



This Student Life

Student connections

SCENE 1

Katie is in Tesco's with Jade. Her phone rings.

Katie: *(on phone)*

Hi Cher. Listen I'm in Tesco's. I'll ring you back in ten minutes. See ya.

Donna:

Hello. Fancy seeing you here. And hello Jade. She looks content.

Katie:

Oh hello Donna. She's content now. She was screaming the flat down ten minutes ago. I decided to come for a walk. I came in here to escape the rain.

Donna:

Hey, it's good we've bumped into each other. I was going to email you about meeting up this week.

Katie:

Oh, I'm sorry Donna, I don't think I can make this week. Cheryl's off to somewhere with her new boyfriend. I'd have no one to babysit.

Donna:

Bring Jade with you. She'll be fine.

Katie:

I don't think so. I just don't concentrate with her there. One of the things I enjoyed was being able to think about studying without worrying about Jade. How about the week after?

Donna:

Of course. Yes, the week after is fine. Katie, did you see this email about the Conference?

Katie:

Which email? They send so many, I don't look at them all.

Donna:

Okay, well, I mentioned it before. You might have forgotten, but they're holding this big conference in June and they want volunteers to be part of it. I was definitely thinking of doing something. I think it would be great if you got involved with it.

Katie:

I can't afford to go to a conference. Where is it?

Donna:

That's the great thing. It's all online. It doesn't cost anything?

Katie:

I'm not sure. I've never been to a conference before. I don't think it's for people like me, is it?

Donna:

What do you mean, people like you? It's exactly for people like you. It's called Student Connections. I think it sounds really exciting, and there's all these training sessions to teach you how to do things. Anyway, it's not for me to tell you. I just wondered whether you'll be interested?

Katie:

Look I have to go. I'll think about it.

SCENE 2

Neil and Dave are at work. They are on their lunch break.

Dave:

So, let me just get this right. You're going to present a paper at a conference?

Neil:

Yeah. I'm not sure which theme I'm gonna do yet, but I'm doing a training course.

Dave:

But Neil, you can hardly write. And you're still waiting for your assessment, aren't you?

Neil:

Cheers mate. Thanks for the vote of confidence. It was Donna that got me into it.

Dave:

Ooh, your girlfriend?

Neil:

She's not my girlfriend, you big lummo. Anyway, what is it with you? You jealous?

Dave:

What, that you've got a girlfriend, who's old enough to be your Mum? I don't think so.

Neil:

You're jealous that I'm trying to make something of my life. I'll tell you what Dave, this Open University has been the best thing that's ever happened to me. I don't care what you say.

Dave:

Okay, okay. Don't get your panties in a twist. So what're you going to do your presentation on?

Neil:

Well, I've been reading a fair bit about dyslexia actually. I reckon a lot of people don't realise how common it is. I'm thinking of doing something on that.

Dave:

Right. But, don't it have to be something from your course?

Neil:

No, not at all. That's what's really good about it. The themes are really open. I went to one of their sessions on the conference and the bloke who's organising it said the main thing was to give us some transferable skills. So they've deliberately chosen themes that well, almost anybody can talk about. And they're helping us to do it by giving us some tips at the training workshops.

Dave:

And where is this conference?

Neil:

Cyberspace!

Dave:

Is that near Coventry?

Neil:

No, it's all online. Well, most of it's online. I think there's some stuff happening at the local centres.

Dave:

Sounds great Neil. Right, we better get back to work.

SCENE 3

Katie is at the till

Katie:

I'm sorry, it's how much?

Cashier:

Nine pounds ninety nine pence, please.

Katie: *(counting money)*

Oh, I'm sorry I've left my money on the dresser. I'll have to pop home.

SCENE 4

Neil and Dave are arriving home. The door opens and shuts as they are talking

Dave:

So he says, 'Hold on a minute I can see what's stopping it'

They both laugh, Dave more enthusiastically than Neil

Neil:

Do you have any jokes that were actually written this century, Dave?

Dave:

The oldies is the bestest, Neil. Oh, there's a letter for you. Would you like me to read it to you.

Neil:

Bugger off! Give it here. Oh, it's from the Assessment Centre. Go and put the kettle on.

Dave:

Yes, sir. Is there anything else I can do to make your life more comfortable?

Neil:

I suppose moving out's out of the question. But I could murder a cuppa.

Dave:

Do you want a meat pie with it?

Neil:

A meat pie? What are you on about?

Dave:

I thought you Northerners had meat pie with everything.

SCENE 5

Katie is back home. Jade is crying, as is Katie. There is a knock on the door, Katie opens it.

Cheryl:

Katie, what's up? What's happened?

Katie:

Oh, Cher. I just can't do this anymore.

Cheryl:

What Katie, what can't you do? Here, wipe your nose. Sit down and tell me what's wrong.

Katie:

What's wrong? What's fricking wrong? My life. That's what's wrong. My whole life is a bloody mess. I'm a hopeless mother, Cher. I can't even afford to buy her nappies or anything. I just hate my life.

Cheryl:

Oh Katie. Sweetie. What's brought this on? This isn't like you. You're always so positive.

Katie:

What the hell have I got to be positive about, Cher? I'm stuck in here with a baby I can't stop crying. I'm 32, no man's going to look at me when they know I've got a baby. I can't afford to go anywhere. I can't even afford to buy nappies for Jade. I'm just a complete mess.

Look at these.

Katie hands Cheryl all her bills

Cheryl:

Crikey! That's a lot of bills. I thought you said these were under control. How'd you run up all these debts?

Katie:

Credit cards. It was okay when I was working. I was paying one off with another and somehow making it all balance. But that doesn't work when you're on benefits.

Jade is still crying in the background, Katie turns on her shouting

For Pete's sake Jade, shut up! I can't stand your wailing.

Cheryl:

Whoa, whoa, Katie. Don't take it out on Jade. Look I'll take care of her. Why don't you go and have a shower. You look like you've been dragged through a hedge. Your makeup is all running down your face.

Katie starts to calm down.

Katie:

Okay. Thanks Cher. I don't know what I'd do without you.

Music – dur: 00:06