



Scripts.com

The Day the Earth Caught Fire

By Wolf Mankowitz

The time is now 10:41,

19 minutes before countdown.

19 minutes.

- Yes? Yeah.

- Jeannie?

This is Pete. See if you can find someone to take a story for me.

My typewriter's seized up.

- I'll try.

- You all right?

Yeah, so far.

You better come up here, Jeannie.

No sense of being on your own.

Pete, how long before we know...

- Copy desk? Hold, I'm giving you newsroom.

- Yes?

- Look, Kitty, do me a favour.

- Are you ready?

- Who's there?

- Pete Stenning. I can't write.

Now, will you take it for me?

But for what? Who says

there's gonna be an edition?

Just take it.

Okay Go ahead. Nice and slow.

It is exactly 30 minutes since the corrective bombs were detonated.

Within the next few hours,
the world will know

whether this is the end

or another beginning.

The rebirth of man

or his final obituary.

For the last time, man pursued

his brother with a sword,

and so the final fire was kindled.

The Earth that was to live forever

was blasted by a great

wind towards oblivion.

It is strange to think

that barely 90 days ago...

Davis. Yeah?

When did it collapse? Anyone in it?

Try and get a local photographer.

I'll send someone.

Mitchell!

- Yes, Dave?

- More flood trouble.

Ascot Racecourse,

new grandstand collapsed.

About the only thing not underwater in

that area seems to be Windsor Castle.

- Martin's down there. Take a photographer.

- Right.

I think Foreign gets the splash tonight, Dave.

Big earthquake piece from Jakarta.

We got enough splashes

with these floods.

"Exeter marooned. Five to six

feet of water, main Devon roads.

"Marines move in with high troop carriers."

I'll even take earthquakes.

Steve, try and get a call

through to Plymouth.

Tell Denison to give us the

latest Lynmouth position.

"Add flash. Beauty queen riot.

Contestants sue each other."

Yeah, we got some great pictures,

but Jeff says we're a family newspaper.

Down here, Mr Davis.

- Anything new on the test?

- Only the last AP report, sir.

New York announces it was detonated

25 miles from the South Pole.

- Must be the biggest bang yet.

- Not that test. The cricket.

Oh. Sorry, sir. Still no play.

Six inches under...

- Were you getting tea?

- I wasn't, Mr Davis...

- Well, you are now.

- Anything else exciting?

Yeah, four transatlantic jets grounded

with reported navigation trouble.

- What causes navigation trouble?

- Sunspots.

- Sunspots?

- Well, ask a silly question...
Right here, Mr Maguire.
More protest letters, sir.
- No. Take 'em to Features.
- Features said take them to you, sir.
I can't stop the bloody bomb.
It went off 10 days ago!
All right. Put 'em down.
Take those back to
the morgue, will you?
- Sir.
- Yeah?
No, this is Bill Maguire here.
Oh, I'm sorry, Sandy. He's out
of the office at the moment.
Well, yes, even reporters
have to go sometime.
Yes, all right. I'll tell him.
Would you mind telling me something?
I was under the impression that
you wanted a piece on thrombosis.
Well, as I can only do
one thing at a time,
what am I expected to do with
all these protest letters?
Thank you very much
but there's 1,700 of them.
Don't worry about that now. Go down
and see if my car's back, will you?
It's a tan Morris in
the side entrance.
If it is, Mr Stenning's probably in
Harry's Bar. Tell him he's wanted, quick.
- Sir.
- And how's the thrombosis market?
Great.
This'll give the high-paid executive
readers a nice moment of anxiety
at their breakfast tomorrow.
Boy!
Mr Sanderson's asking
for you, Mr Stenning.
So they sent Pip the cabin
boy to bail me out.

- I think he was in a hurry, sir.

- Yes, well, you just tell him I'll be coming up when he sees the bubbles.

I just got to get some clips from the library, sir.

Fine. Make sure my obituary's up-to-date.

But why alter my heading? What is he trying to do, make a job for himself?

Bill, you can't print a feature on thrombosis and call it "You too can be the death of the party."

Aw, we're all getting soft.

That's what we're all getting, soft.

- Hi, Billy boy.

- Good evening.

Well, your car's safely back.

It's a fine vessel and should prove seaworthy for another hundred years or so.

What I don't understand, why bother to come back?

You borrow my car for lunch, why bother to hurry back at 6:30?

- I saw my kid today.

- Oh, yeah?

Yeah. Battersea Pleasure Gardens.

She lets me see him sometime.

It's my legal right, you know.

We spent the afternoon on the ghost train, the only customers in the rain.

- You know, Sandy's been screaming for you.

- He's a nice little kid.

Bright, too. Remembered me after about 10 minutes.

You can throw this lot down, too.

My floor's full.

Well, what's it like to have fan mail?

Biggest experimental bang of all time is 10 days old.

Instead of being proud, the public demands we stop it.

Oh, I don't know.

The best science man in the street
ought to be able pull
off a little job like that.
Make a trick film maybe.
Yeah, you know,
the mushroom goes back into the bomb,
the bomb goes back into the plane,
which flies backwards over the task force
steaming backwards from the Antarctic.
Yeah, you better start climbing
backwards to Sandy's office.
He wouldn't believe
you were in church.
He probably wants me to
take over the Science desk.
Promotion. Stenning rises again.
Don't think you wouldn't be welcome.
- What have we got?
- A flash.
"Spitsbergen reports the largest
earth tremors ever recorded."
Sorry I wasn't around, Sandy.
Okay, I'm used to it.
- You know anything about sunspots?
- Sunspots?
You hear that static?
My favourite tune. But I don't
think it'll make the top 10.
I'm not joking, Pete.
There's usually a lot of sunspot
static this time of year,
and during the last week
it's been heavier than ever.
The TV people are having
trouble with their picture.
And so's the public.
- Do me a 500-worder for the leading page.
- Success!
Wait a minute. Here are a couple
of items about navigation trouble.
- Maybe you can tie them in.
- Yeah, why not?
Hey, great idea.
With all these floods,

what about a Daily Express ark?
Great sales promotion, Sandy.
You know what, Pete? I really think
you're gonna have to try a bit harder.
This paper isn't built
to carry passengers.
All right?
Okay.
Well, Billy boy, they got
me doing your homework.
500 words on sunspots.
Have you seen the figures on
some of these earth tremors?
Is another planet
trying to contact us?
"Are you receiving me?
Are you receiving me?
"You are? Well, get knotted."
Must've been a hell of a big bang
to give these seismograph readings.
Tell me all about sunspots, Daddy.
Sunspots are caused when the rays of the
sun beat down on an unprotected torso,
thus causing a sun
rash similar to acne.
I thought it was clean
living that did that.
Ring up the Meteorological Centre.
See if you can speak to Sir John Kelly.
Maybe he'll give you some quotes.
- If not, you can talk to Pat Holroyd.
- Pat Holroyd, that berk from Picture Post?
Oh, he's a PRO now.
He's gone legitimate.
Well, this calls for
a celebration toast.
Pete, ring the Met Centre.
I'll be back. It's six and a half
minutes past my medicine time.
Get me the Met Centre, please.
- Thanks for holding on, Bill.
- Holding on to what?
My job. This may not be a revelation
to you, but, and I quote,

"The thrill is gone,
Bill, it's really gone."
You know what I think?
I should get my finger out
and peck on the typewriter.
- Roughly.
- Alcoholics of the press, unite.
Yes?
Oh, yes. This is Peter Stenning,
Daily Express. Sir John Kelly, please.
Well, it's nice of you to be interested.
I want to speak about sunspots.
Just one moment, please.
What do I do with the press?
What does he want you to do?
Wants to talk to
Sir John about sunspots.
Oh, dreary. Press office.
No direct calls to Sir John.
Sorry to keep you waiting. I'm putting
you through to the press office.
Look, I don't want the press office,
dear. I want Sir John Kelly.
All right, all right.
Then get me Mr Pat Holroyd.
Yeah? Oh yeah, Sandy.
Yes, I understand all that,
dear, but Holroyd knows me.
We used to work together.
Now, just tell him Peter Stenning.
No, I'd rather do this myself.
I've got my own sources...
Look, just tell Mr Holroyd!
This girl's a bigger threat than radiation.
I heard that remark. Listen, I don't
care if you're Lord Rothermere himself.
All right, Beaverbrook. I'm putting
you through to the press office.
You were gonna get me Mr Holroyd.
Would you get me Professor Lambert...
Listen, your job is to pass
messages on when you're asked.
My job is to do what I'm told by
the people who gave me the job.

And anyway, this isn't my job.

I'm from the pool.

Well, why don't you

dive back in and drown?

I take it you didn't get

much change out of her.

I'm going over there, and I'm gonna
shake her till the tilt sign goes up.

Fine. In the meantime,

shake my car keys out of your pocket.

I may want to use it

before closing time.

Hello. Professor Lambert?

Hello. It's Bill Maguire here

of the Daily Express, Tom.

Hello. Tom, about these seismograph
readings of the latest American experiment.

Would you say they were bigger than
the official announcement gives out?

Oh, off the record, of course.

Something pretty huge?

- Press office.

- Straight through. Second left.

- Mr Holroyd's on the same floor, isn't he?

- No, sir. One up.

- Did you have an appointment?

- No. I'm just going into the press office.

Hello, Pat. Well, this is a bit
better than Picture Post. Isn't it?

Stenning, what the hell do you want?

- A quote on sunspots.

- Sunspots?

Look, just tell me that the static,
the monsoon, the compass trouble,
and the terrible shows we get on
television are all caused by sunspots.

