

# THE CHICKABEES

Screenplay by Randall Berger

(Based on the CHICKABEES books and characters  
by Margaret Clark)

Fourth (Final) Draft

SUGGESTED MUSIC CUES HIGHLIGHTED

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Randall Berger  
6 Oxford Street  
SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141 AUSTRALIA  
+61 418 598 239  
randall.berger@bigpond.com

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1 INT/EXT. FULL SCREEN TV PROGRAM BROADCAST - DAY

1

A way too handsome TV PRESENTER sits at a news desk. The program has a distinctly ET!/HOLLYWOOD DISHES THE DIRT feel. A colourful graphic featuring a 24 year old BERNICE BENNETT in full performance mode is keyed in behind.

PRESENTER

Welcome back. As part of our ongoing celebration of the greats of popular music, today we profile the legendary Disappearing Diva of Rock, Bernie Bonito.

Paparazzi shots and footage of BENNETT in various outfits and locations as she arrives at gigs and functions, very pumped, happy and successful.

PRESENTER (V.O.)

(cont'd)

For almost 25 years, not a single word has been heard from this once humungous star. Yet in a career at the top that lasted a scant 27 months, she left a mark that will never fade.

SONGS Video Clips from 3 songs, incl. BONITO's "Big Hit."

MONTAGE of 100% excerpts from pop videos and concert footage of "Bernie Bonito and The Head Hunters" in full flight, as well as scenes from her two pop-sploitation movies.

BENNETT (24) responding to a question from a very recognisable interviewer or pop guru, supremely confident in her position.

BENNETT (24)

You want to know why the kids like me?  
It's because my songs talk to them ... are about them ... things they worry about ... what's happening to them right now.

(CONTINUED)

The paparazzi shots and footage become nasty and dark, with a haggard BENNETT (24) in dark glasses, scarves, peering from hotel curtains, sulking in the back seat of limos, plus file shots of rehab clinics, locked gates.

PRESENTER (V.O.)

In very public fall from grace, Bonito crashed and burned in 1984, all but disappearing from the music scene overnight. Rumours of substance abuse, financial difficulties, depression and even suicide flew around the media. Without Bonito fronting them, The Head Hunters never played another gig.

TV PRESENTER back at the desk, the keyed graphic now a grossly overwrought, overweight artist photo-fit of what Bennett might look like now under the words "The Disappearing Diva: Where Is She Now?"

PRESENTER (cont'd)

Remarkably, Bernie Bonito's popularity has never waned, with her songs continuously on the golden hits charts and several tribute bands doing the rounds, cashing in on her popularity.

SONG Bad tribute singer doing refrain from the "Big Hit."

BRIEF intercut of a shockingly bad BERNIE BONITO TRIBUTE BAND, screeching one of her hits.

TV PRESENTER is backed by an even more garish graphic proclaiming WE FOUND HER!

PRESENTER (cont'd)

Well, we found Bernie Bonito, right here in our own back yard. She just so happens to be the performing arts teacher at a local high school, running her own little school of rock under her real name, Bernice Bennett. Let's reintroduce Bernie Bonito to the world.

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1

HANDHELD TV CROSS of a NEWS CREW running and accosting Bernice Bennett (49) as she gets out of her rather unfashionably old car in the school staff car park, a REPORTER thrusting a mic in her face.

REPORTER

Bernie! Bernie Bonito!

BENNETT (49)

I don't know who you're talking about. Get that (bleep)ing thing out of my face!

BENNETT (49) takes a swing at the REPORTER which audibly connects, then the camera is pushed to the ground, the signal ending in static.

THE PRESENTER is at his desk, caught like a rabbit in the headlights by the sudden end to the cross.

OPENING CREDITS ... INCLUDING OVER NEXT 8 SCENES

2 INT. DANCER'S BEDROOM - DAY

2

A typical tween-age girl's bedroom ... pop star posters, odd travel souvenirs and collectables, ballet certificates and medals, slightly dusty and forgotten dolls, CDs out of their cases around a CD player, ballet theme sheets and coverlet on an unmade bed.

DANCER(15) sits at her computer, a flower-power iMac, dictating with a combo headset/mic, using voice recognition software. The words appear on the screen as she speaks.

DANCER

"The Road To Fame and Fortune for The Chickabees, the Greatest Girls' Band In History, by Dana Martin. Chapter One: We Knew What We Wanted" ... and we were bloody well going to get it, too!

3 INT. BALLET CLASS - DAY

3

DANCER at the ballet bar. She is graceful and focused.

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3

DANCER (V/O)

I'm Dana. My Chickabee's name is Dancer ...  
no, not like the stupid reindeer ... like  
ballet.

4 EXT. SURF BEACH - DAY

4

RIDER (15) is shooting the waves with style and skill,  
dressed in a day-glo Rip Curl neoprene wet suit with her  
hair back tight, a short-board corded to her ankle.

DANCER (V.O.)

Ria is Rider ... 'Cause she likes to ride  
the waves. She's pretty good and could be  
a champion. She's kinda tough ... like  
she'd bite a shark if one ever came after  
her. Or a guy.

She shoots past several guys, receiving both admiring and  
condescending looks as they give way to her.

5 INT. CEECEE'S BEDROOM - DAY

5

CEECEE (15) is in computer nerd heaven in her floor-to-  
ceiling-filled-with-computer-gear bedroom ... a mass of  
monitors, wires and web cams. CeeCee is wearing jeweler's  
goggles as she solders a circuit board, which magnify her  
eyes in a goofy way.

DANCER (V.O.)

CeeCee's real name is Cecily, but she  
hates that name, so she's always been  
CeeCee. CeeCee stands for Computer Chick,  
too ... She's like right into computers and  
electronic stuff. Her Dad runs a computer  
store. She writes the words for our songs.

6 INT. TAPPER'S BASEMENT GARAGE/LAUNDRY - DAY

6

TAPPER (15) is dancing together with her father PETER (39)  
in the basement of their apartment building, doing a great  
father/daughter take on Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER (V.O.)

Tani is Tapper, because she's always doing this funny kind of jazz tap dancing. She lives with her Dad, who's a really good dancer ... used to be professional or something. She also plays the keyboards and writes our music.

7 INT. TEEN FASHION SHOW - DAY

7

MODDIE (15) is modeling at a fashion show. Beautiful and young, a child-woman, but she also looks tired and troubled ... not heroin chic, but vulnerable.

Her mother LINDA (49) stands in the background. Stylish and businesslike. The Devil wears a Chanel suit. Moddie steals the catwalk, but is also getting steely looks from her mother.

DANCER(V.O.)

Maddie is short for Madeline, but her Chickabees's name is Moddie, because she's a professional model. She's really beautiful ... Her mother is like really bossy and her manager, but in a good way, I suppose.

8 INT. DANCER'S BEDROOM - DAY

8

Back in her bedroom, DANCER continues to dictate to her computer.

DANCER

We sing ... we move ... we play the music ... we do it all. We want to be ... no, we're GOING to be ... WE ARE ... the hottest girl band EVER ... We're not wannabees ... we're not gunnabees ... We're THE CHICKABEES!

As if Dancer has said magic words, the room swirls with mirror ball light as she throws off the headset, grabs her hairbrush like a microphone and does a grand jeté out of frame and onto a giant stage with the other girls.

9 INT. CHICKABEES MTV AWARDS FANTASY SEQUENCE - WHENEVER 9

When DANCER lands, her hairbrush is a real mic and, like the others, is dressed in an amazing designer outfit. Her fantasy flash-back-flash-forward-flash-whenever becomes very real.

SONG Full Chickabees Number poss. the NAME-TITLE song

This is the ultimate performance by THE CHICKABEES at the peak of their talents. All the moves, all the sounds, all the chutzpah. It is a great song that gives them all a turn in the spotlight. The lighting and pyrotechnic effects go crazy. There isn't a dry seat in the house.

Just at the climax of this hottest opening number in film history, the action freezes.

DANCER (V/O)

Oops, I'm getting a little ahead of myself  
... There isn't a Tapper or a Moddie yet.

TAPPER and MODDIE get panicked, worried looks on their faces and then audibly warp out of existence.

A blaring car horn is heard on the stage, disrupting the fantasy. Then the whole scene pops out of existence.

10 INT. DANCER'S BEDROOM - DAY 10

Outside her bedroom window, a car horn can be heard honking. DANCER is still holding a hairbrush like a microphone, posed in the middle of her bedroom.

Dancer is in her school uniform, a stylishly formal white shirt, striped tie, pleated skirt, matching blazer, white knee socks and black oxfords.

Dancer puts down the hairbrush, grabs her school bag and bolts out of the room.



11 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING 11

Several uniformed school students are walking in the same direction along the footpaths towards school. A LEXUS SUV cruises by.

12 INT. LEXUS SUV - MORNING 12

MODDIE is being driven to school by her mother/manager, LINDA. Linda is dressed to the nines and every hair in place. Moddie slumps frowning in the passenger seat with her arms folded.

LINDA

It's going to be sunny later ... you'll  
freckle ... do you have your hat ...  
sunscreen? Remember, you're a  
professional ... no distractions ... no boys.

Moddie just sits looking ahead ... her mother going in one ear and out the other.

LINDA (cont'd)

Are you putting on weight? Don't slouch.

MODDIE

Look, Linda ... just drop me off here. I  
can walk the rest of the way.

LINDA

Good idea ... Work off breakfast.

MODDIE

No, you're just a little overdressed for  
dropping your kid off at school.

13 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING 13

Moddie is walking alone down the suburban street, her demeanor and gait making her school uniform look better than it deserves, school bag slung over her shoulder.

In a blur, two big BURLY MALE STUDENTS in the same school uniforms jump out from some bushes and drag her in, muffling her screams.

14 EXT. UNDER A BIG TREE - MORNING

14

Under the boughs of a tree that overhang almost to the ground, the two BURLY MALE STUDENTS hold MODDIE's arms pinned behind her. One has a plate-sized hand over her mouth. Her eyes are wide with fear.

A third male student approaches, a predatory leer on his face. He is even bigger than the other two, tall and ruggedly handsome, dark hair falling over one eye. This is JACK SLACK (17). His grin widens and he puts out his hand.

One of the BURLY MALE STUDENTS hands over Moddie's wallet. Jack opens it, takes out all the cash ... a couple of \$20s ... that he shoves in his pants pocket.

JACK

Is that all you've got for me?

Moddie sinks her teeth into the hand over her mouth and doubles the other BURLY MALE STUDENT over with an elbow to the not insubstantial gut.

Instead of running to freedom, Moddie snarls like a cornered beast and launches herself onto Jack Slack, throwing her arms and legs around him and madly kissing him full on the mouth.

Jack motions the other two thugs away with a wave, the role play over. They depart as he and Moddie and settle into the leaves.

15 EXT. THE HIGH SCHOOL MAIN ENTRANCE - MORNING

15

This is a large, private, coeducational, non-denominational secondary school, grades 7 - 12.

DANCER is dropped off at the curb and meets up with RIDER and CEECEE.

MODDIE walks past in front of them, looking a little uncharacteristically dishevelled with leaves stuck to the back of her blazer and in her hair. She also has a big smile on her face, drawing a curious glance from those she walks past.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

It is today, right?

CEECEE

Big Ben said Monday.

DANCER

I couldn't sleep a wink.

RIDER

Me, neither.

DANCER

If we get picked ...

DANCER/RIDER/CEECEE

... we have a chance at Online Idol!

The three girls give a squeal, line up and ritualistically do their unique little bootie-wobbling victory dance.

16 INT. BIG BEN'S PERFORMING ARTS OFFICE - MORNING

16

Bernice Bennett (49) sits in the private office off of the main classroom enjoying a quiet cup of coffee before the start of another hectic day of performing arts classes.

She is looking older than her years and still trying to dress young and hip, but coming off stuck in the 80s. The glass door and window into the office are mostly covered with posters to keep prying eyes out.

She glances to see that no one is looking in, opens a locked desk drawer and puts a glug-glug slug of vodka in her coffee cup.

On the wall behind her chair hangs a platinum LP and album jacket in a big frame. Several of the posters are for BERNIE BONITO AND THE HEAD HUNTERS, proclaiming things like "Head Hunting World Tour" "Head For Wembley" "Madison Square Garden 1986." The focus of all the posters is the young BERNICE BENNETT (24), just as faded now as the 25 year-old posters.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

There are also 20 years worth of chintzy trophies and banners awarded to the high school performing arts department scattered around the office.

The morning bell goes, Bennett downs the last of her morning shot with a gulp, pops a peppermint, a squirt of Dior and leaves the office.

17 INT. BIG BEN'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

17

Big Ben enters the music classroom from her cloister and locks the door. The boys and girls troop in and take their seats in the Greek theatre style class. DANCER, RIDER AND CEECEE sit together. MODDIE is in the class, too. JACK and the two BURLY MALE STUDENTS sprawl in a back row.

Big Ben sits on a high chair with a conductor's stand surrounded by students on the tiered seating.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Two: For Whom The Bell Tolls."  
Our performing arts teacher, Miss Bennett.  
We call her Big Ben because her voice is  
so loud, it's like a big bell.

CEECEE (V.O.)

Big attitude ...

RIDER (V.O.)

Big ass ...

DANCER (V.O.)

Hey, get lost ... This is my bestselling  
novel. Write your own.

