' she says.

Fiona takes you to the training ring.

The training ring has a sawdust floor, which softens the blow if you take a tumble. Hopefully you won't need to test it out.

Fiona leads in a chestnut pony. 'This is Cutie Pie,' she says.

You admit you dreamt of riding a mighty stallion, but there's something charming about your little pony.

'First,' explains Fiona, 'a horse has a very good memory. If you treat it badly, or if you ride it incorrectly early on, a horse will remember and cause trouble later. So always treat a horse with respect and love.'

Fiona brings you across to the pony's side. 'We're going to learn to mount,' she says.

How hard is it to jump on a horse? you think.

After bouncing up and down like a pogo stick for what seems like forever, Fiona teaches you how to keep your balance and grasp the saddle as you spring off your left foot.

This is much harder than it looks.

Eventually you are sitting in the saddle, but not before confirming the softness of the sawdust several times.

'Don't slouch,' says Fiona.

You sit up straight.

'Knees in.'

You stick your knees in.

'You're slouching again.'

Phew! There's more to remember for this than for an end of term science test.

In the next twenty minutes you –

- Mount and dismount numerous times
- Learn how to hold the reins
- Understand how to steer and make the pony obey all your commands.

And you haven't ridden Cutie Pie a step yet!

At last Fiona says you are ready to start walking.

'Remember to try and keep still when you are riding. Wriggling about is uncomfortable for the horse.'

You stop squirming and sit still.

'When you start trotting, try to rise in time with the pony.'

'Up, down, up, down.'

'Keep the ball of your foot on the stirrups.'

You give Cutie Pie a slight nudge and off you go, trotting around the ring.
It isn't easy keeping rhythm with the little guy. You keep lowering yourself onto the saddle when she is raising her back, banging your backside on the hard leather.
You just begin to get the hang of it when the lesson is over.
'You'll be ready to canter soon,' says Fiona.
'I'll be back after school tomorrow for my next lesson,' you promise.
You stand up all the way home on the bus feeling tired and sore, but very happy.
What a terrific C-Day!
The only sour note is your dad's refusal that night to buy you a pony, paddock, stable and riding outfit for your birthday. You're not worried, because like your trotting and cantering, you'll work on it.

End

34 Crammed Pockets

You pretend to read the bottle's glossy label. How can they charge so much for a little vial of lousy liquid? Patricia isn't a thief. Spenbucks & Sons are the real thieves.

Besides, if perfume companies want to sell to girls with a minuscule allowance, what do they expect?

You certainly can't afford to buy their perfume.

The assistant is punching in numbers at the cash register and has her back to you. You ease the perfume down towards your coat, and very carefully place it in your pocket.

Feeling both excited and scared, you've just become a shoplifter.

Quickly moving away from the large counter, you make for the exit. You don't want to spend more time in Spenbucks than you have to. What happens if the bottle of Black Orchid suddenly falls from your pocket or someone notices the bulge?

The exit looms nearer. Once you're outside you'll be safe.

Shoplifting is scary. This is definitely going to be a one-off experience.

The glass doors part and you step out into the welcoming fresh air. Sweat trickles down your face and you feel hot in your bulky coat. Your legs are like a bowl of custard. You've got to get home.

'Excuse me, Miss.'

A man wearing a blue suit and a name tag, which ominously says "Security", looks down at you with a stern expression.

'Would you like to come with me to the manager's office?' he says.

'No,' you reply lamely.

'We can phone the police instead.'

With the mention of the word "police" you start to whimper. Now you know you're in real trouble.

'Why? What have I done?' you ask path-etically, stalling for time and waiting for this bad dream to end.

'I have a video you may be interested in watching,' the security man says.

You can bet your allowance it's not the latest Kyle Kissmore episode.

The security man leads you right through the store.

All the shoppers stop and stare, knowing another sneaky kid is about to get what she deserves.

Tears of humiliation flow and you keep repeating to yourself. 'This isn't happening, this isn't happening . . .'

You want to rewind time back to the counter. If you were given just one more chance . . .

Instead the security man leads you up an escalator to the second floor.

An elderly man and lady in front look down at you in shock.

It's your grandparents! They live in Sunny-brook Happy Meadows Retirement Village opposite Sunnyworth Shoppingtown, and they shop here all the time.

'Hi Gran, hi Pop,' you say weakly.

'Darling, what have you done?' asks your Grandma.

'I'm afraid she is the star of our latest security video,' says the security guard.

What will Gran and Pop think of you now?

