



Scene: August 1981. DAN and KATIE'S living room. There's a couch and a TV. DAN, JOSIAH, and EDDIE enter, all wearing school backpacks. They fling them down and pile onto the couch. DAN turns on the TV. (Note that the TV should be facing away from the audience, who can hear sound but can't see the screen.)

VOICEOVER

Are you ready to see which of these Kiwi towns deserves the title Top Town?

DAN

Top Town! This show's awesome.

VOICEOVER

But first, of course, it's time to introduce our teams. Please give a warm welcome to Waipukurau, Hāwera, and Greymouth!

Applause rings out from the TV and continues for a time.

DAN

Eddie, move over.

JOSIAH

Yeah, you're hogging.

EDDIE

Oh, sorry, like this?

EDDIE spreads his arms and legs, pushing the other two boys off the couch.

JOSIAH

Hey!

DAN

Don't be a doofus.

EDDIE

You're the doofus.

VOICEOVER

... but before we get started, let's meet our lovely scorer, the beautiful Theresa.
Give her an extra-special round of applause, lads!

DAN

Look, Josiah – your girlfriend.

JOSIAH (*embarrassed*)

Nah.

EDDIE (*poking him*)

Oooh.

DAN and **EDDIE** are still teasing **JOSIAH** as **KATIE** and **RITA** enter.

KATIE

Dan, get off the couch. Dallas is on.

DAN

Aw, what?

KATIE

Mum said me and Rita could watch the TV. You and your mates go somewhere else.

DAN

No way! We were here first!

KATIE switches the channel. **KATIE** and **RITA** sit on the couch.

DAN

Oi, we were watching that!

EDDIE

Come on, Dan. Let's go to Steve Mitchell's place. He's got a colour TV.

DAN dives for the TV and switches the channel back.

KATIE

Dan! It's started!

RITA

We could watch it later at Lisa's house. She's got a VCR.

KATIE

Nah, I'll be busy. The rugby's on tonight.

There's a pause. **RITA** frowns.

RITA

You're gonna watch the game?

KATIE (*shrugging*)

Well, yeah. Me and Dan and Mum and Dad always watch the rugby.

DAN

We get fish and chips.

RITA

But ... it's the Springboks.

KATIE

So?

RITA (*baffled*)

What do you mean "so"? Haven't you read the papers and stuff? What about apartheid?

KATIE

Well, yeah ... what about it?

RITA

Black people can't vote, and they basically live in slums, and there are all these places they can't go, and ... didn't you hear about all those high school kids who got *killed* because they were protesting? My mum told me all about it.

DAN

Your mum must be one of those HART hippies.

EDDIE

What's HART?

JOSIAH

Halt all racist tours. They're protesting about South Africa coming here to play rugby.

RITA

She is in HART, actually.

DAN

Our dad reckons all the protesters are just overreacting. I mean, yeah, maybe some bad stuff is happening over in South Africa, but –

RITA

That's an understatement.

DAN

Come on. This is nothing to do with that. It's just sport.



KATIE

Yeah, Rita. It's not like the Springboks made all those laws. Sport and politics are two separate things, right?

RITA (rolling her eyes)

Why does everyone keep saying that?

JOSIAH

Hey, Dan, can we go back to *Top Town*?

RITA (impassioned)

Of course sport is political. Everything is political. There's supposed to be a boycott against South Africa right now, and breaking it is like saying to the world that we don't care about what they're doing to their people.

KATIE

I don't know if that's -

RITA

It's like ... it's like if Dan punched Katie, and we all agreed we wouldn't talk to Dan until he apologised, and then I invited Dan to come over and play badminton.

DAN

I wouldn't come anyway.

RITA

It's an example. I wouldn't *invite* you anyway.

DAN sticks out his tongue.

EDDIE

But even if we shouldn't have the Springboks here, what the protesters are doing is against the law. You can't just jump the fence and run onto the field during a game.

