



ths phne 2.0  
the next generation

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ths phne 2.0: the next generation**

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# THIS PHONE 2.0: THE NEXT GENERATION

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT BY  
*Lindsay Price*



*the phone 2.0: the next generation*  
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## **Characters**

13M/24W total roles

Minimum 2M/3W

ACTOR ONE, FOUR: Male

ACTOR TWO, THREE FIVE, Female

## **Author's Note**

Pace is very important in this piece. Keep it up as you move from vignette to vignette. Do NOT use elaborate costume changes or sets that will take the audience out of the world of the play. Blackouts should be no longer than three seconds.

The set is very simple: a couple of cubes or chairs that can be moved around for the various scenes. You can also have stationary cubes — a couple stage left and right and upstage centre. You can also have a backdrop with “ths phne 2.0” scrawled across it.



*Lights come up. ACTOR ONE and TWO are stage left, both texting on cellphones. ACTOR THREE and FIVE enter stage right. ACTOR FOUR runs on close behind.*

ACTOR FOUR: (*sing song*) Look what I got, look what I got. (*waving a cellphone at THREE and FIVE*)

ACTOR THREE: Fancy.

ACTOR FOUR: Does everything but cook your meals and fold your laundry. (*waving it at ACTOR FIVE*) Whatcha think? Don't you wish you had a phone like this?

ACTOR FIVE: No.

ACTOR FOUR: (*puzzled*) No?

ACTOR FIVE: I looked at that model but the camera's no good. (*waves her phone*) Mine takes awesome pictures.

ACTOR FOUR: No good? No good? I'll be right back.

*ACTOR FOUR dashes offstage right. ACTOR THREE and FIVE walk over to ACTOR ONE and TWO. They are both on cellphones, texting each other. They don't speak. They don't look up. They text furiously as if they are really emoting whatever it is they're texting.*

*ACTOR THREE and FIVE look at each other and then at ONE and TWO.*

ACTOR THREE: (*confused*) Hi guys.

ACTOR ONE: (*not looking up*) Hi?

ACTOR TWO: (*still furiously texting*) Yeah, hi.

ACTOR FIVE: Ummmmm, what are you doing?

ACTOR TWO: (*looking up*) Huh?

ACTOR THREE: What are you doing?

ACTOR ONE: We're texting our dialogue.

ACTOR THREE: What?

ACTOR ONE: We're texting our dialogue.

ACTOR FIVE: You're joking.

ACTOR TWO: Uh uh. This play is great!

ACTOR THREE: But if you do that, THEY (*gesturing to the audience*) can't hear it.

*This stops the two in their texting tracks. They look at the audience. They look at ACTOR THREE and FIVE. They look back to the audience.*

ACTOR TWO: You mean we have to speak?

ACTOR ONE: Out loud?

ACTOR THREE: That's the way it's usually done.

ACTOR ONE & TWO: Oh.

ACTOR ONE: Can't we just hold up our phones? They could read along.

*ACTOR ONE and TWO hold up the phones and smile.*

ACTOR FIVE: It's not the same.

ACTOR THREE: Trust me. It's the right thing to do.

ACTOR ONE: (*with a sigh*) If you say so.

ACTOR FIVE: (*to the audience*) This Phone Will Explode at the Tone:

ACTOR ONE, TWO THREE & FIVE: The Next Generation!

*ALL leave stage left. From stage right, ACTOR FOUR enters. He is very nerdy. He speaks in a typical nerdy voice. He walks with his shoulders slumped forward and he shuffles. He in on his cellphone.*

ACTOR FOUR: Yes mother. Yes mother. Yes mother. I won't forget. I won't. Pick up oatmeal. Pick up oatmeal. I have a list. Oatmeal is on the list and I –

*ACTOR FIVE enters from stage left. As soon as ACTOR FOUR sees her, he completely changes his demeanor. He lowers the tone of his voice and completely straightens his back. He starts to walk with purpose.*

ACTOR FOUR: How many times, do I have to repeat myself? I said I was on top of the deal. If I say I'm on top of the deal you can be sure I'm on top of it.

*ACTOR FIVE passes him and he waves cockily at her. She waves back.*

ACTOR FOUR: You think I would let something as important as this slip my mind? Do you think I'd let –

*ACTOR FIVE exits. ACTOR FOUR reverts right back to nerd-dom in terms of voice, posture and shuffle.*

ACTOR FOUR: – Oatmeal slip my mind? Just because I forgot oatmeal that one time? Gee whiz. Yes mother. Yes mother. Yes mother. Flea collars. Flea collars. I have the flea collars on my list. It's on my list. It's –

*ACTOR THREE enters. ACTOR FOUR transforms.*

ACTOR FOUR: – at the top of my list. That's what I'm trying to communicate to you. How come this is not on the top of your list huh? Huh? I take care of my commitments and that means –

*ACTOR THREE, as if trying to remember something, turns away as she looks through her purse. ACTOR FOUR reverts.*

ACTOR FOUR: I'm going to pick up the flea collars. Three boxes. Three. I think we only need three.

