



Don't Kiss Girls

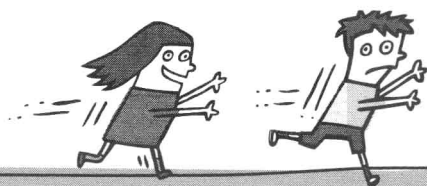


Pat Flynn

Puffin Books

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藏书章



Pat Flynn

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Don't Kiss Girls

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When I'm at home, in front of the mirror, I can talk real smooth. But when I get near girls my brain turns to mush. If I had a flip-top scalp you could suck it out with a straw. I just need a way of making Ashleigh see what I'm really like. Well, not what I'm really like, but what I'm like sometimes. Well, occasionally.

Tony Ross is in *luurve*. And she's not just any girl. She's Ashleigh Simpkin – the most popular girl in school. Rossy needs some help . . . and fast. But will his best mate's advice get him a girl – or get him in more trouble than he ever imagined?

Also by Pat Flynn

Mal Rider

Adventures of Danny

The Tuckshop Kid

To the Light

Alex Jackson series

To the players like Mezza and Rossy
who see life not as a tragedy but
a comedy.

And to those who made me laugh
at school like Podge, Chook
and Noope.

**The Musical,
the Girl,
and MPme**

While we wait in the tuckshop line, Kane and I tell each other jokes.

‘Why did the toilet paper roll down the hill?’
I say.

‘Why?’

‘To get to the bottom.’

We laugh.

‘Spell “pig” backwards and say “like a waterfall”,’ says Kane.

‘G. I. P. like a waterfall.’

Kane chuckles.

‘I don’t get it,’ I say, before suddenly I do.
I punch him in the arm and we laugh again.

Kane and I think the same, probably because we’ve grown up together. He moved across the road years ago, back when I was still wetting the bed, and we’ve been friends ever since. Though things have been changing a bit lately, I must admit. Since we started high school, he’s grown taller and stronger and kids are noticing him more. Especially girls. But it’s times like this, when we’re



mucking around, that I realise how gooda mates we really are. No one will ever get between us.

A girl appears. 'Let me in?' she asks Kane.

He studies her for a moment. She's got straight blonde hair and deep blue eyes.

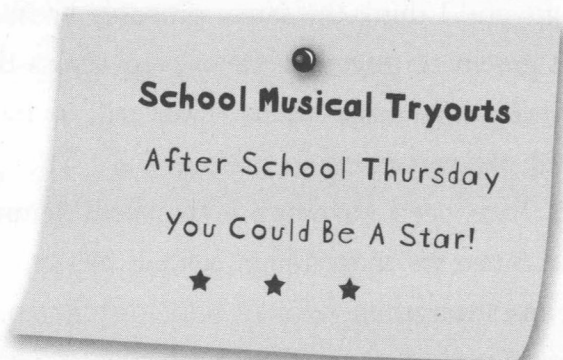
'Sure,' he says.

She cuts in behind Kane, which is in front of me. Damn!

'Are you going to try out?' she says to Kane, fluttering her eyelashes.

He shrugs. 'For what?'

She points at a poster pinned to the crumbling cork noticeboard.



‘You should, you know,’ she says. ‘Us girls are all hoping you will.’

I snigger, and the girl looks back at me.

‘What’s *your* problem?’ she asks.

‘Nuthin. I just can’t see Kane singing and dancing, that’s all.’

What I really mean is: I know Kane. You don’t.

‘I betcha he’d be great.’ She touches his arm. ‘And if he needed any help, I could give him some private tuition. I’ve been performing since I was five.’

She does a pirouette and her hair whips me in the face. This girl is really starting to get on my nerves.

‘It’s not gonna happen,’ I say.

‘Why don’t you let Kane make up his own mind?’

‘Okay then. Tell her, Kane.’

I look at him but he doesn’t say anything.

‘Kane. Tell her.’

Before he can, three more girls show up and



the blonde lets them all in behind her, which is in front of me.

Damn!



'D'ya hear Kane's trying out for the musical?' Gavin Fox says to me during maths.

'You're kidding?'