RIDER (V.O.)

Sorry ...

CEECEE (V.O.)

Yeah, sorry ...

BIG BEN looks around the room and a sly smile comes across her face. Everyone laughs nervously. She picks up a sheet of paper from the podium.

(CONTINUED)

BIG BEN

In the school bulletin ...

Everyone in the class groans. Big Ben tries to keep a straight face.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

... Money for school photos has to be in by Friday. Year Sevens are holding a Medieval Day in two weeks time and all classes can take part. Prizes for best costume. Our exchange student from Finland is giving a talk at lunchtime today in Room 209 to anyone considering becoming an exchange student. There was something else ...

Big Ben seems to be searching for a piece of paper on the podium. A huge groan goes out.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

OK, I've tortured you enough. You losers have all been hanging out for the Online Idol Competition, I suppose.

Cheers, whistles and applause goes up around the room as everyone lets off some relief.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

Online Idol wants 300 acts to compete on the internet with the whole world watching and voting. The school is going to sponsor an official entry ... and the competition starts today ... not that I think any of you have the talent to make it. I'll be selecting the group and coaching them for the competition. Rehearsals are going to be tough ... after school, weekends ... and if you're picked you'll probably wish you hadn't been ... until you start getting all the free stuff!

JACK

And groupies!

(CONTINUED)

BIG BEN

Dream on, Mr. Jack Slack-by-name-slack-by-nature ...

More cheers and whistles, this time in earnest.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

Now, I don't suppose it's a secret any longer, but I do have some experience in the field of pop music ...

This brings a big laugh from the class. A girl in the back row jumps up and belts out a line from a Bernie Bonito hit.

SONG Main line from Bonito's Big Hit, sung a cappella.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

Thanks, Cheryl, the cheque is in the mail ... I fronted a pop group that got pretty big ... ask your parents. If any of you are entering as a group, you should have four or five members ... duets and trios are history. I'm also looking for guitarists, drummers ... I want a big sound, people!

More cheers and refrains from Bernie Bonito songs.

DANCER, CEECEE and RIDER walk down the hall straight after class.

DANCER

We've just got to find two more girls ... all girl bands have five.

RIDER

Spice Girls only had four.

DANCER

They had five, but one dropped out.

(CONTINUED)

RIDER

That doesn't count ... And they didn't play anything.

CEECEE

OK, so how are we going to find two more girls we like and can sing and play an instrument ... in that order?

THE THREE GIRLS meet up at the front of the school the next morning in a well practiced routine. DANCER reaches into her schoolbag and pulls out a stack of little flyers on fluoro-coloured paper.

DANCER

I ran these off last night ... We'll put them up around school and see who shows up.

RIDER reads one of the notices aloud as they walk into the school.

RIDER

"Wanted ... Two singers with good voices who can play something to try out for a really cool band. Meet at the pine trees at lunch time." I guess that says it all.

CEECEE

I just wonder if anyone will show up?

Dancer hands each girl a handful of the notices and a big chunk of Blu-Tac. They do their little bottom-wiggling victory dance and break. As they enter the school, they split into three directions; girls with a mission.

MONTAGE of the three girls putting up notices around the school. Kids take a look at them as they arrive for school and put things in their lockers. They also hand them out to girls who walk past. One happens to be TAPPER.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

MODDIE, who is walking with JACK, stops to read one stuck on the wall. Jack also takes notice.

21 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

21

DANCER is putting up a notice when a well-known voice booms down the hallway.

BIG BEN

What the hell is this then?

Dancer freezes and slowly brings the notice down and turns. RIDER and CEECEE step in behind her, showing a united front.

BIG BEN is upon them.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

You three. In my class. Now. Fix that tie, Martin.

DANCER

Yes, Miss Bennett.

Dancer straightens the knot on her school uniform tie as she and the other three lead Big Ben into the Performing arts class. Big Ben shuts the door behind them.

22 INT. PERFORMING ARTS CLASSROOM - MORNING

22

The three girls stand in line ... not quite at attention, but the feeling is there. BIG BEN glares at each in turn.

BIG BEN

Explain.

DANCER

It was my idea, Miss Bennett. We need a couple more people for our band ... for Online Idol. We thought we'd hold, like, auditions ... tryouts. We figured posters would be OK.

(CONTINUED)



BIG BEN remains expressionless, appearing to ruminate over this story.

BIG BEN

Just make sure these are all collected by the end of lunch ... every scrap ... because if I see one, you'll all get a detention.

ALL THREE GIRLS

Yes, Miss Bennett.

BIG BEN

Don't get your hopes up. Girl groups are old hat and you don't have what it takes. I ought to know.

RIDER

How can you say that? We might be good ...

BIG BEN

Look, ladies ... Sing for your families ... sing for parties ... but don't aim any higher, OK? You'll just get hurt.

DANCER, CEECEE and RIDER sit together during the recess break.

DANCER

Why is she so set against girl groups?

CEECEE

Why is she so set against us?

RIDER

I dunno ... she hasn't even heard us.

Dancer peers closer to CeeCee's face.

DANCER

What's with your glasses? There's something different. They look even more nerdy.

(CONTINUED)

A smile comes across CeeCee's face. Rider looks, too, but doesn't see anything.

CEECEE

Gee, thanks ... It's really cool ... It's a microscopic video camera ... It's like sooooo tiny ... Like a Tic Tac.

RIDER

So, what does it do?

CEECEE

Check this out ...

CeeCee brings an iTouch iPod out of her school blazer pocket. A wire goes back into her uniform. She presses a button and a jerky close up image of BIG BEN fills the screen.

BIG BEN

(Video Recording)

Look, ladies ... Sing for your families ... sing for parties ... but don't aim any higher, OK? You'll just get hurt.

DANCER

That is so cool!

CEECEE

I know ... My Dad got it for me. He didn't believe me when I told him the way Big Ben behaves ... I think he had the hots for Bernie Bonito when he was in high school ...

DANCER/RIDER

Ewwwww! Didn't need to know that!

CEECEE

... so I thought I'd keep a video diary.

RIDER

Isn't that, like, illegal?

CEECEE

And your point is?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

The bell rings and the girls head to the next class.

24 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

24

Just as the three girls are about to go back into class, MEG and two of her CRONIES sidle into their path and block the door.

MEG (15) is brimming with self-importance and has a permanent condescending look on her face. This is the "Nasty Girl." The Cronies mirror every hip thrust and flick of the too coloured hair.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Three: The Ice Girl Commeth."  
Meg is Alpha Bitch of the school ... so far up herself, she's nearly inside out.

MEG

I saw your stupid notice. You really think you can start a band that people would want to pay money to see? More than likely they would pay NOT to see it!

Meg's Cronies laugh way too large at this joke.

RIDER

Why not put your money where your mouth is and try out?

CEECEE

Ria!?!

DANCER

Nobody has enough money for a mouth that big.

RIDER

Well?

MEG

Do I look that stupid?

DANCER

Is that a rhetorical question?

(CONTINUED)

MEG

You are seriously weird!

CRONIES

Weird! Yeah, weird!

DANCER

I guess the answer is yes, then.

Meg and her Cronies turn and enter the class in a huff.  
The Three Girls share a grin and follow.

SONG Need a song here. Poss. NASTY GIRL in fantasy mode.

A copse of rough and ancient pine trees stands at the far edge of the school sports ground, close enough to be convenient, but far enough away to give notice of approaching authority.

RIDER, DANCER and CEECEE arrive first and look back to see a few STUDENTS making their way in twos and threes across the playing field.

DANCER

We'll sit along there and the girls can stand on the flat bit.

RIDER

Like, they'll just sing without any music?

CEECEE

That's the way they do it on pop idol ... if you can sell it a capella, you can sell it anywhere.

THE AUDITIONING BOYS AND GIRLS arrive and begin chatting excitedly amongst themselves with nervous anticipation. MODDIE and JACK are amongst the front line. TAPPER stands a little back.

Dancer claps her hands for attention. It goes unnoticed. Rider lets out a huge two-fingered wolf whistle and there is immediate silence.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

Thanks for coming. We're holding try-outs for two ...

MEG

I really love your choice of audition venue, Dana. Is that what we can expect from the band? Is there any room for talent?

DANCER

Alright, that's enough. Look, we only want girls to try out ...

This brings a collective groan and jeer from half of the group.

JACK

That's false advertising ... it doesn't say just girls on your poster.

DANCER

Look, I'm sorry ...

JACK

What a bloody waste of time.

MEG

Yeah, right ... Hey, everyone ... There are tryouts for people who want to be in the competition but don't have a band ... right now, in the Performing Arts room ... like, REAL try outs. For guys, too.

Meg turns heel and heads back to the school, with the entire group is step behind her like some twisted Pied Piper.

The three girls are left standing alone. Without a word, they slowly follow the group to the performing arts room.

Jack Slack leans against the wall and broods. Moddie is getting something out of her locker.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

Those bitches should be taught a lesson.

MODDIE

Why?

JACK

I really thought I could maybe get into their band. Show I could do something.

MODDIE

You don't have to impress me. I like you just the way you are. Bit rough around the edges. Let's go to the try-outs anyway.

27 INT. PERFORMING ARTS ROOM - LUNCHTIME

27

The performing arts room is already packed by the time the Three Girls arrive.

Standing in the centre of the platform is BIG BEN and the über bitch, MEG. In the front row are MEG'S CRONIES, ready to cheer her on.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Four: Big Ben Brings Down The Axe" ... How could we have been so stupid?

Dancer, CeeCee and Rider make their way down to the platform and approach Meg. MODDIE and JACK enter the room.

DANCER (cont'd)

I thought you said you didn't want to audition for a band ...

MEG

I never said anything of the kind ...

CRONIES

No ... I heard her ... she never said it ... nope ...

(CONTINUED)

BIG BEN

I knew you girls wouldn't know talent if it hit you over the head ... Meg is great.

RIDER

Oh, I get it. Look, Meg broke up our auditions so she could get all the good kids here.

BIG BEN

I told you girls your group doesn't have a hope. Read my lips ... you-are-not-in-the-com-pe-ti-tion! There's a clipboard over there ... put your names down for any vacancies.

This brings a shrill laugh from MEG and her CRONIES and embarrassed titters from the other students.

DANCER

There's nothing in the Online Idol rules that says our group can't enter by ourselves ...

BIG BEN

No, but I can make sure your remaining years in high school are a living hell if you do. Look, just forget it ...

The dead silence in the room is broken by a few sniggers. Dancer, Rider and CeeCee regain some of their composure and stride up to the exit. Rider calls out to the other students as a parting shot from the back of the class.

RIDER

If you want to be in a REAL band that sings ORIGINAL songs, come find us AFTER school.

The THREE GIRLS storm out of the performing arts room under a cloud.

(CONTINUED)

RIDER

I think we're screwed.

CEECEE

Totally.

DANCER

How can she do that?

RIDER

We've still got the dream ... she can't steal that ... God, that sounded lame ...

DANCER/CEECEE

Yeah ... pretty cheesy ...

DANCER

Were your James Bond Glasses working?

CEECEE

Oh, yeah ... Gold! You said "original songs" ... Where'll we get those?

DANCER

You're always writing poems and stuff ... You'll write them.

CEECEE

Me? Uh ...

RIDER

And we can jam the music. That's how it's done ... I think ... jamming ... isn't it?

The school bell rings.

DANCER

Back to the salt mines.

DANCER, CEECEE and RIDER sit slumped on the low wall at the pickup area like three sad monkeys, watching the steady stream of council buses, SUVs and Volvo wagons sweep up their passengers.

(CONTINUED)



DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Five: Putting The Fox Amongst The Chickabees." Can the most beautiful girl in school really be one of us?

They are suddenly cast in shadow and look up as one to see a tall girl standing beside them, surrounded in sunlight.

MODDIE is the picture of style and grace, every hair and pleat in place even at the end of the day.

DANCER (cont'd)

Maddie, hi ... uh ... this is Ria and CeeCee.

RIDER & CEECEE

Hi. Hiya ...

MODDIE

Hi. I saw your notice for a band ... and what happened at the tryouts.

RIDER

Big Ben shot us down in flames.

CEECEE

Totally.

MODDIE

I've always wanted to be in a band. I can play the violin and the drums, kind of.

DANCER

Come on, Maddie ... you're a pro ... a model and TV stuff ... an after school girls' band is a bit beneath you, isn't it?

RIDER

Hey, it wouldn't hurt to have a star in the group ...

DANCER

Ria!?!

(CONTINUED)

MODDIE

No, she's right ... What I couldn't bring to the band in talent I could bring in publicity!

All four girls laugh and the tension is broken with this self-deprecating comment. Maddie drops her façade and plunks down beside them on the wall.

MODDIE (cont'd)

So, can I try out for your band?

DANCER

You just did ... all say aye?

DANCER, RIDER & CEECEE

Aye!

DANCER

Very democratic. We don't have a plan yet. We're, like, going to meet after school tomorrow.

A familiar LEXUS SUV pulls up right in front of the girls. A picture straight out of Vogue from the coiffured highlights to the Jimmy Choo's alights from the vehicle and steps up to the quartet. Maddie's mum LINDA doesn't have to raise her large, very dark D&Gs to show there is fire in her eyes.

LINDA

Madeline, what are you doing out in the sun without a hat or sunscreen? You'll freckle ...

MODDIE

Linda, these are my friends ...