And that the sunspots are caused
by bigger bomb experiments
and I'll leave you in peace.

Well, there usually is a bit
of extra sunspot activity
this time of the year, old boy.

But I don't think it has
much to do with anything.

But there could be some connection.

Oh, come on, say yes.

What harm could it do you?

Look, Stenning, it's nice to see you again,
but I'm afraid I'm up to my neck, old boy.

All right, Miss Johnson.

Take this to the typing pool,
have it mimeographed immediately.

- I see you're still a bit of a liberty taker...

- Well, give me something, Pat.

- I've got to get a story out of this.

- Sorry, can't oblige, old boy...

But why not? It's a perfectly routine,
harmless, silly season story.

- Look, Peter, you've no right to be here.

- Well, it is, isn't it?

- Well, just tell me, yes or no.

- I don't have to tell you anything, Stenning.

You got no special position that
entitles you to a first break
on anything that
comes into this office.

You mean, something has come in.

- Miss Johnson?

- She's out of the office, Sir John.

- Who's there?

- Holroyd, sir.

- Come in immediately, Holroyd.

- Right, sir.

Now, if you don't mind, Stenning...

I suppose there couldn't be some information
that hasn't hit the British public yet.

If there is, you'll get it when everyone
else does, in the official release.

Oh, Miss Johnson,

perhaps you'd take Mr Stenning
down to the press room, would you?

- Of course, sir.

- It's nice to meet an old pal.

- Come this way, please, Mr Stenning.

- Normally, darling, it would be a pleasure,
but at the moment, work before women.

The general pattern is pretty clear,
but until we get the full picture...

- Yes?

- Sir John.

- I have only one question to ask you.

- Who are you?

I think this gentleman's come
to the wrong department.

How are the effects
of the recent bomb
different from all the others
we've managed to survive?

I don't know what your job is, young man,
but it's not mine to speculate.

- Come along, Stenning.

- But they are different, aren't they, Sir John?

- You're not making this any easier...

- All right. All right. Relax.

Good try, old man. But these diabolical
liberties will get you nowhere.

Oh, come off it. You've gate-crashed
for a story often enough.

- Oh, hello. Have you come to fix this?

- Well, I hadn't, but for you, why not?

Oh, I'm sorry.

They said they'd send someone.

Can I help you?

Nearly everyone's gone home.

Yeah, I'd like a copy of
tonight's official line release.

- Tonight's what?

- The official release, sweetie.

Oh, those were all a bit smudged.

It's over-inking. I'll get you a clean one.

We're in a terrible state here.

What with summer holidays and flu,
we're all doing everyone else's job.

It happens to the best of us.

Success. No smudges.

- This is all I get, sweetie?

- That's all you get.

- Wouldn't like a drink, a meal or a lift home?

- That's correct.

- Just for my record, I'd like your name.

- Peter Stenning.

Just for my record, I'd like yours.

- Peter Stenning?

- Yeah.

- Express?

- Oh, you've heard of me.

Oh, yes. And if you're Peter Stenning, that's not all you get.

- Oh, great, great.

- You get this, too, sweetie.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to dive back into the pool.

800 grisly words on thrombosis, and look what they do to me.

"Stubborn men and the killer they caught."

What sort of impact heading is that?

I might as well be working on The Police Gazette.

- You're a bit late, aren't you?

- I'm dedicated.

Sounds like a flash, if anyone's interested.

Personally, I'm not. Good night, punchers.

"Russia announce world's largest nuclear test explosion,

"Siberia, last Monday, 8:00 p.m.

"Force of bomb stated exceeds American by 20%." End flash.

Anything you can do, I can do better.

All right. This is a change-up, next edition.

Monday last, when was that? 23rd?

- Monday. When was the American blast?

- Tuesday.

- What time?

- Late afternoon, wasn't it? I don't know.

- I can check. Messenger!

- Coming.

- Library, clips on test bombs.

- Right.

- No, I want you. Get Mr Maguire back.

- Yes, sir.

What's the difference in time factor between the Antarctic base and Siberia?

- That'd be New Zealand time.

- I pass.

If California's eight

hours behind us,
they must be more
than that down there.
Eighteen, twenty-four...
So evening in Siberia can't
be far off the same time
as early next afternoon
in the Antarctic.
Which makes one hell of a story.
- Now what?
- Better read that.
Yeah, I know. The kid told me...
We'll have a slip edition.
Get Jeff, he's at the Savoy.
Head printer, fast.
Give me a quick 50 words
across three columns.
You got five minutes.
I'll write the headline.
Now, let's have something
for the leader page.
Possible effects, comparative figures.
Check actual times of explosions.
Five minutes.
- We'll put you in the next edition.
- Thank you very much.
Where the hell's that printer?
Well, get him back from tea.
You, Jock, find me the biggest
mushroom picture in the files.
See if there are any stock blocks.
Smudge? Slip edition coming
down in five minutes.
Get a bloody move on.
Don't we always? Yes. All right.
Slip edition in five minutes.
Front page needs reset.
What's the betting some
princess is pregnant again?
There's a change-up coming down.
Okay, George. Know what it is?
Well, as long as they
haven't made beer illegal.
One. Lift.

Slip edition in 10 minutes.
We'll be putting it on four machines.
There's bound to be a big
re-plate on the second edition.
Someone up there hates me.
I should've stayed with Woman's Own.
I'll warn them.
Yep, in 10 minutes. Okay.
Henry. Down the chute, quick.
Make sure they've got
the mushroom block.
My watch stopped.
Oh, for heaven's sake, Bill,
drink or no drink, have I ever
missed an edition before?
You missed more than one this time,
you missed the slip as well.
What happened?
Where were you last
Tuesday morning at 8:00?
Asleep, if I had any sense.
Then there's something
else you missed.
Mankind let off two
for the price of one.
That accounts for all that
rattling in the Spitsbergen attic.
What's all this amount to?
It amounts to the biggest jolt the
Earth's taken since the ice age started.
Now, if you'd like to swim across
to Harry's, I'll buy you a last supper.
- It's stopped raining.
- Has it?
Well, don't tell Jacko,
he's liable to stop the presses.
All right. Here you are, 800 words,
"How to be happy, though radiated."
- I suppose thrombosis comes out.
- Sorry we kept you up, Bill.
Oh, it's an honour and a pleasure.
I've always wanted to work an eight-day week.
- And you're listening to a dedicated man.
- Got to lose your sunspots too, Pete.

Come on, Pete, we'll...

- Before we get involved in another flash...

- Jacko.

I had trouble with sunspots, Jacko.

Yeah, I bet you did,

but it read fine.

John, where's that bomb data?

Let's have it back a minute.

Thank you.

You coming or not?

You shouldn't have done this, Bill.

I know it. I should've gone home.

I wouldn't have got involved in this.

I need my bloody head examined.

So do you.

I did go to the Met Centre, Bill.

And my watch did stop.

Maybe they'll give you a
presentation one when you leave.

I leave tomorrow, you know that.

I don't give a flop what you do, but relieve
me of the tension, if you don't mind.

Yes, I know.

What the hell's the
matter with you anyway?

Forget it.

No woman's irreplaceable,
no matter how much you love her.

I told you, forget it.

There'll be somebody
else sooner or later.

London's full of somebody elses.

And that cures everything, doctor?

Does alcohol?

Find yourself a girl, Pete.

Find yourself a dozen.

I've got your permission,
have I, Dad?

Permission?

My thoughts will be with you.

Well, well.

The opposition's late tonight.

We don't admit any opposition, son.

Mr Maguire. What will it be?

- Two large lean steaks.
- Not for me. I'll have a Scotch.
You'll have a steak, too. It's good
for you to eat at least once a week.
Anything worth reading in
tomorrow's paper, Mr Maguire?
It's all agency stuff tonight,
so you can have a look for a change.
There is also a well written
article on thrombosis.
One cause, eating too much fat.
Oh, I'll tell you this,
there's no fat in any of mine.
- Sandy know I wasn't there?
- Just get us a couple of drinks.
- Get on with your orders.
- Oh, May, give it to him.
Don't you take it, Harry.
Who's boss here, you or her?
Knock it off, Mr Cardiff.
I know all about you.
You want jackets with 'em?
No. No potatoes, May.
I've read my article.
What about you, Mr Stenning?
Bill, what did you tell Sandy?
I told him you'd phoned it in.
- Hello, Peter. Still with the Express?
- For the moment.
It's murder up at our place tonight.
They don't know what to
make of this Russian bomb.
Your lot never knew what
to make of anything.
All right. Nice to have seen you.
Maybe we don't spend
enough time in the bars.
Would you like a nice salad?
Salad's very healthy.
Is it? Just some bread, thanks, May.
Fresh for a change.
- Like you?
- Yeah. Sometimes I think I could.
In fact, I'm sure I could.

