

## WHO'S THE REAL TEEN?

Isabelle was 14. She was starting to take an interest in boys. At least, she would have done if they weren't all such pains. Her parents had been sweethearts when they were at school, and married early, so they were both in their early thirties, and still wanted to be thought of as 'cool'.

'Ding dong!'

Who was that? Mum, wanting to practise her latest words, rushed to the door, opening it, in the hope that it was one of Isabelle's friends.

'You is here?'

Isabelle's voice came from the top of the stairs. 'Of course, she's here Mum. What do you think that is in front of you?!'

'You coolin' it babes?'

Oh no! Isabelle raced to the door. She had learnt not to be sarcastic towards her mother in front of her mates. She didn't want her weekly allowance to be stopped.

'I's doin' the bakin' stuff.  
I's bakin' it,  
So we all start cakin' it'.

Lilly was too polite to say anything, so she just smiled.

'Oh, that sounds really nice. I'm very pleased for you.'

Isabelle's mother turned back towards the kitchen.

'We's gonna feel real sick, la'er.'

This was no consolation for Isabelle, who felt really sick now, but not in the way her mother meant. She welcomed Lilly in and they both went upstairs, before Isabelle slammed her bedroom door behind her.

'Aaaaaaargh! Parents! Who'd have them?'

'Well, from what we've learnt at school...'

'Now who's having a laugh? You don't have put up with them every day. And the old man's even worse!'

'What do you think?' Lilly held up her phone to show Isabelle a photo of Noah.

'Wow! Now is he hot or what? But I've never seen him. He's not from our school, is he?'

Then a voice bellowed up the stairs.

'You's snackin'?''

'No Mum, we're just talking. It's what girls do when they're mates.'

'Just let me know, and I'll be runnin''

Lilly burst out into laughter.

'At least she means well. Not like some people's parents we know.'

'I suppose. Anyway, are you going to see this guy? You know, like, on a date 'n stuff?'

'Can't say.'

'That means yes, doesn't it? Whoooooooooooo! Go on. Hey, look, you've got to tell me how it goes! Promise?'

The two girls fist-pumped, spending the next hour talking about boys they liked, before Lilly decided it was time to get back home.

'Later!' came the cry from the kitchen as Lilly exited through the front door. She turned her head to face Isabelle.

'And you don't say anything to anyone, right?'

'Got it!'

'Cos if you do, we aren't going to be besties anymore.'

'Yeah, you don't have to keep going on. You're getting to sound like my old man.'

The rain poured down. Noah stood there, waiting. Surely, this mystery girl was going to appear. Noah had met up with Lilly, but things hadn't worked out. He was a free agent, so why not give this other babe a go? She looked a real 'hottie' from her picture. Noah didn't know how she had got his details, but who cared? He was in a public place and it was the middle of Saturday afternoon, so what could go wrong?

Then a message came up on Noah's phone. He didn't recognise the number, but there was another photo of that gorgeous babe.

'Can't make it now. Stuff has come up. Parents and all that. Can we meet up down the park later? You know where I mean? I'll be there around 5.'

Noah wasn't sure how to respond, but he knew what his mates would say.

'When you meet a hot babe, you gotta taken the chance, man. You don't wanna miss out, or someone else could step in.' Noah had told his mates that he was going to meet a 'hottie' that day, so he didn't want to suffer the shame of admitting he'd been stood up, and he wasn't very good at lying.

'Yeah, I'll be there,' Noah said to himself, and messaged the babe, 'Izzy', as she called herself, to confirm.

Noah was down at the park, watching all the other teenagers on their skateboards, wishing that he had brought his. What better way to impress a young woman on your first meeting, than by doing a kickflip? The rains had stopped and the sun had come out. It was surely a sign. Then a message arrived on his phone.

'I'm here. Let's get breadcrumbing!' Noah looked around, but couldn't see anyone who looked like the girl he was supposed to start 'breadcrumbing', or 'flirting' with, to use his parents' language.

Then there was a tap on Noah's shoulder.