They have always called you their 'angel'. Someone who helps with the rose garden and hoovers their unit. How will you be able to look them in the face again?

Pop is comforting a shocked Gran.

In a few minutes your mother and father will arrive. Lessons have to be learned, and this is one you're about to learn the hard way.

End

35 True Love

'You're paranoid Kyle. There's nothing between Gregg and me.'
'Don't lie to me Tonya. I saw a pair of Marty Mouse pyjamas in Gregg's bathroom this morning. They're yours.'
Kyle hesitantly asks, 'Did you and Gregg spend the night together?'
Tonya bursts into tears. 'Yes, we did!'
Kyle lets Tonya go.

How could Tonya do this to poor Kyle? He's been dating her for two episodes and this is how she treats a serious relationship!

Kyle stares at the moon. 'Do you love him?'
'Yes. No. Oh, I don't know. I'm so confused.'

This is awful. Tonya doesn't love Gregg! She only did it to make Kyle jealous after Veronica tried to seduce Kyle in the sauna.

He takes a small box from his pocket.
You hold your breath.

'If it's Gregg you love, then you won't want this.' He shows Tonya a beautiful diamond engagement ring. She gasps as he hurls it into the swimming pool and storms off towards his apartment.

'Kyle!' calls Tonya. 'Kyle! I don't care about Gregg. It's you I love. I want to marry you.'
Kyle turns to face Tonya, rips off his polo shirt and then dives into the pool. He retrieves the ring and soon has it on Tonya's shaking finger.

You feel your eyes water with emotion as the couple kiss passionately. This begins what should be a short and torrid marriage if previous relationships on Spunky Hunks are anything to go by.

Phew! What an episode! It has everything –

- Scandal
- Gossip
- Cute guys and a
- Dreamy ending.

You'll be watching that one a sixth time.

And Kyle, what an actor! Every word he spoke, every tear he spilt, every close-up camera shot of his golden-treacle chest gave you the shivers.

You're in love with him, and no matter how many Spunky Hunks re-runs you watch, you can't get enough of him. Over the past year you've written countless love letters to his publicity department and how you treasure those photocopied replies.

Unfortunately the question-and-answer articles in Teen-Zeen or the Spunky Hunks website has been the only way to get closer to the love of your life. Staring into those blue eyes in Teen-Zeen may help satisfy your passion.

Petula told you the latest Kyle Kissmore article in Teen-Zeen is pretty hot. To discover what Kyle looks for in a girl, flip to [42 Right Up There](#)

OR

Clink on www.spunkyhunks.com and swoon as you look into Kyle's deep, shimmering eyes @ [47 net/spunkyhunks.love](http://47.net/spunkyhunks.love)

36 Flab Busters

You put the phone down. The pizza can wait. There's plenty of time to eat and put on weight once you're married.

The Drop the Flab Workout Show bursts back onto the screen. Trish stands with her hands on her hips. 'Okay fitness freaks, ready for some serious hard work?'

'Yes!' her companions shout.

'No,' you groan.

'Then let's get funky. Down on all fours, and lift the right leg up, bring it down . . . '

You feel pretty silly.

'No resting! Now touching your toes.

'One, two – feel those leg muscles tighten – three, four . . . '

The pain!

Oh, the awful I-may-never-walk-again pain. You need rest, please Trish, REST.

'Now arching your back, keep those arms high, and lean back, now forward, feel those nasty knots loosening?'

You feel something, and it's not knots loosening. It's a sharp crack, like a piece of wood breaking in two, in the lower regions of your back. You find yourself bending over like a mad-scientist's hunchbacked assistant, and with horror find you can't stand straight up again.

'Help, help,' you gasp stumbling towards the sofa. It feels like someone has used your back for a dartboard.

You don't want to walk around at belly-button level for the rest of your life. Plus you have the inter-school basketball final next week.

'I'll get you for this Trish, I'll weigh you down with dumbbells and throw you into a tank filled with killer jellyfish,' you moan.

Trish smiles. 'Wow, don't you feel great?'

You feel close to death. Whoever said crash diets are a dangerous way to lose weight was right, but they don't warn how exercise can cripple you. Before each Drop the Flab Workout episode they should screen the warning "These exercises are potentially lethal".

Two hours rest slows the throbbing in your back from a THROB, THROB, THROB-ING to a welcome throb, throb, throb-ing, but your legs feel like they're filled with custard.

You can't even reach the phone. You're stuck on the sofa for the rest of the day, which you put to good use watching the soaps and talk shows.

At least the day's not a total waste.

