



## **This Student Life**

*The three musketeers*

### **SCENE 1**

*Donna, Katie and Neil are meeting up in a town centre café.*

**Katie:**  
A coffee please.

She counts her money, as Neil walks up behind her.

**Neil:**  
Hello. I'll get that if you want? Can I have an Americano, please?

**Katie:**  
I can pay for my own. I just forgot my purse last time.

**Neil:**  
Okay, okay, okay. Oh look, there's Donna.

Donna walks into the café and joins them at the counter  
*(Donna walking)*

**Katie:**  
Hello Donna. Let me get you a coffee?

**Donna:**  
Hello you two. And you'll do no such thing, Katie. Can I have a cappuccino, please? With extra chocolate on the top.

**Neil:**  
Why don't you two grab that table over there and I'll bring these over.

Katie and Donna walk away from the counter  
*(they sit down)*

**Katie:**  
So, is everything okay? I expected you to email me. It's been weeks since I sent you my stuff.

**Donna:**  
I'm sorry I didn't contact you, but something came up. It's a bit awkward though, I'd rather not talk about it.

**Neil:** *(Putting cups on the table and biscuits)*  
*(sound of crockery)*  
There you go. I got us some biscuits.

**Katie:**  
Anyway, Donna, you were saying.

**Donna:**  
Oh, it's nothing. What shall we do first? The next TMA or the conference?

**Katie:**

I'd quite like to discuss our podcast.

**Neil:**

What d'you mean 'our'?

**Donna:**

I'm sorry, Neil. This was my fault. Katie and I were thinking of doing a podcast.

**Neil:**

So was I. Rob says I've got very good verbal skills.

**Katie:**

Who's Rob?

**Neil:**

He's just someone who helps me with my work.

**Donna:**

Oh, well we were wondering whether we might work together. If you remember what Karen said, there would only be so many spots at the conference.

**Katie:**

And she said that working in groups might be a good idea.

**Neil:**

Right. So you two thought I'd obviously want to work with you because I couldn't manage on my own?

**Donna:**

Oh, don't be like that, Neil. Of course you can manage, but it will be fun to work together.

**Katie:**

If he doesn't want to, he doesn't have to.

**Donna:**

I know, but he would be better off collaborating. After all, he's still got a TMA to write.

**Neil:**

I'm still here you know!

**Katie:**

Well, do you want to work with us or not?

**Neil:**

Well, do you think I can fit it in? You know? In between writing my TMA and holding down a fulltime job.

**Katie:**

You're obviously working with this Rob, perhaps you'd prefer to do it with him.

**Donna:**

Stop it, you two! Just listen to yourselves. I had this when my children were all at home. Constantly bickering.

**Katie:**

Sorry.

**Neil:**

She started it.

**Donna:**

Okay, Neil, let's just ask you. Would you like to work with me and Katie on making a podcast for the conference?

**Neil:**

That depends on what you're thinking about doing it on.

**Katie:**

It's going to be called 'The Challenge of Studying Social Sciences'. The idea is to interview, say, half a dozen students about what challenges they have had to overcome to study with the OU.

**Neil:**

Well, I was going to do mine on students with dyslexia.

**Katie:**

Well, that's one of the challenges, isn't it? If we could find a dyslexic student, we could interview them. Trouble is finding one. They don't come with a badge do they?

**Neil:**

No, no, no, perhaps they should so everybody can see that they're different.

**Katie:**

I didn't mean that!

**Donna:**

Of course, you didn't. Well, what about it Neil? You in or not?

**Neil:**

You make it sound like a bank heist. Alright, I'll be the third musketeer.

**End of discussion**

*(Fade out/fade in)*

**Donna:**

I suppose a report is a bit different from an essay.

**Katie:**

But we still have to include references, don't we?

**Donna:**

I haven't really got into this report to tell you the truth.

**Neil:**

I've only just submitted TMA4. I got well behind. I was waiting on my assessment.

**Katie:**

What assessment?

