

1001

DRAMA

STARTERS

Chris Stubbs

Classmate Books

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Also in this series:
Drama Works!

1001 DRAMA STARTERS

A resource book for
educational drama

Chris Stubbs
Classmate Books

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Introduction

This is an ideas book, pure and simple. 1001 situations which provide the starting points for improvising drama. The ideas are mostly self explanatory; experienced drama teachers will see how to develop them immediately. Some brief guidance will be offered shortly for those new to drama teaching, or wishing to include drama in their teaching. The ideas have been grouped under topic headings for convenience, covering many different subjects, people, places and periods. Hopefully, there are ideas to suit everyone's tastes, from contemporary naturalism to the fantastically surreal. Dip in and have a look round.

I have made no attempt to suggest which ideas should be used with particular ages of students, because I don't think you can. Some ideas have universal appeal to all ages, while others require a bit more experience of life itself to be fully relevant to the players taking part. Be prepared to experiment. Young students can tackle situations which require a discriminating response; older students frequently enjoy "Once upon a time...", especially in the guise of children's theatre, for performance to a young audience. If in doubt, try it out.

Above all, I hope the book helps with those moments equivalent to "writer's block" which affect all drama teachers from time to time, trying to think up new ideas to invigorate drama sessions both for the students, and for yourself. Even the best ideas get tired after being used for the umpteenth time. I hope you find something new in these pages.

A few starting points

Before they can improvise a situation, the players need some basic information which provides the framework to the scene, the rules to play by. This includes:

- Time
- Place
- Characters
- Relationships
- Conflict

The "starters" suggest these elements, though it will be necessary to help students define these very clearly before they begin. These are some of the questions it is useful for them to ask:

Time

When "historically" does the scene occur? What difference will this make to the way the people in the scene talk and behave?

What time of the year is it? How does the weather, or a special date, effect what happens?

What time of the day, or night, is it? How do people behave differently at various times of the day?

Is there any pressure being put upon the people because of time? Are they in a rush?

Place

Where "geographically" does the scene occur? What difference does this make to the way the people behave? Are some of the characters "foreigners"? Do they understand local customs?

Is the scene taking place indoors, or out of doors?

If the scene is out of doors, is it a busy or a lonely place? What is the weather like, and how does this affect the people? Are the people in transport of some kind?

If the scene is indoors, is it in someone's home, or an office, or a public place, like a cinema? How will this alter the way people behave? How formal or informal will things be?

Is there any tension being put upon the people because of the place? How comfortable do they feel?

Characters

What are the people like physically? Strong, weak, active, lazy, handsome, ugly and so on. How do these physical characteristics affect what happens in the scene?

What are they like emotionally? Calm, angry, happy, sad, tense, betrayed, vengeful..

How do they show these emotions, and do they affect what happens?

What are they like socially? Rich, poor, liberal, prejudiced, posh, common, friendly...

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How do these social characteristics alter how the people get on together?

What are they like morally? Good, bad, tempted, greedy, generous, proud, caring...

How do these moral qualities affect what people say, and do?

The “starters” give the characters names, simply because it makes them easier to understand at first reading, rather than “Character A”, “Character B”. The names, and the sexes, of the characters can be changed in the majority of cases.

Relationships

What is the history of the relationship? Do these people know each other already, and if so what has happened between them?

Is the relationship positive, or negative? Do they get on together now, or not? What are the reasons for their relationship being as it is?

How close, or distant, is the relationship? How do people show this?

Does the relationship put pressure on the people? Family pressures, business pressures..

How emotionally charged is the relationship? Is one person afraid of, angry with, in love with, desperate for, blissfully happy with, can't stand the sight of the other...?

How do these relationships affect what happens in the scene?

Conflict

What is the scene about? What starts things off?

What is the cause of conflict between the main characters in the scene?

Do other people get involved, and if so, do they “take sides” with the main characters?

Is the conflict settled at the end of the scene, or does it lead to other things happening?

Finally, make sure each character knows when they enter the scene, and what the first things they do, and say, are.

An example

Here's one of the ideas from the “Family Affairs” section:

When Susan and Donald marry, his teenage daughter Clare comes to stay at the weekends. Susan's children, Mary and Josh, do not get on with her very well, and she doesn't do much to try to fit in. One weekend there is an angry argument; Clare has borrowed some of Mary's clothes without asking her, and they are in a bit of a mess...