It's the kid, isn't it?
You want to see the way
they're bringing him up, Bill.
It'll be the right the
right prep school next.
And then the right boarding school.
And by the time they've finished with
him he'll be a right bowler-hatted,
"Who's for tennis", toffee-nosed gent.
But he won't be my son.
Oh, I don't know. That bad blood
of yours is bound to come out.
- How old is he now?
- Seven.
That's a nice age. I suppose
you're still shelling out for things.
If I wasn't, I wouldn't even try,
not that I'm trying too hard.
- Was she there with the kid?
- Oh, no. The nanny brings him.
Yes, they've got a nanny as well.
Nothing but the best is good
enough for her husband's wife.
- Well, If they're so well off, why should...
- Because he's my kid, that's why.
Well, here's to him.
May he turn out to be a hard-drinking,
hard-fighting son of a bitch.
Yeah, well, that part of
his parentage is for sure.
I'll see you tomorrow, Bill.
Oh, don't be long, ducks.
They're ready.
Like a bit of butter, they'll be.
We won't be needing
the other steak, May.
Oh, shame.
Shall I wrap it up for your
big collie dog, Mr Maguire?
- How's Mrs Maguire?
- Oh, fine, fine. Just fine.
I wouldn't like to be a newspaperman's
wife, coming home all hours of the night.
And day. We sometimes come

home in the middle of the day.
I bet that could be embarrassing.
Yeah, it has been, for some.
We are not a political party,
and we have no intention
of becoming one.
We derive our support from
individuals of all walks.
The campaign for nuclear disarmament
opposes all tests,
manufacture, stockpiling,
possession or intended
use of nuclear weapons.
The world today is imperilled
by nuclear anarchy.
Nuclear weapons no longer
threaten the enemy,
but the whole of mankind.
The fact that we are
living in a nuclear age
should be a challenge, not a threat.
Instead of building bigger,
better and more weapons,
we should be concentrating on the
tremendous task of feeding the hungry,
healing the sick and
clothing the naked.
Let us abandon our nuclear weapons...
And may the best man win.

- You all right?
- Yeah, but my camera!

Daily Express. Can I join you?
Why not? We've got
The Herald up here already.

- Always ahead of the Express.
- Yeah, when it comes to getting out of fights.
- Now, don't start another one up here.
- Holy smoke! Look at that!
- It's an eclipse.
- That certainly wasn't in the schedule.
- Lend me this for a minute, will you?
- Hey, what, what are you doing?
I'm press. I want a picture out of this.
What have you got in?

- Black and white or colour?

- Black and white.

Wait a minute. Give me those.

Hey, I've got some pictures in there.

Don't worry, you'll get them
processed for nothing.

- Right. Let's go.

- Go where? I don't want to go anywhere.
Fleet Street. You'll get your roll back
and a dozen free. Take you 10 minutes.

I don't care a tinker's damn about
this eclipse of the sun as such.

The evening papers will cane it.

It'll be dead by tomorrow morning.

But what I do care about is why
there's been an eclipse of the sun
10 days before it was due.

Bill, this is your department.

I don't know why everybody
regards me as Nostradamus.

- Your guess is as good as mine.

- Yes, but I don't want guesses, I want facts.
Try someone on top. Sir John Kelly.

What about the Astronomer
Royal at Herstmonceux?

Stenning got in to see Kelly.

- He had 28 fully armed guards around him.

- Yes, but what did he say?

He wouldn't even say good night,
in case it was taken as an official comment
on the future of mankind.

Which convinces me even more
that information's being
withheld in Downing Street.

Here, we can't use this. Take it
across to the Evening Standard.

And if you're quick with it, they might
be able to make the first late night.

- I'll send a messenger right away.

- Never mind about a messenger,
it's your picture.

Follow it through yourself.

Does anyone really care about the weather
after the bashing they've just had?

I agree. We're lucky to
have any sun to eclipse.
You know something, sir?
I only know what I read
in these agency reports,
and I only know what
I see on this map.
Southern France, Sicily, Libya.
Ten days of torrential rain
in their peak summer months.
The Nile flooding the Egyptian deserts
for the first time in known history.
Look. It's a straight line, follow it down.
Here's Western Australia.
Arid wastes two feet deep in water.
New Zealand, floods.
And at home, an untabled eclipse.
Are we suggesting it has something
to do with the double bomb?
Oh, sure. We blew the moon
ahead of its schedule.
I'm not joking about this, are you?
Look, all I know is what
I read in the papers.
There may be some after-effects,
atmospherically, due to the bomb,
- but quite frankly, I wouldn't know.
- Well, I want to know.
- Can you give us anything to go on?
- Nothing.
Except that I've heard that the boffins
are running around like lunatics
putting bits and pieces together that
might add up to a very big story indeed.
I want it, and I want it first.
Is that clear, then?
I want it first, whatever it is.
Just announced, Sir John Kelly's on
television and radio before the 1:00 news.
He'll have a lot of hecklers.
As I am sure, most of you will know,
a solar eclipse occurs as a result
of the interposition of the moon
between the Earth and the Sun.

And that, children,
is how the little bunny rabbit
got his fluffy white tail.
When one considers the
moon is 240,000 miles away
and the sun 93 million,
it is an extraordinary thing that astronomers
can tell with such a degree of accuracy
what their movements will
be many years ahead.
Now, what does that mean?
- It means he doesn't know what it's all about.
- Right.
...start searching for wild causes.
In this case, many of you will blame
the unfortunate concurrence
of the two nuclear detonations.
But, of course, this is nonsense.
- It is certainly nothing to worry about.
- Of course not.
It's all good, clean fun.
Just light the blue paper and
retire to a safe distance.
Get me another drink, will you?
Come on, then. Out you get.
What shall we go on now?
Let's go on this one.
- What, again?
- Yes, let's go on it again.
- No, let's go on the ghost train.
- Well, we haven't much time left.
Yes, we have! Yes, we have!
- Come on, then.
- Good!
Out you get.
Alley-oop!
Let's go in again.
I wish we had time, Mike.
You shouldn't take him into
that place, Mr Stenning,
it makes him dream.
We'll have to go back now.
No! I'm going to stay here forever.
I'm going to live here.

- Now, don't be silly.
- No, you better go now, Mike. It's almost 1:00.
And will we go on the
ghost train next Sunday?
Yes, we will.
You really make things very
difficult for me, Mr Stenning.
Good-bye then, Daddy.
Good-bye, son.
Now, come along, Michael,
or your mother'll be angry.
One of each.
Well, it just shows you
what the sun brings out.
Quite a day to jump in a pool, isn't it?
Made any good connections lately?
Please. This is my day off.
Come the revolution,
and we'll all have Sunday off.
I have to be in the
office two hours ago.
I hate to think of them trying to print
that great big paper without you.
- Tell me something, Miss, er...
- "Miss Er" will do.
Are you anti-press or just anti-me?
On the contrary, I wish you the
best of luck on your prowl.
You'll find the bikini section
of the forest nearer the river.
- Why don't you howl over there.
- Oh, come on, now, what did I do?
- What...?
- I know, I know.
I shouted at you on the phone.
But that was four weeks ago,
does there have to be a blood feud?
Besides, I was under stress
and sober at that time.
It was my first day on that board.
I did some terrible things.
I connected Mr Holroyd with his wife
and he though he was talking to his...
Oh, dear. I shouldn't

have told you that.

Why not? It made my day.

No, a switchboard is very confidential,
and an Air Ministry one is even more "very".

How "very" is your phone number?

- It's a bad line. You get nothing but crackle.

- I love crackle.

You're sitting on my skirt.

Oh, sorry. Look, there's a lunch
place down there by the boating pool.

We could get fish and chips
and pretend we're in Venice.

Sundays I don't eat lunch.

- Okay, Miss Er.

- And that's not feuding, it's dieting.

- Dinner?

- No. Tonight's hair wash night.

Well, that lets out breakfast,
because I can't stand those pins.

If you turn over quick,
you can lose an eye.

Well, I suppose that's
the end of our summer.

Well, we'd better get on the main
road while we can still find our way there.

I've got to get my things first.

I left them over here.

Don't you get lost as well.

No, not that way. That's the river.

- Okay, I found them.

- Well, that's great.

Now, do you think you can find me?

- Keep talking.

- Control to Miss Er. Control to Miss Er.

Waiting for you to come on in.

Come on in. The water's fine.

- What about this?

- It's terrible, isn't it?

Anyone with that kid?

Sounds like a lost child somewhere.

Hello there. Are you lost? Now, stop crying.

We're lost, too, and we're not crying, are we?

Who did you come here with?

Mummy? Daddy?

What's your name, sweetie?
Well, we seem to have
made a big impact here.
What do you think we should do?
Well, there's only one thing to do.
The three of us must head
for the nearest cave,
face the future with courage and
vow to carry on the human race.
There's usually a policeman
at the main gate.
My name's Peter.
Won't you tell me yours?
Well, we'll just have to
call her Miss Erjunior.
Make it senior.
I'm changing mine to Jeannie.
- Jeannie what?
- Craig. Is that all right?
Yeah. Most suitable.
Sort of Scotch, like the mist.
There you are.
Now you're taller than all of us.
- It's not like normal fog, is it?
- Heat mist.
- What, this thick?
- Well, it's your switchboard,
you should know.
Let's get out of the road.
How you doing up there, partner?
See anyone you know?
So?
You look as if you're used
to carrying children.
My doctor says I have
the perfect figure for it.
Also, I have a child of my own.
- We found an abandoned lady in the park.
- But she won't talk.
- Well, now, and your what's name, my dear?
- Trixie.
- And who did you come up with, Trixie?
- Rita.
Well, you stay with me, and we'll

wait for Rita to come out, all right?

Yes.

- Where do you live?

- Embankment Terrace.

Come on, we'd better hop on this.

Bloody marvellous, isn't it?

Clear as a bell on the top deck.

We've had the lot this summer?

Not yet, but there'll be three

feet of snow by teatime.

You don't want to joke about that.

Looks spooky, doesn't it?

I'm fascinated to know what your
friend Holroyd makes of this.

He's not my friend. I just
work for him now and then.

- And turn down all his passes?

- He's harmless.

Nobody's harmless,
not if they're normal.

