



## **This Student Life**

*Tesco is coming!*

### **SCENE 1**

*(Donna putting down the phone)*

**Donna:**

That was Luke, Ted.

**Ted:**

Is he okay?

**Donna:**

He's fine. Do you fancy a cuppa?

**Ted:**

I'm going into the office.

**Donna:**

On a Saturday?

**Ted:**

It's the end of the month. I need to make sure the books are balanced. That Slimy Simie is lurking.

**Donna:**

Oh, I thought we were going into town?

**Ted:**

It'll have to wait. I'll see you in a couple of hours.

**Sound:**

*Door opens and closes*

**Donna:**

Right, if Ted's working, so will I! I'll log on to the forums.

### **SCENE 2**

*Sound of a busy street. Katie is pushing Jade*

**Cheryl:**

I need to get an outfit for later. And I definitely need some new shoes.

**Katie:**

New shoes? Where are you going to put them? You must have about 200 pairs!

**Cheryl:**

I haven't got 200 pairs. Anyway, I need some high heels. I've hardly got a decent pair.

**Katie:**

What about that black pair you bought about a month ago, they were really nice.

**Cheryl:**

No, too black. I'm wearing a white skirt tonight. I can't possibly wear black shoes.

**Katie: (Katie spots a nice dress in a shop window)**

That's nice.

**Cheryl:**

What?

**Katie:**

In that window there, that black dress.

**Cheryl:**

No, I need something white. I'm not after a dress anyway.

**Katie:**

I wasn't thinking for you.

**Cheryl:**

Oh, for you? Yeah, I bet you'd look really nice in it. Why don't we go in and you can try it on?

**Katie:**

Even if I had the money, which I don't, where do you think I'm going to go in a dress like that?

**Cheryl:**

Okay, so you don't go out much, but ...

**Katie:**

Don't Cher! I love this baby to bits, I really do, but sometimes ...

**Cheryl:**

She'll be all grown up soon enough Katie, then you can go out as much as you want.

**Katie:**

By the time she's grown up I'll be nearly fifty. I won't be going out on the razz then!

**Cheryl:**

Life doesn't end at fifty. Look at my Mum, she still goes out with the girls and she's nearly sixty!

### **SCENE 3**

*Dave and Neil are in the pub*

**Neil:**

Did you see they're thinking of building a big new Tesco's up on the Old Common?

**Dave:**

Really? The Old Common, eh? I used to hang out there when I was a kid.

**Neil:**

Really?

**Dave:**

Yeah, I'd ride up there on my bike and we'd use the abandoned cars as an obstacle course and chase each other around. It'd never be allowed today, a health and safety nightmare.

**Neil:**

There were places like that where I lived. There was one, a disused mine. I had my first snog down there. Suzie Parker, we were 14. I thought I was in love until I saw her snogging my mate Phil.

**Dave:**

How poetic, Neil.

**Neil:**

Anyway, the Old Common – it's going to be turned into a Tesco's.

**Dave:**

That's very sad. I shall have nowhere to race my bike now.

**Neil:**

You don't have a bike. Anyway, it'll wreck the local economy.

**Dave:**

Well that's as maybe, but there is no local economy round the Old Common.

**Neil:**

When was the last time you were up there, David?

**Dave:**

Oh, now you're asking. Ten or twelve years ago, I suppose. Why?

**Neil:**

Well, I was up there this morning.

**Dave:**

This morning? What were you doing up there this morning.

**Neil:**

Taking photos on me phone. Here, look!

**Dave:**

That's not the Old Common. That looks quite nice. The Old Common was, well, old and common.

**Neil:**

Well, it's been done up, and these are the local economy. A couple of nice caffs. See that one there, I bought a nice mug of cappuccino in there, and this, this is a fresh food market they have there every Wednesdays and Saturdays.

**Dave:**

Blimey! So, why are you getting all worked up about it?

**Neil:**

Well, I've been reading about the way Tescos take over an area. They use their market power to drive out smaller firms.

**Dave:**

Is this in your course?

**Neil:**

Yeah, it's dead interesting. This is all about domination David. Big companies, like Tescos, use their market power to seduce us into buying from them and them alone.

**Dave:**

Domination, seduction, this is a social sciences course, is it?

**Neil:**

Don't try to bring this down to your level. This is important.

**Dave:**

Fair enough, Neil. But, don't they also create lots of jobs, and don't they create more choice.

**Neil:**

Yeah, but at what price, Dave? What price?

**Dave:**

A cheap one usually.