End

End Note:

With the help of a sturdy plastic back brace you score ten points and help Lower Heights College to a finals win over Glenlake College.

37 Rhyming Time

The ball of paper flies across the room, bounces off the rim of the bin and onto the floor.

Thirteen other scrunched up pages lie next to the bin and you still haven't written more than two lines.

How can you put your heart into a sorrowful, serious poem when you're feeling great?

After all, it is C-Day.

No Principal Macdonald ready to pounce on latecomers and bite their heads off. No Brett Williams sticking pencil shaving down the back of your dress.

How can you expect to write bleak poetry while feeling so good?

You decide to log on to your school's very own chatroom and see if Petula is on-line so you can gossip with her.

She isn't, but Tanya is.

>> Hey, it's Tan. Wazzup?

If Petula Silver is your best friend, Tanya comes in a close second. You always hang around Tanya when you and Petula are having a fight (usually over boys or borrowed clothes). She's as funny and bubbly as Passion-Pop.

>> Heya Tan. I was writing some poetry.

>> Since when did u like writing poetry?

>> I do it all the time. It's fun as.

You hate to lie, but you love appearing more sophisticated than you actually are.

>> Hey, can I check it out?

>> Na Tan, can't let u. I don't even let Petula.

>> Now we're talking bout Petula, did ya hear what Melanie said to Tuan Mu bout her?

>> Nop, wat?

Like an eager bloodhound you can sense gossip in the air.

>> She says Petula plays b'ball like a total loser and the only reason she's on the team is u r captain!

>> Dats a load of garbage! Petula is a giant and a cool rebounder. Wat would Mel no? She couldn't shoot a basket if she had a chance!

>> Mel rekons u didn't chewz her coz u lent her a friendship band last year and she lost it down the drain pipe in cooking.

>> Mel is, like, a total loser. Eye didn't pic her coz she can't play.

>> Dat's not wat she's saying. Now Mel is telling every1 u r on wif Brett Williams.

>> That idiot? I wooldn't get wif him if he were the co-star of Spunky Hunks!

>> She's ownlee trying to get u bac.

>> Mel is, like, lame as.

For another fifteen minutes you have a wonderful gossip session about Melanie.
From there you move on to the boys of your class, Mr Pirak, the Mathematics teacher.

And then to the new girl on Spunky Hunks who's after Kyle.

>> O chance. Her eyes are too close 2gether.

Two hours later you at last drop off-line. Who needs dark poetry to relieve tension?
Gossiping on the net is just as much fun.

End

38 Express Yourself

Sometimes you feel like you are a bubbling bottle of Passion-Pop. You have so many feelings churning around inside of you. Love for Kyle Kissmore and Spunky Hunks. Anxiety about school.

You need to have your cap unscrewed and all the fizz and froth released before you explode.

Everyone is full of love or hate or frustration that needs to be let out.

That's where poetry comes in.

Poetry isn't just lines of rhyming words that are hard to understand. It's a way for people everywhere to express those emotions and feel better because of it.

Today is a great chance to spend an afternoon writing poetry. You may even send a verse or two to Kyle.

You pick up your dad's gold fountain pen and a flowery note pad.

What type of poem do you feel like writing?

A happy, joyful poem that celebrates all the good things in life, like –

- C-Days
- Teen-Zeen specials
- the dew on a spring morning
- easy to use cosmetic removers.

Or maybe a dark, depressing poem about –

- finals
- early mornings
- a lousy spending allowance
- greenhouse gases
- big zits on the end of your nose.

If you're all happy and fluffy inside and want to share your joy with the world, turn to

[4 The Poetry of Love](#)

OR

Your cat, Twinkles, is slinking around the house looking cranky (probably because no one has bothered to feed him again).

That's exactly how you feel. If you want to dedicate a poem to painful experience, sharpen a pencil and turn to

[37 Rhyming Time](#)

39 Escalator to Heaven

You've only taken one step into the Denim-Heaven store when a sales assistant swoops down on you.

'Can I help you – is there anything you want to try on – oh you'd look stunning in our new cropped sweaters – gosh I love your hair, it's so natural,' she says in one amazing breath.

You back away defensively.

'We've got some great tights that would suit your wonderful legs – you really do a great job looking after yourself – I bet you'd look abso-terrific in our patterned skirts.'

Talk about Attack of the Sucky Sales Assistant!

'How do you like purple – we have so many wonderful garments in purple – I'm sure you'd look great in a purple leather miniskirt.'

'No! I'm just looking!' you say.

