

**Nalengua - Lover's Limit**

**Woody**

## Introduction

This book is not presented in such a way as to be appealing to the public in general (or is it?) Much like the script for a play, Nalengua is intended to be used to form the basis of a production like a play. I started off writing it as a script for a comic. The format described in 'So you want to write a Comic' sounded tedious in the extreme for the writer (describing each scene frame by frame), and relying on the artist for nothing other than the tangible art. So I've been much more general, on the whole, about the low level realization, which has allowed me to concentrate on the higher level design and let the artist deal with the low level design, and hence give them a more creative role.

This laziness on my behalf has worked in another way too: Nalengua can be used as the basis for not only a comic now, but for a play, film, animation (if anyone is willing to spend that much time on it - probably about three lifetimes worth of work), or even a decent book!

As the artist/director is required to take a large interpretive role, it is inevitable that some parts of my text will seem inappropriate to them. Where this is the case more relevant text should be inserted wherever necessary. Scenes should be removed and added in an attempt by the artist to produce something they're happy with. This can be taken to the extent of using one or two of the fundamental ideas, and basing a completely new story around it.

To reinforce the fact that absolutely nothing in Lover's Limit is sacred, and to encourage artists to use the book, no remuneration is required for any parts of 'Nalengua - Lover's Limit' that you scab, be it the whole book, or just one sentence. Copyright has been taken out, not (as is normally the case) to ensure that people pay for use of the book, but to protect the people using it. As I'm trying to persuade as many people as possible to use Nalengua, it is conceivable that someone who has based a comic on it will be sued by someone who's made a film out of it. The copyright on the book will only be used in such circumstances, where people are being prohibited from publishing their version of Nalengua. This introduction is your guarantee that you are free from paying any royalties. It would be nice though if you could send me a copy of your comic, or give us an invite to the school production of it. Give us a bell on (0602) 524935 in the UK.

The story is quasi-auto-biographical, and is set in a society that has adopted a 'system' which has superseded democracy. Horror of horrors, the world is run by cooperative conglomerates (or more accurately, the companies within the conglomerates), but unlike most similar scenarios posed to date, this system works. Don't believe me? Read on. The system was implemented on a wide scale about one / two generations before the time of the book. Democracy is now of historical interest only now that power has been taken by the people.

I have paid a reasonable amount of attention into getting the physics of space travel correct. The Lover's Limit phenomenon which shares the title of the book is a real physical oddity that has been ignored by sci-fi and physics communities alike, until now.

One last word of warning about reading Lover's Limit. As I have said, it is autobiographical to a limited degree and as such is a record of how my mind works. Another record of my mind is my use and misuse of words and their spelling. To pass Nalengua through a spell checker would remove all trace of this aspect. Sometimes my inability to spell and generate xxxxxx (reader insert descriptive word) text may leave the reader cringing. Still, there it stays. Many misspellings are deliberate, but I have no doubt that others exist.

I know it is very hard to reject the current democratic system and live within another as you read the book. The tendency is to reject the whole system and put it all down to naivety on the behalf of the author, but please try to read it with an open mind. Give the book the benefit of the doubt wherever you come across something you disagree with. Try to think of ways that the system could address a problem you

can see (as members of that society would have to) rather than rejecting the whole system at the first sign of trouble. As you get to understand the system, I think you'll agree that it has the potential to work considerably better than democracy.

Hope you like it,

Woody.

## Critique #1

Nalengua - Lover's Limit deals ostensibly with man's inevitable emigration from the solar system and the practical implications and physics involved in doing so. The titles reflect these respectively. This superficial story is as entertaining and interesting as any others that might constitute a genre/. Lover's Limit can be enjoyed purely at this level, however it is more. Considerably more. It provides our society which desires a 'Green', sustainable lifestyle with a social structure to support it without compromising what we consider to be our freedom. In fact it augments freedom. All national governments are forced into impotency, only services such as electricity, telecommunications and transport are left under local government control to varying degrees. The world is run by small companies under the protective wing of a fairly small number of conglomerates that are owned by the workers and customers as cooperatives. This is surely every 'right on voter's' doomsday scenario, but Woody asserts that only one fundamental change in human behaviour could support the system: customers and suppliers choosing who they buy from / sell to on both financial and ethical grounds equally. The seeds have already been sown for this as such attitudes have prevailed in personal purchases since the Green revolution a couple of years back. Companies however (and more specifically the people within companies) seem to have been immune to this so far.

Woody suggests that if democracy was going to be the structure of the ultimate society, it would have worked by now, maybe we should look at ways to get closer to that ultimate society. The proposal she forwards requires no government to adopt it, only individual people. As more people take on responsibility themselves, so responsibility is taken from the few in government, and given to the masses. Anyone can live their lives in such a way, in fact many do already but not at work. For a social capitalist society to supersede democracy, people in positions that already carry responsibility need to adopt the philosophy.

Nalengua deals in varying depths with all aspects of life within her society. She has used the story as a vehicle to record her life, and to discuss the personal options available to her. In particular the two main characters, Miranda and James, trace two possible outcomes of her life as she sees it.

The speed with which her life progresses is reflected by the pace of the book - skimming over life towards the end, as she obviously feels she is now doing herself.

What makes the book so refreshing though is not the frank discussion about what life is all about, nor the beautifully constructed society that we shall necessarily live within sometime in the future, but the style of writing. Written as it was, in such a way that someone else can fill in the gaps that she can't be bothered with, Woody only deals with what she considers fundamentally important to life or her new society. Every scene has a completely new style, making this pure form of Nalengua required reading for anyone who has enjoyed the film or comic.

## Critique #2

Once again the tired old 'Man leaving (yorn yorn) Earth' scenario is trooped out for a book that the author couldn't decide on a title for. The physics of the situation and mechanics of the 'New Society' is addressed in such unnecessary detail that one could almost forget that there is no real story other than that I've summarized above. That any sustainable society can exist without addressing Man's fundamental tendency to look after number one is in the least naive. The whole of this trait of man is seemingly symbolized by one character that is unconvincingly converted in toto.

Mr Woody may well feel personally traumatized by life, but I fail to see why he feels he needs to highlight the unresolvable (to him) questions in life to us in such a patronizing manner. It gives the feeling that he

is lecturing at you and the world, shouting 'aren't I smart that I can see things like this and you plebs can't'.

However unbearable the many interpretations of this work are, they pail into insignificance when one tries to make head or tail of a writing style that seemingly changes every hour on the hour. In summary: wait until the film comes on the tele and miss that.

A/B 1                      Alternatives Waking Up

The start of the comic is done in silence, with only background sounds being heard. Maybe have a frame of sunrise over the abode about to be described. A man and a woman lie in bed asleep an equal distance from its centre. The cock-a-doodle-doing of the cliché/d cockeral wakes them up and they spend a little time trying to work out if the other is awake (without moving too much). When they simultaneously realize that the other is awake, they both spring up and rush to get out of the bed first. The woman wins and it then becomes apparent that the bed they have has a sort of pivot along the centre, and if someone has all their weight on one edge with no one on the other end, they drop a couple of feet. As the bloke does.

Not much of a way to get up, but attempt to make it clear that this ritual goes on every morning. Maybe a consolidatory cup of tea appears after a while, or if you're feeling a bit of a git, make the bloke get the teas in.

Pay as much attention to washing, dressing and eating breakfast as you can be bothered with. Good job I'm not doing it.

The bloke opens the chicken hut before he leaves for work. Show the simple house they live in with well maintained vegetable garden. The house should be set in a beautifully naff country scene with trees, and maybe a lake, or a grassy barren moor. Follow him cycling across the countryside. Gradually the landscape becomes more industrial, and he ends up joining about twenty other people who are waiting outside a highly insulated and clean portable cabin in a yard with an accumulation of construction equipment. They are all similarly dressed in earthy, home made and coloured clothes. Before long one geezer comes out of the cabin and another goes in. After a short while it's our little chappie's turn. Leave the veiw for a frame or two from the outside. He then hurrys out of the cabin onto his bike and heads backs off post haste.

A/B 2                      Historical Soap

Miranda is sat in her sitting room with her two housemates. They are watching 'Kinkie Queenie' - the wacky historical soap opera. The screen takes up most of one wall, and the girls don't appear to be dressed too differently to the actors on the screen from what you can see of them now like, I'm not trying to tell you what their contemporary fashions are. God forbid. All this is just so we can get one up on Joey Bonehead reader 'cos he's going to think that the actors are just part of the next scene. Our belles are sort of completing the semi circle that the actors make. Well see what you can do. You're the blinkin artist.

The scene on the tele is King Richard's tent. You could of course put everyone out onto the battlefield but I reckon the girlies would look a tad out of place there. 'Oh sorry Dick, did you want us? We just thought we'd have our picnic now. You couldn't ask that group to stop fighting could you? Their spoiling our veiw of the canal.' 'canal?' Any road.

Richard: .. Get a grip you git.

Knock Knock on the tent door?

Richard: Come in. How's it hangin'?

Spy: Could be better Guv'. Well the Stanleys are there, but they seem to be standing back a slot.

Other geezer in tent: And you're not jesting either are you? S'pose they're waiting to see who comes out on top. Then get in with them, just like the waps, bless em.

Spy (looking at the camera): You'll have to stay watching 'Kinkie Queenie' for some time before you get that joke. Unless you know all about it all ready. If so what are you watching this crap for smartarse? Nik off round the back and do some gardening.

Richard: Oh get real Grandma. The boyz Stanley'll come up trumps for us. Let's get stuck in and they'll join in when they know we're going for it.

Posse: Oh yeah. Reckon.

Richard: Oh. Well, the boy Tudor got a grip then eh?

Spy: Looks link he's heading around the west side of the marsh. Should be a piece of winkle to get them with the hill behind us.

Geezer: Now I know you're not exactly God's gift to psychology like, but even you can see that our so called friends are acting quite as chummy as the might be?

Richard: Oh I? (Then offering comment) Boyz?

Frame or two of silence and everyone looking around to see if anyone's going to talk.

Ugly looking bonehead whose maybe been sharpening a knife, or is messing with a mace perhaps like: Go for it.

A nice dramatic page break now wouldn't go a miss.

### A/B 3 Alternatives meet Miranda

<Door Bell> Oh yeah. These <> stupid brackets indicate a sound effect. Well they do until I forget I've written this like.

Miranda's in the centre of the girls. By raising her eyebrows to girl 1, she gestures - well go on then. Girl 1 replies with a hand behind the ear, a squint, and a slight shift towards the door - well I didn't hear anything.

So Miranda turns to girl B, eyebrows aloft. Girl B just catching her glimpse suddenly becomes totally consumed by the intense drama on the box.

Miranda gets the door. There's the man and woman we just saw getting up. Ah it's all starting to piece itself together quite nicely. Bit of luck 'n I could have finished writing this crap by closing time. But Woody, it's the most important piece of socio-physical-econo-fictional-autobiography this week. Surely (don't go for it) you'd best put a tad more work into it than that. Alright, I'll carry on until I get bored then.

Man: Hello, is Miranda in?

Miranda: Yeah, that's me.

Man: Hi, I'm a friend of your sister's. She said you might be able to help us.

Miranda: Well I'll try. Come in and have a lovely cuppa.

The three of them troop through the lounge, past the housemates.

Woman: 'right?

Girl B: 'Cha!

Miranda: Oh, I would introduce you to them, but quite frankly they're just not worth the time or effort.

We're all big fans of 'Kinkie Queenie' here. Do you watch it? Earl Grey?

Both nod alike. And Miranda sets about making the tea. All the cooking is electric, and all the food and that comes in sturdy reuseable containers. If you liked, you could have Miranda using the last teabag in the container. She can tip all the crap into the sink, flushing it down with some water, then drop the container down the shute (for collection and reuse), get a new container out from the cupboard and get some more Earl Grey out. All a very everyday occurrence. The containers have a fancy printing on them saying what they are, and what's in them. But this printing is permanent, so that it can be returned to the manufacturer, refilled, and used again. All the containers in the cupboard are robust, and are resealable like.

Woman: Is that the one where they play out all of history and the actors just take on new ro^les when their characters get killed.

Man: But they all keep their catchphases though don't they.

Miranda: Yeah. All seriously low budget. It's ace.

Man: We don't use screens, so we don't really see it.

Miranda: Oh right. So how d'you know my Sis them?

Woman: Well we used to live in the same commune as her. Then this one thought we should nik off. So we settled down outside Leicester. In fact it's about our home that we've come to see you. You know they're starting to build that pretend spaceship to see who would be good to live on the real one?

Miranda: Yeah, Gensim.

Woman: Yes, that's it. Well he often does conservation stuff to earn us some hard shod, and they obviously needed quite alot of clearing to be done. So he turns up to work there the smorning only to find out that they're going to build this Gensim on our house. They've given us a couple of weeks to leave.

Miranda: They can't do that. They can't do that. How long you been living there?

Woman: We found what's now our chicken house about three years ago. It took us about six months to build the place before we could move into it, and about another six months before it was in good nick.

Miranda: And they just think they can come in and get you to move in two weeks.

Man: Well they just don't think most of them. I mean, you get people having picnics in our garden. I suppose they just don't really understand how alternatives exist.

Woman: He's a bit too understanding really. Alot of them just do it out of spite, just to piss us off and laugh at the backward or something.

Miranda: I wouldn't be surprised. What have you done so far?

Man: Well they offered 2,000 francs to help with moving house and the use of some department to help find us a new place.

Miranda: I'll bet they did.

Man: I thought that if I took their money then it'd be easy to trace.

Miranda: Yeah, you're right there. They could try to claim that you've accepted their deal by that, but it's not going to hold much weight really. We'll get them.

A/B 4                      Miranda calls James's work

Miranda's bedroom is plastered in girlie prints like black and white adverts of georgeous men and women, and impressionist paintings. Pretty indistinguishable from the rest of the house or any other girlies' house. She walks in and sits at the desk infront of the screen that runs along the wall by the desk.

There's also some cosmetics and scraps of paper and pens on the table. Behind her (just so everyone she calls can see it) is her selection of favourite posters.

Screens are used extensively throughout everyone's life. They have a wide bandwidth and act as a terminal for information. Not only broadcast TV, but all the programs you've videoed can be viewed. Buses are ordered from them. You can instantly find out almost anything from the screen just by asking it. All the music and books that you've bought are stored 'somewhere out there'. Your bank holds all your rights to music and books etc. as well as your money. All of these services cost shod, and the price for these calls (playing some sounds or finding out who succeeded Henry VIII to the throne) is always displayed to give you a chance to fold. Each screen has a set of about four buttons which are labeled with suitable options depending on what you've just asked the screen. Say you want to get up to Worcester ASAP, the screen will already know that you like to listen to very loud Thrash Metal on your journeys around the place. There might be a Metal Bus going, but it will get you in ten minutes later than the Cribbage bus. Some of the buttons might be labeled 'Mind-buckle', 'One for his Knob', and 'Nick off' in this case. So you can choose what you want to do without having to actually say everything explicitly, actually. You can (of course) just say it if you can't be naffed to push the button.

You, the artist, are now quids up on Jo Git on what's going on in this society. You're sadly mistaken if you think your getting owt for nowt, you've got to provide the screen's button labels for the rest of the show. Alright?

Miranda: Hello James! Who's Progen bank with ah?

The screen (answering to 'James') turns itself on and displays the logo.

Screen: Medialock.

Miranda: Oh right. See if you can get their nearest branch with a PO on the blower.of her chosen hold music comes on.

James prints up: Loughborough market place branch.

A window appears on the screen with the receptionist (smooth git) in it.

Receptionist: Good evening. Medialock Loughborough, how can I help you?

Miranda: Hello I work for Contempary News. I'm doing a report on one of your clients. Could I speak to your press officer please.

Then another window appears just overlapping the one with the receptionist declaring: 37% matchup. High scores for: going down pubs, dancing and dance music. Lows: walking, education and sex.

Receptionist: Fortunately she's busy at the moment, so I'll get a chance to push my 'Lurve Button'. There she goes. Ah, I see you haven't pushed yours yet. No time like the present is there Miranda?

Miranda (thinks): Oh pleeeese.

Miranda: I'm sorry I've got a pretty good date, so I'll have to pass.

Receptionist: Yeah, but you ain't been out with me. I think you owe it to yourself to have a bit of fun. Push it quickly 'cos she's just free now.

Miranda: Does she know you use your job to solicit yourself a social life? Just pass me on please.

The window switches from the receptionist to the press officer and her name (and other details?) is printed up.

Jill: Hello I'm Jill. How can I help you?

Jill has Miranda's details in a window in front of her too.

Miranda: Hello. I'm looking into a financial transaction that Progen did yesterday. It seems that it was used for quite a different purpose from that it was supposed to.

Jill: I see. Well we'd better exchange some keys and encode the line then. Alright Jack? (her screen's name)

Miranda: You too James! That's told them.

Jill: I just don't understand why it takes them so long to recognise a voice and a face.

Miranda: You'd be surprised how complicated it is. I did a short course on it once. There's a fair bit to it.

Both screens flash 'Identification guaranteed. Encoding guaranteed' up. It stays there for about 20 secs give or take. All these times and formats and that are all user changable. Miranda might have said in a fit of rage two years ago 'don't leave those bloody windows up so long' and not mentioned it since, so it only stays up for 10 now.

Miranda: Right. A couple of alternatives claim that Gensim is being built on their land and both Progen and Land Allocation failed to realize they lived there. Someone at Progen tried to keep them quiet with the offer of a new site and some cash. They got the money yesterday, and hopefully you've got some record of it.

Jill: Well, we can certainly confirm the transaction. I'll just get someone who'll tell you all you want to know, just a sec.

Miranda gets her hold music played to her. She's got a selection of favorites, or a radio station. Any road, a serious current fav comes up.

Miranda: Oh, get in.

A/B 5                      Miranda and James talk on the dog

This is James's office. Design it as wacky as you like. Basically all that is required is a seat which is good for your back (maybe one of these new fangled Japanese-Yoga-kneely thingies), a desk with a long screen to allow lots of separate windows for all your guff, a small draw for notepads, pens and personal effects, and a coat stand, natch.

Some Bloke is at his desk talking to his screen and writing odd notes and thinking. James (our hero) passes him and gives him a serious clout around the earhole. It's quite a hard hit, but not hard enough to knock him off his seat. But he falls heavily to the floor none the same.

Bloke: Oh cheers mate.

James: Yo, Kickin'.

Bloke: What do you think you're wearing eh? Did you chuck on that tie over the weekend or what?

Fully spammy head shaking and any other abserd gestures you can think of.

James: Jest ye not. I'll have you know that this tie is dead smart actually. No. Yes. The same goes for the strides which I bought with the aforementioned tie apperale not six weeks former from a kicking shop they wouldn't let you sweep the forecourt of matey. And while I'm at it, how long have you known owt about fashion? You recon old Rainbow Cheif Hatstand's kickin!

Bloke gestures (with his eyes) that the particular cauc who mistakenly thinks he's an African chef, and dresses accordingly, whom James is describing is well within earshot, and is fast approaching with a steaming cup of coffee.

James (having to think on his feet): Err. Have you seen him taking that footrug for a walk round the park? Why he can't ...

Rainbow Chief Hatstand walks past the boys.

Bloke: Bob.

James: Right Bob. Why he can't get a dog like anyone else I'll never know. You ask me, it's worse than them grannies walking cats.

Short pause while Rainbow Chief Bob Hatstand gets out of earshot and round a corner. Cue raucous uncontrollable laughter.

Other Bloke (Who's sitting at his desk nearby, and is slightly older than the boys): I don't know what you reckon's so side splittingly funny, but have a goosy at this.

They saunter over thinking 'What?' A blank window gradually fills with small dots, apparently randomly. James and Bloke look at each other and burst out laughing.

James: Cheers for sharing that with us. If you've got anything else interesting you'd like us to see? ...

Bloke: There's only one thing marginally sader than old Captain Chromo, and that's this inkblot. Ha, Ha.

Other Bloke: Oh yeah mock why don't ya. I'm stealing bandwidth here sonny. Every one in ten thousand bits from the management channel of that lunar link's making this.

They start taking a bit of notice now with a quizzical look. (How literary Woody. Keep it up Woody, you might fool someone.)

Other Bloke: That's loony Lol there in a photo that's worth a weeks wages! (Cackle, cackle.)

James and Bloke look at it again slightly stunned. Its got a bit clearer and you can just make out a face now. If they were laughing uncontrollably earlier, then now they're, well they're still laughing uncontrollably and falling about all over each other, and looking up every now and then at the picture getting clearer.

Quick as you like, up flashes a message on Other Bloke's screen saying: 'Oi, James. Get to your desk smartish and do a smidgeon of work you idle get.'

At his desk.

James: Yo.

The screen springs to life.

Jill: Yo James!

James: Oh, err, hello Boss (slightly cheekily - what a monkey!)

Jill: Can you help this woman. She's a journalist and she wants to know something about the Progen account. Anyway, she'll tell you.

James: OK.

The screen changes to Miranda from Jill. Work out some cool transition if you can be naffed, or just switch them if you want (lazy git.)

James: Hello, I understand I'm to grant you your every wish.

Miranda: Well I don't know about that, but the suss on Progen wouldn't go a miss. Do we need to pass keys James?

Both the screen and our James reply simultaneously.

Screen: No it's cool, I've got that covered.

James: Hope not. I hate....

Miranda: Oh shut up you stupid computer. I'm sorry he's called James too and he should have worked out that you were too. Now don't do it again.

James: Oh, sorry. I'll try not to.

Miranda (laughing): Not you.

James: It's yout own fault for giving him such a stupid name. Can you hold for a second.

Miranda: Sure.

James then pushes a button on his screen and a choice of both their music is played to them. James slouches back in his seat and foulds his arms and makes it quite clear that he's relaxing and listening to his music. Miranda starts off with a puzzled look like, as she tries to work out what he's doing. After a couple of frames she breaks out into giggly laughter at James more than with him. James times it to perfection pushing the button and then coming in with...

James: Ooooh, that's better.

Then they both get the window coming up with '68% match up. Especially: dancing, music, socializing and travel.' Miranda's reaction is to push one of the buttons on her desk fairly conspicuously.

James thinks: Did she really just push the button? Oh God. That must be her button to take the window off the screen.



He now clams up completely from his happy go lucky self, to a milksop (I got that word from a Theasauras. Get in!) barely able to string sentences together without reference to a Theasauras. From here on he only really speaks when spoken to.

Miranda: Yeah I suppose I should change it, but I do like the name.

She starts off trying hard. Frame silence. But then she gives it up as a lost cause and carries on as if nothing has happened. James can't act in the same way.

Miranda: Anyway, some cash was drawn from your Sheepy Magna office yesterday out of the Progen account. Can you give me some verification of it or something like that.

James: Yeghgh. (Then a cough.) Yes, I think so. Puter?

Puter: On the case.

James's screen comes up with the right one, and he pushes some buttons.

James thinks: Oh my God, I can just feel myself going really red. I just want out of this situation now, It's just so naff.

James: I think this is the one.

Miranda (with the info on the screen): Yeah that looks like it.

James: Eh? This account should be for payment to alternatives over an eight week period, and it's nearly empty already.

Miranda: Can I have a copy of that too?

James: OK.

Miranda: Great, well I don't think there's anything else.

Frame silence.

Miranda: Bye then.

James (unenthusiastically): Bye.

The window closes on Puter.

James lets out a sigh of relief.

Frame silence.

James thinks: What have you done? All you had to do was push the button. Are you really that afraid of the embarrassment of being rejected? No, it's more than that. It's the fear of fancying someone and being exposed. Whatever, you are a serious git James.

Bloke: Hey Jue. Why so blue?

James: Oh. I just had a great beaver come up for me, but I didn't push the button. Heh heh. (Poor attempt at an ironic laugh.)

Bloke: Oh don't worry about that. That's no trouble. Simply ring her back. Oi Puter, get that beaver of James' back on the dog!

James titters.

Bloke: Who was she?

James: A journalist looking into Progen's account.

Bloke: Well tell her you've found something new. What did she want?

James: She's found an odd cash withdrawal.

Bloke: Lets look for some more then. We'll have you grumping her grimes in no time.

James (trying to appear uncooperative, but quite wanting to go along with it all): That was the first withdrawal from that account matey, but I think you'll have to try a bit better than that me old plate.

Bloke: Oh just tell her that that was the first withdrawal from that account at that branch. Gitface. Get James's beaver back on the dog for him will you.

Gitface: Right oh Chef. Who was she?

Bloke looks on James's screen and finds her info window still up.

Bloke: Miranda Aardvark-Wood, a journalist. And while you're at it, why are there so many Aardvark-Woods about.

James: Oh get real grandma. (But not putting up much of a fight.)

Bloke: And don't hangup if James says so, I'll speak to her - he'd hate that. Just sit down and talk to her.

Gitface: Got her. (Prints up 'Ringin' her.') Wood used to be quite a common name, then a craze got started to get them to the top of lists. It was considered quite a career move. Then it got really cool for about five months, and nearly one percent of the whole of England (most of them not originally called Wood even) changed their names to Aardvark-Wood in that period. Got quite a ring to it hasn't it?

Bloke and James look at each other, pull the sides of their mouths down, nod their heads down and go 'Ummmm' in a 'well isn't that interesting' sort of way.

Miranda then appears on in a new window. Bloke shuffles out of the way and walks away leaving James alone with her.

Miranda: Hello.

James: Err, Hello.

Miranda: Oh, hello again. What shakes?

James: Urm, something I didn't notice at the time about the account.

Miranda: Oh yes?

All the guff comes up and he pushes the Ace Date button quasi discretely, she doesn't.

James: It was the first cash withdrawal from that branch out of that account.

James thinks: Aaghgh you tit. What are you saying?

Miranda: Oh right. Well actually I don't think that's that important really.

James: Oh right oh.

Frame of silence.

Miranda: Well thanks for thinking about it anyway. Bye the.....

James thinks while Miranda's talking: Now James. Now.

James: Miranda?

Frame's silence.

James: Errr. You don't need anything else?

Miranda: That should be enough cheers.

James: Oh.

James thinks: She'll be nice. Honest.

Miranda: OK then...

James very red now: Well aren't you going to push the bloody button then?

Miranda laughs: I didn't think you were interested. Ha, ha.

Miranda pushes the button: Oh, you sweetie.

James: Sorry about all that first cash withdrawal guff. Tee Hee.

Miranda: Bless you. Where do you live then?

James: I'm out in Haslingfield.

Miranda: Oh right. I'm just off Mill Road. D'you wanta hit the Arms some night then?

James: Get a grip. All me mates'll be there. How about somewhere a tad more remote?

Miranda: Dah, we can think about that on the night. Tommorrow, eight?

James: Ahh, I've got my evening class on Wednesdays.

Miranda: Thursday then?

James: Could you not make it in about five minutes. (Giggles)

Miranda: But looking forward to it's half the fun.

James: Is it? I'm dreading it already. If it's all downhill from here maybe I won't bother.

Titters all round.

James: Nah, that's cool.

Miranda: Give James my address James so he knows where to come to.

James: So I'm picking you up then am I?

Miranda: Well the girls in the house'd laugh if I called a tank out the stix.

James: Oh cheers. Thursday at eight then.

Miranda: Yeah. See ya.

James: See ya.

The window closes.

James sitting back contented like, thinks: Get in.

A/B 7                    James calls Dill, just to tell him like.

James: Get Dill for us Puter.

Blank frame. Do what you like with it.

Dill: Hey ma man. What shakes?

James: Guess.

Dill: Those short slitty eyed yellow people from Scruby have decided to get there own back for no one taking them seriously by opening a juvenile court where children are pulled in off the street to either stand trial, be a member of the jury, or perform one of the sundry executions that they deal out?

James: Nop.

Dill: Your boss caught you peeking at that specialist video she did a couple of years ago?

James: SHHHHH. She could well be within earshot.

Dill: Err.

James: You're never going to guess.

Dill: What's the most unlikely thing that could possibly happen? No, you haven't got a date have you?

James: The old silver tongue's still on top form.

Dill: I should bloody hope so, you haven't used it yet. In fact I'm surprised it hasn't atrophied. (Big smile comes over his face.)

James: Heh, heh, heh. Nice one.

Dill: Souperior model you see. Lick that.

James: Miranda, a journalist.

Dill: She looking into some form of deception involving money?

James: Yeah, how'd you know?

Dill: Miranda you say. I thought it rang a bell. Of course you do know she's only going out with you to get close to me.

James: Yeah, yeah.

Dill: Oh yeah. She come round the other week trying to sell me some ivory and gold leaf.

James: At's funny you should say that cos she tried to sell me sommut too. Some enormous flowers.

Dill: What Elephant Chysanthemums?

Both Spontaneously fall into uncontrollable laughter.

James still giggling whilst Dill's gone to fetch his brown trousers: The boy Dill chips it right over, quick one two from James. Lovely finish by the boy Dill.

Dill: Isn't that a fast food equivalent of a brothel?

Continue the laughing, zoom on James falling off his chair, Dill sympathetically doing likewise. Top of both heads on screen, and cut.

#### C/D 1                      Miranda and James' first date

James walks up to Miranda's front door and rings the bell. A frame wait for her to open the door whilst he's looking around. Then she opens the door looking really good.

James: Wotcha.

Miranda (simultaneously and with a big beam): Hiya.

Miranda: How you doing?

James: Oh you know. Hanging tough.

Miranda: Dyou want to come in and order a bus?

James: Er, well. I've got this car (pointing at the small vehicle a couple of metres away from them on the road.)

Miranda: For just the two of us? (He nods.) Oh you sweetie. I'll not impose the ordeal of being scrutinized by my mates just yet then. (Turns 'round and shouts) See ya.

Girlies (stiffled): See ya.

They walk out to the car.

Miranda: I haven't been in a private car for ages.

James: OK Puter.

The door to the car opens, they walk inside and sit in large comfy seats facing eachother.

Miranda: God this is ace. It must've cost you a fortune though.

James: Da, I wouldn't worry about that - I charged it to you.

Miranda laughs.

James: Where are we going then?

Miranda: Er, I don't really know. Shall we start going into town and make out minds up on the way?

James: Sounds good. Puter?

A screen somewhere within James's eyeshot prints up 'Cool.' The car starts to move out into the road and travels (about 30 mph) into town.

Miranda: Well where do you normally go?

James: We normally hit the Arms.

Miranda (remembering): Oh yeah!

James: But I seriously wouldn't advise it. Hey what about Crusts?

Miranda: The place with all the armchairs?

James: Yeah, why not.

Miranda: Kay.

James: Kickin'.

Frame of embarrassing silence (maybe two if you want to be really embarrassing!)

James: I saw your article on the news. At least I think it was yours.

Miranda: Expect to have me reporting did you: I'm pretty junior there really, that's my most important work to date. They made me alternative representative because they don't really place much importance on it! Well, that's not really true I know quite a bit about alternatives, my sister went alternative and left home when she was 19, I think I was 16 then. I go up and stay with her quite a lot. When I started to get more than just a day a week off school to go and work they gave me a special responsibility for alternatives. We were the first but other agencies have got representatives now you know.

James: Yeah? There's been a real run on alternatives recently hasn't there.

Miranda: Yeah. I suppose when our society really got going, almost everyone was excited by it. But now it's 'The System' I suppose people like to rebel against it.

James: Yeah. What's going to happen about Gensim 'n that then.

Miranda: Probably not much. Well, I think that their land allocation are going to look into trying to keep better tabs on where alternatives are. But you know, being alternative means that you don't want everyone to know everything about you. The last thing you want is someone spying on you to see where you're living. But it's still ridiculous that no one official knew that there was a house there.

James: Yeah.

Frame wait.

Miranda: Have you applied for Progen?

James: Nah, I didn't fancy it really. Galavanting off to colonise new planets. Spending your whole life partying, that's no way to carry on is it? You can't go round life enjoying yourself!

Miranda (with a certain amount (sorry no SI units) of disbelief): What?

James: Oh, alright then. Yes. Yeah, me and everyone else in the world bar three. You one of them?

Miranda: Not me. Nah, I love the idea of being one of the chosen few. It's sort of like a master race. Take the world's most intelligent and healthy people, and force them to interbreed. You'll get to know everyone on the whole of the ship in the ten years getting to Nalengua. You'll know all the gossip in the whole of your universe.

Miranda: I don't expect to be chosen though really, not with all the odds stacked up against you like that.

James: Someone's got to be chosen, I don't see why anyone else should be chosen over me, so why not?

Miranda: I wish I could be as confident as that.

James: Oh not another woman always putting herself down?

Miranda: Well you know? What if you did get picked though. You'd have to leave everything you've ever known for good. I don't think I could handle that.

James: Lots of people move a couple of thousand miles away, it must be pretty similar musunt it? I suppose they've always got the option to come back though. It's not really the same when you're up against the laws of Physics.

Oh, and by the way they've arrived at Crusts now, and during the course of the next couple of sentences they: get out of the car; go up to the bar; go and sit down in a snug little corner. Just I thought I'd tell you now like so I don't disrupt the flow. Right?

Miranda: That's another thing. Imagine being the first people to actually travel in time significantly. After ten years on Progen they'll be at Nalengua 300 light years away, and the Earth will be 300 years older.

James: Yeah, well they're going to be travelling at as good as  $c$  for most of the time, so they'll hardly age while they're travelling. You must have done some Physics at school? What's really bloody odd is lover's limit.

Miranda: Yeah, do you understand that?

James: Nah, not really. I proved it mathematically at school, but I don't think anyone has got a real concept of it. What do you want then?

Miranda: Milk please.

James: Two pints of milk please.

James coldly to authorize payment: Puter.

Miranda: Yeah, Maybe not. I certainly don't.

Both laugh a bit.

James: It'd be nice to know all the real details about Progen wouldn't it?

Miranda: There's a lecture you know. Yeah, I think it's in Bourn parish church. 'The most exciting time in History' or something.

James: No?

Miranda: Yeah. Next month. I'm pretty sure I saw it somewhere.

James: Shall we go? Or do you want to see how it goes tonight before you commit to a second date!

James immediately starts to go a bit red.

Miranda: Well I was hoping to see you again before next month.

This does nothing for the colour of James's face. Take a frame pause why don't you?

Miranda: Come on then. You know all about my job, what about what you do then eh?

James: Well I'm a technical geezer for Medialock. What a cracking name eh? Really makes you want to trust them with almost all your belongings, sounds so safe. Anyway, I'm one of the team that sort out hardware/software problems.

Miranda: Yeah? I've never had much of a clue about hardware really.

James: Well, most of what we call hardware isn't really hardware. You start off with a big block of hardware that you can configure to be whatever you want really. You buy in other people's designs for, say a screen interface, and all you get is a whole load of ones and noughts. In general you get your processors, chuck whatever peripherals you like on them and blow your circuit. Sometimes you need some analogue stuff, but you make it digital as soon as possible really.

Miranda: That sounds really interesting.

James: God yeah, it's ace. I'd really like to do some design work though. There's not much chance for it though. Almost everything's already been designed and all we have to do is to make small alterations to stuff. It gets you thinking sometimes. That's pretty good fun.

Miranda: Yeah, it must be like that when you get to make suggestions for vetoes at our place.

James: That must be great. So much power.

Miranda: Well you only get that power if people respect you. If you start up a vendetta against a company or something, and people don't think it's justified, then no one takes any notice of your suggestions and you become a bit of a lame duck. Mind you, I've got a few years yet until I start getting onto veto committees.

James: It's all so grey, like some people think a company only gives money to schools that don't do enough physical activity so they don't buy products from that company, but other people think it's not that important to have so much sport, so they deliberately buy from them. It all evens itself out really doesn't it.

Miranda: Yeah, mostly it does, but when something's so important that most people think it should be addressed, sales dramatically fall and the company almost always springs into action. Mind you that doesn't happen as much as it used to though.

James: What new vetoes have you got coming up then?

Miranda: Hard to say. There's some more stuff on the GIT conglom not contributing enough to education. The public's starting to get a grip onto that one now. That was a scoop to start off with for us you know. They'll react soon. It must be getting a bit too hot for them now.

James: Oh dear. I had some Space dust today. That's GIT isn't it.

Miranda: Exploding sweets & Co's GIT alright. Naughty boy.

James: I can't do without me Space dust though, I'd die. I don't take any of their buses now though.

Miranda: Well, we'll let you off then. Just this once mind. You don't really like that Space dust do you?

James: Me and Dill've been on it on and off since school.

Miranda: You're mad.

James: Yeah. We went to a free school. You know, the one's where there's loads of stuff going on and you do what you like. So you and Dill just sit on the climbing frame all day watching everyone doing their Maths and French eating Space dust.

Miranda: You can't have done. You must have learnt loads at school to be doing what you do now.

James: Yeah, I suppose so, but it went in phases. You know, you'd spend three weeks getting really into Physics and covering what most people do in a year. Then just as suddenly as you got into it, you'd get bored with it and go and sit on the climbing frame eating Space dust for a bit. Then you'd get really into music for a month and not do any more physics for ages. It works though, you remember things like that, and you make so much progress if you've done the basics of a subject just a couple of weeks ago.

Miranda: Bright boys seem to be able to do that. It's not fair.

James: Yeah, we're pretty lucky really.

Miranda: What music did you do?

James: Oh, dance music really. We just used to go around sampling farts, and speed them up to use for treble, you know. Monotonous bass, monotonous treble, get Puter to randomly choose some quotes and play them and repeat part or all of them randomly. We'd then spend the whole of the next couple of days just dancing in a music room to it. (Chortle chortle.)

Miranda also chortling: You really are mad aren't you. I bet you do really odd evening classes don't you?

James: No. I'm doing a really interesting one at the moment actually: Diesel freight engines.

He pauses to let her laugh.

James: Medieval history. It's ace, they're all held in different churches around the place. They're really great. I mean, you go there for raves and lectures and that, and they all look very grand, but going around them when there's only a small group of you there's smart. The leader insists on turning the heat off and using candles. She explains what society was all about really well. It all revolved around the church. Hey, you know when people stopped going to church?

Miranda nodding like a dog stuck to the back of a bus: Yeah.

James: Well, they stopped using the churches too. I suppose you can see it to a certain extent, I mean the people who inherited such ace buildings wanted them to be used exclusively for worship as it was supposed to be holy ground and that. They blamed everyone else for not financing the repairs they needed.

Miranda: Yeah. Another milk?

James: Cheers. I'm off for a slash.

## C/D 2                    Dill and James Hit the big C

View from inside the gents. The bog door opens (following on confusingly from the last scene - for the bonehead who's reading this rubbish anyway, cos he thinks that we're still dealing with our lovely couple's first date.) As James staggers through the door towards the urinal make quite clear that he's not the sober man we left talking intellectually to his prospective. Just as he reaches the end urinal the door slams open behind him and Dill is there with quite a smile on his chopper.

Dill: You're trying to pretend that birds aren't horny any more and Miranda's the only one for you aren't you.

James: Da ya git. It's just that those firm, ripe breasts are just too well rounded for me.

Giggles all round. Dill stands on the No 2 toilet seat in a trap and pisses on the bog roll which gradually doubles in size.

Dill: 'F ya rask me, they were headed straight for our seats. What the bloody 'ell er we gunna do?

James: I think we can answer that question in two ways: on the one hand we could saunter up to them, we'll buy them a drink, they'll buy us a drink. Nik off round their place and it's shag city.

James, still pissing at the end of a row of five urinals, moves to the other end of the row in four sharp steps as he flicks his piss onto the next pisser during his speech.

James: Or, on the other side of the spoon, we could go red as we ask for our jackets from under the seat, and zip off round Miserable Git's for a boogy and see if there's any beaver down there gagin for it. There won't be, and we'll spend the rest of the night convincing ourselves that those birds in here were after us.

Now turn to view Dill who's now completely upside down with his back to us, facing into the shitter. His feet are holding his whole body weight on the wooden arch over the stall's entrance. These toilets not only flush, but as most customers prefer to have their arse washed with warm water and then blow dried

(stops the skid marks), such facilities are incorporated into the John. Dill has opened the toilet seat and has started the arse washing process, but is trying (and generally failing) to wash his hands in the bowl.

Dill (slightly muted): That sounds stupid. LETS DO IT!

Dill drops down onto his hands and springs up. James turns round still pissing and puts his dick into his pouch.

James: Dah, can't be bothered to wait.

They nick off downt disco. I do hasten to add that there is no one else in the John at the time, but you could put the Queen mum (or at least a photo of her) in there if you're in a good mood.

Design your own disco (Miserable Git's) cos I can't be bothered (and they all look the same anyway.) If your production has sound then give it some hardcore techno cos that's kickin'. Or you could have some euro-industrial, or some sounds more contemporary to your production. Or you could just put some real rubbish on. Dill and James are getting on down together on a semi full dance floor. You can stuff this scene (as you can any scene) full of your fashion ideas. Maybe have two separate fashions highly represented with different subversions for blurks and birds. Dill and James don't conform too closely to either fashions, but they don't look like gits.

Dill: I'm pissed.

James: Eh?

Dill (shouting): I said, the acoustics in here are fantastic!

Much laughing and dancing all round.

James: I'll tell you wot though. I'm right pissed I am. And that's quite true actually.

James makes a time out sign or something stupid. Dill turns around and starts walking towards some seats with James following him. Dill does a 'Classic British Comedy' 'Trip, trip, recover recover, repeat much more than is really funny' routine on the way back to sort their beers. Couple of frames of them drinking and looking at people dancing. Maybe a nice beaver walks past and only Dill follows her past while James stares straight through her.

James: Miranda's got a really nice face. I don't know, it's not the sort I'd have thought I'd have gone for, but it's really nice.

Dill: She got any sisters then?

James: Yeah, I think she's an alternative in a commune near Lough.

Dill: Oh eye? They're all goers aren't they alternatives.

James: Apparently, they don't serve people in pajamas (laughs around a tad). No, apparently, so Miranda was saying They're just normal people like you or I that just steal and sleep around a bit more than normal people. (Giggles.)

Dill: Smashing. So if I was to leave a tenner hanging out me back pocket. I could rub past her, catch her red handed, and chastise her. Mind you, I might just dechastise her while I'm there. Did you, er, chastise Miranda last night then eh? Eh?

James: As you're well familiar, I don't tend to boast about my more than active bedtimes.

Dill: So you've not lost the big V then ?

James: Well, err, no.

Dill: You want to go out with her sister. Apparently... No, no. Apparently she's a bit of a goer. So the street says any road.

Frame staring at the dancers (James), beavers (Dill).

Dill: Any road, I don't care what you say. If she's not got any sisters, lets split it.

They get their jackets and leave. Miserable Git's customers get a bit of a shock as the sound packs up. You can even tease the other customers by showing the DJs obviously chatting and mouthing (naffly): we've lost the sound. But you're not as much of a git as I am. Or are you?