*ACTOR THREE pulls out a date book and writes something down. As she does, she turns toward ACTOR FOUR. He transforms.*

ACTOR FOUR: I'm telling you we only need three and that is the number I'm going to get and I won't hear another word about it!

*ACTOR FOUR waves cockily at ACTOR THREE. She giggles and turns away. ACTOR FOUR reverts.*

ACTOR FOUR: Yes mother. Yes mother. I'm on my way now. I won't forget. I won't forget. I won't. Everything's on the list. Mother –

*ACTOR THREE turns back and ACTOR FOUR transforms. She walks by ACTOR FOUR. She keeps looking back, as if she's hanging around to talk to ACTOR FOUR.*

*At the same time ACTOR TWO enters. She's on a cellphone and has a grim look on her face. She makes a bee line for ACTOR FOUR.*

ACTOR FOUR: If Brent Wayne says things are under control then things are under control. *(to the girl)* Hello sunshine *(back on the phone)* Is that clear? Have I made myself perfectly crystal clear here?



*ACTOR TWO taps ACTOR FOUR on the shoulder.*

**ACTOR FOUR:** *(holding up a hand, without looking back)* Hang on. *(on phone)* Because if you and I aren't clear then –

*ACTOR TWO taps ACTOR FOUR on the shoulder again and ACTOR FOUR turns.*

**ACTOR FOUR:** Maybe we need to *(a gasp of horror)* Mother!

*They freeze. ACTOR FIVE enters from stage right. She holds a laptop under one arm. The other arm is thrown across her face in a gesture of despair. She kneels beside the stage right cube, and begins to pound the cube dramatically.*

**ACTOR FIVE:** Oh Woe! Woe, woe, woe, woe, woe, *(she takes a deep breath and is off again)* Woe, woe, woe, woe.

*ACTOR THREE, FOUR and TWO unfreeze and move with curiosity to ACTOR FIVE.*

**ACTOR TWO:** What's the matter Courtney?

**ACTOR FIVE:** Alas, alas, alas, alas, alas. *(she takes a deep breath in and is about to go on again)*

**ACTOR FOUR:** *(interrupting)* Being a tad dramatic aren't we?

**ACTOR THREE:** What happened?

**ACTOR FIVE:** *(holding up the laptop)* I just... I just... I just...

**ACTOR TWO, THREE, FOUR:** What?!

**ACTOR FIVE:** Spilled Coke all over my keyboard.

*The others groan in dismay and join ACTOR FIVE kneeling around the cube.*

**ACTOR FOUR:** Not the laptop!

**ACTOR THREE:** You just got that.

**ACTOR TWO:** That's terrible.

**ACTOR FIVE:** It happened so fast. One second I'm typing, the next *(she gives a whimper)* phzzle. Bzzz. Wrrrrrr. Zzt. Ztt. She's gone.

**ACTOR THREE:** Is there anything we can do?

**ACTOR FIVE:** Uh uh.

ACTOR FOUR: Are you sure?

ACTOR FIVE: Positive. Sunny Bunny is gone.

*There is a pause.*

ACTOR THREE: You named your laptop?

ACTOR FIVE: Sure. Don't you?

ACTOR FOUR: No.

ACTOR TWO: No.

ACTOR THREE: It's just a machine.

ACTOR FIVE: Shut your mouth! Just a machine. Sunny Bunny sang hello to me and gave me the news and automatically saved my work whether I asked her to or not. She was my window to the world, my information highway, Sunny Bunny was my best friend.

*ACTOR TWO, THREE and FOUR stand.*

ACTOR FOUR: OK...

ACTOR TWO: I thought I was your best friend.

ACTOR THREE: Who wants to go to the mall?

ACTOR TWO: Me.

ACTOR FOUR: You need to get out more.

*ACTOR TWO, THREE and FOUR leave stage left.  
ACTOR FIVE hugs her laptop.*

ACTOR FIVE: I don't need you! All I need is my Sunny Bunny! All I need is my – hey wait! I'm coming too – I need a new laptop!