'Oh,' she says, her smile falling. 'How wonderful. Another customer just looking.'

You breath a sigh of relief. You felt her head might explode if she said any more. Now with her gone you can browse in peace.

The tartan pants look pretty cool. A few years ago nobody would be seen dead in tartan, but Teen-Zeen says they are going to be BIG this season.

Being the latest buy the price tag is steep. Still, there's no harm in trying a pair on.

The Chilly Sardine jacket looks like it could do serious damage down at any surf beach. It would definitely be warm, and look better than your old green coat.

If you want to flaunt yourself in front of the mirror in the tartan pants, turn to

[44 Check This Out](#)

OR

Even if you don't feel like turning over your hard-saved allowance, you can have fun modelling the Chilly Sardine jacket on

[43 Hanging Out](#)

40 Shop Till You Drop

Sunnyworth Shoppingtown shines radiantly, welcoming you.

It's like a modern Greek temple. Each corner of the building is supported by fancy pillars, two lions guard the entrance and a brilliant fountain spouts foaming blue water in the middle of the food court. Wow!

The giant glass doors open to you with a happy "woosh". A man dressed in a green suit and name badge gives you a cheesy smile and says, 'Have a nice day shopping at Sunnyworth.'

Oh yes, Sunnyworth isn't just a giant shopping mall, it's a fun park. No wonder you and your friends love it.

What will you check out first? Your most frequent hang-outs are the cosmetics and perfume counter at the giant department store Spenbucks & Sons, and Denim-Heaven, which has all the latest fashions.

Brenda Davidson, your class shop-a-holic, told you about the wonderful new pet store on level three. Everyone loves to pat cute puppy dogs and play with kittens.

Spenbucks & Sons often tempts its customers with samples of the latest perfumes. You can have a make-over for free, on

[24 Try Before You Buy](#)

OR

You're looking for a pair of jeans, and you've heard Denim-Heaven has a sale on. If you have an eye for a bargain, turn to

[39 Escalator to Heaven](#)

OR

You just love cuddly animals. If you want to check out Kitty Katz's Pet Corner, turn to

[15 Puppy Love](#)

41 Extra Cheese, Please

An entire Super Eater Beater! You can just see the delicious cheese oozing as you delicately pick out the anchovies. You hurriedly phone the number.

'Yeah, Big Tony's Pizza. C'n I help ya?' asks a voice in between unhealthy puffing. It must be Big Tony.

'Hello, I'd like a Super Eater Beater please.'

'You want a bottle of Passion-Pop with that?'

'Ahh, yes, please.'

'That'll be the special price, hon. Be around soon.'

'Thanks Big Tony.'

'My name's not Big Tony, that's a sorta gimmick. My name's Mario.'

'Oh, sorry, Big Mario.'

Fifteen minutes later your door bell rings. Timidly you open the door expecting to come face-to-face with a huge man in a Big Tony's T-shirt.

'You ordered a Super Eater Beater?'

You connect with the delivery guy's eyes.

Meeting Kyle Kissmore in Hollywood was fantastic, but it was just a dream. This isn't a dream. This is very, very real.

Standing on your front step is the guy who lives next door to your Auntie Mel. You continue to stare. You haven't seen him this close-up before. His face is perfect. Wavy blonde hair washes over his suntanned face, and his muscular body bulges beneath the tight T-shirt. A true surf-head. No, more like a Surf-God.

'You ordered pizza?' Surf-God asks again.

'Yes,' you stammer.

'Dude,' he asks, 'what's with the Super Eater Beater/ You having a party?'

'What? Oh no, this is just for me.'

'You're going to eat an entire one by yourself? No way! Share it round, or you'll finish with one mean gut-ache.'

Hmm, one giant pizza, garlic bread and a bottle of Passion-Pop. Maybe you did overestimate your appetite a little. But no one's around to share it with . . . except Surf-God.

You have a crazy idea. Ask Surf-God in to share your Super Eater Beater. This means being forward with a guy you've worshipped from afar, but never spoken to before. Scary!

Maybe it's not worth the risk. Why should you share your Super Eater Beater anyway? You paid for it! If you ignore the Surf-God's advice, turn to

[22 Dive In](#)

OR

Who dares wins! If you casually say, 'Yeah it might be a little too much.' And then add, 'Want to help me with it?' turn boldly to

[27 Wipe Out](#)

42 Right Up There

Teen-Zeen is SO informative. In just one page you learn that Kyle Kissmore is allergic to cat hair, watermelon and 100% cotton shirts.