Anyway by now the boys have walked an indeterminate distance, but probably under 17 miles, one of them notices a 'To Let' sign. Make it as subtle as you like so Joe Public doesn't realize the critical nature that that sign will play in the rest of the story. They circumnavigate the building and any adjoining buildings casing the joint and discussing (without us hearing) which is the easiest stroke funnest way up the building to where the sign is.

They start round the back (off the street). Follow their progress as they try to get to the sign. Here's 'a couple' of suggestions for obstacles.

- i. The top of a fire escape with a drain pipe next to it just within easy reach. Then a window with a metal grid over it just within easy reach of the drain pipe on the other side of it. You can climb onto a flat roof from the top of the grid.
  - ii. A large chimney along the top of a pitched roof is always a bit tricky if you have to commit all your weight to your hands and the unknown condition of the stack as you shuffle round with yer legs dragging on the slanted roof.
  - iii. Sliding down the edge of a pitched roof to a pillar. Then using the base of the pillar to lower themselves down to within three or four foot of the roof below.
  - iv. Dill can lower most of his body down the side of a pitched roof, but holding all his weight on his hands and shoulders bent over the pointy bit. The other one of our smashing pair mounts Dill and lowers himself down Dill's body. When James gets to the bottom of Dill (his feet not his bum), Dill is struggling to hold all of James's weight on his feet, and is trying to pull his toes up. When James straightens his arms. His feet can just touch the three inch high concrete gutter. So he lets go of Dill, natch. A few frames stood up having a breather, then James lays back onto the angled roof with his feet firmly in the gutter. Dill then stretches his arms and lets go leaving James to hold his weight and lower him to the gutter.
  - v. Use window sills and peaks over the tops of windows (who knows what they're called) to overcome slight overhangs. Why not go for a right angled corner with the outsides of the walls on the inside of the corner (like a reflex quadrilateral in school), plonk a couple of windows there so you can have a foot on both windows. Add an overhang and you're laughing.
  - vi. If you think I'm going to give you all the obsticals then you're even sadder than I thought. If it's your type of thing, get six pints down you and get up a roof with a mate. Use all available ladders and natural foot and hand holds - you'll be amazed how easy it is. Include a couple of you're own, real obstacles. Of course you don't have to do this bit cos it's not strictly part of the creative process, but it's a bloody lot more fun than sitting there making cuts in potatoes and sticking lentils to the paper with golden syrup, or whatever you artists do.
  - vii. Getting up can require a leg up and treading on shoulders to get the first one up. Once up, he lies down with his arm hanging down. The other one must climb up his arm to get to the flat roof.
- When they get to the To Let sign James pulls out a thick black pen. Dill takes it from him, bowing to say thankyou. He writes the 'i' in it as elaborately or plainly as you like. James has the critic's eye. He gives it stern critical appraisal for a frame before giving Dill the nod and receiving the pen. The actual To Let sign may be in a tricky place that needs care getting too.
- James has a piss on the roof and Dill leaves a turd. They then decend, job done. I wouldn't be bothered showing too much detail of them getting down cos I'm getting bored already. Just include the last obstacle.
- When they hit the floor they both take a look at there hands that have a nice red glow, and walk off as if nothing has happened.
- For the duration of the climb don't bother with telling Joe Punter what they're saying (if anything). Try to take some frames from just above their heads so that you can see what they see, to give the sensation of height. Even though they're six pints down, they don't act too pissed. The drink seems to releive them of all the fear that would normally lead to fatality, but the height seems to have a sobering effect stopping them stumbling around on the roof. Even though they were stumbling around when they saw the sign, and stumble off once they've got back to the ground.

C/D 3

Lecture

The lecture is being given in a parish church. Seeings as this is a lecture the bubblely sort of word saying thing you do in comics might not be too appropriate cos there's going to be hundreds of frames with this geezer in a pulpit. Beings as this is a lecture it does stand a remote chance of getting a few visual yawns, you could look at what the congregation are doing (probably not sleeping). Do what you will, but I would point out that any English parish church is probably the most impressive object in the whole village, just thought I'd mention it.

Why are we bothering with Progen? What's the point of it all? It's very easy to say logically that there's no point and we should never have worried about it all and should cut our losses now. If we'd never used



all this manpower, and kept our most productive members of society we could each have had an extra hour in bed every week. Makes you think doesn't it. But using the same logic, what's the point in living? The only thing that stops you committing suicide in that frame of mind is the fact that it might hurt. But that's a stupid way to look at it. We all know why Progen is so important. It's the whole world exploring and having fun. It's interesting, who doesn't spend ten minutes each day talking about or thinking about Progen. It's just such a romantic concept.

The sun is about half way through it's life as a main sequence (normal) star. In five billion years it will turn into a red giant and will expand so much that it's diameter will be larger than Mars's current orbit. We and all Earth's life will have to leave the nest before the Sun does this. I suppose we could all go off and live on Titan in a totally enclosed box that protects us from the extreme weather. We could probably do pretty well at it and not feel too claustrophobic, mind you I'm sure we'd get a bit naffed off with such little gravity. Who knows, that or something similar may well be the fate of a group of our descendants.

Progen has given the whole population of our era a sense of adventure. That's something we don't encounter too often. If we're travelling around, the bus never gets the wrong route, and it always knows where it is. If we do want to know where we are (and I'm always surprised how few people actually do,) then there's always a screen nearby to tell us everything we want to know. Even when you go out up big hills with your mates and just a map and a compass, the path has been so well made and well used that even in thick fog or snow you can always tell when you're about to leave the path.

Progen is not just a publicity exercise to try and persuade the population that society is really working. It is a part of every one of us. The sole purpose of man, just like all animals, is to pass on our genes and keep our race alive.

If you dismiss the habitation of the Moon and Mars as propaganda, then the serious search for man's second home started over six hundred years ago. Fifty six probes were sent out in all directions from Earth. However, over half of them were sent inwards a bit to our nearest spiral arm of the galaxy which contains the greatest density of stars. Each probe was looking for a planet with about the same gravity as Earth, and a large amount of water on it. All of them were propelled in much the same way as Progen will be, effectively travelling at the speed of light for the majority of their journeys - we'll come onto that in a little bit.

And of course everyone knows that we found Nalengua. I know that it doesn't really matter how far away Nalengua is once it takes more than a lifetime to get a reply to any mail you send them, but it really is remarkable that it is as close to Earth as it is: only 300 light years away. And that it wasn't found by going into the spiral arm, but out towards the edge of the galaxy.

Nalengua is blessed with water, gravity of 9.75 (just less than Earth's) and even an atmosphere of nitrogen. It has a more constant temperature over it's surface due to its rotation giving a sixteen hour day about its axis. This axis is more vertical than Earth's, reducing the severity of both summer and winter. The axis is vertical in relation to it's orbit around Apollo (Nalengua's 'naffly named by the press' slightly larger equivalent of the Sun) which is more circular than Earth's orbit around the sun, but is slightly longer taking 403 Earth days. The surface temperature at the equator's of both planets is about the same, but as Nalengua is slightly smaller than Earth it's poles are much warmer and the water probably only just freezes there.

On the whole, it's all very good conditions to grow plants. Which is very fortunate as it's not going to be too easy to grow stuff there. We only have a very little amount of information on the planet. In fact it seems amazing to me how much we do know about it. I mean, the probe that sent back all this stuff was travelling past it at as good as the speed of light, and flashed across the whole of Nalengua's orbit in under eleven minutes. All the range of tests were done at the same time in the split second that the probe got really close to the planet that looked most promising. Other tests carried out over longer distances corroborated the data. There can only be one planet in each solar system that is the right distance away from its star to support life. So even though we've got a fair amount of knowledge about our first colony, we don't really know enough to tell which plants will grow there.

Progen will take seeds from a very large range of terrestrial plants, some of which we hope will adapt fairly well to extra terrestrial life.

Nalengua is dull and uninteresting. When we start getting good at colonizing planets we can try harder ones which will turn out to be much more beautiful than Nalengua, and maybe even Earth although they'd be doing well to do that. But for the moment a boring one will be more than enough trouble for us I'm sure.

Anyway, well before we start worrying about all that, we've actually got to get there. Onboard Progen, right at the top, there's a lightweight fusion reactor. This provides all the power for use on board, and drives the accelerators.

The two accelerators force electrons and positrons down the two two metre diameter shafts that run down the whole length of Progen. By applying a force to the particles in the accelerators, not only do they get accelerated by the applied force, but also Progen is slightly accelerated by the force. Overall, the sum of all the forces that each slightly accelerate Progen, add up together to constantly accelerate the ship at about 10 metres per second per second. That's artificial gravity to you. Pretty cool. Just a couple of statistics to throw at you: the 1km long, one thousand tonnes ship needs to be accelerating 15 million amps worth of electrons and positrons to maintain gravity. To stop a fair few watts of power being constantly generated in the Progen population due to the electric field caused by the current flow, the positrons travel down a central shaft, while the electrons travel down a cylinder which completely shrouds the positron beam like a coaxial cable. The fields from both beams cancel each other out with this arrangement. I don't know why they bothered really: no one could complain of being cold as everyone would spend the next ten years of their lives with truly central heating!

(Polite laughter from the punters.)

One point we should look at is where these electrons come from. Over Progen's ten year journey fifty tonnes of electrons will have been chucked out the back. What's happened to all the protons and neutrons then? Are they in an a hundred thousand tonne pile at the front of Progen, trying to get away from each other? Well hopefully not, cos the whole of Progen weighs orders of magnitudes less than that.

Under certain conditions, photons (small packets of light) can be encouraged to spontaneously split into an electron and a positron. Pretty lucky eh? They're then forced apart, accelerated down the ship, and then attract each other and combine back to form another photon round the back making a beam of light just like in all the old sci-fi films. Of course there's no shortage of photons, there's loads of them constantly being passed between electrons and protons in atoms to keep them together. Obviously if you just take them away, then the electrons fly off, but the boys in Tech. have sorted that one out, and given us a limitless source of photons. All we need is the power derived from the reactor to generate them.

Progen is shaped like a long tube, with six long tubes around it's outside. These are the Exploratory Modules or Exmods I to VI. Although they are called exploratory, they are really only there for emergencies. Some of them will be left in orbit around Nalengua, some may be used to search for other suitable homes, some may even be sent back to Earth in case of severe problems onboard Progen. Each Exmod is itself a miniature version of Progen with a diameter of only 20 metres but the same length. They are completely self contained with accelerators and reactors, a small population could be sustained almost indefinitely in each of these. However, they will hardly be used during the intended mission, only providing Progen with the extra power it requires to accelerate the extra mass of the Exmods.

Once at Nalengua, Progen will have to fall bottom first onto the surface of the planet using parachutes, cushions and some rockets to brake the fall. Progen will then become Nalengua's first skyscraper and sureing it up will be the populations first task. Rockets along the side of Progen will be able to stop it from falling over for the first week. Thereafter, the guyropes they erect in the noxious atmosphere during the first week will be all that holds it up.

OK, the first problem to overcome though is that of actually getting to Nalengua, three hundred light years away, in ten years without travelling at thirty times the speed of light. This actually isn't as much of a problem as you might expect.

When you apply a constant force to an object, in this case Progen, it carries on accelerating until it gets close to the speed of light, when oddly enough, the force applied appears to add mass to the object rather than to make it travel faster. Other effects of travelling this fast are that time seems to slow down, and would you adam and eve it, distances get shorter! Now that doesn't mean that everyone on Progen walks around thinking, God my leg feels really heavy, I'll take it dead easy getting to work, bleedin heck, I'm there already! They feel and are exactly the same as they've always been, and the same as we do now.

(There's a quite good - though I say so myself - explanation of why relativity is so odd just before the end in K/O-c 5.1 if you can wait for it.)

As you should all remember from school this is called relativity, and because it's all relative it works the other way around too. In other words the distance that was 300 light years, becomes ever smaller as the ship gets closer to the speed of light. This is how the journey time comes down to ten years, taking into account the fact that Progen stops accelerating for a couple of hours half way there to turn round and start decelerating so that it doesn't get to Nalengua, and then knock it out of it's orbit because it's just a huge lump of momentum, and loose it for Man forever!

Now's a nice time to just mention how accessible the rest of the Universe is. Nalengua is just round the corner to us in terms of the Milky Way (our galaxy.) The diameter of the galaxy is 100,000 light years. Using Progen, this distance could be covered in just sixty years, arriving there at no velocity. Sound impressive? Well not next to the next one, lets go the whole hog the most distant quasar. This is the furthest thing from us that we know about in the Universe at about fifteen billion light years. No trouble that only takes eighty years to cover in Progen. But from Earth's point of view, it's travelling at 0.9 the speed of light and Progen'll be basically travelling at it. So we'll have to travel ten times that distance to actually catch up with it. That will only take an extra ten years (to travel the additional 135 billion light years!): you'll have to wait ninety eight years, less than a lifetime, to travel across the whole of the Universe. Mind you, Earth won't have much of a point of view when you get there cos it'll be long gone as will the Milky Way as we know it. You'll only be eighty eight years older, but the Earth will be 150 billion years old, and as it's only 4 billion now (it's only 15 billion years since the big bang!), that's quite some time.

In fact, a word of warning should be asserted much more strongly than I have ever heard it said. How the Universe is going to evolve over such periods as 300 billion years no one really knows. We know that almost every heavenly body that exists now will be long gone by then, but what will be left? It could be much more of the same, or these first 15 billion years could be the height of it's activity and it's residue after 300 billion years may be very different and even unable to support life. We stand the quite serious possibility of wasting the whole of the Universe: missing it whilst we've been out galavanting, come back and find nothing there. This line of thinking is seriously underdeveloped, and no doubt you'll be hearing much more about it in the years to come.

So, absolutely nowhere is out of the reach of man, and we will colonise everywhere possible. Even completely unsuitable places. That's when man will start mutating and all those sci-fi monsters come true. Well, only to a small degree. Evolution only really gets a grip with populations in which a large proportion of the population die without passing on their genes. When undesirable genes are passed on by a population that can support members that would have problems coping otherwise, rapid evolution ceases. There's a pretty high chance that along the way life of some form or other has evolved elsewhere, maybe even some as advanced as ourselves. The solar system is quite young though in terms of the Universe, and it may be that we are the first life in the Universe, or that no other life has had the time or been forced by evolution to become advanced in our sense of the word.

The only way to keep everything all nice and simple would be to stay on Earth, and make sure that all your ancestors do. But that just isn't going to happen. People will travel and the Universe will become very diverse. The way see a really odd world is to get your grandparents to nik off to the other side of the Universe and then send you back home when they get there. Earth and rest of the galaxy will be in it's early billions of years since Uma and Upa left, and the whole of the place will be seething with mutations and interbreeding. Should be a pretty cool place to live. Imagine a ship comes in from a far off planet, bringing with it all the last hundred years culture from that planet. Some of that stuff is bound to be superb. The whole galaxy and beyond will become a serious centre of excellence. New ships coming in could bring with them new knowledge from thousands of years of research. They must have done some pretty good stuff in all that time. Then again that information might render an entire industry obsolete and a whole generation might get all depressed and start thinking 'What's the point?'

The problem that man used to be obsessed with was that of policing the universe. It would be completely impossible to keep a check of where everyone is and that they're not doing anything offensive. One concept that was very fashionable at one time was the sex planet, where no one ever wears anything but underwear, and sex is the general greeting. Sod shaking someone's hand. Murdering people you didn't like too much wouldn't really matter, cos you could just literally disappear never to be seen again.

The whole concept of having to keep an eye on people to stop them doing anything wrong is very hard for us to perceive, but the sheer volume of detective stories from the early days of television bears me out. Man at that time seemed to assume that you had nice people and nasty people, and it was just how

certain people were. I know it seems remarkable now, that they didn't realize that all of the 'nice' people were the ones who'd been fortunate with their education and careers, and that almost everyone else had had a problem somewhere along the line and just didn't get any help with it. Once we'd got the idea of helping people get the right jobs and the right housing and everything, we, as a race, were laughing.

I don't think we really can appreciate the thrill of being part of the process that rendered every democratic government redundant. It is easy to look down on the people who lived in those large scale democracies as being simple, but they weren't. It's true that cartels existed for almost every product in the marketplace. An unwritten and usually undiscussed, but none the less understood agreement to keep prices high. The main competition for things like toothpaste and washing powder was from other 'Big Brand' products made by the same high profit making companies. Fashion at that time was generally to buy products with a lot of money behind them. Also it was fashionable to buy the most expensive products too, in the same way that tribesmen used to try and have well rounded bellies to display their wealth and well being. At that time most of the world still had an essentially working class mentality. Even much of what was called middle class then still wasted an inordinate amount of time trying to get one over all the others. But a core of what we'd now look back at and call middle class, did exist. It is this slowly growing group that made the real breakthrough eventually.

It's worth pointing out that fashion in clothes and music in the UK were well ahead of their time relative to the other parts of their culture and the rest of the world. Different styles of music and clothes had a rapid turnover, like many of our products today. It was cool to be into things today that others would be into tomorrow. Just like almost everything else now. But it was a catch 22 situation because their labour force was used to working at one job for all of their lives, not just working for two years handmaking green laces, and then moving on to designing an electronic friend that you keep in a pocket with you, and evolve a different language with. I understand that's what our kids'll be playing with soon - bless them.

It is also true that the majority of the population believed that democracy was the ultimate social structure, but that was really because they thought that the concept was written in stone like  $E = mc^2$ . They never really thought too long about it. We shouldn't be lulled into rejecting them as lesser beings, they were the same as us in every way. They were simply sheltered from the knowledge and questioning culture that we take for granted.

If they heard a word on the TV that they didn't understand, they couldn't simply ask the screen what it meant. Several minutes would be spent looking it up in an encyclopaedia if you were lucky enough to have one close to hand, if it was comprehensive enough to contain it, and of course, if you could spell it. They thought they were the ultimate society and couldn't see what was in front of their noses as much as we can't. They didn't lack vision either. I doubt very much that if their society was filled with our population we'd change anything.

They were very creative. Too creative maybe from our point of view, only leaving a few scientific odds and ends to pick up. Everything they did leave us to discover is so complex that we all wonder if it is worth the lifetime's effort of a whole generation of scientists in that field to marginally push back the frontier of the unknown one inch more.

Try to imagine working for a company all your life, only having a say in political debates every four or five years, and then only having the choice between one group of views covering the whole spectrum of politics, and the opposite view on every contentious issue. Yes, yes we laugh at it now, but at least there was fairly widespread debate amongst the people for whom the system worked for, and surprisingly often good was done.

Now say you as this working man, has a fit of conscience and decide to use the position of power that he's gained through hard work over the years. He takes the hard decision to let his company share the philosophy of almost all of its employees, and make the company's wealth and the Earth's resources sustainable indefinitely. Now this is quite a step forward for the generation that were brought up to think that all companies should be run completely selfishly, and justify this by pointing out that to do anything else would jeopardize jobs and the needs of the employees to feel safe was very important. Well they got that bit right, but they just didn't make the logical extrapolation to other company's employees and the unemployed and society in general.

In order to sustain the company's wealth (and the resources it was using up) it was inevitable that this bloke's prices should rise making it significantly more expensive than an equivalent product next to it on

the shelf at the supermarket. Not this time to sustain some fat MD, but to buy raw materials from a supplier that doesn't exploit his workers and their land.

Now although there were economists around at the time, most of them were not very good, and economics in general at that time was in it's infancy as much as medicine was when they used to drain the patient's blood, and make them eat expensive foods (taking a cut for themselves) and then force them to throw up. So economists took little notice of peoples' conscience in their analysis. Unfortunately the population thought that economics was like democracy, and that economists knew what they were employed to know. So everyone totally underestimated their own consumer power thinking what does a lifetime of me spending a quid every week on that make any difference. And anyway I quite like it, and there's no decent alternative so my standard of living would drop if I worried about that.

When our hard working businessman found his sales slowly, but surely increasing, that first spark of real power is seen. Before you know it all the companys are forced to adopt a similar philosophy, or even a slightly different one to corner a neich in the conscience market.

Soon enough our little man and a couple of his local mates who are also incharge of local businesses that are doing quite well decide to intervene in a local education dispute where the government aren't providing the education that the parents want. So our companys provide a school for their employees and everyone in the locality, many of whom are customers. Not only is this great education, but it's great PR too. All the locals now go out of their way to support the companies that are supporting their kids, and everyone else who cares particularly that education should be dictated by the parents buys those companys' products.

Then exactly the same happens to local transport, sport, entertainment, refuse collection and recycling. One by one all of the government's responsibilities are taken from them until all that is left for them is to open fe/te/s, wave and make speeches.

As we've always 'voted' every day by choosing our goods, not just by the price, but on the company's philosophy, we can't appreciate how the population felt as power was slowly given over directly to them. The surge in global well being is so hard to properly realize now. At the time, the same people who had one say every five years on every political issue grouped up together, could now become outraged en mass and have action taken immediately on a specific issue. And they did, alot, not like now. The whole structure of government was rapidly shifted to become part of the conglomerate cooperatives that succeeded companys and conglomerates.

It is fairly well acknowledged that happiness depends on one's expectations. No one era has ever had happier or sadder people overall. But this must have been beyond almost everyone's wildest dreams, and hence quite a way past their expectations. This really must have been the most exciting time in the history of Man.

#### C/D 4                    Dill's wacky weekend Suggestion

James is in his office at the drinks machine. He puts his mug with a wacky message on it into the machine, like you do.

James: Coffee or else.

Machine: Charming.

James: Have you only got a vocabulary of one word? Any abuse I give you you always give us a 'Charming' and then cough me up me black coffee. How about giving me tea or choclote every now and then? And try and get a larger reportoire. Might as well get you doing something all day.

Machine: Oh man. I'm only on 75 bps man. Don't bring such a downer on me.

James: Well, see what you can do.

Machine. OK. Oh, and Dill's on the dog. I don't suppose you'll be wanting it here so you'd best nik off.

James: Nice start. Keep it up.

James then makes his way to his desk, passing by a teeny crowdette around someone elses desk. They're all looking at a window on the desk's screen. James walks onto the frame, looking as he passes them, and then walks off the screen. Frame of them still watching. Then James walks backwards onto the frame again in a sort of double take fashion.

James: (About to say something, but it just doesn't make it past his lips.)

The bloke on the screen is the geezer who's photo gradually came through from the Moon earlier. He's introducing his family and the whole lunar scene in general on a full bandwidth video and speech channel.

Loony: ...and this is my wife, June, and John and Jackie our lovely Moondoggies (their kids.)

James: (Does it again!)

Bloke: Oh James! Just thought I'd tell you, we were finding that we couldn't get all the network management info that we needed down the negligible bandwidth allocated on the lunar link. So we uped it a tad. You don't think they'll mind do you?

Frame pause. Followed by Bloke starting to titter. James can hold it no more and erupts into a serious cackle. A couple of frames of laughter if you like, incorporating James crawling to his desk. Literally if you like. If you like.

James: Yo Dill ma man. What's shakin'.

Screen bursts into life with the boy Dill centre stage.

Dill: Well, the world nature trust are getting a tincy budget cut. Er, but nothing else's changed: Jo Smith-Clarke has still got the largest breasts I've ever seen.

James: I see. How about seven twelves?

Dill (quick as you like): Eighty four. Smart!

James: I'm sorry, it's seventy three. Just ask the world nature trust.

Both of them fall off their seats simultaineously and then get up.

James (with a hushed voice) : Anyway, I thought I'd told you not to ring me at work.

Dill: Yeah, but I thought I'd best tell you what you're doing this weekend.

James: Oh aye?

Dill: You're going to go quarters on a Hurse on Thursday night right at the end of the week. Make a beeline for Margate. Take two Dracs cash out of the first bank that we hit. Then go onto the next bank westward along the south coast, put those two Dracs into it. Do the same at the next pair of banks but with three Dracs. Then five, seven, eleven and all the primes. We're going to do the whole thing at fifteen, 'cos Hurses can go that slow and everyone offers some respect. Oh yeah, and you've got to hire the costume as well. Sod B&Bs, we've all got coffins to sleep in! All in all it's going to be yet another ridiculous weekend to augment our nice little collection.

James: I don't suppose you'll be drinkin' much will you?

Dill: That's the really wacky bit. We're not touching a drop all weekend!

James: What?

Dill: Oh yeah. I remember, Greg's appropriated a casket and we're chucking it in the 'Deep Sleeping Quarters', and going to start drinking before breakfast each day.

James: You complete geet. Why can't you pick a weekend that I'm not rebuilding the great wall of China for such a corker?

Dill: She's not got you doing that has she? Tell her who's boss and that beer's much more important than beaver.

James: Dah, wish I could. She'd only cut my rations though. Oh git. And I haven't been out with you lot for ages.

Dill: We, er, could kill the missus for you. Would that help?

Continue the conversation, but with no actual text of what they're saying.

James thinks: What is it with having a bird? You stop being an individual, you stop bieng and doing what you want. I feel I need to tell her when I'm not going to be with her rather than when I am. That's all part of our contract I suppose. But why is it that when I have the real extreames of enjoyment I'm with the Lads? She's basically replaced Dill almost directly. We used to spend most weekends together and a couple of times in the week. But it's different, it seems more like a social obligation seeing Miranda so much. I used to see Dill so much for purely selfish reasons, that marriage was because we had a really good time together. Then again there's hardly any of the hard put downs which really hurt every now and then. And I suppose there's room to develop and go onto kids, even let my personality change which is out of the question with Dill. That relationship requires both of us to remain fairly stable - if we change we grow away from eachother. I suppose it's just maturing into caring. Caring for what? Caring for Miranda by written or unwritten contract so that there's someone there to care for me when I need it? It's funny how me and Dill used to always talk about the inevitability of our eventual break up, and here we are past that now. Well I never got shag city with Dill did I? God! I suppose that's the real beauty

of a gay relationship: best mate and lover rolled into one. What about those people that say that there best friend is of the opposite sex. Sad people. They are obviously confusing a best friend with the friend that you're closest to. They've obviously never had a best friend, they're really sad gits.

Dill: ... so I says to him, I says 'you can't watch Dogbreath without me!'

He waits for a response.

Dill: Well I thought it was funny. Two fives!

James: Ten.

Dill: Trickster. Right then you boring geet, must dash - nothing to do.

James and Dill together: Ole/.

And both push the button to hang up together.

C/D 5            Wall holiday

Scene in the bedroom of a bed and breakfast in some mountain region. Miranda is nearly ready for the day repairing dry stone walls, but James is still fluffing around.

Screen: James. Your old nag's on the dog.

James (at screen): Mum?

The screen comes to life with James' mother.

Mum: Hello James.

James: Are you alright Mum?

Mum: It's your Great-Grandma.

Now concentrate on Miranda going into the bathroom. She's heard the conversation so far, but now talks to the screen.

Miranda: Henry. Can you get us a motor to take us to the bottom of Pen-y-gent like yesterday. Make it a taxi. As soon as you can after James gets off the phone. OK?

Screen: OK, but it'll set you back 197 sobs.

Miranda: That's cool.

She then touches up her mascara on for a frame or two. When she hears James sign off she quickly goes to him and hugs him.

Miranda: Still want to mend walls?

James: Yeah, it'll give me something to occupy me I suppose.

Miranda: I've ordered a taxi. It'll be here in about four minutes. Best get these on (handing him his boots). They leave the B&B and walk onto the levatating taxi. There's 360 degrees of circular vision and a glass roof too.

Miranda: All in Henry. Lets go.

They just sit for a short while, holding hands and looking at the mountains. Eventually ...

James: Nanny's calling it a day.

James: That's such a hard decision to make.

His eyes glaze over and he gradually starts to cry as he talks. Miranda is a good listener. Being genuinely interested, but not interrupting. Just letting James's outflow go wherever he wants it to go. He's looking out of the window as he talks.

James: What criterion do you use to decide that really you've given all you're going to give to society, and now the taking has gone past what you consider reasonable? You want to die now with the same dignity that you've lived your whole life with. How do you know that you're not going to get better? I suppose it's obvious to you as it is to everyone else. I know it's for the best, but having to loose someone ... I'm being selfish. Thinking of what I'm going to loose at her time.

Frame pause to look at the countryside.

James: It's been arranged for Thursday. Only the local family are going to be there. (Frame pause.) She always liked me in particular you know. I don't know why. I suppose I should ask you that eh?

He turns to look at Miranda, and smiles as if to say 'I'm alright really,' with tears streaming down his face as he tries to wipe them away as best he can.

James: She wants me to live in her place when it's all been sorted. Somehow she knew I was after a place, I suppose you told her.

They look at each other and sort of let a sympathetic snort out of their noses simultaneously. A sort of laugh, but they're both a bit upset for that.

James: Mum reckons she wants you to move in with me there. She thinks that you go mad when you get a bit of independence, I suppose she thought that Grandma and Grandpa could keep an eye on us.

They've looked after her for long enough, they'll not notice a couple more years.

The taxi pulls up at the bottom of the hill and they get out.

Miranda: Cheers.

James: You get on really well with her don't you? I think she just wants to push us together. Reckon you can face it?

C/D 6

Euthenasia

James and Miranda arrive at James's Grandmother's house. She opens the door and kisses them both. Inside.

Grandma: Quick cuppa?

James: I'd love one.

Miranda: Yes please.

They walk off into the kitchen. Frame with no one talking.

James: How is she?

Grandma: Pretty weak, but quite happy I think. Course she's pleased to get out of hospital, and the amount of people who've come to see her is amazing. Don't spend too long with her 'cos she gets very tired, and the doctor's coming round in a couple of hours.

Cut to the Great-Granny flat, with the old lady sleeping in an arm chair. The knock - knock on the door doesn't stir her. James opens the door and pokes his head round.

James: Hello Nanny, it's James.

She stirs and he goes up to her, kisses her, takes her hand and sits down in the seat next to her. She really seems to be grasping him as hard as she can in her frail condition.

Nanny: Is that James?

Each word she says is a real struggle, but she enjoys talking to James and doesn't worry, but each word takes time to enunciate.

James: Yes that's right. How are you feeling?

Nanny: Great. Has Miranda not come?

James: Oh, she's having a cup of tea with Grandma.

Nanny: Why have you left her out there? I want to see her. It's my day isn't it?

James: Well, she thought we'd want some time alone.

Nanny: Nah, go and get her.

James (letting out a laugh): Alright.

He leaves. Frame pause with the door open. They come back together.

Miranda: Hello Nanny. It's Miranda.

They kiss and now Nanny sits holding both their hands tightly with Miranda kneeling next to her, and James facing them both straight on.

Nanny: Hello Miranda. He's let you in now has he.

Miranda: Yeah, bless him!

Nanny: He's not all that bad really is he? What's happening then?

Miranda: Well we're going off to see Bluffer play down the arts centre later.

Nanny: That's the band with your friend in isn't it?

James: Yeah, that's right: Fred.

Nanny: Their a bit wishy washy for me. I like music with a bit more oomph!

James: But ambient stuff's really kickin' at the moment.

Nanny: Kickin'!? What about Christmas, are you having it together somewhere, or with the family?

Miranda: Has he not told you? We're going off to Japan.

Nanny: No. I always seem to be the last to get all the news. Is she a Twoer? (To James.)

James (now with tears in his eyes and a lump in his throat): No. She'll have to go won't she.

Then he starts crying.



James: I'm sorry.  
 Nanny: Come here.  
 Sort of a one sided hug, then he sits back down again.  
 Nanny: Try and be happy for me, I'd like to see you happy.  
 Nanny: First, first - their the worst! I can't believe we used to sing that when we were kids.  
 Miranda: Twos, twos - a load of poos!  
 All laugh a bit.  
 Miranda: Yes, we're hopefully swapping with a couple in Kyoto. Can't wait.  
 Nanny: I'd watch out for him, he always fancied himself as a Samuri, have you seen that photo on Grandma's sill?  
 Miranda: Yeah. Great isn't it?  
 Nanny: What about Progen then?  
 Miranda: Well James is still in the running.  
 Nanny: And you're not? Well to be honest, I think it's more a thing to be proud of for society rather than for yourself. It can't be much fun stuck on a ship for the best part of your life. I think it'd probably be a mixed blessing being picked. Looking forward to moving in then?  
 James: I don't really want to say yes. I'd hate to feel I'd forced you to do this by pushing you out of your home. But yes, it'll be nice for us to have a place together.  
 Nanny: It's alright James, I'm not going to want to change my mind, you haven't forced me into it. But if it keeps you happy, if I do have a change of heart, I won't hesitate to make you homeless! I've had a really good time this last week. Ever since I made my mind up. The pain seems to have gone away a little and I feel so relieved. Life was starting to become a real burden, and all that weight's gone now. Your Grandmother was starting to spend too much of her time looking after me. I am a real burden to her now. She's going to help me tonight, that's the last she'll have to do. It's a hard decision to make, but sometimes you've got to make a decision. You'll have to make a hard decision sometime. Now I've chosen to die. My life has seemed so full, I look back thinking what fun it all was. When you move in think of me as you remember me, not as I am now. And don't be worried about me dying in your room. Think of me as someone who's heart is still with you.  
 By this time tears are flooding down both of our hero's faces (and our reader's (sic - Ho ho) too on the train as they read it.)  
 Nanny: Come on lets have a hug.  
 Nanny (while hugging Miranda): Enjoy this flat, it's pretty cool.  
 James (Whilst hugging. Muffled): I love you Nanny.  
 Nanny: I know. You too. (Louder) Now wipe those tears away before you go.  
 They leave without saying anything or looking back.  
 Nanny: Enjoy the gig.  
 Outside they hug eachother.

## E 1 Christmas in Japan

A Japanese family are all sitting down at the table and having a meal together. There are a few bits of tinsel scattered around the joint. The doorbell goes. One of the children get up and answers the door, but everyone stirs a tad. The door opens and Miranda and James are there.  
 James: <Hello!>  
 Kid: Hello!  
 The mother appears.  
 Mum: <Hello. Come on in. I'm Mitchia.>  
 James: <Hello. I'm James and this is Miranda, I'm afraid she hasn't got much Japanese.>  
 They both shake her hand. The kid picks up on this and spends the rest of the scene trying to shake Miranda's hand. From now Mum and James are having a conversation in Japanese whilst laddie shows off his English to Miranda.  
 Mum: <That's OK. You're going to be her ears and mouth then?>  
 James: <Well it looks like she might have her own translator already!>

James and Mum share a titter. Miranda looks up wondering what's going on, but tries not to be rude to the boy wonder.

Mum: <Did you have a nice trip?>

James: <Great. It all went smoothly, not too much hassle.>

Mum: <Good. We've got some food for you here for tonight. You can have it now if you like - we've just finished ours. Or if you'd rather just relax, have a wash and generally veg out after the journey then that's cool.>

Kid (simultaneous with a couple of lines ago like): How did you get here?

Miranda: By plane, we didn't really have enough time to take a cruise over.

Kid: Are you married?

Miranda: No. No we're not.

Kid: Do you like dogs? We've got a dog.

Miranda: Yes, they're alright.

James: Do you want to eat now, or just flop for a bit.

Miranda: I'm knackered.

James: Yeah, me too. <We'll just settle in for a bit I think, if that's alright.>

Mum: <Of course it is. Let me take your bag. Sartoru, take Miranda's bag next door will you.>

Kid: Yup Kingpin!

They step back into the corridor and walk to the next flat's door. Mum gets the key out and lets them in taking the key out of the door and giving it to James.

Mum: <You can meet everyone else later, they're all dying to see you. Right, here we are, it's the next flat. Everything should be there. Just call us or come round if you need any help. OK?>

James: <Great, thanks a lot. See you in about an hour or so I expect. Bye.>

Miranda: <Thank you>

Kid: See ya James. See ya Miranda.

Mum drags Kid out backwards and shuts the door behind her. Our lovebirds have a quick peck and a hug and then recline on a comfy sofa.

Miranda: No worries about the natives not being friendly.

James: I wouldn't bank on it. It's in their blood. All that warm exterior is just to hide their disembowelling instinct.

Miranda: Oh behave and find me my present.

James: Lets have a look.

He has a quick gander around the house. It's basically a fairly large living room with a kitchen and bedroom off it. Odd cards are up too.

James: They've not exactly made it easy for us have they?

Miranda: Dah. Wait til later. Come here and we'll watch their message.

James: And admit defeat? Get real grandma! Here they are. The gits put them in the oven. Oh God, there's loads of them. I'll just bring a couple out. God!

Miranda: Ace, which one's mine?

James: Dunno. There aint any labels.

Miranda: Can I have the big one? Gimmy, gimmy.

They sit next to each other opening the clips and clasps of the reusable present boxes.

Miranda: Ace, it's a kimono. Can I have it?

James: I suppose so.

Miranda: Oh ace, I'll wear it next door tonight.

James: Yeah, why not. The other one I quite smartly left in the oven's much nicer... Oh biscuits. Get in. I think they're homemade. Want one?

Miranda: That's a bloody stupid question if ever I heard one.

They sit munching for a frame.

James: Come on then Puter, lets see what old Albert's got to say.

The screen springs to life and starts up the vid Albert made to greet them.

Albert: Hello James and Miranda. Welcome to our humble. I hope we've had time to make the place look a tad respectable cos we're a bit rushed at the mo. Can't wait to stay in your little flat. Your Grandma sounds ace, but she was a bit upset that you've chosen to go away on the first week. Older people don't seem to realise that it's nice to have a change every now and then. Mind you I'd stay at home first week

next Christmas, she says she usually enjoys the family being together and organizing all the events and everything for us firsties more than going on holiday herself.

I presume you've already met the Oi's next door. They're ace. I think they're planning to make some food for you for tonight. Good luck!

If you're anything like me you'll have opened all of my presents to you by now. But if you're wondering where they are then ... Well you'd just better look a tad harder then. Anyway, I'm sure you're dead tired after the journey so I'll leave you be. I'll be at your place ages before you, so give us a bell when you like. You might even get to see Anna unless she's still doing her make up. I shouldn't joke about it. She might be! Er, don't forget the 10 hour difference (as if you could.)

You're still in Progen aren't you James. You're the only person I know still in it, though there's a friend of a sister of a friend of mine who's still in the running. You must be able to sniff it. Good luck with it anyway. I've left Donkey with some suggestions of things you could do during your stay. Well the sort of things we'd like to do if we visited Kyoto anyroad.

Enjoy your stay and our home. See ya.

The screen dies.

Miranda: Ain't Christmas ace. None of that drunk driving, gluttony, wasted money on useless presents, and nothing going on. Just half the world swapping houses with friends and strangers, leaving the other half to organise stuff for everyone on holiday for the week before going on holiday themselves. It's got to be the one thing that establishes ourselves as being civilised.

James: Oh God. She's in one of her enthusiastic moods again. I'm going to take a shower before you get me playing Beetles.

## E 2 Progen Interview

James is sat in a waiting room in the reception of one of the Progen offices. He's got his worky sort of clothes on: white unironed shirt (current fashion), dark flowery tie, dark trousers with some sort of small repetitive pattern, and odd socks. A lady comes through one of the doors.

Interviewer: Hello James. I'm Marg.

James: Hello.

Interviewer: Let's drag you off for the grilling then!

They set off walking through the building.

James: Right-oh. It's not going to be too bad is it?

Interviewer: Oh, I don't know... You made it here in one piece then. What do reckon to 'The George' then?

James: It's quite smart isn't it! Nice to live it up for a change. Most of us staying there had a bit of a drink after the meal last night - quite a laugh.

Interviewer: Oh yeah? One of the unfortunate ones who had earlier interviews looked a tad the worse for it. You look like you've just about worn it off by now!

Both laugh.

They get into the office. It looks fairly simple and clean. The desk is about four foot wide with a long thin screen at the back of it.

Interviewer: OK then, here we are. Take a seat. Right, I'd better start off by telling you what I'm looking for so that you can tailor your response.

James: Oh, thanks very much.

Interviewer: I'm not going to test your technical knowledge and ability, so you don't have to impress me with loads of stuff cos it'll go right over my head. You've passed all the previous interviews and tests which were looking for all that. So you've got further than I have. All I'm trying to establish is how you'd fit in with the rest of the people on Progen. Obviously, all the people who get picked will form the seed for a whole new society, completely isolated from the Earth. So we want to make fairly sure you're not going to blow Progen up in a fit of suicidal rage, or that you're not going to talk to anyone and create a bad atmosphere on Progen. That sort of thing.

You're now down to the last 20,000 worldwide and 4,000 of you will go to Gensim. So that's a 3 month party to look forward to even if you're not one of the lucky 1000. Honestly, Gensim is going to be a serious laugh. The only thing is that it will be used as a quarantine period: if you are picked, then you'll

not be able to physically meet anyone outside the Progen project. With this in the back of your mind all the way through Gensim, it may make you think twice about accepting an offer if one was made to you. Right then I'll just go down this list of topics and we'll discuss what your thoughts are on them. It's a pretty crude way of getting a conversation going, but it's quite effective for comparing candidates. Right, sport.

James: Oh, the hard ones first. I'm not going to shine on this one really cos I don't do very much of it. I know it encourages teamwork and stops you thinking that if you want a job done well, do it yerself, and one should really do lots of sport, but I can never really get too excited about running about and getting hurt. Everyone who plays sport regularly seems to have injuries regularly too. I'm too keen on self preservation really.

Interviewer: What about using sport to keep fit.

James: Well I never intend getting fit, let alone keeping fit. You'd have to spend such a disproportionate amount of time on your body. I'd rather be active in other areas more. Also, if you're fit you become so susceptible to colds and anything that's doing the rounds. Nah, I go by the premise that the best way of making your muscles as strong as they need to be is to do the things you need to do.

Interviewer: What about the aerobics you do? Doesn't that conflict with your general philosophy on exercise?

James: Ah, well no. I like dancing so that counts as something I need to do. But aerobics is ace: you just prance around doing whatever teach is doing and it's cool to work up a sweat, which it often isn't when you go out for a quick boogie. I do that quite a bit with me mates, aerobics is just a more rigorous version of that really. You do feel really great after a sesh mind.

Interviewer: Right, what about music then?

James: Ah, you've picked a good one there. I like almost any noise at all. You could have someone scratching their nails down a wall and I'll listen and probably dance to it. There's just so much good music around at the moment: electronic, folk, rock, even classical. As a rule of thumb with classical music, if it doesn't end with 'Da, Da, Dahhhhh' to wake every one up and tell them when to start clapping, and spend most of the rest of the piece being oh so very witty and pretending to have endings before the real end, then I probably like it. But as that excludes almost all of them I don't have to plough my way through much to see if any of them break the rule. I haven't been proved wrong yet though. I love folk festivals, they're just great, with all the kids running around, and the morrismen and all that. It's great..

Sometime later in the interview.