- And you're normal?

- So far.

There's very few of us normals left,
you know. You should always be nice to us.

Is it a boy or a girl?

Your child?

A boy.

- Are you married?

- Divorced.

I meet him there once a week.

He likes the funfair.

All kids do, don't they?

He wants to live there, on the ghost train,
if it can be rented reasonably.

Sounds like our cue to walk.

Hello, hello, hello. Sorry,

I was following the white line.

Sorry, this station's closed for
the time being. I'm sorry, sir.

No trains for a while, madam.

Looks as if the Underground's closed.

Will you wait while I phone the office?

- Sorry, sir, the station's closed.

- I'm press. I only want to use the phone.

If I let you in, they'd all want to.

It's chaos down there as it is.

Why? What happened?

Well, this fog's coming down the
air shafts and along the tunnels.

It's a good thing you live within
groping distance. Which way?

That way.

We turn left in a minute,
about 20 yards.

You time it, I'll pace it.

One, two, three...

What comes after three? Oh, yes...

There's a telephone in my
flat if you care to use it.

- Without prejudice, of course.

- Naturally.

I'm turning left.

I don't know about you.

Yes, please? Oh, Miss Craig.

- Quite a day, isn't it?

- Certainly is, miss.

There's just been a fog warning.

- The whole country's covered in it.

- That's Britain today.

What we have, we share.

You know, they say,

it's not what you call a true fog.

More like a sort of heat mist.

Heavier than your typical fog, it is.

- Thanks for the breakdown.

- Hey, mister. Where are we, mister?

- Ask him, Dad.

- Where are we, mister?

- We're trying to find the coach station.

- Ask him, Mum.

- I just asked him.

- No, I want to go to the toilet.

You wait till the coach station.

Tell her, Dad.

You wait till the coach station.

- Oh, the coach station.

- Yeah.

You want to try and

get to the embankment.

- Look, I'll show you.

- That's right, the embankment.

Now, now, keep going till you
come to the T-road, right?

- Brings you straight onto the embankment.

- Where are we, mate?

- Embankment Crescent.

- Just shows. It should be Sloane Square.

I've gotta go, Mum.

Why you can't wait?

It's the same at the pictures.

Well, I don't know. I shouldn't think they'll
be running many coaches in this fog.

Oh, dear.

Really, it's stifling.

Are there more expensive
apartments above the mist line?

- Looks fantastic, doesn't it?

- With a bit of luck, it'll go on forever.

You came to telephone, Mr Stenning.

- Aren't you even going to offer me a drink?

- Yes, if you don't mind instant coffee.

Coffee? What are you
trying to do, corrupt me?

- The phone's by the bed.

- Nice and handy to call for help.

So far, I haven't
had to call for help.

That's your fault or his?

- There doesn't happen to be a "his".

- I'm not surprised.

And what exactly does that mean?

Well, if they all get the
same treatment that I got...

You happened to walk in at
the end of a black Monday.

What about a foggy Sunday?

Come on, now, Pete.

We're too old for...

I'm not too old.

I said you could use
the phone, and that's all.

Oh, come on now, Jeannie.

What do you want, a slow build-up?
Hot hands at the movies?
Knee troubles at a coffee bar?
This seems to be where we came in.
Do me a favour, just use the phone and go.
Lady says you gotta go, you gotta go.
You don't dial. The porter gets it.
I'm sorry, Jeannie.
You're a case,
Pete Stenning, a real case.
Yep, that's me, "Knock 'em down,
drag 'em out Pete Stenning,
"the battered caveman."
Fleet Street 8000, please.
What is this "look at me,
I'm so tough" act?
Oh, I am tough, Jeannie.
Tough and chewed up.
- Not the way you drink.
- Bill Maguire.
Alcoholics take it because they can't
take it. I read that in The Guardian.
What do you know about me and drink?
It's in the Met Centre
facts of life file.
Dogs bark, cats meow
and Stenning drinks.
- Yeah?
- Bill, this is Pete.
I'll make the coffee.
Yeah, we seem fated
to be apart, don't we?
As soon as I can.
Stupidly, I forgot to pack
my radar kit this morning.
Half the boys have been caught
short, so you won't be missed.
What's your number there, in case?
How long will you be there?
Well, just as long as it takes to make
and drink a cup of instant coffee.
Yes, coffee. No, it's not a pub.
More a sort of a club, really.
Jeannie's Club.

Yes. I am a temporary
dis-honourary member.
You wanna watch that coffee kick,
before you know it you'll be
joining Caffeine's Anonymous.
What the hell kind of fog only
comes up to the fourth floor?
It knows better than to come up here.
This place is like the anteroom to hell.
It's really chaos at London
airport, Mr Maguire.
It usually is.
The question is, how do
we get home tonight?
Yes, I know. Isn't it wonderful?
And New York is still clear?
Yeah, Shannon's closing in.
Hold on. News desk.
Yes, sir, I'll bring them in.
Yeah, I've got that.
Madrid, Lisbon, New York, clear.
Right? Check back in an hour.
News conference, now.
The gaffer says you too.
Yeah, I know, he wants a 50-word
by-line from the Almighty.
Hate to think what the roads back from
the coast are gonna be like tonight.
I know what I'm gonna be like. I promised
myself a night of booze and orgy for years.
Where's this great
exhibition gonna take place?
I shall grope my way over to Harry's.
And who's the orgy
going to be with? May?
If you can keep Harry busy.
Now, get me Professor Jacovski,
US Weather Bureau, Washington DC.
And I don't want his assistant,
his secretary or his wife.
Make it person-to-person.
Well, boys, this is going
to be a night of nights.
If we're gonna catch the trains,

we'll have to go to press
at least an hour earlier.

- Can't be done.

- It's got to be done.

We've got to play this mist,
and we've got to play it big.

I want to give it
saturation coverage.

I want a recap on the rain,
the heat wave, the eclipse.

I want a comparison of the
statistics and weather charts
going right back to the first
meteorological reports in 1854.

You can go back as far
as Galileo, if you like.

I want to know if anything
like these conditions
has ever happened
in recorded history.

- What pictures have you got?

- We've got some shot from our roof.

That's no good. Let's have an aerial
panorama of London above the fog.

Aerial? In this place?

Well, get a helicopter.

It's only got to go up and down.

Send Benny to the heliport
now before the light goes.

Where is everybody? Most of
them are still trying to get back.

The night staff haven't
shown at all yet.

If it's a heat mist,
it can't last long.

"If" being the operative word.

We've all seen a heat mist that rises a
few feet above the ground in hot weather,
but this one's four storeys high.

And in two hours it's virtually
paralysed a third of the globe.

Look, France, Italy,
here and even India.

What sort of treatment, Jeff?

Do we still link the bombs?

We do, and we go on linking them until someone up top proves how we're wrong.

- I want something from you on this, Bill.

- Yes, I was afraid of that.

- Any angles?

- Oh, a couple.

This mist could be caused by an unusual amount of condensation from the unusual heat following all that rain.

- Alternatively...

- Alternatively what?

Well, this is just a personal guess.

I wouldn't dare to put it into print.

Let me decide what goes into print. You just give.

Could be caused by a mass of extremely cold water

- penetrating into the warmer currents.

- What's that mean?

An unusual amount of melting ice at both poles.

Surely that would also mean floods.

They've already had them in Australia and New Zealand.

Are you telling me that the heat of the bombs melted the ice caps?

No, sir. That wouldn't melt enough ice to flood the Isle of Wight.

But if they did go off together...

Supposing the combined thrust of the explosions shifted the tilt of the Earth.

Oh, come on, Bill.

That would alter the climatic regions, a complete change in the world's weather.

A new ice age for some, new tropics, a new Equator.

I don't know what else, it's all guesswork.

It's all science fiction.

So were rockets to the moon and manned satellites.

We're gonna have to move, sir.
Yes? Right? Miss Evans?
All right, move and hit hard.
Bill, write your story. I'm not
sold on it, but I'll print it.
It might force something big.
Professor Jakovski.
Just a minute, please. Hold on.
We'll try it on him. Any quotes,
you will get them.
Professor Jakovski?
This is the Daily Express, London.
You're not getting any fancy flying.
The deal is straight up, straight down.
Don't think this is my favourite
assignment, 'cause it isn't.
Now we're up, what about
a look at London airport?
Some things just aren't possible.
My orders are, everything's possible,
even the Indian rope trick.
You may need that to get down.
May I have your attention, please.
All flight departures have
been delayed for another hour.
Travel information may be obtained from
the information desk opposite channel 7.
London approach.
Speedbird 352 leaving Watford.
Roger, 352.
Descend to 2,000 feet on
your present heading.
2,000 feet. Roger.
Sorry, KLM 603. Have to return you.
Priority transatlantic only.
KLM 603. What is the
Amsterdam weather?
Hello, 603.
Visibility, 50 yards in fog.
Speedbird 352 intercepting
the ILS beam at 2,000 feet.
Roger, 352. The runway
visibility now is 80 yards.
Oh, no.