There are numerous ways this might be dramatised. This is one possibility:

Time: 7.00 pm on Saturday evening. Mary is hurrying to get out when she discovers the clothes she intended to wear have been left in a mess by her stepsister Clare.

Place: Mary's bedroom, which she has moved out of to let Clare use for the weekend. This gives Mary an additional grievance, and allows her to take the high “moral ground”.

Characters: Clare is selfish, caring little for other people's feelings. Mary has a strong will, and an equally strong sense of injustice. Mary thinks Donald favours Clare over his new family. She has more money and clothes than she and Josh do.

Relationships: Susan and Donald are recently married, trying very hard not to let any disagreements come between them. Josh respects his sister, and sides with her against Clare. Mary dislikes Clare's “looking down” on them. Clare ignores people she doesn't care for, and manipulates her father.

Conflict: On the surface, it is about the clothes. Underneath, it is about the tensions in the family created by the marriage. Susan and Donald have key roles, because they have to sort out the situation, but may find themselves disagreeing as well.

The “starters” are therefore exactly that. They can be performed in a large number of ways, with many varied outcomes. Each idea will need discussing, attempting, redrafting, changing, abandoning, resurrecting before it is the finished thing. But after all, that's the fun! So I hope you enjoy using the ideas in this book.

An alley way between apartment blocks and cheap hotels in a city. A man stumbles, wounded in the leg, blood on his hands. He staggers, knocks over trash cans, then falls...

Dawn is breaking, mist covering a field bordering a secluded wood. Two duellists, and their seconds. The pistols are presented, loaded, inspected, offered and accepted. The duellists stand back to back, walk twelve paces, then turn and fire...

A narrow ledge, perhaps on a building, perhaps on a mountain edge. Someone moves gingerly along the ledge, their back against the wall, eyes desperately trying not to look down, feet feeling for the next step, hoping it won't be their last...

A western saloon. A piano playing, tinkling away. The cowhands drinking at the bar, three fingers of rye. The saloon girls lazing around, looking over the shoulders of the poker players, trying to judge a winning hand. A stranger appears at the swing door...

A bedroom at night, lit by a full moon shining through the window, the gossamer curtains lifted by the breeze. A young girl lies sleeping, stirring slightly, frowning at a dream. A figure appears beside her bed, leans over, gently touching her hair away from the white of her neck...

A penalty shootout. The final kick to win or lose the whole competition. The player steps forward, places the ball on the spot. Looks into the keeper's eyes. He fidgets on his line, checks his gloves, his cap. The player steps back, begins his run to strike the ball...

Night. A country house, at the end of a long drive, an impressive looking building, built several centuries ago. A figure climbs ivy growing up one wall, reaches a balcony, and eases silently over. The flash of a blade in the moonlight, a window prised open, and the figure climbs inside...

A row of lockers on a busy airport concourse. A man approaches furtively, looking around to see if he is being watched. He takes out a key, and opens the locker. A quick look round, then he removes a briefcase. From behind, a gun is pressed firmly into his ribs...

Night. A figure crawls on his belly towards a barbed wire fence. He stops. He whistles softly. He is joined by a second figure. They listen. Then they begin to cut an opening in the wire.

The school yard at night. The caretaker is doing his rounds. Shadowy figures dodge from place to place, hiding. One of them is carrying a can. When the caretaker has passed, they approach the window, and prise it open...

Two men are fixing plastic explosives to the wall of the building. They run the detonation wire from the charge back to the plunger. They look at their watches, and prepare to set off the explosion...

An old building is about to be demolished. A group of children explore silently, moving through the rooms, up the stairs, testing the floorboards. They come to a locked door. One of them tries to turn the handle. When it does not open, he puts his shoulder against the door and pushes...

A child is heading for school, careful not to tread on the cracks or lines in the pavement, chanting:

"Tread on a crack, you'll break your back.

Tread on a line, you'll break your spine."

The child misses her footing, and treads on a line. It's going to be an unlucky day at school...

In a department store, the toy section. A skinhead approaches the cuddly toy section, looks round to see if anyone is looking, and, without trying to look conspicuous, steals a giant Winnie the Pooh bear...

Action # 2

A long corridor, in a seedy hotel or apartment. Two men look cautiously up and down, checking the coast is clear. They approach a room, pull out guns, signal to each other. With synchronised movements, they burst through the door..