'Nah. I don't blame him, either. It's a good way to meet girls. I'm thinking about trying out meself.'

'Can you sing?'

'Nah. But I'm hoping for a part where you don't have to. Like maybe a tree.'

'In that case, I'm going for a part, too.'

'What as?' he says.

'A dog.'

We laugh.

'Boys!' says Mr Relf. 'I'll be over in a minute to check on your work.'

‘Hey, will you come with me to the tryouts?’
Gavin whispers.

‘Hell, yeah.’

Although there’s no way I’d be caught dead trying out for the school musical, seeing Kane make a fool out of himself is something I wouldn’t miss for the world.



‘The sun’ll come out, next Tuesday,’ sings the blonde girl from the tuckshop line. ‘Bet your bottom dollar that next Tuesday, there’ll be . . .’

‘A much better singer than you up there,’ I say.

Gavin sniggers and Miss Mason and Mr Relf, the musical directors, turn and give us nasty looks.

Most of the kids who try out can’t sing to save themselves. If I were the director I’d keep a box of rotten tomatoes handy. But then a girl I’ve never seen before gets up on stage. She stands tall, and



there's something about her that keeps my eyes open and my mouth shut.

'Say you'll care for me, now and always, turn my head with talk of butterflies . . .'

She looks out at the crowd and uses her hands to help her sing. She's got nice hands and an even nicer voice.

'Say you'll want me when I'm old and ugly. Swear to me that all you say is true. That's all I ask of you . . .'

'Holy hell, this girl's good,' says Gavin.

'She's better than good,' I reply. 'She's damn good.'

The music crawls under my skin and something rises up inside of me. Something I've never felt before and I have no idea what it is.

'Say you'll eat my really average cooking. Say the word and I will fall for you . . .'

'The word,' I mumble.

'What?' asks Gavin.

'Nuthin.'

She gets to the climax. *'Love meeeee. Or else I'll kill you.'*

It's like she's talking to me, and me only. And suddenly I know what the feeling I've got inside is. I've read about it in one of Belinda's *Dolly* magazines.

It's lurrve.

She smiles out at the audience, who gives her a round of applause. I clap so hard my hands go red.

'Well done, Ashleigh,' says Miss Mason.

Ashleigh, ay? That's a good name for my first girlfriend.

Miss Mason leans over to Mr Relf and says quietly, 'We've found our star. Now we just need a leading man.'

Before long it's Kane's turn. I know that he knows I'm watching but he doesn't look over, which annoys me because I want to poke a face at him.

He clicks his fingers to get the beat and then starts singing.

'I'll win the game on my own. I'm like a one-man



team. I feel power inside me. People will see me and scream.'

I have a chuckle at the thought of people looking at Kane and screaming, and nudge Gavin to share the joke. But all Gavin says is, 'Geez. He's not half bad.'

I hate to say it but Gavin's right. Like everything else, Kane's beaten me to puberty, and his low voice rumbles to the back of the room in a way that doesn't make me want to put my hands over my ears.

'I'm gonna run right past you. Make you feel so ashamed. I'm gonna live forever. All you suckers remember my name.' He starts doing the moonwalk. *'It's Kane, my name is Kane, it's Kane, it's Kane, it's KANE!'*

He finishes by throwing his arms up in the air, like he's won an Olympic gold medal for moonwalking.

The crowd claps and some girls whistle and scream. I'd like to boo, but I'd probably get kicked

out and I want to hear what the teachers say about him.

‘He’s good,’ murmurs Miss Mason, ‘but his voice is too deep for the lead role. We need someone who sounds a bit more boyish.’

Yes! I think.

‘I disagree,’ says Mr Relf. ‘He’d be a good foil for Ashleigh, especially in terms of the romantic story-line.’

No! What are you thinking, Relfy?

‘I suppose Kane *will* look convincing during the kissing scene,’ says Miss Mason, stroking her hair. ‘He’s a real ladies’ man.’

Kissing scene? No one told me about no kissing scene!

‘And I don’t think we have too many other options,’ says Mr Relf. ‘So it’s decided then?’

‘Wait!’ I yell.

Everybody looks at me.

‘I want to try out for the lead part,’ I say, before I really know what I’m saying.