Okay, Colonel,
let down the drawbridge.
You been to Fleet
Street already, sir?
I've been on a hike where all streets
turn left and all roads lead to home.
Fortunately, I found this in a
sand dune just past Benghazi.
It's getting hotter, too. 91 degrees.
It's gonna be quite a summer.
Well, let us share a toast, Colonel.
I give you this battered and benumbed
world of sweaty moles and radio static.
- You can have it.
- Oh, thanks very much, sir.
We interrupt this programme to bring
you further Air Ministry bulletin.
The freak mist which has hit the British
isles is likely to increase in density
for the next few hours.
And the best of British luck.
The police have asked the public
to keep the roads clear
for essential transport
and avoid traffic congestion by arranging,
where possible, to stay where they are.
I think our British police are wonderful.
Where's the house phone?
Over there, sir.
We return you now to
late night dance music.
- Hello?
- Guess who.
Clever girl. Were you asleep?
No, I was just washing my hair.
Did you make it all right?
I certainly did, I'm back downstairs.
Well, it's a two-hour story.
You listening to the radio?
Did you hear that bulletin?
So, are you pro-police
or anti-police?
Yes. Yes, I'm still with you.
I was just trying to work

out all the permutations.

There's only two of them.

You can send me out into the cold, cold snow
and let me get lost with the rest of the kids,
or you can utter two one-syllable words
and become a law-abiding citizen.

Can you be one, too?

Well, since this thing seems to
be bigger than both of us...

- I'm beginning to think you arranged this.

- But of course.

You look cute, sort of boyish.

I am. Well, just remember,
you're normal.

Yes.

Well, this is all very sweet and spontaneous.

I don't mind sleeping on the couch.

Haven't got a couch.

Oh, in that case, I'll cuddle up on
the floor at the bottom of your bed
like a faithful Saint Bernard.

Oh no, you won't.

Can't we just have a flaming
fog flare between us?

Won't be necessary. If you're
staying, you're sleeping in here.

I've got a feeling you've
been through all this before.

- I have not.

- You mean, I'm the first man
you've managed to trap
up here for the night?

It's perfectly comfortable with
a pillow and a couple of sheets.

Excuse me.

Well, supposing you want to
use the bathroom in the night?

We'll deal with each
problem as we get to it.

I have a big problem, Jeannie.

As well as being normal, I'm human.

You're also a pushover, Pete.

Meaning you're not interested.

Maybe I could be, but don't

make it so easy. Be hard to get.
Make me fight for you.
It's an unfair contest.
Well, who knows,
you might even be lovable.
But don't rush me.
I'm allergic to one-night stands.
Now if you'll give me five minutes,
I'll finish my hair.
Normally I'd offer to help,
but in the circumstances...
In the circumstances,
you can take a well-earned nightcap.
There should be a bottle
of something in the kitchen.
I forgot, Saint Bernards'
carry their own.
- You'll get a glass in there, too.
- Maybe I will.
Maybe I won't.
- Did you find it?
- Yes, I found it.
Look, if I've got to play hard-to-get
for you to go steady with me,
how about a few immigration details?
- Such as?
- Oh, where you slept for the last seven years.
Have you ever suffered from marriage,
divorce or any similar virus?
Only two near infections.
Any other inquiries?
No, the rest seems to be all right.
Maybe I will.
One or two pillows?
Oh, I'll just wedge my
head between the taps.
I'd offer you a pair of my pyjamas,
but it's a bit hot, isn't it?
Yeah. You wouldn't like to come
into my place for a drink?
- It's against the house rules.
- You like your guests sober.
I like you sober.
Good night, Jeannie.

Good night, Pete.
And thanks, for the
use of the bathroom.
You're welcome.
Sleep well.
Hello?
Jeannie's Club?
Oh, yes. Just a minute.
- Pete!
- Yeah?
Phone.
So, what do we do now?
Can you push it under the door?
Come and get it, idiot.
Just a minute, please.
Sorry. It must be the office.
Yes? Stenning here.
We just put the first edition to bed
without you. I hope that's all right.
Okay, okay. It caught you there,
it caught me here. There's no justice.
But just to even things up,
you can call round at the
Met Centre tomorrow morning
and get me some comparative ice
floe figures for the last 20 years.
You'll be surprised at what
I might bring you tomorrow.
I've... I've made a new contact.
Well, they're rather
fussy about new members.
You have to be vouched for by two friends,
and you don't have two friends.
Yeah, you too, you vulgar man.
Compromised while telephoning.
- What does it all mean, Pete?
- It means you'll probably have to marry me.
I mean the mist and this
crazy weather. What is it?
Don't ask me. You know more
about what's going on than I do.
- Oh, but Bill...
- Oh, come on now, Jeannie.
You've been running around

that office for months,
trying to hide signs of the
elephants that passed.

I don't understand half
the things I hear anyway.

Such as? I'm no mastermind,
but such as?

Be fair. I'm not even supposed
to be talking to you.

So far, that's all you've done.

- Let's change the subject, shall we?

- To what?

- Pete Stenning.

- Too dull.

- What happened, Pete?

- What, "What happened"?

They say you used to be a writer.

Look, let's just put that subject on the
same list as the weather, shall we?

Well, that leaves us with
nothing to talk about.

Do we have to talk?

- No, but seriously...

- I'm not unserious, Jeannie.

- Your bath's getting cold.

- Look, Jeannie.

I don't wanna make love to you.

I don't wanna hold you or kiss you,
because you don't appeal
to me one little bit.

But please fight for me, Jeannie.

Do you think it will
last a long time?

- The fog?

- Us.

Why do women worry about
the end right at the beginning.

- I'm not women.

- I mean...

- I know what you mean.

- So move over, then.

Even though ye hide
in the secret places of the Earth,
ye shall be found out

for the last judgement.
Come with me. Repent!
Morning, Sarge. Anyone in yet?
A few. Most of the night duty
staff have only just left.
Cost a fortune in overtime, it will.
Well, there you are, boy.
Just relax and get rich.
Oh, the lift's out of order. When the
power failed, it blew a fuse or something.
I'm liable to do the
same in this heat.
- Another cyclone, in Greece.
- Another one, or the same one?
Casualties aren't quite so high.
Boy! Greece, Italy, France and us.
We're still along the
old man's same line.
- Mr Maguire, ask him to follow it through.
- Yes, sir.
Jacko says will you follow
this through, Mr Maguire?
- Thank you. Did he send any Benzedrine?
- Benzedrine?
Skip it. Get me a
cold drink, will you?
If I'm asleep when
you fetch it, nudge me.
- Yes, sir.
- I can't hear you.
If Le Bourget is out, try one
of the private flying clubs.
Or get them by road to Brussels.
We've got to have those pictures.
Yes, they'll get a credit.
No, I don't want the small roads,
just the main highway diversions.
Paris Match has got pictures
as it crossed the Seine.
- When do we get them?
- A couple of hours, with luck.
It almost wrecked Le Bourget.
The other airports are jammed.
We'll need a photo news extra.

I hope nobody kicks about the price.

Photo news. Bill, there's an extra page going out.

Hi, Jacko. Like the old Blitz days, isn't it?

Where the hell were you all yesterday?

You may remember there was a mist that covered...

You may remember that was in the afternoon.

I wasn't drunk, and I wasn't drinking, if that's what you're suggesting.

I'm suggesting wherever you were you'd have been of more use here.

It so happens, I made a new contact at the Met Centre yesterday...

- Anything usable?

- Not yet.

Anyway, Bill Maguire knew where to reach me all day.

Unfortunately Bill Maguire doesn't pay you, Peter.

No, sir.

Hello, Mr Stenning.

What about that cyclone?

- First one ever in Europe. Did you know that?

- I do now. Thank you.

They had a whirlwind in Greece, too.

Give me that, or you'll have one right up your backside.

- It's not very cold. The fridge packed up.

- You've been here all night?

Oh, don't ask. I'm still recovering.

Any damage up your end?

A few windows broken.

It just skirted us.

Still. At least it

blew the mist away.

- Why don't you blow yourself?

- Oh, don't sort the kid out.

- The temperature's not his fault.

- Yes, it's not my fault.

- Oh, shut up!

- All right, all right.
Why does the whole world
have to drink this stuff?
I understand there was organised
chaos here last night.
The old man put the edition
forward one hour to beat the fog.
Comes the cyclone, a complete
change-up with only half-staff.
Oh, it's bloody hot.
98 degrees on the Air Ministry roof.
Think of all those WAAFs stripped
to the fuselage. What's this?
Library clips. Cyclones, typhoons,
hurricanes. It's all there.
West Pacific, northern Australia,
Madagascar, Bay of Bengal.
List the figures for me, will you?
Rate of advance, acceleration and casualties.
Why don't I just do 500 steaming words
on how mankind is so full of wind
- it's about to out-blow nature.
- Yeah, fine. But after you've done my figures.
Yes, of course.
- Oh, give me those ice floe figures, will you?
- Ice floe?
You mean you didn't
go to the Met Centre?
Oh, those. Yes, I went.
I dropped Jeannie off.
All right, all right. She's the new contact.
Works there. She's calling them through.
You, of course,
were too busy to get them.
She only has to look up the files,
I thought it more important
to be here this morning.
- Not to me, it isn't.
- Apparently.
Well, you'll be glad to hear I've
just about had the whole issue.
That's up to you, chum.
Okay, so the knife's
penetrated deep. Can I go now?

Oh, sit down, Pete.

Give her a ring.

Our switchboard's probably jammed.

Get me the Met Centre, please.

- Could I speak to you for a moment, Sandy?

- Oh, not now, Pete.

It won't take a minute.

Look, all I want to do is finish
this lot and get some sleep.

- I wanna turn it in.

- Do what?

- Turn in my job, jack it in, resign.

- I can't stop you...

Look, I am sick of being the ass
end of Bill Maguire's donkey.

Why don't you leave it till
the temperature drops.

- We're all a little edgy.

- I'm like a cub reporter here!

"Phone up for figures,
run down to the library,
"take these pictures." What am I?

You're getting paid
for it, aren't you?