LINDA

You don't have time for ...

MODDIE

... and they want me to be in their band.

A virtual truck could drive through the pause.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA

A what?

MODDIE

A girls' band ... I'd like to try something more than just looking hot.

LINDA

Get in the car. These girls obviously just want to trade on your fame ... You're more than a wannabe ...

MODDIE

No, Linda ... I want to trade on my fame ... I offered it to them.

LINDA

I am your manager ...

MODDIE

Well, manage this ... if I don't get a little time to do what I want to do for a change, your cash calf is going to turn into a mad cow.

LINDA

After all the ...

MODDIE

You can leave the guilt cards in the deck, Linda ... I've got a royal flush.

Another virtual truck drives through the silence. Maybe two trucks. The other three girls are stunned.

LINDA

Fine! My terms: No performing out in the sun ... Nothing risky that could cause injuries ... No conflicts with your sponsorships ... And everything in writing. Now get in the car.

MODDIE

Deal. I'll see you guys tomorrow. Thank you soooo much.

(CONTINUED)

The three girls are still stunned. They wave to Maddie as she gets in the car and it roars off.

DANCER

I wish I could handle my mother like that.

RIDER

That girl's got balls.

CEECEE

Big ones.

DANCER

That's one girl down, one to go ...

30 INT. TAPPER'S BEDROOM - AFTER SCHOOL

30

Tani's bedroom is the antithesis of a tweenage girl's domain ... neat, uncluttered, practical ... no posters or other accoutrement of an awakening woman.

TAPPER throws her school bag on the bed and begins to shed her "school skin," keeping each piece nice for the next day.

31 INT. TAPPER'S KITCHEN - AFTER SCHOOL

31

TAPPER comes into the kitchen now wearing a too big T-shirt with branding from her father's job (FedEx, DHL) and tracky-dacks.

SONG Original heavily rhythmic instrumental from boom box

She puts her schoolbooks on the table, turns on the cheap boom box over the sink and starts into another practiced dance-like routine based around doing the dishes and fixing dinner.

She turns on water in the sink, squirts in soap, grabs something out of the freezer and pops it into the microwave and sets it to defrost, all punctuated with pirouettes and taps.

32 EXT. JACK'S HOUSE - AFTER SCHOOL 32

This house has wrong-side-of-the-tracks written all over it, with the weed-bound cars on flattened tires and flaking paint of indeterminate colour. JACK comes up the walk and through the half open front door.

33 INT. JACK'S HOUSE - AFTER SCHOOL 33

JACK walks past the leaning tower of pizza boxes, overflowing ashtrays and crushed cans of cheap beer, into the kitchen. He opens the fridge door to nothing, not even a light.

34 INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - AFTER SCHOOL 34

JACK pitches his backpack into a corner and sits on his never-made bed. He picks up an electric guitar leaning against the wall, slides out the pic and begins playing some fantastic riffs, un-amplified.

SONG original guitar riffs worthy of a great axeman

The bedroom door is suddenly banged open against the wall with a foot. In the opening leans a big bear of a man, supported by his arms on each jam, obviously roused at 4:00pm from his winter sleep. This is JACK'S FATHER, all tank top, stubble and sweat.

JACK'S FATHER

What the hell do ya think yer doin'?  
What's all the Goddamned racket?

JACK

Nothing.

JACK'S FATHER

What the hell do ya mean, nothin? You woke me up!

JACK

Hey, it was time to get up, anyway ... you were sleeping through good drinking time ...

(CONTINUED)

Jack's father moves with uncharacteristic speed, catching Jack off guard with a full backhand that sends his six foot plus frame sailing into the corner with his school bag.

JACK'S FATHER

They teach you to talk like that at school? Goddamned loser. Just like your mother ...

Jack's face is red and one eye is starting to swell shut. There is blood starting to come out of his nose.

JACK

At least she had the good sense to leave!

Jack's father lumbers out of the room, all but ignoring the parting shot at his back.

35 INT. JACK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

35

JACK'S FATHER is buried in a broken easy chair that forms to his body, a beer in one hand and the TV remote in the other.

JACK rushes by and out the front door, having changed into casual clothes and holding a tattered wet washer to his eye.

36 EXT. JACK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

36

JACK doesn't bother to shut the door as he storms down the walk. JACK'S FATHER'S voice carries down the street.

JACK'S FATHER

Bring home something for dinner or you'll get another one ... Loser ...

37 INT. TAPPER'S KITCHEN - LATER

37

TAPPER is sitting at the kitchen table doing her homework. The dishes are all done and draining and there are steaming pots on the stove.

(CONTINUED)

At the sound of the front door opening, Tani goes into action. She closes up her books and binder and puts them on the sideboard and puts the waiting plates and cutlery in place on the table.

PETER walks into the kitchen, grabs a glass from the dishes and fills it from the tap, downing it in one gulp.

TAPPER

Wash your hands ... dinner is just done.

PETER

Timing ... the secret of my success.

Peter walks out of the room. Tani serves up dinner ... vegies, mashed potatoes and meatloaf. Peter walks back in and sits.

PETER (cont'd)

Ah ... Pain de Viande!

TAPPER

God, you're such a dick sometimes ... it's just meatloaf.

They eat for a while in silence. Peter notices a fluoro-coloured flyer poking out of Tani's homework on the sideboard beside him and pulls it out.

PETER

What's this?

TAPPER

It's homework ... private ...

Tani tries to snatch it back, but Peter is quicker. He reads it and smiles.

PETER

Do you want to try out for this band?

TAPPER

As if ... anyway, they had the tryouts today.

(CONTINUED)

Peter puts the flyer between them on the table, but Tani purposefully ignores it.

PETER

You'd be very good. You're every bit as good a performer as I was ... or ...

TAPPER

No, I'll never be as good as you ... or my mother ... but how would I know? Anyway, I don't have time.

Peter and Tani continue eating in silence. Peter finishes and pushes back from the table. He takes his dishes to the sink. He unplugs the boom box over the sink and takes it under his arm.

PETER

I'm going to go downstairs ... workout a bit ... See you later.

MADDIE and her mother LINDA sit at either end of a very long and elaborate dining table, finishing dinner.

LINDA

I'm just thinking about you.

MODDIE

No, you're thinking about the next job. It's not like we need the money.

LINDA

Madeline ...

MODDIE

Look, I've only got another couple of years of this Lolita-look ... after that, I either have to hit the catwalk for real or crack it big in the soaps ... And I think I'm more than just a pretty clothes rack.

LINDA

But the TV ...

(CONTINUED)



MODDIE

Oh, come on, Linda ... those jobs aren't acting ... it's just guys looking at my tits ...

LINDA

Madeline! ... Look, I just want what's best ...

MODDIE

I'll tell you what's best, Linda dearest ... this band.

LINDA

As long as you're living under this roof ...

MODDIE

Well, maybe I won't live under this roof! Did you ever think of that? I actually earn a pretty good living, you know!

Moddie storms out of the dining room.

MODDIE (cont'd)

I'm going for a walk.

39 EXT. MODDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

39

Moddie smiles as she storms out the front door and down the drive. She ducks into some birch trees out of sight from the house and into a passionate clinch with Jack Slack.

MODDIE

Were you waiting long?

JACK

Meeting you makes it worth the wait.

She reaches up to kiss him and Jack winces.

MODDIE

Your dad?

(CONTINUED)

JACK

Uses a little too much body language  
sometimes.

MODDIE and JACK sit against the trees.

MODDIE

I talked my way into the girls' band.

JACK

So, what good's that going to do?

MODDIE

Well, for a start, it sticks it right up  
Linda, that's for sure!

JACK

Maybe I should get into a band ... Show my  
dad.

MODDIE

We might have to compete against each  
other ... but making up after will be good ...

Moddie very gently kisses Jack on his bruised cheek. The  
porch light and garden floods flick on and off. Moddie  
gets up.

MODDIE (cont'd)

I have to go in.

JACK

I might wait a few more beers before I go  
home ... he'll pass out.

MODDIE

I'm so sorry, Jack.

JACK

You think your Mom rides you, but you just  
don't know ... you've got everything.

MODDIE

You really think that makes a difference  
with us?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

JACK

Well, I wouldn't mind changing places ...

MODDIE

Good night, Jack ...

Moddie is off through the trees and Jack settles for a wait.

40 INT. CEECEE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

40

CEECEE sits in her cluttered, computer-filled bedroom.

Even with all of this electronic gear, she is writing on a big lined pad of paper with a pencil. She is surrounded by wads of scrunched up paper, laying testament to her frustration.

CEECEE

*When it's all too hard ... Never forget  
you've got a friend ... You're not alone ...  
'Cause you're not alone ... you've always  
got a friend in me ... What does it matter  
when it all works out ... You and me  
together's what it's all about ... aw, shit  
...*

CeeCee scrunches up another page from the pad.

41 INT. TAPPER'S BASEMENT CARPARK - NIGHT

41

The underground carpark is all concrete and pillars with symmetrical pools of light evenly spaced. Very few cars are parked on this level.

PETER is finishing up some stretching warm-ups. He wears a tank top and track pants with soft black shoes. He is already glistening with sweat.

(CONTINUED)

SONG Peter's Dance Instrumental becomes full force

He goes to the boom box which he has plugged in near the Laundry, ejects and flips the tape, puts it back in and hits play. A rhythmic beat fills and reverberates around the basement.

Peter begins to dance out his frustrations, covering lots of ground, running up pillars and flipping, doing bum slides across car bonnets, executing superlative combinations from ballet, jazz, tap and Latin. [It's the "Angry Dance" from *Billy Elliot* meets the rumble from *West Side Story*.]

Peter's dance builds to a tremendous climax and he is suddenly weeping. When he finishes dancing, he shudders with both exhaustion and released emotion.

A car is heard in the distance entering the car park and driving to a nearby parking space. Peter tries to compose himself.

The car headlights reveal TAPPER hiding in the shadows. Peter immediately turns away in embarrassment.

TAPPER

Daddy ...

PETER

What are you doing down here?

TAPPER

I'm always down here ... hiding ... watching you dance ... it's wonderful.

Tani rushes into her father's arms and embraces him, which he fiercely reciprocates, kissing the top of her head.

PETER

I never knew that.

TAPPER

It's made me understand what you had to give up.

(CONTINUED)

They quietly hold each other for a long time. Arm in arm, they walk back to the boom box and collect it, then head for the lift.

PETER

I want you to try out for that band.

TAPPER

Daddy!

PETER

Do it! Show me what you've learned ...  
hiding ...

TAPPER

But who's ... ?

PETER

I'm a big boy now ... See, all grown up! I  
can take care of myself once and a while.

The lift door grinds open and they enter.

TAPPER

Phew ... Daddy, you're stinky ... me too, now,  
thanks to you!

DANCER is reading in bed while her little ink jet is printing out more brightly coloured flyers.

A stark fluorescent light high in the ceiling flickers on with a "tink-tink-tink," bathing the small kitchen in harsh light. It is a very low-rent, very plastic, very public housing kitchen.

TAPPER stands at the doorway, her hand still on the switch as she blinks away her deep sleep in the hard fluoro light. She is wearing a pair of shortie pyjamas.

(CONTINUED)

PETER is slumped asleep on the small kitchen table in the pool of light from a small desk lamp, his head resting on a stacks of bills.

In what seems to be a well-practiced routine, Tani gently wakes her father like a sleeping child, whispering gentle encouragement as she guides him out of the room.

TAPPER

Come on, Daddy ... that's right ... let's get you to bed ... Sooo big ...

Groaning springs are heard from the adjacent bedroom as Peter bounces full weight on top of a bed with a mumbled "night."

Tani is immediately back in the kitchen. She taps around the room, picking up the bills and tapping them into shape on the table before putting them in a tray on the sideboard, turning off the lamp and then putting Peter's coffee cup in the sink

Tani turns at the door for a last check before flicking off the overhead light.

The flick of the light switch literally turns night into day as TAPPER now stands in the kitchen doorway with her hand on the switch in her neat school uniform: blazer, white shirt, tie, pleated skirt, white knee socks and T-bars.

She once again launches into a practiced routine, almost choreographed, with little spins and steps between each action: putting two bowls and glasses on the table, boxes of cereal, milk and juice, getting two already-made lunches out of the small refrigerator, making two mugs of instant coffee.

She then sits down and prepares both bowls of cereal, pours milk in both coffees, sugars them, pours the juice.

(CONTINUED)

Tani begins to eat as PETER enters, hair wet from the shower, wearing a blue collar uniform for some well known courier company or another (Fed Ex).

He sits down, throws down the juice and begins to eat his cereal. Not a word is spoken for some time.

PETER

Baby, I'm sorry I got you up.

TAPPER

It's OK, Dad ... I understand ... I'm not cross.

PETER

You take good care of ... us.

TAPPER

Somebody has to ... You have to work.

PETER

You're kind of like the mother ...

TAPPER

Dad ... please ... I don't need the speech again ... Put that old record back on the shelf.

Peter looks deep into his cereal. Tani stands, takes a last slurp of coffee, puts all of her dishes in the sink, picks up her lunch and pops it into her schoolbag.

She puts her father's lunch bag beside him on the table. Tani stands behind her father for a moment and rests a hand gently on his shoulder.

TAPPER (cont'd)

I love you, Daddy ... Have a nice day in the jungle.