His first movie was called Revenge of the Mutant Crocodiles. He played a crocodile, which explains why you never noticed him. And he uses plastic lips when kissing girls on Spunky Hunks.

You feel you know the real Kyle after re-reading the article. He's not just a beautiful hunk, he has complex feelings, emotions and fears like any other person.

'Oh Kyle,' you sigh, reluctantly turning the page.

Teen-Zeen is sure to have another remarkably similar article on Kyle next issue. Until then you'll just have to make do with the old cut and torn Teen-Zeens you keep under your bed.

It's such a valuable magazine. Where else could you get hundreds of photographs to cover your school diary and the many vital beauty and shopping tips?

The Fantastic Fashions and Make-Me-Up sections are essential reading for the girl who wants to keep up with trends that seem to change more often than Kyle changes hairstyles.

You flick to the Flirty Fashions pages. The young and attractive models all wear the latest gear which sets off a spark of envy.

You could look just as beautiful if you had a closet full of gear like that!

An afternoon of furious shopping at Sunnyworth Shoppingtown is all it would take.

The Make-Me-Up section has young models looking ten years older with the help of expensive lipgloss, eye shadow and mascara.

You could look ten years older wearing those cosmetics.

You throw the magazine down.

You're tired of longing to look like a Teen-Zeen model. Today you are going to be a Teen-Zeen model!

But what makes an ordinary girl into a ravishing, in-vogue, Fashion Queen?

Is it clothes or cosmetics?

If you feel clothes make the woman, grab your purse and catch the bus to Sunnyworth Shoppingtown, on

[40 Shop Till You Drop](#)

OR

Maybe your mother's cosmetics are the way to build that new image. So get out the mascara on

[10 It's a Cover-Up](#)

43 Hanging Out

The Chilly Sardine jacket is so warm. The fleecy lining feels like you're cuddling up to a woolly lamb. But you're not sure about the patterns. The green and purple clash. Sure, they are supposed to. But can you live with it? Anyway, the hefty price tag puts it way out of your league.

It's not fair. If only your parents would become part of the real world. You can't make them see that your measly allowance only goes as far as a Passion-Pop and a pack of Better Bobble Gum. You need a big big rise. And that's as unlikely as meeting Kyle Kissmore at the bus stop! So the jacket is OUT.

'Hey, sick jacket!'

'That looks totally rad on you.'

Marty and Duck, the two coolest kids in your year, rock up.

You give them a big smile. 'Hi guys,' you say cheerfully.

These two don't often give you much of their time. They're usually chasing the good-looking chicks or busy smoking behind the gym.

Marty, dressed in a beanie and rad jacket, looks you over. 'I never knew you were such a major babe.'

You blush. It has to be the jacket. Your dad always said clothes don't make the person. Your dad was wrong. Forgetting about the clashing patterns and heavy price tag you immediately buy the jacket. Even with the 25% off coupon, a half a year's allowance vanishes.

'Let's go hang with the homies,' Duck says to you.

'Okay, sounds good,' you say, secretly thrilled you've got the chance to become part of the rebel crowd.

A group of trendy kids are lazing about the seats in the food court when you arrive. You see Cool-A, Wozza and Shelly.

Cool-A and Wozza are both currently suspended from your school for painting the principal's car fluorescent yellow. Your mother would have a heart attack if she knew you were hanging around with kids like these. This makes it even more exciting.

'What's happening, dude?' asks Cool-A.

'Nothing much. I just bought a new jacket,' you say.

'You mean you paid for it?' asks Wozza.

'Yeah.'

Wozza shakes his shaven head.

'She's not a criminal like you, Wozza,' laughs Shelly.

'It's a totally sick jacket man. Chilly Sardine,' says Marty.

'I racked a Chilly Sardine cap last week,' says Wozza. 'I like fish.'

It's a strange two hours you spend talking with the gang. They seem to be only interested in way-out parties and music.

They lounge around the tables drinking Passion-Pop, swearing and complaining to each other. You start to grow restless, wondering how to escape.

Eventually a security guard asks the group to move along. Everyone gets up slowly and departs.

'Do you spend all day like this?' you ask Shelly.

'Yeah, except when we're at school, which isn't often,' she replies.

'Er, great,' you say.

You must admit that being rebellious and cool isn't quite as exciting as you thought.
It makes caravan vacations with your family seem exciting!

End

44 Check This Out

You model in front of the mirror. The tartan pants looks great with the red jumper you're wearing. It's certainly different from the usual surf gear everyone else wears. You're sick of following the crowd. It's about time you expressed your individuality.