RITA

Why not?

EDDIE

It's trespassing.

RITA

Sometimes you have to break the law if the law isn't fair - and if it's the only way people will listen to you. Plus, HART isn't hurting anyone. Unlike the police ...

EDDIE

Hey! My dad's a policeman and he's -

RITA

And he's what?

RITA points to **DAN** and **KATIE**.

RITA (CONT'D)

On their side?

EDDIE

I mean ... not exactly. He said he thinks the tour shouldn't have happened in the first place. But now they're here, he's got to keep order.

RITA

By using force?

JOSIAH

Guys, can we stop arguing about this stuff?

KATIE (ignoring **JOSIAH**)

Well it's not fair for protesters to disrupt the games. People have paid to watch. And wouldn't the best thing be if the All Blacks totally smashed the Springboks? If we won every game? That'd be symbolic, right? Show them our team's better than theirs with all our players from different races.

RITA (shaking her head)

That'd be playing their game. Literally.

DAN

Dad says half these protesters don't really care about the tour anyway. He reckons they're just teenagers who want to fight with the cops and cause trouble.

JOSIAH (quietly)

My sister got arrested.

RITA

For protesting?

JOSIAH

Yeah, she went on that march to parliament last month. My parents wanted her to stay home, but she told them it would be peaceful. Then they decided to march to the South African embassy, and the cops showed up. One of them knocked her over.



EDDIE (*shocked*)

My dad would never knock anyone over – even if they were a protester.

JOSIAH

I'm not saying it was your dad, but one of them did. She got a black eye. They put her in a cell overnight for disturbing the peace. All she did was carry a sign and shout.

There's another pause.

JOSIAH (CONT'D)

Why don't they just cancel the games? If we're all against apartheid, and people like Sefina are going to jail for protesting ...

RITA

Because people like rugby. And they only stand up for what's right when it's convenient.

DAN

Dad says –

JOSIAH (*impatiently*)

Who cares what your dad says! What do you think?

DAN *is silent.*

KATIE

I think I don't want anyone else to get hurt. Not here and not in South Africa, either.

Another pause.

KATIE (CONT'D)

But do you think any of this is going to make a difference? Even if the tour gets cancelled – is that really going to do anything to stop apartheid?

All the performers freeze. The television flickers and makes a static noise. The actor playing EDDIE steps forward.

EDDIE

John Minto, anti-tour activist and chairman of HART.

VOICEOVER

I think all those New Zealanders who got bashed by police, who got beaten up by pro-tour thugs, and who went to hospital, who went to jail – all those people can take real credit for the fact that in the darkest days of apartheid, little old New Zealand was able to punch a hole in the system and let some light through.

The actor playing DAN steps forward.

DAN

Doug Rollerson, former All Black who played during the 1981 tour.

VOICEOVER

It was important to get them over here and show them a multiracial society living in relative harmony ... twenty-five years later, I still think the tour should have gone ahead.

The actor playing RITA steps forward.

RITA

Ron Don, chairman of the Auckland Rugby Football Union in 1981.

VOICEOVER

I was very pro-tour. I don't regret anything that was said or done in 1981. We won. We beat the protesters. We beat the media, and most important of all, we beat the Springboks.

The actor playing JOSIAH steps forward.

JOSIAH

Mereana Pitman, anti-tour protester.

VOICEOVER

For me it was a really significant thing ... the relationships that came together have survived – even relationships between Pākehā activists and Māori activists. Those are still the ones that survive today because a level of trust was attained at that time that never actually went away.

The actor playing KATIE steps forward.

KATIE

Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid activist and future president of South Africa.

VOICEOVER

By that time, we were allowed to have newspapers in prison and were incredulous that a peace-loving people on the other side of the world would stand up against their own police for our cause. I will never forget the day the Hamilton game was cancelled. It was like the sun coming out.



illustrations by Toby Morris

The Game

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