Tani is out the door.

45 EXT. TAPPER'S APARTMENT - MORNING 45

TAPPER exits the front door of the apartment onto the outside landing.

Being on the top floor of a public housing tower, their two-bit flat has a two-million dollar view of the city on this crisp morning.

46 EXT. PUBLIC HOUSING TOWER STAIRWELLS - MORNING 46

TAPPER waits impatiently at the battered and graffiti covered steel doors of the lift and finally decides on a breakneck hippity-hop down fifteen flights.

Shortly after Tani leaves, the lift door slowly grates open.

SONG Tapper's Stair Routine can build on her kitchen music.

Tani dances her way down the stairs in a funky jazz routine mixed with good old-fashioned tap dancing.

Other tenants she meets on the way down waiting for the lift smile at what must be a familiar sight.

One old man does a little soft shoe in appreciation as Tani passes.

47 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING 47

One of the new flyers dotting the hallway reads: "The World's Best GIRLS' Band still needs one more special talent. This is NOT a school project and will be WAY MORE COOL! Lunch Room @ 12."

A hand rips the flyer down.

48 INT. SCHOOL LUNCHROOM - LUNCH 48

DANCER, CEECEE, RIDER and MODDIE sit huddled together at a table in the corner of the big cafeteria-style lunchroom.

(CONTINUED)



DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Six: And Then We Were Five."

TAPPER boldly comes to the head of the table and tosses the flyer into the middle of the group.

TAPPER

That's me ... the one more special talent.  
I want to try out.

The four girls look up at her and smile.

DANCER

Well, as you can see, there is an enormous  
line ... you'll have to wait your turn.

Tani looks puzzled. The other girls just laugh.

DANCER (cont'd)

It's a joke, Joyce ... sit down ... uh ... ?

TAPPER

Tani ... Short for Tatiana.

DANCER

Careful, in case you haven't heard, we've  
got the plague ... or so you'd think with  
the number of girls wanting to audition.  
Big Ben has put a curse on us, we think.  
This is CeeCee, Maddie and Ria ... I'm Dana.

THREE OTHER GIRLS

Hi ... Hiya ... G'day ...

RIDER

So, what can you do?

TAPPER

Sing ... Dance ... jazz and tap, mostly ...  
play the piano ... and I've done music  
composition.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

A composer ... and pianist ... a dancer and a singer ... a mite limited, don't you think? You're in.

TAPPER

Really? Just like that?

DANCER

No, you'll have to have a police check and a note from your gynecologist ... kidding.

RIDER

Gross!

CEECEE

Totally!

DANCER

Tani, we really need to get started. We want to have a go at the Online Idol competition. Your timing couldn't be more perfect, believe me.

TAPPER

My dad says that's the secret to success.

DANCER

He's too right. Right place, right time. We really need someone who can write music and play ... do you have a keyboard?

TAPPER

Yeah, just a small one ... electronic.

DANCER

You are like sent from heaven! What will your parents think?

TAPPER

There's just my dad ... and he really wants me to do it. He insisted.

(CONTINUED)

MODDIE

At least you have a Dad ... Linda refers to whoever my father was as "the sperm donor."

RIDER

Gross again.

CEECEE

Totally again. What's a sperm donor?

TAPPER

My mother left a week after I was born.

The four girls are aghast at this revelation.

DANCER

What?!?

TAPPER

No big deal ... My mom and dad were like famous dancers ... I guess she just couldn't face giving that up, so she just left us.

The other girls are all quiet and riveted by Tani's revelation.

TAPPER (cont'd)

He could have been amazing ... he is amazing ... but he raised me instead.

DANCER

Thanks ... for telling us that, I mean.

CEECEE/RIDER

Yeah ...

MODDIE

Look, how about we swap? ... You can borrow Linda if I can have a loan of your Dad ... he sounds great!

The ice is well and truly broken and the girls all laugh.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

I reckon there's a song in there, don't you, CeeCee?

CEECEE

I'm kind of the word writer and we need someone to write the music.

TAPPER

I'd like to try that ... do you have any lyrics?

CEECEE

Well ...

CeeCee hands Tani a tightly folded piece of paper. The other three grab at it, but Tani pockets it fast.

CEECEE (cont'd)

No ... please ... Don't read them ... just Tani ... you have to hear them ... with music.

DANCER

OK, you win. Tani, welcome to the group. We five will change the world ... or at least try.

The five girls quite sincerely join hands in the middle of the table.

DANCER (cont'd)

Let's meet after school at [The Chicken Shack] to plan our world conquest ...

MEG and her TWO CRONIES pass by the table at this moment.

MEG

Oh, God ... "Dana Dyke and her Four Dykettes" ... I can wait to see this band!

The Cronies guffaw on cue.

DANCER

That girl is coming down hard.

49 INT. FAST FOOD CHICKEN SHACK (POSS. KFC) - AFTERNOON 49

The FIVE GIRLS are monopolizing a corner booth at a KFC after school.

They wear their school uniforms, as do most of the young people crowding the place, showing the colours and crests of a variety of different schools.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Seven: What's In A Name?" I suppose I could have just told them, but that would have spoiled the story.

Four of the girls just share one large fries, but MODDIE is licking her fingers over a half-eaten plate of chicken pieces.

MODDIE

Please don't tell Linda ... She says I have to stay a size six, but I just love this. Sure none of you wants some?

Not really waiting for an answer, Moddie scoffs into another piece of chicken.

DANCER

OK, we've all got our character names...

DANCER goes around the table, starting with herself.

DANCER (cont'd)

Dancer ... CeeCee ... Tapper ... Moddie ... and Rider ... That's the easy part. Now, we've got to have a name for the band.

There is a pregnant pause.

DANCER (cont'd)

Well, not everybody at once.

(CONTINUED)

EVERYBODY AT ONCE

Hot Chicks ... Bootylicious ... The Banditas ...  
 Girl Power ... Hot Babes ... Hot Honeys ...  
 Spicy Chicks ... 5-4-U ... 5-4-1 ... Hot and  
 Spicy ...

DANCER

OK, OK!!! Hot and Spicy?! You got that  
 off the menu ...

MODDIE

The Chicken Babes ... These guys can be our  
 sponsors ... give us free chicken ...

RIDER

Yeah ...

CEECEE

The Chickybabes ... we are hot chicks and  
 we're babes ...

DANCER

Sounds like The Wannabees ... we're The  
 Gunnabees ...

TAPPER

The Chickabees ... ?

There is another pregnant pause, with twins this time,  
 only the din of the other diners under.

DANCER

Say that again?

TAPPER

The Chickabees?

DANCER

The Chickabees ... "By Jove, I think she's  
 got it!"

CEECEE

That is way cool.

(CONTINUED)

RIDER

Cooler.

MODDIE

Freezing.

Dana raises her soft drink.

DANCER

The Chickabees ...

IN UNISON

The Chickabees!

The girls chat excitedly. Moddie wipes her hands and sidles out of the booth.

MODDIE

Got to see The Wizard.

Moddie heads for the toilet. A moment later, Dancer stands as well.

DANCER

Me, too. Bustin'.

50 INT. CHICKEN SHOP FEMALE TOILET - AFTERNOON

50

Just as DANCER cracks the door, she hears someone throwing up. She continues on in and hears a toilet flush to mask the sounds.

Dancer stands at the mirror checking her face as Moddie exits one of the cubicles. They make fleeting eye contact in the mirror.

Moddie goes to wash her face and rinse her mouth at the adjacent sink as if nothing out of the ordinary has happened.

DANCER

You on the two-finger diet?

Dancer mimes two fingers into her open mouth.

(CONTINUED)

MODDIE

I'm not, like, crazy ... bulimic or anything.

DANCER

You say.

MODDIE

I have to keep my figure ... It's my job.

DANCER

That way's way not cool.

MODDIE

None of your biz, really ... Just don't make a big deal about it, OK? With the others?

DANCER

Your call. Just get some help.

Moddie leaves the toilet and Dancer enters the cubicle.

51 INT. FAST FOOD CHICKEN SHOP (POSS. KFC) - AFTERNOON

51

DANCER returns to the table and says nothing. RIDER holds up a poster for the Grand Opening of a new KFC store nearby.

RIDER

Hey, check this out ... Maybe we can get a gig at the opening!

MODDIE

As if ... Who would want someone who hasn't even started rehearsing yet?

Rider boldly collars the store MANAGER as he walks by and waves the poster in his face.

RIDER

Excuse me, do you think the new store could use a "hot and spicy" new girls' group to perform at the grand opening ... for free?

(CONTINUED)



The other girls choke and repeat "Free?"

MANAGER

Sure, I guess ... Write me down some details and a contact and I'll get back to you.

The Manager walks on through the crowd. Rider tears a blank page from her school binder and starts writing furiously.

DANCER

Hang on ... What's this "free" stuff?

RIDER

We have to start somewhere ... and hey, what have they got to lose?

MODDIE

What about costumes?

RIDER

I'll tell him we'll wear whatever they want for the opening ... maybe even dressed like their workers.

CEECEE

We'd better get cracking ... That's in less than two weeks.

DANCER

We'll meet up again tomorrow. We need to find a place to rehearse ... each of you ask your folks ... parents ... single parent ... God, this is complicated!

CEECEE

My place is out ... it's floor to ceiling computers and boxes.

RIDER

I kind of live a ways out ... hard to get to ... Maybe for a sleep over.

MODDIE

I'll have to ask our housekeeper.

(CONTINUED)

RIDER

Your housekeeper's more important than  
your mum?

MODDIE

You haven't met our housekeeper ... Even  
Linda asks her permission to have people  
over!

TAPPER

Where I live, there's like this big  
underground carpark, but most of the  
people can't afford cars.

CEECEE

That sounds cool. I'll bet it has great  
acoustics.

TAPPER

It's warm, 'cause it's near the laundry ...  
And it's right on the bus.

DANCER

Done deal ... Tapper's carpark it is.

MODDIE

Will your way cool Dad be there?

SONG Song over following montage scenes, becomes full song.

52 INT. TAPPER'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON 52

MONTAGE - CEECEE and TAPPER nutting out a song, with  
Tapper on her keyboard and CeeCee writing furiously.

53 EXT. THE PINE TREES - LUNCHTIME 53

MONTAGE - The FIVE GIRLS practice coordinating their  
movements while singing (mute) and playing air guitars.

54 INT. TAPPER'S GARAGE - AFTERNOON 54

MONTAGE - The FIVE GIRLS playing their instruments (mute).

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

CEECEE hands out a set of music and lyrics to the girls.

TAPPER plays and sings while the other girls play and sing along.

They have their biggest and best rehearsal. There is no mirror, so CEECEE sets up a camera to record them and then they watch the playback to criticise.

55 INT. TAPPER'S BASEMENT CARPARK - AFTERNOON

55

The FIVE GIRLS sit around exhausted, wiping their faces with hand towels and drinking from water bottles.

DANCER

I guess we're as ready as we'll ever be.

TAPPER

It's do or die.

MODDIE

If we can't wow a chicken crowd, our goose is cooked ... Oh, I made a funny!

RIDER

Don't take being blonde so seriously.

DANCER

What do you mean? It sounds like you've been writing her material!

CEECEE

My dad is going to film it, so we'll be able to look at that ... See what we may do wrong.

DANCER

Or right ... fingers crossed.

56 INT. LINDA'S SUV - MORNING

56

LINDA is driving the CHICKABEES to their debut. The nervous anticipation in the vehicle is palpable.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Eight: The Chickabees Take Flight  
... or will we crash and burn?"

RIDER

Thanks for driving us, Linda.

LINDA

Well, maybe this will get this whole band  
thing out of your systems and we can all  
get back to normal.

MODDIE

What's normal?

LINDA

Exactly.

MODDIE

Just shut up, Linda.

The other Chickabees exchange glances.

57 EXT. LINDA'S SUV - MORNING

57

The vehicle pulls up into the crowded car park. The new  
store is covered in bunting and there is already a crowd.

58 INT. LINDA'S SUV - MORNING

58

LINDA

Look, you girls get out here and I'll find  
somewhere to park around the corner.

59 EXT. CHICKEN SHOP CAR PARK - MORNING

59

The CHICKABEES pile out of the SUV and grab their  
instruments and portable amps out off the back before it  
pulls away.

They stand looking up at the façade with a huge banner  
proclaiming "Grand Opening." Several big posters also  
declare "Featuring the new band, THE CHICKADEES!"

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

My God ... The Chicka-DEES!?! How did they get that wrong?

RIDER

I dunno ... I wrote it down.

CEECEE

I've seen your writing ... we could have ended up as anything ... The Chicken Nuggets.

MODDIE

It doesn't matter. What matters is we are here and this is the first step. Ready Chickabees?

THE OTHER FOUR GIRLS

Ready!

The five girls do the trademark victory dance, link arms and head towards the entry. There is a huge scrum of people waiting for the doors to open.

TAPPER

Maybe we'd better go around the back.

CEECEE

Not a very grand entrance, but practical.

60 EXT. CHICKEN SHOP BACK ENTRANCE - MORNING

60

DANCER knocks on the heavy door. After a moment, the Manager opens it.

MANAGER

Oh, hi ... the band ... Come on in.

61 INT. CHICKEN SHOP BACK AREA - MORNING

61

THE CHICKABEES crowd in with the MANAGER, who shuts the door behind them.