The change room curtains are flung back. 'They look perfect. Tartan really matches your jumper.'

The sales assistant isn't ready to take "no" for an answer. 'How do they fit?'

You finally get a word in. 'They do look good, but they're a little loose around the waist, and the . . . '

You don't even get to finish your sentence before the sales assistant adjusts the waistline of the pants. She pulls them up, giving you a most unwelcome wedgy.

'No need for adjusting – you'll fill out – they'll shrink in the wash – you can wear a belt.'

Her shrill, rapid voice makes your head spin. You feel a strange urge to buy the flares just to shut her up. This must be how Denim-Heaven makes so much money.

'Have you seen our berets? – they'll look exquisite with your pants – and how about a pair of our new denim socks? – do you want me to wrap the pants for you?'

'No, I'm just looking, I'M JUST LOOKING!' you scream, tearing the pants off. You change as fast as you can and grab your purse and run out of the store.

Like one of your brother's bad smells the sales assistant keeps following you. 'I'll throw in the socks for free!' she shouts after you.

You collapse into a nearby café.

It'll take a large lime shake and a cream cake to recover from her.

'Excuse me, would you like to help save the rare Amazonian buck-toothed sloth?' A cheerful old man holding a donation tin looks down at you. 'Logging has destroyed its home,' he adds.

'Has it really?' you ask with venom.

Now is not a good time to hassle you.

'Yes, and with your small donation you can help save one of . . . '

'Let me tell you something,' you say to the old gentleman. 'The only buck-toothed sloth I know is my brother, and he doesn't need money to save him, he needs a personality transplant. Personally I don't care if the entire population of sloths has to move to Antarctica, I'm not going to donate anything. Goodbye.'

Stalking away you see the elderly man has turned red. You must have really hurt his feelings.

How can you let an entire species die out just because of a sucky sales assistant?

Feeling guilty you rush back to the old man.

'Sorry,' you say, 'here's all I've got left.'

'Bless you,' he says. 'You're a real angel.'

You leave Sunnyworth feeling good inside. Happiness has cost you significantly less than a pair of tartan pants.

**A WARM &
FUZZY ENDING**

45 Café Raven

'Apricot eye shadow? I don't think so.'

Tanya ignores you. 'Apricot looks good with Pink Frost lipgloss.'

'I look wild.'

'That's the point.'

'What's the point?'

'Looking wild.'

You knew Tanya was sucking up for a reason. She always does this. At school she'll comment on how great your hair is or how she wishes she could be as smart as you, and then a minute later asks to borrow some money, or the answer to your homework. It works well. Now she has convinced you to wear bizarre eye shadow and mascara so you look like a circus freak.

'Why do you want me to look wild?'

'It's the latest look at the Café Raven. The café is open twenty-four hours. We can go in this afternoon.'

'What do you want to go to the Café Raven for?'

'Because it is totally sick. You should see what people wear. The fashion is really out there.'

'I'm not sure . . . '

'Go on!'

There goes Tanya again, trying to suck you into another of her ridiculous plans.

'And we can wear my sister's clothes. She's got everything we need!'

'It sure will make people look.'

'Which is exactly what you want when you hang out at the Café Raven.'

'I don't want to ride on a bus looking like this. What if someone recognises us?'

Tanya produces a card from her pocket. A taxi card. 'My dad's,' she says mischievously. 'He said we could use it in emergencies.' Tanya drags you into her sister's bedroom. 'Get ready to rub shoulders with the stars,' she screams.

'Okay,' you say weakly.

'Thanks a lot!' Tanya says to the taxi driver.

'Yeah right,' he says rudely and speeds off.

'I don't think he liked us,' you say.

'Why? Just because we look a little different? Just because we're part of a new generation he doesn't understand?' says Tanya angrily.

'He didn't like us, Tanya, because your taxi card is invalid.'

'I said I'd mail him the fare. C'mon.'

'Are you certain this place is okay?' you ask nervously.

'Sure it is.'

'Well, I'm not sure, and I look ridiculous.'

'You look like a real woman. Hey, the tissues have fallen out of your wonder bra.' And the right boob is heaps bigger than the left.'

You adjust your bra as Tanya walks into the Café Raven. You rush after her, your heart thumping. You don't know what to expect.

The place is nothing like you expected.

'Isn't it great?' Tanya gushes. 'It's so atmospheric. And I love the chipped, graffitied walls.'