A graveyard at night. Moonlight. The sounds of shovels digging. Two figures, dark shadows. A spade strikes wood. The figures struggle to lift a coffin from its grave.

Night. A lonely spot, woodland. A young woman is weeping. She digs a shallow grave with her bare hands. She places a small bundle in the grave, and covers it, overcome with tears...

In the attic of an old house. The new occupier pushes open the trapdoor, and climbs into the roof-space. He looks round by the light of a torch, steps carefully over all kinds of junk, which has been gathering dust for years. Eventually, he comes across an old trunk. He tries to open it. The hinges are stiff with rust, but at last they give. He opens the trunk and looks inside...

A hallway, morning. A letter drops through the letterbox. Someone eagerly picks it up. Good news, or bad...?

The main street in a western town, empty. Two figures, one at either end, silhouetted against the hot sun. The gunslingers draw nearer, stop, and hold each other's gaze. Fingers twitch near the cool steel of their guns. The town holds its breath, waiting for the next move...

A window cleaner. He whistles as he goes about his round, bright, breezy and cheerful. He places the ladder against an upper window, climbs up. He begins to clean the window, then looks through. As he does, he stops, horrified...

Explorers hack their way through the jungle, clearing a path where no one has been for thousands of years. As they struggle through the dense undergrowth, they are wary of poisonous animals on the jungle floor, and in the branches above them. Suddenly they come to a clearing. What they see makes them stop in awe and fear...

An angler is sitting on a riverbank, casting his float out on to the gently flowing water. He eats a sandwich, enjoying the sunshine, the peace and quiet. A tug on his line makes him put down his snack. He begins to reel in. There is something heavy on the other end, but he can't see a fish fighting him. Gradually he reels in, then reaches for the gaff to land his catch...

A magician on stage, flashing swords in the lights, throws an orange in the air, and slashes it neatly in two, to show the sharpness of their edges. His glamorous assistant locked in a trunk. Drum rolls as he pushes the blades through the trunk, one at a time. The last blade, difficult to push through. A piercing scream, as blood oozes from the trunk...

A beach-comber using a metal detector, walking slowly along the sand, waving the detector from side to side, listening intently for the beep in her headphones. She stops. There is something in the sand directly in front. She takes off the headphones, puts down the detector, and begins to dig gently with her hands. She touches something, brushes away the sand...

The passenger check in at an airport. The passengers filter one by one through the security frame. If the alarm sounds, the security guard checks what may have triggered the detector, bunches of keys, jewellery, a metal spectacle case. A nervous man passes through the frame. The alarm sounds. The security man moves across to search him...

A teenage girl leans against a wall at the corner of a street, at night, underneath a street lamp, nervously smoking a cigarette...

A wife wakes up in middle of the night, and hears a noise in the room below. She moves carefully downstairs, and is astonished to find her husband burning some clothes in the fireplace....

Early morning, a back garden. A boy climbs over the fence, picks up a handful of gravel from the flower bed, and begins to throw the stones one at a time against an upstairs window...

A policeman walking a lonely beat, late at night. He patrols the street, testing the shop doors, shines his torch through the windows to make sure all is secure. But when he gets to the electrical shop on the corner, he finds the door is open. He goes cautiously inside...

A space-craft has landed on a distant planet, bathed in the silver light of its two moons. The hatch opens, and an astronaut takes the first step on to this new world...

In a police station. An identity parade is taking place. The witness walks slowly along the line, glancing nervously, quickly, into each face. Finally the witness decides, and points to the suspect...

Early morning. A young man dressed only in boxer shorts, and suffering from a hangover, climbs over a garden fence. He stumbles across the garden in the dark, stubbing his toe on an unseen rockery, hopping around silently in pain. He makes for the washing line, and finding something he hopes will fit, he pulls on the still damp clothes...

Two young men are walking up and down the rows of cars in a multi-storey car park, glancing casually in each car as they pass. A car park attendant turns the corner, and watches them as they stop beside a high-powered model, and seem to fumble with the keys in the door...

A young woman is waiting on a railway station, a suitcase beside her, as her train draws in. A young man is running madly down the platform, trying to find her in the people surging to the train...

A boy with a black-eye comes home, carefully checking that no one is around as he opens the door. He goes to his sister's bedroom, and experiments with her make-up to disguise his eye. Preoccupied, he does not hear his sister enter the room...