*ACTOR FIVE runs offstage left. The lights change. A spotlight comes up centre stage and ACTOR ONE steps into it.*

ACTOR ONE: Hi. You've reached Jeremy. I can't pick up right now. My phone and I aren't speaking. My phone wants all the new paraphernalia. All the gadgets and gizmos. Gotta watch movies on the phone. Gotta listen to music on the phone. Gotta take pictures, access the web, unlimited texting, a thousand contacts each with their own ring tone! I do not want any of these things. I want a phone. To talk into. To communicate with. Apparently, this is wrong and completely out of touch with the sane world. My whole family is on my phone's side.

I don't care about ring tones. My sister says you have to care about ring tones. The ring tone says who you are. A stranger will hear the ring tone and know you. "That," I say, "is decidedly creepy." (*as sister*) "I spent three weeks coming up with the right ring tone, My phone plays Don't Phunk With My Heart — the Acoustic Version! (*or similar popular song that would sound bizarre acoustic*) Shows how cool and unique I am. Takes a certain person to go acoustic. What does your phone do?"

"It rings," I say. (*as sister*) "Yes but HOW does it ring, Jeremy? What is your phone telling the world about you? How does it ring?" (*he looks confused*) It rings like a phone. Like a normal phone. An ordinary, normal phone. Apparently this is wrong and completely out of touch with the sane world.

I don't care about having a camera in my phone. (*as mother*) "But what if something happens?" my mother says. "What if you see a star walking down the street, and you're the only one there, and they are wearing something awful and you could take their picture and sell it to the tabloids for a million dollars and set me up with an island off of the coast of France?" "Mom," I say, "Isn't that completely mental? Decidedly mental?" "Get me to France, Jeremy," she says.

My family isn't listening to me and my phone is threatening me. My phone says, "I'm going to lose all your messages if you don't step up and get with the program!" (*yelling directly at phone*) I won't charge your battery if you lose one message! Do you hear me? Uno message-o. (*he looks sheepishly at the audience*) So we're at a standstill. A standoff. A silence. I'm the one in charge here. That's what I keep telling myself. So don't leave a message. I won't get it. And if you see me at the corner of First and Dorchester say hi!

*Blackout. Music plays. Lights up.*

*ACTOR TWO enters holding up a cellphone. She is trying to find service. She holds the phone high, low and somewhere in the middle as she moves about the stage.*

*As ACTOR TWO continues, ACTOR FOUR enters holding up a cellphone. He is trying to find service. He holds the phone high, low and somewhere in the middle as he moves about the stage.*

*As both continue ACTOR ONE enters holding up a cellphone. So does ACTOR FIVE and ACTOR THREE.*

*All five are now moving about the stage holding their cellphones at different levels trying to find service.*

*Once everyone is on stage, the five move closer together. They all start to get tangled together in their search for service. A sculpture of arms, legs and moving cellphones.*

*When the five are in the most complicated, tangled up pose possible, they all look at their phones and get big smiles on their face.*

ALL: I got service!

*ACTOR FIVE stands up and claps her hands together like a grade school teacher.*

ACTOR FIVE: Gather 'round children. Gather 'round!

*She moves to a stage right cube. The others jump up, run around and run over to stand around ACTOR FIVE. They are school children and babble excitedly.*

ACTOR FIVE: All right, all right settle down. Settle down. Now. (she points to an 'object' on the stage right cube) Can anyone tell me what this is?

*The others stare at the cube.*

ACTOR FIVE: Anyone?

*The others shake their heads.*

ACTOR ONE: What is it?

ACTOR FIVE: This very special object is what's known as an antique.

*The others go 'Ooooooooooooooh.'*

ACTOR THREE: What's it called?

ACTOR FIVE: A rotary phone.

*The others go 'Ooooooooooooooh.'*

ACTOR TWO: Phones used to look like that?

ACTOR FOUR: (reaching out to touch the phone) Whoa.

ACTOR FIVE: Don't touch it! It's very fragile.

ACTOR ONE: It's so big.

ACTOR THREE: How do you carry it around?

ACTOR FIVE: You don't.

ACTOR FOUR: Where's the screen?

ACTOR FIVE: There is no screen.

OTHERS: No screen!

ACTOR TWO: You can't text?

ACTOR FIVE: Believe it or not, there was a time no one used text messages.

*The others 'Ooooooooooooooh.'*

ACTOR ONE: How do you talk to people?

ACTOR FIVE: Through this. (*pointing*) It's called 'a receiver.'

ACTOR THREE: What else does this rotary phone do?

ACTOR FIVE: Nothing. You use it to talk to people.

ACTOR FOUR: Talk? That's it?

ACTOR FIVE: That's all.

ACTOR FOUR: Whoa.

ACTOR TWO: How do you work it? There ain't no buttons!

ACTOR FIVE: Aren't any buttons Tina.

ACTOR THREE: Do you poke it?