Interviewer: OK then, that's enough of that rubbish, now we get to the fun part. Well for you anyway. We need some of your body to test the DNA for genetic defects. You'll only fail at this hurdle if you've got loads of bad ones, but we've obviously got to protect the next and following generations of Nalenguans. And of course, we've got to check that you're not firing blanks. If you get onto Progen you'll be encouraged to get into a relationship which, with a bit of luck, will bear fruit. However, if you don't want to settle down and have babies, or maybe if you're homosexual, you might not want to participate in the conception of a child. Obviously Nalengua requires as much variety of genes as it can get, so your sperm will be artificially inceminated if this is the case. Think yourself lucky, the women have to say they are going to have a baby before they're forty. There's not much scope for not giving birth, although the child may be brought up by someone else if they want. We don't want to impose this on people living this free society, people should make their own minds up, but I'm sure I don't need to explain why this condition must be imposed.

Anyway, the long and short of all this is that we need a sperm sample, and although there are other methods of extraction, manually is probably the simplest and most fun. If you've got a problem with that then we can come to some alternative arrangement, lots of people do.

James: No that sounds quite embarrassing enough for me!

Interviewer (chorteling): Yes. Well, the room's got a live size screen and some cracking smut in there. Try not to forget to collect the sperm like one bloke did earlier. Ha ha.

James: Tee Hee.

You then see them entering the wank room.

Interviewer: Here you go then. (Handing him the container (use your imagination.)) Take your time.

We've got a serious collection of porn, and it's quite a nice room for it really.

James: Cheers.

The door shuts behind him.

James thinks: I wish I hadn't had one this morning now. Well, off to work then!

James: Puter. Got anything for a good pull then?

Puter prints various broad titles.

James: I think we'd best have a colour video. Sod all this arty farty stuff. And nothing with any blokes in it.

Uniforms, slow strips, groups, Christmas. Christmas? Is it left over from last year or is it this years?

Best give us a group of airhostesses if you've got any.

Now if you're producing a porn version of Lover's Limit, you can dwell on this for as long as you want. Just remember that you may require some artistic advise from the author during shooting!

### E 3 Graveyard

James is sat in the graveyard of a bog standard glorious parish church. The gravestones are maintained to a reasonable degree, and there are several benches with a few odd people and maybe a couple populating them. They sit and think or talk, or walk and look at the graves (maybe at the baby ones.)

James thinks: What a lovely place. All those people buried here. They all thought that after death they'd go to live at a better place than this, or did they really? Anyway, they all knew that their bones would remain here for eternity. Strange. Everything that has happened since then, we still respect that. I don't know why, we seem to have no respect for most of our ancestors' thoughts and beliefs. Sometimes I think I'd quite like to be buried, cremation seems so final. When you're layed out to rest as part of the Earth it seems like you're still part of life, society. Still, mustn't let my ego get the better of me, wanting to live on after death is for boneheads. And think of everyone who's died since burials stopped.

Probably the whole world would be one large graveyard by now. Why have you come here James?

You've never come to this, or any other graveyard before to just sit and think like everyone else does.

Bringing Nanny's snuff box along just gives me an excuse. What are you going to do if you do get onto Progen? What a question. How could anyone turn down the oportunity, not only of a human lifetime, but of the Earth's lifetime? I know the odds of going to Nalengua are still stacked up against me, but...

The orders of magnitude are so much smaller now. I'm starting to really think I'm going. Just thinking back to when almost everyone was applying and the whole world dreamed for a couple of months up until the rejection certificates started to come though. Now it feels like reality to me. Some people have rejected offers for Progen. Maybe I should consider declining an offer. I wouldn't though, it just seems like the right thing to do. As if my life up until now has almost been tailor made for Progen.

Miranda appears on the frame and walks towards James slowly.

James thinks: Does she mind James? We both remember the agreement we made on our first date down Crusts, but will she be alright without me? Don't be too concered will you now James? You git.

James thinks: She'll be fine. She's perfectly capable of coping without you ya arrogant git. It's an exciting time James. If you're not chosen then your options are hardly limited on Earth, in fact you'll probably get a much better job cos all the really decent personnel are on Progen! If you're good enough you'll get picked. Don't worry about it.

Miranda: Do you mind me sitting here? I'll go away if you want to be alone. I just wanted to give you the option of being with someone if you wanted. Shall I go?

James: No. No. I'm just thinking.

Miranda (taking a pue): Yeah, you've not really moved much stuff in yet have you.

James thinks: What? Oh!

James: Well I think it's been a sort of mix of accepting it as being the right thing at the right time, and not really thinking much about it. It's nice to spend a couple of moments reflecting on it now. Just so I don't rush into anything I'm going to regret.

Miranda: It takes time. You bring something of Nanny's?

James: Yeah. The snuff box.

He hands it to her.

Miranda: It's a nice tradition that. Sort of connects you with your ancestors and the people buried here bringing something given to you by someone who's now passed away.

James: Yeah. I think I've completely accepted the situation now. Now I've spent a bit of time thinking about it. Come on lets go.

You could do a comic cliché/ here by watching them walk into the distance and leave the graveyard.

F/G-1                      Gensim

View from Gensim's main entrance. A small car for only two people in it pulls up outside. Spend a couple of frames watching the two hugging and all that. One of them gets out and walks down the path towards Gensim. As he gets closer it becomes apparent that it is James. Follow him all the way along the path. On the doorstep he turns and waves then enters. Wait a frame as the car stays outside even though James has entered Gensim and is out of sight. The car then leaves.

New scene. A classroom with eight seats placed randomly around the room in random directions. There is also a stack of seats in the centre of the room. There is someone sitting in all of the seats (except the ones in the centre, natch.) Everyone is wearing a boilersuit - just like in all the movies. James looks through the slit of glass to the side of the door, and then knocks in the assertive manner that you attempt to do when you're nervous.

Everyone in the room loudly: GO AWAY!

James pauses for a second, looks around him and checks the room number on the door, looks through the glass again to see everyone looking at him. He opens the door.

James: Is this B1-11?

Someone in the far corner with her seat facing the corner stands up on her seat and turns to face him.

Jane: Hello, I'm Jane and I feel more than a tad silly actually! What's your name soldier?

James: James.

Jane: Right then, before I start, I need a number between 1 and 7.

James: Err, err three?

Someone close to the centre but facing somewhere stupid titters to himself and everyone looks at him temporarily.

Jane: Right then, listen carefully cos I was the last person to come in and you'll be introducing everyone to the next person who comes in in a couple of minutes. Right, starting with our leader Andrew, (she points at him as she does to all of them,) Barbara, Clive, Darron, Liz, Fred, that's Girtrude, and of course you'll have to add Jane to that list, and yourself. You chose three so that's Clive.

Clive: Smashing. Well in the absence of any way to suspend a chair from the ceiling somehow, you can sit, or lie rather, along the skirting board of the wall directly behind the door. Best get a chair then eh?

James: Clive right? Cheers mate. What now: do you want me to take this cliché/d boiler off? One for the ladies maybe?

Chuckles all round.

James (trying to arrange himself): I don't blame you Clive, it's not really your fault. I mean all those problems your mother had trying to bring you up singlehandedly with no money or emotional support whilst you're wetting the bed every night. Endless trouble with the police. I personally think you've done 'really quite well considering.' It's a tribute to the efficient running of the whole Progen project that they've found some space for underprivileged children on Gensim. They can mix freely and are treated just as if they were a normal candidate.

All of them have a good little chuckle. Well as large as you like really given that they're all trying to fit in but stand out.

Clive: Settle down now and behave.

There's a knock on the door.

Everyone: GO AWAY.

James: Aggghh.

The door opens as if the knockee hadn't listened to everyone telling him where to go.

James slides back along the floor 'standing up' on his chair until his head is crammed underneath someone else's chair.

James: Don't ask. You must be Beaky?

NB Give this bloke a big nose unless you've got a big nose yourself and are thus a member of the anti-nasal-abuse-lobby.

James: No? Don't tell me... Clumsy!

Titters abound.

James: Anyroad, I'm James, and I'm glad we've become so intimate so early on in our relationship. Don't take any notice of what I'm going to say cos it's complete bollocks, and so muffled you'll never get it anyhow. First of all, give us a number between eight and ten.

Clumsy: Pi squared.

James: Very good. Your name Cocky? No? I'll get it soon. Nine, that's me. Smashing! James looks at Clive as best he can through the chair legs and gives him an evil smile.

James: A quick introduction is in order: Andrew, Barbara, Zeus, err Greg? That's Beaky (I remember now), Mick and Titch natch, and the lovely Jane, bless 'er. Right, now the fun part. Get a chair from the centre and sit on top of Zeus. Serious. Oh, and you've got to introduce everyone to the next person through the door, in the style of a Dashaund.

Clumsey: Is this B1-11?

Everyone pisses themselves.

Andrew: Yes, it's OK your in the right room. Thankfully you're the last member of the group. That was just some stupid ice breaking session. I always find that the more ridiculous they are, the more ice is broken. Now as you may or may not (looks at James) have gathered, I'm in charge of your stay on Gensim. If you have any problems or find anything that you feel needs to be said then I'm your man.

Andrew: Right, lets start with these ridiculous clothes. As you know, you'll have your own clothes on Progen to provide both a fashion element to the community, and to link you with your past on Earth. As you'll find if you get onto Progen, and statistically two of you will, maybe none of you will be suitable, and there's even a chance that all of you'll get some of the various miscellaneous vacancies invented really to allow certain couples to be accepted. As you'll find, there's quite a lot of steps been taken to avoid you loosing your identity. This is probably the most traumatic move Man will ever make, everyone onboard will have to loose all their friends and family, and move to a place they've never been to before, with people they don't know, without even a chance of visiting or even calling, or even writing after the first year to anyone. So you've all selected your favourite clothes and a few light odds and ends to take with you if you get picked. All these are currently in quarentine, and so are you I suppose, until either you get moved up or you finish Gensim after probably the best holiday you'll ever get. All these bits and bobs will be THE artifacts on Nalengua if they get there. The general human emphasis on Progen is its links with the Earth in an attempt to try and stop you going crazy.

Gensim on the other hand is trying to emphasize the main problems with Progen: the overall lack of space; almost complete lack of contact with Earth and only very limited one way contact after lover's limit is passed. It'll be a real occasion when anyone on the ship gets a letter then. Good old  $t=c/g$ , bless it. So on Gensim the amount of general living space has been reduced by 25%. If you start feeling that this is starting to make you feel claustrophobic, don't try and persuade yourself that the extra 25% will make all the difference, it won't. By six months you'll probably be a cringing mass curled up in a ball on the doctor's couch. Under that circumstance Euthenasia may be the only option because get this straight now, the colonisation will not be terminated for your individual well being.

All your friends and family have been asked to send you letters today, tomorrow, and on Thursday and Friday too. You'll get today's today, tomorrows will be released after four days, you'll not get Thursday's until after two weeks, and Friday's letter you'll get a week before the end of the quarentine period. This should really mess you up, and it's designed to. But again, although we've exaggerated the effect, believe me, it's nothing compared to what you'll feel on Progen.

Now we're all trying to make out that Gensim is the fun bit, and Progen will be harsh. In my opinion that's true. I didn't apply, I honestly feel Gensim is the real achievement. But I'm sure that you don't feel that way. My job is to really make you think about what you're doing. If, after three months some of my enthusiasm for the Gensim party has worn off on you then I've done my job properly. But if you still feel that you want to sacrafice your life for Man in general, then you're the person Progen wants.

Everyone thinks: That'll be me.

So when you decide you don't want to go onto Progen, just tell me. About 30% of the people who've come to Gensim so far have 'had a word' before they've got to the stage of offering jobs. And as you know you're some of the last, so that's quite a reasonable figure, so you'll certainly not be alone. If you do want to drop out then you can leave straight away and go back to your friends. Now not too many have done that. Gensim is designed to be a novelty holiday resort after Progen's departure, and the whole idea is to have a laugh, so if you don't want to go onto Progen, stay here. When else in life can you take

a three month paid leave and go back to your job at the end of it, and still have a month's holiday to spend in the other nine months? If you look out for the people who are real animals at the bar, they've all dropped out and are now really going for it all in a big way. Any questions?

Clumsy: Can we reject an offer to go to Progen if we want to?

James and Clive look at each other, tut and smile.

Andrew: No, I'm afraid if we want you to go, you'll have to go.

Stunned silence. James and Clive turn and pay attention.

Andrew: Dah, get a grip. It's your decision all the way. Any more? Right, now you all know that the only way teachers can tell which part of an explanation actually gave the students their realization is for the students to tell them as soon as they understand it. Well you've guessed it, your group has been chosen as one of the test groups. You'll have to complete a short realization form after each session. The form will ask you a couple of quick questions just to establish that you really have understood what's just been taught to you. Then there's a couple of questions about what tipped the balance for you, and a space for any comments. Don't feel you have to fill out the comments part to stand a better chance of getting onto Progen as almost everyone does. It just leaves me with a pile of useless text.

Well, start as you mean to go on, that's what I say. Just really to give you a feel for the format of the form, go to the screens around the edge of the room and follow the instructions.

F/G 2

Gensim Night Out

Dance studio aerobics group scene with everyone all lined up and Teach up front. Everyone's doing the joggy wakeup bit beside their mats after they've all been doing the stretches right at the end. Make sure they all look as ridiculous as you can bear to make them. Euro house? Clive's dead out of time. The studio's shaped in a sort of semicircular manner like it would have to be on Progen.

Teach: Right then, lets slap it all out. Ankles first. Knee's. Groin.

James and Clive look at each other after both turning away from Teach and/or some other beaver slapping their groin, in the hope that they can control themselves.

Teach: Belly. Chest.

Darron turns to James who's staring at the wall directly opposite so hard that his eyes are turning red.

Teach: Arms. Hands.

Now everyone's clapping and it transforms into a general applause of the session.

Teach: Thanks everyone, see you all on Monday.

They all take their mats up (some take other people's too.) Then they all head out. The boys are quick to get in the queue for the lift.

James: It's getting easier now isn't it?

Darren: Yeah, I'm getting much more used to her routines. It'll be a piece of winkle in a couple of weeks.

Mind you, even sneezy looked more impressive than bloody Clive. What, in under a thousand words, do you see as the point of aerobics then eh? Do you not understand what you're supposed to do?

Acknowledging the abuse, Clive is first into the lift, the boys and 4 beavers pile in behind.

Now, on Progen the lifts zoom up and down as you'd expect. Gensim, of course, is trying to simulate Progen as closely as possible. However, Gensim is a long, narrow, short building as opposed to Progen which is tall and thin. So the lifts on Gensim go sideways! Just bear that in mind while you're drawing it all.

Anyway, the boys are on the outside of the inside of the lift with James on the side of the lift that everyone is forced to as the lift gets going. Everyone sways towards him a tad. Take a couple of frames to observe the lads catching the odd glimpse of tanned, firm, sweaty leg/breast etc. and then reporting back to the boys facially. Examples of expression you could try are: not bad, whoorah, oh dear (one of the beavers is bound to look a bit off), I wonder if she's been to La Alhambra? (That last one's one for the more advanced artists, you could maybe get an adult to help you with this one if your stuck.) Just as James is stretching his neck over this bird's shoulders to see the goods, the horizontal lift stops suddenly and everyone leans slightly away from James. But James is already lent that far that way that he seriously overbalances and falls right onto this girl. Both of them end up on the floor with James ontop.

James breaks the short stunned silence that follows with: Sometimes takes you by surprise dunnit?

They all giggle uncontrollably as the girls eventually get out of the lift.



Darren: West 7.

James: Do you think she noticed?

Titters.

Clive seriously: Hold it.

Laughter stops.

Clive: Oh no. We're going to have to go into an emergency landing.

James and Darren look at Clive in a puzzled way (expression for beginners that one.) The lift stops and the door opens. Nice place for a page break if poss. Clive runs to the far edge of the area outside the lift next to a sign declaring 'Emergency Congregation Area'

Darren: Oh God! (Walks out onto the landing.) Don't give up the day job eh Clive?

James: I don't get it. Clive. Darren? I don't get it.

Darren calculating: Shower, dry, quick pull over the fourth newest bird they've managed to get up the alps with her rocks off, dressed. Synchronize watches. In Clive's room in forty five minutes.

James: Forty.

Clive: Fifty.

Darren: Forty. Go.

New scene Clive, Darren and James are all sat in Clive's room with some sounds on. Clive's sat on the back two legs of a chair with his feet up on the desk. James is lying down 'dead'. Well I used to think it was dead looking, but to be quite frank, it's a tad like a star. Darren is cleaning his teeth in Clive's sink.

There's an empty bottle of sherry on the desk, and all of them have a mug of sherry on the go.

Darren: Burr burr blurr blur blurr bur bur bur?

James convulsing with chuckles: You chuffing what?

Darren repeats it, but this time holding his toothbrush in his teeth, and further augmenting it by shaking his arms 'n that around.

James and Clive look at eachother and laugh.

Darren spits out the discoloured toothpaste.

Darren: You boys ready then?

Clive: That poof's hardly started his QC.

Darren: Get it down yer hairy throat, so as we can hit the bar.

James: I suppose I have started weaving. Come on, power through it.

Darren puts some more toothpaste on his brush, dips it in his mug of sherry, then continues brushing his teeth. Meanwhile.

Clive: I'll tell you what makes me laugh: vegetables that grow in funny shapes. No, no. I'll tell you what makes me laugh: writing complete bollocks on those realization forms.

Darren sprays his toothpaste all over James.

Clive: I reckon next time we all get together and make out that Smellie's areoma was the thing that really tipped the balance and made us understand why all the comms stuff's wired back to front! Or even less likely, all pick on one of Andy's implausible analogies involving a cloud and a feather.

Titters all round. Darren finishes his teeth with a rinse of sherry.

Darren: Come on boys, lets D.O. it.

All three of them glug away and end up with empty mugs upside down on their heads.

They all troop onto the landing, Clive closing and locking his door.

Clive: Where's Gammy tonight? Not that I'm missing him like, it's just that most nights he's sniffing around us well before now. I'm worried that he might be up to something. Or trying to befriend some poor git.

James: I told him we'd be celebrating in the bar as soon as we could so he'll have been there since just after the end of robes.

Raucous laughter.

Clive: Corker. Who'd have thought they'd choose him?

Darren: If they're all like that I'd soon as stay here.

James (smiling in anticipation): He's not definately there yet is he?

Darren: Good as!

They all break into tears of laughter as they fall over eachother, and into the lift.

Bar scene. Some of the girlies are already sat around a table, and Zombie is also sat there with them, but he's obviously not the kingpin of the conversation. It's fairly empty. The boys pile out of the lift laughing.

James: Stop laughing boys.

Puzzled looks arise and they stop in their tracks.

James: Boys, this is really important. I think we should approach the bar.

Boys laugh.

Darren: Oh sod off James.

Clive crouches on all fours behind James. Darren pushes James over (natch.) James struggling grasps one of Darren's arms and all three end up wetting themselves on the floor of the bar.

Beryl: Evening lads.

Clive: Three pints of Nasty Beryl, and make it snappy.

Darren: And I'll have three pints of nasty too, make it snappy.

James: I'll have a crocodile sandwich, and make it snappy.

I needn't point out where they break into chuckles.

Beryl thinks whilst smiling: Bless them.

Zeus comes up.

Zeus: Where the bloody hell have you been? We've had to put up with him for half an hour.

James: You should be thankful, maybe some off his immortality'll rub off on you.

Zeus: Yeah. Anyway, we've managed to get into the brewery tonight, but he's not bloody coming.

James: Ace. We'll stay down here for a sniffa, then naff off.

James and Zeus sit down on the table with the rest of them.

G 1: Dyou fall asleep then?

James: No, we got in from robes, quick shower, pull and change. Sink une bootile de Q.C. and came straight here.

G 2: I don't think we really need to know about your sex life.

James: Oh we had a great one. Clive'll tell ya.

Girlies: What?

James: Clive. Clive. CLIVE.

Clive: Alright I'm here.

James: Good Sherman?

Clive: Corker. Julie really had some moves didn't she? What about the...

James: ...the bit with the jumper.

Clive: Yeah, and the bit in the squash court.

James: I don't think Darren enjoyed it quite as much.

Quizical look from Clive toward James.

James: I rung him up soon as I'd finished. Aparently he hadn't.

Darren (arriving avec drinks): Yeah you did you bastard.

There's no more space around the table when Darren gets there.

Darren: Pint of nasty, Nasty?

Nasty: Yes please. You buying?

Darren (passing James's pint over): I got you one, that one at the bar.

Nasty: Next to that bloke. (Darren nods.) Oh cheers!

Nasty niks off with a big beam on his face, and Daz jumps straight into his grave.

Clive: You did what?

Darren: Well I think he deserves it. And I can tell all my friends that his almightyness and I were like that. That's me.

In the background there's this Bloke: Get off my pint ya geet.

Nasty: N-n-n-no, my good man. You must be mistaken. My mate just got me this one in.

Bloke: I don't care what he says, just keep your thieving mits of me beer.

Much low quality merriment suppression on our table as you see Nasty confuring with the barman, then leaving in a rage.

Zeus: I can't believe they're taking him onto Progen. He's so bloody wet.

Clive: If they're all like that, I'm glad I'm not going.

Darren: Er yeah, me too?

James: It's not sure he's going yet. No one's actually told us yet. He must be thinking it over.

Darren: He's hardly going to say 'Ooh, no thanks. I'm enjoying it so much here on Earth I couldn't bear to give it all up just to nik off round other planets.'

Titters.

James: and there's another thing, you could well still get in Clive. I'm sure the selectors have got a sense of humour: come on lads, lets pick him, give them someone to laugh at.

Clive: If they've picked all gits like Smelly, then I'd rather stay on Earth and have a week's reunion here every year for the rest of me natural.

Darren: Yeah. You really can be quite deep sometimes Clive you know that. You don't want to listen to what everyone says.

Clive: I don't know where I get it all from.

James: Written it off already then?

Clive: I only really applied for a laugh.

Zeus (looking at James): Hey, are they going to consider you now your cousin's in?

James: Shhh. Well, makes you wonder why they asked me to Gensim. But they're not going to let me on though are they...

H/I 3                      Their last phone call

Blank screen, maybe a couple of miscellaneous windows up. Seriously heavy and loud sounds in the foreground. Then a window springs up with Miranda in it.

Miranda: Wotcha James, I didn't expect to hear from you until later on. How was it?

James: Ace fun. Really great.

Miranda: Oh smashing. I bet you've had the time of your life. You'll be talking about it forever I'll bet.

James: Er. Well, yeah we have had a bit of a laugh.

Miranda: Are you alright? You seem a bit tired. You been up all night celebrating?

James (uncomfortably): Well, I certainly didn't get much sleep.

Miranda: You are...

Frame break. Look at both of them, one on the screen.

Miranda: Oh, no. You're going aren't you. You're going to Nalengua.

Frame watching James. He just doesn't know what to say.

Miranda closes her eyes.

Miranda: Oh, God. You're leaving me.

New page. The next scene is done as if it's a continuation of the conversation, but it's about a week later and Progen, with James on it, has just left.

James is in his room on Progen. It is relatively spacious, having his bed with a small screen and a desk with a large screen. Make it as flash as you like, but it should be designed in such a way as to be fairly familiar surroundings as that that might be found on Earth. He is sitting at his desk with a phone window up with Miranda on it.

James: It's just so hard to believe that it's actually happening at all, let alone with me on it. It was great when we left, we all watched Spinning Jenni fall away from us. Everything in my room was all over the place when we left cos I forgot there'd be a couple of minutes gap between Jenni's gravity and Progen's. It's just so ace to be part of such a cracking experiment.

Miranda: Yeah, I know. Have they told you more about what you are going to be doing all the time though?

James: Yeah. They reckon that some people are bound to die throughout Progen, and early on Nalengua. So to avoid any major problems they've got about ten of us that spend all our time going around and learning everything about everything that happens on Progen. So when someone dies or can't work or sommut, the others in the department get promoted, and we nestle in at the bottom.

Miranda: So you just go round doing nowt?

James: That's about the size of it. Well, we spend half a year in each department, learning the ropes and all that, they'll give us little jobs to do to help them out and all that.

Miranda: Sounds a bit boring compared with what you were doing though.

James: Maybe, but when you're in a department, you get access to all their secret little nuggets of info. So I can sit and learn all that and find out just how the whole place really runs.

Miranda: Smart. D'you know anyone there yet?

James: Apart from me cousin and Dozy, and they're both gets, no. All of us lot who go around the place, floaters they call us, we'll spend a fair bit of time together so I'll probably get to know them first. All the

others, right, they're all other halves of people who they really wanted on Progen, but who wouldn't go unless their other half did. I don't know why they picked me.

Miranda: Corse you do. You're bright and happy all the time. They probably want you to liven Progen up a bit.

James: Maybe! Andy (teach from Gensim I think. check.. Edit thei s ouhjtat FOUT out.) said that most of the people that had already gone up were, quite frankly, a bit boring. Makes sense I suppose doesn't it.

Miranda: Are the other floaters on your floor?

James: Nah, they're all in couple's accommodation.

Miranda: Oh right.

James: I'm on a floor full of single blokes. Should be a laugh. They all work in different places. I haven't really spoken to them yet. They've all been here a fair while and know eachother quite well.

Miranda: Where are you working first then?

James: Food processing. I should be being taken down there any time now. That's the place with all those racks and racks of vegetables growing and the beer, well lager, and all that. Then after six months there I nik off to the communications side - so I'll be part of the real screen team that Nosy's on. He might be on my floor actually, well anyway, then on to navigation which should be smart cos I don't know owt bout that. But we'll be pushing lovers limit then so that's probably all you'll ever hear about the rest of my life. And I'll never get any more replys to my letters.

Miranda: Well that was your choice.

James: Yes. Yes, I know.

Another phone window pops up on James's screen with a message to the effect that this geezer from personnel wants a word in your shell like.

James: 'Ay up, what's this? Can you hang on a second Miranda. I think I'm being called for my first day's work. I'll only be a couple of ticks. See ya in a bit.

Miranda: See ya shortly.

James pushes an appropriately labeled button, the new window becomes active. Sort it how you like.

James: Hello John.

John: Hi James. Enjoying it?

James: Yeah, it's great int it?

John: The best. Anyway, enough frivolity, you can't go round life enjoying yourself - work.

James: Yup.

John: Shall I come round to take you off to Food Processing now?

James: Sure. Shall I come down?

John: Well, I wouldn't bother. We're suppost to take you from A to B first time. I think we'll maybe rethink that in due course, but we'd have to do all that quality stuff, changing the procedures and that, so we'll stick to it for the moment. I'll be right up. Bye.

James: Bye then.

Pushes another button.

James: Hi I'm back.

Miranda: Hi.

James: He's coming to pick me up straight away.

Miranda with red eyes but holding herself well considering: So this is it then. I'll carry on writing to you for the rest of my life. It'll be a bit one sided, but It'll tell you how we're all doing.

James: Oh, thanks. You should get letters quite frequently until lover's limit. But I'm afraid that they'll peter out to nothing in no time after that.

Miranda: Enjoy yourself then.

James: Don't forget I love you.

Frame pause.

Miranda: You'd best go now. Bye.

James: I should. Bye then.

James thinks: Well, Goodbye Earth. What a cliché/!

Bing bong (door bell noise.) John has pushed the doorbell button on the screen outside James's door.

James sees him on his desk screen.

James: Shall we let him in Puter? Oh go on then.

James opens the door manually.

James: Hello John.  
They shake hands.  
John: Hello James. Ready?  
James: I've been ready all day.  
They walk out of the door, onto the landing and push the lift button.  
John: What you been doing then?  
James: Lock it (to the screen once they've left his room.) Ringing up old friends really. A bit sad I suppose, but good to speak to them all again. Passing the time really.  
John: Not too bored I hope.  
A lift comes and the walk to it and get in. John pushes another button.  
James: No, just excited really. Time just stops when you're excited doesn't it?  
John: Yeah. Mind you, time nearly will stop for us later in the trip.  
Both laugh controllably. The lift stops at the food processing office floor. All the diameter of Progen is open plan office space with the accellerators, lifts and stairs breaking up the centre. They leave the lift and approach someone whose desk is closeby.  
John: Hello. This is James, the floater that'll be with you to start off with.  
The bloke just looks up at him blankly, across to James, then further across to another bloke working there.  
The other bloke (and everyone else in the office (all male - important)) is looking at them. No one says or does anything.  
John (to the first bloke): Well, can I leave him with you?  
Frame silence with a slightly agressive look at John from the bloke.  
Bloke: Well I don't know what to do with him. (He turns to the bloke he looked across to.) Bijou?

H/I-a1 Village shop monopoly

Yet another office scene. Again, the basic elements are chair, desk and screen. Try and make it distinguishable from James's office in earlier scenes.  
Paul has got Miranda a coffee in and brings it over to her.  
Paul: How's it hangin 'en?  
Miranda: Dah, not too bad I suppose. Got a letter from James last night.  
Paul: Yeah?  
Miranda: Yeah. Seems to be doing alright. He reckons we should start a game of chess. Bloody ridiculous eh?  
Paul: Sounds like him.  
Miranda: Yeah, suppose so. I'm still living with his grandparents you know.  
Paul: Yeah?  
Miranda: Yeah! They had a flat for James's Great Grandmother, and we moved in when she died. Then he left me there when he went off to Nalengua. It was alright when he was in Gensim cos he was sort of expected back.  
Paul: You didn't though did you?  
Miranda: No. No I didn't, but that shot of hope was a real killer. You couldn't just put it all down to experience at that stage cos statistically there was still a good chance of him coming back. I got on much better with his Great Grandmother than I do with his Grandma. His Grandpa's alright, but you never get him alone and it's Grandma who's got full reign. I could handle those three months alright, and they'd never ask me to leave, but I just want to move out now.  
Paul: Mmm, yes, and how long have you been having these feelings?  
Miranda (laughing): Don't joke, it's serious.  
Paul: Most people have problems with people not cleaning the house, or eating their butter, but not Miranda.  
Miranda: It's not really like the old house. I just can't stop myself always considering them as James's family first, and my house mates second.  
Paul: You going to move back to Mill Road then?  
Miranda: Well I though about it. I went out with some of the girlies last week. That's the first time I've ever felt like I'm ageing.

Paul: Obviously not been paying too much attention to the mirror then eh?

Miranda: The cutting edge of contemporary wit as ever. Nah, I wish it wasn't so, but I really didn't enjoy it as much as I should. We went down the pub and loads of their friends were down there. A couple of odd blokes came over to either start or finish relationships with one or other of them. They were having so much fun. I sort of wished I could be back like they still are, and enjoying it. But I've changed now, it's not so easy anymore.

Paul: Get a grip, you must be the most outgoing woman I know.

Miranda: Dah, sometimes I am, but sometimes I'm not. The odd thing is that it's blatantly obvious that they're having much more fun than me, and I still look at them as if they're the unfortunate ones, just cos I've moved on. You know: been there, done that. It's such a ridiculous emotion.

Paul: So what you really want is a place you can move into immediately, that's just right for one person, maybe with a small proviso that you'll have to share for about a month.

Miranda: Uh?

Paul: Well, I'm moving out in a month when Sue comes down and we're getting a place together. So why don't you move in now so we can have a bit of a piss up, and a laugh before I move out. Can't see there being any problem in you taking over the flat once I'm gone.

Miranda: You serious?

Paul: Natch.

A call comes up on Miranda's screen with some git on it. His name is in there somewhere too. (Make it up you idle get.)

Miranda: I'd love to. Really?

Paul: Yeah, I'll see if it's OK with land allocation, and you can move in tonight.

Miranda: Yeah, go on. TONIGHT?

Miranda pushes a button.

Miranda: Hello.

Bloke: Hello I'm from Dutch Elm. I thought I should inform you about one of our customers who we've temporarily stopped supplying.

Miranda: Yes.

Bloke: Yes. It's the Shingey cum Wendy Old post office. They're selling our goods at what we consider to be unreasonably high a margin.

Miranda: Have you got a copy of their accounts?

Bloke: Yes, shall I send them to you?

Miranda: Yes.

Bloke: 'And make it snappy!' (to his screen) I've highlighted the figures that directly affect us.

The accounts appear on a new window on Miranda's screen.

Miranda: Right, well I'll obviously have to check them out, but they look a bit over the top.

Bloke: Yeah, they're just trying to exploit their monopoly on the village. Obviously they don't have as large a turnover as stores in the centre, so you'd expect prices to be a bit higher, but they're taking the mick a bit there. Not the sort of reputation we'd want to rub off on us, we don't really dig greed, it ain't cool.

Miranda: OK. Thanks for telling us. I'll check those figures again, the auditors, and yourselves of course.

Once I've got to grips with all that, I'll give the Old Post Office a tinkle and see what they've got to say on the matter. Depending on their reaction, I'll either leave it a day or so for them to sort it out if their sorry about it all, or I'll contact all the other suppliers, and try and get an article into a couple of local news programs. I'll keep you informed whatever. OK?

Bloke: Great, well thanks, that was quick. Hope to hear from you soon.

Miranda: Cheers

H/I-a2

Paul's Flat / Chess Letter

Paul's flat has just got one main living room/kitchen with a bathroom and a bedroom off it, unless you can think of owt better. Miranda's in the bedroom hanging a few of her clothes in his wardrobe, whilst Paul's clearing up all the cutlery et cetera. Show him doing the washing up and draining it all. Lots of Miranda's stuff is piled up all round the place in strong reusable boxes.

Paul (just finishing off): Come on Fetty, it's just about to start.

Miranda comes rushing in and sits on the sofa, too close to Paul for platonic comfort. They're mutually invading each others space, but although both conscious of it, they're both easy with it.

The screen (acting as a plain TV now): In a change to the advertised program tonight, we have a tribute to Bernard Carter, who died in his sleep last night. This week's history of Rock will be shown next week.

...

Miranda: It's always the bloody first to go. I don't know why they bother advertising it if it's never bloody on. Who the hell was he anyway? I've never heard of him.

Paul: Well, I suppose I'd best use the opportunity to give Sue a bell. Shame it's such a reasonable hour!

Miranda: What am I supposed to do then? It's alright for you to go running off to your girlfriend, but you can't leave me like this surely.

Paul: Dah, I'm sure you can write a letter your boyfriend. He's bound to reply sometime before you're dead.

Miranda: That's not as stupid an idea as you might think. He did send me a letter a couple of nights ago. I'll write him a letter.

She goes and gets some lined paper and a refillable ballpoint pen out of one or more of the boxes, sits at a desk and composes this:

Dear James,

Thanks for the letter. The amount of time it takes to get your letters is starting to become noticeable. You sent the letter over a week (earth time) before I got it, and the gap between letters is starting to become significant. We'll have to start writing letters before we've got a reply to the last one!

It's a shame they haven't really got much work for you yet, but I suppose they're still getting to grips with it all themselves. Enjoy it while you can. My work's still going quite slowly too, just tight fisted shopkeepers who are trying to charge the Earth. I suppose I'll get doing some better stuff soon, but research still looks as remote as it ever did.

Well, I've moved out of your Great-Grandma's flat now, it was just a bit too large for me there. I'm taking over Paul's flat now. It's quite near the centre of town, and there's a shop just on the corner, it's ace. I couldn't believe how quick land allocation were, I'm used to them taking a week to tell you that you might have a problem, a week after you've solved it. They just said yes straight away, as soon as we suggested it. Paul's still living here for the rest of the month until he moves into his new place with Sue. I don't reckon your Grandma'll stay there much longer cos they don't really want anyone new living in with them, and it's getting a bit too big for them. They'll get a couple sized place for next to nowt, especially when you consider how well they keep that house.

[Paul walks past her and goes into the bathroom.

Paul: How you doing?

Miranda: Alright, I'm just finishing off. Only another paragraph.]

What a cracker of an idea to have a game of chess. It'll take 600 years between turns after the first five each, so I'd best get weaving. You didn't tell me whether or not the black's queen is to the left of the king or not, but in keeping with your 'no computers' philosophy I haven't asked what it should be. But I was thinking that it doesn't really matter which one I choose as long as I stick with it. It can be a big secret between Earth and Nalengua: are we using the board the same way round or not - we'll never know! Our direct descendants will have great debates as to what moves to play. They'll even have great debates about who is a direct descendant, and thus able to take part in the debate.

Anyway, King's prawn from 2 to 3. Lick that!

Lots of love,

Miranda. xx

She then holds the letter up to the screen.

Miranda: Can you get this please James.

In no time the letter appears on the screen just as it does on the paper, even though she's (relatively speaking) waving the sheet all over the shop when James is trying to digitize the handwriting.

Miranda: OK send that.

She then puts the letter, paper and pen back away. Paul then comes out of the bathroom, and Miranda heads to the bathroom (gagging for it like all women - poor bladder design.) They stop slightly too close again for normal comfort.

Paul: Half seven, Earl Grey?

Miranda: I usually take my tea stirred with a silver teaspoon that's been washed in water that's had the juice of half a lemon and a pinch of salt added to it. If that's OK.

James (smiling dismissively): Good night Miranda.

Frame pause as they're both confronting the natural urge to kiss (peck) each other goodnight.

Miranda: Night Paul.

Miranda has a slash, cleans her teeth, changes, converts the sofa into a bed, turns the light out and gets into bed accompanied with the following thoughts: God Miranda, what's going on eh? I know you're good friends n that and all your actions could be put down to good freindship, but what about that goodbye? We nearly kissed goodnight. On the face of it that might mean nothing, the fact that we suppressed it does mean something. If it was nothing then why didn't we kiss and go to bed.

When he took the mick about James, I'd have gone off in a huff if anyone else would have said it under any other circumstances, but it just seemed amusing. Even someone at work thought we were going out together. I nearly fell through the floor. And when he called me Sue by accident! I don't know, what the hell do you see in him? He's never stood out to you at work as being particularly attractive before, but I suppose he hasn't struck you as being ugly either. Well except for his dog breath, that really is truly repulsive. There, you're not so close to mention to him about his Hurrerrr, that's something I suppose. He's maybe a little more feminine than most blokes, and I suppose I'm slightly more masculine than other women. That might draw us together. Dah, it's only the proximity were keeping that's doing all this. I mean, we've spent the whole day together today: off to work, lunchtime, home from work, watching TV, making and eating food, and now to bed at the same time. We even communicated with our other halves at the same time. Dah, stop worrying about it, get some kip now Mmiranda.

HO4

Food Manufacture

James is sat in the food office on Progen. Somehow (since it's an essentially circular floorplan) they've managed to put him in a corner where he's very isolated from everyone else there. He's slouching back very low on his seat looking sideways out of a window far across the room, with a screen in front of him.

James thinks: God, do they really think I'm going to get anything out of just sitting here and reading? They don't bloody realize that I can actually do things for them. It'd only take a minute to tell me something to do, then I could spend the rest of the day doing it. If I had any problems I could ask Puter, but Puter can't give me a job to start off with.

Tut. Spend the first couple of weeks going through the procedures. A COUPLE OF WEEKS! I'm sure they're all very well written and that, but it's all complete crap unless I've got at least some realization of the problems involved. The first one I read was ideal for me, except it left me salivating for a chance to do some of the things it outlined. Toon! Gits, none of them have the faintest notion that I might be less than totally fulfilled here. Dah, I'll read that introduction to food again. I might pick up the odd nugget I missed last time.

James: Show us that intro to the food bit again Puter.

When most people are asked to consider the problems of sustaining life on a space ship they come up with generating air, and food as the main obsticals. Oxygen is produced by plants. You can kill two birds with one stone by eating the plants which while they're growing, make air. Progen has a generous 200,000 square metres of soil devoted to growing food for it's 1000 populace. As all this area is hand planted, monitored and reaped, exceptionally high yealds are achieved. 100 floors worth of the 50 metre diameter Progen are dedicated to the growth of plants. The outer 3m of this volume is used to provide a 15 km walkway that spirals around the area where the plants are grown, gradually up or down hill. This is one of the really beautiful features of Progen. The inner 8m diameter core cannot be used for food since it contains the accellerators, transports water, electricity and communication, and houses the two staircases and the lifts. This donut shaped cross sectional area is split up into 32 segments, Only 31 of the segments have trays in them for growing plants. When layer upon layer of these trays are stacked up on top of each other, the spare sectors form a huge empty column. This column is used to gain access to any tray. To do this the layer containing the required tray spins around until that tray lies in the column. The tray is then lowered down the column to the agricultural department, where it can be inspected, treated, planted, or reaped.

The trays hold a range of plants, and the distance between succesive layers of trays is determined by the height of the plants in the lower tray. A plant's productivity is measured in crop per cubic metre as



compared to crop per square metre - the ruler usually used on Earth. All the trays have banks of lights on their undersides to provide light for the plants growing below, and sprayers to provide them with water. Cameras under the trays allow the crops to be monitored, and enables the distance between the trays to be optimized. The small distance between the top of the crop and the bottom of the tray above is displayed fantastically from the walkway around the circumference of the ag. area.

As there are no animals, and hence animal products on Progen, protein is in relatively short supply. To solve this problem we use another two birds with one stone solution: we convert all our poo into food - single celled protein. The process also reuses the parts of plants that are not eaten directly as food like potato leaves, and lettuce roots. To start the process we must take all the waste, mash it all up and mix it with water. This is done within a vat with spinning blades inside it. It is kept cold (0-5 degrees C) so that nothing grows inside it: we want that to happen later.

From the vat, the slurry is passed through a pipe where steam injected into the pipe sterilizes it. Enough steam is used to raise the temperature to 140 degrees C for 3 seconds. The slurry must have a constant, low viscosity so that when it is forced down the pipe at a high enough velocity, the liquid flows in a turbulent manner (see Reynolds number) and it effectively stirs itself: the heat is distributed evenly and the steam can sterilize the slurry uniformly. The rate of flow down the pipe is constant, so 3 seconds from the injection of steam is a fixed distance. At the end of this length of pipe the slurry enters an expansion chamber with a much lower pressure. All the steam rises out of the top of the chamber and the sterilized slurry is collected at the bottom. It now enters the fermentation vat. All of our waste is eaten here by a handy little bacteria: corynebacterium which looks like a cloudy liquid. All we do is keep feeding them with our waste. They keep eating and multiplying, and then we eat them - just like farm animals back on earth.

To obtain the maximum amount of food, the bacteria must be skimmed off the top of the vat at the same rate as the slurry coming in. This rate is carefully calculated to keep the rate of increase of bacteria to a maximum. The contents of the vat is about 2g solid per litre. The bacteria needs to breathe, so sterilized air (ie very finely filtered) is bubbled in at the bottom, and the whole vat is lightly agitated by rotating plates protruding off an eccentric axle.