A classroom at the end of the day, when even the cleaner has left. A girl steals quietly into the room. She makes for the teacher's desk, carefully forcing open the locked drawer with a screwdriver. She takes out a folder of work, and begins to write additional answers on her paper...

A young father is pushing his new baby in a pram. In the distance he sees some of his old mates, who are all still single, and off to the pub. He turns the pram around, hoping to avoid them, but they spot him, and gather to pay their "respects"....

A street, late at night. A woman hurries up to a house, where she bangs urgently on the door. There is no answer. She looks through the window, and knocks on it, then goes back to bang on the door. At last, a light appears inside...

5 am. A girl gets quietly out of bed, listening for sounds of others awake in the house. She pulls a suitcase out from under her bed, opens it, and packs a few final things. She puts on her coat, picks up the case, and tiptoes silently down the stairs. She places a letter on the table, carefully opens the door, pulls it behind her, and leaves...

Two men draw up in a car, park it at the side of the road. They step out, looking cautiously up and down the street. They move round to the back, open the boot, and look inside...

A teenage boy is waiting for a group of girls to pass by. He is determined at last to talk to the great looking girl, to let her know he exists. He steps out, cool and casual, ready to make an impression. But his feet get caught up in the straps of his bag. He falls over...

Adventure

At the bottom of a sheer rock face, somewhere halfway up a mountain. A guy and his girl are climbing. This seemed like a good idea when she suggested it, and when he lied about places he'd been climbing before. Now it doesn't seem like a good idea at all. How can he persuade her not to go higher without letting her know he's lost his bottle?...

A son has had a serious accident some years ago while riding a high-powered motorcycle. Now living away from home, he returns for a visit riding a new machine. His parents are concerned that he will have another accident, and dismayed when they see the new cycle...

On the moor. A cold, wet, blustery day. The landscape is bare, with little shelter other than outcrops of rock here and there. A group of teenagers are engaged on adventure training, camping out, surviving for the weekend on their own. The group are lost, cold, tired, hungry and wet. Above all, unsure what to do. Some want to press on, some to retrace their steps to find a place they can recognise on the map, some for pitching camp, some for splitting up to find help...

A hot, hot day in the Australian outback. A group of teenage offenders have "volunteered" to go on a survival course instead of doing a term in jail. No sweat. The offenders cocky, streetwise, on to an easy thing. What's a little stroll in the sun, even if you do have to carry some gear. Run rings round these adventure guys. No worries. And then, lesson one: What to do if a mate gets bitten in the bum by a snake...

A group of three amateur pot-holers are in difficulty underground. It has been raining heavily, and the underground passage through which they came has filled with water. They are in a small cave, but the water level is rising quickly. A two man rescue team manages to reach them, but they have only brought two extra pieces of breathing apparatus. The passage is too narrow for them to share one apparatus between two people, and too long for one person to hold their breath...

A small unit of female army recruits are on their first overnight, outdoor training exercise. They have to do a 10 mile route march in full kit, dig a shallow trench and put up a bivouac in which to sleep, and feed themselves on whatever they can catch and cook. The (male) corporal in charge intends to introduce them to the delights of baked hedgehog later on, but the first task is a kit inspection. He is not too impressed when he discovers that they have brought numerous cans of hairspray, deodorant, and full make up kit....

A group of friends are out hill walking. They have stopped at a village pub at lunchtime for several drinks, and are in good spirits. They reach a spot on the hills known as "The Blind Leap", where there is a six foot gap in the path, and a 200 ft drop. It is possible, but dangerous, to jump across the gap. Most of the group want to attempt it, but one of them thinks it is totally foolhardy...

Tracey writes in to a television programme in which members of the public are invited to do hair raising stunts. She volunteers her husband Jerry to take part, because he regularly watches the programme, and says he would love to have a go. When he is picked out of the audience, however, and asked to abseil down a skyscraper, he loses his nerve, and refuses to do it, in front of millions of viewers. They arrive home after the show...

As a training exercise, a firm sends a group of young executives on a Paintball Shootout. They start off treating the whole thing as a joke, but as old scores and jealousies come to the surface, the whole exercise becomes much more serious...