ACTOR FIVE: You use the circular pad to dial. Just think, children. One day your phone will be an antique and children will come here to the museum to look at your phone the same way you look at this.

OTHERS: No way!

*They laugh. They stop and look at the cube in wonder.*

*A cellphone starts to ring. The ring tone is classical music. The ACTORS looks at each other. ACTOR TWO breaks character and pulls her phone out of her pocket.*

ACTOR TWO: Sorry!

*As ACTOR TWO starts a silent conversation, a second ring tone is heard. A top of the charts number one song. ACTOR THREE pulls out her phone.*

ACTOR THREE: Sorry! (answering her phone) Hello?

*A third ring tone is heard. A movie theme song. And another ring tone is heard. A plain old ringing phone. ACTOR FOUR and FIVE pull out their phones.*

ACTOR FOUR & FIVE: Sorry! (answering their phones) Hello?

*As the four carry on silent conversations, one last cellphone ring tone is heard. It is a woman's voice.*

VOICE: Chad, you're so hot. Chad, you're so hot. Chad, you're so hot...

*Everyone stops their conversations to listen to this ring tone. ACTOR ONE searches around for his cellphone and finds it. Everyone is staring at him.*

ACTOR ONE: Sorry! (answering phone) Hello? Oh hey... (sees everyone staring at him) Uh... hang on a moment. What?

OTHERS: Chad, you're so hot?

ACTOR ONE: It's my ring tone.

OTHERS: Chad, you're so hot?

ACTOR ONE: What's wrong with it?

ACTOR THREE: Don't you find it a bit... I don't know...

ACTOR TWO: Odd.

ACTOR FOUR: Weird.

ACTOR FIVE: Bizarre.

ACTOR THREE: That every time you answer the phone you hear 'Chad, you're so hot?'

ACTOR ONE: No. Can I go back to my call now?

*ACTOR ONE starts to exit.*

ACTOR THREE: (calling after) But your name's not Chad!

*All exit but ACTOR FIVE. Lights change to spot. ACTOR FIVE enters the light and holds up her cellphone to the audience.*

ACTOR FIVE: Hv goo dy. Hv goo dy. (*spelling it out*) H-V, G-O-O, D-Y. Hv goo dy. He wants me to hv goo dy. (*she sighs*) I would like to formally announce the death of the English language. It just died. On my cellphone. (*she points*) There. Doornail. Dead.

*She blows out 'taps' through her lips before running over to her phone and holding it up to the audience.*

This is a text from my boyfriend. Hv goo dy. My mother has a shoebox in her closet of notes and letters and postcards and things written on napkins that dad wrote to her over the years. She has tangible things that she can take out of her closet and wave in front of my face to show me how great a guy dad was at one point, and just because he yells over the improper lining up of the recycling bins doesn't mean he's a freak. (*she changes tangent*) Why must the recycling bins be lined up grey, blue, green? Why is it a major tragedy when the bins are not lined up grey, blue, green? Why am I bringing down the existence of life as we know it because I forgot to line those stupid freaking bins up grey, blue, green?

My mother can show me a birthday card my dad sent to her when she was twenty years old that seriously melts my toes. Not because it's my dad, don't be gross. Because it's a good old fashioned love note from a guy to a girl. On actual paper. I have no note. I'm supposed to have love. I have no note. I have dots on a screen that spell out Hv goo dy. My mother has notes. I have a decided lack of vowels.

And what does this mean exactly? Hv goo dy. Am I supposed to have a good day or a goo day? As in a day filled with goo? As in gooey pus? Does he want me to have a toxic pus filled day? Is this a bizarre boy way of breaking up with me? Is Dane, my boyfriend, and I'm already extremely weirded out by the fact his name is Dane, I'm going out with a guy named Dane, is Dane trying to use as few letters as possible to give me the big kick off? Is that what Dane is doing? Hv goo dy.

Ugh! Why can't he just use words? Full words. Not short forms, not acronyms, WORDS! Have a good day. Is that so hard? I do not want to LOL I want to laugh out loud! I do not want to say B-F I want to say Boyfriend! I do not want my word love shorted! My lovely word love, has no passion, no spark, no joy, no nothing

in L-U-V. I hate L-U-V! Just as much as I hate being told to HV  
GOO DY!!!

*She takes a deep breath and looks at her cellphone.*

Am I taking this too seriously?

*Lights change as ACTOR FIVE starts to exit stage right.  
ACTOR FOUR runs on and blocks her path.*

ACTOR FOUR: Hey! (*sing song*) Look what I got, look what I got. Top  
of the line and it takes amazing pictures. (*waves it in ACTOR FIVE's  
face*) Awesome amazing pictures, a lot better than yours, I'm  
afraid.