Now we have got our protein, but it's not in such a form as we'd really like to see on our plates for every day of our natural, although there are some funny people around! Once again we must sterilize the liquid in exactly the same way as before down the pipe. Then the solid part is extracted by a simple centrifuge. We've now got a gooy sticky slimy substance which we wash in a vat of water with an agitator. Centrifuging again gets us a wet looking solid, which is packed full of DNA which ain't so hot since it gives us dioreaha and gout. To breakdown the DNA we heat shock it in batches. Firstly it must travel down a pipe heated to 68 degrees C for 3 seconds, which empties into a vat kept at 50 degrees C to incubate for two hours after filling it up.

Since this is the major source of protein, for the population of Progen, it would be nice to have a couple of basic forms of the product for everyone to cook with. So we make a fine powder which is used like a high protein flour, and textured bacterial protein (TBP), a light dry solid (like a dense version of Wotsits - Woody) that once hydrated, has a texture comparable but not really similar to small lumps of meat.

To make the powder, the heatshocked bacteria is drum filtered, which is very similar to tumble drying in concept, but without heating. The wet solid obtained is then spray dried: it is both highly heated and highly pressurized and forced through a spinning bulb perforated with loads of small holes. The water in the protein when released into the vat surrounding the bulb evaporates, and is collected at the top of the vat (hot steam rises.) The powder (the finished product) now falls to the bottom and is collected there. NB the powder tends to stick to the sides of the vat which causes explosions if it is allowed to settle there in the heat. So the sides must be vibrated to avoid such a build up.

To make TBP, water should be mixed with the protein and a binding agent in a vat to form a thick slurry. Again, it is heated and pressurised, but this time it is forced through a small hole (about half an inch in diameter.) Again the water evaporates when it is released. The extrusion is then chopped up to form the TBP chunks.

James thinks: Well, that last coffee's gone through me now, time for a slash.

He gets up and timidly walks around the room towards the kitchen and toilet near the centre of the floor with his mug. He slows down to let people who would otherwise end up walking behind him walk in front, but avoids any eye contact as he slowly approaches the junction with them. The open plan kitchen is just before the toilet and James must pass it en route. As the kitchen (basically a sink,

draining board, fridge and kettle) comes into view there is someone making a drink there. Look of horror on James' face. The bloke then at the sink looks at James, but James looks away before any eye contact is made and James walks straight past and into the toilet trying to conceal his mug. Through the Gent's door, straight into a trap locking the door mechanically. Still standing he listens for a frame. Hearing no sound he puts the mug down on the floor, lifts up the seat, undoes his flies and starts pissing onto the side of the bowl to silence his discharge. Then you hear someone come in. James stops pissing but stands completely still listening. He hears him piss in a urinal, wash his hands, blow dry them, and leave. All tediously slowly. Try to force the reader to go through this embarrassing period too rather than letting her just scan over bits with no words. Viewing the scene from complicated angles which the reader finds hard could be a possibility. Once the bang of the door closing is heard James zips himself up and leaves without washing his hands. Again he tries to conceal his mug, and be discrete as he leaves, but someone sees him.

Someone: Jim?

James turns around embarrassed about the mug.

Someone: Oh, I didn't think the coffee here was THAT bad.

James tries a vague laugh which is very embarrassed, says nothing and goes red.

Someone: I wonder if you could give me a hand ...

James is now just about to start doing the job asked of him: sitting down picking strawberries from a tray suspended like a table.

James thinks: Coffee. (He gets up and walks confidently down stairs to the kitchen with his head up high.)

God this is great, a whole afternoon with something to do. For the whole afternoon I can feel part of Progen. I'm doing a job and people are relying on me to do it. By the end of this shift I've got to get that tray done.

There's a bloke in the kitchen filling his mug with coffee.

Bloke: What they got you doing then?

James: Oh, I'm picking strawberries til the end of the shift. Haven't really started it yet, but it look fun.

Bloke: Yeah, it's not that bad really. I've seen others do it.

James puts his mug down next to the bloke's, who puts some hot water in both of them.

James: Cheers. See ya round.

Bloke: Yeah, see ya.

James thinks: You've even walking back confidently for God's sake. Do they realize how much of an impact their whims have on your life? All I need is a job that needs to be done and I automatically become a participant in society, and I'm happy. I even didn't throw that bloke's conversion right back in his face. Depression and talking come in a sort of pair; you're either in one state or the other, sort of. Happy people aren't talking 24 hours a day, match. But if you're depressed you can't converse properly with people which can only worsen the depression. Whereas it is only that social contact that's going to draw you out of the depression.

H/I 4                      Letter ' Everything's new'

... Anyway, it's ace to hear from you again.

This place is so different from Gensim. Pretty crap simulation if you ask me. Its got such a different feel to it. Gensim was competitive I suppose, but everyone there was trying to get on and fit in there. It's not like that here. Everyone's trying to settle down and make the place home. But it's not. Everything's new, everything. When you change job or something on Earth, it feels like everything's new, but it isn't. You've still got your family and friends, and even if you move house too, you probably haven't moved to an area that you've never been to before, and don't know fairly well. And of course you can always move back if you don't like it. There's just nothing here that even resembles anything from home. Quite a big step to make really: leave everyplace and every person you've ever known and loved, and pretend none of your past life ever happened. Maybe I didn't think hard enough about the decision to come here. I had trouble when I started work and I loved that before too long. Maybe I'm just getting slower to adjust.

Dah! It'll all sort itself out I know, they always do. But it just looks a bit confused at the moment.

And of course that tricky second move King's pawn to King 3.  
Lots of love  
James xx

H/I-a 4            Carer's pay

Miranda's at work sitting at her desk scribbling onto a pad of paper. Thinking, crossing out and then scribbling somewhere else on the page with loads of words and phrases circled with arrows 'n that.  
James (her screen): Got a call form your sister. Do you want to pay for it?  
Miranda pushes the 'I'll Pay' button.  
Miranda: Hiya, How you doing?  
Sister: Ace. You still coming up?  
Miranda: Natch. Did you not think I'd make it then? I'm no part timer me. Shame on you for letting the thought enter your head.  
Sister: No, no. Just checking like.  
Miranda gets a new window coming up.  
Miranda: Hey! I've just got a letter through from James.  
Sister: What's he say?  
Miranda: How'm I supposed to know? I've only just got it through.  
Sister: What, while we've been talking? (Nods.) Well read it out then.  
Miranda: Ooh, I don't like to. I expect he'll say he's married with three kids by now.  
Sister: What? Is he really old now then?  
Miranda: Daaaaah, got yer! Nah, he stays younger than we do. He'll reach Nalengua ten years after he left, but it'll be 300 years before he gets there for us, and then another 300 years until we can get messages back from them about it. You see little old lady, he'll be travelling at as good as the speed of light for most of it, so he'll not be ageing much while he's covering all that distance.  
Sister: He must get pretty bored, walking about so slowly all the time.  
They both titter a bit.  
Miranda: Yeah, the delay between letters is starting to get larger now. He's only been gone three and an half months now and it'll take nearly a month (our time) for him to receive any letter I send now.  
Sister: Well divn't worry about him, cos I'll tell ya what we're gonna do. We're goin'ta get that horny Richard guy that you tapped off with last time. We're gonna bring him up to Lough for the weekend, and we're gonna tell him you're quite interested. I've never known anything to get a shy bloke trying to show how manly he really is and get him to make moves, than to suggest that it would be fruitful.  
Works wonders.  
Miranda: Oh God. I'll be so embarrassed, I won't know what to say.  
Sister: Da, that's alright, a couple of beers, and neither of you'll worry about that. Both of you can normally talk to the wall, you'll be laughing.  
Miranda: Well, I'm having second thoughts now. Maybe I won't come up after all.  
Sister: Get a grip man. You serious?  
Miranda: Nah! (Tee Hee.) I've got to wait for some geezer to give me a bell before I go really. See, there's this woman who's mother's now incapable of living without full time help. She's not too bad mentally and she's got many years fun left in her, so her daughter's given up her work with a Smartness company. Anyway, somehow Smartness have messed up her carer's pay and she's not had any shod for the last two weeks. Yeah? So unless they sort it out, we're going to release it.  
Sister: God, I don't understand you lot. Contempary News is a Smartness company isn't it? (Nods.) So you'd release all this guff on how bad Smartness is and tell everyone to stop using Smartness products. I suppose you'd tell them not to listen to the rest of the report. 'We suggest you only listen to our competitors news reports so you'll put us all out of a job.' Don't worry me ducks, we'll convert you this weekend, you'll be alternative before you know it.  
Miranda: Yeah, it does seem a tad silly on the face of it. Just try thinking of all these conglomerates as the equivalent of the olden governments of big countries like England and Germany. They're pretty similar really, they just work better than those governments. You've got to force them to do the right thing for

other people so you know that you'll be treated OK yourself. And if you're not you know that others will fight for you.

Sister: I still reckon you're mad. When are you gonna be up then?

Miranda: James? (Window with some current and predicted travel info comes up.) An hour and an half after the call, so hopefully by half six? Unless they don't find her the money then we'll be a bit later than that. Anyway, it shouldn't come to that.

Sister: OK, see ya then, then.

Miranda: Seeya.

Together: Bye.

Miranda and Richard are a few beers down and are lying on the floor in front of an electric heater that is glowing red and is the only light source. They're ramming their tongues down each other's throats like it's going out of fashion.

Miranda Thinks: Get in.

They stop snogging. Richard rolls over to face the fire with Miranda still on her back in front of him.

Richard: I just can't believe we haven't spoken to each other all day. It's been such a crap day as well. I'm not normally like this. Only when there's a woman I really like around. I have to censor everything I'd normally do or say without thinking. I've got to make sure that I'm not just doing or saying something to show off to you. It always gets censored, and I spend the whole day doing and saying nothing except being embarrassed.

Miranda: I thought you didn't like me. I thought you were embarrassed about getting off with me last night.

Richard: Oh Miranda.

Quick kiss and hug.

Richard: I suppose that was the only thing you could have thought. Oh I'm sorry.

Another quick K & H. Sad gets!

Richard: I just wish I could cope with it all a bit better. I don't know what to do.

Miranda: Oh don't worry. We're alright now.

Richard: Yeah, more by luck than judgement.

Richard lies down with his head lying on Miranda's shoulder, staring at the fire.

Miranda: Yeah, I suppose.

Frame pause.

Miranda: Are you still going out with that girl?

Richard snorts with a surprise / ironic laughter combination, as you do.

Richard: Yeah. Yeah. 'That Girl.' Yeah. I suppose I really should do something about the situation. I mean, we're really close like, but it's been almost three months since she went off with him. She still calls me from his place. I don't know if it's designed to make me feel like I haven't eaten for half a week, or do the same for him. It works on me anyway whatever her motivation is. I suppose I'm just an excuse now for her to enjoy herself with him without having to sleep with him. Any road, it's basically over.

What about you? Have you heard much from him?

Miranda: Yeah, he writes a lot. I got one Thursday, I'll write on Sunday to tell him about this weekend.

Well most of it. He's not himself really. He was always bright and friendly: happy. But his letters seem a bit withdrawn. He'll get on alright, it'll just take him a bit. I mean, when he started work he used to hate it. One day a week without his mates. After about six months he could hardly wait to get another day there. He'll be alright.

Miranda looks at Richard's eyes. He then looks from the fire to her.

Miranda: It's nice to feel a bit more free of him.

They smile. Silent frame.

Miranda: It was funny early last night when I came in and we didn't even formally acknowledge each other, even avoiding eye contact. And then spent the rest of the evening flirting with other people just to prove to each other that we were attractive to others or something. 'Funny how we work isn't it?'

Richard: Yeah, me especially. How are we going to stop going through it again for a third time tomorrow?

Miranda: Well we could start off by sitting next to each other. That'd force us to talk.

Richard: What about Sunday? When are you going home?

Miranda: Just after lunch.

Richard: Well why not travel together up to your place, then I can get a bus home from somewhere. I know it'd be doing two sides of a triangle, but it'll be a laugh.

Miranda: Err, yeah. Why not, look, have you seen the time. I won't be able to talk to you even if we are sitting together if I don't get a little sleep before tomorrow. I'd best go.

Richard: Yes, yes, you are right of course.

Richard kisses and hugs Miranda then she gets up to leave. Just as she opens the door she turns back and waves (with her fingers not her hand) to Richard.

Richard: See ya.

The door closes.

Richard thinks: Get In! (Pronounced in his head very slowly.)

H/I 5                      Cry for Help

There are several people including James in a room that takes up about a half of the cross-section of Progen. They're all sat around a table.

Charlie( the leader): Right then, straight onto the next activity. I know you're all starting to get a tad tired, but this is the last physical one.

James: Yeah, but that's just another test to manipulate our hope. Don't believe him!

Couple of titters from the leader.

Charlie: Now I wouldn't do that. Or would I? Steady. Anyroadup, lets just explain this one. You've first got to find the rules which you'll find somewhere on Progen. They're very conspicuous and you won't have to look under anything. You'll find them in the main room of some floor, and you'll only have to poke your head round to see it. Right, just a couple of clues: it's not in navigation, power generation, ag, or in any private rooms. We don't want you going anywhere that you're not welcome, and that rules out most of the top and bottom of Progen. Apart from that, it could be anywhere. Stay in the two teams from the last game. You've all got five minutes thinking time, then I let you out one by one in each group at one minute intervals. You've got fourty five minutes from ...now! And you can't use any lifts or electronic communication.

They split up into the two groups and we focus on James's, like you do like.

Francine: Split Progen up into six and take one part each.

Geoff: How are we going to know when someone's found it?

Harry (a girl?): If we all meet at the same place every five minutes...

Isabel (butting in): It'd take five minutes to get from the top to the middle and back.

James: Well why all meet at the same place? Surely we can do it Chinese whispers style: 'Well I still ain't got now't,' 'bugger me, me neither.' Up and down the length of Progen, meet either the person above or below you.

Kate: You can do a floor between each meeting - smart.

Francine: It'd take too long for everyone to get the message.

James: The first people can start solving the problem whilst everyone else finds out.

Francine: It sounds a bit too complecated really.

James: Yeah, you're right. Lets all run to the top floor, do that, then do the bottom floor next, then the second floor.

Slightly defensive look from Francine, but titters from the others.

James: Or we could even take a floor each from here going up, and when you've looked on that floor you run up past everyone else to the next floor that hasn't been checked. We could get a shish kebab to use as a marker so that everyone knows which the current top floor is, you pick it up and drop it on the next floor, which you check. Where the bloody hell are we going to get a kebab at this hour though?

Francine: Sounds cool.

Geoff: Bangin'.

Show some shots of them hacking around the joint. Use your imagination: kitchens, gyms, pubs (one of them can stop there and have a snifta), couple of people meeting at the stairs. James could quickly hide and trip up one of the opposition for a laugh.

All James's team at the top level they're doing.

Kate: That's all done up to here.

Geoff: Right, back to where we started and carry on down from there.

James: And I'm not looking forward to the journey home neither!

Running (sweaty gits) down the stairs together.

Harry: I'm sure that wasn't there last time (comic cliché!/ Delete if your intended audience has any intelligence) What the others doing man.

The others have chosen some other manner of searching and communicating. Indicate that it's a fair sight less efficient than ours.

The team are now on their bottom floor, exhausted and short tempered etc. after completing the search.

Francine: Come on then man-machine, where the bloody hell is it.

James: Alright. No, no! I must come clean. I found it in the first room I did, but I thought we'd all lose the point of the exercise if I told you then.

Harry (with belief): You did what?

Isabel: That's not funny, James.

Kate: Maybe there is no clue.

They're all pretty pissed off by now, have a few frames without any talking, just a tense, frustrated and orthopaedic silence. The other team all come rushing onto the floor excitedly together.

Other team member: Oh aye? Not got it yet poofaces!

Maybe accompany this with a tongue just slipping out of his mouth - nestling like.

Other member 2: Divn't worry. We only really just stumbled on it. Just keep on looking.

They troupe off into the room on the bottom, then back out fairly soon after.

Francine: I suppose we'd just better have another look.

James: Get a grip man. I may be a lot of things to a lot of people, but not stupid is certainly not one of them. Any be that as it may. Doing all that again I'm doing not.

Harry: Old wotsit said to keep looking, why not? They know more about it than we do.

A couple of them stand up and pull James up while the rest of them drag themselves up.

Next you see James (or one of the others) unenthusiastically entering a floor with a very large sheet with 'INSTRUCTIONS' painted on it, obscuring the way just outside the stairs door.

James: How the bloody hell did any git miss that!

He traipses out of the door for a frame whilst the artist having read the next paragraph and being a bit smart, stays looking at the stairs door. Right enough, James turns up right back through the door with one of the others and the remaining five trailing. Before you'd know it they've all been teleported (or at least they would have been if this was a bona fide naff sci-fi comic) into the room next to the other team.

Watch them enter the room to orientate your punters if you like. Oh, suit yourself - git.

Francine: we've got two and a half minutes to get these personal ratings done so I'll write them from top down, shout out suggestions. I'll get them done shit 'ot, then we can debate and change them until our time's up. Right, arrogance.

James, Geoff and Isabel all speak together.

Isabel: Francine.

Geoff: Isabel.

James: Me, me!

Then simply shift the time frame to the closing seconds of the exercise. On the sheets of paper are rankings with all the names of the group arranged under different headings. Invent some headings if you like, like, but James is bottom of physical attractiveness and care and concern, and top for intelligence, arrogance and humour. James should be either towards the top or bottom of each list you invent. Fill the lists as you see fit, but give all other individuals a much more even spread with some rankings in the centre of the lists.

Francine: Any more adjustments?

Kate: I don't think Geoff should be higher than Isabel in attractiveness.

Francine: Swap them?

General agreement. Someone might go as far as to say 'OK' even.

James: Francine has got to be bottom for humour.

She immediately puts her name to the bottom without discussion.

James: Only joking love. Alright?

Geoff: We'd best stop. There's only 20 seconds left.

They all spring to life and run to Charlie in the other room handing him the rankings. The other team's already sat down in the room with Charlie talking amongst themselves.

Charlie (looking at his watch): Thanks, get a seat and sit around the screen.

Charlie then talks to a screen in the background whilst they're getting chairs 'n that.

Charlie: Right then. These are all the rankings from both the groups. (Pointing at the screen.) Any comments?

Nothing. Blank faces. (Take that to extreme if you like, if you like.)

Charlie: Do you think that they're pretty much representative. Are they good rankings?

Short delay.

Francine: Yeah. I reckon ours isn't bad, and theirs doesn't strike me as being particularly wrong.

James thinks: Why does she always talk such rubbish?

Kate: Yeah. Maybe a couple of them have got two adjacent people the wrong way around. But that's subjective. We'd never agree to it. I mean no one has been put right at the top when they should be at the bottom.

Geoff, Isabel, Francine and Harry all actively nod heads etc.

James thinks: What? They can't all really think that can they?

Charlie: Does everyone agree there?

James thinks: Go on say it.

James: They're not that good really.

James thinks: God, where's that lump in my throat come from?

James: I mean, I really don't mind being classed as the arrogant, ugly, future drop out.

Thinks: Oh no. My voice is going croaky. Oh no.

James: But ...

Tears form very quickly in James's eyes and roll down his cheeks in no time.

James: uncaring. I just don't think that's true.

James then sits for a couple of frames looking down at the floor or at the line where the opposite wall meets the ceiling. Not making any eye contact with anyone. He's trying desperately to stop the tears, but lets short bursts of air come from his nose a couple of times. Each outbreak being accompanied with his stomach forcing itself sharply forward for the duration.

Charlie: A sure sign that no one is really sure quite how to take someone is when their rankings are all extremes. High low low high high. (Pointing at the first few sequential rankings on the screen.) We all know that James is a great laugh and that really is a gift. But you won't give him a chance will you.

James thinks: Oh what have you done James. They're all going to feel terrible that I've got like this, they'll blame themselves. Get a grip.

Charlie: Do you not think he's capable of anything except the quick one liner?

Charlie straches his arm out across the room with an open hand towards this lad whose trying to look at him with tears straming down his face. Isabel sitting next to James is trying to 'comfort' him, and James is completely placid. He is exposed and helpless. He would let anyone do anything to him.

Charlie (quite loudly and aggressively): This is one serious man.

Dramatic end to the scene and the page no less.

H/I 6                      Letter Lonely

Dear Miranda,

Q -> KB3.

I recently had a special 'Personal Development' course to do here. A group of twelve of us within the same sort of age group were chosen at random, and we spent three intensively physical and mentally active days together. Towards the end, one particular activity had me crying amongst all the rest of them. Ignoring the reasons for my outburst, at the time I felt that I continued crying because I was upset that all the others (who in the three days have become the closest people to me here) thought that I was crying because of their actions.

Anyway up, until then I didn't realize there was any real problem with me here. I thought it all purely transitional. But now I've had to face it. I am lonely. I wish I knew what to do about it. (I've just started to cry again.) I mean if I were to look objectively, none of the people here are any different from

those back home. I never had any difficulty getting on with everyone there, so what's happened? As far as I can work out, I was really odd before I started on Progen. I seemed immune to man's basic emotions. I never got really happy or really sad. I never got angry with anyone. Whenever anyone saw me, I was always in the same mood. No one ever got me on an off day. I was a model worker. I had a very childish sort of lust. Now I skive out of some work, and I lust for women now in a way I never did. Not for their beauty, or mind (like with you,) but just purely with a mind to sex. A certain amount of that has been taught me by the society here I'm sure. I can't tolerate people who seem to have taken a disliking to me. In short, I seem to be a fairly normal being now. Don't ask me what I was before. Finding friends is becoming more than just a stumbling block now. I can't seem to find the inclination really to become anyone's friend. I just think 'well I've got loads of friends, why do I need to have more?' All my friends are on Earth of course and they've organically changed and rotated for years, but such an inorganic change as this is so false.

I'm sorry if I seem to be repeating myself, but I really am lonely. Loneliness is a train moving no faster and no slower than any other train, but never making any stops. One of my cacti on my shelf flowered about a week ago. I just wanted to show it to someone, but I don't feel I know anyone well enough, or anyone who's interested enough to show them to. It was so sad. What's the point of beauty if it can't be shared? No one wants me on Progen. Everywhere I go I'm in the way. If I died now in my room, no one would notice. They'd never find me. I had my haircut yesterday. I eventually plucked up the courage to face the personal contact. I couldn't keep any of her conversations going. I thought it all so trite. I hated every second of being so close to her. It was so false. I am autistic Miranda. I NEED holding, forever ...

End there with no punctuation or sign off. James sends it as it is.

H/I-a 7                      Northern Ireland

Miranda is talking to some geezer on a screen.

Miranda: I'm here with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr Ken Savage, at the latter's celebration of Orange Day. Perhaps you could explain the event to us Prime Minister.

PM: Certainly Miranda. In the times when the Prime Minister and Parliament took a key role in the way that Britain was run, Northern Ireland was ruled from London in England. Ireland, southern Ireland that is, spent a couple of centuries claiming Northern Ireland to be theirs as far as we gather. Because of the fighting, no one would invest in the area, and there was little else for anyone to do but join in the aggression: no real prospects. Back then Orange day was a Northern Irish celebration of a battle where they 'beat' the southerners, but it was essentially more of a focus for aggression rather than a celebration. The rest of western Europe eventually realized that there were people living there that could contribute actively to their expanding, borderless society. They could both produce and consume, and by giving the Northern Irish jobs and prospects, their troubles are much less likely to continue spilling over periodically into the main society's domain.

So investment started and now it's really a festival celebrating the society that saved Ireland from itself, whilst curing most world evil in one fell swoop!

Miranda: Sounds great, wonder whatever happened to that society!

Titters from both sides of the screen.

Miranda: Seriously though, Orange day has seen the tail end of the feudal system, the democratic system in full, and of course, the social capitalist system. What next?

PM: Heh, heh. (Cackle.) Well I reckon I'm just one of these people that accept the current system as being cast in stone. I suppose all it takes is someone who understands, but doesn't accept the present system and it's short comings. If they've got the vision to see a new system, the time to spend a couple of years considering every aspect of society and seeing how it could and would work, and then not being put off by no one else sharing that vision then why not? It's happened before. Maybe there's someone out there struggling to get his voice heard, driven by the notion that if he doesn't succeed, then society will never understand his ideals and miss out. But I'll be one of the ones who get in his way I'm sure. I think we've still got a lot of milage left out of social capitalism.



Miranda: Whether you know it or not, Britain elected that man: Ken Savage. Britain the only area which technically speaking has all three systems working concurrently. Makes you all nostalgic don't it. If you're celebrating tonight, enjoy yourselves, we've got a biffie here in Belfast. See ya.

Miranda turns ninety degrees and starts to speak to the PM who is sat right next to her at right angles. Just a bit of wit there for the punters, apparently they get better shots if they look straight into the screen.

Miranda: Thanks Ken.

PM: That's alright anytime. You staying tonight then?

Miranda: Nah. Well no one wants to hear that I'm nicking off straight after the interview do they?

PM laughs puzzledly (aka artist/director's nightmare.) PM gets up and leaves.

PM: Enjoy yourself then.

Miranda: Thanks again. You too. James, call me a taxi.

James: Miranda, you're a taxi.

James prints up: 2 mins Social Family 47p

3 mins Quiet 50p

3 mins 30 secs Rave 48p

Miranda laughing: How many of them did James tell you?

James: He said he didn't do any.

Miranda: Oh, you're so stupid James. You should think before you speak. It's pretty cute though. Oh I can't face all those cute kids with cute parents. Book me the quiet one and I'll contemplate life and look out the window on the way to the airport. Oh, hang on I'd best get the rave one and try and call Vanessa from it.

Cut to a shot looking from the outside at Miranda looking out of a window. A tenish seater bus pulls up outside. Miranda brings a small bag slung over her shoulder out to the bus, and gets onto the bus booming banging hardcore trax. Leave a small dance area if you like and make the bus bigger cos that'd be really stupid.

Miranda: Hello!

Various omnibus dwellers: Hi etc.

Miranda puts her bag in the storage area and sits down in one of the seats.

Miranda: James. Can you get Vanessa for me please.

Frame.

Vanessa: Hiya Miranda.

Miranda: Wotcha, how you doing?

Vanessa: Oh, you know: hangin tough.

Miranda: As ever. Just phoning to say I'm on my way. Should be about an hour 'n a half.

Vanessa: OK. Fiona'll be round just before and we'll hit town with some of my mates. What are you doin on the way?

Miranda: Can you not tell? This is a rave bus. If they play a decent track I might boogy if anyone else does. We'll see. Nearly caught a pseudo sociable one.

Vanessa: I didn't think they were still going?

Miranda: Neither did I. But I'll tell you wot, come here, I had to wait an extra minute and a half. Of course being such an active belle you should be thankful that I'm not changing someone's nappy, or colostomy bag by now.

Vanessa: Fancy.

Miranda: Well you've got to keep taking rave busses to try and pretend you're not old.

Vanessa: Yeah, maybe. Well, see ya later. I'll get something on for you.

Miranda: You starkers?

Vanessa: Titter, titter. See ya.

Miranda: Cheers.

H/I-a 8 Jez

Miranda and Jez are (tanked up) boogying away in a small basement dancy bit of a bar. Vanessa is there too, attempting to tap off with some smart drunk. In the middle of the record Jez makes a move on Miranda. At first drawing her close with his hands on her shoulders, then having a good old snog whilst

in deep embrace. Everyone else around is still getting on down except Vanessa avec blurk who are lookin on from a distance with interest. After several frames of pure lust from the young uns. They part and continue dancing.

Cut to a them snogging on a bus. Jez is sat ontop of Miranda with Vanessa sat right next to them with the whole crowded bus completely off their faces.

Cut to a shot of a dairy farm (cows asleep outside.) Go inside where Miranda and Vanessa, their respectives, and another bird (five in total) are sat around the fire nattering and setting out a board game.

Jez: Right. Who wants coffee?

Everyone says yes or some varient thereof, except Vanessa who puts her hand up. The two blokes leave to make some non alcoholic beverage to give their livers a rest. The two other birds look straight at Miranda as soon as they've left. Miranda pauses.

Miranda: Jez is a bit of alright isn't he?

Vanessa: Cute ass.

Bird: I couldn't believe it. One minute you're talking about water quality. The next you're doing his dentistry.

Miranda (smiling): Well, men just find me irresistable. Tee hee. You reckon he'll go out with me?

Vanessa: He's not been getting on too well with his girlfriend recently, reckon he's after splitting up with her.

Miranda: Who is she?

Vanessa: Just someone who he used to work with. They've been goin out for about two years now. I think they've outlived their time together. He never says anything nice about her anymore.

Miranda: So you think he likes me?

Vanessa: Get a grip. This is the first time you've put eachother down all evening.

Miranda: Not pull then Heidi? Old torque wrench was after you.

Heidi: Oh bloody hell. I didn't see you rushing to my assistance. Look after No. 1 eh?

Marginal titters.

Heidi: I think this was a case where the needs of the few, out weighed the wants of the many. Well that's what I purrit down to any road.

Jez comes back in.

Jez: I'm afraid you're all going to have to have it black cos, wait for it, we're out of milk!

People fall about laughing.

Cut.

H/I-a9                      Fashion letter

Thanks for your letter, I'm sorry to hear that you're not making friends as easily as you used to. It's true that the process gets slower as you get older. I think it's fairly well documented that people who 'get on' with everyone in a very short space of time tend to be rather shallow, and the people that one enjoys the company of are, on the whole, the ones who are shy to start off with. Hopefully the situation will be alot better by the time you get this letter. Because of the ever increasing delay between my replys to your letters, the best advice I can give you if it hasn't all sorted itself out, is to speak to someone on Progen about it. There are trained social police or whatever the equivalent there is called (I checked.) You'll probably feel the same way about them as I did - that it's really for a different (lower?) class of person. Soon after you left me I was faced with the same question. I told myself to stop being so stuck up and at least give them a chance. [ Miranda thinks: you lying get.] I would urge you to do the same. You'll be surprised how helpful you find them. They're not pushy, they go with you in your own direction, and at your own speed. You don't realize that they're doing anything, but they do gradually steer you and before you know it you've started to sort yourself out. Anyway, as I say, hopefully you'll not need to take my little snippet of advice, or maybe you'll have thought of it already.

Not much is happening here really, you know nothing really changes. Bought a smart pair of black and white strippy leggins. They're really cool. There's something about them that's really feminine. I suppose the edges of the stripes show off the curves of my hips and legs well. I've not got bad legs you know, might as well show them off, who knows what might happen to them!

I don't blow my trumpet very often, and writing it to you hardly constitutes arrogance - I mean, there's no serious comeback. No, fashion's great isn't it? There's so many different fashions for people of slightly different ages, who like different music. You see no end of people walking down the High Street, all wearing completely different clothes, and all of them really cool. It's just great.

When I remember, I try to walk with really big aggressive, confident strides with my huge boots on. Just like all the 'Throbe Girls' do, it's great. I wish I was one of them. Well I suppose I am really, I mean what makes you one of them? I wear the same clothes, walk the same (sometimes) and listen to the same stuff some of the time. I just don't feel like I think they all feel, but I suppose they all think that!

You know those little pearls of wisdom that James comes out with every now and then. Well one of them was about fashion. Apparently, when both music and fashion were well established and cultural amongst Britain's youth, the rest of Europe (especially France) had only one accepted fashion, and almost everyone conformed. Troups and troupes of them all looking the same. The funny thing was that for some unknown (to us) reason, popular opinion even in Britain was that the French in particular had impeccable fashion sense! Bizzare.

Anyway, with the now familiar signoff: N, QB3 -> QN5, I'll be off.

Lots of love,

Miranda xx

## H/I 7 Evening Stroll

James is taking a walk around the part of the ship where the food is grown. There is a walkway that spirals around inbetween the outside of the ship, and the plants growing in the centre. A walker can either walk slightly up, or slightly downhill (one in fifty?) with the plants on the inside of the spiral, and the perpetual night sky shielded with huge curved sheets of glass.

James thinks: I just seem to spend all my time being depressed and thinking about depression. It's just such a waste. If only everyone from home was on Progen, the place'd be such a laugh. For me maybe, but everyone else here seems to be getting on alright. Strange that: the only reason I was brought onto Progen was for my sunny disposition. Whatever happened to that eh?

Sometimes Puter comes up with some real crap amongst all the ace stuff. Depression is an illness of the brain: who on Earth wrote that? There's nothing wrong with my brain, it's working perfectly. Lets face it, your mind can only be formed from the experiences that it gets. When almost every input to the brain is negative, maybe not badly so, just as long as not many good things happen and none of these are too good, can you really be surprised at the results? The brain is designed to make judgements on what it knows. It's fairly obvious that a good healthy mind will start to ask itself 'What's the point?' and 'Why carry on?'

Oh, I'd best turn in here, go up on the stairs for the next few floors (which he does) cos I'm almost up to that restaurant floor. That bloke from work'll be there tonight, he'll see me walk around the outside. Oh James, surely that's exactly the thing you shouldn't do. You should turn around now and walk past looking for him and then go over and have a chat with him, he's not a bad bloke. Oh, I'd just be so false - 'Will you be my friend?' Well someone's got to make the first move. Anyway, I just want to be alone walking and thinking for the moment. Oh yeah? You've actually convinced yourself of that haven't you James.

James has now made it back to the walkway.

James thinks: Change the subject James. (Blank frame.) This really is a pretty cool walkway actually. It's nice to see all the plants all stacked up. They look so squashed, it's odd to think that they've all got exactly the right amount of space to live in. Bit of a shame there's no animals though. Being vegan's not bad, but it was always nice to have real milk and cheese, and meat for special occasions. Then again, that's not really in keeping with that 'all living beings are equal' philosophy they've got here. It seems a bit stupid when you think of an insect flying into someone's eye on Earth. So maybe the fly is dead, but it's caused a lot of pain to the human. Even when you try to look at it from the fly's point of view, you can't help feeling more for the human than the fly, cos it's a much lower form of life. You can take the same argument further to justify keeping farm animals to frolic and roam and have a laugh shagging anything that moves. They've got all their food found for them and not a care in the world. Until their last day that is, but it's still a wholly reasonable existence. Same for abortion. I mean, who would deny

someone the freedom and fun of their life just so that another life can cause such destruction of their standard of life.

James, use your brain. Everyone else stops there. Why? Go on James make that step into philosophical history, just by taking the same argument one step further: all human life can't be equal. I suppose it's been recognised slightly by 'women and children first.' Nah, that's rubbish. Surely someone who actively contributes and participates in society's life is worth more than someone who's a leach on society, giving nothing but taking lots. Even just someone who is on a par with society isn't worth as much as the contributor.

Oh classic James. All men are not equal and they shouldn't be. You smart git. Come on then, lift back to the room to tell Miranda about it all.

H/I 8                      Knowledge

...(Half way through the letter.) It's great being able to change your views when suitable arguments are formed to challenge them. Honestly, being a hypocrit is the largest luxury one can allow oneself. I've been doing alot of learning on Progen. It's amazing how well most of it is written and how much sense all these things make. When you just hear the odd keyword every now and then in conervation it all seems so daunting, but an hour infront of a screen when you're in the right mood (which seems to be most of the time with me) and it all makes sense and goes in so easily. I find it wholly plausible that most people these days only use about a third of their brain capacity, but that can really be bumped up by sitting and learning stuff, and using your left hand.

One thing I have found though is that knowledge messes you up. If you're blissfully ignorant of all these issues then you can go about life content, wondering who's going to be down the boozier that night. But all these contradictions start appearing even when you've only just start aquiring knowledge.

There really is no end to the amount of knowledge you can get, but I wonder if you reach a sort of saturation point, where you don't know everything, but any additional little snippet of info comes as no surprise to you, they all fit into a general pattern. You'd reach a sort of nirvana and can spend the rest of your life with your legs crossed eating yoghurt!

I'll tell you what though, one thing that's interested me has been how far back humanists (sort of aetheists who reject the supernatural) go in history. At every stage of man's development there seems to be someone at the fore who you just KNOW didn't but any of this religion rubbish. I suppose that proof that they were really thinking men is that they were recorded by history in the first place. Even though the contemporary people didn't understand their more subtle thoughts they certainly admired them for the things they could understand. It's ace having some historical characters to empathize with.

Something I've found a tad embaressing is that I've been forced to be a hanger on to John? (Sleepy, the hanger on to us on Gensim.) Sometimes you're put into situations where you've got to stand or sit with someone, or be alone. So I tend to sit with John fairly often. The odd thing is that he doesn't act half as badly as we did to him. We'd just turn our backs on him and ignore him. He often indulges me in converstion and that. It makes me feel like a failure, having to borrow Happy's (John's) friends.

I've been wondering how I got onto Progen. Looking back, I don't seem to have made an active decision anywhere really. Throughout my education and work, I've had a set of choices at various stages, and I've always chosen the 'best choice'. I'd make the same decisions even now. Everything was made so easy I never really thought about it all, I just stayed on the escallator at every point. That escallator brought me here, but this is certainly not the ideal place for me to end up. But I don't see how I could have avoided it. I'd have had to get off the escallator somewhere, and to get off the escallator you'd have to be thinking about it all, or the escallator would have had to take you to a place you didn't really want to end up. Still there's no turning back now.

Wanta know what really naffs me off. The boneheads on Progen. We had some film come on the tele that wasn't straight forward. You know, you had to think a bit. Not like a ridiculously complecated story that's only complex for the sake of being complex to try and justify itself, but one that sometimes has parts that appear totally disjoint from the rest of the story, or is almost consistantly disjoint. They were all making out that the writer / director must be a complete freako, and making out that their mind must be a complete mess. Only being a little cocky, I understood which side of the spoon she was looking through. It didn't seem too much of an intellectual barrier to cross, but apparently it is for most people.

Then again, maybe by disjointing the story a tad it's just adding gimmical value and drawing attention to itself.

You can only attempt to change society to a certain degree. After that point is passed you no longer hold views that the general populus have, and become a freak. You will not be in contact with man and so will start to forget why he reacts in certain ways. That then leads you to being unrealistic about the need to and the nature of change required. To address this I'm trying to make a concious attempt to lech at women for instance, and push people around on the dance floor.

Anyway enough of this crap, I think I'm getting carried away: K1 -> Q2

Lots of love,

James xx

H/I-a 10            New Business

Knock on door.

Boss: Come in.

Miranda: Hello, only me.

Boss: Ah, good. Sit down. I've got a sort of request to make. I wonder if you'd mind taking a slight shift in the content of your work, from basically reporting on events that have happened, towards a more researchy sort of role.

Miranda thinks: Oh, right.

Boss: That doesn't mean you'd not do any more reporting, but we need more people to spend time understanding how the world runs. Then when a report comes in, we can judge how important an issue it may be. We don't just magic up sanctions on the whims of whoever happens to be around when it's mentioned. It's carefully calculated. You'd gradually become a bit of a guru, and participate in policy decisions. I don't need an answer right now, you can think about it a bit if you like, but I think you'll enjoy it.

Miranda: Yeah, that's fine.

Boss: Great. I thought you said you'd quite like a move this way. Well, we'll phase you in gradually, but no time like the present. I've got someone who's just started their own business. Could you find out from him the mechanics of it all. He's got something to do with insurance I think, well you can find that out I'm sure. He's expecting you to call and he's a nice man. Find out what you can from him, he's very bright, you never quite know what gems he'll come out with. Oh, and the motto is: there's no question too stupid to ask him.

Miranda: Oh, thank you.

Boss: No no, thank you.

Cut to Miranda at her screen.

Miranda: Hello, I'm Miranda from Contempary News. I gather you've just started up your own business. I wonder if I could ask you a couple of questions about it.

Bloke: Hello, of course you can. I've been expecting your call.

Miranda: OK. Could you start by telling me a little about the new company.

Bloke: Yeah OK. It'd probably be clearer if I start off with compensation in general. Say someone's house burns down. The first thing they do when they've got a roof over their heads is to contact one of the compensation companies, usually one from their own conglomerate. The compensation company then estimates the loss, and where compensation should come from: husband and wife may well work for companies in different conglomerates, what proportion of the cost of rehousing and replacing all their possessions should each conglom pay? It's a fairly simple system to use and run as long as the compensation companies make good estimations and the conglomerates respect the decisions and don't run out of money. But of course it's not that simple since dreaded Man's involved. The comgloms are quite rightly concerned about the amount of shod they're dishing out. And of course, it turns out that some people claim for everything they loose or misplace (some losses are even made up), and other people never claim and would only do so if something like their house burned down. These types of people are the extreames in both directions away from the 'ideal citizen' (but who knows one of them?) Needless to say that since both of the extreame types work equally hard to earn money for their conglomerate (not strictly true but we'll run with it) the Claimers are effectively taking money from the

Non-claimers. As it is very hard, and pretty pointless to force the Non-claimers to claim more, the Claimers are therefore taking money from the congloms. A fairer system would obviously reduce the Claimers rewards, and use the shod saved for the community as a whole rather than the greedy few.

With such catholic compensation, the tendency is to not really care for things since you'll get new ones regularly if things happen to them. So it is reasonable to consider what claims people have made in the past before deciding on what to give them now. The more claims, the less compensation. This serves as a deterrant from clumsiness, and leaving yourself open for things to happen to you as well as reducing God this is boring. If someone has made so many claims that she's only getting about 10% of an item's worth every time she claims now, and then her house burns down, you can't only give her 10% of the value of everything she owned. It goes against the concept of the conglomerate provider: shielding and helping all it's members. So the system becomes very complicated and each compensation company carries out its work in slightly different ways. In my old job working in a compensation company I gradually spent proportionally more time per claim checking that my customer would not be better off going elsewhere. Other companies used to call me up to make sure that what they were offering wasn't wildly off the mark. There was obviously a need for someone to collate all this information independantly on a full time basis. So that's what I've done.

Miranda: Oh, I see. How did you go about starting the company once you got the idea then?

Bloke: Well you're quite right that the idea is the most important thing. You get help with everything else, but the market has got to be identified by yourself. I'm going to take a liberty with your seeings as you're paying for the call, and dip into a bit of the history of company finance first.

In the past, all the small new companies were started up by people who were willing to lay their home and all their possessions down on the line to achieve finance for the company through a bank. The type of person willing to do that isn't always the person with the most innovative ideas, and the best person to run a company. Apart from that, you'd never find anyone these days who'd dream of putting themselves or their families through that, and why should they? Starting up larger companies was done by offering a number of sources of finance the chance to own a proportion of the new company, by paying that proportion of the total amount required to set the company up. If the company turned out to be a good one, then these investors got a proportion of what they called profit. In their definition, a company's profit for a year was the difference between the amount that they charged for the goods they'd sold over the year, and how much they were worth. This could amount to quite a bit, which was then given to these 'Shareholders' on a pro rata basis. They didn't consider that the people who actually made the goods were entitled to divide the money between them, or that the customers were entitled to a fair price. But that wasn't the half of it.