Look, it's not so long ago,
this paper put out posters
telling the public to read my stuff.

And you stopped writing it,
so how could we go on printing it?

Look, Pete, I'll forget you resigned.
Give it a few days.

Anyway, I thought Bill Maguire
was a friend of yours.

- Yeah.

- He always behaved like a friend.

- Sanderson.

- Yeah, maybe it's the heat.

For you.

Think about it.

Yeah, I will.

Stenning, who's that?

It's Jeannie. Pete,

I've got to talk to you.

It's serious. I can't, not on the phone.

I've got to see you.
You will tonight, remember?
Well, if it's that urgent,
hop a cab and come here.
I can't. I'm in a telephone box
and I've got to get back.
Listen, I'll take an early lunch.

12:

The restaurant by the boating lake.
All right, Jeannie.

- Okay?

- Oh, yeah, it's a new contact
I found at the Met Office.

She, seems to have
something on her mind.

Met Office? Has she got a story?

Well, frankly, I don't think
she'd notice a news story
if it was in 72-point. Still,
I don't think we should ignore it.

- Well, she's your contact.

- All right.

But you're my witness for the defence
when Stenning's found missing again.

What are you, a cub reporter?

Go on, get out.

Well, of all people. It must
be three hours since we met.

There's too many people here.

Who's shy? I only want to kiss you.

Look, Pete, I mustn't
be seen talking to you.

I know, you're a Russian spy.

All right, I'll come
to Moscow with you.

Oh, Pete, please be serious.

Never more so. Come on, tovarish.

- But you don't understand...

- So, you're going to tell me.

Now, get in the carriage. Go on.

No expense spared with Stenning.

Well, what could be more private?

- Pete, I...

- Take your time, I bought a double ride.

- Have you got a cigarette?

- Sure.

This morning, half of
the girls didn't get in,
so some of us had to go
on the switchboard again.

And?

Well, I've overheard things before.

Sometimes you can't help it,
but you keep it to yourself.

A switchboard is very confidential,
especially a government...

But this morning?

You've got to promise
me you won't use this.

Is it about the big question mark?

- Then how can I promise?

- You must.

Oh, for God's sake, Jeannie.

If something's gone wrong, don't you
think people are entitled to know?

The people at the top are cleverer than
we are. They know what they're doing.

- Then why tell me?

- Because I had to tell someone or bust.

I thought you were the one person
I could tell. Maybe I was wrong.

No, you weren't wrong,
Jeannie. Now, go on.

I didn't understand very much of it,
but what I did understand...

I don't know, I panicked
and called you.

So, here I am.

I want your promise.

All right. Let's have it.

Got it! All right, all right. May!

Two hot lagers for the Daily Sketch.

You're lucky, I've got
two nice ones on ice.

No, you haven't. I just sold them.

I told you to hang onto those
in case Mr Maguire wanted them.

- I never heard you.
- You never hear anything.
- You can't keep ice in this weather.
- No. Three hot Scotch's.
Good for the circulation.
Personal not professional.
- There you are, Mr Maguire.
- Thanks, May.
I need you, Dad, and you
need that, so drink it.
Put them on the slate, May, will you?
I heard a funny story on my
way to the park this morning.
How funny?
What's the nutation of the Earth?
Nutation? Well, it's a slight
oscillation on the Earth's axis.
It's caused by the pull of the
sun and the moon on the Equator.
It's changed.
You see, there's a
slight bulge on the...
There's also an item here
about axis rotation.
There's been an 11 -degree variation,
whatever that may mean.
- Where'd this come from?
- Never mind where it came from. Translate it.
- It means I was right.
- Well, congratulations.
They've shifted the
tilt of the Earth.
The stupid, crazy,
irresponsible bastards!
They've finally done it.
That's the normal angle of tilt.
An 11-degree variation would
put it this way, or there.
- We don't know whether it's east or west.
- No.
Your weather line theory would
indicate an east-to-west tilt.
Where did you get
this story, Stenning?

I prefer you not to ask, sir.
Get me Sir John Kelly,
either at his office or at his home.
Wherever he is I want to talk to him.
Does this come from your new contact?
Never mind where it comes from.
You take my word, that's the story.
What can it do to us, Bill, apart
from altering the Earth's climates?
Monkeying around with nature on this scale,
who knows what the implications are.
Well, what do you think?
I prefer not to.
Yes? I didn't ask for the PRO.
- All right, put him through.
- Who is it?
- Holroyd, sir.
- Holroyd.
Get Jacko in. Get everybody in.
Holroyd, this is Jefferson,
the editor of the Daily Express here.
Yes, well, you can tell Sir John that he
has the choice of being disturbed now
or when he reads his morning paper.
We're going to print
whether he talks or not.
Bill, get moving. I want a pictorial
panorama of the world as it's going to be
with the new climatic zones
and all the rest of it changed.
Stenning, come in on this phone.
Take this down.
Sir John Kelly, Jefferson here.
I'd like a statement and I'd like it now.
Nothing's impossible. Not even an
11-degree tilt in the globe's axis.
Yes, that's precisely what
we're going to print.
Mornin', sir.
What about all this, then?
"World tips over."
Fog, cyclone and flood?
- Jeannie, what else could I do?
- I don't want to hear, I don't want to know.

It had to come out, Jeannie.
You couldn't sit on a thing like this.
That's right, that's right.
But we didn't use your name, Jeannie.
Nobody used your name.
Who cares about my name? My name's
nothing, it's my trust you've used.
All right, I'm ready.
- Who are you?
- I'm a security officer.
Now, wait a minute.
Where are you taking her?
For the moment,
into preventative custody.
- For what?
- Can we go now, please?
What the hell are you preventing?
It's happened, man!
You've got the head weathercock
sitting on the biggest addled egg
the human race has ever laid.
Leave us alone, Pete. It's none
of your business any more.
You let these bloody bombs off as
though they were four penny squibs
on bonfire night, and you
want to keep it a secret!
Fine, fine. So they stick the
kid into preventative custody.
Oh, cool off. I know
it's hot, but cool off.
Never mind the data on leukaemia
or infant mortality or strontium g,
or any of the other clinical
facts of mass suicide.
Just stick some kid in a cell and
everything will be all right.
Go on, write about it like that.
Oh, sure, now they want
to read about the filthy,
self-destructive force
humanity carries around
rotting in its belly.
Now, when it's too late.

It's never too late for a
good story well written.
The human race has been
poisoning itself for years
with a great big smile
on its fat face.
Well, that's how it is, Pete.
People don't care about the
news until it becomes personal.
Well, it has become personal for me.
Isn't there anything you can do?
What else is there to do?
I've made my will.
Look, Pete, they're just a bit
hysterical like the rest of us.
- They'll let her out in a few days.
- Let her out to do what?
- Who's gonna give her a job?
- No problem there, we'll give her a job.
While it all still lasts, we might
as well have full employment.
I felt it necessary
to speak to you all,
if only to stop the many wild
and irresponsible rumours
precipitated by a
general lack of facts.
There has indeed been a displacement
in the direction of the polar axis.
But it is not a catastrophe,
nor is it the millennium.
Geologists and astronomers
have long had evidence
that the tilt of the Earth has
been altered more than once
in the history of its evolution,
and it has survived them all.
Now, what does this mean
to us in our daily lives?
Well, some of the seasons,
as we know them,
may be disturbed and
change their intensity.
This displacement has undoubtedly

brought some regions
nearer to the polar circle,
whilst others have been
carried further from it.
But I have the utmost confidence
the world's scientists
can produce solutions for any of the
climactic problems we are likely to meet.
I know that many of you are
blaming the combined effects
of nuclear tests for this disturbance
to the motion of the Earth.
I must tell you that the majority
of the world's scientists
deny that this is the cause.
However, I would be failing in my
duty if I did not admit to you
that there are many others
who believe it could have been.
But whatever the rights,
or whatever the wrongs,
the four major powers have now
reached unconditional agreement
to cease all further tests,
experiments, manufacture
and work on nuclear projects.
What they'll do to get votes.
I ask you now to face the future
calmly and constructively,
remembering that here
in Britain, at least,
the weather is something we
are used to coping with.
I wonder who writes his punch lines.
The old boy will need all the laughs
he can get if this heat keeps up.
No, leave it on, May.
Let's hear the forecast.
Yes, it's always so right.
I wouldn't mind the heat if this stupid
old fool would remember to order the ice.
- I did order it.
- Well, where is it?
I don't deliver it, May.

It's real bikini weather, May.
Yeah, give the boys a treat, May.
I don't know. All this heat's making
you lot behave like foreigners.
No point in holding a hot glass.
Have another one.
No, I'm going back to the office.
...with a probable rise
towards the weekend.
What's on your mind?
Do you think Jeff would
give me an advance?
Depends how much.
However much it'd cost
to get her a good lawyer.
Oh, stop worrying. She'll only
be in for a week, two at most.
They're just going
through the motions.
But she didn't break
the story, Bill, I did.
If they're gonna charge
anyone, it should be me.
Look, you brought in the
beat of the century...
- Covent Garden!
- ...enjoy it.
- What is it, Dick?
- The whole lot's as dry as a bone.
They think it's all going up.
All right, clear way!
Please keep the roads clear.
Clear the roads, please.
Keep out of the roads.
Don't cause obstructions, please.
Keep the roads clear.
Please keep the roads clear.
Clear the roads, please.
This is the editorial floor.
Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.
Is this where I work?
Through the newsroom and
down into the library.
By the way, I'd better warn you about

some of these newsroom characters.

