

SCENE 1.

FX: AMBIENT SOUNDS FROM A BUSY SCHOOL.
BELLS SOUNDING. PUPILS RUSHING OFF TO
LESSONS.

MR. THURSBY: Ah, Mrs. Stonehouse. Come in. You wanted to talk about David.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: That's right. I've just had the misfortune of viewing David's lamentable GCSE results. I think we'd like to request a refund.

MR. THURSBY: They are rather disappointing. However, this establishment is not in the habit of issuing "refunds". This isn't a supermarket.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Of course not. You are, however, a consumer service provider, and with that comes certain responsibilities. Managing to provide my son with one pass, and that a rather lack lustre "C" in art is not an acceptable result. Not by any stretch of the imagination. No disrespect to the art department.

MR. THURSBY: Of course not.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Five long years ago. We had such high hopes when David entered your establishment. I still remember attending your open evening when so much was made of your outstanding OFSTED reports.

MR. THURSBY: We are justifiably proud of St. Saviour's academic reputation...

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Vain boasts. They ring rather hollow in the light of my son's catastrophic academic failure! Where is the "value added"? Just what have you been doing for the past five years?

MR. THURSBY: Your son has been offered the same range of educational opportunities available to any student at St. Saviour's.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Five decent GCSE passes is the bare minimum requirement for a reasonable future nowadays, and you couldn't even provide my son with that. All David has to look forward to is a future digging ditches or stacking shelves. That's if he can find an employer willing to ignore his final year report.

MR. THURSBY: Yes, I'd like to draw your attention to that. "Your son seems to be lacking in any motivation, initiative or enthusiasm. He constantly displays a level of engagement that borders on the catatonic."

MRS. STONEHOUSE: And whose fault is that?

MR. THURSBY: Isn't the answer obvious?

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Quite right. Uninspired teaching combined with a sorry lack of discipline. That's what's to blame here. How was my son ever going to thrive in an environment where so few of his teachers were worthy of respect?

MR. THURSBY: I have to take issue with you there. My staff are all hard working professionals dedicated to the well being of the students.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Really? Then how do you explain the regrettable incident in the chemistry lab?

MR. THURSBY: The police report put it down to wilful negligence and recklessness bordering on the criminal.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Exactly. How Mr. Murgatroyd is still teaching I don't know.

MR. THURSBY: On the part of your son.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: It would never had happened had my son's interest been properly engaged. Flammable chemicals and a lack of proper supervision is a surefire recipe for potentially lethal accidents. One expects this type of thing from the state sector, but not from a fee paying school, and certainly not one with your excellent reputation.

MR. THURSBY: David has been an extremely challenging pupil. I apologise if we've failed to meet that challenge. It's possibly the case that we should have flagged up David's "special needs" earlier and made provision for them.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Are you suggesting there's something wrong with my son?

MR. THURSBY: Heaven forbid. Now, moving forward, there are certain options available to David...

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Never mind that. What are you offering in the way of compensation?

MR. THURSBY: I repeat, we are not in the habit of offering refunds?

MRS. STONEHOUSE: We had a contract with your school. We would endeavour to get our son to school in a prompt and timely fashion. In return, you would provide him with the benefit of a first class education. This you have patently failed to do. It's breach of contract, plain and simple.

MR. THURSBY: If there's been any failure we'd respectfully suggest that...

MRS. STONEHOUSE: We'd like to apply for a full refund of the fees we've paid over the past five years, with any accrued interest added. Given David's woeful exam results we feel this is the very least you can do.

MR. THURSBY: We can't offer refunds. We could offer you a credit note.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Credit note?

MR. THURSBY: A money off voucher. Reward Points if you will. To be redeemed at any educational establishment of your choosing.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: How much?

MR. THURSBY: I don't know. Hundred quid? Has David got any siblings? At a pinch I could throw in a two for one deal. And a coupon for any extra-curricular activity of your choice.

MRS. STONEHOUSE: Done!

THE END.