

CHAPTER 15

A POSTSCRIPT

It does all join up – One fine day in April 2019

You leave work at 5 pm on the dot, and check the bus stop's electronic display – your bus home is due in 3 minutes. It glides to a stop, electric motor whirring quietly, and you beep on with your smartcard. The buses are not-for-profit now, and cheaper than they were four years ago.

You grab a seat and dig out your phone to check your bank balance because today is pay day! You're working as a cleaner at the hospital, so with the £9.60 minimum wage you get around £1,500 a month before tax. The rent controls that were recently brought in mean you don't pay too much to your landlord and, since your home was super-insulated through the Green Warm Deal, your gas bill's not much either. With all that, you're getting by pretty comfortably, and managing to save up a bit to buy a house.

The bus stops by your son's nursery, where all the kids go free, and he comes tumbling out giggling. Together you walk round the corner to your gran's new council house for a cup of tea. Her carer stays to chat for a few minutes before heading off to visit his next client. He says that since social care is free now, and much better funded, he's finding the work a lot more rewarding and might make a career of it. Your gran is cheerful too, happy to be back on her feet after her recent stay in hospital, and glad the whole thing was noticed early and dealt with quickly so she can get on with her life.

Later, back at home, a child from down the road knocks on your door to ask if your daughter can play out at the park. They are friends from school, the only two kids out of the 20 in their class who have packed lunches now that school dinners are free. They head off to the park's new play area, promising to pick up some milk at the Post Office on their way back.

You sit down at your laptop and start planning your next holiday, two weeks on the beach in Cornwall. It's a long trek, but the train tickets cost less than you expected and there's a local line that gets you practically to the campsite gate....