A group of 10 years olds have been taken on an adventure weekend by their school. One of the activities is a mountain walk, and though the weather is poor, the instructors at the site say it is safe to go ahead. During the walk, the weather gets much worse; the mountains get really misty, and it is difficult to see where you are going. Fortunately, the group and their teachers manage to get back to base safely. But when they do the "head count" they discover that one of the children is missing....

The man next door does not like animals. He torments the children's dog whenever he meets it, and throws stones at it when he thinks no one is looking. One hot day, he goads the dog too far, and it bites him. The man complains to the police, who arrive to say that the dog will have to be put down...

The Lion and the Elephant are always arguing about which of them is the King of the Jungle. The Lion boasts about his ferocity and speed, the Elephant about his strength and wisdom. Finally, they ask the monkey to make up a test which will prove who is the real King of the Jungle, once and for all...

News item: Teenagers on the Ballymun high rise housing estate in Dublin have been reported to the authorities by angry residents. The teenagers are alleged to be keeping ponies in empty flats and garages on the estate. Residents complain that sharing a lift with a pony is causing elderly people distress, and is a health hazard. The environmental health authorities have sent an official to look into the complaints...

The children want a puppy for Christmas. Their parents want to know how well it will be looked after. They agree to buy the puppy, providing the children pass a test. The test is to keep an imaginary puppy for a week, feeding it, training it, taking it for walks. The parents are to decide what the imaginary puppy has been getting up to...

Helen's friend asks her to look after her pet tarantula while she is away on holiday. Helen agrees, unaware that one member of her family has a horror of any spider, let alone a large furry one. But not much can be done, since her friend has now flown to Florida for a week. Just as long as the spider can't escape...

Africa. The dry season is turning into a drought. If it doesn't rain soon, the crops will fail, and people will starve. The tribe remembers its traditional custom, to sacrifice a goat to make the rains come. Chimumba has a pet goat, the last one in the village. Her father offers this for the sacrifice, without asking her. She just cannot let this happen...

News item: Day trippers at a riverside beauty spot were horrified when a local farmer drowned a number of newly born kittens in a sack. "There were young children on the river bank, who could hear the terrified mewling of the kittens" reported one witness. "Town people don't understand country ways" said the farmer. "The cat had too many kittens, I couldn't find anyone to take them, so drowning them was the kindest thing in the long run". An RSPCA inspector is said to be investigating the complaint...

Make up a short piece of drama which explains any of these ideas:

- How the elephant got his (or her) trunk
- How the zebra got his (or her) stripes
- How the giraffe got such a long neck
- Why the rhinoceros has such a thick skin
- Why the kangaroo has a pouch

Mrs Carliss has been abroad for several months, and while there, she has bought a pet dog, a small terrier. She returns to England by car ferry, but instead of arranging for the dog to be placed in quarantine, she smuggles it into the country, hidden in the back of the car. A week later, the dog begins to act very strangely, especially when she tries to offer it water...

A strange animal has been killing farm stock in the West Country, near the moor. Various people have sighted the animal, and describe it as being a large cat, a puma perhaps. Except that no such animal is thought to live in the area, nor even the British Isles. The local farmers decide the animal must be hunted down and killed because it is costing them money by killing their livestock. A group of children decide to track down the animal, and trap it alive, to prevent the farmers from carrying out their threat. But it might be dangerous...

Animal rights

A fox hunt. A huntsman has been thrown from his horse into a ditch. A hunt saboteur finds him. The huntsman has broken his leg. He shouts to the saboteur for help...

Penny is a shop assistant in a large department store. She has not worked there long, and since she struggled to find a job, is delighted with the opportunity. The supervisor informs her that she is being moved into the fur department, where the store sells mink coats. But Penny objects to animals being treated in this way, and asks to be placed in another department...

An animal rights campaigner is working undercover in a laboratory which is involved in experimentation on animals. He has been keeping a diary, taking photographs, and making video recordings designed to show how the animals are suffering. He has nearly collected enough evidence, when he is caught taking photographs by a member of staff...

Scott pretends to be a vegetarian in order to impress a girl he fancies called Miriam. She is an animal rights supporter, and so he doesn't tell her that he has a part-time job at Macdonald's. He does not know that she has organised a protest at the branch of Macdonald's where he works...

A group of children have strong feelings about how animals are used in scientific experiments. They get into the science prep room and release the rats which are kept for dissection by the 6th form students. There is a plague of the rats throughout the school. The principal is not amused...

