

This Student Life

EPISODE 23: THE CONFERENCE

SCENE 1

Katie, Donna and Neil are in the café. They are logging onto the conference. It is Sunday afternoon.

Neil:

I thought you said it was free wifi in here Katie?

Katie:

It is. It says on the door. Jade! Don't put that in your mouth!

Neil:

Right, got it. I'm connected. All I've got to do now is point my free wifi connection at the Student Connections website.

Katie:

This is quite exciting isn't it?

Donna:

Yes, I enjoyed the opening session yesterday.

Neil:

I can only log in as me. So you two can look over my shoulder? Jade! Can you stop pulling my hair please?

Katie:

I think she likes you Neil. So, what's happening?

Neil:

It's just people logging on at the moment. The keynote doesn't start until one.

Donna:

Another five minutes. This is Meg Barker, isn't it?

Katie:

Yeah, I think so. This is going to be really interesting. Did you read the blurb on her research interests?

Donna:

I was going to but I never quite got round to it.

Katie:

She's interested in sexuality and particularly gay, lesbian, transgender and all that sort of thing. It's really interesting stuff.

Neil:

Okay, it sounds as if it's about to start.

FADE OUT/FADE IN

Meg's presentation finishes

Katie:

That was brilliant! She was really good, wasn't she?

Donna:

Yes she was. Really interesting. What does she teach on? I must try to get on one of her courses.

Neil:

Can I close this down?

Katie:

I think Jade is going to wake up in a minute, so we might have to leave.

Donna:

So when does our podcast go up?

Neil:

I think they're going to put them up each day every hour, yeah, and ours is due to be unveiled at 11 am. And I'm gonna miss it because I'm working.

Katie:

It'll still be there. Look, I'm gonna go, let's chat tomorrow, perhaps we'll get some feedback.

SCENE 2

Neil is at work with Dave

Dave:

Do you know what she said?

Neil:

What?

Dave:

He'll be fine. You've not been in his life for so long, he'll soon forget all about you. Forget about me! That's what she wants. That's what she's always wanted. It's her way of punishing me.

Neil:

Well, what's she punishing you for exactly?

Dave:

Breathing.

Neil:

And who can blame her. Listen, can I slope off for a couple of minutes?

Dave:

Why? What you up to?

Neil:

I just want to check the conference website and see if our podcast's been uploaded.

Dave:

Oh right. Yeah, course, it's nearly teabreak time. Go on, off you go.

SCENE 3

Katie is playing with Jade.

Katie:

Okay Jade, now, I put Peppa Pig over here, let's see if you can find her. This is called hide and seek.

There is a knock on the door.

Knocking sound

Katie:

You don't have to knock, Cher. It's your flat.

The door opens

Sound of door opening

Cheryl:

Just checking you were decent. Everything okay?

Katie:

We were just playing hide and seek. She's not very good, she takes the toy before I can hide it.

Cheryl:

Look, I'm gonna pop out for a Chinese, do you want me to get you something?

Katie:

Let me just check my purse.

Cheryl:

You can owe me, if you want?

Katie:

Cher, I'm so grateful to you for letting me stay, but you know, you have to say if you want us to go.

Cheryl:

Don't be so stupid. You can stay as long as you want. Have you heard from the bank?

Katie:

Yeah. They turned me down. So I still owe all that money. I talked to my landlord Mister Yesayan.

Cheryl:

What did he say?

Katie:

He was really good actually. He kept saying Jade reminded him of his little girl. He offered me a job to help pay it off.

Cheryl:

Well that's great. What sort of job.

Katie:

He needs somebody to clean in some offices he owns. He said he could stop the back rent out of my wages.

Cheryl:

What about Jade?

Katie:

Well that's the problem. I could take her with me, but I'm not sure that's a great idea. Anyway, I haven't said yes or no yet. But, on a brighter note ...

Cheryl:

Now that's the Katie I know.

Katie:

Our podcast went live yesterday. We got some really nice comments from people. One from Meg Barker!

Cheryl:

Who's Meg Barker?

Katie:

She's this brilliant academic from the OU. She's got a fantastic blog and she said that our podcast was, what was the word, here we are 'inspirational'.

Cheryl:

Fantastic. Well done!

Katie:

Are you around tomorrow night at all?

Cheryl:

Tim's coming over, why?

Katie:

It doesn't matter.

SCENE 4

Donna is in the newsagents. She spots Katie walking past with Jade in a buggy.

