

**Mere Oaks School, Standish, Wigan.**

**First Light Movies Entry**

**TITLE:** The Net

**LOG LINE:** A chance encounter develops into an intense internet relationship where feelings and consciences are challenged before reaching a dramatic conclusion.

**MARKET:** A film about disability, discrimination and honesty that will appeal to an audience of teenagers.

**STORY SETTING:** The film is set in an internet café where a chance encounter leads to feelings of great expectation before a quadriplegic teenaged girl has to examine her conscience and make an agonising decision about her disability.

**BACKGROUND:** The story was inspired by real examples of prejudiced attitudes towards disability, experienced by some of the pupils involved in this project.

**OUTLINE:** Anna is in a wheelchair; she has Cerebral Palsy. She is a regular visitor to an internet café where one day, by chance, she finds an “opened” e-mail address and her curiosity gets the better of her. She contacts the addressee who immediately replies to her. The contact is a young man called Brian who has abundant apparent courtesy, wit and charm and, over a period of days, they correspond frequently. Anna quickly becomes aware that a strengthening relationship is building up and she discusses this with Joe who is the proprietor of the café. He warns her about the dangers of meeting up with strangers on the internet but Anna is adamant she wants to meet him. Joe agrees that such a meeting would be safer if it was in the café where he could act as chaperone.

They arrange to meet at the café the next day. Brian gives her a detailed description of himself so that she will recognise him when he arrives. He is tall, has dark hair, wears gold framed glasses, and always dresses in a black leather jacket.

Suddenly Anna realises that she has not been entirely honest with Brian. She has not told him of her disability. Does it matter? Should she tell him before hand? Will it make a difference? She wrestles with her conscience (voiceover) and, in the end, decides not to mention it.

The following day we see Anna waiting nervously in the café with Joe watching her. In walks a young man who is tall, has dark hair, wearing gold glasses and a black leather jacket. He sits at a nearby table. Anna is convinced it is him but cannot pluck up the courage to approach him. She keeps staring at the boy until, eventually he shouts across to her and snarls venomously:

“What do you think you’re staring at, wheelchair girl?”

Anna is distraught. She was so sure. She rushes out, very hurt at the insult and upset because she should have been truthful about her condition. A few minutes later a girl joins the boy in the cafe and apologises to him for being late and kisses him on the cheek.

The next day Anna goes back to the café; Joe is off duty. Anna receives an e-mail from Brian: “Where were you? I went into the café as planned. Where were you?”

Anna deletes the message and the many subsequent ones of a similar nature that Brian sends to her. She does not reply to any of them. Still distraught at her lack of honesty and the insult of the previous day, Anna leaves the café and doesn’t return for a number of days.

Sometime later she returns to the café. Joe, the proprietor suddenly remembers:

“By the way, I forgot to tell you; that day when you left looking so upset? Just after you went a young man came in. He came in every day after that for a week. He was asking for you. He said his name was Brian. Oh, and by the way.....He was in a wheelchair.