Sharon is shopping in the supermarket with her daughter Judy. Judy is keen that they should buy free range eggs, because she has found out how hens are treated on battery farms. Sharon is sympathetic, but the free range eggs are twice as expensive. Judy persuades her mother to ask the store manager to justify the extra cost....

A meeting of the licensing committee of the local council is to be held. There is an application from the circus to hold its annual show in the town. However, several of the new council members want to refuse the licence, because they think circus animals are treated cruelly. The opposition members want to grant the licence, as they always have done, so that the council can make some profit from renting out the field where the circus is held.

A group of animal right protestors are staging a sit in across the road towards the docks at a port. They are attempting to stop lorries from carrying live calves to the continent. The lorry drivers are angry, since the delay is costing them time and money, and ironically, causing the animals further suffering. The police try to persuade the drivers to be patient, while they attempt to move the protestors without creating further trouble...

Martin has found a new girlfriend, Sandra. They have been out together on a couple of dates, and have got along great. He arranges to meet her on Saturday, and turns up wearing a brand new leather jacket he has recently bought. As soon as Sandra sees him wearing it, she is horrified. She has strong views about animal rights, and does not agree with leather clothes or goods...

When a circus comes to town, Jamie goes along to see the show being set up. As he wanders around the site, he comes across one of the trainers mistreating a chimpanzee, hitting it with a cane to get it to perform a new trick. When his protests to the trainer fall on deaf ears, he decides to let the chimp out of its cage, and to get it to safety....

Peter is working at a Pet supermarket for the Christmas holidays, when many people are buying pets as presents. He enjoys working with animals, and is upset when he discovers that it is store "policy" not to call a vet if any of the animals fall ill before being sold. The sick animals are simply isolated in the storeroom at the back of the building. If they recover, all well and good. If they don't, or even look like they won't, they are thrown in a skip at the back of the store. Peter decides this is not good enough....

At the end of a twisted alley, in a twilight world where the sun never reaches, a shop, the Bizarre Bazaar. To those who wish to make a purchase, the proprietor urges caution. Buyer beware! These items come with only one guarantee; your life will never be the same again. So what am I bid for these remarkable items...?

A leather bound tome, The Moste Excellente Booke of Witchcraft, Spelles and Magick. The parchment crisp and brown with time, written in a strange cipher. And on the first page, the pentagram, ancient symbol of all knowledge...

A large glass specimen jar, the kind found on any laboratory shelf or museum display. The sort used to preserve organs, hearts or brains, dissected to show their inner secrets. And from this jar stares one large eye, curiously magnified by the curve of the glass, the dead eye of a dead thing, which seems to watch each movement you make...

An Egyptian mummy, over 3000 years old. This sarcophagus was taken from the city of the dead by Lord Molyneux in 1897. Inlaid with lapis lazuli and carnelian, the mask is decorated with the motif of the falcon Horus, and is believed to hold the body of the high priest Akhenaton. Lord Molyneux was found, petrified with fear, literally "stone dead" only weeks after returning to this country...

A leather cap of Bavarian origin, comprising one large horn, the alleged "Mad Cap" of Till Ullenspiet, Lord of Misrule, Prankster, and Tongue-smith. There is no situation, however awkward, desperate or dangerous (and usually of the wearer's own making) that the wearer cannot talk his or her way out of....

The Mask of Vitrium is made from crystal glass so pure and clear, that it almost cannot be seen. Created by the master craftsman Gianni Gavotti for the Borgia family in 16th century Italy, this mask is reputed to grant its wearer powers of invisibility...

Made from the finest Arabian wool, decorated in the most exquisite patterns the eye will ever behold, a carpet woven by Princess Khalia while imprisoned by her father for refusing to marry a husband of his choice. How she escaped from her high tower, no one knows, though perhaps the magic words enciphered into the carpet's rich design may give a clue...

A phial containing the last few drops of Cleopatra's perfume. Distilled from the fragrances of every flower growing along the length of the Nile, this is the perfume used by the immortal Queen of Egypt to captivate the heart and soul of all men. Neither Caesar nor Mark Antony could resist the allure of its tempting fragrance...

The Portuguese scholar Mendonca was reputed to be the most knowledgeable man alive, a medieval genius in every field of study. His skull cap, made from rich velvet, decorated in pearls, is said to grant the wearer all knowledge...