ACTOR FIVE: Oh that phone? I don't have it anymore.

ACTOR FOUR: What?

ACTOR FIVE: Yeah I took it back. My new model takes pictures, and  
has 5G.

ACTOR FOUR: 5? G? (*he holds up a hand*) I'll be right back.

*ACTOR FOUR runs off. ACTOR FIVE shakes her head  
and follows.*

*ACTOR ONE, TWO and THREE enter stage left.  
TWO and THREE look like they're having a great  
time. ACTOR ONE is holding up his cellphone as they  
walk.*

ACTOR TWO: (*taking a deep breath in*) This is great.

ACTOR THREE: Wonderful.

ACTOR TWO: Can you feel that air? It's so fresh!

ACTOR THREE: I feel like I can breathe.

ACTOR TWO: I know. (*turning to ACTOR ONE*) What do you think,  
Stan?

ACTOR ONE: Service. There's no service.

ACTOR THREE: Aw shucks.

ACTOR ONE: How am I supposed to stay in the loop if I can't get  
service?

ACTOR TWO: That's the idea of being in the woods. No service. No  
loop.



ACTOR ONE: Barbaric.

ACTOR THREE: If you don't put that away, I'm going to throw it off the nearest cliff and make you listen as it bounces off the rocks all the way down.

ACTOR ONE: Barbaric. And you're the head Barbarian.

ACTOR THREE: I'll take that as a compliment brother dear.

ACTOR ONE: Hmfpt. So. What do we do now?

ACTOR TWO: We're going for a hike.

ACTOR ONE: Outdoors?

ACTOR THREE: I've tried hiking indoors. They always end up rather short.

ACTOR TWO: We're outside Stan. Haven't you noticed?

ACTOR ONE: I'm trying to block it out. (*jumping up and down*) Service! I got some service!

ACTOR THREE: Stan!

ACTOR TWO: Turn the phone off and put it away.

ACTOR ONE: Fine. (*he snaps the phone shut*) But if I pass out and there's no service to call the ambulance, you'll be sorry. (*walking away*)

ACTOR THREE: (*murmuring*) Not that sorry.

ACTOR TWO: Maybe this wasn't a good idea.

ACTOR THREE: Oh no. He spends all day in front of his computer. He's like a freaking zombie. He never talks to anyone and I'm going to make him get some fresh air. Even if it kills him!

*ACTOR ONE starts thrashing about wildly, as he swats mosquitoes.*

ACTOR ONE: Agh! Get away from me! Get away!

ACTOR TWO: It's not going to actually kill him is it?

*ACTOR THREE goes over to ACTOR ONE.*

ACTOR THREE: Stan, Stan! Calm down. Come over here.

ACTOR ONE: (*muttering*) Those were not normal mosquitoes.

ACTOR THREE: Of course they weren't. Now, Stan. Sit down. (*he does*) I want you to close your eyes.

ACTOR ONE: Why? What are you going to do to me?

ACTOR THREE: Nothing. There's a witness.

ACTOR ONE: But she's your friend, she could back up your story.

ACTOR THREE: Just trust me, OK? Close your eyes. (*he does*) Now take a deep breath. (*he does*) Didn't that feel nice?

ACTOR ONE: Sort of.

ACTOR THREE: A lot fresher than the basement?

ACTOR ONE: I guess so.

ACTOR THREE: OK. Now I want you to listen. What do you hear?

ACTOR ONE: Um, birds. The leaves rustling. I can hear the brook too.

ACTOR THREE: Now open your eyes. (*he does*) Look all around you Stan. Look at nature. Look at the expanse of trees and dirt and bark and flower. Look at the colours, Stan. This is life! Everything growing, changing, evolving as we sit here. Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it the most amazing sight you've ever seen in your life?

ACTOR ONE: (*pause*) Eh.

ACTOR THREE: Eh? That's all you have to say?

ACTOR ONE: I can download pictures of nature.

*ACTOR ONE gets up and exits.*

ACTOR THREE: (*throwing up her hands*) I give up. This is me giving up.

ACTOR TWO: Kristin, you can't expect him to climb a mountain his first time out of the basement.

ACTOR THREE: I guess.

ACTOR TWO: Let's go back to town. We'll take him to a vegetarian restaurant and trick him to eat tofu.

ACTOR THREE: You wouldn't tease me would you?

*A cellphone begins to ring. And a second. And a third. ACTOR TWO, THREE answer their phones. ACTOR FIVE enters also on the phone.*

ACTOR TWO, THREE & FIVE: Hello?