When the 'Shareholders' needed more cash, they would sell all or part of their share in a company. As any new buyer of the shares might not be available immediately, and he (they generally were male) might well want a significantly larger or smaller proportion of the company, other people who didn't actually want to own a part of the company, acted as middle men. Buying parts of the company for less than it was worth, and selling it for more than it was worth. Phenominal amounts of money could be acquired in this way. As administration of this type became substantial, these 'easy money' financial institutions keeping themselves extremely busy with unproductive work, became a serious leech on the whole of society, much moreso than even the banks and forcing almost every company to make profits that once achieved were simply given away.

The system wasn't really as grim as I make out, since the people who benefitted from it all and had most of the money did spend it, which kept everything moving, but society in general had to work much harder than it should have needed to to compensate for the massive inefficiency of the system. As all the congloms now are cooperatives 'owned by the staff', there's no owners to sell their shares and support that huge administration, or to force the companies to make profit to divide amongst them. Also, as the structure is there to setup your own new company, under the wing of the conglom (which I promise I'll get onto soon) to provide finance and help in terms of sales, marketing etc. all with no personal risk other than loss of face. So there is no role for banks to leech from the new companies. All lovely and efficient.

Anyway, so much for what's happened so far. Now, you've got a good idea and there's enough demand for what you intend selling to enable the company to pay its way eventually. You go along to your conglom's innovation council or whatever it's called, and try to justify it to them. They're pretty good I think. They look into it all in quite a bit of detail: if it's a no hoper, then they'll weed it out, but most of

the time they get fairly reasonable suggestions. The congloms need to invest money in new companies. Some of them will go to the wall (eg. no one can ever judge fashion consistently correctly for all but a narrow subculture,) but the other ones will be successful and will help form the backbone of the conglom in the future. It's much better to have ten innovative and exciting projects on the go with a couple of dedicated staff working on them, and have nine of them fail. In the long term the other one will pay for the failed attempts several times over, and then some.

It's much easier to tailor a new company's structure to a new market, than to change an old one. There's another contrast with the old system of industry. Companies tended to start off small, specializing in one small area - much like the whole of industry now. I'll take the example of a design firm. All their designs would be manufactured by specialist manufactures, and external accountants would sort their exceptionally complicated financial system out. To start up a business in the first place, the designers would have a good concept of the markets, but as the company grew, the designers would tend to have less and less involvement with the market, and 'Marketing Departments' WITHIN THE DESIGN COMPANY would start up. Ideally these marketeers would have a technical background, but, although in our educated age it is hard for us to appreciate how it could be, this was seldom the case. The company would actually find it cheaper to start up its own manufacturing plant, and accounts department. Although these ancillary departments could justify full time employment, the whole emphasis is away from the area of expertise. Also, cumbersome company structures must be put in place to ensure that the departments communicate directly. This shouldn't be a problem, but just compare it to our system: each company only deals with its area of expertise. To take the design example again: each engineer has direct contact with its component suppliers, the product manufacturers, and direct contact with its customers. They know both the supply and demand and are their own marketeer. They are all directly financially accountable so there is no need for accountants. (It is sometimes argued that a conglomerate's policy committee are basically accountants.) Admittedly, the volume of output each engineer 'produces' in terms of numbers of designs much less than his oldern equivalent, but that output is of a significantly higher quality. The engineer has a broader responsibility and hence a richer life experience. Also, if you get naffed off with your manufacturers doing things badly, you can change them (Capitalism at work.) Of course, you can't do that if they're part of your own company.

In those oldern times, they were obsessed with economical growth and recession, rather than sustaining a level. The whole economy would boom and almost every company would suddenly do well, and then during recession, would virtually cease trading. True, the excitement of a boom period is a feeling we can only conjecture about, but the waste and depression of recession can't justify that feeling. It seems bizarre compared with the obvious status quo of, old, obsolete industries declining, and new exciting ones expanding proportionately. But I suppose their whole system was a bit naff with companies shirking their responsibilities (and potential power), and artificial governments ruling over artificial boundaries pretending to know everything about everything and generally moving very slowly. The figureheads that used to run the countries are quite analogous to the chairmen of the congloms these days in many ways. Although to the uninitiated, the old voting systems gave the power and mandate to these governments, the respect that we have for the our chairmen and the shod they get in return for giving us what we want, gives them both the power and the mandate in a much fairer and more responsive system.

Miranda: That's great, I've not heard such a good summary as that before: you know alot about history don't you?

Bloke: Well you pick things up don't you. I hope I've been some help.

Miranda: You certainly have, thankyou.

Bloke: That's alright. Anytime you want to know anything you didn't know you want to know: call me.

Miranda: Good luck with your company.

Bloke: Thanks, I don't know if it'll work, but it might catch on, nothing ventured... Bye then.

Miranda: Bye thanks. Bye.

Miranda pushes the hang up button and the window closes.

Miranda: Call my sister will you James.

Miranda: Hiya, how's things?

Sister: Ace yerself?

Miranda: I've just been promoted to doing research work.

Sister: Ace! James'd be pleased.

Miranda: You won't believe it, but I just got another letter off him.

Sister: With the chess on it?

Miranda: Yup.

Sister: I don't bloody believe it every time. You still coming up?

Miranda: You bet. I'll tell you all the guff later. Should be a couple of hours, I've still got a couple of things to do.

H/I-a 11            Gary

Miranda and Gary are dancing away pretty groovily on some dance floor. After a couple of frames of merriment her sister comes up and shouts into Gary's ear.

Sister: I don't think I'm going to loose this headache, so I'm going home. Rory's coming back too.

Gary: Oh, OK.

She then waves to Miranda.

Gary (to Miranda): Dancing?

Miranda: Asking?

Gary: Asking.

Miranda: Dancing!

Miranda hugs ther sister. Gary and sister have a quick peck and a hug.

All: See ya later.

They carry on boogying for a few frames whilst she leaves. New page? Time has passed, but they're still dancing even though we've turned the page. A new track comes on. Gary looks at Miranda with a 'screwed up on one side', questioning sort of face. As if to say: 'I'm not really too bothered about dancing to this, but I've been dancing for the last half an hour to a string of other tracks that sound almost exactly the same, so I don't mind carrying on really. Oh and my legs are tired too! Miranda tilts her head so that one ear is marginally closer to the speaker. God knows why, cos it's certainly loud enough to hear. NB It isn't so loud as to cause anyone permanent hearing damage. Spend a frame trying to work out which track it is. Then she shakes her head and they walk off towards the cloakroom.

Cut to a view from outside the disco with them walking out adjusting their jackets. They hold hands as they turn onto the street.

Gary: So, you're still living down south then? (Nod reply.) Why don't you move up here and stay in the commune? You always have such an ace time when you're up here and everyone loves you up here.

Miranda: Yeah, I know. Its not that bad down there though. You just get to hear about all the bad points from me, you know, all the things that really get you down. When something good happens I don't tend to go on and on about it.

Gary: You don't have to be an alternative you know. Just cos we all are. You could work as a journalist up here and everything'd be ace.

Miranda: Yeah, I know. I suppose I really should consider it shouldn't I? (Nod reply.) I don't know.

There's not much there for me anymore with Sis moving up here I suppose. But work's starting to pick up now, and I'm at a stage now where I'm just learning so much. If I move jobs, they'd want someone with either no experience or fairly broad experience, not sort of inbetween. It'd be really hard to get the right job. At the moment though, I'm at a stage where I'm learning so much that I'll have the experience in just over a year. I also owe them a bit of work too. I mean they've sent me though school and trained me up. I want to do some proper work for them. Do I sound like I'm trying to justify it to myself?

Gary: Well, er just a tad. Come on: everyone educates and trains people. Your replacement would have been educated by someone else. It all cancels itself out. You know that.

Gary kneels down to do his laces up.

Gary: Hang on a sec.

Miranda pushes Gary over on the pavement. Gigles abound exponentially. Frolocks as Gary attempt to continue doing up his laces. Eventually he's done it and Miranda pulls him up, and their faces just carry on moving together until they're bleedin' snogging.

Both think: Bloody hell!



Drag the snog out as long as you dare. They stop and hug eachother for a frame or two. With arms around eachother they start walking slowly home.

Miranda: We'd best enjoy the walk home, it'll not happen again.

H/I-a 12                      Miranda's Crash

She's travelling home, the only person on the bus, on a quiet road, on a very windy, dark winter's night. Snow covers the whole countryside. A large tree falls diagonally across the road right in front of Miranda's bus so that rather than feeling the full force of a square hit, she glances off the trunk and the bus is thrown off the road into the woods.

Miranda thinks: Bloody hell, that was close. You're alright though, quick check. Everything seems to be there.

Miranda: James. James. JAMES! Oh bugger it. What do I do now? Does the door work?

She pushes the manual override. It opens.

Miranda thinks: God that's cold (she slams it closed immediately.) I haven't seen any houses for the last couple of miles, and I'm not about to go walkabout in this. Transport'll realize that they've lost me from the road. Someone'll be out to find me in no time. Best to stay here. Keep yourself warm and occupied (write James's letter?) God it's getting cold bloody quick. You shouldn't have opened that door you daft tart. Get as many clothes on as possible. Still feels like there's a draught. God there's a hole from the crash. Best cover it somehow.

Get her looking absolutely ridiculous, but warm: socks on her hands, jumpers upside down on her legs. Some way of keeping her toes and feet warm (sitting on them under her legs?) Somehow she's wielding a pen, and peering out of some garment that, although not meant for one's head, is actually keeping exceptionally hot.

Dear James,

I've crashed on the way home from my sisters. It's quite late on the Sunday night and I was the only person on the bus. There's snow all around and it's bloody freezing. I'm not sure if the tree that we hit is still on the track, but I don't think it moved. I'm just expecting a speeding truck to hit it in the same way that we did and then pile in the back of us. I'll freeze to death if I leave the bus, so I'm sat in the back (now the furthest point away from the future point of impact) facing any oncoming vehicle. I'm scared. The car's getting colder and colder, but my ears are so wrapped up that they're burning, but I'm sodded if I'm going to let them cool down.

Now's probably a better time than most to review my life. OK lets try and think what is wrong with me (the symptoms):

- i) Lack of motivation to do things. I'm sure that I would normally (or abnormally on the last year's performance) be over the moon by work at the moment, I'm really starting to do exactly the design work that I'd like to. I was visibly unwilling to accept the design of the Omega power supply. I can't find the motivation to cook, so I have beans on toast EVERY night with a little slice of cheese. Even though I proved conclusively that it takes as much effort to produce some thing much more tastey/interesting/different - you know. Even washing is a chore that requires so much energy that it is made into a formidable barrier in my mind.
- ii) Money. How I managed to accumulate such a visa bill is partly the fault of my CD player. The car has been the worst one though. In the three months from August I've spent £180 on work done to get her through MOT. £90 on two (only two!) tyres, £57 on an exhaust. Claire of course, went into the back of Vicky and didn't tell me. Danielle told her I'd assumed that it was kids and Claire just put of telling me. To say I feel let down, betrayed etc. is an understatement. Whilst I thought it was just kids I went to buy what I thought would be a £10 glass piece and discovered that it was a £70 sealed unit. The bloke in Hadley's Rover parts bit takes pleasure in doing everything so tediously slowly that everyone hangs around for ages and is really wound up by the time they leave. I just wanted to throttle the fucking cunt and shout in his ear whilst shaking his whole body "just fucking hurry up." It's exactly the emotion he wanted. Glee of Glee, he was out of stock of integral offside Metro headlight/indicators and so he'd have to order it. I thought if he want paying now he can fuck off. Now after half an hour waiting the other bloke who serves at parts turned up to serve in exactly the way that happened when I wanted a new

wheel (oh that's another £30). His reply to my reluctance to pay was that he could get it tomorrow morning but it may have been gone when I come in.

Now, observing that it takes half an hour to serve 3 people I thought that the likelihood of it going was pretty minimal, but I knew the trick he might play. So I rang up at 5:00 pm (I wasn't going at lunchtime again) to check it was there. At 5:40 after a 15 minute customer he tried to tell me that it must have been sold. "No no no no my good man. I think you find that it is there I rang to check." He insisted it wasn't there and the man I spoke to must have put it aside in a place he didn't know (after a couple of other malicious tacks.)

Just tell me if I'm letting little things get on top of me.

Ringed the bank to ask for £30 extra on my Credit Zone because I spent too much over the weekend. I had £4 to last me the week. On Monday Grace needed to borrow £1 for lunch (more pressure). Laura owed me £1 from last week and wasn't in until today. Would she remember (more pressure) - she did. Got to phone the bank again because Frizzel will take £30 out for car insurance on Friday. Only having the cash to buy 1 stamp when you need two.

I went to the doctor on Monday & got some pills for my sore throat (more things) -

Couple of months ago I was cool & confident especially with the blokes. Where are they now? I can get that confidence again I know, but things will have to work first. I feel that I could inflict an injury upon myself and not really worry. It wouldn't make me really feel better, I wouldn't be doing it to attract attention, but I could just thrust a sharpend matchstick through my gums.

I feel week and hungry alot of the time because I can't afford to feed myself properly. Fuck I hate car companies. I wish public transport was affordable then I could fuck B bloody L. I know all those men seem to have turned their backs on me, but what do I want from them? Kids for sure (about the only thing that I'm certain about). Emma once had a T shirt (after she had the abortion) saying 'I feel bored, I think I'll have a baby' and then pointed out that I'd never understand that feeling. Well I do. I want a relationship like Laura and James's. But I want to live with all my friends (a commune?) Why are all the people I love all over the country? Comic? When? Am I going to bring up my children and have no time for art or make a balance. What the fuck is going between me, Sis and Gary? When I go and do anything cultural, why do I spend all my time shrouded in self pity because I'm doing it on my own? No hot water this morning: Claire.

AM I BEING UNREASONABLE?

Whenever I make myself a better person, I also become a sadder person. Will it get better eventually.

[Small graph with the X axis labeled K with an icon of an open book, Y axis labeled H with an acid house smiley face icon. The graph is a horseshoe with a cross at the minimum point of H for K labeled Miranda.]

Oh, did I forget to mention. Claire's cousin had his car stopped over the weekend. The IRA then riddled it & him with bullets. Back door was open all day today: Claire. I don't feel that any part of this house is mine except my room. The others watch Neighbours 3 times an evening. It's videoed and they each watch it when they get in. Because they watch it all evening, if I want to watch anything myself I have to sort of book it and the others have to go elsewhere (they can't bear anything I'd watch & vice versa to a certain extent,) unless they bring the phone in and talk all the way through it. And I have the standing order for the £19.95 pcm TV and video. There is no real life for me any more in Cambridge - look at Emma. I've been exposed to myself as central to the posse/. True or otherwise that is now an additional pressure, and also there is no other group I'd be a member of. No driving force. No solution. This is it. Is Gary avoiding me now? Work say he's at home. Home say's he's at work. Ring back now 1/2 8, 'Can I speak to Gary?'

'Who is it?'

'Miranda.'

'No I'm sorry he's out. I passed on your message though.'

I wasn't going to tell you this until after we'd passed the inaptly named 'Lover's Limit', but you can't begin to understand how lonely I am, and it's all your fault. I don't care anymore that I'm going to get a reply to this revelation - don't you dare not address it. I just want you to know how you threw the keys of my life away without even considering me you bastard.

The rescue man arrives.

Miranda thinks: Thank you God.

Rescuer: You OK?

Miranda: Yeah, only bruises. It's great to see you.

Rescuer: Yeah, good. Get in the van, I'll bring all your stuff. Then we'll get you some soup.

Miranda: OK. Have you got a screen in that thing.

Rescuer: Yeah, go on, help yourself.

Miranda: James. Get this.

She holds the letter up. James acknowledges he's got it and lights a 'Send' button. Miranda waits a couple of frames as she is gradually coming down. As the rescuer gets closer her mind works overtime. Just as he puts his hand on the door to open it, she pushes the button.

H/I 9

Progen disco

A fair number of people are having a bop to a fairly middle of the road pop record. James is dancing in a group of five: two birds and two other blokes including Natasha and Albert.

James thinks: If there's one thing I can't stand. I can't stand up! Tee Hee. See, you can have a laugh, it's only with yourself, but still. No, no I hate dancing in a group of people that you're not comfortable with. Well, I suppose if I didn't know them at all, but really wanted to, it'd be alright. God this music is just so chuffing inoffensive. Am I the only person who likes a little bit of bollocks?

Does Albert (looking at him) think he's impressing Natasha by knowing and purposefully mouthing each word of each track? What a get, mind, she's probably dead impressed with him. It'd be par for the course: there's such a repulsive 'boy meets girl' atmosphere here. All these discos are just pick up joints really, trying to pull the odd one or two spare birds. Everyone dresses up smart to try and impress. Am I really better than them dressing so differently? I don't pretend I look particularly good, but at least I'm not following the one same fashion. I suppose it completely eliminates any possibility of pulling so I don't expect to, or aren't let down by not pulling. Oh God. I'll be cacked if I'm dancing to another track of this crap.

He walks to the bar, gets in a soft drink, (everyone else is drinking larger,) and turns and looks at everyone.

James thinks: Albert's not the only one putting a bit of a show on. I suppose everyone's at it to some extent: pretending that you're getting really into the groove and trying to dance like it's all been choreographed; throwing yourself around in a cry for attention; and the stable ones, more like me, who'll dance smoothly and coolly to most tracks. Stable?

He stops and listens to the lyrics of the song for a bit. (Make your own up or use some already prepared you idle get.)

James thinks: Oh is that what it means, that's not bad really. Not that any of these boneheads have ever thought to actually listen to the words in a song before.

James starts letting his mind wonder. He thinks back to when he was dancing and mentally isolates the five of them. While he's dancing he 'melts' into a thin, square sheet about a yard square, levitating horizontally about six inches below the other fivers' feet. No floor is shown, but is implied. They don't notice him, just carry on dancing.

Keeping the near edge flat, planar and a yard in length, the far edge starts to be drawn away, getting fractionally thinner. Once clear of the 'floor' they're not dancing on, it bends upwards and starts to gain volume. The dancers are looking down (as they have been doing,) aimlessly towards, but not at the flat sheet under their feet that is fast turning into the serious comic drawer's nightmare: A Monster. The monster is roaring loudly, is about 10' tall, and its body now completely enshrouds the dancers on three sides (underneath, back and its head shrouds the top. It uses wings or arms or other on the two sides leaving only the front free. They are completely oblivious to it as it becomes pitch dark under the shadow of the monster which continues to expand eventually giving the feeling that the cameraman taking the shots we're looking at has been engulfed. Finish the page with nearly pitch black and very loud roaring.

Turn over.

Albert has come over and is standing next to James.

Albert: Don't like this one.

James (stunned as he comes back to reality): Nah, not one of my favourites. I like pop in general, but this is a tad too weak.

Frame pause.

Albert: James. Are you gay or something?

James thinks: Bloody hell.

James: I'd only deny being gay if I was straight and afraid of it, or gay and afraid of it. I'm not afraid of being gay. That's going to have to be a good enough answer for you I'm afraid.

James thinks: You smart git James. Always knew that line'd be handy sometime. He hasn't got an idea what to say now.

Albert: You can't have failed to notice that Natasha is absolutely gaging for you.

James: Nah, she's not really my type.

Albert: I don't know how you can restrain yourself. She's so bleedin' horny.

James: Well...

Albert: Oh I like this one.

James: Don't think I'll bother. Have one for me.

James thinks: Is she really after me? How would I know anyway? Lets face it, I hardly go looking for it. Maybe I just miss the signs.

He looks at her dancing. She waves at him and he waves back.

James thinks: If you'd sat down and written exactly what you want a bird to look like it wouldn't be too different from that. She's got lovely curves. Why don't you even consider her? I know she's not much to talk to, but you've not got much choice here have you. Maybe I should reweiw my criterion for going out with someone. I'm starting to have had enough, not of actually being asexual, but of people feeling sorry for me for being asexual. They must think I've always been like this since they've never known me any different. I don't s'pose it'd make much difference even if I had been like this all my life.

She starts walking towards him.

Lets face it, Natasha really exudes sexuality. Well I'm not going to try too hard, just give her a chance.

Natasha: Enjoying it?

James: Well it's not too bad.

Natasha: You're so lovely and reserved (wrong word replace it if you can). I'm bored here. Fancy leaving?

James: Given half a chance, yeah.

They look at the others and wave goodbye.

Albert (under his breath): Trickster.

While they're walking to the lift and getting in it.

James: You not like that music?

Natasha: Yeah I do, but I just fancied going back and getting a coffee. Do you want one?

James: Oh, it'll keep me up all night. And the lift's stopping now, it seems a shame not to oblige it by getting out. Ooohh, go on then.

The lift stops, opens the door. They giggle. It nicks off.

Frame of embarrassed silence.

James: What work are you doing?

Natasha: Just ... I'd rather forget about work really.

They get out onto Natasha's floor, she unlocks and opens her door and then they go into the communal kitchen where she sets about making a coffee.

James thinks: She's really gaging for it. Do it James, go for it, don't persuade yourself out of it. Don't reject her now.

She has her back to him and he approaches her and puts his hands on her hips and puts his head beside hers on her shoulder.

James: They'll still be boppin away still.

James thinks: What are you talking about?

Natasha turns and kisses him and they start snogging. Before you know it, her hands have found their way to the flesh on his back.

James thinks: Blinking flip. Stay cool. Just go along with it.

Natasha is wearing a one piece clingy top with leggings and a short tight skirt. James is wearing knee length shorts and an enormous T shirt covering about half of his trousers, odd socks and trainers. He rubbs his hands up and down the material on her back and then gradually progresses to her side. Up and down,

brushing undetectably lightly against the side of her perfectly formed, small, round breasts: the clingy top really bringing them out to their best.

Natasha: Shall we move into the room.

Leaving the half made coffees, she leads him by the hand to her room. Once in, she locks it behind them.

They explore eachothers' gums and teeth with their tongues and James starts to stroke her firm, tight buttocks. They shuffle towards the bed, lower themselves onto it and lie back. Their bodies both slightly curled. James now strokes her smooth legs down to her knees and futher on to her calves. Then back up along the inside of her legs with the backs of his fingers, just avoiding getting too close her inside leg at the top, but going around the outside to her buttocks now slightly streached as her legs are bent up. The arm he's lying on is tracing the outline of her lower breast as it falls towards his hand, pushing the nipple back flush with the rest of the material, and kneeding upwards.

Natasha is rubbing James's chest with his top now pulled up almost exposing his nipples that are being tweaked while their jaws are locked together as tightly as their eyelids. Natasha starts to fumble with his trousers. James reacts by stopping stroking her buttocks and leaving his hand inbetween her legs. He pays more attention to her thighs now with his free hand, still stroking, but now his hand enters the volume darkened by the skirt and spending proportionally longer there with time. The other hand now trys to worm its way down the shoulder hole in Natasha's top to the familiar flesh.

She gestures for him to lift his hips up so that she can pull his shorts down. They are drawn by her after he looses the shoes and socks, with the T shirt following immediately. Natasha having dropping her shoes of without assistance, pushes her hips off the bed and James obliges by pulling her stretchy skirt down. Taking the bit between his teeth by the horn, he undoes the gussett buttons of her one piece top and pulls her leggings down.

James thinks: There it is. How many close ups of that have I seen in the last year? It looks exactly how it should, it's georgeous.

Natasha starts pulling her top off over her head. Before she's got it over her head, James is already fondling the free breasts. But not for long, she forces herself down to attend to the escapee of his skids, which are off before you know it.

See his member as her head approaches, and obscures it. Then pan up his body to his exstatic face. And if I'm not mistaken, that's a trite enough place to finish the scene.

H/I 10/11            James leaves Progen

James is sat at a desk infront of a completely clear screen except for an analogue clock in a corner which he is staring into space towards whilst playing with (pushing) one of the buttons.

James thinks: So it's over. That long spell of celebacy. It's only been a year and six months. Not long really, but as that's the only time they've known me for it must seem forever. Happy about it James? Well, I thought everything would just slot into place when I had a woman. But it doesn't. To be truthful, it's just another big problem to deal with. Yes, I fancy the arse off her, but she repulses me. She's so bloody shallow, just like everyone else here. Everyone is so nice to me now making out that I'm a really great bloke and an asset to Progen. All just because I got off with Nableedintasha, and the only valid status is being half of two, you can't be a whole one otherwise. When I bought those johnnies from the shop, the woman seemed to be saying 'What a sensible young man. Pillar of society.' If she was looking through my video account finding all the smut I use she'd be saying 'Disgusting little worm. I thought we'd only chose stable people for Progen.' But what's the difference really? They're both pandering to pure lust. Except if you're having a quick pull you can be completely selfish. Mind you, I suppose I was being completely selfish with Natasha. Immediately after, I thought I'd really used her. I know I didn't force her into anything like, but I felt a bit sorry for her, throwing herself at me. Now I feel used by her. She's the real one that just wanted lust. Really I wanted the whole thing. Getting off with her was just the first in a series of stages leading up to playing with our great-grandchildren. The next day I was aspiring to going out for a meal and a walk etc. etc. but she was just thinking about her next lay. What now? Now that it's clear that her intentions are to fit me in between her other blokes. You've seen everyone on Progen and no one is that special someone. There's so many different women that everything could work with. You mould your veiws and feelings around them. Same with mates I suppose. Once you're in (Urine - Ho Ho James, still like a laugh, even in adversity!) a posse/, as their

taste in music and pastimes changes, so do yours. I suppose you could get into anything, even transport theory if all your mates were, and that. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with these people on Progen. It's just, I don't want a whole range of new friends. I want my current ones back.

Blank frame. James comes out of his blank stare and becomes more aware of his surroundings.

James thinks: Come on then, lets take the opportunity to find out everything that isn't public knowledge about Navigation. Once I've completed the training I'll know more about Progen than anyone else. Smart.

James looks around to check that no one's within earshot.

James: What files are restricted to Navigation personel then Puter me old son?

Screen puts up a list of options: detailed route info; direct access to instrument's raw measurements; emergency procedures; etc. (make some up yourself.) James smiles and pushes emergency procedures. Another menu comes up: Instrument failure; partial steering failure; full steering failure; evacuation; etc. James seriously beams, looks around, and pushes evacuation.

Puter prints: When an evacuation of Progen is necessary, one of the six self contained exploration vehicles (Exmods) may be used. Under extreame circumstances, up to three vehicles may return to Earth. The three remaining vehicles is the minimum number that Progen will require for the colonisation process so at least three must remain... etc. etc. James looses interest in the rest.

James: What?

James looks around again and pushes a button that silences Puter.

James quietly: Can you find out how to get into one of the exmod's launch and fly it without setting off any alarms by finding out?

Puter prints: Yes.

James: Do it, I'll read it later.

Puter prints: I've just received a letter from Miranda.

Written: 9 months Earth time,

Current Earth time: 2.5 years,

Current Progen time: 1.5 years

He reads the letter and we read the first few lines with him, then concentrate on his face as he starts to rub the lump in his throat, his eyes go red and fill with tears. See him rubbing his eyes but at no point have tears streaming down his face.

Spend a couple of frames as he composes himself and looks around.

James: Have I got access to the restricted information from a screen in my room without attracting attention.

Puter: Yes.

James: Make this screen look like I'm looking into, er, methods of identifying stars and telling our position and direction from them. Cheers.

James gets up and tries to make the desk look like he's in the middle of doing something and just nicked off for a slash.

Next scene.

James closes and locks his bedroom door mechanically. (N.B. automatic doors are not used anywhere on Progen.) All James's actions now are coldly logical and well executed. He appears tense, but otherwise unaffected by Miranda's letter.

James: Puter. If anything I do in the next 24 hours will attract attention, tell me and don't do it until I confirm I want to do it. Right. Is there any way I can get onto an Exmod and launch it without drawing attention to myself before it's too late for them to do anything about it?

Puter prints: When the release procedure is instigated, all Navigation staff will be informed.

James: Will it be too late for them to do anything them?

Puter prints: The sequence can be terminated by any one of them.

James: Can I can change the change the code that flags this?

Puter prints: Any alterations to the software will draw attention when the code is compiled.

James: What about if I go in and change the lowest level directly. I'd probably just need to bypass the circuit that senses that a launch is being instigated.

Puter prints: That would attract Communications.

James: But it'd be a low priority event and may take time to find, check and cure. Would Navigation be informed by Communications of the anonmaly immediately?

Puter prints: No. Only when the circuits are being corrected.

James: Current lower quartile for dealing time?

Puter prints: 2.5 hours.

James: Get in! Can you copy all your personality to er Exmod II's central computer. Has it got 4.5 years of entertainment on it - cackle, cackle?

Puter prints: Transfer complete. It's got as much as there is on Progen.

James: Right then, lets find out how to disable Exmod II's launch termination circuit. Cackle cackle, smile smile.

New page

James opens a drawer and pulls out his Nanny's snuff box and walks to the lift.

James: Floor 220.

Frame wait. The door opens and the guy from personel (first day) is in the lift.

Guy: James! How ya doing.

James: Oh, alright you know I'm in Navigation now. Just off to take a look at the Exmods.

Guy: Oh ei? I'll have to get them to show me round some time.

James: I'll tell you if it's any good.

Lift stops and James leaves.

James: See ya around then.

Guy: See ya.

Door closes and James walks around to Exmod II's entrance. There's no one else on the floor. He speaks to the screen there.

James: Puter. Unlock and open this door, then lock it behind me.

James enters and talks to the screen on the inside of Exmod II.

James: Puter. Make the mod. now.

Puter prints: This will attract Communications attention.

James: Well done. Do it.

Puter prints: Mod. complete.

James : Instigate the launch procedure.

Puter prints: You've got one minute.

James walks to the stairs and up three flights, then enters a room and straps himself down in a seat there.

James: Puter, how long?

Puter prints: Thirty five seconds.

James: Turn your voice on and share this with me Puter.

Puter: OK.

James: I suppose they'll be running round like gits out there when it breaks off.

Puter: Yup.

James: Are you still controlled from Progen?

Puter: Yup.

James: Well I suppose you'd best transfer yourself here and delete your personality th... No. I suppose this'll be an epic legend in Nalenguan folklore. Leave as much guff about me and you as you can.

They'll be making documentaries and plays about us until the cows come home.

Puter: You still want me to transfer?

James: Yup. Hey, let's have a count down!

Puter: Bloody Hell! Do I have to? Control transfered. Here goes: 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Lift off you naff git.

See an external veiw of Exmod II slowly drifting away from Progen, and Progen accellerating away at g.

Frame of James screaming with joy with his head floating in 0g.

James: Get In!

Progen clears Exmod II. Exmod II slowly spins around 180 degrees and stops. Then accellerators are started and James starts the journey back to Earth.

James (unstrapping himself): Get bleedin in. Right James. You've got to make sure that you get cracking and get food going. And you've got to make sure that in four and an half years of solitary confinement, that you don't go mad. I suppose doing the food will help give you a purpose in life. Get up early every day, don't spend the whole day lounging around in bed. Seven hours sleep is all you need, so get up and do stuff after that. You'll be laughing!

H/I-b1

Macro Economic Research

Miranda calls up another journalist.

Miranda: Hello I work for Contemporary News. I'd like to speak to someone about your policy on the Newcastle taxi industry.

Secretary: Certainly. I'll put you through.

Screen comes up with company she's ringing's logo and her current fav background sounds.

Javid: Hello Miranda. (He gets her name from the screen.) And what can I do for you?

Miranda: Hello Javid. I suppose you realize that our newsagencies disagree on policy regarding the Newcastle car industry?

Javid: Well yes, you do seem to be fighting a war that doesn't exist don't you?

Miranda: It seems obvious that the recent craze for taking taxi's is coming to a halt, and fashion is turning back to buses again. Newcastle seems to have put all its eggs into the taxi basket. Since Newcastle has such a disproportionately high number of people involved in this industry it could have dramatic consequences. Already sales are very low, and they're only going to go down. The knock on effect to the whole community in the North East is going to be drastic, and no one seems to recognise this. What the congloms need to do is invest in alternative industries and respond to the changing fashions. Surely that philosophy is what makes society work.

Javid: Well that's really nice of you to be so considerate as to ask for a quote from the opposition. I don't know what you're expecting.

Miranda thinks: Does he not want to address the point or something? Is there a problem?

Miranda: I don't particularly want to quote you if you don't want to be. I just want to try and understand why people aren't giving this issue the attention we think it deserves.

Javid: I suppose you think it's a credit to our society that two newsagencies both owned by the same conglomerate can publicly take up opposing views about an industry that forms a core part of their group. Do you think accusing our conglom of incompetence is going to help either of us, the conglom, Newcastle or the World?

Miranda thinks: You complete bonehead. Why are you trying to upset me? I don't know how you've managed to get this far in life without understanding society.

You bastard, it's working. You are upsetting me. Not because of the things you're saying - I can stand up to a damn sight more than that, but I just can't cope with the fact that someone is picking on me and trying to upset me for whatever reason.

Don't answer. Let him say the first thing.

Intense frame pause.

Javid: I think it's you that ought to explain your policy to me.

Frame pause.

Miranda: Oh well, thanks then. (Said with a lump in her throat.)

She pushes a button to hang up.

H/I-b2

Couples Letter

Dear James,

I suppose I should start off with an appology for my last letter. It was really vicious I know, but I hope you saw through all that and took it for what it really was: a cry for help. I shouldn't have been as direct as I was, but I was quite unhappy on the whole. I suppose I just suddenly realized that everything wasn't working out. Things have always gone the wrong way every now and then. It pisses you off at the time, but you know it's all going to work out in the end. That letter is the result of taking all those little things that you usually take in isolation and say 'orse things happen at sea,' and looking at them together. In that letter the eggshell that I've been living in for the start of my life finally cracked and I was exposed to the whole world.

Do you remember me mentioning about when Todd chucked me. I must have told you, I've told every one. It was my big shock story that I used to use to show off about. The instant I read the start of his letter giving me the old spanish archer, just for a split second I considered suicide. I rejected the idea straight



away, but I still considered it. It was supposed to be a measure of how much I was in love with him or something.

Every day before I get up now I have to justify my existence to myself. Suicide is always in the back of my mind. I never think about slitting my wrists or hanging myself, never about the mechanics of it. I just consider what prospects the future holds for me (will I ever be happy?) and how me not being here would affect anyone else. The answer's always the same: no one wants or needs me here, and I can't see any way that things could ever get better, but ultimately in several years time some change might occur that I can't foresee at the moment, I suppose it's still worth waiting for the unexpected. Maybe tomorrow.

I've started smoking again. It's just such a crap drug, I don't know why I do it. I don't get a decent high, not like poppers - straight up, laugh for a minute and straight back down. It just goes to my head and I think aggh, I don't like this, stop it now. Aggh, I get that sort of emptyish feeling in my gut after about 2 of them. But I still light up another one within ten mins of putting the last one out.

Why does everyone tap off with someone a couple of times and then feel they should set about spending the rest of their lives with them? I mean, for starters it's so touch and go who you tap off with: it's basically no more than who happens to be both available and pissed at the same time that you are, where at worst, neither one of you repels the other. It could be absolutely anyone, it's just so random. Then you spend the rest of your life trying to convince yourself that their attributes are just the traits you want to see in them.

Everyone at work's like that. Mostly they're over five years older than me. None of them can just decide, I'll go off and stay at my sister's tonight, get pissed, get up at five with a serious hangover and drag myself onto a train to get down for work ten minutes late as normal. For starters, they can't even do an hour's overtime without consulting the 'diary,' and the idea that going out with someone other than the person they're with for over half their life might be a nice change and quite a laugh is tantamount to moving in with someone else.

It's just so sad, people who are a real laugh and ace, independent people leave college and end up spending the rest of their lives with the first half decent bloke that comes up on their date. Suddenly they're inadequate as a whole entity, suddenly they've got to be half of a couple to be whole. Then they can spend the rest of their lives saying 'All men are bastards.' Er, I think it's your expectations of men that have been bastardized actually you cliché/. It just makes me want to throttle the gits.

Just cos everyone does it just cos the family they grew up in was like that. Can't they see how restrictive it is? I suppose it's a lot easier to follow like sheep, I mean, the whole society's geared up towards couples. If you form a couple everyone encourages you plurally. And whole people seem somehow to get looked down on, and certainly not encouraged to continue as such. I just look down at them all so much, they seem to be taking a short term easy option. They'd have much more fun as separate entities spending time where they want.

The worst thing of all is just the banal inevitability of marriage. However much I despise the whole concept of it, I just know I'm going to end up having kids (which incidentally I can't wait for) within a nuclear family under marriage. I don't know what'll change, but something will. You've just got to smile at it all.

Well I suppose that's enough moaning. It's good for me to carry on these letters now you've passed lover's limit. I suppose you'll receive this in a couple of years time for you, but I'll be well over 300 by then I expect. It's better than any diary, knowing that someone is going to read it and that your feelings are recorded, but that it can never have any comeback on you.

Lots of love then,  
Miranda xx

H/I-b3                      Communications

The world is literally plastered with screens that display almost any information we want. Only a very small amount of dwellings haven't got a screen of some form in every room. We use them to communicate directly with others on the phone, we watch the tele, listen to the radio or even play back videos or play records on them. We order buses on them, and of course, everyone has a screen on the bus. All of society's member's finance are done on a screen. Books are read, short educational lessons, like this one

on communications, span the entire range of Man's knowledge. You can get medical advice, find the nightclubs / cafes / B&Bs that suit you when you visit a new town, even ask people out with a guaranteed positive response!

So with a basic understanding of the system, one can use it more effectively, and more cheaply.

OK. We'll start with a description of the communications links. In a medium sized town, say Loughborough, there is a main exchange. Every screen in the whole of Lough has a direct connection to the exchange. This link is effectively a pair of wires sending signals back and forth from the exchange to the screen, although the actual realization is usually more complicated, it remains conceptually a simple two way link. If you know which screen your mate is sat at, and you're both in the big L you can ring him up. You both have direct links to the exchange, and the exchange simply connects the two of you together. In addition, each town has many high bandwidth (capable of transferring large amount of data quickly) links connecting them to surrounding towns like Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. Other links will connect the town to the major local Cities like Brum, Glasgow, London and Brussels. Using these links we can now speak to our mates in various important local locations. But each of these towns will also be connected to other cities, and those to others etc. Using a string of links we can communicate with any other screen in the world.

The direct two way link to the exchange is not the only source of information though. Down every street is a cable that contains every radio and TV station. This broadcast information only needs to be one way, so having one link down a road with spurs off it to each house and only one one way link from the exchange makes the reception of broadcast information considerably cheaper than making phone calls and other two way info transfers. Mobile communications are achieved by transferring data across the couple of inches gap between the bus and the road.

A large amount of our usage of screens is spent recalling standard sets of information eg. listening to records, reading a book and taking a lesson (like this one.) Each major record company / publisher / educational establishment, has a high bandwidth link from each exchange to their local office. If you've got a record on, the record company's local office sends you the sounds down a small part of their link to the exchange, and then down to you. Smaller publishers may have fewer offices, and you may need a slightly more expensive link, to Nottingham say. To avoid incurring such costs each household has a 'cache' of memory which stores your favourite records that aren't retrievable locally. This cache space is limited and careful use of it is the key to economic communications.

The price of the link is not the only cost accrued by the use of the cable when listening to music etc. The musicians and publishers must also get paid for creating and distributing the sounds. Although all publishers' charging systems are different, they generally follow the same pattern. The first time you listen, it is relatively expensive. The cost gradually decreases as you use it, and after a certain point the only cost accrued is the cost of the line, or if it is stored in your cache, nothing! At this point you effectively own a copy of the record in the old traditional sense, but without all the risk involved in buying a record you've never heard before. This is vital in maintaining the wide availability of music, and supporting musical fashion. Payment for such services introduces the concept of the bank.

The bank has traditionally been a store of wealth in terms of cash. In the past, assets such as records were tangible, vinyl or CDs that you could touch, and were kept at one's house. Nowadays, if you've heard a record enough times, you effectively own it in the way one used to own a record, since you don't have to pay to listen to it anymore as I've just explained. This information in the form of a list of possessions or partial possessions (tracks you've listened to a couple of times, but you're still paying something for it each time you listen) is kept at the bank. As well as your current account. So say you want to listen to a relatively new sound. First you ask your screen for it, it finds out the price from the bank (There is no charge for finding out prices,) the bank then pays the publisher from your current account (maybe they've got a different bank which involves some conceptually simple communications between banks.) The bank then gives the go ahead to the publisher to send you the music, paying any local authority for any inter exchange link used, and you get your sounds. If the record is on cache, you still pay the publisher, although you'll get a reduced rate for not using any of their link's bandwidth, and you won't pay the exchange (owned by the local authority) for making a connection between the publisher and your screen, since none will be made. The direct link from the screen to the exchange is rented say quarterly and all local (the same exchange) calls only incur a connection charge (waived by some local authorities) since you both pay for the lines separately with the rental. If your favourite band's record company have an office in your town, it will be most economic to always download the tracks from

them via the exchange as you listen to them, and use your cache for data that requires a link from elsewhere.

To allow accesses to your current account, you obviously want some kind of security, otherwise anyone could say 'I'm Jane Gizzard, transfer all of my money to Janet Gambers account please.' Each user has a word or phrase that they say to authorize all their transactions. This phrase produces a pattern unique to them dependant on the physical size and shape of their mouth and throat: their signature. Everyone is familiar with this method of validation since we all use it to tell screens we're talking to them rather than just maintaining idle banter. For particularly important transactions, facial details may be required. Ultimately, if anyone's going to go to the length of making a fully functional human replacement, identical to someone that would fool the system then they're going to get the information they want however sophisticated the security system is, and what's someone doing storing information that important without a better safeguard anyway. Also any financial transactions are recorded, so they'd leave a trail for when their scam was discovered.

You might think that safeguards could be inherent in the system, all transfers of data could be checked to see if anything untoward was afoot. There's two main problems with doing this, the first one is a technical matter. Each transfer would be subject to many tests, this would require a disproportionate amount of processing power for the amount of data being transferred. Who could justify the immense extra cost of developing techniques, coding them and implementing the hardware. It'd all be a waste of time and effort and hence money that would be better spent on a better network in the first place. The second problem is an ethical one: does anyone have the right to follow us around, tracing our footsteps, checking up on us? This is a relatively civilized society, the whole system is based upon trust and acting responsibly, such 'safeguards' would be against the nature of society. It's very well documented that people rise to both responsibility and lack of it. So we have a communications network where only transfers involving possessions or finance are recorded, unless specifically asked for.

Most people make their screens record telephone conversations up to a day old, and they often go back and store some of them for personal reasons or reference. Basically you are given the freedom to do what you like as long as you've got enough money.