(CONTINUED)

MANAGER

Look, you can change in the storeroom. The costumes head office sent over are all there. We open in around 10 minutes and then you're on.

RIDER

We're going to be dressed, like, your workers, right?

The Manager laughs at this.

MANAGER

Well, not exactly.

Dancer indicates the portable amps for the guitars, drum synth and keyboard.

DANCER

Can somebody plug these in where you want us to sing?

MANAGER

You bet.

The Chickabees open the door into the storeroom and their jaws drop.

62 EXT. CHICKEN SHOP - MORNING

62

Many of the family and friends of THE CHICKABEES wait outside, including PETER and LINDA. BIG BEN and MEG are also in the crowd.

The doors open and the crowd surges in. Peter goes and helps the Manager arrange the instruments.

63 INT. CHICKEN SHOP BACK AREA - MORNING

63

The MANAGER taps on the store room door and smiles.

MANAGER

Ready, Chicks? Don't forget your drumsticks!

64 INT. CHICKEN SHOP DINNING ROOM - MORNING

64

The dinning room is absolutely packed, as much with people wanting to see THE CHICKABEES as attend the opening of the store. The MANAGER takes the small stage at one end of the dinning room and grabs one of the mics.

MANAGER

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,  
welcome to the Grand Opening of the new  
(Chicken shop). To kick off the  
festivities, we have a new local band  
making their first appearance ... THE  
CHICKADEES!

He throws to the girls. They stand looking at each other. The costumes are enormous chicken suits: Big red rubber coq's combs, felt beaks, felt feathers down their arms like wings and big bustles of brightly coloured feathers on their asses, puffy legs with red tights from the knees down to big chicken feet.

The girls take the stage and pick up their instruments. They can hardly walk or use their fingers very well.

SONG Clumsy start to what becomes a great song later.

They begin to play after a fashion and try to sing. The beaks make it hard to see or sing. It is a disaster, though the Manager smiles because it looks so corporate.

The crowd begin laughing so hard that it drowns out the song. Big Ben smirks sadistically. It is like watching a train wreck.

Finally, the girls grind to a halt. There is a deathly silence. They stand on the stage, looking pathetic and forlorn.

Tapper pushes her chicken head back, revealing her face, and pulls off the wing-tip gloves on her hands. She genuinely laughs with the audience.

(CONTINUED)

TAPPER

We really had you fooled, huh? OK,  
Chickabees, let's do it for real.

The other girls push back their chicken heads and pull off their gloves, too. The audience applaud.

HECKLER

Put the masks back on ... you're prettier!

The audience boo this remark. Moddie makes eye contact with Jack. He gives her his killer smile in encouragement. Jack edges over the heckler and gives him a squirrel grip.

Unencumbered, THE CHICKABEES now give a better quality performance ... still a bit rough, but not completely handicapped. They start the first song again and play it through.

65 INT. THE CHICKEN STORE ROOM - AFTERNOON

65

THE CHICKABEES have flopped around the room on boxes in various stages of un-feathering, absolutely exhausted and covered in sweat.

MODDIE

I never knew it would be so hard.

DANCER

Fun, but hard.

CEECEE

We only had three songs.

TAPPER

At least we got through them, twice.

RIDER

I thought we were pretty fowl.

The other girls groan and laugh at this lame joke.

MODDIE

It was our trial by fryer.

(CONTINUED)



65 CONTINUED:

65

This gets an even bigger groan. They finish plucking off their costumes and towelling off.

66 EXT. THE CHICKEN SHOP - AFTERNOON

66

THE CHICKABEES come around the corner of the Chicken Shop to the front, on top of the world, and run straight into Big Ben and Meg. CEE CEE quickly throws on her special glasses.

BIG BEN

Yep. Fast food suits your style. No substance and nothing but empty calories that go straight to your ass.

Meg laughs. Rider bursts a capillary.

RIDER

Why are you being such a bitch to us, Miss Bennett? What did we ever do to you?

BIG BEN

Watch your language, young ...

RIDER

This isn't school ... I can say anything I want.

BIG BEN

You want a bitch, you've got her.

RIDER

Bring it on.

BIG BEN

Consider it brought.

67 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

67

RIDER, DANCER, CEECEE and MODDIE arrive at school. They walk down the crowded hall and stop at a wall of lockers. Two open lockers, exchange books and put in backpacks.

TAPPER comes running up, very excited.

(CONTINUED)

TAPPER

Hey, guys! Guess what?

RIDER

Guessing ... der ...

TAPPER

My dad ... he, like, delivers stuff ... and when he was at the MegaMall yesterday, he saw this poster and entered us in a big Talent Competition!

Tapper unzips her backpack and pulls out a poster. The other girls crowd around as she unrolls it.

RIDER

"MegaMall presents the Search For The Next Big Thing ..."

DANCER

"... The largest talent quest of the year to find the hottest new entertainment ..."

CEECEE

" ... big prizes and a nationwide appearance on The Today Show ..."

MODDIE

" ... top agents and recording companies will be in attendance ..."

RIDER

Uh ... Saturday, the 24th!? That's less than two weeks!

TAPPER

We can do it ... it's, like, a chance to get noticed by the right people.

MODDIE

Do you really think our soirée at The Chicken Shack is good enough for nationwide TV?

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

Hey, we're The Chickabees ... we ARE the next big thing!

The five girls squeal and do the victory dance. The morning bell goes and a cacophony of locker slams up and down the hall heralds the start of a new school day.

Meg and some of the other students make chicken noises. Big Ben just smiles.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Nine: Fame Is Fleeting" ... or ...  
"The Higher They Fly, The Farther They Have To Fall."

BIG BEN

OK, listen up. The various groups still in the running to be the Official school entry for Online Idol will be giving a concert in the Main Hall at lunchtime. Got to let them flex their performance muscles and get over nerves. One group that won't be performing are The Chickenpox ...

The students laugh and ridicule with chicken noises.

DANCER

Excuse me, Miss Bennett. The Band is called THE CHICKABEES.

BIG BEN

Sit down and shut up, Martin.

Moddie is looking for some attention from Jack, but he is being a bit distracted.

MODDIE

What's the matter, Jack?

(CONTINUED)

JACK

I've kind of got something on my mind.

MODDIE

What did you think of the show on Saturday? The chicken suits were pretty stupid, huh?

JACK

I think you're getting pretty good. Then you'll just dump me.

MODDIE

NO!

JACK

I'm just going to have to get better.

70 EXT. THE MAIN SCHOOL HALL - LUNCHTIME

70

The entire student body line up to enter the main school hall. The five CHICKABEES are in the queue, wondering what they can expect.

71 INT. THE MAIN SCHOOL HALL - MORNING

71

The girls sit in a row together towards the back of the near-overflowing auditorium.

SONG FIVE snippets of songs as per the five band styles.

In succession, half a dozen groups take the stage. There is a hip-hop group, a kind of Celtic New Age [Corrs] group, a white bread stoner-bunny reggae group, an a capella boys' harmony group and a totally anarchic heavy metal band that blast everything and damages everyone's hearing.

SONG Full performance by HUNTERS with major solo for Jack.

The final group consists of Meg fronting a band of four guys doing hard rock. She is channelling a combination of Suzi Quattro and Bernie Bonito. The number is good and the performance very skillful.

(CONTINUED)

Big Ben's eyes flare when she sees this and she smiles at the memory. Or is that a flash of megalomania?

One of the guitarists comes out of the back line into the light for a solo spot and it's JACK. MODDIE is aghast. He launches into a solo that is absolutely on fire. The whole place is on their feet.

Big Ben's eye's flash at this, too, and a knowing smile comes over her face.

The theatre arts students have done their best to give a rock extravaganza feel with lights flashing and one humble smoke machine chugging away. One single flash pot goes off halfheartedly at the climax.

The Chickabees sit looking like five worried monkeys.

Outside after the performance, THE CHICKABEES huddle.

DANCER

Those groups weren't bad ... in fact, some of them were pretty damn good.

RIDER

We're going to have to work our asses off if we want to stand a chance of entering on our own.

TAPPER

And we have the MegaMall comp in a fortnight.

CEECEE

It was a good song from Meg's group. That was Jack Slack on the guitar, wasn't it?

RIDER

He's hot.

TAPPER

Smoking.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

We'll just have to be hotter.

MODDIE

Maybe we should just call it quits.

DANCER

What's up with you today ... kitty got a nosebleed?

MODDIE

Get stuffed.

Moddie shoves her hands in her blazer pockets in a very unfashionable way and storms off.

CEECEE

Moddie has a sick cat?

The four girls stand, hands thrust in their blazer pockets, maintaining the worried monkey look.

73 INT. TAPPER'S BASEMENT CARPARK - AFTERNOON

73

THE CHICKABEES emerge from the laundry with their school uniforms in their arms, having changed into rehearsal clothes.

LINDA leans against her SUV which is parked nearby, flipping through the latest copy of "Vogue."

The girls toss their uniforms in the back of the SUV and get their instruments, plugging them into a lead coming out of the laundry.

TAPPER comes out of the lift having changed, carrying her keyboard.

SONG Opportunity for a full Chickabees song.

The Chickabees run through a new number completely.

PETER emerges from the lift with a box of juice poppers and a big packet of cookies. He stands near the SUV until the number concludes.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Time for a sugar hit, ladies?

The girls come over and dive into the box, popping the drinks and ripping open the cookies.

LINDA

Hi ... Linda ... Madeline's mother.

MODDIE

Moddie!

PETER

Peter ... I'm responsible for Tani.

TAPPER

Tapper!

LINDA

Whatever ... Nice meeting you.

PETER

Likewise.

LINDA

So, what do you think of our progenies's little endeavour?

PETER

So far, I think it's the best thing that's ever happened to Ta ... Tapper.

TAPPER

Good boy ...

The other girls laugh at this tease. They whisper conspiratorially.

DANCER

Your dad is sooooo cool ... and buff!

TAPPER

I told you, he's a dancer ... was ... ballet and stuff ...

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

So that's where you get it.

MODDIE

Careful ... Linda's a man-eater ... full-on  
Great White Shark.

CEECEE

What happened to the sperm donor?

TAPPER

Guys! You're talking about my dad!

LINDA

I heard that ... back to work ... if you have  
time to gossip about the "olds," you're  
slacking off ...

The Chickabees put their empty poppers back in the box and  
go back to their instruments, tuning up for the next song.

Peter picks up the box and heads back towards the lift.

PETER

I'm sure I'll see you around the  
Chickabees' gigs.

LINDA

Count on it, Peter.

Meg and her boys are rehearsing a number. Big Ben is  
watching and taking notes. It is a new number and as good  
as the one they did at the lunchtime concert. Jack Slack  
is getting even more confident. They come to the finish  
and it rings out.

BIG BEN

OK, that's enough. I'll give you my notes  
tomorrow so they'll stick.

The boys start packing up the instruments.

(CONTINUED)



BIG BEN (cont'd)  
Meg, got a minute?

MEG grabs a towel and puts it around her neck, wiping sweat off her face. Big Ben waves Meg into her office.

75 INT. BIG BEN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - AFTER SCHOOL

75

MEG enters the inner sanctum. She is in awe of the "ancient" rock posters with BIG BEN as the lead singer of The Head Hunters. She stares at the platinum LP behind Big Ben's chair as she sits in it. Meg takes a chair in front of the desk. Big Ben seems lost in the memorabilia, as well.

BIG BEN  
I see a lot of myself in you, Meg.

MEG  
Thank you, Miss Bennett.

BIG BEN  
You can call me Bernice ... or Big Ben ... I kind of like that nickname.

MEG  
Bernice ...

BIG BEN  
I actually think you have the guts to take it all ... the killer instinct that I don't think the others have ... I wish I'd had more.

MEG  
You must have done pretty good.

BIG BEN  
If I had I'd still be doing it. I made a lot of bad choices ... took a lot of bad advice. I got screwed by my manager ... literally and figuratively. The band I control won't make those same mistakes. I will be in total control and take them right to the top!

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

A shadow of doubt crosses Meg's face as she basks in Big Ben's megalomania.

76 INT. PERFORMING ARTS CLASS ROOM - NEXT MORNING

76

Class hasn't started yet and BIG BEN hasn't taken the podium. Instead, MEG steps up.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Ten: Our Big Break ... or our Big Break Up?"

MEG

I just thought I'd let everyone know that our band is now officially called "The Hunters." Bernice told us yesterday that we are the official school entry into Online Idol.

These comments bring groans and cheers.

DANCER

Oh, it's Bernice now, huh?

Meg ignores Dana.

MODDIE

The Hunters are also going to perform at the MegaMall this Saturday in the "Search For The Next Big Thing" competition and win a spot on National TV!

DANCER

Big deal. We entered that over a week ago ... and we'll see who wins.

The class can sense a bitch fight brewing. Meg just glares. BIG BEN enters from her office and Meg takes a seat.

77 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

77

MEG confronts THE CHICKABEES after class.

(CONTINUED)

MEG

Look, you Chickabees had better stay right out of my way.

CEECEE

At least someone got the name right.

RIDER

Or else what?

MEG

Or else Big Ben is going to fix it so you never perform again.

DANCER

As if ...

MEG

Look, I'm going to front this school's official Online Idol group and there is not a cock-a-diddly-squat you can do about it.

DANCER

We really scare you ... and Bennett ... don't we? Why can't we just both compete?