*The lights change and the three ACTORS move stage right. ACTOR FIVE sits on the stage right cube. The other two stand on either side. None of these ACTORS are in the same conversation.*

ACTOR TWO: What?

ACTOR FIVE: Hello?

ACTOR THREE: Hey!

ALL: Where are you?

ACTOR TWO: What?

ACTOR THREE: Shut up.

ACTOR FIVE: I'm on the bus.

ACTOR TWO: What?

ACTOR THREE: Shut up.

ACTOR FIVE: I'm on the bus.

ACTOR TWO: What?

ACTOR THREE: Shut up!

ACTOR FIVE: I am on the bus!

ACTOR TWO: Hello?

ACTOR FIVE: Are you there?

ACTOR THREE: No!

ACTOR FIVE: I can't hear anything.

ACTOR TWO: There you are!

ACTOR THREE: Who?

ACTOR FIVE: Hello?

ACTOR TWO: Where are you?

ACTOR THREE: What?

ACTOR FIVE: I'm on the bus.

ACTOR TWO: Wait for me!

ACTOR THREE: Hello?

ALL: Can you hear me? Hello? (*pause*) Hello?

*They freeze. ACTOR ONE enters stage left. He places his cellphone very carefully on the cube. He then kneels down and stares at the cellphone. ACTOR FOUR enters and stops when he sees ACTOR ONE. Once the focus shifts from them, ACTOR TWO, THREE and FIVE exit stage right.*

ACTOR FOUR: Hey Steve...

ACTOR ONE: Hey.

ACTOR FOUR: Whatcha doing?

ACTOR ONE: Breaking up with Jeannie.

ACTOR FOUR: What??

ACTOR ONE: Well I haven't done it yet. I've got the text ready and I'm just getting ready to push send.

ACTOR FOUR: You can't you can't, you... Steve. You can't.

ACTOR ONE: Sure I can.

ACTOR FOUR: It's not right. It's not, it's not, it's – Steve. You can't!

ACTOR ONE: Sure I can.

ACTOR FOUR: Have you actually thought about this?

ACTOR ONE: Sure I have.

ACTOR FOUR: I don't think you have Steve. I don't think you have.

Right now, Jeannie's in math. Blissfully unaware, just trying to get through the day. Sitting there, unaware, and the text comes in. She's joyful. Gleeful. A respite from the droning doldrums of her surroundings. A chance to communicate with the outside world, a chance to see who wants to talk to her, who wants to bring a little sunshine into her math-haze. And it's from Steve! Her boyfriend! Oh glorious Steve. How wonderful! She skillfully opens the cellphone so the teacher can't see the warm glow of the screen. Oh how that glow brightens her tired and weary face. Oh how that glow warms her cheeks and brings light to her eyes. And then she sees the text. The brush off. The shut down. The 'later babe.' Steve is breaking up with her and she never saw it coming. She slams the phone shut, hoping beyond hope she read wrong. But a second read brings no joy, no glee, no hope. Back to the droning doldrums of her surroundings. Back to her math-

haze. Back to the knowledge that her lowlife scummy boyfriend went down easy street when he wanted to back away. Scummy, scummy Steve.

ACTOR ONE: OK, OK! I won't send it.

ACTOR FOUR: Good. Stand up and be a man, Steve. If you got to break up with her, do it face to face. It's the only thing to do.

ACTOR ONE: And I didn't say 'later babe.' I have some class.

ACTOR FOUR: Good. (*warily*) What did you say?

ACTOR ONE: (*very proud*) Don't call me, I'll call you. See? Class. (*he exits*)

ACTOR FOUR: (*sputtering*) You didn't, you didn't, you – STEVE!!!

*ACTOR FOUR runs off. Lights change to spot and ACTOR TWO enters the light. She is prim and proper and very 'Miss Manners' like.*

ACTOR TWO: Email Etiquette. With Mary-Sue Noosom. Last week we talked about the Importance Of (*said punchily*) Punctuation! Just because an email is not written on pretty pink stationary with a lovely floral scent, does not mean that punctuation can be tossed aside like the manners of a discount gas station attendant. Periods are your friend! (*she laughs primly and smiles*) Today, I'm going to address a true bee in my bonnet. A burr in the fur. (*she looks grim*) The smiley. You know what I'm talking about. The smiley is running rampant in the email world. Supposedly there to convey emotion, there's nothing that gets Ms. Noosom's blood boiling than a poorly written sentence, with no capital and no period and a smiley at the end. That colon-dash-bracket insolent smiley! That semicolon-dash-bracket brazen wink! And the worst, the grinning trickster, the sarcastic colon-dash-greater than sign! Monstrous. I detest the smiley. It must be stopped. You must help me stop them or our emails will disintegrate into sinister grins and insolent winks! All I want is a well-written thoughtful communication, is that so much to ask? (*she takes a deep breath and laughs primly*) That's all for today. Next week, shouting. Why must you write in all caps to Ms. Noosom? Why?