Tanya walks confidently into the café to the counter. 'Two lattes thanks. Both white,' she says.

It's a good thing Tanya knows the lingo or you'd feel even more out of place.

'There's a free table back there,' you say, pointing to the rear of the shop.

'No one will see us there! Here's an empty table right out front.'

You sip your coffee and watch the beautiful people flirt. Suddenly a tall man with a pigtail, wearing sunglasses and a silky green suit comes and sits at your table.

'Say, I've seen you two girls before. Are you both models?' he asks.

'No,' you reply.

'Gee, that's surprising. You're both so beautiful, and I love what you're wearing. You two could be models for sure.'

'Could we?' asks Tanya, leaning toward him.

'Yeah. Say, I'll make you a deal.'

'No thanks,' you say. You don't trust this guy, he looks sleazy with his slicked back hair and gold earring.

'What sort of deal?' asks Tanya.

'I'll take a few photos of you both, put them into a folio and take them around to agencies. They'll phone you if they like you.'

'Why?' you ask.

'That's how I make money. I get commission from agencies. But I'm leaving for New York tomorrow, so if you want to come back to my studio now, great, otherwise, see you.'

Tanya turns to you with sparkles in her eyes. 'It's up to you, you're really good at making decisions.'

You can tell Tanya is desperate to be photographed, and it could be fun. If you tell him

'Sure, why not?' turn to

[32 Model Material](#)

OR

If you tell him, 'Thanks, when we want to be hassled by a sleazebag you'll be first in line,'

turn to

[14 Guy Magnet](#)

46 Stack 'em Up

It's true you're not the world's best cook. Once you blew the griller along with eight lamb chops.

'I do I like my meat well done, but this is ridiculous,' your dad joked as he picked out the charred remains of the meat.

But even a disaster-prone cook like yourself can make pancakes. Simply mix flour, one egg, milk and a pinch of salt, then fry in a saucepan.

You pour the ingredients into a bowl.

Stir.

Tip in too much milk.

Throw in some more flour.

Add another egg because the mixture doesn't look right.

Put the hotplate on high.

Take five minutes to find the oil. Accidentally splash too much in the pan.

By the time you pour in the sloppy mixture you're really not feeling like pancakes any more. The phone rings and you thankfully leave the messy kitchen.

'Hello?'

'Hi, it's Donna here. Isn't C-Day great?'

Donna Featherstone is the most cheerful girl in school. She has a permanent smile engraved on her face and sees the positive side in everything. For example, if some desperado like Eugene Hackman spoke to her she'd giggle and say, 'Aren't Eugene's glasses, like, so manly.'

This level of positiveness annoys you. Knowing you can't compete with it, you take the opposite approach.

'Hi Donna, what're you doing?'

'I'm hoovering the floor. Don't you just love when you suck up some coins and they clink and clank all the way up into the bag?' she says.

'I hate hoovering. I'd rather fly into the sun.'

'Oh yes, isn't the weather be-au-ti-ful?' she sings cheerfully.

'No. It's pretty overcast. Probably going to rain.'

'Well, it's beautiful for ducks then,' Donna laughs.

'I hate ducks. They poo everywhere.'

Donna really brings out your negative side. It's because she's happy all the time. That's just not natural.

Smoke!

You rush to the kitchen and find it in flames. The oil in the pan has caught fire and now the entire kitchen is burning.

'Fire! Fire!' you scream running outside yelling like a maniac. 'Fire! Fire!'

Mr Georgio, from next door, is planting marigolds in his garden.

'Fire! Fire!' you scream at him, waving your arms around like a short-circuited windmill. He runs inside to his phone.

Fifteen minutes later your kitchen looks like the inside of a washing machine. Foam covers the floor, the walls and every expensive electrical appliance. 'You're very lucky,' says a firefighter, 'the whole house could have been destroyed.'

'I should have ordered pizza,' you reply.

Boy, are your parents going to be mad. Really mad. You just hope your dad likes his pancakes like his lamb chops. Very well done.

If only they were like Donna Featherstone, they'd say, 'This fire is a real blessing. Now with the insurance money we can build a really spacious, good-looking kitchen.'

Yeah right, and Eugene Hackman's glasses look cool!

A fiery end

47 net/spunkyhunks.love

'C'mon, c'mon,' you say, tapping your foot impatiently. Everyone else from Lower Heights College must be on the Internet too. It's taking forever to connect.

When Kyle eventually materialises on the screen you find to your delight there is a new interview with the Spunky Hunks star. You immediately download it.