MEG

If you don't drop out of the MegaMall competition and give us a clear shot, things might start going very wrong for you.

THE CHICKABEES wrap up a rehearsal, glistening with sweat, but radiant with happiness.

PETER and LINDA stand together leaning on the SUV, applauding.

DANCER

Well, girls ... that's it. Tomorrow we are either the next big thing or the last big nothing.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

The five girls line up and do their victory dance, which is getting more formal and complicated.

79 INT. MODDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

79

MODDIE's fashionable cell phone rings. It's on "speaker."

JACK

It's Jack. I've organised a little surprise for the MegaMall show tomorrow.

A worried look comes across Moddie's face.

MODDIE

Nobody's going to get hurt, are they?

JACK

Nah, but as soon as I hit the stage, The Hunters are going to develop a whole new fan base.

MODDIE

Well, all I can say is may the best band win.

80 INT. MEGAMALL CENTRE COURT - DAY

80

The MegaMall Centre Court Galleria Atrium Supreme is packed to the rafters, with the edges of several levels crowded with spectators.

SONG Something in the key of fiddle and dog.

On stage, a man playing a violin with a singing Jack Russell terrier is performing.

81 INT. BACKSTAGE AT THE CENTRE COURT - DAY

81

In the backstage marshalling area of the Centre Court, the Fiddler and Jack can be heard coming to a climax.

MEG and the rest of THE HUNTERS move to the wings and prepare to go on. Meg waves over the STAGE MANAGER.

(CONTINUED)

STAGE MANAGER  
Chickabees?

MEG  
No, we're on next ... The Hunters ...  
Chickabees have a bit of stage fright ...

STAGE MANAGER  
(Into his head mic)  
We've got a switch ... tell Ken ... Hunters  
not Chickabees next ...

DANCER  
Hang on, we're next.

STAGE MANAGER  
Make up your minds!

MEG  
Sorry, babe ... first in, best ... you know  
the rest ...

STAGE MANAGER  
You're on Hunters ...

The Fiddler and the Jack Russell receive polite applause.  
Meg and the boys take the stage and quickly set up. The  
MC ... a well known B list TV star ... takes the stage.

MC  
Give another big hand to the duo of  
Russell and Russell ... and let's pause to  
remember the pussycats who gave their  
lives to make those violin strings ... I  
don't think they died happy.

This brings a combination of guffaws and boos from the  
audience.

MC (cont'd)  
OK, now our next act comes from a local  
high school ... let's welcome The Hunters!

(CONTINUED)

SONG A major Hunters song, again with great solo for Jack.

The Hunters come on stage. They start out pretty good and begin to gain confidence. Meg is in great voice.

Jack takes centre stage for his solo spot and does things with his strings that cause a near riot. When it looks like it's the segue back to Meg, Jack just keeps going and the rest of the band follow his lead.

BIG BEN is enjoying this. She seems to have two protegees now instead of just one.

Out of nowhere, dozens of stoner bunnies, Goths and grungers surround the stage and start moshing, body slamming and general mayhem. Jack's guitar seems to be driving them into a frenzy.

MegaMall security try and break it up, but this makes it worse. Some of the invaders jump onto the stage. By the time The Hunters are finished, they can hardly be heard and it is nearly a full-scale riot.

The look on BIG BEN's face is deadly.

83 INT. BACKSTAGE AT THE CENTRE COURT - DAY

83

THE CHICKABEES are watching from the wings, aghast at the on-stage and audience goings on. From the look on her face, Moddie realises this was Jack's surprise.

STAGE MANAGER

OK, Chickabees ... You're on.

MEG and the other HUNTERS come off stage in a state of shock. Meg is nearly in tears. JACK has a bit of a swagger and a smirk. The Chickabees go on.

84 INT. MEGAMALL CENTRE COURT - DAY

84

THE CHICKABEES take the stage. The grungers, stoners and Goths have been subdued.

(CONTINUED)

MC

Well, that was The Hunters ... or maybe it was The Hunted ... and I think they've got a cult following now ... Good luck with that! Let's give another hand ... or Devil horns, if you prefer ... to The Hunters!

This brings another hoot and holler from the Stoners, Punks and Goths, some of whom start a fight and are pounced on by MegaMall security.

MC (cont'd)

OK, now it's time for another group from the same local high school, in fact ... must be a talented bunch ... don't know what they're feeding them, but it must be good! I've actually heard of this group ... put your hands together for ... The Chickabees!

SONG A full Chickabees number. Can be the one rehearsed.

THE CHICKABEES come forward onto the now cleared stage and perform one of their original songs.

It starts out low key and grows from there. Every eye and ear in the MegaMall Centre Court slowly focuses on the group.

The crowd is soon on their side, mainly because the idiot element has been quelled and they can actually hear them.

The Chickabees are magnificent. The moves are crisp, the voices loud and clear, the harmonies tight.

All of the parents, including PETER and LINDA, stand together, wishing them on ... The energy is palpable.

And the crowd goes wild! They get a big hand at the end, augmented by the grunge element.

The look on BIG BEN'S face is even deadlier.

MC (cont'd)

Wow! I don't want to make predictions, but The Chickabees get my vote.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MC (cont'd)

On the other hand, I am a sucker for a man with a singing dog. Now, the Judges are going to confer to tally their votes and we should be making an announcement very soon. Don't go away now!

As the Chickabees are leaving the stage, RIDER passes the MC a note. He quickly scans it, wide eyed, and steps again to the mic.

MC (cont'd)

Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls, I just have a little announcement ... The Chickabees would like to say no matter who wins, they owe everything to their high school performing arts teacher, Bernice Bennett ... better known to us oldies as ... Bernie Bonito?!?

Big Ben can see what's coming and ducks for cover into a shop off the Centre Court. The MC scans the audience. The audience are also looking around, murmuring in anticipation.

MC (cont'd)

Where is she ... come on up here, Bernie ... we still love you! Folks, one of the great rock stars of the 80s, Miss Bernie Bonito!!!

The crowd cheer in anticipation of her taking the stage, but this dies out when it becomes apparent that she isn't going to show.

MEG and THE HUNTERS are nowhere to be seen. Moddie's cell phone rings. She looks at the screen and answers.

MODDIE

Jack ...

JACK

(on phone)

Did you like my surprise?

(CONTINUED)



MODDIE

Oh, everybody was surprised, alright ...  
your mates pretty much trashed your whole  
act.

JACK

Yeah, I guess it kind of backfired, but I  
looked good.

MODDIE

Sure, but I don't think good looks are  
going to win today.

JACK

Maybe.

Moddie closes her cell phone.

The girls come out from the backstage area and rush to  
their parents. It is applause and hugs all around.

RIDER

I know, I know ... "It's an honour just to  
be nominated." Bull ... I want that prize!

DANCER

I think they really liked us.

LINDA

I'm afraid The Hunters lost the plot a  
bit.

MODDIE

I know ...

PETER

Baby, you were something.

TAPPER

Thanks, Dad.

The MC takes the stage again and goes to the Mic.

(CONTINUED)

MC

Ladies and Gentlemen ... can I have a bit of shush, please ... the judges are about to hand down their decision. It's very close.

An OFFICIAL comes down on the stage and hands the MC an envelope.

MC (cont'd)

OK. I have here in my hand a sealed envelope that contains the judges' decision ... who is going to be The Next Big Thing in Entertainment ... discovered right here at MegaMall ... on the 24th of September ...

HECKLER

Get on with it!

This brings a resounding cheer from the entire crowd. The MC smiles and tears open the envelope. The Chickabees all scrunch their eyes and hug each other tightly.

MC

You're right ... no more beating about ... The winner is ... no, the winners ARE ... What a surprise ... you could make a movie about this ... It's THE CHICKABEES!

The Chickabees scream and jump.

MC (cont'd)

Come on up again, girls. The major prize for the winners is an appearance on The Today Show on Monday morning ... with the entire country watching ... plus a shopping spree throughout the fantastic shops here at MegaMall ... clothes, shoes, records ... nothing teenage girls would be interested in, of course!

This brings a tremendous cheer from the crowd that turns into applause as the five Chickabees take the stage again. DANCER steps to the mic.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

This really means a lot to all of us. I think we are going to be popular because our songs talk to kids ... are about them ... things they worry about ... what's happening to them right now.

BIG BEN peers from her hiding place and seethes to hear herself echoed by THE CHICKABEES.

SONG As much of this is not seen/heard, can be a reprise.

The girls perform an encore, every bit as good as their first number.

While the girls are performing, BIG BEN approaches the group of parents from behind. Everyone expects her to congratulate them, but instead, she has a rather contrary look on her face.

BIG BEN

I'm sure this has been a wonderful experience for everyone, but I'm afraid the girls will not be able to perform on television.

This brings a stunned response from the group of parents. LINDA takes the lead.

LINDA

What on earth are you talking about, Bernice?

BIG BEN

Well, you see ... when you enrolled your children at our school, you signed a legal document stating your children's faces could not appear in the media without the express permission of BOTH the school AND the parents.

LINDA

But this isn't a school function! The Chickabees is not a school group!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LINDA (cont'd)

Of course they have our permission to appear on TV!

This brings a resounding chorus of approval from the parents. The Chickabees continue their encore, oblivious to the situation.

BIG BEN

Well, that's a matter for the School Council. Unfortunately, they don't meet until Tuesday. The Today Show is on Monday.

LINDA

I'm on the School Council ... I know they'll approve!

BIG BEN

I'm afraid that's not my call, but if they appear on The Today Show without permission, that could be grounds for them to be expelled. Have a nice weekend.

Big Ben turns and walks away. The parents stand looking after her, aghast at this development.

LINDA

That woman is insane! The rule is meant to protect the students in the event of a custody dispute, not a singing gig! I've never had to have the school's permission for Madeline to be on television!

PETER

I'll bet it wouldn't apply to The Hunters. What will we tell the girls?

There are five conspicuously empty seats in the class when the bell goes Monday morning.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Eleven: You'll Never Show Your Face In This Town Again"

(CONTINUED)

BIG BEN is hardly through the door from her private office when MEG is on her feet.

MEG

Miss Bennett, they aren't here! They're going on TV this morning! They'll be on right now!

BIG BEN

We'll see about that!

She grabs the remote for the TV monitor mounted up in the corner and turns it on. It comes alive on cartoons, but Big Ben changes the channel.

TODAY SHOW HOST

After this break, we have a special new singing group that I'm predicting is going to take this country ... and maybe the entire world ... by storm.

Big Ben looks as if she is going to bust a mainspring. She dashes out of the classroom.

88 INT. THE TODAY SHOW TV STUDIO - MORNING

88

The CHICKABEES are backstage at the studio and a jangle of nerves. The floor manager leads them onto the stage area.

FLOOR MANAGER

We're one minute back from commercials ... Take your places.

89 INT. PERFORMING ARTS CLASS ROOM - MORNING

89

BIG BEN hurriedly leads the PRINCIPAL into the class.

BIG BEN

I want you to witness this ... Five students from this school are going on nationwide television and it could be in blatant contravention to the privacy regulations for this school.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

On the TV monitor, The Today show comes back from the commercial break.

TODAY SHOW HOST

Here are five teenage girls who have a fantastic sound ... great style ... and sing all their own songs ... I'm proud to present THE CHICKABEES."

90 INT. THE TODAY SHOW TV STUDIO - MORNING

90

The CHICKABEES are in hard silhouette against a lit studio cyc. The front lights come up and they are all wearing elaborate masks over the tops of their faces.

SONG Full song with TV Production values, about identity.

The song they perform has something to do with individuality, mystery, loss of identity, masquerade, invisibility, thereby making sense of the masks.

It is another superlative performance from the girls.

91 INT. PERFORMING ARTS CLASS ROOM - MORNING

91

Most of the class clap and cheer the TV until BIG BEN sweeps the room with her Martian death-ray glare.

A slight smile shows at the edges of the Principal's mouth.

PRINCIPAL

Well, Bernice, those five girls are very good. Well done. A credit to the school. Clever idea, not showing their faces. We could have had a serious problem if any of their parents had objected.

Meg is livid. The bell rings and the class leaves.

92 INT. BIG BEN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - MORNING

92

(CONTINUED)

Big Ben storms into her office and slams the door. She unlocks her desk drawer and doesn't even bother with the coffee ruse and takes a deep slug straight from the quart bottle of vodka.

The room seems to start to spin around her, along with her life as a pop star.

She remembers all of the good times which soon turn into bad memories.

She hallucinates that the other members of the Head Hunters become the five Chickabees.

Big Ben goes into an alcohol-fuelled frenzy. She throws the almost empty bottle of Stolli against a framed gold record and begins to throw other things around the office.

93 INT. PERFORMING ARTS ROOM - MORNING

93

Jack comes into the empty performing arts room. He hears the commotion inside the office and peers through a chink in the papered window. Big Ben is in full swing, ranting and raving at her ghosts and at the Chickabees.

Jack pulls a cell phone out of his pocket, flips it open, puts it up against the window and hit a button. In the meantime, he keeps a close watch over his shoulder.

Suddenly, an even more piercing scream comes from within Big Ben's papered inner sanctum and Jack splits quickly.

94 INT. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - MORNING

94

The girls have returned triumphant to the school from the broadcast. They sign the late book.

SECRETARY

Girls ... the Principal has asked that you go straight to the Performing Arts Room.