- I'm a big girl now.

- Yeah, that's what I mean.

Mr Maguire, if you ever want

- any extra water...

- Never drink it.

I mean I've got a contact.

Five-gallon drum only costs a pound.

Great, we'll celebrate

with two iced Cokes.

- They're fetching four bob apiece now.

- Are they?

- I'll get them as soon as I drop these.

- Tell them they're bloody robbers!

Relax, he's out on a date,

if that makes any difference.

Not to me, it doesn't.

Look, Jeannie, you can't go on blaming
him for blowing that story you gave him.

Can we change the subject?

No journalist would

have any right not to!

I agree. Tell me, do I

always come in this way,

or is there some sort of

tradesman's entrance?

Yes, I'll mind my own business.

Now, these are the legal

gentlemen the brothers prodnose.

This is the chief bunch here.

Jacko, Miss Craig,

library and standby switchboard.

- Hello and welcome.

- Thank you.

All I can say is whoever took your
press pictures ought to be fired.

What's the lead? "Hospital
emergency water trucks rammed."

- Yeah, they grabbed 5,000 gallons.

- Marvellous, isn't it?

I can remember when
it used to be money.

I must say, this is
all a bit frightening.

Nothing to worry about,
unless you own a reservoir.

- No, I meant the job.

- Oh, you'll get numb to it.

The chief librarian's a nice guy.
He'll put you right.

If there's any special problem,
there's always me, or Pete.

Everything's filed here,
from the atom bomb to Zen Buddhism.

Well, I appreciate the motive, but don't try
and restart anything. It's very, very over.

Oh, break down, Jeannie.

What, do you want him
in the penitents parade,
walking barefooted down Fleet Street?

- I don't want him anywhere.

- This is no time to waste time.

Well, he isn't wasting it.
He's out on a date.

In Battersea Park with his kid.
Miss Craig.

- You found your way?

- Mr Maguire brought me.

Yes, I shouldn't think we'd
ever be lonely down here now.

Look after her, Archie.
She's a bright girl.

It's just her sense of
proportion that's a bit bent.

Here we are. Eight shillings
worth of deliciously hot Coke.

Take that to Miss Craig, will you?

What's the matter, kid?

Oh, I'm all right, sir.

Holy smoke, look at
these temperatures!

Mexico delta, 145.6
degrees Fahrenheit.

USA, Texas, 141 .3.

Rome, 139.

This famine death count's
pretty terrifying, isn't it?

I just don't get this lack of water.

What about all this extra
polar ice that's melting?

Well, the heat's taking
it up as vapour.

Yeah, but doesn't it come
down again sometime?

It does. And when it does,
pray you're on high ground?

Hi.

All right, no hi.

- Dave, I just came from Battersea Park...

- Personally, I prefer Brighton.

Look, something's going on.

If you're not interested, to hell with it.

Unwind, for God's sake.

How do I know if I'm interested?

What sort of something?

Well, they're putting up long sheds,
you know, the army type.

And there's trucks full of
piping and shower bath fittings.

500 gallon water tanks complete
with purifying systems...

- Battersea Park?

- Yeah. And Hyde Park, Richmond,
Wimbledon, Highgate, Hampstead...

Most of the open spaces.

- You've seen them?

- Only Battersea,
but I talked to one of the drivers.

In the last few days he's delivered
similar gear to the others.

- For what?

- I don't know, I never got that far.

- The foreman came up shouting, "Security!"

- Any ideas?

- Yes. Community washing centres.

- Good God.

Why, you got ugly neighbours?

If that's right, it means there'll
be no more private water at all.

Correct. Just turn on your taps and
hear the rude noise of progress.

This is Davis. You got any

photographers down there?

Well, push them up here fast.

Mitchell, get on the Glasgow office.

I want a list of any similar sites in Scotland.

- You, Manchester.

- Right.

Tell them to check all main towns north of Birmingham.

Bill, have a go at the ministries.

You might surprise something out of them.

If I do, they'll surprise something out of me.

And what about us messenger boys?

Are we allowed to jump around a bit, too?

You've jumped, haven't you?

You've probably brought in a hell of a beat.

- But I'm not capable of writing it.

- Oh, relax, for...

This is Davis, sir. Stenning's brought in a lead to something that could be big.

Well, it looks like they're about to cut all running water.

Yeah, but I'd like him to talk to you before he writes anything.

Well, they seem to be putting up community showers in all the parks.

All right, I'll send him in.

Pete! Go tell the old man.

Well, we're getting pictures...

What about the hospitals?

Well, try them.

If it's going to happen, they're bound to know about it.

They'll have made special arrangements.

And if anything comes through on the tapes, let me know.

- You actually saw these showers?

- About 50 of them at the Battersea Hut.

I wouldn't like you to make guesses about things like this,

there's too much panic about as it is.

Sorry, Clive Maccreedy on

the phone from Moscow.

- Moscow?

- It's urgent. It's a very bad line.

A wonder it got through at all.

Clive? Hello? Clive?

Yes, I can't hear you.

Yes.

Yes, I've got it.

I only wish I didn't believe it.

I expect you'd like to come home now.

Is anything still flying?

Well, it's up to you.

You can if you wish.

Shall I get on with it?

- Conference, fast!

- Right, sir.

Jacko!

Conference! Jacko,

where the hell are you?

- Yes, sir?

- In here! Get a move on!

Miss Evans, get the old man.

I think he's at Cherkley,

but wherever he is, find him.

- Yes, Mr Stenning.

- Do you want me to wait?

You have a family, don't you?

I have a son.

I'd get him to the

country if you can.

I don't think things in the cities

are going to be too pleasant.

- I brought the dummy in case...

- Oh, you can tear that up.

On the direct line.

Good evening, sir.

Well, the Russians have just

about topped everything.

Macreeedy got through from Moscow.

They held an international press conference.

Had their top scientists present.

They say that those two bangs

did more than alter the tilt.

They made an 11-degree

shift in our orbit.
And we're moving towards the sun.
Well, I can't see what
they'd gain by making it up.
They say Western scientists
have known about this all along,
but were trying to work something
out before they broke it.
It's not through on the agencies yet,
but it's bound to be any moment.
No, of course not.
No, that's the way I
was going to play it.
I'll have it put through to you.
Anyone want a recap,
or did you get it?
We got it, but what the
hell do we do with it?
To start with, it's two lines of
120-point across eight columns.
I'm not up on my sci-fi.
So, we're orbiting toward the sun.
- But how many billion light years...
- If that's true,
I'd say there's about four months.
Before what?
Before there's a delightful smell in
the universe of charcoaled mankind.
Do you really mean four months?
According to the temperature rises
in the last few weeks, yes.
- So that's the message, is it?
- About another 300 deadlines.
Is that what we say
in tomorrow's paper?
Tomorrow we report the news.
The facts. We leave prophecy
to the street corner cranks.
Bill, you and Sandy, start arranging
interviews with top scientists.
Cockcroft, Penny, if you can,
get a call through to Calcutta,
Haldane might break silence.
Pete, you get busy on

the "no water" angle.

Everything affected, sanitation,
electricity, power plants...

- Even down to car radiators.

- Will do.

And keep the tone of the paper
reasonably optimistic. Understand?

It's going to be all right.

That's it.

- Sir, there's an agency flash!

- Yes, we just had it.

In every possible way.

My home, please.

What's it all mean?

I was going on holiday next month.

Do you think I should cancel it?

Only thing to cancel is your life insurance.

Sell up and have an orgy.

- Nice public-spirited advice.

- Oh, do me a favour.

Can't anything be done, Mr Maguire?

Yes, there's something

you can do right away.

Pop off to the library.

Bring me everything

- they've got on melting points.

- Melting points?

Yes. The temperatures at which everything,
from steel to my glass eye, starts to melt.

Right.

I suppose it couldn't be a mistake.

It is. The daddy of all mistakes.

Funny how, when the chopper falls,
everyone just accepts it.

What else, when it's

your neck under it?

A fellow up in Leeds

says he's found a method

of extracting water

from the atmosphere.

Oh, as it were, he's been certified.

Jeff said to get the kid out of town.

It might be a bit easier in the country.

Yes, it might.

Couldn't get my old woman
away from her garden.
She's got about six
tonnes of sweet peas.
She'll be out buying black
market water for them.
Which reminds me, this is highly
illegal, too. Do you want a swig?
- No thanks.
- Quite right.
I suppose they'll do something,
won't they, Bill?
What?
Well, something!
They've gotta do something.
They can't just let... Let...
- You've got a piece to write, haven't you?
- I know what I'd like to write.
You can't. It's a family newspaper.
We're all so bloody clever
at outsmarting nature!
"Anything you can
split I can split better."
- You know what I'd do if I were you?
- What?
Some special data waiting
for you in the library.
Half an hour ago, I brought her.
Thanks. Well, in that case,
we'll just skip the library.
- If you take my advice...
- You know she hasn't spoken to me since.
Well, how the hell can she speak
to you in separate rooms?
Well...
I need some data anyway.
Yeah.
We all need whatever we can get.
You see, they're all cross-filed.
You have to remember
what names are connected
with what subjects and vice versa.
Anytime you want any help...
I'm just getting

Mr Maguire's stuff, sir.

Well, thanks.

- Yes?

- I need some...

Pete...

I need you, Jeannie.

I need you, too.

Attention, please. Attention, please.

There will be an emergency
announcement of national importance
by the Prime Minister

at 9:

Stand by at 9:

announcement of national importance.

Please pass on this information.

Attention, please.