If conversations are of a particularly private nature, they may be encrypted and all financial transactions are encrypted. There are mathematical techniques that provide two numerical 'keys': a 'public key' and a 'private key'. If you are sending some information to your mate, you first find his public key from the directory of them, encode the data using his public key. The data can now only be decoded by the private key known only to your mate, so no one else can get at the photo you've taken of his wife on holiday! He would then reply by encrypting his response (in whatever form that might be) with your public key that everyone's got access to from the directory. You're the only person who can decode it as you're the only person with the corresponding private key. There's one minor problem so far, you don't know who's really sent the response since it's coded with your public key that everyone's got access to. One way of guaranteeing that data has been sent by you is to 'sign' it. Firstly the raw data is coded by your mate with your public key, then he recodes the coded data using his own private key, and sends the code that has now been encoded twice. You then decode it using his public key, and your private one. Since he's the only person with access to his private key and you with yours, the message is guaranteed to be sent by him and received by you.

It is mathematically possible to calculate the private key from the public key, although this would take up to 10 million years with current processing power and current algorithms. Even so, everyone's keys are constantly being updated. The networks of encryption are quite complicated when you allow for each screen having its own set of keys too, but the basic concept remains the same.

It seems appropriate to say a couple of words about the electronics that provide our excellent communications. Originally, what we call hardware was actually that, hard! You could touch the silicon chips and capacitors. An engineer would see what components he needed to do the job and link them together. The direct equivalent of their hardware is our configurable blocks. Much of the original interface components (e.g. for sending data down an optical fibre) are very similar to those we use now, but it just enters a big block now rather than travelling through a set of discrete components. The engineer these days chooses the set of configurations of logic blocks that they require (sets of blocks being equivalent to hardware components of old) and links them together. All this information is 'soft' in the conventional use of the term, but never the less it is generally referred to as hardware. Its configurable nature is its beauty. The only different parts of real hardware in use now are different sizes

of configurable logic. What was once the most creative section in industry now produces only a handful of products. The design of configurations is now the creative part with literally millions of microprocessor and peripheral configurations. The 'hardware' engineer now links configurations together, bought in from industry standards. The 'real' software is developed in the same way as it always has, but with tools so sophisticated as to make the task comparatively trivial. Mind you looking back at old software techniques can really break the ice at parties, some of them are surreally complicated. Now, generating hardware or software is not a major part of any task, and full attention can be given to the task.

H/I-b 4            Fame

Dear James,

Fame. Why do I so desperately want to become famous? I feel I'm pushing myself up a mountain of ego. I go around all the time thinking that I'm this great Journalist: the only person in the world that can see certain things that the rest of the world are shielded from, and hence I have a divine right to be loved. Is self criticism the asset I really believe it to be? I notice a weakness and remedy it, then in my mind I'm better than I was to start off.

Teenage boys have posters of me on their walls and worship me for my body. Men love my brain and all I stand for first, then my body (or the other way around if I'm true to myself.) I'll be recognised as being truly great. People will remember my birthday.

But then what's wrong with being normal? Why shouldn't I clean the bath after me like everyone else? Mind you, I suppose famous people are more normal than normal people, at least normal people have overcome this basic human floor that requires widespread admiration. They've come to terms with reality.

It's easy to become famous, anyone can do it. All it requires is hard work, dedication, a willingness to neglect other parts of life that are usually integral ones, and a need to prove yourself. This instability is inherent in all famous people except those who genuinely have a love for a particular activity - rather than those that are driven to have a love for the subject because they either: want to block something out of their lives - so they put all their efforts into their work; or they feel that the only way to have a useful life is to be famous, so that they can stick two fingers up at their old school friends and say look at me, you haven't done a thing with your lives.

Britain has a class of Intellectuals who have no need to prove themselves, they get their enjoyment out of the arts and science etc. Some lesser mortals believe that money is the only important thing in life and their whole life is geared up towards pursuing that. They can only get good jobs by holding the 'right' views that they just pick up from opinion polls. Still someone's got to do it I suppose. Maybe they're just unable to become famous?

I think I should leave it until late on in life before becoming famous. If I'm still immature enough at that age to still want fame for fame's sake then I suppose I can take it. But no one will ever look at you in the same way again. All the friends you've made over the years will treat you as if you're a different person. (Maybe you'll act as a different person too.) Even your closest friends won't be properly at ease with you. And you can right off making new friends like you used to. Mind, that might not be such a bad thing as I've been finding increasing difficulty meeting people recently, although I've been surrounded by them. Having other people approach me might be what I need.

All of this goes round and round in my head all the time. I know I want to combat that inside me that urges me to strive for fame. I also know that I tend to think more about the ultimate nature of man as opposed to how he balances his existence in this stumbling period of history. However, I can view the situation from whichever direction I think gives rise to my answer (being famous) being correct. What I really need is justification: I've got a damn sight more to say than most of those famous bleach blondes. Why shouldn't I take the airtime from one of them? No one will notice. There's loads of them and only one of me.

H/I-b 5            Wolve's independence

Miranda to someone on screen: Hello Mrs Craven. I'm Miranda from Contemporary News. I was wondering if I could ask you a couple of questions about the Wolves' independence movement.

Mrs Craven: I'd love to. Glad you're taking an interest.

Miranda: Thanks. Can I use some of what you say in a report?

Mrs Craven: Of course you can. Fire away.

Miranda: OK. Well, why do you think Wolves should be granted independence from Brum?

Mrs Craven: In short, Wolves isn't considered by Brum as being part of it. All of the members of the government, except myself, come from Brum, and very few of them are at ease in Wolves. Now they all understand Brum very well and identify weaknesses in the infrastructure very efficiently. So revenue is directed to Brum from the West Midlands government. As none of them appreciate Wolves' problems, these are hardly ever identified and we're losing out. We have a disproportionately high level of revenue since major British transport, water, electric and telecommunications arteries pass through the region, but we do not get the benefits from them. It gets diverted to Brum. They can do without us pulling them up, they'll have to work more efficiently without our revenues, which will be better for the global community as a whole. Also, all of the country's admin centres: again transport, water, lecky, telecoms and land allocation are all based in Brum. Not only do the staff have little sympathy with Wolves' concerns, but Wolves' population is starved of these jobs that exist in Brum. A split would bring our fair proportion of jobs to us.

All of that is just straight forward common sense, housing though is the most tangible reason for a split.

The current Brum system where the state not only owns the land you live on, but the house you live in too is a tad silly to put it mildly. Now I understand that at the time when the world was grabbing 'social capitalism' by both hands, the notion that everyone could stop trying to do minor house repairs themselves out of their precious free time with inadequate equipment must have been appealing. Everyone being guaranteed a decent place to live - quite revolutionary in its time. However, the evidence that we've got now after what seems like a millennium of blinkered vision, and evidence that was around at the time of West Midlands' departure from the rest of the Midlands maintain that this policy doesn't work. People ring up for absolutely everything to be done on the house, even in some circumstances, to the extent of changing light bulbs. This is obviously a wasteful way of maintaining a house whatever the ideals are behind it. Major things go wrong with the houses quicker than with equivalent owner occupier houses. This is because people let their houses get in bad nick as it's not their house anyway. It's a pain to organize preventative treatment and the government will pay for any repairs when they occur. So they have no incentive - financial or otherwise - to maintain the place properly. Of course many people enjoy maintaining their homes, but such a waste of free time cannot be justified within Brum's system.

Although attempts were made to allow as much freedom as possible to home renters intending to make changes to their house, there's so much red tape involved in achieving such changes through the council that people are put off. Any improvements to a home will increase the rent as well, so there's even a financial incentive not to maintain the place. If someone was to apply for an improvement, the dweller has a group of officials traips round, inspecting their house and their suggestions. This has the effect of standardizing the changes to houses rather than making the housing more diverse. Of course when they move house, they receive no remuneration for the state they leave the house in, so no one really bothers. Other countries have much better systems involving auctions by weekly rent and remuneration for the previous dweller etc. It seems to me that Brum's system was only created to be different from other local states, rather than because it actually works.

Miranda: What housing system are you proposing?

Mrs Craven: Well, there's many options open to us. I wouldn't want to force us into any wrong housing policy. We'll discuss it and make our decision when Wolves has obtained independence.

Miranda: In summary then?

Mrs Craven: We will take a snap shot of Brum's regulations, adopt them as our own to reduce the trauma, and then adapt them gradually. Brum shares a lot with Wolves socially, culturally and economically. The whole relationship between us will improve following the breakup releasing the tension that currently exists between us. The emphasis will then be on the many similarities between the states and not our differences, we can concentrate on mutually helping each other. All the surrounding states should benefit from the reduction in tariffs of all types of traffic that is inevitable within Wolves following the split.

H/I-b6

Hospital Letter

Dear James,

Today I was one of those sad and lonely gits that go to the doctor's, not because there is anything wrong with them, but just for some social contact: for some attention. To have someone caring for them. I was sitting in the waiting room when I pieced it all together. I suddenly got that empty feeling like something was eating my stomach from the inside. The same as I felt when you left the car to go to Gensim. My eyes glazed over and some tears got going. 'Has It come to this now Miranda?' Then I tried to pull myself together and get a grip seeings as I was in a public waiting room.

When I got to see the doctor he spent the 30 seconds looking at my hand that I didn't deserve. Of course it wasn't painful in the way it should have been. The nurse was really nice and bandaged it up and spoke to me, but I wasn't really in the right mood for a chat. I just felt I was wasting their time. Thing is, I really didn't feel right at all. I know it's all just psychosymatical and it's just cos I'm a bit depressed at the way my life - the life that really did have everything going for it - is just going a bit wrong. I'm not eating properly either, but it's just too much effort to cook. I just can't do it. Even when I'm really hungry beans on toast is just beyond me and I go to bed and try to sleep at about eight just so I don't have to actually do anything. God, and the washing as well. Every ten bloody days that comes along on top of everything else. Maybe I should go see a councillor. I suppose they're free which is one thing. But that's for people with real problems, I'd just be wasting their time. Especially as I know a bit about psychology. They can't tell me much I can't tell myself. Anyway, I'll struggle through somehow. I mightn't be as pretty and innocent when I make it, but I may well be a better person having sorted it all out me self.

Oh God, there was this bloke at the hospital who'd done something real to his arm, but he was still very mobile. His adoring bird really made me want to chuck. She'd obviously taken time off work to come to hospital with her man. They were touching and kissing all the time. The thing that really made me want to land her one (I'm so sensitive) was when she came out with 'I don't think you know how much I care for you.' IF YOU CARE FOR HIM THAT MUCH DARLING, THEN WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE HIM ALONE WITH A BOOK AND GET TO WORK AND EARN SOME DOSH. AGGHHHHH!

I'll write more when I'm feeling a bit better.

Miranda xx

H/I-b 7

Letter Religion

Dear James,

Why am I so afraid of religion? Is it because I don't want to be looked down upon by everyone the way I've always done? You know: 'She may be a wonderful company chairman, but she's religious. All those wonderful things she's done are for the wrong reasons.'

I don't know, just look at the people with religion. They're careing, giving, loving, quite the most beautiful people you could hope to meet. They have that sunny outlook on life that I used to have. Na"ivity or innocence. They have just such a wonderful glow that really can't help but brighten up your day.

I mean, the general world view is that God, in whatever form, doesn't really exist. People just use religion as a mental sheild. But it is surely true that we have 'spiritual' needs. If it isn't then why am I so messed up? And quite apart from that I quite like the idea of divine reduction of wave packets, saves you having to define what a consious being is!

I don't know if you've ever come across this analogy, but it really sums it all up: If you are thirsty and have a drink of water, it quenches your thirst. If someone now tells you that water doesn't exist then their arguement doesn't carry any water, like. You don't feel thirsty any more, who cares if it exists. So whether water is tangible or not, it still quenches your thirst so you're going on carry on drinking.

If religion can quench my thirst then surely I should embrace it with open arms. But I know I know too much about reality (what is real Miranda - Ed.) to fall for it all. Surely you can't coldly make the decision to become religious because you wish to become something that you're not just to be relieved

of the burden of life. I suppose that you'd have to be introduced into it, much like my conversion from 'science' to 'art encompassing science'. Just like you've spent your whole life in a world that goes on until infinity in all directions except one which has got a huge wall preventing any penetration through that plane. You don't know what's beyond it and it doesn't really concern you, it's just the way it is. Just like the laws of physics are the way they are, you can't do anything about it. One day with your first piece of knowledge that provides a real insight into art (or religion), a minute hole appears in the wall, but you don't really notice it. Then gradually as you get other odd little bits of knowledge a crack starts to visibly appear. You can see the crack but think nothing of it. All walls get cracks in them. Who knows, it was probably there all along and you just hadn't noticed it before. Then maybe two or three different gems come your way, all unrelated except that they are, together, the straw that breaks the camel's back. Suddenly paintings, music, journalism, architecture, fashion, pornography, industry, science, everything just fits into place as the wall rips apart at the crack so fast that you don't see it ripping, you just feel it being drawn from you. You're just left looking at the whole world as if it's a completely different place, which of course it now is for you. You can never turn back the clock and see the world as it was, what's more you're part of it now. Your bumbled path through life has brought you to journalism and everything's just there for the taking.

But I know too much for that to happen to me now with religion. I don't think I could fall for it. Besides, I quite enjoy the luxury of changing your mind, admitting you've been wrong all these years and that there are other considerations: the atheist's prerogative to be a hypocrite. To reflect society.

Religion's irrationality is its beauty. Relieved of the burden of life, you can concentrate on having fun. I would love to have religion, and let's face it I'm in the target group, but it just ain't going to work.

H/I-b 8            Transport

Miranda is in front of a screen

Miranda: Right then James. I think I'm going to need the low down on transport man.

James: The one that's supposed to be best is from Easyinfo.

Miranda pushes none of the buttons.

Miranda: Is there nothing else.

James: Quandry have got one that's got about a quarter the rating as the Easyinfo one.

Miranda: I don't know who reads or writes Easyinfo's crap, but really you should know better James, especially when Quandry have got an alternative. In future ignore the fact that Quandry have got relatively low satisfaction ratings and high prices. Most of the gits that use it have no idea what they want to know. I do, so give me that one. OK?

The details of all the lessons' prices and popularity etc. are displayed on the screen.

James: Yes. Sorry.

Miranda: It's alright I wasn't having a go at you. Just remember it.

A big Quandry logo comes up onto the screen. Throughout the lesson the screen shows figures to accompany the narrative.

Teach: This lesson is about transport. It covers the basic requirements of travellers and freight, and details the current solutions to them. If this is not what you require then stop the lesson now and you'll only be charged for the bandwidth you've used so far.

Both passengers and freight require speedy transfers from door to door with the smallest amount of hassle. Ideally this would take the form of a vehicle picking them up and taking them directly to exactly where they're going, avoiding any bottlenecks that occur. If this ideal was realistic then every group of travellers or parcel would have an individual vehicle for each journey. The roads would be completely full and the number of vehicles required would be enormous. This would push the price up astronomically, like the late twentieth / early twentyfirst century when practically everyone actually owned and maintained their own 'car' (until they used up almost all the oil for us).

Both cost and journey time can be reduced from this 'Ideal' by reducing the number of vehicles on the road. Many parcels will need to be sent from one city to another city at about the same time of day. So one vehicle goes around the first city collecting all the freight, travels directly to the destination city, and delivers all the parcels to the door one by one.

A benefit of this system is that a particularly urgent parcel can be sent quickly by paying significantly more than normal and be collected immediately to fill up a truck that's already been filling up for half an hour, and be delivered first. Other parcels in the truck get some form of rebate usually if this is the case. Also, by not collecting and delivering to towns inbetween, unnecessary traffic in those towns is avoided.

When passengers are travelling rather than freight there are two main differences: firstly, waiting to be collected or delivered whilst the bus potters around town collecting or delivering others is particularly time consuming; and secondly, passengers are easily moveable from one vehicle to another. In order to make the most of the situation, each town has a couple of main stations around its periphery. These stations regularly have buses shuttling passengers to and from various parts of the city as and when the customers require. None stop, high speed buses to other towns operate mainly between these stations.

So a typical holiday journey for a family would be as follows: they'd pack all their stuff into two separate containers: the main one with everything that is needed for the duration of the holiday, and another one with just the odds and ends needed for the journey. The large one is put outside in a safe weatherproof shed next to the road. Every household has one of these sheds and they all take a range of standard sized boxes. Trucks can automatically remove these boxes from the road and place new ones in them so no human lugging is required except to and from these sheds. After filling the box they leave it to be collected by the truck. This may be done the previous night since to make the journey as cheap as possible the freight will travel relatively slowly, and as they are more likely to need something from the box at their destination than at home, it's better to have the box awaiting them as they arrive.

When they are ready to leave, they simply call a bus from a screen. This could pick them up from their house, but again from a purely economic point of view (for the traveller) this is disproportionately expensive on the whole compared with a journey after a one or two minute walk to a more convenient pick up point from the buses point of view. The bus will have picked them up after two minutes, but in less than five minutes from the request call in 97% of all cases, and a wait of over ten minutes only occurs in cases where some form of problem has occurred. That's 1 in 10,000 journeys or twenty times in the average lifetime, any improvement in the service over that results in too high an increase in costs / increased benefit. If this does happen to them then they can just call for another one, it's inconvenient but looking at it objectively, it's only twenty minutes wasted.

They are taken to one of their local stations, the one that's in the direction that they're heading, maybe stopping a couple of times to pick up some others en route. Now at the station they make their way to the faster bus that takes them directly (except in very long distance trips, or those overseas) to their destination city. This will leave up to five minutes after they arrive. Once at the destination city, they change again for a shuttle either to a nearby street, or straight to the door if they don't feel like walking the extra couple of hundred yards. A surprisingly high number of people take this option when one considers how disproportionately expensive it is. Their large box will arrive (assuming they sent it just as they left) usually up to four hours after them in a very similar shed this time outside their holiday home.

The beauty of this system is not only that it runs consistently at just below maximum efficiency, but that it is so flexible. If you are the only person wanting to travel to a certain destination at a certain time, then you'll get a vehicle to take you by yourself. Although it might seem at first glance obvious to charge much more for such a facility, in practice it works. By providing a relatively stable price, the consumer and producer have much more stable expenses/income. This security is obviously advantageous. Since most vehicles are used during the day, journeys made at off peak times also enable travel operators to keep their vehicles in service for a higher proportion of the time.

When ordering a vehicle the various specialist interest buses running are listed, and you can choose to dance, read, converse, play chess and do almost anything else! People consider this an essential part of travelling, so their time is not wasted. Groups of friends can all take the same bus etc.

Whilst travelling down stretches of road, the overall throughput increases if the cars group together into a long train. This is highlighted by a bus (or more often a train of them) turning right onto a busy road.

By concentrating cars into trains, large gaps occur along the busy road. When a gap coincides in both directions the bus (train) turning right can cross both carriageways of the road and start accelerating.

Busy roads have two different types of lanes on the roads. Fast lanes at the centre where trains are travelling at top speed in both directions, and slow lanes where vehicles leaving the road may slow



down, or speed up when joining the road. Occasionally cars may stop in this lane to admire views etc. and sometimes even another lane is provided for this.

All cars are magnetically levitated above the road when travelling. This a wholly satisfactory way of achieving motion for many reasons: since there are no moving parts things very rarely go wrong with them; the cars have relatively little engineering effort going into them as the complicated and powerful motion components are embedded in the road and so the busses are cheap; as there is no actual contact between the road and car, no wheels on the car or road wear out and the suspension is superb.

The roads are owned and maintained by the state which the road is in. Some times several neighbouring countries group all their services together as they are too small to operate efficiently on their own. All the main conglomerates have transportation companies within their group. These companies own the cars, lease the road from the communities, coordinate customer journeys with other companies and charge the customer. The state is responsible for the manner in which you travel along the road, different states vary a fair bit. For instance the length of the train varies wildly between states.

On the screen comes up: Other Quandry lessons on related topics include: Road construction, Traffic theory, Transport charging mechanisms (and any other you can think of.)

H/I-b9

Not pissed off

Dear James,

I've lost most of the anger that so filled most of my letters to you over the last year or so (God is it really that long?) It seems that after spending all that time enshrouded in circumstances that I'd always considered abnormal, they have now become the norm. I do still try and convince myself that it's only temporary and I'll find myself an ace group of friends to live with and everything'll start going great, but I just don't believe it. Recently I've been trying to rekindle my depression as tangible proof that I won't accept this life for myself, and that with it I'll find the impetus to try and find a new break if it comes, but I won't. Depression seems to be the only way to avoid accepting life as it now appears to be. I'm very good at my job, I interview all manner of people and drive the conversation. But if I bump into exactly the same people out of the safe structure of work, I'm so embarrassed at the situation I try to walk off if possible. If they force me into conversation, they have to work really hard at it. Everything I say can close the conversation unless they restart it. I walk away so relieved when they finally get the idea that I'm really uneasy talking with them. I have real trouble even speaking to people like shop assistants. I mean the etiquette is very well understood for that and I still talk quietly. I've even had to call 'James' (my signature if you remember - I've changed it back now) a couple of times to authorized sales because I was putting myself under so much pressure that I was speaking so quietly and croakily that he didn't recognize me.

That lucky break I need so desperately is now even further out of my grasp: the other day I was calling people up to find out some stuff for an article when up popped dateline. He pushed it fairly obviously, but I didn't, he looked quite nice and I had an extremely good matchup with him (83%.) but something just wasn't right. When I was off the phone, dateline came up again telling me that I was too choosy. Apparently I've turned down 30 consecutive men with matchups that would normally result in dates 28% of the time. Then it said that deep down, maybe I don't really want a man and that I should consider this and maybe address it. Sod considering it. I dealt with it alright: I turned it off! I felt such relief when I did it. I can relax a bit now, and I don't have to worry about when the next trial will be.

I suppose dateline was right to a certain extent. I certainly feel that I could never properly love anyone anymore: madly and naively. I'll be much colder and logical, you know, this person is right for me because of this, this and this, rather than 'Oh God he's so ace!'

People who don't know me very well (and who does these days?) think I'm really odd. They're never sure what sort of reaction they'll get to anything they might say. Sometimes I'm just solid and dull, not reacting enthusiastically, but usefully. Other times intercourse is just the last thing I want and I'm morose and aggressive towards them. The younger ones especially just can't understand how anyone can possibly act so differently on consecutive days when nothing has happened, the world's exactly the same as it was the day before. I remember someone who used to be like I am now. He was one of our standard conversations, listing the latest odd things he'd done to each of us. We used to laugh loads about it. I can't even do that anymore. If I'm walking through town and there's a group of young girls

laughing and giggling uncontrollably I get a serious lump in my throat. I don't actually start crying, but I might as well be. It's not tears for myself and how bad it's going (well I suppose if you go a level further it probably is) but tears of joy, like a mother crying at a wedding. That time of life is just so wonderful, and the laughing is just so real. I never spontaneously break into laughter any more. Sometimes you are forced to make yourself laugh. It's all so false, so superficial. I really do envy teenage girls.

They've got the whole world at their feet. I suppose I must have had at one time, but I never realized. I suppose the boys our age then could have had us at their feet though too. They just weren't interested in us then. They didn't have the hormones.

As much as it's true that beautiful young women have the world at their feet, ugly women have everyone's backs turned to them. A pretty face can open doors that six years training and experience can't. The whole world goes out of its way to help pretty girls, they make friends instantly, and are always pampered. Ugly women have no friends, they have to battle for everything. There's just nothing can be done about it. It's always been that way and it always will be. Men making gets of themselves.

Oh why do I write these letters? (Have I written this to you before?) I suppose it's purely ego. Wanting to live on after I die. Everyone on Nalengua will, in the fantasy that my mind lives in, look on it all as the greatest collection of literature that they have. Literature that the Earth doesn't have. The most concise, but precise summary of the human condition. Kids will grow up knowing my name and not knowing my work! They'll all think I'm dead boring and pretentious until eventually one of their mates sez ' Miranda- she's bangin!'

H/I-b 10            School Philosophy

Miranda is at work and gets a call come up on her screen.

Receptionist: Hi Miranda, got a parent calling in about the school she sends her children to.

Miranda: OK, Thanks. Hello, I'm Miranda, how can I help?

Mum: Hello, well the school that my two girls go to are trying to change their philosophy.

Miranda: I see.

Mum: It's currently child centered and they want to move away from that. The way I see it is that if you're not interested in what someone's trying to tell you then you're not going to learn anything. The only effect that it is likely to have is to turn you away from that subject. Both the student and the teacher might aswell spend their time doing something else. Now I thought all this was fairly well established educational doctrine. So why is it that the Warden of Comberton Village College is trying to force through changes that make a core curriculum mandatory? I chose this school like all parents do, on thier teaching philosophy. If I wanted my children to stand in a corner with their hands on their heads reciting some boring, outdated by centuries prose, I'd have sent them to the Lees. But personally, I don't want my children to stand in line and conform. Children that attend that sort of school don't create, are inarticulate, and inherit other peoples respect criterion. So what if my children cause problems, they'll only be forcing society to address situations head on, and generally get real. My children'll have a positive impact on society and they'll grow as fast as they can rather than being held back by some of their peer group.

Miranda: OK, but you'd agree that the general trend is back away from a child centred approach, and that it's inevitable that some schools change.

Mum: Certainly, for better or worse, that seems to be the case, but apart from Comberton, there's only one other child centred school in the area. There's no way it could absorb all of Comberton's students that still believe in the child centered approach. And Linton's hardly local anyway.

Miranda: Can I use that in an artical.

Mum: Please do. Anything for some press.

Miranda: OK. What I'll do is I'll make some calls, pass it through the panel, that's really a formality cos this news should get some coverage. Then we'll edit some quotes together with some comments and publish it. I'll let you know what happens. OK?

Mum: Great. Thanks Miranda.

Simultaneously: Bye.

Miranda: James. How's Comberton financed.

James: The Cambridge Education Consortium.

Miranda: Oh, what about Linton?

James: Most comes directly from the local companies rather than them passing the money up the corporate structure for distribution as the Education Consortium sees fit. The consortium provides a token 20%. Linton companies supply a similar token proportion to the consortium.

Miranda: Yeah, but what about all the products that Linton buys that are not made locally. The companies that get Linton's money should contribute surely.

Miranda: Hmmm. I suppose it all cancels itself out, but not if half of Comberton start going to Linton. See if you can get me the Top Dog at Comberton.

Warden: Hello.

Miranda: Hello, I'm from Contemporary News I understand that the college is planning to change its philosophy. I'd like to get a comment from you explaining why you want the change.

Warden: Oh right. Well for starters changing the philosophy of a school is not something that anyone takes lightly. It's obvious that such a change can have a major negative impact on students that would be forced to change. So the proposal has been very carefully thought out. That said, there is substantial evidence to suggest that making a small core curriculum mandatory propels students forwards. Obviously a student that's interested in a subject will learn and understand substantially more in substantially less time than one which is forced to attend a lesson and forced to do work. So ten hours, say, of work with an uncooperative student is very roughly equivalent to one hour with an interested one. Also forcing anyone to do anything is only likely to cause friction and animosity between student and teacher. For a long while these arguments seemed too convincing to be challenged. But it's true to say that the things in life that give you the most pleasure are the things that cause most pain. An excellent example is hardcore music of any form. When you first hear it, it seems cacophonous in the extreme and is often very unpleasant to listen to. However with a little knowledge of the genre, it very often becomes the most pure example of any type of music and you just can't beat dancing to it.

Almost everyone has to give up sugar in tea sometime in their life. Again it's a move away from the simple pleasant taste, followed by two months of drinking tea that tastes disgusting when you could quite easily add a couple of spoonfuls and make it not only palatable, but nice. Then of course you reach the status of acquired taste and get so much more out of tea than you ever could with sugar.

I think it's important to show how good things can be when sacrifices are made, and of course it's good to show students that you can't always get what you want - often the hardest realization to come to terms with. Many of my students' parents and their generation who received a generally pure child centered education are accused of not accepting this basic fact of life. This problem with almost all of the population is often blamed for some of the teething troubles of social capitalism. The mistake should not be made by two generations on the trot.

Miranda: What about all the parents that chose Comberton just because it was a child centered school, and all the surrounding schools were not.

Warden: Yes that's a very hard question to answer. There's a grey area in education: for a newly born baby it is obvious that asking it which play school philosophy does it feel it is most ethically aligned to is ridiculous. The child's parents have chosen to have a baby and have a good idea which philosophy they like, and which they disagree with. At this age the parents and the child are one unit and no one would deny the parents their right to bring their children up in whatever way they see fit.

Similarly, it is unreasonable to ask a 20 year old's parents what subjects their daughter will be studying this term. The transition from dependence to independence comes somewhere within these two decades, but it is impossible to attempt to pinpoint it, as responsibility is gradually given/taken and each case is different.

Most of the children who come to Comberton arrive here when they're about 12. Almost always by their parent's decision. And we most certainly do have a duty to the parents to declare a philosophy and follow it wholeheartedly. We also undeniably have a duty to the students. In this particular school at the moment I believe that there is a conflict between the wishes of the parents and the needs of the students, in a few core areas. We are very anxious to keep these down as low as possible, but we can't get away from the facts that the students respond better once these small refinements of child centered learning are made.

On the bus back from an interview with someone, watching the world go by.

Miranda thinks: Come on Miranda. What the bloody hell are you doing with your life? Now that you've started to get good at your job and you've got into a position where you are given the freedom to prove you're good, you don't like it anymore. What's the matter? Is it the fear of fame and the change that it would bring to your life? Your life. Why can't you make a decision? Sod it, we're getting too close to home. I want to feel miserable longer.

Miranda: James, can you let me out here please. I'll walk through town to home.

The bus stops and she gets off at the edge of the centre of town and proceeds through town.

Miranda thinks: You know you don't want to be married, not being able to make decisions on your own. Stopping going out and forgetting the life I've got with Sis and everyone totally, couldn't do that with a hubby. But you can't stay single either can you? The loneliness and lack of love is really fucking you up now after a relatively short time, what could it do to you in a whole lifetime. Think of all those habits you'd pick up that no one would ever comment on, you'd get odder and odder without that restrain.

Miranda approaches a group of the punks or similarly strong imaged cult on the opposite side of the road having a laugh. What follows doesn't happen except in Miranda's mind, but depict it as if it does.

Miranda thinks: What's stopping you from going over and befriending them? I bet they're really nice. Yeah, I will!

Miranda crosses the road and approaches them. They stop talking and turn around before she gets to them. A girl who's much larger than Miranda is standing closest to her.

Miranda: I'm sorry. Can you hug me.

Girl: Come here. (With open arms.)

In the deep embrace they have, Miranda has tears eventually flooding down her face. Eventually Miranda loosens her grip and pulls her chest back to see the girl's face.

Miranda: Thank you.

Girl: Come back anytime.

Miranda crosses the road back onto the original side and then reenters reality having really just walked past the group without crossing over.

Miranda thinks: But if you had it in you to do that, you wouldn't need to do it in the first place.

Miranda thinks: You've got to change jobs Miranda. Change jobs and have a baby.

K/O-a 1&2      Meeting Richard

Miranda rushes into her house, drops everything, and props herself up in front of a screen.

Miranda: James?

Screen springs to life.

Miranda: What do you know about Richard.

James: 24, lives on a commune near Loughborough. He's alternative so there's not too much info on him.

Miranda: Not that Richard. The one that pestered me for all those years at college.

James: Richard Rose?

Miranda: Yeah.

James: Living in a two bedroom flat in Newnham (address printed on screen.) Do you want a full rundown?

Miranda: Er, no I'll try and get that off him meself. Where does he work?

James (printing up some guff): you know where it is?

Miranda: Yup. When do they have lunch there?

Cut to Miranda sat on a bench dressed up pretty smartly in town with a fair number of people around. She's watching a door past the end of the local shops. A group of geezers pile out laughing. Miranda stands up immediately and starts walking towards them. The blokes have past a couple of shops by the time she gets up to them. They're all looking her up and down (as you do.)

Miranda: Richard?

Richard: Miranda?

All the other blokes look at him as if to say 'How the bloody hell do you know a bird like that?'

Miranda: How you doing?

Richard: Great. What about you. I've not seen you on the news yet. I always look.  
Miranda: Well, I'm in research rather than reporting now, it's a bit more interesting really. You get to choose vetoes and stuff. You know  
Richard: You always did like to be in control.  
Miranda: Listen, I'm actually doing some work at the moment. Why don't we meet up sometime?  
Richard: I'd love to. Any time.  
Miranda: Next Tuesday?  
Richard: Sure, where?  
Miranda: Oh, we can decide then. Tell you what, you come round to mine and pick me up. OK?  
Richard: Great. Well, see you then then.  
Miranda: Yeah, see yea.  
Other blokes: See ya!  
As they walk apart various of the blokes turn around at various stages to watch her walk away (her curves!)  
Other blokes: Who's she?

K/O-a 3            Richard ace - letter

Dear James,

Am I still pissed? Well, I was completely off my face last night and I haven't got a hangover. I just feel really happy and I nearly fell out of bed. I remember leaving the house last night and saying to myself that I wasn't going to get off with him and settle for someone I don't really fancy. I felt quite bad about it at the time - what a load of crap, it didn't stop me tarting myself up and going out. God knows what the score is, but I feel great!

I wish he was in my room now, and I was out in the kitchen making toast for him. Why? I could nick off to the corner shop and make idle chat with the assistant. Why? What is so satisfying about doing something for him that would be a chore for almost anyone else? What is it about him that leaves me in a state of confidence such that I can do things like go round to the old lady next door's to see if she wants anything and generally have a chat?

Several pints down he agreed to move in with me. I believe him. We can decorate the place and have it exactly as we want. Fill it with coarse earthy furniture and ornaments. And have loads of crockery and cutlery - none of it matching eachother. Not have much stuff, just keep it simple and clean. God I can start buying paintings and sculptures. God it'll be ace. I can even do the garden. The whole world of gardening is there, established, just waiting for me to have somewhere with a mandate for me to work on it. We can stay in loads and watch documentaries and natural history programs together, and bring up our kids how we like. And they'll love us and we'll love them.

Oh God, it just feels great to enter into the whole new world of couples. The whole of society is structured around couples and now I'm part of it. I suppose it's fairly similar to having a best friend except they're the opposite sex. (Anyone who claims their best friend is of the opposite has sadly never had a best friend.) You do loads together and have a relationship so close as to exclude others from you to a certain extent.

The basis for couples is fear of loneliness, giving enough to eachother so you're both secure. Couples have love too though, sex uniting them, reinforcing commitment to eachother and consolidating the security. Best friendships don't have that. This huge physical gap that, not forgives all, but brings everything into perspective and in giving commitment receives security, is only bridged by homosexual best friends and that really must be something: someone you're completely selfish with and both feel they're doing exactly what they want with sexual forgiveness and security.

Couples evolve though into families, which must also be something very special, having new entities (but very much part of you) to chat with. Can't wait. Can you really be a successful half of a couple after so long as a whole entity yourself? You'll be expected back home at a certain time, you'll loose your capacity to change your mind at the drop of a hat. Can you cope with that: having to confer about everything, all that loss of personal freedom. It's a high price to pay, is it worth it? You've not made full use of it in the past because you've always felt too insecure.

Communal life must be pretty ideal. Getting your security from the group, being selfish with your best friends, releasing your lust in whichever direction you wish (and as many directions as you wish too.)

and the community being the family too. Why do all the communes seem to be alternative, it's just not the way I want to live. I need society - it works.

It's funny when you think how random it is who you marry, and how much of an impact who you marry has on you. There's hundreds of thousands of blokes who have the right sort of interests, personalities and bums. But there's only a fraction of them that you synchronize becoming available with, and who happens to meet you in the 'correct' circumstances, and you get far enough together to justify arranging a date. The first bloke you meet under these criterion and is at the same stage of life as you is almost certainly the one you marry.

Me and Richard, we need each other. He's been crazy about me ever since college. I know he should be 'growing up' and coming to terms with it all, and I know that he found someone else but she's obviously not fulfilling him, and I'm sure he's been leaving the door at least slightly ajar for me. He really only started going out with her because he thought that there must have been something he was missing, why didn't he find almost the entirety of the female population attractive? It seemed as though everyone else did. Well he's got his experience now, he's done the crap job with no prospects and little pay. 'This time, this time I want it to count,' so he told me. It's obvious he'd spent a lot of time thinking about it since we met the other day. He told me that you can fuck anything up and put it down to experience indefinitely. This was to be the last time he turns his back on a problem, this time it's forever.

God knows I need love. Every time I go to a country house, or to the theatre, or a lecture, I don't concentrate on all the wonderful things around me, I just think 'Why am I doing this alone?' Everyone shares those things, a bunch of mates, a family, but worst of all: couples. Not couples that have their arms around each other and kiss all the time - they could be anywhere, they just want to be with each other. No, what really brings tears to my eyes are the couples that go out and fully enjoy what they have gone to see. They are so at ease with (and without) their partners that they just take it for granted.

Richard adores me so much that he'd never hurt me, that's very comforting. Right now I feel I've been so cut up I don't want any of that mutual crap. I want to be loved.

Some would look upon it as the worst possible reason for getting married, but it's better than some - probably most other reasons.

Ah, it's not as bad as I make out. The memory of him (us) when we first met is wonderful. There must still be a fair amount of mutual attraction.

It was under really bizarre circumstances that last night was arranged. I felt so much pressure about men and that, I couldn't go out with anyone I didn't totally believe that our relationship had the potential to develop indefinitely. I just hated the idea, it was all so pointless. I couldn't go out with any bloke I really fancied, I just couldn't get physical to the state of snogging, the first of the set of truly sexual acts. To bring sex into it would have been to force me to think, where I only wanted to be loved and hugged and loose everything else a relationship provides. So I turned off my dateline. That must seem to absolutely everyone the most paradoxical thing to do: for someone who needs to be loved to cut off the only source she is likely to find it when you consider her resounding negative body language, but it made sense to me. In the end I remembered Richard and called him up.

It sounds really bizarre, but I could feel my baby during that emotional well. Physically and mentally he was there in my stomach, being fed and protected by me and growing slowly. Gradually taking all I can give him, completely dependant on me. It was something so wonderful in a miserable time in my life. I was only like that for about six weeks and then I had my period and the illusion was shattered and I fell to pieces again. God knows what I was like. I mean there was no father or anything, it was all just a figment of my imagination, but all I felt was real.

Richard's not my idea of the ideal man, maybe it's better that I smash the illusion that there is such a thing. Anyone you initially think's ideal will have some floor or other, that's the fun part: the little things that are 'wrong' with them, that none the less are them. These are the things that you love about your long term partners.

Am I going to love the way that he completely misreads situations? Maybe so, I mean it gets embarrassing when he says and does things that are inappropriate, but when he oversteps the mark in his naive fashion it often bears unlikely fruit - usually it's the start of a conversation with a stranger, sometimes he asks the wrong person to do something for him and surprisingly often he eventually gets what he wants. There again, unsurprisingly often he sees a slightly dark side of man. Still, it's a damn sight more interesting than being right all the time.

It'd be nice to start off with someone you think is ideal, and have that initial craziness gradually dwindle as you find out their faults. Why is that craziness so short? It's such a wonderful feeling. Even saying I'm going to marry and enjoy being married to Richard, I'm still going to grab any opportunity to get that rush when you see 'that man'. Your heart pounding, adrenalin, going red when you speak to him and speaking complete crap. Oh I look forward to that day, I know that nothing concrete will come from it, I'll stay with Richard, but it'll be a couple of months of fun when it happens.

Any really successful relationship is free from any financial or geographic pressure, both parties must have a similar outlook on life even if they have opposing views, and of course: love, sex and lust. I suppose I, like countless scores of others will have to accept life with all but one of these: accept second best. Richard is great: he's intelligent, easy to talk to, likes my kinds of music, going out and getting pissed. What an ideal boyfriend he'd be. So why is it that I don't fancy him? Why doesn't his presence make me want to rip select items of clothing from him and get straight down to it? The thought almost repels me. I could go for it but it would be unfair on him and me. I could maybe last a couple of years, but then I'd've had enough. If we'd started a family, things could get bad. What avenues would I have left four years and a kid on? It'd really mess things up.

No, no. I'm not going to give up right at the start of this relationship. I've rejected every other prospect of a life companion because odd things weren't right. This time I'm going to go with it, I'm going to face the problems and work with them. It's not that I'm not going to be able to love him, I'm sure I will. Maybe I'm mistaking misunderstanding of love for lack of it. He is security, but that doesn't explain why he makes me happy.

I know some day, exactly the right man for me will come along, but what am I expected to do until then? Should I remain a virgin like in the dark ages? I need love and companionship now, not in an unspecified length of time. Will I be deceiving Richard? Will I act like Paul, Richard, Jez and Gary when the better but harder option comes along? I need to be loved right now.

K/O-a 4            Police

Miranda is sat at her desk working. A letter from James forces an NMI.

James: You've just got a letter from James.

Miranda (pushing the button to print up the letter): Ace.

Dear Miranda,

I remember one of my mates on his twentyfirst birthday. Throughout his teenage years he had obviously told himself not to worry about the fact that he'd not yet lost his virginity, since statistically almost everyone had had it by the time they were twenty one. He would just bide his time. On his twentyfirst he was noticeably disturbed by something (was I the only one who worked out what?) Anyway he made a tit of himself trying to screw seemingly anyone. About six months later he had a girlfriend. Rather than doing 'the usual' he claimed celibacy for religious reasons (I think his mother was involved with some ancient church order.) He had set himself an unachievable target, and then changed the ground rules to suit the outcome.

I too have recently found myself in a situation where I have been set an unachievable goal. Rather than change the ground rules and fit the outcome posthumously to the target, I've kept the ground rules the same, but changed the target.

As she continues reading it her excited happy face goes off. Her eyes bulge out. The face of disbelief.

She's almost motionless for the duration of the letter. Stumped.

Miranda: Are any of the interview rooms free?

James prints up a couple of room names.

Miranda: Book me the broom cupboard for the next hour. Clear this screen.

She gets up. Cut to her in a small room with a comparatively large screen.

Miranda: James? Can you get me Sarah Black at the Cambridge Police station.

Frame.

Sarah: Hello Miranda. How's tricks?

Miranda: OK. OK. Listen, we've got a little bit of a problem here. We're going to have to work out what the best way of handling it is. Unfortunately I can't really tell you what it is yet, but it is something that'd have to involve you in your professional role. If anything does happen it'll be almost five years

before you'll have to do anything so giving me a couple of weeks hopefully shouldn't be a problem. I'll show you my report before we release it anyway. All I want is some hyperthetical information on procedure.

Sarah: Slow down Miranda, five years?