DANCER

Now we get what's really coming to us.

95 INT. PERFORMING ARTS ROOM - DAY

95

THE CHICKABEES walk into the performing arts room expecting it to be full of cheering students. The Principal is standing there beside Big Ben on the podium. The door to Big Ben's office is open. Big Ben glares at them. She looks like she has been attacked.

The Principal silently gestures for them to go into Big Ben's private office. All of the posters have been torn and frames smashed. The girls are dumbfounded.

PRINCIPAL

Can you explain this?

DANCER

We've been on nationwide TV all morning.

RIDER

Probably a million people can testify to that.

PRINCIPAL

There's no need to get smart, young lady.

RIDER

Sorry, sir ...

PRINCIPAL

I'm not accusing you, but this battle of the bands thing has gone too far.

BIG BEN

I want them expelled. They must have got someone to do this, an accomplice, thinking they had the perfect alibi.

PRINCIPAL

Bernice, I will handle this. Until we know who did this, nobody will be expelled.

The girls look relieved.

(CONTINUED)



PRINCIPAL (cont'd)

But there will be no more bands apart from the one under Bernice's control. Your parents have been contacted and you will not be allowed to associate together until this matter is resolved.

THE CHICKABEES sit at their usual table. They receive passing compliments from other schoolmates, but they are despondent.

DANCER

How are we going to rehearse if we can't get together?

RIDER

The Online Idol Competition is in three weeks.

CEECEE

I think I have a plan.

MEG walks by.

MEG

I thought The Chickenguts weren't suppose to flock together.

RIDER

Get stuffed, Meg ... you're behind this.

MEG

I don't know what you mean.

CEECEE

Anyway, they can't stop us eating lunch ... and this was the only vacant table.

TAPPER

Yeah, I have no idea who these girls are.

MODDIE

So piss off, Meg.

(CONTINUED)

Meg moves on, smiling to herself.

DANCER

My folks nearly had a cow ... the Principal called my dad at work ... I'm grounded to the max.

RIDER

Me, too.

MODDIE

Linda says appearances are everything and this appears really bad.

TAPPER

My dad doesn't believe it, but if I get expelled, he loses all the school fees and we can't afford that.

CEECEE

My dad knows it's a crock, especially when I showed him those videos of Big Ben in action.

MODDIE

That still doesn't solve our problems ... how do we rehearse when we can't meet ... and how do we find out who trashed Big Ben's office?

CEECEE

Ladies, we have the technology!

DANCER

James Bond was busy last night, huh?

CEECEE

Actually, that was Q.

CeeCee brings her burgeoning backpack up onto the lunch table and opens it, handing each of The Chickabees a small padded parcel.

MODDIE

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

CEECEE

Web cams ... mics ... software. Just plug them into your computers ... log onto my web site ... and I've set up a virtual rehearsal room!

The other four look at her a bit perplexed.

CEECEE (cont'd)

You stand in front of the cam and the monitor and it's just like we're all in the same room!

TAPPER

Uh ... it's not going to work ...

The others look a bit worried.

DANCER

How come?

TAPPER

I ... I don't have a computer.

CEECEE

Is that all? We've got dozens! My dad and I will drop one off after school ... no charge ... my mother would probably pay you to take it!

DANCER

OK, let's meet up at 7.30 Tonight ... at CeeCee's web site.

CEECEE hits the power key on the computer sitting on the desk in Tapper's bedroom. The familiar tone sounds as it starts to boot up.

She adjusts the web cam sitting on top of the monitor and steps back with Tapper to admire her handy work.

(CONTINUED)

CEECEE

It's just a trade-in, but it's fairly new and my Dad souped it up a bit.

TAPPER

I've never had my own computer.

CEECEE

God, I think I held a mouse before I held a rattle! Anyway, it'll like only take you five minutes to work it out ... there's even this cool little program that shows you the basics.

98 INT. TAPPER'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

98

PETER and CeeCee's dad, STEVE, sit at the table, sharing a beer.

PETER

Thanks for loaning us the PC.

STEVE

Nah, a gift ... I have too many of them ... I just don't have the heart to throw them away. And I've put your phone number on the shop's internet account ... I get free time.

PETER

Thanks.

STEVE

Frankly, I think this whole affair is a load of codswallop. I've seen that teacher in action. She's a real nutter ... and somebody's set the kids up.

PETER

That's what Tani thinks.

STEVE

God, and to think how many unrequited teenage fantasies I had about Bernie Bonito!

(CONTINUED)

The two girls come into the kitchen.

CEECEE

All done. See you online at 7.30.

TAPPER

I'd better get up to speed quick!

STEVE

We'd better get home for dinner. Thanks for the beer. See you soon ... I think us Chickabees parents have to stick together.

PETER

I agree.

CEECEE

Me too.

TAPPER

Me three!

99 INT. TAPPER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

99

TAPPER sits at the keyboard and monitor, fathoming a web browser. Suddenly, she is in CEECEE'S SPACE, a bright, garish over-designed web site.

A flashing icon reads "Chickabee's Rehearsal Room." Tapper clicks on this.

The screen refreshes to show four CHICKABEES standing there with a fifth space vacant. When Tapper stands and moves back, she comes into frame in this fifth area.

CEECEE

Hey, you're late!

TAPPER

Sorry ... still got the training wheels on.

DANCER

I've told my folks I'm just singing with a tape of you guys.

(CONTINUED)

MODDIE

Good idea ... I'll try that if Linda gets snoopy.

CEECEE

Now, it's set up so we each see and hear what the other four are doing. The mic should pick up everything ... just stay in front of the camera.

The five girls each move out of frame to grab their guitars, keyboard or drum synth and then move back in. The result looks like an early TV Chromakey montage of a rock group.

DANCER

Let's do it!

SONG New song that suits the virtual environment.

The Chickabees rehearse an entire number in their virtual rehearsal world, getting so adept at the technique that they start to refer to each other on the screen! (Very Brady Bunch). CeeCee has also rigged the software to do geometric wipes and revolves, etc.

100 INT. PERFORMING ARTS ROOM - MORNING

100

BIG BEN leaves her inner sanctum and takes her podium.

BIG BEN

I have an announcement to make. Unfortunately, the last person to come into my office besides myself was Meg Phillips. She has become a suspect in the investigation.

Members of the class look around, but Meg isn't in her usual seat or anywhere in the room.

(CONTINUED)

BIG BEN (cont'd)

Like that other group, Meg will be banned from the competition unless it can be proved she did not take part in the incident. It would be a shame to waste all of the effort of her band mates, so I will front the school's official entry into the Online Idol competition.

This development sparks applause and cheers from the class. THE CHICKABEES look like they can't believe what they've just heard.

101 EXT. SCHOOL QUAD AREA - MORNING RECESS

101

THE CHICKABEES sit together chatting quietly.

DANCER

That's just crazy. How could she do that to Meg?

RIDER

Easy. She was probably planning it all along.

MODDIE

I don't think Meg would do it.

CEECEE

Well, I've gone ahead and entered us in Online Idol as an independent entry.

DANCER

Cool.

CEECEE

I used the footage from the Today Show and the MegaMall and even the Chicken Shack for our audition tape.

102 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

102

CEECEE is getting books from her locker. When she goes to shut the door, JACK SLACK is standing close behind it, causing her to jump. CeeCee quickly "straightens" her spy glasses, sensing a media event coming on.

JACK

Look, I thought I should tell you guys. It was Big Ben herself ... trashed her office. She just went crazy. She was drinking, too. She pinned this on Meg because she wanted to front the band all along. The lady's nuts. Have a look at this.

Jack holds up his cell phone and plays the incriminating video file.

CEECEE

Can I ... uh ... borrow your phone for a minute? I'll just make a copy.

JACK

Sure. I figured you'd know how to do that.

CEECEE

Why are you doing this, Jack? You might win.

JACK

Not that way. I gotta start doing the right thing sooner or later. Just don't tell Moddie it was me, OK? Gotta keep up appearances.

103 INT. PERFORMING ARTS ROOM - MORNING

103

The class awaits the arrival of BIG BEN, who troops in like clockwork at the ringing of the class bell.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Twelve: How Defeat Was Snatched From The Jaws of Victory"

(CONTINUED)



BIG BEN

Before I take the roll, I have a couple of announcements that I am going to take the utmost pleasure in making.

She looks around the room, spotting each of the Chickabees.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

Our official school group, The Hunters ... while not exactly the darlings of the local shopping centre crowd ... is in the finals to be selected for the world-wide Online Idol competition.

The Chickabees try to look disinterested.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

I have it on good authority that there are only two local groups on the shortlist.

The Chickabees try even harder to look disinterested!

DANCER is lying in bed, reading. Her cell phone vibrates. She reads an SMS, swings her legs out of bed and boots up her computer.

MODDIE is already in the Virtual Rehearsal Room when Dancer appears, and they are joined in quick succession by the OTHER THREE, all in pyjamas, CEECEE rubbing sleep out of her eyes.

MODDIE

I wanted to tell you all at once.

DANCER

What, you're pregnant? You've had a better offer?

The others chuckle.

MODDIE

Well, yes.

(CONTINUED)

DANCER

You're kidding? Who's the father?

MODDIE

No, the other one. I've been offered a modelling contract in New York. They say I can make up to \$10,000 a day! I promise ... I was going to tell you if it ever became real.

DANCER

It certainly sounds real.

TAPPER

Ten Grand a day. I'll do it.

CEECEE

How long before you leave?

MODDIE

I'm not sure ... I think, like, in a week.

CEECEE

Damn! That's when the Online Idol is ... if we are the second local group ...

DANCER

How did Big Ben find out who's in Online Idol?

RIDER

Voodoo, witchcraft, time travel ... take your pick.

CEECEE

Hang on ... We can do it!

TAPPER

James Bond is having a vision.

CEECEE

Look, we've already done it! Kind of ... we just video Moddie like she's in the Virtual Rehearsal Room and then we rehearse with her in the picture!

(CONTINUED)

RIDER

That's all well and good in our bedrooms,  
but this is, like, on stage ... It will  
look like shite.

CEECEE

Not if I can get a powerful enough server  
... like the one at school.

DANCER

Can we bring it off?

CEECEE

Do you doubt me, Miss Moneyppenny?

DANCER

The important thing is to keep this  
absolutely secret from Big Ben.

105 EXT. SCHOOL QUAD AREA - MORNING RECESS

105

DANCER, MODDIE, TAPPER and RIDER sit as CEECEE comes  
running up.

CEECEE

OK, I checked my email. We got the  
official notice ... We're the local entry  
for Online Idol!

The five girls all squeal.

CEECEE (cont'd)

Next Friday at 4:15pm Local time, we have  
a ten minute performance slot in the  
Asia/Pacific time zone.

RIDER

Where will we do it?

CEECEE

In the Media Room. It's perfect! I can  
drop in backgrounds and nobody will notice  
Moddie is a special effect!

(CONTINUED)

MODDIE

Gee, thanks ... Moddie-In-A-Can.

CEECEE

We'll be in and out before anyone knows,  
and by then it will be too late. Oh, and  
I cut together all of that spy glasses  
stuff ... I reckon we give it to the  
Principal.

DANCER

Maybe after the competition. Otherwise, it  
looks like sour grapes.

CEECEE

Totally.

BIG BEN enters from her inner sanctum. She is fuming.

BIG BEN

I just received a call. It seems our  
official school group is NOT the local  
finalist for the Online Idol competition.

Big Ben sweeps her Martian Death Ray glare at the five  
CHICKABEES.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

The local entrant had better not be anyone  
from this school.

SONG Vocal/instrumental over the following montage scenes

MONTAGE - In amongst the floor to ceiling computers,  
CEECEE busily programs and animates colourful backgrounds  
for the Online Idol performance.

108 EXT. TAPPER'S BASEMENT CARPARK - EVENING 108

MONTAGE - The CHICKABEES perform against a wall. The section behind MODDIE has been painted Gremlin Green. They are being lit by the headlights of LINDA'S SUV.

CEECEE'S dad, STEVEN is filming Moddie with a video camera.

PETER and LINDA seem to be standing a bit closer this time and making a bit of obvious eye contact.

109 INT. THE CHICKEN SHOP (POSS. KFC)- NIGHT 109

MONTAGE - A banner proclaiming GOOD LUCK MODDIE and BON VOYAGE TOMORROW stretches across the dining room.

THE CHICKABEES, their PARENTS and THE CHICKEN SHOP MANAGER raise a glass of champagne in a toast to MODDIE and LINDA.

Lots of kissing, hugging and tears. PETER and LINDA share a significant moment, not missed by TAPPER and MODDIE, who hug each other.

The song ends.

Moddie glances out the Chicken Shack window and sees JACK glaring in the window from the carpark.

MODDIE

I'm ... Uh ... just popping out.

She makes sure no one is looking too closely and ducks out the door into the carpark. Eagle-eye Linda isn't so easily ducked.

110 EXT. THE CHICKEN SHOP CARPARK - NIGHT 110

MODDIE goes straight up to JACK.

JACK

So, you were just going to go ... not say anything?

(CONTINUED)

MODDIE

I'm sorry. This isn't just about you anymore. You were part of my self-abuse, but I still like you ...

JACK

So that's it, huh? You don't need big bad Jack Slack anymore? I helped you guys!

MODDIE

What do you mean you helped us?