'Hi, this is Kyle Kissmore, star of Spunky Hunks,' he says. 'I'm really glad to have this chance to talk to you. I hope you're watching Spunky Hunks every week.

There's some great episodes coming up and I don't want you to miss one.'

Kyle doesn't need to remind you to watch his show. You've watched all 37 episodes in a row!

'Have you seen the Kyle Kissmore poster book?

You can find it at your local store. There's lots of pictures of me without my shirt on.'

'It's up on my wall right now Kyle,' you say loyally.

'My fans always ask me: "What do you like in a girl?". That's a difficult question.'

You grab a pencil and paper. This could come in handy if you ever meet Kyle.

'I'm sent lots of poems from girls around the world. I love poetry, especially when the poems are about me. I love girls who can write really happy or really sad poems. If I've just kissed a great girl on set I read happy poems, if the ratings for Spunky Hunks are down, I read sad poems.

'I also love horses. When I have a break in filming I enjoy galloping my palomino, Fame, around my ranch. And there's nothing better than sharing the saddle with a special girl. I make sure she always holds on to me real tight.'

Wow! Wrapping your arms around Kyle's sexy chest! How scrumptious!

'Did you know you can buy Spunky Hunks hankies? They're called "Hunkies" and they're available from stores everywhere.'

You quickly disconnect. Your parents only allow you to go on-line at night when it's cheaper rates.

Now you know what the hunkiest guy in the world looks for in a girl –

- poetry and
- horse riding.

You decide poetry or horse riding is for you. That way when you finally meet Kyle he'll find you irresistible.

Writing about roses, everlasting love is definitely very romantic. If you feel writing poetry is the way to Kyle's heart, turn to

[38 Express Yourself](#)

OR

The Naggorama Riding School is just a bus ride away. If you can see yourself galloping like a free spirit across the dusty plains, turn to [49 Giddy Up](#)

48 Kiss & Miss

Dean works his way from your ear to your quivering mouth. His hungry lips gently envelop yours. You close your eyes and let his powerful scent (onion and anchovies) wash over you. As the kiss turns from peck to passion your head reels around giddily like a little child on a carousel.

Dean places a firm hand on your shoulder and draws you nearer to his finely sculptured body. There's sparks before your eyes. Magical, golden sparks. You've never felt this way before. This has got to be true love.

Dean's lips grow more confident. He isn't just kissing you, he's eating you! Fearing being swallowed or drowned, you push Dean away and furiously rub your mouth with the back of your hand.

'Wooah,' Dean says as you fall back onto the sofa, 'that was the best ever!'

If that was the best, you'd hate to think what the worst was like – slurping a bull terrier maybe?

'I feel electric man! Being with you makes me wanna scream. I gotta have noise.' Dean jumps from the sofa. 'Let's crank the bass!'

You're glad he liked it.

'What type of music are you into? I love butt-kicking rock! I've got some CDs in the car we can play loud, or I can grab my guitar. I play some real cool tunes.'

This sounds good. Music is a lot safer than kissing.

A nice, gentle strum of the guitar might settle him down. If you ask Dean to bring in his guitar, turn to

[9 Dean Unplugged](#)

OR

If you feel like getting down to some heavy, loud music with Dean, turn to

[19 Rock On](#)

49 Giddy-Up!

The last time you rode a horse was on your cousin William's farm. It was a pony named Jake who had evil black eyes and a wicked grin. He pretended to be gentle and friendly as William helped you onto the saddle.

But as soon as you were left alone, Jake refused to co-operate with even the simplest of requests.

Instead he galloped towards the pig pen and threw you into the stinking, steaming swill.

Since then you've been wary of horses.

Fiona, instructor at the Naggorama Riding School, promises every horse is obedient and friendly. 'They'll do anything you tell them to,' she says.

Fiona explains that there are two rides available. 'We have a two-hour trail ride through local bushlands, or a training session in our ring where you'll learn the basics.'

A two-hour canter sounds great. You can see yourself racing like the wind across the green fields and jumping broken tree trunks.

The training session is for babies. Even though you don't know which end a horse's "bit" goes!

'I suggest the training session for beginners,' says Fiona. 'The trail ride is quite a challenge.'

If you feel you're up to the trail ride, tell Fiona your parents are jockeys and you've grown up with horses all your life on

[25 Born to Ride](#)

OR

You can't learn algebra if you don't know how to count to ten. It may be a good thing to learn the basics, even if it does sound a bit boring.

For a lesson with Fiona, turn to

[33 Cutie Pie](#)

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