Miranda: It's a bit of an odd case, but I'm not about to compromise your position. I'll give you the complete suss in a couple of weeks whatever, but there honestly is nothing anyone can do for five years.

Sarah: Most intriguing, well police procedure isn't confidential anyway. What do you want to know?

Miranda: What's likely to happen to someone who's probably slightly mad and came into the station and confessed to working against his employer, compromising a very large project and all those who are involved in it, perhaps putting their lives in jepordy.

Sarah: Obviously since they've come to us there's no question of high security, restricting their freedom in one of the special villages would probably be reasonable, just so we know where they are really. A carer, like me, would be put in charge of them right from the outset and would manage their progress and basically be their representative within the policing system.

Miranda: OK.

Sarah: Putting a 'very large' project in jepardy and other employees. We'd have to find out as much as poss about the crime and what can be done to reverse it. This could require alot of time with the carer and with specialists in the area.

Miranda: That's OK there's not much that can be done there.

Sarah: Sounds serious. You sure we shouldn't know.

Miranda: It's not that bad. What then?

Sarah: Then they'll just be councilled, educated etc. at their own rate under instruction of the carer. Until they're ready to actively contribute to society. Sometimes takes a month, sometimes they never get better and spend the rest of their life, if you can call it that, inside. We've got to provide the best life both for them, and society in general.

Miranda: What's average for someone who's slightly mad.

Sarah: Several years, ten plus often. The problem is that there isn't any reason to appeal to, and you find yourself going around in circles.

Miranda: Ah, yeah. How did you become a carer then?

Sarah: Well, there's a three year training course. As long as you get onto it alright and do well at it, then you should get a client straight away.

Miranda: What qualifications do you need?

Sarah (pause): You're almost over qualified. I'd put a good word in for you too.

Miranda (stumbling verbally): I er, it's not ...

Sarah (interrupting): It's alright, I'm trained remember. We could really do with more like you, think about it seriously.

Miranda: OK, thanks. Thanks alot.

Sarah: No trouble. Do call me in a couple of weeks though, I'm trusting you here.

Miranda: Yeah thanks, I appreciate it. Speak to you soon. I won't let you down.

Sarah: I know.

Together: Bye.

Miranda stays sat alone thinking: What d'you reckon? Do I really care about journalism that much? Do I really need to be famous? Other people can do all that. Not everyone can be in the Police. To care for people directly. If you were famous you wouldn't be able to do it well anyway. Would James be better off with someone he didn't know? (Pause) Lots of people are carers for just one person, full time for their husbands and mothers. I could just be a little like that.

You've always admired people who've sat down and made hard decisions to or not to completely change their life. It's your turn now. Take the rest of the day off and just stay on a bus, see where it takes you, and think.

L/P 2                      Zero speed

Dream. All based around an empty Newcy Brown bottle with a pink carnation in it. Make it as disjointed as you like, with whatever else you like in it. But keep either returning to the bottle and flower (pub



name?) or make it central to the dream. Make it as long/short and as meaningful/otherwise as you like, you've got a free hand.

James is awoken by a pleasant sounding alarm. He comes round sat in a loungey sort of area. It's very clean and tidy. He looks up at the screen in front of him.

Puter (writes): Progen will be travelling at zero mph in five minutes.

James thinks: Well, zero relative speed eh? For the first time in almost three years, for each second that passes, exactly one second passes on Earth too. I'm half way there, I'm now heading home. Mind you, I'm the furthest away from Earth that I'll ever be. Everyone I know and love are so remote. Miranda's reply to my letter'll be hurtling somewhere through the sky to me now. I wonder how she's taken it. She might be married with three kids by now for all I know! She might have felt relieved that you went. That's right James, try and convince yourself that you didn't really make that heartless and stupid decision. Oh get real James, do you really think she can't cope perfectly well without you, you arrogant git. Whatever, it's still a good exclusive for her, should up her already high standing in the journalistic community. A meteorite might have struck Earth and rendered the human race extinct. Miranda might have died in a freak accident.

Maybe now's an apt time for you to ask yourself the same question. Half the way home, a third of your four and a half year solo journey complete: how have you taken it James? Keeping yourself occupied?

Well, there's quite a lot to do, you know growing and making food. I was so worried at the start that the food wouldn't grow that I made far too much. I've learnt alot about agriculture since then. I've got a much smaller surplus under control now. Still get up early to try and stop becoming an idle bum, and/or going mad. I really got into art and biology. They're two subjects that never really appealed much when I was younger, but now there's just so much interesting stuff to learn about them. Like, you know all those songs I used to listen to. Most of them are really saying something. I don't know how it used to pass over me cos it seems so obvious now. I just used to like the sound of the music and the sound of the voices. What a pleb. I was going to learn French too. That's something that's seriously lacking from my knowledge, but I've sort of lost interest in all that at the moment. It all seems a bit naff and common place. Maybe it's just a phase, maybe I ODed on it. There was one day a couple of months ago when everything seemed wank and I couldn't be bothered about anything. But that was just a day, and this has been going on for nearly a week. First sign of madness?

I keep asking myself continually if I'm going mad. It's almost like I'm obsessive about it, and looking for madness is itself the first signs of it. I try to stop looking for it and to try and act naturally, but you just can't, you keep on checking.

James is playing with a peice of paper throughtout his thoughts. He eventually gets a pen and writes 'Chair' on it. He folds and tears the paper, and places the word on the arm of the chair he's sitting in.

James thinks: There, (laughs out loud) I can't be mad. (Chuckle.) I can still see and act on the multileveled wit of labeling the chair. I could make an instellation out of this place. Ace! That'll keep me busy and stop me going mad. Yeah, and I'll grow some carnations too.

K/O-b 1            End of David's night out

David and a couple of friends are in a bus. They're all in their late teens/early twenties like.

David: I think we're slowing down for me now. OK then. Who's giving the sermon d'you know?

David's friend 1: Rev. Parsons from Haslingfield.

David's friend 2: Oh, God. He really goes on doesn't he.

All three of them get up together and David gives both of them big hugs.

David: Yeah, he does doesn't he. Ugh, see ya tommorrow.

David's friend 2: Ugh (simultainously natch.) Have a good one.

David's friend 1: Ugh

David: Ugh, see ya tommorrow.

David's friend 2: Yeah, stay fresh.

David walks to the door and it opens for him. He steps out onto the wide pavement and starts to walk up a road perpendicular to the way the bus is travelling. The door closes behind him and then starts accelerating away (the bus like not the door - natch.) As it maglevs past the end of David's road he turns round and waves to his mates.

Follow David walking up his road for a fair way (you don't need to waste too many frames but you could do if you like, like.) Maybe make him make a v poor attempt at singing along to some fictitious sounds.

He walks a reasonable distance, say 100 yardsesque before he passes a dark walkway on the left (Oh no, something's going to happen.) He turns to the door at the bottom of a small group of flats and talks to a screen.

The door opens and he walks up some stairs to the first floor, and along the corridor past a couple of doors.  
David: Jesus Christ the Lord: there's a street light not working down the road, tell them would you. Oh, and catch the door eh?

The door clicks and David uses the handle to push the door open. Finish with a frame with the door open at about 60 degrees to the frame. Put an eye in the darkness at about, well at about eye level behind the door at the hinge, not so as you'd notice, not if you weren't looking for it.

K/O-b 2            Break in

This geezer's dressed in warm old dirty clothes. He's just walking slowly down a residential road looking dead dodgie, checking for lights and windows left open. You could zoom in on a window that's ajar (what a poor, poor joke), but with lights on behind the curtain, maybe even shadows. Anyroad up, there's a little path off the side of the street which is pretty dark. Which, after checking to see if anyone's around, he darts into. The path leads through to the next parallel road, but about halfway between the two an even darker path to the left runs along with accesses to the back doors of the houses on both roads. Natch our geezer is rubbing his hands at this opportunity and sets off looking at the backs of all these houses. A room on the 1st floor of a 3 story block of flats has got a small bathroom window open a fair but reachable distance away from a small balcony which has a 3' brick barbeque just under it. Oh yeah and there's no one in below this flat. Unsurprisingly Geezer walks through the archway made out of bushes that is the flats' access to the back passage. You know like when they make penguins out of the bushes, the arch is sort of like that. Geezer gets a good hand hold onto the bottom of the balcony from the top of the barberque (bless it.) The balcony has got 3 horizontal wooden rungs up the edge of it, which the boy manages to pull himself up with his hands. His feet then follow. A frame to look around. The open window is about 1'6"x8", hinges at the top and is above another fixed window that's about twice the height of the small one. Geezer, with one foot and one hand on the balcony, facing the wall can just reach the frame around the top of the fixed window with his hand, leaving the other leg dangling freely. He lets loose his grip on the balcony and swings down on the one hand. The other hand joins it shortly and he pulls his feet up onto the ledge. One hand is then free to sort the catch out, open the window, and enter head first. Have a final frame with his legs waving about trying to get in.

K/O -b 3            Miranda meets Fred

Miranda is sat down at a table in a police station. The table is full (people squeezing in?) and they're all talking and drinking tea etc. The rest of them are all wearing uniform, but Miranda is dressed normally (nothing too outrageous) as is the person sat next to her who stays behind later. A PC comes through one of the doors and walks up to the table and they all seem to pay some attention to him, but background conversation carries on.

PC: Ah, you must be Miranda. I'm Bill.

Miranda: Hello Bill.

Bill: Hi, I suppose you know more about what's going down tonight than I do. They given you the suss?

Miranda: Yeah.

PC: We told her a load of rubbish. She won't have a clue what's going on when something happens!

Bill (smerking): How much training do you have to do these days?

Miranda: Oh I started about three years ago. But we've had loads of practice. I'm really looking forward to it.

Bill: Good. Don't get too excited though, it can be days before anyone needs help. You might get something tonight, but don't expect to. Mind you, our last new social officer got one in the first couple of hours.

Miranda: Yeah, they were telling me.

<Bing bong bing bong> or some such sound effect coming from a screen on the table or wall or something.

Half of them start to stand up and get their coats.

Bill: Well that's quite quick. It's just a warning that the phone has rung, but most of them need some action.

Miranda (in the throws of putting her coat on): Yeah.

<OK Assault at 76 Waterloo Road, White Male about 20>

Bill: Good luck.

Miranda: Cheers.

Girl sat next to her: Good luck.

Miranda: Thanks. See ya.

Some of the PCs troop out into about four cars. Miranda gets into one with two others. They are all talking to the screens and looking around.

PC1: OK, we're heading straight there down the IDR.

The screen has a map of the area, which he zooms in by touching the screen. The four cars are marked on the maps, and a row of the officers' faces (including Miranda) participating appear along the bottoms of the screens.

PC2: How long ago did it happen max?

Screen: 5 minutes max.

PC2: Give me a circle with a mile and a half radius. OK Miranda? Ready?

Miranda has been staring at her screen looking at details about the location and nature of the incident.

Miranda: Ready.

PC2: Good luck.

Change to a home scene with a family sat around the tele watching 'Kinkie Queenie.'

The same actor as played Richard before dressed however you like: If you ask me you're just a fat git.

Then Miranda appears on the screen.

Miranda: Sorry to interrupt you, this is the police. There has been an assault on a man in his first story flat at 76 Waterloo Road. The attacker was a man aged about twenty who looks as if he was disturbed whilst breaking in. He gained access and probably left from the back of the flats. Do not approach this man, but a quick look out of your window would be appreciated. Thanks.

All members of the household spring to life some look out the back and we follow some kid to the front window. (S)he pulls the curtain wide open and already several curtains are drawn on the other side of the road with various people looking out of their windows. Then loads more curtains open and a dark figure (our man) darts down the path seeing all the lights flashing on as all and sundry want to get a look at some real action - something that is a tad lacking in this society (it works too bloody well!) The light from our window lights up the garden in front of us, but next door's garden is dark. The boy wonder makes a dead impressive dive over the wall into the unlit garden and under a bushy tree with its trunk just inside the garden, but hanging over the path. Our little kid being slightly bright acts dead cool.

Kid: Mum. Don't come over and look, just get the police on the dog and tell them that he's hiding in the Gizzard's front garden.

Back to Miranda in the car.

PC2: Well done, that's the hardest bit. The rest is all plain sailing from here.

One of the people on the row of faces starts talking.

Tom: Reports coming in of someone running down Elgar Road.

PC1: Right everyone converge.

Tom: Someone checkout the front garden of 41 Alpine Street.

One of the faces : We're closest, ETA 30 seconds.

PC1: You're half a minute ahead of the rest of us. Try and force him towards Southampton Street. Two of us are coming that way.

Couple of frames of the map with cars, sightings, and 41 Alpine St. marked. Two faces leave the row of faces on everyone's screens when the car reaches Alpine St.. A couple of frames of maps (each PC has a transmitter on him.) People at windows. Excitement and anticipation on Miranda's face. Her car suddenly comes to a halt. (NB. all previously travelling vehicles are now stopped at the side of the roads.) They all get out of the car and run about 5 houses worth before the target house. The other car is parked about 2 doors the other side and another car stops very shortly behind Miranda's. Miranda allows the 2 PC's behind to pass her. Miranda is the seventh officer through the gate of the house. It is

taking four of them to control our man on the floor and one of the others has stepped back and is holding his arm, he was one of the first to get there and has been injured.

The other PC (not involved or injured) to Miranda: I'd wait until we've got him in the van.

Miranda: OK.

A PC: We've been given info that suggests you've just assaulted someone and we're going to take you to the police station to speak to you. Look, we don't want to hurt you, but you're coming with us whether you walk there or the four of us each grab a limb and drag you down. Our man stops struggling for a second, turns and faces the officer, stares at him for a frame, and then gobs at him right on the cheek.

A PC (leaving his cheek): Come on then. Lets get him into the van. (Which has just arrived.)

The trip to the van involves kicking in the bollocks and spitting. Draw it out as you like.

The man is sat down in the van flanked by PCs with another one opposite and Miranda next to him. The van heads off back to the Station.

Miranda: Hello, I'm Miranda, I'm going to be your social officer. Basically what that means is that you'll see me almost every day. I'm on your side.

Our man just stares straight at her spitefully.

Miranda: We're going down to the station now. You don't have to say anything if you don't want to, but if you don't then you can't get anything you specifically want. We will try to accommodate you as far as we can. After all we have just dragged you forcibly out of freedom. It's the least we can do isn't it. (Said with a smile trying to lighten the occasion.) If you need any medication, or if you're addicted to any drugs then you'd better tell us so we can get you some.

He stares contemptibly for a couple of frames and then spits at her. She just closes her eyes before it hits one of them.

Miranda (Wiping her eye): You can do that as often as you want, but you can't get rid of me. I'm going to help you even if we're both eighty by the time you accept it.

Two more frames of staring with the whole scene ending with a greenie.

Miranda is sat in a fairly bare looking room. It has a toilet, shower, sink and a mirror, toothbrush etc. A bed with a 'quite nice actually' duvet, and a couple of screens around the place. One next to the bed and one fixed to the desk (oh and a seat too.) Miranda is sat at the end of the bed away from the door. The man is brought in with two PCs.

Miranda: Hello.

Nothing.: Take a seat.

He stays standing just moves away from the pigs further into the room.

Miranda: Just a quick word about the room before bed. Well, these two don't get to go to bed, but we do (smiling into the face of contempt.) Right, This is quite a nice room really, there's not much here and it's certainly not home, but it'll do for a couple of days. Thing is, if you trash the joint, obviously we're not going to do it all up for you for tomorrow night. If you deliberately damage it then you'll be taken out and put into an almost completely bare room. If your trying to upset me then trashing the room would be a good way because I really hate to see people living in those conditions. Now I know your pretty gutted being here, but the food's good and I'll try to get your stay here to be as short as poss. OK, the screens haven't got the normal preveledges, but you can still get them to do almost anything all at our cost. Just push one of those buttons and it'll give you instructions from there. You will be monitored, people will be watching you all night. I'm sorry about that but I can't swing privacy for you quite yet. But that'll be one of the first things I'll try to get done for you.

Right then. Any Questions?

He turns away.

Miranda: I thought not. Right, try and get some sleep if you can. I'll come in and see you at say ten? I think we both deserve a bit of a lie in don't we. Oh, and if you want anything just tell the screen or shout out, the people watching you will sort it for you, food, drinks, games, softer pillows. See you then.

Blank face.

K/O-b 4            Start of counselling

Miranda is sat in a small interview room. When he is brought in by a bloke in uniform.

Miranda: Hello.

He looks at her and sits down. The bloke sits down behind him.

Miranda: Have you told anyone your name yet?

From looking away from her he slowly turns and looks straight at her and then away again.

PC: No, you haven't said anything really have you.

Miranda: OK. Well I can't call you 'Him' and 'You' so I'll call you Fred. When you've had enough of Fred then just tell me your real name and we'll sort it. Anyway, I quite like the name Fred.

Right then, I'd best start by explaining why we've locked you up, and what we intend doing. Last night a young man was killed by a hit on the head. Other parts of the police have good reason to believe that you had something to do with it. From our society's point of view, we can't have someone going around hurting and even killing fellow members of society. Quite irrespective of whether you killed this bloke, we're going to keep you here under force until such time as we believe that we can return you to become an alternative, or introduce you to our society with minimal risk of you harming yourself or anyone else. Now there will be a look into the killing along with all the red tape associated with it, but only when I think you're ready for it.

How long will it all take? How long will it be before we let you free? Well that really depends, some people try to deceive us and make out they've made lots of progress by just agreeing with us all the time so they can get out quickly. That is really quite easy to spot and although we have been fooled on a few notable occasions, it generally adds six months to a year onto your time here. On the whole alternatives probably like yourself spend anything from one to three years with us, but if you've made no progress after three years then you've got to stay here until you have, however long that takes. Before you're completely released though you'll be spending an increasing amount of time outside on the run up to release. Generally getting back into everything gradually.

Right then, I'm Miranda and I'll be one of the most important people for you during your time here. I'll see you most days. I'm the person that ultimately gets you released. Jim behind you is a nice guy, although I'd often rather he weren't here, because it's much harder for us to have a decent conversation with someone else around. But he's really here for my safety. I'm sure you can understand that a lot of people who find themselves in your situation with their freedom taken from them are very upset, and often attack their carer (me), but he should go before too long. Anything that is said within these walls will go no further. Anything you tell me is strictly confidential, you can tell me you've slaughtered the royal family and I'll tell no one, Jim likewise. Jim has no contact with anyone on the case - I'm your only representative and I'll only mention things you want mentioned.

Now we've got a vast amount of facilities here for you to be taught absolutely any vocation you want, play sport etc. etc. It may surprise you to know that 83% of the people that come here, once they've got over the initial shock, consider this to be the turning point of their lives. It is the perfect place to get a good education, and believe it or not, some of it's even fun. If only everyone had these opportunities... What we're going to do is to help you address the problems you have so that you can go out and live with everyone else in the world without any risk of hurting them.

Did you understand all that?

I see you used your screen last night. We don't monitor exactly what you ask it, but some little bits of info give us a good idea of how you're getting on.

Fred: You just go out and take people straight off the street and say 'I'm going to bang you up for five years and make me the same as all of you (pointing at the two of them). Why do you think that everyone should fit in, just the way you want them to. You all just make me want to ram my fingers down the back of my throat. So superior with your hairdressers and pretend wood fires. I takes two of you to even have a chat with me, that's civilized is it?

Miranda: I don't want you to fit into a mould, I just want to be sure you won't injure yourself or anyone else.

Fred: Well thanks for the concern, you must feel really big 'helping' poor little alternatives out. You're all just so sad all walking through life and 'not injuring yourselves.' So what if I don't change eh? You keep me in until my dying day. I'll bet you'll be dead proud then. I kept that horrible man off our streets. Just think of all those people he'd of injured.

Miranda thinking whilst Fred's talking: Nice move Miranda, are you trying to start a fight or council someone? Calm down. He's not an ungrateful git, he just needs help.

Miranda: Do you like being an alternative?

Fred: You're the bloody alternative, I'm normal. But there's no way you'd ever understand that.

Miranda: How do we stop you doing what you'd like to do?

Fred: WHAT! Walking down the street being bundled into a van and in clink for five of my best years?

Can I swap you for someone with a bit up top?

Miranda: No, I'm sorry you're going to have to put up with me I'm afraid.

Fred: Great!

Miranda: What would you rather be doing now then.

Fred: Getting off my face with Dog and Git, and then going out on the rampage. Trashing your house. Get you back for this.

Miranda: Tell me about Dog and Git then.

Fred stares at Miranda slowly shaking his head

K/O-b 5            Fred opens up

Miranda is walking down a corridor at the prison on her way to see Fred. The rep for society sees her walking past her room and dashes out.

Rep: Miranda!

Miranda turns around.

Miranda: Hiya, how's tricks?

Rep: Oh pretty good, you know. We've not had a disagreement with you boys for ages, it's excellent.

Miranda: Yeah, you're right there. If you don't watch it you'll be out of a job soon!

Rep: Oh, yeah? Why don't you suggest a release for Fred then? Should stir up my cronies.

Miranda: I'd love to, but I don't think he's really up to it yet. Could be two or three years.

Rep: Yeah? Can you go to court with him yet?

Miranda: No, not yet. He still hasn't started talking again yet. He's going to crack really soon though.

Yesterday he came so close after about 40 minutes. He really wanted to speak. We spent 20 minutes of desperate sympathy for each other. It was really exhilarating.

Rep: It must be impossible to suddenly start speaking after 40 minutes of not speaking.

Miranda: Well that's what it is, they often resign themselves to speaking right from the start of the next one, psych themselves up for it. So hopefully today or tomorrow.

Rep: Great.

Miranda: I'm not going to push him though. We shouldn't have any trouble at court. I don't think there's any doubt that he did it with all the forensic stuff. It'll be much better for him to get that behind him.

Then everything'll all be settled and he can start getting some real security.

Rep: Yeah.

Miranda: Anyway, I must get off and see him. I'll come and see you in the next couple of days even if he doesn't crack.

Rep: OK. Cheers.

Miranda: See ya then.

Rep: See ya.

Rep's door closes and Miranda walks along the corridor for a way, then turns and knocks on one of the doors. She is let in by Jim. Fred is sat with his back to her

Miranda: Hello Fred.

Fred looks at her and slowly nods his head at her.

Miranda thinks: My God, he's acknowledged me. Come on make this one the biggie.

Miranda: Hello Jim.

Jim: Alright Miranda.

Miranda (to Fred): Sorry I'm a little late, someone wanted to chat. Still it's (looking at her watch) only a couple of minutes isn't it.

Miranda: I'm sorry that Jim's still here Fred. I want us to be left alone as soon as possible, but they claim that there's no evidence that I'm not endangered by you. They're after some real evidence that you're getting on well.

Miranda thinks: That's a good enough face saver to get him speaking just to loose Jim. Smart move M.

Fred thinks: Go on, now. You'll have to sit through an hour of hell if you don't talk now.

Frame pause.

Fred: What do we talk about?  
Miranda thinks: Get in!  
Miranda: Well anything you want to really. Are we treating you OK? Is there anything you want?  
Fred: No. Not really.  
Miranda: Food OK?  
Fred: Yeah, it's not that bad.  
Miranda: Great. OK. Why do you think we're keeping you here?  
Fred sits there blank for a frame or so. Then shrugs his shoulders: Dunno.  
Miranda: Really? I've told you myself our excuse for keeping you here.  
Fred: Cos I hit that bloke.  
Miranda: Well, you know he died. Did you mean to kill him?  
Fred: No.  
Miranda: Why were you in there Fred?  
Fred: Looking for food or money. Anything I can live off.  
Miranda thinks: What are you doing M? Get a grip what if he's got children? They could be dying right now.  
Miranda: Do you support anyone? We can get them looked after if you like, bring them in to see you. We won't do anything you don't want.  
Fred: No. I live alone now.  
Miranda: What about family? Is there anyone we should tell? Your parents?  
Fred: No chance. They're not bothered about me.  
Miranda: Why do you think that? I'm sure it's not true.  
Fred: What do you know? They're bone idle pissheads. They don't do anything. I had to go out and support them before I left.  
Miranda: Were they alternatives then?  
Fred: Oh yeah they were alternatives. They were forced into it. They couldn't be bothered to earn any money, and just cadged off society. They both got forcefully made into alternatives by society on the same day (that's how they met), you lot of tossers eventually worked out you could do better without them. Apparently they 'gave nothing to any aspect of society' they were always proud of that. I got pissed off with having to work three times as hard as them just so they could piss about all day so I left. Haven't seen them since.

K/O-b 5            Attack

Miranda is sat down in the counselling room. Fred is brought in by Jim.  
Miranda: Hello Fred.  
Fred: Right there?  
Miranda: Thanks Jim.  
Jim: That's alright Miranda. See you in about an hour then.  
Miranda: Right oh then.  
The door is closed.  
Miranda: What d'you do yesterday then?  
Fred: Same as always. Had a game of squash with one of the others I suppose.  
Miranda: Yeah? You getting on alright with everyone else then?  
Fred: Well, alright I suppose. They seem to spend all their time talking about women and watching porn.  
Miranda: And you don't like that?  
Fred: I like porn, but I'm not really bothered about the slags in them.  
Miranda: They're all slags then are they?  
Fred: Well what else are they then eh? Showing themselves off to everyone. Yeah, their all slags.  
Miranda: I suppose you think they'll sleep with anyone too don't you: a photo session is just an excuse for sex.  
Fred: Probably, they'd go for anyone. Have you never seen any?  
Miranda: Oh yes, I watch quite a lot of porn.  
Fred: Uh?

Miranda: Yeah, I enjoy it. It's erotic. There's nothing wrong with that. It's perfectly normal. It's more abnormal to suppress all your sexual feelings. Do you not think that women in porn might take pride in their bodies and quite like the idea of people finding them attractive?

Fred looks a bit blank.

Miranda: Alright then, I'll turn it around. If someone came up to you and said 'You've got a great body.

Would you like 200 Dracs to be an extra in a film as a bloke lounging around a swimming pool?'

Frame of silence.

Fred: Well that's different.

Miranda: How?

Fred: Well, I'm not taking my clothes off for starters.

Miranda: Yeah, but you're still enjoying displaying your body off and having women acknowledge that you're a bit of a looker. It's still sexual even though you've got clothes on. Surely you'd agree that it'd be a great feeling, why stop there?

Fred then stands up looking straight at Miranda. He is between Miranda and the door.

Fred: Come on then.

Miranda thinks: Oh God.

Miranda: Now that's not what I meant Fred and you know it. (Fred walks slowly towards her with an excited smile). Just sit down and carry on the conversation. You're doing really well. FRED!

(Agressively.)

Fred: I know when I'm doing really well thanks.

Miranda (now shying backwards and being defensive): Please don't Fred.

Miranda now has Fred stooping over her. She makes a violent kick at his bollocks and screams: HEL...

But Fred quickly lunges at her face with his hands. One of them grabs her behind the head, and the other muffles her mouth and almost totally stops her from getting any air through her nose too. His thigh gets the full force of Miranda's kick. Fred pulls Miranda out of her seat by her head, and forces her to the ground with him. His body is very close to hers and her kicking and thumping seem not to affect him. On the floor he rams her head into the wall which gives her a big blow. Fred now has one hand both holding her head firmly to the floor, and muffling her; his other hand is now free. He uses this hand to pull her skirt right up. They struggle for some time as he tries to force open her legs and keep them open with the weight of his body. Then he rips her knickers off and throws them to the corner. Tears are now streaming out of Miranda's eyes and her thumping seems almost half hearted now. Fred fumbles with his flies and pants for a short while before he pulls his body up hers. As he is much bigger than her, his arm is straight and holding almost all of his weight onto Miranda's face. He is using the other hand to balance himself by the side of her.

It is all extremely painful physically to Miranda. The act is very fast and furious, and Miranda has given up all her attempts to physically overcome the inevitable. Also she is finding it extremely hard to breathe.

This is a very ugly scene and should be treated as such. Even if you're producing a porn version of it, this scene must not be erotic. Throughout the whole book, the only part that I don't want to be reinterpreted is the violence of this scene into anything other than violence.

Draw it out as you feel appropriate. After the climax, Fred stays there almost motionless for two frames.

Then he draws backwards and gets up watching out for any physical attack from Miranda that might come.

But she's way beyond that. Fred sorts his trousers out and leaves the room closing the door behind him without saying a word, or looking back at Miranda curled up in a ball quietly crying with her knickers strewn in the corner.

Wait several frames.

Miranda (quietly from the floor): James. James (Slightly louder). James (Still only a bit louder).

James: Yes Miranda.

Miranda: Get me a taxi for one home, to meet me out the front straight away. And cancel everything I'm doing.

James: For how long?

Miranda (helplessly): James, just do it please.

James: A car will be outside in thirty seconds for 70 pence if that's OK.

Miranda: OK get him to wait if I'm not there by then.

She slowly sits up and wipes her eyes as best she can.

Miranda: Oh God.



Then she gets up and goes to the desk and gets a tissue from her handbag and deals with the mess, leaving a piece of tissue up there. She pulls her skirt down, gets her knickers from the corner and wraps up the wet tissues in them. Then she bursts out crying again. Spend a few frames at first crying, then trying to stop and wiping her eyes. She grasps the knickers so that they can't be seen in her hands, and leaves the room leaving the door open.

K/O-b 7II            Shower

The taxi pulls up outside Miranda's terrace town house. Miranda gets out and straight to her door mumbling at the screen for longer than normal. It has trouble recognising her voice which is very soft and helpless. It starts to distress her.

Miranda: James. James. Oh just this once (bursts into tears). James!

It eventually lets her in. She closes the door and then all the curtains downstairs. Then she goes upstairs and does the same. Then she goes into the bathroom, locks the door and throws her knickers into the corner. Then she takes all of her clothes off adding them one by one to the pile. Then she has a shower with the shower water mixing with the tears that are still flooding. The whole of her body is cleaned so hard it looks like she's trying to take the whole outer layer of skin off.

Next, she's got completely changed (wet hair) and opens the drawer below the cutlery draw that's full of odd and ends. There's a box of matches there. She goes to the sink that's now full of all her clothes earrings, watch and shoes, and torches them all. Spend many frames with the fire at different stages with her watching it in a trance, watching the flames and standing back. The flames get up as high as her head, when it's at its peak. When the last flame dies leaving only embers Miranda bursts again into tears. She turns the tap on using a cloth to shield her from the heat of it and the embers fizz and steam. Every effort is made to get all the ashes down the sink, but no attempt is made to get the soot off the tiles behind the sink.

Later she's lying on her bed with red eyes but not crying. Spend some time just looking at her from different angles showing that she's thinking alot. Then out of the blue.

Miranda: James.

James: Yes Miranda.

Miranda: No visuals. Can you find one of these independent councillors for me. Don't give them any info about me.

James: OK. This is centre 33.

Frame wait.

Andrew (with a soft, caring voice): Hello, I'm Andrew.

Miranda: Hello.

Andrew: Hello. We're on an encoded line, and everything you say to me is absolutely confidential. So basically you can say what you like and it'll go no further than this phone line. We're completely independant of the police force. OK? I just like to make that clear before we get going.

Miranda: That's OK.

Andrew: What do you want to talk about then?

Miranda: I've just been raped. I was happy with the way that everything was like before and I don't want anything to change. I don't want him to have that much influence on my life. It's my life and I should choose what I do, the choice should be mine. I want nothing to change.

K/O-b 8            Miranda meets Fred outside

Miranda is in the prison garden dressed down as she is for the whole of the rest of the book. She has shades on and although her hair isn't in a complete state, it isn't exactly well groomed.

Fred is let out into the garden by Jim who then stands on the outside of the door watching for the rest of the time Fred's out.

Spend a couple of frames with Fred approaching Miranda, and then a couple with them standing side by side in silence. Miranda then starts walking and Fred walks alongside her. They continue looking forward and making no eye contact, just walking side by side looking into space.

Miranda: Why.

Miranda: Why did you do it? I just don't understand.

Miranda: Did you want to get rid of me?

Miranda: Well it doesn't work like that. I told you the first time I met you that I'm going to see you every day you're here, and I'm going to.

Miranda: I know you're used to just leaving problems as soon as they arise, but you can't do that any more.

Miranda: I'm going to stay with you whatever happens.

Spend three frames with them just walking and with Fred's eyes getting redder and redder. He starts snivelling, which gradually turns into fully blown bawling.

Miranda thinks: Got you you bastard.

Miranda stops walking.

Miranda: That's enough punishment from me, you can do the rest yourself. You've got a lot of thinking to do. I'll see you tomorrow.

Miranda then walks off towards Jim.

Fred: Miranda

She turns around and they look at each other for the first time.

Fred: I want to join society.

Miranda: OK. I'll get Jim to leave you out here until you want to go back in.

She then walks off and Fred watches her.

There's now a large gap in time. Make everyone look a bit different, maybe even start a new page.

K/O-b 9 PE

Fred and Miranda are outside in the cold and wet with Geoff, another inmate, and his councillor. All four of them start off just running between two points to start off. There's lots of avoiding hitting each other as they turn around 'n that. Giggling all round.

Miranda takes Fred off it after a bit

Miranda: Right. You're going to have to trust me for this part. We're going to walk around for a bit, and then walk straight along that walkway (3' wide with a fifteen foot drop either side). You can't open your eyes. Well you can, but you'll lose the whole point of the exercise. OK?

Fred: Yeah, yeah, you want to lead me across that without me actually knowing that it's there. You want me to trust you.

Miranda: Who's been looking at the curriculum then eh?

Fred: Well, you know!

Miranda starts off by spinning him around a couple of times. Then drags him around no place in particular, then eventually over the 'cravass path'.

Miranda: Well done. That wasn't too bad now was it?

Fred looks a little blank, but Miranda's enthusiasm makes him feel a tad proud. (A pretty bloody small tad mind!)

Miranda: Right. Now it's your turn to lead, but you're going to lead Geoff.

Fred: Oh right. Should be a laugh.

Oh, by the way Fred and Geoff obviously get on fairly well. Geoff comes up to Fred with his councillor dragging behind.

Geoff: have you heard what they're setting me up for?

Fred: Me too mate, me too.

Geoff: Oh yeah. Except you know where you're going though.

Fred: Sounds like a laugh to me like. He, He.

Geoff: Ha, Ha. Well it would do. Come on then, let's impress them by getting on with it without them.

Fred: Should earn us some Brownie points eh?

Fred then leads Geoff around and about for some time making him change directions frequently. Then he indulges in a straight bit just like the walkway but just over normal flat grass. Suddenly Fred violently pulls his hands from Geoff's grip and leaves him stood there with his eyes closed for a second. Then Fred barges him from the side forcing him over onto the floor. Geoff of course opens his eyes immediately whilst letting out a loud scream as he thinks he's about to drop fifteen foot.

Fred then stands there looking at Geoff on the deck miles away from the walkway, in a state of shock, whilst Fred's wetting himself. Miranda runs up to them.

Miranda: What the fucking hell did you do that for? Huh? What was this exercise supposed to do eh?

Fred shrugs his shoulders ashamedly.

Miranda: You told me. Trust. Trust! Can you think of any experience that is more likely to stop someone trusting anyone than having someone put the shits up you in a fucking trust exercise? Well?

Fred: Girlfriend tapping off with someone else?

Miranda: Oh very quick. You just don't understand do you? Why don't you use your screen a bit more.

Miranda calms down a tad. Frame of her composing herself.

Miranda: I'm sorry, I know how important it is to have a laugh with your mates. Often that's the real enjoyment of having close mates when you can take the mick out of each other. But a relationship built only of taking the piss is very shallow. When one of you needs the other, that's when you really become good mates. Would you open your eyes if he took you for a spin now?

Fred shrugs.

Miranda: Oh get real. You'd be opening your eyes all over the shop. You'd expect the same treatment that you gave him. If you'd taken him around carefully you'd expect him to do likewise, and he would. You're bright enough to see psychology at work. Some day you're going to have to face the facts that you know are true already. You've got to do it some day, and you should start thinking about it tonight. Today should be a landmark for you, you're going to have to start acting responsibly.

Fred: Sorry. Just a second.

Fred walks up to Geoff who's now talking with his councillor.

Fred: Excuse me. Look Geoff, I'm sorry about that. I should have been a bit more sensible. Do you want to lead me now?

Geoff: Why don't you make ammense for Miranda, show her.

Fred now leads Geoff off. Miranda looks over to Geoff's councillor with a smile.

K/O-b 10            Religion

Miranda is sat alone in the counselling room.

Miranda thinks: Do you really want to go through with this religion session? I mean, you're sort of playing God a bit yourself here aren't you? You rejected religion yourself, by introducing it to Fred do you not think that that's a tad patronizing to both him and the rest of humanity. You arrogant git. No, I've have the chance to make a decision, and he deserves the right to the same decision with the arguments put forward articulately rather than shouted at him by some freako in sandals with a megaphone in town on Saturday. If he became truly religious it would give him purpose in life and would incidentally make my job a hell of a lot easier.

<Knock, knock>

Miranda thinks: It's cool.

Miranda: Come in! Hi Fred.

Fred: Wotcha.

Miranda: How you been?

Fred (chuckling a bit): same as usual you know. Still playing Death Lock most the time.

Miranda: Good. It's bangin in't it?

Fred: Yeah.

Miranda: Right then. This might shock you, but bear with me for the minute. I want you to meet with Mrs Patel, David's mother. No, no it's alright, she's not going to knife you or anything like that. She's had it quite bad herself, you know. Anyway her counselling has come to the stage where she would gain a lot from meeting you. But it works both ways, she gets to find out about the circumstances that caused her

son's death, and you find out what an impact your actions have had on other people. Meetings like this are always very tense to start off with, but you'll agree afterwards that it's of significant benefit to you.

Fred: I don't think I will.

Miranda: Come on Fred, I know you better than that, you're just afraid of meeting her, who wouldn't be? I think you'll even enjoy it.

Fred: Do I get much say in the matter?

Miranda: Of course, if you stick your foot down and say you won't go, us forcing you to won't do either of you any good at all. You will go though won't you?

Fred: I'd best hadn't I.

Miranda: Good. Right then. Mrs Patel has one particular interest, the church. She basically orientates her life around it. So I thought we should have a session on religion in general. Out with the classical start to conversations handbook and it says: "What happens to us when we die?"

Fred: Is that a question? We float up into the clouds and look down on everyone and make things happen.

Miranda: Like what?

Fred: Like making people meet, or kick a ball or anything.

Miranda: I see. Is that if you're good or if your bad?

Fred (pause for thought): If you're good. If your bad you have to work for all the people making the decisions.

Miranda: Ah. Do you know if anyone else thinks the same as you?

Fred: Don't know. Haven't really thought about it.

Miranda: How do you know that that's what happens?

Fred: Err. I don't know, I just know.

Miranda: Have you ever heard of God.

Fred: Oh yeah.

Miranda: Well Mrs Patel believes that he makes all those sort of decisions you mentioned. I'll tell you a little of the history about it. People used to think that God was an all powerful huge ghost sort of a bloke with a big white beard. He created the universe, and passed an ultimate judgement on you when you die as to whether you've behaved good or badly. There were various interpretations of what God wanted us humans to do and how to act. These were generally one person's interpretation followed by huge numbers of people. The original person's interpretations were invariably very radical at the time and also very reasonable social guidelines for people to follow. It was the followers' misinterpretations of these guidelines that caused all those problems that we hear about these days. Anyway God's 'message' was always kept reasonably up to date and in line with current thinking.

The religion that Mrs Patel believes in is now very widespread and by far the largest religion. In fact their beliefs aren't too different from what you believe in. Basically, when you die your soul goes up to heaven. Your soul is what makes you you and stops you just being a lump of meat. Yeah?

Fred: Uh? Like why I 'feel' alive, but I can't 'feel' that you're alive, you could just be a machine.

Miranda: Exactly. Excellent.

Fred: God yeah, excellent.

Miranda: I suppose heaven's just like your cloud but it sort of exists everywhere - in these shoes, Mars, a glass of water, everything. It's part of the fabric of space. God is just the culmination of all these souls, not a particular person, but everyone. People sometimes say that God is the son of man, what is left when man has gone. All those little decisions you were talking about, God makes all of them - it's called divine reduction of wave packets. That's really interesting physics, you can look into that yourself when you've got a spare minute.

Fred: How did the universe start then? No one was alive then, so no one could have died to get cracking on God.

Miranda: I'm afraid that's covered too. You thought you had me there didn't you. Right oh, again this ace physics: you've heard of black holes?

Fred: Yup, they're so dense that not even light can come out of them.

Miranda: God, you know your stuff don't you. Well it's so dense that our normal laws of space and time don't work in them. It's completely unknown and there's no way anyone can ever know. There was a similar circumstance at the start of the Universe.

The big bang is completely analogous. So what is supposed to happen is that all the matter (energy) that is collected by a black hole over an infinitely long amount of time is released over different dimensions in

an infinitely short space of time. So that the whole of this universe is infact a black hole within another universe, and all the black holes in this universe contain a whole universe each of them.

Fred: They can't have started yet though because they don't know what's going to fall into the black hole.

Miranda: Nice try, but these universes use different dimensions, not x, y, z and ct. It's very technical but in their time scale, the whole duration of our universe effectively occurs instantaneously at the big bang.

Now I don't know what current theological thinking is about the start of the first universe, I think it's a bit of a grey area.

Fred (let down a bit): Oh.

Miranda: I'll tell you what though, screens are there for things like this. Lets call it a day now and you nick off and find out what you can and tell me what you find out later.

Fred (standing up): Ace.

Miranda: OK. Bye then.

Fred: Bye Miranda!

K/O-b 11 Meeting Mrs Patel

Fairly large interview room. Miranda and Fred enter.

Miranda: Hello Jane, this is Fred.

Jane: Hello Fred, this is Mrs Patel.

Fred: Err, Hello Mrs Patel.

Mrs Patel (offering her hand to Fred): Hello.

Fred looks at Miranda. Miranda nods back. Fred shakes Mrs Patel's hand and they give eachother a wet fish handshake.

Fred: Hello.

Jane: Lets sit down.

Fred watches at Miranda as she sits and then does likewise.

Jane: Right then Fred, why do you think that we've arranged this meeting?

Fred (looking towards Miranda for support): Well Miranda says that it will help both of us.

Jane: In what way?

Fred: It helps me by seeing the trouble I've caused.

Jane: and Mrs Patel?

Fred: Well, when something really big happens - like what did, it disturbs the victims for really long after it. Because they loose all their trust of other people.

Jane nods encouragingly

Fred: Meeting ..., well meeting me and seeing I'm quite nice really helps Mrs Patel start trusting everyone.

Jane: Well done. Miranda's taught you well hasn't she. Do you think that all this theory is going to work?

Fred (looking a bit uneasy): Not really.

