

CLASS

Noun

1. A group of things having **common characteristics**.
2. A system that **divides** members of a society into sets based on social or economic status.
3. A group of students taught **together** (the collective name by which they are addressed).
4. A lesson.

Verb – to put in a **category**.

To us it's an adjective meaning top, best, finest.

Chapter 1 – Happy families

If this was a movie, it would begin with an overhead shot of Justin impaled upon a spike, like they did to criminals in the middle ages.

Kneeling below, I wail uncontrollably, "Why? Why? Why?"

Justin can say nothing. His last word was uttered amidst the pandemonium moments ago. No one actually heard it, but for the record, it was: "Destiny."

What a sorry scene. Hardly love's young dream is it? Hardly what we'd planned for our third date.

Anyway, let me tear you away from this tragic ending. Let's rewind, since fiction allows us the advantage of flashbacks, to Thursday and the beginning of our blossoming romance.

Thursday 6th August 2011, 6.35pm

- Seriously girl you got to get urself over to marcuss yard gonna b a class party!
- Wheres his yard at?
- It's on roslyn nr 7 sisters, u rmember?

- Nah not really. Thats far V.
- C'mon.
- Not sure I can get.
- Wot?
- My dads in one of his moods. might flip if I ask for cash.
- Cant u ask ur mum?
- Shes workin nights now. More money.
- Wot about ur Kenny?
- Nah. Dont wanna b ownin im nufin. Look il c wot I can do and text u back, k?

Now I know it's wrong to steal from your own flesh and blood, but see, I don't see how lifting a few quid from my old man's wallet can actually be classed as stealing from *him*, since he stole it from my mum in the first place. He's always there on pay day with his hand out. The way I see it, my mum would rather me rescue some of her hard earned before it ends up in William Hill's filthy coffers.

There he is, my old man. Look at him. What a slob. Wonder how long that ciggy's been hanging out of his ugly mush. Judging by the number of cans, he'll be out for the night. Better check though, don't want to risk getting caught.

First of all, I take mum's laptop off his knees, wouldn't want it slipping off onto the floor and getting smashed now, would we? Nothing - he's out cold alright. Just to make absolutely certain though, I take that ciggy and stub it out in the overflowing ashtray. Gross - it's covered in his saliva. Still not a peep from Sleeping Beauty, so I go for the kill. He keeps his wallet tucked into his back pocket, but luckily he's slumped to one side and it's the *right* side, I can see it. I take a deep breath and reach for it, when,

"Oi, what you up to?" That's my no good brother. Already following in his father's footsteps. Leaning on the doorframe, a can in one hand and a fag in the other. Thinks it's his job to look out for his old man, like an obsequious Rottweiler.

That's done it. Now the old man starts to smack his chops and rolls round onto his other side.

"Just making sure he don't set us all on fire." I tell Kenny, pushing past him.

"What you all tarted up for?" he asks, eying me up and down as if I'm some common Tom.

"Goin' round V's that's all." I lie. He follows me into the kitchen.

I toy with the idea of taking a few quid out of Mum's secret stash. She keeps emergency funds in a Tampax box on the kitchen windowsill. Dad and Kenny are always giving her a hard time over that box and why she's got to keep it there. She says it's to remind them of her pain and suffering as a woman. She's got balls my mum, keeping it there, right under their noses. They'd never touch that box though. You could tell them there was a winning Lottery ticket in there or a list of tomorrow's winning nags or Derren Brown's cards, they'd still treat it with utter contempt. Like it's Pandora's box or something.

I take out my phone and start texting Vegas that I'm gonna have to walk and Kenny snatches it from my hand.

"You won't tell me what you're up to, I'll 'av to see for myself, innit?"

"Oi! Give us that back!" I try to reclaim what's mine, but he just holds it above his head. Even in my killer heels I can't reach.

"Oh so there's a party on Rozzy is there? Forget to give me my invite did you?"

"I can't invite you. I don't even really know this Marcus."

"That's OK, I don't know 'im neither. But I guarantee 'e knows me. Or at least 'e will."

Our Kenny and his little mates like to think they're a 'proper gang', but truthfully, they couldn't cut a jelly baby with a butter knife.

"You ain't just rollin' up and neither am I. I ain't got no cash for the tube, alright? Now give me back my phone so I can tell V I ain't goin' will ya."

"Ahh, Cinders can't come to the ball, shh, you 'ear that?"

"What?" I think, 'shit, the old man must have stirred with all the commotion'.

"That's the sound of the world's smallest violin playin' just for you." Another thing about our Kenny is, he thinks he's hilarious. "Tell you what, 'ow's about if I 'elps you get to the ball?"

"What you turned fairy 'av you? Don't worry your secret's safe with me."

"Watch your lip." This is Kenny trying to assert his authority. Mum's out; Dad's out cold; that makes Kenny the 'man' of the house. "You wanna go or what?"

"I ain't that fussed to be honest, might just find somethin' to watch on Netflix." I try to sound super casual.

"C'mon sis. I'll fix you up, who you got your eye on?"

"None of your skanky little homies." That gets a sharp intake of breath, how *dare* I disrespect his crew.

"Don'cha disrespect my friends you little tramp. Apologise now." Told you.

"Yeah, right, sorry," I can't keep the sarcasm from my voice. Something about Kenny just brings it out in me. His fake sincerity I suppose.

"You ain't getting' this back 'till you say sorry properly." And he actually puts my phone in his underwear. Can you believe that? I'm livid at this point.

"You better get that out of there and disinfect it Kenny, or I swear I will not be responsible for my actions, you faggit."

"What did you just call me?"

"Oh for Chrisakes!"

"Oo, is it on vibrate or what?" He starts girating his skinny hips and pulling gross sex faces. "Someone wants you bad sis."

"Seriously, you give it me NOW!" I scream.

He heads off upstairs and I give chase, grabbing a pair of kitchen scissors.

I find him in his room, loading up Saints Row.

"The phone or I start cuttin'," I tell him, snipping the air between us with the scissors.

"I don't fink so," he scoffs.

"We'll see," I say, holding up the wires round the back of the TV.

"You wouldn't dare, Dad'll kill you," he pushes himself back on the bed, so his back's against the wall and fixes me with a do-your-worst stare.

"Dad's out cold, you want to wake 'im? Want to explain why my phone's getting' contaminated with your nasty trouser germs?" I place the wires between the blades of the scissors and apply a little pressure.

This next part's priceless, you can imagine it in slow motion if you like, that's sort of how it seems to happen. Kenny jumps up off the bed like his arse is on fire and pushes me hard. I go flying backwards and as the wires are still hooked by the scissors, Kenny's TV and X box come flying with me. Kenny's not sure whether to be angry at me, or concerned about his 'life support' system. He's sort of dithering in a state of confusion when Dad emerges from the depths of the house, like a shark coming up for prey.

"What the 'ell's goin' on up there?" He yells up the stairs.

"Phone," I whisper, holding out my hand, "phone and I'll take the blame. I'll make somethin' up, c'mon."

Kenny regards me distrustfully, but he knows his life won't be worth living if Dad finds out where he's stashed my phone. He hands it over just as Dad bursts into the bedroom.

I'll tell you something about living in a battle zone, it's made a quick thinker out of me. I see the open window and I just bolt: onto the porch roof, drop down onto the lawn, shoes off and I'm gone. I'd like to see either of them catch me for dust, even barefoot. They get out of breath running a bath. Besides, by the look on the old man's face, he's more bothered about the plasma screen. Of course, I know I'll be for it later, but Carpe Diem and all that.