**Neil:**

But they can only do that by exploiting workers abroad. And, do you know Tesco controls nearly one third of the grocery market in the UK?

**Dave:**

Okay, mate. Calm it down a bit.

**Neil:**

I am calm, but the big four are like a monopoly. They give us choice, but only the choices they think we should have. In some places Tesco's alone control over 60 per cent, 60 per cent of the market. How's that choice?

**Dave:**

Well, I suppose ...

**Neil:**

And, they extort workers overseas, so that you can have cheap goods. In India they've got kids, kids Dave, working for about £17 a week, and still their families are in poverty. All so we can have cheap goods.

**Dave:**

And you're getting all this out of your course?

**Neil:**

Yeah, I'd never really thought about it before.

**Dave:**

Well, good for you mate. Now how about taking your righteous indignation up to the bar and filling my pint?

#### **SCENE 4**

Donna is at her computer typing. The phone rings.

**Donna:**

Hello?

**Louise:**

Hi Mum, it's Louise.

**Donna:**

Louise, how are you, is everything okay?

**Louise:**

I was just wondering about you Mum. I keep meaning to get in touch you know. Are you okay?

**Donna:**

I'm fine love, how are the children?

**Louise:**

Oh, they're proper Aussies now. Tod's joined his school rugby team and Annabel's taken up gymnastics.

**Donna:**

Gosh, they must be so big now. I wish you lived closer.

**Louise:**

Oh, you should come out here for a holiday.

**Donna:**

A holiday in Australia? I'd love to, but you know your Dad doesn't like flying.

**Louise:**

Is Dad there?

**Donna:**

No, I'm afraid not. He's had to go into work. The end of month panic!

**Louise: (laughing)**

Oh, he's not still having those, is he?

**Donna:**

Hmm, as usual.

**Louise:**

So, what have you been up to?

**Donna:**

Me? I've started an Open University degree.

**Louise:**

Oh, good for you. I bet Dad's happy.

**Donna:**

Well, you know Dad. So long as it doesn't get in the way of the ironing.

**Louise:**

He's such a chauvinist! Honestly, he treats you like chattel, Mum. It's the 21st Century. Anyway, what are you doing?

**Donna:**

I've signed up on a psychology pathway. But we have to start with a social sciences foundation course.

**Louise:**

Oh, brilliant! How's it going?

**Donna:**

I'm really enjoying it. It's great to feel I'm actually using my brain.

**Louise:**

Well, you go for it Mum. Is it all home study?

**Donna:**

Oh no! We have tutorials too at a local study centre. I went to one recently. It was great, really good.

**Louise:**

So what are the other students like, then? Are they quite young or what?

**Donna:**

Not all of them, though I think I'm the oldest in my group. They're from all sorts of backgrounds. I was talking to this young woman who was a Somali refugee.

**Louise:**

Oh, that's really interesting, Mum. So you get to meet them, then?

**Donna:**

Yes. I've got quite friendly with a couple of them. And, I've just registered to attend a conference. I'm thinking of being a presenter.

**Louise:**

Mum! Wow, you're going to be a presenter at a conference. What are you presenting on?

**Donna:**

I haven't decided yet. They're running these training workshops. I might learn how to make a podcast. Or, perhaps do some blogging.

**Louise:**

Hark at you. I'll bet Dad's happy with the new you.

**Donna:**

I haven't mentioned that I'm thinking of taking part in the conference. You know what he's like?

**Louise:**

Yes. He doesn't have a very enlightened attitude to women, does he?

**Donna:**

Oh, he's just a bit traditional. His heart's in the right place. But, listen to me going on about myself, what about you, and what about Michael, is he okay?

**Sound:**

*Silence*

**Donna:**

Louise?

**Louise: (sighs)**

Well, I had to tell you sooner or later. Mike's moved out.

**Donna:**

What! What do you mean, moved out?

**Louise:**

Things haven't been that good between us for a little while. We've been spending more time fighting than anything, so we thought a trial separation was for the best.

**Donna:**

So, this is just a trial?

**Louise:**

No, not really. We've been separated for three months. He's going out with some bimbo from the typing pool where he works. Mike and I are getting a divorce.

**Donna:**

A divorce? What about the children?

**Louise:**

They'll be fine. Half their friends are from failed marriages. We couldn't stay together just for them. Anyway, listen Mum, I'm sorry, I have to go. I have to pick up Annabel from the pool. But don't worry. We'll all be fine. Give my love to Dad. Bye.

**Donna:**

Bye.

**Sound:**

*Hangs up phone*

**Donna:**

Oh dear, a divorce. At her age, too.