Jane: Well we'll see. Mrs Patel, do you think it's going to work?

Mrs Patel: It might do, we'll see.

Jane: What was your life like before and after David's death?

Mrs Patel (to Miranda): Well my husband died when David was about seven, so he never really knew him as anything other than an infant. David used to love going to church, his friends came from there. The best time of the week was the walk to church. We used to leave ages to get there and just used to chat all the way there. Even when he moved up the road we still went off to church together. He had tea with me most weekday evenings. It was great.

When he died. When he died, the church seemed really empty. All our friends there, but not David. I got invited round people's alot to start off with. I still do I suppose, but they all only really invite me round because they feel sorry for me.

Jane: OK, Fred? Can you do the same, tell us what your life was like before and after the incident.

Fred: I was an alternative. On my own just travelling around the country. Getting food where I could 'n that. I didn't really know what you lot were all about, but it was always easy to get food off you.

Miranda: Stealing.

Fred: Yeah, stealing what I could really.

Jane: Did you go around with a group of friends:

Fred: Not really, I used to go around with my parents when I was young. They hated society, and everyone really I think. But then I left them when they really pissed me off once, and I haven't seen them since.

Jane: How long ago was that?

Fred: About five years now, but I've been here a lot of that.

Jane: And what about now?

Fred: Well I really hated it to start off with, everyone was really horrible. Except Miranda. Then I upset Miranda. (Frame pause.) I thought I'd sort of make up for it by cooperating a bit, but I suppose I wanted to really.

Jane: and you're getting on well now?

Fred: Oh yeah, I think we are (smiling at Miranda), hopefully making progress.

Miranda: He's quite good really.

Jane: Good. OK Mrs Patel, It's a real trama meeting for the first time. You must have had some idea of what Fred'd be like. Is he what you expected?

Mrs Patel: Not really. I didn't expect him to talk so well.

Fred: Well my parents both came from posh families.

Mrs Patel: You'll have to forgive me, but I expected you to be aggressive, but you seem quite friendly. I thought you'd ...

K/O-b 12            Miranda and Fred on Gensim

Miranda has taken Fred for a holiday on Gensim. Fred is sat in his room watching a bit of tele with the door open. Miranda appears at the door.

Miranda: Knock, knock.

Fred (dead pleased to see her): Hiya!

Miranda (walking in): What you watching?

Fred: Oh just some sad love film rubbish. There isn't really much on.

Miranda: What about Kinky Queenie? That's on now isn't it?

Fred: I don't like that much really. It's not as funny as people make out.

Miranda: Oh. I quite like it.

Fred: Do you want to watch it?

Miranda: Nah, I've come round for a long overdue chat really.

Fred: Oh dear, that sounds ominous.

Miranda: Well. How d'you think you're getting on.

Fred: Pretty good. I've made lots of progress, still a long way to go though.

Miranda: You reckon? You're going to have to face the world sometime you know.

Fred: Not yet though, I don't know how everything works. What if I go and attack someone again.

Miranda: Now come on, that's the last thing you're going to do. You're my best student so far.

They both let out a laugh.

Miranda: You understand exactly what stages you've got to go through, I'm not supposed to be here for you forever. Now you're going to start spending more time on your own, working with Georgeous (his screen) and some of your friends. I'll still be here seeing you through, but just not quite as often.

Fred: Have you got me a job aswell then?

Miranda: Well yes actually. It's one of the one's you wanted: looking after a park.

Fred: Oh right!

Miranda: Now you're not going to be going very regularly when you start, you know that. But if you get on well, you'll be surprised how soon it'll be before you get out for good

Frame silence.

Fred: You missing James?

Miranda: I'm afraid I am. It's the first time I've been away from him for a night, let alone a whole weekend since he was born.

Frame pause.

Miranda: What about Mrs Patel.

Fred: She's ace isn't she?

Miranda: Are you sure it's the best thing to do visiting her socially?

Fred: It seems odd I know, we just get on really well. You should be happy.

Miranda: Oh I am. I'm just worried that you might upset each other after a while. There'll be nothing to stop you meeting her when you're out, so we might as well encourage it where we can keep an eye on the situation. You sure you want to do it? You don't have to just because she asked you round for tea you know.

Fred: No I really want to.

Miranda: OK. Good. I just wanted to be sure.

Frame pause.

Miranda: I made sure you got this room you know.

Fred looks at her quite puzzled actually.

Miranda: The first boyfriend I moved in with left me to go on Progen. He had this room for real.

Pause.

Miranda: I'm taking a couple of weeks off with Richard and James in a month. When I come back, I'm going to go out with the real police and get another client. I'm going to have to see a lot of them, they're going to need much more attention than you do now. I'm not going to abandon you or anything, but you're going to have to do a lot more on your own. You'll only really see me when I take you out to work to start off with, and once every fortnight. This weekend in Gensim is a sort of reward for the both of us for getting this far.

You've been a good student you know, very rewarding from my point of view. All that fuss you made to start off with. I knew you'd work out OK in the end when you didn't trash the room on the first night. Showed me that you were reasonable.

Come on it's not that bad. It's not as if you'll never see me again.

Right then, I'll just have a quick wash before tea, I'll be back down in a couple of minutes. Come on then give me a hug before I go.

They both stand up and embrace.

Fred (very quietly through his snuffling): Sorry.

L/P 3

James's Dream

James and Miranda are down the night club having a boogie to some really hard sounds, it's not the sort of place they frequent. Everyone else is wearing the same sort of clothes all complementing each other, and they're almost all male. James and Miranda have made an effort to wear that sort of clothes from their normal (using the term loosely) stuff, but it doesn't come off that well. Neither of them look too out of place, but together, going as a couple, they really stick out. Miranda is wearing a clingy top with thin shoulder straps, and the music is booming.

James: Isn't this ace?

Miranda: Er. I can't really dance like this as well as you can.

James: Coarse you can, you look ace.

Miranda: And everyone's looking at us.

James: Well that's their problem. Adds to the whole ambience though eh?

Miranda: Hmmm.

Frame more boogying.

Miranda: We couldn't leave now could we? I'm really not enjoying it.

James: What?

Miranda: The acoustics in here are fantastic.

Both laugh a bit.

Then you see them walking out. They have to squeeze down this corridor with blokes on either side sipping from bottles, looking at them. James goes down first.

Hard Nut: Do you not like it here then darlin'?

Tense steps past them as they both ignore them. As Miranda passes Hard Nut he pulls the strap down off her shoulder and her breast falls out. She runs out past James crying. He follows. All the blokes are cackling.

Hard Nut: Cute ass. Both of them!

They run through the door to get out of the disco. Seeings as this is a dream, the other side of the door is the police station. Make it clear that the police station and the disco are connected by looking back from the police station at Miranda just through the door, James just approaching the door, and the Greebos at the end of the long corridor laughing to themselves.

Next scene is back in the disco with the booming sounds in the foreground. The boyz from the corridor are all lined up the other side of a walkway around the edge of the dancefloor. James enters with a handful of police following him. He goes along the walkway, stops opposite Hard Nut then turns and looks straight at him. Hard Nut looks first at the police to the side of him, then bricking himself, straight at James. James's face breaks out into an excited revengeful beam as he points at Hard Nut, looks at the police, and then waves his arm from side to side across the whole group implecating them.

This is when the boom, boom becomes the boom, boom of his alarm. The room is in immaculate condition (clean) and everything conceivable has a label stuck to it (mirror, hairbrush, notepaper, shaver, shaver lead, shaver foil, label, etc. etc. to ridiculous lengths) including two jars labeled: Zits and Nails. For the whole of this section absolutely everything on Exmod II is labeled. There is a table with a pink carnation in water on it. Puter flashes up the time (14:23.)

James is fully clothed and sitting almost straight upwards in an armchair with his head slightly angled. He awakens slowly.

James: OK.

He stands up and walks to the lift and gets out on one of the agriculture floors which has a particularly high roof. When walking about he keeps close to walls and speeds across openings.

James approaches a work desk and pushes the button on it. He then speeds over to the column where the sectors of plants come down. Looking up, at first the very top layer spins around slowly for a while. Then there is no apparent movement but gradually you can see the tray come down from right at the top. Spend an inordinate amount of time showing this. The tray then swings over James's head and James walks underneath it until he reaches the workbench. The tray slowly lowers down onto the bench. On the tray, perfectly arranged are x carnations (I can't be bothered to find out how long it takes them to grow, sort that one yourself) at every stage of development from a simple finger mark in the soil where a seed has been planted, right up until the flower in full bloom, and then on to decay with many faded dried petals and very dark stems. They are all just one flower on a stem, and they are in a row of two. One of these rows stops at the plant most fully in bloom, while the other one carries on into decay.

First, James picks up a tool and manually fertilizes the most developed flower (labeled 'Beauty') of the truncated row to the equivalent one on the full row (or one a couple of days either way from it depending on the carnations' sex life. You can find that out at the same time). Use such an angle that shows James has a stonking hard on at this point. Picking up two seeds from an Atlantic one of the dying plants, he plants them in the next logical free places in the tray at the end of the rows that spiral inwards on the tray, next to the seeds planted yesterday.

The label is taken from the plant with it and placed on the plant next to it on the same row a day younger than it. Then he cuts the first plant and pushes the button again that takes the tray back up to the top level and around. He takes the carnation up with him to his room where it is then placed with the one already in his room.

Starting with his top half James removes all his clothes and arranges them neatly on the bed. When he takes his trousers off a large ugly scab is revealed on the upper half of his left shin. There is a pubic hair streached out across the scab set into it and held at both ends with a length of thin tape. The stonking quorndon that is bearily being held in by the skids is released soon enough. He takes the tape off the ends of the hair in the scab. The electric shaver then comes out and he shaves the stubble from both his legs, really dwelling on this and enjoying it. No direct touching of the mammoth member, but allowing his arm to stroke against it as the shaver goes up and down his thighs. From one of James's draws he gets out a black suspender belt, fishnet stockings, skimpy G-string and high heels putting them on one by one in that order. Then he gets a clip on dangly earring made up of white beads getting wider as it gets lower, and puts it on his left earlobe.

He picks up the older carnation, a small container lined with a furry soft material, and the tape he used for keeping the pube in the scab on his leg. Very surefootedly, he walks up several stories into the auditorum. A few seats from a couple of rows have been removed from the centre leaving enough area and a step for James to sit down. He does so, removes his G-string, and stares towards the screen which is displaying the time for about ten seconds before it turns three O'clock. The screen lightens up and



starts showing a video of beautiful women in one piece clinging bodysuits. Each successive woman has a small area missing from the garment revealing a tantalizing piece of their body. No nipples or pubic hair, just soft smooth curves of skin from the edge of breasts, the top of the bottom, the bottom of the belly to one side etc., all very erotic.

James gets the lined container and places it lightly over his hardness. Gently and slowly he spins it back and forth only a few degrees. Several women go by until he throws his head back and closes his eyes in ecstasy for a couple of frames.

James (opening his eyes and shouting aggressively): Not Miranda. No, not Miranda.

Settling down, he carries on gradually getting higher and higher, holding his breath for long periods and snorting periodically. Fractionally before climax he stops, pulling the container from his knob. A couple of spasmodic convulsions are suppressed and he stops the ejaculation. He undoes the left suspender pulling the stocking down loose at his ankle. Grabbing both sides of the hair and pulling, the scab is removed and blood starts to form there almost immediately. Holding the scab by one side of the hair it is placed in his mouth, chewed and swallowed.

A new pube is plucked from his thatch and placed in the new blood and taped at both sides. By this time his cock has gone more (although not completely) flacid. The masturbation is restarted and he returns his attention to the video. This time however, it is taken fractionally further before he removes the lid, picking up the carnation in his left hand and spunking into it in 3 or 4 giant pulsating spurts.

After relaxing for a moment but with his body still having the odd convulsion, he runs his finger up the far side of his cock to get any spunk that remains in the end of it onto the carnation, which is already dripping onto his left hand.

James then goes into spasms once again. Although it might appear to be from his orgasm at first, this time he's crying. His eyes turn red and tears roll down his face. A couple of frames of tears.

James: Take the hair off. Go on. You wouldn't have to do any of this if you just pulled that hair off now. Go on do it. Why not? It's not that much of a journey into the unknown is it? Yes I suppose it is you mad bastard. Just think what it'd be like if you pulled that hair off now. You could take all those fucking labels off everywhere, grow and eat properly, make a video of your life here for when you get back for TV, learn. All you've got to lose is some false security that you've built for yourself.

KC1                    M's letter to J about her and Dill

She writes it in her own hand.

Dear James,

Men. I just don't know where to start. Although we were really close, I thought I should go and see Dill, seeings as he saw a very different side of you than I did. So that I can prepare properly for your return, we went out for a drink together to discuss you and got on really well. Well, too well really. I know I haven't enjoyed someone's company so much since you left, way back then when I was young and innocent.

We stood outside the pub in the dark, waiting for our respective buses, but it just wasn't to be. I don't know, we just both understood what was going to happen, it was just so right. All night we'd been laughing and joking together: getting closer and closer. When we got outside, we just folded into eachother perfectly. It was just such fun. Both buses were waved on, and we spent hours just walking and snogging like teenagers. I suppose you know that he's been married for some time too. But neither of us were bothered. That night was to be just for us. Just two people finding eachother, the same as it always has been and always will be.

I'll never forget the night, not if I never see him again, not if I forget everything else I've ever done. We kissed and laughed and hugged. Nothing more physical. It was just so beautiful.

It was the early hours of St. Valentine's day when we eventually fell to sleep in eachother's arms in an hotel room. It's just such a cliché/ that it happened then, but it's true. Just as true as on Feb. 14th six years ago when I spent the whole night crying on and off about life (meaning men) just not working out for me, and wondering how it could ever go right.

That's all the romance in my heart now, but I'm left with the mess that's in my head. By the morning we'd already moved a foot apart from eachother, finally admitting to ourselves that there are other considerations. Other people in the world apart from ourselves. Richard. Dear Richard. Would I have

made it through to today without taking my life without him? I know you can't tell, but I wouldn't be surprised if I had ended it. He gave me a source of love and a purpose in life: a home. Even a destination, in James, for my emotion. Am I going to throw that away for one night? I've only seen Dill that once so far, but the will is there to see him again, to find out more and discover him. I've forced R to give up his life for me once before, it'd just be too traumatic to do so again. Everything was just so settled and certain. I could never find it so tranquil again. It's just not worth it. Even if it did work out, surely it would eventually reach the same level as with R - loose the real kick. Anyway, now I must face R for the first time since then, so I'll have to say goodbye so I can try to calm down before I see him.

Much love,

Signed Miranda in round girlie writing.

Miranda then takes the sheets of paper and folds them up together. She then gets up and unlocks a little chest from a far shelf with a metal key from her pocket. Inside it is almost full up with other letters addressed to James on the same paper and looking very similar. She adds this one to the front without looking at any of the other letters. The chest is locked and returned before she sits down on the corner of the bed with her eyes closed and breathes out a long sigh of exhaustion and relief.

K/O-c 3

Museum

Dill and Miranda are sat in a museum's workshop. A room with a small group of people, a leader and various artifacts. The leader is just finishing her demonstration of how to make an axe head out of two lumps of flint.

Leader: Right then, you might as well get cracking (excuse the pun.) I'll come round and see you all gradually, but come and get me if you can't do anything right at all - you all seem to have got the hang of it so far pretty well. Oh, just a last couple of words - I run a week long stone age holiday where you've got to kill and eat all your own food. That's in the summer. Sometime next month we'll go outside and make some iron age weapons and tools. And a word of warning, don't get too carried away with these axeheads like a bloke did a couple of years back. He got pretty good at it, and sharpened as many bits of flint as he could, including this 3000 year old blade for removing the leather after a kill.

Shock on everyone's faces.

Dill: I lied to Catherine about where I was going tonight. I invented an old mate who required his annual service to talk about the good old days and agree to meet more often. I feel bloody terrible about it. I don't think I've ever deceived anyone before. I can't have done, I'd remember this feeling again.

Miranda: I just came right out and told Richard. "I'm going off the the Fitzwilliam with Dill. Don't know when I'll be back." I'm a real bastard to him, he doesn't deserve it. It's just the sort of thing he loves doing too.

Dill: Ah, at least that concern doesn't arise with me. Catherine just can't understand the attraction of anything intellectual or wacky and certainly not a combination of the two. It all just passes her by. She's C2 incarnate, you know: sit her in front of a soap opera 24 hours a day and she'd be completely content. The moment a documentary or natural history or OU program comes on the tele's turned straight over. You can imagine our house can't you. It's filled with expensive unwanted presents, just like all the rest of her family's houses and their class for that matter. I hate the waste of it all, it just repulses me. Why does a present need to be expensive to be appreciated? I'd much rather have less money spent on me and throw all the presents straight away, rather than having to keep them because they're pricy. Maybe it's just me but my favorite presents are the cheap and thoughtful ones rather than expensive and thoughtful ones. They're just attracting attention to themselves by flaunting all their shod: look at me, aren't I important and selfless, look everyone.

Miranda: What I hate about presents is that you buy everyone else the presents you want and you get the one's they want. You'd have thought in this day and age that we could have got round it.

Dill: Some people do you know. Every time they see something they want, they tell 'Wotcha Git' (his screen) and then everyone asks Wotcha Git what they want and put their names down for things.

Miranda: God that's ace. I'll have to start doing that.

Dill: Put down some really expensive stuff just incase some of Catherine's family are around.

Miranda: Tee hee.

Dill: Ho Ho. God the rubbish I have to abide. I mean, she never tires of the same naff jokes over and over again, all of them completely planer. Even if there's a fairly sophisticated humourous situation in one of her soaps, she'll laugh alright, but at the wrong joke. She takes the volume of the joke and slices an easy to swallow cross section out of it and laughs at that.

Miranda: How on Earth did you manage to get together in the first place then?

Dill: God knows. No it was when I was young and I suppose I took everything at face value and all that. The only life I knew was totally pragmatic, black and white. I had no idea what I really wanted in life. I thought I did, but all those decisions were based on little or no experience.

So I thought that what one wants in a woman is beauty. Catherine certainly is beautiful, exactly the same kind of beauty I liked at that stage. I can't believe I didn't understand the beauty in almost every other girl that must have suurounded me at that age. It's the same tunnel vision that sheilded me from the knowledge that would let me know what I want in life.

Nothing ever actually went wrong between us, but then nothing went particularly right either. We never had the impotus of something going wrong to do anything about it. So we stayed on the escalator, got married and had kids. It's much easier to get married that to turn around and confront the issue. And I suppose I always thought I'd never find anyone else who even touched on her beauty. I don't know what's happeded to that, she still looks the same (or fairly similar), I just seem to have bored of her. Sounds terrible doesn't it, she's just so flat and boring that she's not attractive to me any more.

Miranda: I don't find Richard attractive at all - never really have done. I used to feel there was something wrong with me. I never really fancied anyone, but I was dead lonely too. I just got to a certain point and gave myself a real shake and had to ask myself: why don't you fancy him? He's perfect for you. you'll fancy him in no time if you give him a chance, and besides you've got to get yourself into the game. Being at home with him's just like going to work: it's what I do, it's lost all it's excitement. Not like this, not making a flint arrowhead. Both of us are escaping out to be together. Oh, I didn't mean to embarress you.

Dill (gone red): That's OK. I don't know how women can say things like that. I know that that's what we're doing, but you're not supposed to say it. Come on, we're English remember.

Miranda: Sorry. I'll try and do better in future.

Miranda: I think most of Richard's problems stem from his lack of confidence and that in turn's from his mother. You know he still can't meet her at her house without turning into a moody teenager slamming doors, running out of the house, shouting, crying. I just can't begin to understand what she's done to him. All his family're the same. She's pretty selfish on the whole and does and says stupid things. His whole life seems to be just stumbling about. I suppose he leaves himself open to let things happen to him.

Frame silence.

Dill: Miranda? We are going to carry this on aren't we?

K/O-c 4            Cooking

Dill is round Miranda's and Richard and James have gone away for the night. They're one and a half bottles of sherry down and still going. The final mouthfuls of stodge are being put away. Dill brings his last forkfull toward his mouth as if he's going to take it, then he aborts.

Dill: It's not like me to waste food, but this forkfull's symbolic of the inordinate amount off food we've just shoved down our gullets, when at the same time three hundred years ago people were starving to death. As he puts it back on his plate they both laugh.

Miranda: Why can't you cook a reasonable amount for two?

Dill: That was a reasonable amount for Catherine's family! It's because we must have had one of every species of fruit and vegetable this side of Lympstone clock tower. It all adds up you know.

Miranda: Phew, I'll take these into the kitchen. Sod washing up until tommorrow.

Dill: I suppose we'd best do the honourable thing and down the rest of this sherry.

He fills up his and tops Miranda's up, and walks from the dining room table to the sofa, with the glasses and the tad left in the bottle, and his fourth hand is holding the athletes foot powder he never goes anywhere without.

Miranda (sitting down very close to Dill and accepting her glass): Thanks.

Dill: Down in one!

He throws his head back and forces it down. Miranda holds her glass away and stares at Dill from very close. Dill having finished the glass turns it upside down on his head, lets out a gasp and smiles.

Miranda: Well done son.

She moves towards him to give him a celebratory kiss, which develops naturally into an all out snog the way any drunk couple that aren't repelled from each other would.

Next shot is them entering the bedroom with their outer garments either discarded or seriously untucked and ruffled. They stand at the foot of the bed snogging. Miranda starts to undress herself further. Dill is slow to follow. When she's down to panties and undone bra, she starts on him. Dill remains passive but snogging throughout the disrobing ceremony. She then grabs hold of him and pulls him down onto the bed. A few frames of mutual masturbation and that and in no time she's found a condom and is opening and fitting it. Dill is visibly tense. Miranda now lies back, legs akimbo pulling Dill down on her and directing his knob up her as she does so. They start, but most of the motion is generated by Miranda. Suddenly Dill withdraws, sits up on the side of the bed, and pulls the discarded duvet around him. He stares towards the wall focusing some way before it with tears in his eyes. Miranda gets a near by towel and covers herself up with it and sits next to Dill.

Miranda: Oh sorry Dill. I didn't mean to force you into it.

She wraps her arms around him, but he stays there passively gazing into space.

Dill (quiet and croakily): Is this it? After all the excitement and thrill of the past few months. Have we made it now to the height of our fun together? We've passed all the lower stages of mutual acceptance and we've got all the way up to sex.

I want my heart to keep racing every time I'm just about to meet you, and that numb lump at the front of my chest and the warm glow I get every time we part. I want to keep them forever. Why can't we keep it like that.

Fair pause.

Miranda: Do you want to?

Dill (turning to her now and hugging her): No. It's just ...

They stay hugging for a fair while before Miranda gets the urge to discuss the important factors about their relationship.

Miranda: I can't leave Richard. He loves me too much, it would break his heart. He is so happy and confident and he'd just lose it all. How could I ever justify changing him into a submissive follower. He's a leader now with thoughts and dreams of his own and people follow him. He'd turn into someone who bumbles about for the rest of his life, being manipulated and uncatered for. Getting bum deal after bum deal and not fully realizing how bad things have become, just getting through however inefficient and expensive it is. Not appreciating when something good comes along. Being thrown onto the street, being as bad as being conned out of £200. I can't do that to him. James'll be OK whatever, he's still too young to be traumatized by it. But if I didn't do it now I'd have to wait until he's twenty. What'd we do anyway? Set up home and a family? It'd be exactly the same as we've got now only with more complications. Lets keep it the same. Keep it special.

Pause.

Dill: An old friend of mine, he was just like me in almost every aspect. He used to work at the same place as me, and we spent every lunchtime together. Had circumstances been different, well geographically anyway, we'd probably have become best friends (if he didn't have a girlfriend). One thing he said really stuck in my mind. I wouldn't have said it, which wasn't true for absolutely everything else he ever said. He was explaining how, right from the very first encounter, his relationship with his girlfriend (now wife) was different from all the other relationships he'd ever had. He didn't think constantly of her, he wasn't conscious of their relationship developing (although it did). Everything was so easy and natural. I couldn't comprehend it at all. I was always crazy about whoever I fancied at the time. I looked out for women that made me feel the way he described, but I never fancied any of them. No wonder I didn't go mad over them. I thought he was wrong when I got married to Catherine. When things stopped going well I kicked myself, why hadn't I listened to him.

Well, he was wrong about it in the end wasn't he. I'm absolutely enamoured with you and I don't want that to stop. Ever.

Miranda's messing around on the screen or something when up pops a phone call from Fred.

Miranda: Fred! How are you?

Fred: Great, everything seems to be going right now.

Miranda: Ace. Things alright with Mrs Patel?

Fred: Couldn't be better, it's a great little family we've got. We go off to church together and everything.

Miranda: Great.

Fred: And I've got a girlfriend now you know.

Miranda: Yeah?

Fred: Yeah: Catherine. I go to church with her and she's brilliant.

Miranda: Come on then, give us the suss.

Fred: Well, I met her on the first time I went to church with Mum. David went to school with Catherine, and she's known Mum all her life. We just got on really well and went out to a pub together and everything went ace. I don't think she got on too well with David though, but still, it's funny how things turn out.

Miranda: What's she like then?

Fred: Really beautiful, stunning really. Infact, 'Gorgeous', send her that still of Catherine at Christchurch. Very chic - she really knows how to wear clothes - bit af a stark contrast with me there. Ha.

Miranda: You just dress comfortably though don't you.

Fred: Is that what you call it? Well anyway. Her family are pretty well off. God, the birthday presents they give eachother cost a fortune. She's a pretty high powered businesswoman so she can afford it.

Miranda: How's your job going?

Fred: Really well. Everyone's impressed with my food even though I make it a bit differrently than they expect, but everyone says I've got a good future. Who knows, I might start up my own cafe/ someday.

Miranda: excellent. I'm really pleased for you.

Fred: Yeah, we're both doing well. Loads of Catherine's boss's mates keep offering her astronomical amounts of money to travel the world with them in the hope that some of her good looks rub off on them.

Miranda: I expect sexual favours would be expected for that sort of price.

Fred: They'll be lucky, we take our religion quite seriously you know.

Miranda: So no sex before marriage?

Fred: Nop, but that's not too far away now.

Miranda: Yeah? I don't know, you don't even tell me about her until you're getting married. All abit sudden isn't it?

Fred: Well we've been going out for four months now (it's our aniversary on Tuesday), and we're madly in love. It's going to be great. That's the reason why I rung you really, to invite you to our engagement party Saturday week.

Miranda: Thanks, I'd love to come. I'll get cracking on a babysitter.

Miranda: Ear. Did you know that you're more likely to have a better marriage if you don't have sex before?

Fred: Yeah? I wonder why everyone doesn't do it?

Miranda: I think it says more about the nature of the people who are prepared to abstain, than the act of abstaining itself. I think the arguement goes that if you don't have sex, then it blocks any development in the relationship getting past a certain stage. The relationship stays immature, and blocks any real understanding between you. It can often cause the men problems, because they have no tangible evidence that the woman likes him more than any of her male friends. Women don't seem to suffer so much from this jealousy.

Fred: That's interesting.

Miranda: Some of it may even be true, but I wouldn't put any money on it, generalizations are notoriously flawed.

Fred: Well it's something to think about anyway.

Miranda: Anyway, I look forward to the party, should be fun.

Fred: Where's James?

Miranda: Oh Richard's taken him down the shops.

Fred: Oh right. You can bring Dill or Richard if you like, or just come on your own, whatever.

Miranda: I think I'll come with Richard, he knows you better, he'd enjoy it. Dill's looking forward to James coming home, only a couple of months now.

Fred: How's he coped?

Miranda: James? I really thought he'd be completely immune to it all. Maybe I just wanted him to be. He's not though, I don't think he's barking mad, but he's become seriously reclusive. The lack of any personal contact has left him barely able to make social contact even with me or Dill. I've been writing a lot, but he's been getting literally thousands of letters every day from all around the Earth, and of course he receives them at a much faster rate than they're sent. I've had one very terse and hollow reply. I think, well he was hoping to carry on going out with me. He couldn't have taken the news that I was married too well. Maybe I shouldn't have told him until he got to earth, he might have weathered the trip much better with that hope, I thought it was the right move at the time. He's going to need a lot of work. Mind you I'm used to that aren't I?

Fred: Ha, Ha, well, I wouldn't want you to feel you hadn't earned your pay.

Miranda: Yeah, you can't go round life enjoying yourself! Anyway.

Fred: Right oh, see you not this weekend, next weekend.

Miranda: OK, bye then.

Fred: Bye.

#### K/O-c 5.1      Dill's Journey to Jenni

Start with a view of a fairly standard looking airport, but with one slightly different plane because they use no fossil fuels. Now show Dill boarding a slightly different one of the planes with its destination described as the Spinning Jenni, being greeted at the door by a pair of airhostesses.

Dill: Wotcha git.

Hostess: What a charmer. I can see I'll have to watch you.

Dill: Dah, I'm not that bad.

Hostess: You've got that seat there next to the aisle.

Dill: Wot, don't I even get a window seat. I don't know.

Dill (taking his seat) thinks: Bugger me, she's alright (looking back). What an arse.

Pan up and down her voluptuousness. Dill sits and watches her load everyone on.

Dill thinks: And there's some other tasty bits boarding too.

Have views of him watching the girls come in. Hardly have any blokes and dress them down to divert attention from them. Concentrate on their tits, legs, faces (odd bits of eye contact), and arses. Is there anything I haven't covered? Anyway they all look really sexy in all possible ways. You lot should be good at all that, everything I ever see seems as biased as this.

Dill thinks: Blinkin' flip Dill. Why have you changed so much in the last year? Right up to meeting Miranda you really wouldn't have looked twice at a pair of legs as long and smooth as those. I can't believe that they weren't around then. Was I normal then, being unhappy with just one woman? I could only consider one scenario, that of being in an exactly similar monogamy but with a bird with brains. The thought of shagging everything in sight never occurred to me. How often did someone with breasts as round as those give me a look like that: just a fraction of a second too much eye contact? It must have happened all the time, or maybe it didn't. Maybe since Miranda, I've just exuded confidence and sexuality and all these women pick up on it.

Knowing Miranda has opened my mind, I feel a completely new man. I could give up work now, I could find a new bird if the one I was with gave me the push. What is so different about Miranda and Barbara and these women? None of them are any more attractive than Barbara, no part of them is any better than Miranda. They're just different. But why is it that I could go right now into that toilet and shag that bird in low gear until Spinning Jenni? She's probably the most boring person in the world. It's just pure lust.

God Dill, isn't this the mind of a rapist? No? Well what must be in the mind of a rapist? Surely being consumed by lust is just about it isn't it? Maybe a little piece of mesogeny too, you haven't got that have you? Well what about those frames of mind you get after your lust has been satisfied. You know, when you're watching smut and the curves look a bit stupid: the top of the hips are too high; the arse sticks out too far; breasts are either too high and small or too low and large; nipples too large, long or soft. Even the freshness of a new female face to look at seems no real difference to any previous ones. The whole

physical nature of women becomes uninteresting, and then you lose interest completely. Again it's lust driving whether you want to know women or not. Their lack of confidence, the xxxix (can't read my own writing - insert a suitable word) nature of their behaviour, their loving selfless attitudes with men, and dislike for excess and extremes all become a bit naff and unnecessary. Male company with its fun and piss taking seems so much more natural and the absence of the sexual element present in any male/female relationship relaxes. So anyway, you're male and you've got the mind of every rapist. What is it that makes them or stops us doing it? The sense of what you and they would feel after maybe? If there were absolutely no emotional repercussions I'd bend her over that bog and bloody do it now. But there are, both for me and her. Maybe that's what separates me from a rapist. I couldn't do it to Miranda: essentially make her sexually redundant for me. It's her I love. How can I detach love and sex so readily? I'd love it if Miranda physically turned into a different woman every night I share with her. Maybe even that wouldn't have the thrill of the unknown and naughty. But the fuckee, she's got to have some attachment to me doesn't she? Oh God. That brings you back again to James. What is it that upsets me about James having his knob up Miranda? It's not about him really, I mean he's barking mad now, but Miranda gave herself to him. So you expect her to have remained a virgin until you turned up eh? There, I obviously can't detach sex and love. Have we really evolved so little away from all the other animals in those eight million years that we men must have every woman, and every woman can have only us.

Oh stop it Dill, you know there's no answers. Let's see what's on the box.

Presenter: Every one knows that James is going to return to the Earth after over eight years, and that he himself will not have aged that much. In fact there are many technical issues surrounding his return, and Professor Waffle is here to clarify these issues. Professor Waffle?

Prof: Thank you. Well we'll start off with the fantastic situation where James has only aged five years nine months in the last eight years two months.

To get a basic understanding of the principals behind this we must start by agreeing that the speed of light is constant when measured anywhere in the universe is the same. This means that if we measure it on Earth, it makes no difference if stars and galaxies are moving towards or away from us (fairly reasonable) and vice versa. The value we get is the same in the summer as it is in the winter when the Earth is travelling in the opposite direction around the sun to the tune of 60,000 metres per second. So the speed of light, just as everything else on Progen is exactly the same as on Gensim with its acceleration providing the gravity it needs.

Now we know that Progen is travelling at a great speed away from the Earth, but let's pretend that it is skimming across the Earth's surface rather than being the great distance away that it really is. Say there's a light at the bottom of Progen almost touching the flat surface of Earth. A partical of light leaves the light and travels up the side to the top of Progen, a distance P. In the time it takes to get to the top, Progen has skimmed across the ground a distance D. The speed of light is the same on Progen as it is on Earth. So since the light has covered more distance over the Earth, it must also have taken more time. Conversely, the shorter distance covered by the partical on Progen means it's taken less time. Because Progen is travelling at speed, time is progressing slower. This is why Miranda is now two years, four months older than James is although James was born nearly a month before she was.

Maybe we were too hasty in saying that the speed of light is constant. The situation's like having two similar tanks of water both with something bobbing up and down at the far end and sending waves towards us. One of the tanks is on wheels though and is coming towards us at a speed V. If the waves come towards us at a speed W in the stationary tank, we'd expect the waves in the moving tank to come towards us at  $W + V$ . Which they do with water. However, from our assumption above that the speed of light waves are constant, that would mean that if the waves generated in the moving tank were light not water, they would also travel towards us at W. Either the progress of the waves in the moving tank is slower, or the waves are travelling at the same speed, but time is running slower.

Obviously the hypothesis about the speed of light being constant must be wrong. The only problem with this seemingly obvious statement though is that that is exactly how light seems to behave in every experiment ever done on it.

Now Lover's Limit is the other main peculiarity that the Progen project experienced, and it's not quite as simple to explain as relativity. (In other words I can't work out why it happens, it just pops out of the back of a couple of equations as far as I'm concerned. - Woody) I'll just give an explanation of what the phenominum is rather than why it happens. After take off, Progen accelerates uniformly at a rate of g

exactly equivalent to Earth's gravity (g) to make the journey comfortable for the passengers by giving them some artificial gravity. Now as we've shown, relativity comes into effect when Progen's speed approaches the speed of light, which can never be reached. So, although Progen is accelerating at a rate of g relative to the part of space that it's in at any moment, it's rate of acceleration relative to Earth reduces as it gets closer and closer to the speed of light. It is interesting to note that it never actually stops accelerating relative to Earth, so that although it never actually reaches the speed of light, it is constantly getting a little closer to it.

Assuming for the minute that Progen doesn't turn itself around and start decelerating half way to Nalengua, and that James didn't leave it. Say that Miranda is sending letters to James on Progen. The time after take off that the letter is sent and the time it takes for James to get the letter's received is as follows:

sent (Earth)	received (Earth)	received (Progen - slower)
1 week	1 week 1 hour 42 mins	1 week 1 hour 41 mins
1 month	1 month 1 day 11 hours 58 mins	1 month 1 day 10 hours 52 mins
10 months	4 years 0 months 5 days	2 years 0 months 20 days

A letter sent at Lovers limit ( $t = c/g$ ) 351 and a half days (almost a year) will never get to James, even though the letter is always travelling at the speed of light and Progen is travelling at less than it. Maybe you'll have to get a real expert onto the show to explain why that happens.

The only other outstanding technical issue that needs addressing is how Exmod II is going to land on Spinning Jenni. Spinning Jenni is the Earth's docking port for space vehicles, so that they don't have to have special protection for entering Earth's atmosphere, have special equipment for landing on Earth's surface, and expend so much energy in escaping Earth's gravity. It looks like a giant bike wheel with 30 spokes, 15 of which have massive counter balances that side up and down their length which on these spokes extends slightly further than the 10km radius of the main wheel. It rotates once every 200 seconds. This provides an acceleration at the rim towards the centre equal to the gravity on Earth. Spinning Jenni's axis of revolution is always pointing towards the Earth's centre of gravity, and Spinning Jenni is of course in Earth orbit.

To dock Exmod II onto one of the ports halfway between two of the extended spokes it must synchronize its deceleration so that it reaches a velocity of 300 metres per second (the speed at the circumference of Spinning Jenni) just before it reaches it. It must then rotate by 90 degrees. Exmod II must approach Spinning Jenni tangentially. When they meet, they must be synchronized so that the intended docking site is exactly at the the point of contact. I say point of contact, they don't actually join at that moment, instead Exmod II is slightly towards the outside of the rim. It turns its main accelerator back on and gravity is restored to everyone onboard (James) and other smaller tangential accelerators cause it to start rotating as if it were connected to Spinning Jenni. Slight corrections in the outputs of these accelerators get Exmod II into docking position, where it is grabbed by Spinning Jenni. As the counter balances gradually adjust themselves, the accelerators are turned down until the counter balances completely account for the extra weight at one side of the rim and keep the centre of gravity at the centre of the wheel.

There's a shuttle going up there from Earth even as we speak that will land in this manner except that the docking port is in the roof of the shuttle that resembles a conventional aircraft fairly closely.

### QII 3 James's final approach

Mirada: James, see if you can set up the final call to James as we talk him in.

Dill: You think he'll start responding a bit better now he's a bit closer?

Miranda: Doubt it. He'll only make progress really when there's people around and he can acclimatize himself to human contact. We should be there for him, sort of 'around' rather than forcing ourselves on him and making him participate: that could force him over the edge.

Miranda pushes the connect button. James comes up on the screen.

Miranda: Hello James?

James: Hello.



Miranda: Have you had enough sleep over the last day?

James: Yes.

Miranda: Oh good, cos you've got a pretty busy day ahead. I've got Dill here.

Dill: Wotcha James!

James: Hello.

Miranda: We're both up here on Spinning Jenni. I've got the Top Dog from Spinning Jenni here too. Now he'd feel alot happier if control of Exmod II could be passed to him for this last hour of your approach. He says he's got one or two doubts about the state of part of the navigation equipment. Do you think you could do that, just let control of the final docking be transfered, you'd obviously maintain complete control of the rest of Exmod II.

James very slightly nods his head and a window comes up 'Control Transfered'.

Miranda: That's pretty impressive.

Miranda: Right, I know we've gone over all this with messages, but you've obviously been getting thousands of messages an hour from all over the Earth, I just want to make sure you know exactly what the score is on a couple of fronts. OK?

Right, the Progen body here are definately not going to bring any charges against you, so there's going to be no hassle from them. However you are going to have to go through a rehabilitation process which I'm going to do with you. Should be a laugh. I've had a look into making you an alternative after what you said about it. It's been quite interesting, the IT lot have has a bit of a laugh: they officially killed you off eight years ago, and there's never been a requirement for resurecting anyone before, so they've had to adapt the procedure for someone becoming an alternative, and then coming back. It's been ages since anyone's written any original code for it. It must be the most well structured and documented code ever. They've taken it pretty seriously though, making it general enough for when space travel may be more widespread and there's loads of people at it. They even started getting into a universal currency, but they had to give it up as it was a bit more complecated than they'd anticipated. Anyway, you'll still need to have some records whilst you're going though rehab, then you can loose them all and go alternative if you want.

Right, you'll be staying just round the corner from me. They'll be someone there on call for you 24 hours a day. You've got a bedroom and a bath in a block of other rehab people and various others. I've taken the liberty of moving some of your stuff in there. Me and Anthony did that last weekend. We'll all get down to Earth tomorrow sometime.

Right, there's no real way around this one, you're arrival is a big media story. They're going to want some film of you coming out and everything. I thought the best thing to do would be to get a mate of mine from Contempory to do an 'offical' version and then release that for nothing. That should keep the intrustion down to a minimum. God knows they've hounded us enough recently.

OK we've only got just under an hour now until you dock. It could take a bit longer to sort everthing out before we see you.

James: Miranda?

Miranda: Yes James.

James: Do you think I could have the last hour alone?

Miranda: Er, er, yes. Yes of course, sorry, I'm being selfish. Look, don't forget about the couple of minutes you'll spend in zero gee. Strap up well. OK we'll see you then then, bye.

The screen powers down.

[The following text is said whilst performing the actions detailed below that.]

James: What can I do? I'm mad. I know that. I can't talk to people now. I don't want everyone looking at me and pointing. Miranda's married someone else. I love her. I'm going to be her patient. She's going to practice on me. But we were in love. It's all my fault. If I'd have stayed on Earth I'd never have got depressed in the first place. I'd be surrounded by friends and I'd be the same age as them. Miranda and me'd have two lovely children and I'd work at home and play with them all the time.

Well you're mad and you've got a gammy leg now and back on Earth you'd just be a burden to society, and you've been more than enough of that already. I used to think I was so lucky. I used to think that I really had everything. What happened? I made all the right choices didn't I? I only started to understand life when it was just too late for me.

How could you let that leg get like that? You noticed it. Was it the fascination, or just the habit?

AAAAAAAAAAh, I thought my mind had cleared, but it's so full of stupid suggestions. Can't it clear just for a couple of minutes?

James: I remember when Nanny died, she said I'd have a hard decision to make some day, but I'd make the right choice. Today is Today. Puter, you won't understand, but you're the only thing that fought against me losing my mind over the last four years. Thanks. At least my leg'll stop hurting. One last pull? No. No. Just this once do something properly. Puter, stop them removing g for a couple of minutes - but don't smash into Jenni. Oh, and don't let them in for a couple of hours - wouldn't want anyone to revive me. Tell Miranda I love her, and you too Puter.

[James, now on crutches, gets a large bag from the ag level and fills it with soil. He drags it into the lift, and then out on the main entrance level. He then calmly rips the bag open and piles the soil up, throws the bag on the floor and whacks the soil sideways with his crutch. Then he goes up to the gym, and throws a rope over a high beam. He ties a noose in it and then sets about making it the right height, by bringing the horse over to him and setting it a reasonable way above it before tying the other end somewhere. The book ends with him having struggled up the horse, holding the noose in his hand.