Donna:

Just a Daily Telegraph please. Thank you.

Katie walks out of the shop

Noise of footsteps

Donna:

Katie!

Katie turns

Katie:

Donna. What are you up to?

Donna:

I was just taking a walk, and I stopped to pick up a paper for Ted. What are you doing up here? This is a bit out of your way isn't it?

Katie:

Oh I was just walking aimlessly. I can't stay cooped up in one room all day. We're both gonna go nuts.

Donna:

I live just round here, why don't we go to mine and have a cuppa.

Katie:

Are you sure?

Donna:

Of course. I've got some of the girls' old toys in the attic, I was wondering if Jade would like them?

SCENE 5

Neil is pacing and muttering. Dave is watching him.

Dave:

You're going to wear a hole in the carpet if you don't stop pacing. And, what's with all this muttering.

Neil:

I'm practicing my speech.

Dave:

What speech?

Neil:

I'm doing a presentation tomorrow at the online conference.

Dave:

This is the thing with your girlfriends, is it?

Neil:

They're not girlfriends. Well they are friends, and they are girls. But not like you mean.

SCENE 6

At Donna's house

Donna:

Ted, I'm on the conference, so don't disturb me. Okay, what shall I join? I wonder whether Katie is online tonight? I'll Skype her.

Donna begins the Skype call

Sound of Skype

Katie:

Hiya.

Donna:

Are you at the conference?

Katie:

Yeah. Have you been to all the keynotes?

Donna:

Yes, I enjoyed Graham Pike, he was really interesting.

Katie:

Jacqui Gabb and Janet Fink were good on enduring love. I don't know why that appeals to me, possibly because most of my relationships have lasted around seven minutes.

Donna:

What are you going to now?

Katie:

Well, there's only one choice. Look who's presenting.

Donna:

Oh goodness. Is that our Neil?

Katie:

Yes, it is. Oh we must support him.

Donna:

He never said a word. The sly old fox.

SCENE 7

The conference is underway. Neil is doing his presentation.

Neil:

Okay, my presentation is on why social science matters. It seems obvious to me that social science is really important. I think it matters because it affects the lives of real people. My Mum and Nan, for instance, were both nurses in the NHS. They spent their lives helping other people. But, what evidence was there that we needed the NHS? An important source was from statistics, many compiled by social scientists working for the Government, which showed clearly that working people were likely to die younger than the rich or the middle classes ...

FADE OUT/FADE IN

Neil continues

Neil:

So, when people question the rights of people to free healthcare, they do so on the basis that such is a right and not a necessity. Many of those people claim to be following Adam Smith. So, to put these people straight, in conclusion, I'd just like to finish with a quote from Adam Smith himself: "By necessaries I understand not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but also whatever the customs of the country renders it indecent for creditable people even of the lowest order to be without ... The poorest person would be ashamed to appear in public without them." That's it, thank you.

SCENE 8

Neil has finished Dave is standing behind him.

Dave applauds

Sound of applause

Dave:

That was brilliant mate! Fantastic. Well done. Look at all them little smiley faces you're getting, they like you.

Neil's phone rings.

Ringing sound

Neil:

Oh, it's Katie. Hello.

Katie:

Neil, I just watched your presentation. You were brilliant. It was really good. I just wanted to tell you how proud I was. I was thinking is this the same Neil who bought me a cup of tea once?

Neil: (*a little embarrassed*)

It was nothing really. I completely forgot one bit.

Katie:

Well, it didn't show. Look, I have to go. I just wanted to say well done.

Neil:

Oh, thanks Katie.

Neil hangs up. His phone rings again.

Ringing sound

Dave:

Who's that now? Your agent?

Neil:

Hi Donna.

Donna:

You were super, Neil. Well done. That was the best presentation I've seen all conference.

Neil:

You're just saying that.

Donna:

I mean it. You've set the bar very high. I've got mine to do on Friday.

Neil:

I know. I'm sorry I can't be there, I'll be working.

Donna:

Oh, don't worry. But, I'm going to have to rewrite it now after watching yours. Where did you find all those pictures?

Neil:

Most of them were just on Google, but some on other sites too. But I'll send you a list.

Donna:

Well, well done you! I'd better go. Bye.

Neil hangs up.

Telephone Noise

Dave:

Looks like you're the talk of the town, mate. I suppose I better buy you a pint to celebrate.