Attention, please. There will
be an emergency announcement
of national importance by the
Prime Minister at 9:00 tonight.

Stand by at 9:

announcement of national importance.

Attention, please.

There will be an emergency
announcement of national importance
by the Prime Minister

at 9:

Stand by at 9:

I'm sorry, sir, no entry.

You better close this, chum.

- I'm meeting someone inside.

- Not during ration hours.

Yeah, but anyone inside will
have to come out this way.

- No, don't say...

- It's no use arguing.

You can't take those in,
leave them here.

- No, I want to save half my shower, see?

- You can't take water from here,
this is a washing centre.
The forms, please.
I don't dig it, doll.
I mean, we're all entitled
to so much water, aren't we?
Yeah, for washing. Leave them here.
- So who says if it goes over us or in us?
- Move on.
Either leave or get out of line.
Attention, please. There will
be an emergency announcement.

Stand by at 9:

- Daddy, you weren't there!
- Oh, they wouldn't let me in, son.
- We're driving away now into the country.
- I know, Mike.
I wanted us to say good-bye
to the ghost train.
Well, there isn't time now,
and anyway, it's closed up.
Will it be open again sometime?
Yeah, maybe sometime.
Mummy's here. Come and see Mummy.
You can come with us.
You come with us, Daddy.
Make Daddy come with us, Mummy.
- Hello, Peter.
- Hello, Angie.
Why can't Daddy come with us?
Somebody's gotta stay and report it
when the ghost train starts again.
- We'd want to know that, wouldn't we?
- I suppose so.
You're staying in London?
Paper goes on forever.
When will I see you again?
Quite soon. I'll come out and
visit you. Now, go on, off you go.
I want to sit in front!
All right, but don't
wriggle the whole time.
I think we ought to

leave now, Angela.

- Good-bye, Peter.

- Good-bye, Angie.

- You got water in those cans?

- We saved a little.

I'd keep to the main roads.

The water gangs are pretty busy.

I won't take chances.

Good luck, Peter.

It all seems pretty

ridiculous now, doesn't it?

- Yeah, pretty ridiculous. Look after the kid.

- Yeah. See you.

Maybe.

Attention, please.

There will be an emergency
announcement of national importance
by the Prime Minister

at 9:

This is London.

Try and get it clearer.

Nothing much I can do, sir.

We're using every known cut-out.

What do you bet they'll have another
power failure in the middle of it?

It's all right, sir. We're running
on our own generator now.

- It'll have to wait for the agency copy!

- Ronnie, hop over to PA and wait for it.

Well, go on.

I feel that at this time,
it is senseless to minimise
the gravity of our situation
or to deny the danger of
the course decided upon.

Keep it quiet, please.

Perhaps it is comforting to know
the decision has been taken
jointly by all governments
and heads of state throughout the
globe acting in complete accord.

Bravo. It's only taken
half a million years.

He's shaking like a jelly.
What's the matter with his tongue?
It's all swollen.
All right, try and get a doctor.
Drastic conditions
demand drastic action.
Scientists are unanimous that
we must attempt to change,
or at least check,
the movement towards the sun.
And so, all thermonuclear bombs,
the largest ever devised,
will be detonated simultaneously,
100 miles apart,
in the west of Siberia.
And to this end, they have been
working with all possible speed
before conditions of heat
make assembly uncontrollable.
No one, and I repeat,
no one, can tell us exactly
what this massive
explosion will effect.
One thing is certain, however.
Without it, we are a doomed planet.
With it, we can only place ourselves
in the hands of the Almighty.
- You just missed the good news.
- I heard it on the PA.
- Here's the full speech. Official release.
- When's the big bang?

Wednesday, 11:

have their tea break first, you know?
- I don't think that's humourous.
- Don't you? Well, try this for a laugh.
There's five cases of typhus in North
London, and they're expecting more.
- Typhus?
- Yes, from black market water, mostly.
4 a gallon. Typhus, no extra charge.
- What happened, kid?
- Don't touch him, any of you! Keep away.
- Where does he live?

- Live? I don't know, North London some...
That's what I thought.
Call emergency. Get an ambulance.
I'll get it.
Poor little bastard.
This is all we needed.
You'll have to see your staff's
inoculated before anyone leaves.
Of course. At least we have a
choice now... Typhus or leukaemia.
What do you think, Bill?
The bombs, I mean.
You heard what the PM said.
No one, not even Bill Maguire
can answer that one.
- And if it doesn't work?
- Evacuation by spaceship.
All aboard for the moon. You want
the best dead planets, we are them.
- Want a slug?
- Please.
If that's your last will and testament,
don't forget to leave me my car.
I'm degutting the
polluted water pedlars.
Give us martial law and
we'll shoot the gits.
Plus the 12 I paid for my water
circulator I haven't even seen.
- Do you want some?
- I'm off it.
So I've noticed. It's a beautiful
thing to watch a woman reform a man.
Only needed the Earth to catch fire.
Glad you approve. Well, if you've exhausted
your repertoire of amusing quips,
I'll go and collect the other
half of the reform movement.
- She's gone.
- Gone?
Yes, she'd collected
enough water for a bath,
and she was going to have it
before you turned it into coffee.

- Can I use the car?
- Surely. I've forgotten how to drive it.
There you are, Jacko.
Read all about it.
Including the carbons.
Slash what you want. I'm going home.
- Home?
- Yes, I've done enough work for one lifetime.
- But you have to be injected.
- Against what?
The end of the world?
Keep moving, please, down to
the embankment. The road's closed.
Can I get back on at the other end?
- Not tonight. This district's out of bounds.
- For medical reasons?
No, there's some teenage
kids kicking it up a bit.
They lit a few fires,
looted a bit of water.
- Where are you going, sir?
- Embankment terrace.
- Okay, let this one through!
- Thanks.
If you see any of them, keep driving.
- They're either drunk or drugged.
- Great party.
And stay clear of Chelsea.
They say it's pretty rough down there.
It always was, wasn't it?
Yee-hoo!
What do you think you're doing?
We're makin' a great clean end, man.
Real cool, clean finish.
I want to throw this lot over
on the stinky little cow.
This what you've been
saving up for, darlin'?
- Give me that...
- No, I wanna do it!
All right, that's enough!
Now get out!
Pete!
Saving up for a last little

bath together, were you?
I wanna bath him! I wanna
bath him! I wanna bath him!
I wanna bath him!
I wanna bath him! I wanna bath him!
Did they hurt you?
No, it's nothing. You?
It was time I hit something.
Come on.
I'll go and barricade that door.
- They've all gone insane.
- Yeah, it's the new fashion.
Did you hear the speech?
I heard.
Why did this all have
to happen, Pete?
It just had to, that's all.
We're all too smart.
All people want to do is live.
I don't think so.
I wish I could understand why.
A lot of people don't want
to live. It's too difficult.
They're tired, they're frightened.
They'd rather it was all over than
go on worrying, being frightened,
losing a bit more hope every day.
So they want it to finish.
But I don't.
I don't want it to.
Neither do I...
Now.
The time is now 10:41.
19 minutes before countdown.
19 minutes.
The time is now 10:46.
14 minutes before countdown.
14 minutes.
14 minutes before countdown.
You are advised to stay inside.
The time is now 10:47.
The time is now 10:51.
Nine minutes before countdown.
Nine minutes.

The time is now 10:52.

Eight minutes before countdown.

"The boy stood on the burning deck
whence all but he had fled..."

Hi, children. They fled to the machine
room where the booze is hidden.

But not the deck boy?

He has an assignment. See you.

Where are you going?

To see what happens after
the man says, "Zero".

Eyewitness account of whether
we're coming or just wind...

- Bill, let me cover it.

- No, Pete.

The time is now 10:56.

Oh, take her home to bed, you idiot.

Four minutes before countdown.

If we can make it to Harry's and
down it in three and a half minutes,
I'll buy you both a drink.

I got something, then!

Can't think what you want
to listen in for, anyway.

It's a historic occasion, May. It's like
the Queen's speech on Christmas Day.

Just a lot of numbers,
that's all you'll hear.

Don't see what's historic
about someone counting.

All right, open the safe!

What've you got left, May?

Oh, I'm so glad. It's so nice
to have someone in the club.

...in exactly 30 seconds from now.

30 seconds.

I've been saving this.

And this one's on the house.

Take it easy now, May.

That half bottle cost a fortune.

How I ever got to be manageress
to a mean old bastard

like you, I'll never know.

You've never said

anything like that before.

No, but I've thought it and now I've said it, and I'm glad. There's yours. Countdown must have started by now. Drink up, then.

Here's how.

22...

21...

To the luck of the human race.

18...

17...

12...

11...

Mustn't lose count.

Must be about nine.

Seven...

It's always later than you think.

Six...

- May.

- Five...

- I'm here.

- Four...

- Did you mean all that piffle?

- Three...

- Of course I didn't, you silly old berk.

- Two...

- One...

- Bill, let me.

Zero.

All right, go on, you bloody idiot.

So man has sown the wind
and reaped the whirlwind.

Perhaps, in the next few hours,
there will be no remembrance of the past
and no hope for the future
that might have been.

All the works of man will be
consumed in the great fire
out of which he was created.

But perhaps at the heart
of the burning light
into which he has thrust his world,
there is a heart that cares more for him
than he has ever cared for himself.

And if there is a future
for man, insensitive as he is,
proud and defiant in
his pursuit of power,
let him resolve to live it lovingly,
for he knows well how to do so.
Then he may say once more,
truly the light is sweet,
and what a pleasant thing it is
for the eyes to see the sun.