**Neil:**

Well, I suppose you'll find out, so I might as well tell you. I had an assessment for dyslexia. There. Now you know. I'm getting all sorts of support actually, now. They sent all the materials on audio, and I'm meeting this bloke who's called Rob, and he types my assignments for me.

**Katie:**

So that's why you're so interested in dyslexia.

**Neil:**

Yeah. I suppose so.

**Donna:**

Well, I'm interested in mental health, it doesn't mean I'm mentally ill.

**Katie:**

I wasn't saying that. Is that the time? I'm going to have to go soon.

There's a knock on the window.

*(knocking sound)*

**Neil:**

That woman's pointing at you Katie.

**Katie:**

Oh, it's Cheryl. I better go and see what she wants.

Katie leaves the table

*(Katie walks away)*

**Donna:**

I think I'd better bring boxing gloves for you two in future.

**Neil:**

Was I too aggressive?

**Donna:**

Oh, I think Katie can hold her own.

**Neil:**

Thanks for not mentioning my dyslexia.

**Donna:**

It's none of my business. What made you tell her?

**Neil:**

I don't know. It's nothing to be ashamed of, I suppose.

Katie returns with Jade

*(footsteps)*

**Katie:**

Oh, Cheryl's got to go and meet some bloke she's seeing. I'm going to have to go. Sorry.

**Donna:**

You can finish your coffee at least.

**Neil:**

Hello.

Jade starts to cry

*(Crying sound)*

**Neil:**

I tend to have this effect on girls.

**Katie:**

Look, she just needs changing, I'll be back in a mo.

**Katie** takes Jade to the toilets.

*(footsteps)*

**Donna:**

Neil? There's something I need to say.

**Neil:**

Oh, sounds serious, what's the problem. Have I said something out of turn?

**Donna:**

It's not you, it's me.

**Neil:**

Oh.

**Donna:**

I'm being investigated.

**Neil:**

Investigated? Who by? The police?

**Donna:**

Of course not. No, I'm being investigated for plagiarism.

**Neil:**

Plagiarism. Really? What did you do?

**Donna:**

It was when Ted had his heart problem. I was all flustered and ... well, there's no excuse for what I did.

**Neil:**

What did you do?

**Donna:**

I went onto this essay website.

**Neil:**

You mean the ones we're told to steer clear of?

**Donna:**

Yes. I was behind. I downloaded an essay. I didn't mean to. It just happened. I feel so ashamed.

**Neil:**

Well, well, hold on. You were under a bit of stress. Have you talked to Martin?

**Donna:**

Yes, but he wasn't able to help much. According to him, once it's in the system, there's nothing he can do. I could be expelled.

**Neil:**

But surely they'd understand. It's not as if you've done it before, is it?

**Donna:**

Of course not

Katie returns with Jade

(*footsteps*)

**Katie:**

Here you are Jade. Play with Neil's pen top.

**Neil:**

You've got a beautiful baby, Katie.

**Katie:**

Thank you, Neil. So what are you two talking about?

**Neil:**

We were just discussing the conference.

**Donna:**

No, we weren't.

**Katie:**

What's going on?

**Donna:**

I was just telling Neil that I've done something stupid.

**Katie:**

What have you done?

**Donna:**

I've been caught plagiarising ...

**Neil:**

Hey, hold on. It's a bit more complicated than that.

**Donna:**

I'm not sure it is Neil. I expect I'll be expelled.

**Katie:**

No! They wouldn't, would they?

**Donna:**

It's in the hands of the Faculty's Academic Conduct Officer.

**Katie:**

Ooh, that sounds official.

Donna becomes tearful

*(tearful sound)*

**Donna:**

If I am, I'd still like you two to work on the podcast together.

**Katie:**

Oh, come on Donna. You'll be fine, you'll see.

**Neil:**

Yeah, yeah, come on, they'll understand surely.

**Donna:**

Whatever happens, I want you two to know I've really enjoyed your company.