*Lights change. Music plays. ACTORS ONE through FIVE move to the front of the stage and stand in a line. They are all writing blogs.*

ALL: Date. Time. Subject. Current Mood?

ACTOR ONE: Monday the 12th. Midnight. Bored, and bored. I am bored. Bored, bored, bored. I'm so bored that I'm boring myself typing out the word bored. B-O-R-E-D.

ACTOR TWO: Sunday the 9th. Nine am. Ruble Dolls Rock! Excited!

ACTOR ONE: The aliens that are monitoring the earth deciding on the right time to invade have tapped into my computer, read this blog, seen how boring I am and called everything off.

ACTOR TWO: Last night was the best night in my whole life!

ACTOR ONE: That's how boring I am.

ACTOR THREE & FOUR: Tuesday the 22nd. 3:30.

ACTOR THREE: Grrrrrrr. Frustrated.

ACTOR FOUR: No basketball. Crappy.

ACTOR THREE: Teacher X hates me. I know he does. The third B minus in a row!

ACTOR TWO: Oh my God! I have been trying to get Ruble Doll tickets forever. For years. And I finally, finally got them and I finally, finally got to go to the concert and I was worried 'cuz I've been to a couple of concerts in a row that really sucked. And what if my favourite band in the whole world sucked? What would I do?

ACTOR THREE: My parents are going to freak. B's they can live with. B minuses are not 'acceptable.'

ACTOR FOUR: I didn't make the team. All the way up to the last cut and I didn't make it.

ACTOR THREE: I'm going to get 'the talk.'

ACTOR TWO: But this was the best concert I have ever been to. Ever.

ACTOR FOUR: I'm supposed to be happy because I 'almost' made it. I was really good but there's only two slots. Be happy! Feel good Darren!

ACTOR FIVE: Friday the 17th. Ten pm. The most beautiful boy in the world. Giddy.

ACTOR THREE: I hate 'the talk.' I can recite it by heart.

ACTOR TWO: They were the best and I had the best time and I'm going to remember this moment for the rest of my life.

ACTOR FIVE: Ben was at the movies tonight. I didn't know he was going. He was right there. Right beside me through the whole movie. My arm, here. His arm, here.

ACTOR ONE: I have to get less boring. I've got to make that my New Year's resolution or something.

ACTOR FIVE: I have no idea what the movie was about.

ACTOR THREE: He's being extra picky on purpose. He's giving me B minuses on purpose. He just hates me. I didn't even do anything.

ACTOR ONE: That's a great idea. A New Year's resolution!

ACTOR THREE: It's not my fault he wears weird sweaters.

ACTOR FOUR: Who cares if I 'almost' made it. No one cares about the people who almost make it. I don't.

ACTOR FIVE: I've never been so close to him before. I was so excited. I didn't know what to do.

ACTOR FOUR: You're a winner or you're a loser and this whole "Hey, be happy Mr. Almost" is crap.

ACTOR ONE: But January is like forever away. What do I do now?

ACTOR TWO: Nothing is ever going to match this night. Nothing ever ever.

ACTOR ONE: How do I keep those aliens awake?

ACTOR THREE: (*imitating*) You can't get anywhere with a B minus Lisa.

ACTOR FOUR: I'm a loser. That's what it gets down to plain and simple.

ACTOR FIVE: And at the end of the night he said, 'see ya.' Right to me. He was talking to me! And I said 'see ya' right back. We had a conversation! Wheee! (*she squeals and giggles*)

ACTOR ONE: If anyone's reading this, boring man, over and out.

ACTOR TWO: Ruble Dolls rock!

ACTOR THREE: Transcript of 'the talk' coming tomorrow.

ACTOR FOUR: I'm gonna eat a vat of Cheetos.

ACTOR FIVE: (*fanning her face*) Good thing he doesn't read my blog.

ALL: Date. Time. Subject. Current mood?

*ACTORS ONE and THREE exit. ACTOR TWO sits on stage left cube. ACTOR FOUR jumps in front of ACTOR FIVE.*

ACTOR FOUR: Hey! I got something to show you...

ACTOR FIVE: (*groaning*) Oh no.

ACTOR FOUR: (*pulling out his cellphone, sing song*) Look what I got.  
Look what I got...

ACTOR FIVE: (*sing song*) I really don't care...

ACTOR FOUR: (*waving the phone*) Takes great pictures, has wireless, plays music, videos, has a huge memory card and it's hands free. What do you think of that huh? Huh?