JACK

I gave you the video of Big Ben!

MODDIE

What video?

Moddie is shocked. Jack grabs her arm. He looks into her eyes, trying to be soft.

JACK

Please. Stay.

LINDA is immediately out the door and walking determinedly towards them. Jack sees her first.

JACK (cont'd)

Oh, hey ... haven't you always wanted to introduce me to your Mother?

LINDA

Very pleased to meet you. Now take your hands off my daughter!

On 'daughter,' Linda is upon them and plants the spiked heel of her Jimmy Choos on Jack's foot, causing him to release Moddie and limp away.

MODDIE

Linda! Why did you do that?

LINDA

Because they don't pay \$10,000 a day for bruises. Come back inside, Madeline.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

She looks back at Jack, a bit sad. She mouths the word "sorry." Linda leads Moddie back into the Chicken Shop.

111 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PICK-UP AREA - AFTERNOON

111

MODDIE leans out of the rear window of a cab. LINDA can be seen across the seat. The Other FOUR GIRLS stand at the curb, everyone close to tears.

MODDIE

I don't suppose you've forgotten, this is where we all met.

DANCER

I didn't think you were the sentimental type.

MODDIE

I'll write, I'll ring, I'll be in the virtual rehearsal room as often as I can.

DANCER

Trouble is, we'll all be asleep.

LINDA

Come on, sweetie ... we have to go.

MODDIE

You guys win that thing. I'll be there in spirit.

CEECEE

You'll be there in more than that.

MODDIE

I'll be back ... Bye ...

The cab pulls away and the FOUR GIRLS blow kisses and wave.

DANCER

OK, ladies ... it's show time!

112 INT. TAXI CAB - AFTERNOON 112

MODDIE looks out of the back window of the cab as long as she can. When the other girls are finally out of sight, Moddie turns around and looks out of her side window. LINDA looks out of the opposite window. Neither looks at the other.

113 INT. VARIOUS SCHOOL CLASSROOMS - AFTERNOON 113

STUDENTS and TEACHERS sit casually in classrooms watching computer monitors and computer projections on screens, waiting for Online Idol to start.

114 INT. PERFORMING ARTS CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON 114

JACK and the other male members of THE HUNTERS sit with BIG BEN. A pull down screen displays a video projector image of the ONLINE IDOL web site.

BIG BEN

Twenty minutes. Then we'll find out who our rival is.

There is a main part of the screen devoted to the group currently "on stage." It's a 50s inspired Manga fusion band from Japan called "The Pokémon Elvises."

In the corner of the screen is a small box entitled "The Green Room." It flickers a couple of times and briefly shows the School Media Room and THE CHICKABEES.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

What the hell was that?

115 INT. SCHOOL MEDIA ROOM - AFTERNOON 115

CEECEE is putting the finishing touches to the camera and computer setup.

THE CHICKABEES stand in front of the Media Room green screen with a noticeable gap for MODDIE.

(CONTINUED)



The TV monitor in front of the band flickers briefly.

RIDER

What the hell was that?

CEECEE

Nothing. They're just cutting into our feed. I'll see a 60 second countdown before our ten minutes start.

BIG BEN

You'll see nothing but the Principal and expulsion from this school if you don't step away from that equipment immediately!

BIG BEN and THE HUNTERS stand at the back of the Media Room.

CEECEE

Uh ... I have permission from Mr. Standish to be using this equipment.

BIG BEN

I don't see Mr. Standish. This could be another one of your lies.

Big Ben turns to The Hunters.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

Go and get your instruments. You four get off the stage. I am authorizing the Official school band to perform in your stead.

RIDER

You can't do that!

BIG BEN

Oh, but I can! You, Little Miss Computer Whizz, will operate the equipment for me ... us.

The Hunters return with their gear. CEECEE reluctantly sits down at the computer. She makes eye contact with JACK who just shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

BIG BEN (cont'd)  
Why aren't there any sets or stuff?

CEECEE  
It's all in the computer ... special effects ... gets put together and goes out to the internet.

BIG BEN  
Show me.

She walks round to the other side of the computer. CeeCee brings up some of the Chickabee video effects.

BIG BEN (cont'd)  
Clever. The Principal is watching this in his office. I think he will be very pleased. You four will remain here ... I'm not finished with you yet.

MODDIE abruptly turns from her reverie out the side window of the cab and leans over the seat to the driver.

MODDIE  
Stop the cab.

The cab slows as it pulls over to the curb.

LINDA  
What is it ... are you going to throw up?  
It's just nerves.

MODDIE  
No, Linda. You always say you're doing it for me, that it's what I want. It's what's best.

LINDA  
What's brought this on?

MODDIE  
What I really need is to be in The Chickabees. More than anything.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA

But ...

MODDIE

If I finish school and go to college, I might not end up one of those empty-headed scarecrows with my fingers down my throat.

LINDA

But ...

MODDIE

It's not like we need the money. Please ... Mom.

Big Ben and The Hunters get ready on the stage in front of the green screen. CEECEE's cell phone rings.

BIG BEN

Don't answer it.

CEECEE

It's my mom.

BIG BEN

Be quick ... We only have like 5 minutes.

CEECEE

Hello?

MODDIE

(Over phone)

CeeCee ... it's Moddie. I'm on my way back. I'll be there in a few minutes!

CEECEE

Uh ... still at school ... in the Media Room.

MODDIE

(Over Phone)

Duh ... I know that ... see you soon!

(CONTINUED)

CEECEE

Uh ... yeah ... see you soon ... Mom.

CeeCee flips her cell phone closed. The other four Chickabees come and sit around her. She turns to them and whispers.

CEECEE (cont'd)

That was Moddie. She'll be here in five! I didn't have the heart to tell her what happened.

BIG BEN

What the hell are you whispering about? Shut up. You'd better not screw this up for me.

118 INT. THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

118

The Principal logs onto the web site.

119 INT. SCHOOL MEDIA ROOM - AFTERNOON

119

THE HUNTERS fidget on stage. A countdown starts on the computer screen.

CEECEE

OK ... sixty seconds ... I'll count you in from 10.

BIG BEN

That's a good little computer nerd.

CeeCee begins to type frantically into the keyboard.

BIG BEN (cont'd)

What are you doing?

CEECEE

I'm just ... uh ... doing computer stuff ... talking to the, you know, Master Controller ... 30 seconds ...

(CONTINUED)

CeeCee is madly dragging video files together. She then double-clicks on something.

CEECEE (cont'd)

Ten seconds ... nine ... eight ... seven ... six

...

SONG Major Hunters song fronted by Big Ben.

CeeCee does the rest silently with her fingers. On zero, The Hunters start playing one of their anarchic tunes with Big Ben wailing out front.

However, on the computer screen ... and on the entire World Wide Web ... is CeeCee's video masterpiece ... all the bad stuff they secretly taped of BIG BEN and the others becomes background to the song. JACK'S CELL PHONE FILE of Big Ben's vodka-fueled frenzy plays a big part.

It is inter-cut with clips candidly shot on CeeCee's video glasses throughout the entire CHICKABEES saga of BIG BEN being a harridan in class and abusing the others.

The style of the editing is actually really funky, with lots of scratching and stepping, like a hip-hop video, and fits in really well with glimpses of Big Ben and The Hunters' song.

120 INT. THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

120

The Principal stares in horror at his computer monitor with all the appeal of Dracula for a crucifix while all of this plays out. A smile slowly comes across his face.

121 INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS AROUND SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

121

On computer monitors and projected on screens throughout the school, students and teachers are watching this. It is a real "Springtime For Hitler" moment, mouths agape and giggling.

It is abject humiliation for BIG BEN and a vindication for MEG and THE CHICKABEES.

122 INT. GRUNGE STICKY CARPET STONER PUB - AFTERNOON 122

A TV monitor in a grunge bar is displaying the internet feed. Dozens of STONERS, PUNKS and GOTHS are moshing, head banging and body slamming to THE HUNTERS song, oblivious to the implications of the display.

123 INT. SCHOOL MEDIA ROOM - AFTERNOON 123

THE HUNTERS come to the climax of their song.

The CHICKABEES sit behind the computer monitor, staggered at what they must have just wrought.

BIG BEN and THE HUNTERS let out a whoop, put down their gear and jump off the stage.

BIG BEN

I'm going to tell The Principal he can  
stick this job ... I'm making a comeback!

Big Ben and The Hunters take off out the Media Room door and MODDIE comes back through in their wake. Moddie and JACK pass close in the doorway and share a glance. Moddie grabs him on the back of the neck and kisses him hard, then runs to the other girls.

MODDIE

Did I miss something?

CEECEE

Quick! We've still got five minutes!

Jack hangs back and sits at the top of the class room.

124 INT. VARIOUS SCHOOL HALLWAYS - AFTERNOON 124

BIG BEN and the other band members whoop down the hallways, triumphant.

Other students and teachers emerge from classrooms and stare after them as they go by, wondering how these idiots can be so happy.

125 INT. OUTSIDE THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON 125

Big Ben skids to a halt outside the frosted glass door that reads PRINCIPAL and composes herself.

Big Ben motions for the others to wait outside and throws open the door.

126 INT. THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON 126

The PRINCIPAL is behind his desk and displays all the countenance of the head of the Spanish Inquisition about to pass judgement on a heretic. The door closes behind Big Ben.

127 INT. THE SCHOOL MEDIA ROOM - AFTERNOON 127

THE CHICKABEES take the stage in front of the green screen.

CEECEE madly types at the keyboard and hits RETURN, then dashes up to take her place on the virtual world stage.

DANCER

Hello, world ... we're the Chickabees. Sorry about that bit ... some tragic wannabees tried to hijack our spot. We hope you like our song.

SONG This is the penultimate finale for The Chickabees.

Dancer counts them in and they start to give the performance of their lives. It is CeeCee and Tapper's best composition yet.

The computer graphics work a treat behind them, creating an amazing performance world.

128 INT/EXT. ALL OVER THE WORLD - DIFFERENT TIME ZONES 128

MONTAGE - THE CHICKABEES' performance is displayed on computer monitors all over the world.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

A tiny, crowded Japanese lounge room ...

A stockbroker's board in New York ...

A classroom in India ...

A young soldiers' barracks in Germany ...

A group of Chinese gymnasts ...

Tweenagers and adults all over the globe are moving to the sound of The Chickabees.

The performance builds to an incredible climax and rings out with a long, reverberating echo.

129 EXT. OVERVIEW OF THE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

129

The high school seems deserted on a bright, sunny day. A distant echo of a bass line can still be heard.

DANCER (V.O.)

"Chapter Fourteen: The End of The Chickabees, or Just The Beginning?" That was a pretty special day for everyone. The Chickabees didn't win Online Idol ... we didn't even come close ... but out of 300 entries, we came 75th ... just behind The Pokémon Elvises from Japan.

130 INT. GRUNGE STICKY CARPET STONER PUB - NIGHT

130

BIG BEN is on the tiny pub stage fronting a HEAD HUNTERS tribute band, swallowing the mic and screaming out her guts, a sad parody of her former self.

DANCER (V.O.)

Big Ben did get an honorable mention for the video invasion of Online Idol, plus a lot of fan mail from people who thought she was dead.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



130 CONTINUED:

130

DANCER (V.O.)

She resigned before she was fired and decided she really would make a comeback ... actually fronting a Head Hunters tribute band. She came third in a Bernie Bonito impersonator competition.

SONG Bad parody of Bonito song by Bonito, much like opening

131 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAYS - DAY

131

The school is still deserted. Big thumping music can be heard from somewhere closer.

DANCER (V.O.)

Jack became a school hero for helping to bring down Big Ben. He and Moddie are still friends, but they realised they were kind of using each other and called it quits. Jack and Meg are going to keep their band going, but not called The Hunters. And The Chickabees got an offer to record a CD ...

There is a big colourful poster on a wall that reads:

"The Chickabees Big Day Out! FREE! Buy Their New CD, *Nasty Girls!*"

132 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD - DAY

132

A large crowd surrounds an outdoor stage beneath the pine trees on the far side of the sports ground.

DANCER (V.O.)

This was where it all started, kind of ... so, we thought we'd give a big thank you concert for our families and fans and everyone who helped The Chickabees.

A big banner stretches across the pros arch proclaiming "The Chickabees - We're Number 75!"

(CONTINUED)

DANCER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Will the road to fame and fortune ever  
end? Who cares ... it's way too much fun  
being The Chickabees!

SONG This can be a monster song/anthem that grows and grows

The Chickabees launch into a huge number on the outdoor stage ... and the crowd goes wild!

Their parents are in a group together down the front. JACK is in the mosh pit, looking up at MODDIE and they make eye contact with a smile.

PETER and LINDA seem kind of close. When he puts an arm around her shoulder, TAPPER and MODDIE share a knowing glance and smile.

Everyone who has helped the girls along the way is there to celebrate ... THE PARENTS, The CHICKEN SHOP MANAGER, THE PRINCIPAL, People from TAPPER'S BUILDING, even THE POKEMON ELVISES ...

The Chickabees Big Day Out Concert turns into the END CREDITS, with all actors who played the principal characters taking the stage and singing with the group, including the actors who played Big Ben, Meg, Jack Slack, Jack's Father, The Cronies and Burly Guys, etc.

Bloopers and other off-camera antics are also included.

THE END.