ACTOR FIVE: Yeah I don't have a cellphone anymore.

ACTOR FOUR: What?

ACTOR FIVE: I gave it up. I was getting so caught up with it all; I decided to quit cold turkey.

ACTOR FOUR: What?

ACTOR FIVE: I feel great! See you.

*ACTOR FIVE exits, leaving ACTOR FOUR sputtering.*

ACTOR FOUR: Cold turkey? Cold turkey? (*to audience*) How am I supposed to top that?

*ACTOR FOUR storms offstage right. ACTOR TWO sitting on the stage left cube, shakes her laptop, as if that will solve something. ACTOR THREE enters.*

ACTOR THREE: So you ARE alive. Don't you answer email anymore?

ACTOR TWO: (*holding up laptop*) Busted. Totally busted.

ACTOR THREE: What happened?

ACTOR TWO: It just stopped working. Freeze city.

ACTOR THREE: (*taking the laptop and looking at it*) And you restarted it? Made sure the battery was fully charged?

ACTOR TWO: I did everything! I begged. I pleaded. I offered bribes.

ACTOR THREE: I'm not sure laptops take bribes.

ACTOR TWO: I know. Stupid laptop. Can you fix it?



ACTOR THREE: Can I have more than five seconds?

ACTOR TWO: I cajoled. I threatened. I told it there would be no more Youtube. (*yelling at the laptop*) No more Youtube until you work properly!

ACTOR THREE: Amy...

ACTOR TWO: Did you fix it?

ACTOR THREE: You have seven hundred emails in your inbox.

ACTOR TWO: Is that a lot?

ACTOR THREE: Seven hundred? Ever heard of the delete button?

ACTOR TWO: I hate email. People write and then I have to think of something to say and I put it off and I put it off and more people write me and sometimes I'm not exactly sure what people are saying to me. You know how sometimes you can't figure out tone in an email? I can sit there for hours staring at the screen: (*holding up her hands as if measuring*) Good tone? Bad tone? Tone yes? Tone no? So not only do I have to figure out what to say, and figure out the tone I'm getting then I have to figure out what tone I'm going to send and how do I make my tone clear and bam! Seven hundred emails. Is it a problem?

ACTOR THREE: (*standing*) Answer your emails, Amy. Or delete them.

ACTOR TWO: I can't delete them! What if the fate of the world is in my inbox?

*ACTOR THREE stops and turns to stare at ACTOR TWO.*

ACTOR TWO: What? It could happen.

ACTOR THREE: The fate of the world, or the laptop. Your choice.

ACTOR TWO: Stupid laptop. No more minesweeper for you!

*ACTOR TWO and THREE exit. ACTOR ONE and FIVE enter walking slowly. They're on a bad date.*

ACTOR ONE: Well.

ACTOR FIVE: Well.

ACTOR ONE: The movie was good.

ACTOR FIVE: The movie was good.

ACTOR ONE: The movie was good.

ACTOR FIVE: I think we got that.

ACTOR ONE: Right. (*pause*) I'm gonna go now.

ACTOR FIVE: OK.

ACTOR ONE: OK.

ACTOR FIVE: OK. (*halfheartedly*) Thanks for the date.

ACTOR ONE: Thanks for coming out on the date.

ACTOR FIVE: Right.

ACTOR ONE: (*turning away*) See you.

ACTOR FIVE: (*turning away*) Not likely.

*ACTOR ONE's cellphone rings. ACTOR FIVE's cellphone rings. It's the same song. They both turn back to each other, holding out their phones.*

ACTOR ONE & FIVE: (*both amazed, as if this changes everything*) We have the same ring tone!

*They hug and skip offstage left. ACTOR THREE enters on the phone from stage right. From stage left ACTORS FOUR and TWO enter.*

ACTOR THREE: No I can't talk now. I can't talk. I can't. Mummy's about to give teach a class. No you can't have a cookie. It doesn't matter if Susan said you could have a cookie. If you –

*She turns to see ACTORS FOUR and TWO staring at her. She turns away from them.*

ACTOR THREE: If you want a snack, you can have carrot sticks. Carrot sticks. I don't care if Susan said you can have a cookie. If you want a snack, sweetie – Sweetie. Crying will not get you a cookie. It will not. Says who? What do you mean Susan said crying will get you a cookie! Sweetie, I have to go. We'll discuss this when I get home.

*She snaps her cellphone closed and turns to ACTOR FOUR and TWO. Note that ACTOR FOUR and ACTOR TWO do not to look at each other.*

ACTOR THREE: Shall we pick up where we left off last week?

ACTOR FOUR & TWO: OK.



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