Nothing much to look at, a monkey's paw. Rather a grisly souvenir, some might say, brought from India, though it is not known when, nor by whom. Three wishes are granted to the owner of the paw. But beware! Who knows how a wish may be fulfilled...

A charlatan's plaything, a fortune teller's glass ball. Dismiss it as a fairground trickster's prop if you wish. Or look closely into its depths, watch and wait for the mists of Time to clear, see the Future, if you dare...

The world's first artificial hand, belonging to a Frenchman, Ambroise Paré. A mechanical artifice, the steel fingers moved by intricate cogs and wheels, a grip more powerful than any human hand. A dead, mechanical, inanimate thing. But watch it long enough, and you might swear you see a finger twitch...

Bizarre Bazaar # 2

Look, if you dare, into this marvellous mirror, and see your face within. As years pass by, watch your reflection grow old, but your face remain young. Eternal youth, attraction and vigour shall be yours. But treat this mirror with care, for if it cracks, the spell will break...

A rusty lamp, possibly of Chinese origin, of the oil and wick variety. Unfortunately, this lamp has seen better days, the metal is dull and tarnished, and the hinged top seems to be rusted fast. However, with a good clean, who knows what possibilities the lamp might offer...

A severed finger. On the finger, a ring. On the ring, the most blood-red ruby you will ever see. Hold the ruby to the light, and watch it cast a crimson shadow on the wall, a shadow in the shape of a woman. The ring, a gift from an Indian Prince to his bride. She was unfaithful to him, and he took his revenge. Give this ring to your lover, and she will never be unfaithful. She would not dare....

Perhaps you like to gamble? A game of cards? Poker perhaps? Then try this pack of cards, the only thing which was left when the Lucky Horseshoe saloon burned down in Deadman's Gulch, 1847. As good as new, almost. Just a bullet hole through the ace of spades. So only play if you enjoy high stakes. And uninvited guests...

How much is good health worth? What would you pay never to be ill, to feel no pain, not the slightest twinge? Then perhaps I can interest you in the Lee Penny, a silver coin from the reign of Edward IV. On one side, the King's head; on the other a dark red stone. Dip the coin in water, and cure any disease. But avoid this one temptation; to attempt to cure the dead...

Accidents will happen, especially when we expect them least. So it pays to be insured, against fire, theft, natural disasters – even Acts of God. You know it makes sense to get peace of mind. But are you fully covered, or can I interest you in this? An insurance policy against alien abduction...?

An ancient book, the *Summa Perfectionis* (Summit of Perfection) attributed to the Arabian scientist and philosopher Geber, the oldest book on alchemy known to the world. Chief scholar of the school of pharmacy inaugurated by the caliphates of the Abbasids in 750 AD, Geber discovered the mystery of the Philosopher's Stone, the most perfect of elements, by means of which all metals can be turned to gold...

A talisman, the amulet of Abraxis. This unassuming stone, worn round the neck on a gold chain, is inscribed with a protective charm, the phylakterion of ancient Greece. The wearers of the amulet are protected from evil spirits, witchcraft and sickness, and shall have good luck throughout their days. Woe be to him who steals the amulet...

How miraculous, the power of the snake to slough its skin, to be born anew! To cast off the old skin, and find a new has grown beneath. If only a man or woman could do the same, shedding their old skin, wrinkled and tarnished by age, and discover a new skin underneath, fresh, young and clear. Drink of this phial of snake's blood to discover the power of the snake...

Only those of pure mind and soul may partake of this powder, ground from a unicorn's horn, and offering the ability to fly! No longer to be earthbound, able to soar above the clouds on a whim, transported across oceans like the wind. But beware you of evil intent who wish for the horn, for your limbs will become leaden, and as heavy as stone...

The Hand of Glory once belonged to a renowned Arabian thief, before it was finally cut off as a punishment for his crimes. Now withered, brown and leathery with age, it is kept in its own small, mahogany case. It is believed, however, that these clawed, lifeless fingers can still open any lock in existence....

A group of young children spend a morning in the school holidays building a den. They go home for lunch, but when they return in the afternoon, they find the den has been taken over by a gang of older youths, who say they can stay, providing they pass the initiation test...

David is being bullied at school by older children who have been stealing his dinner money. He has had no lunch for several days, and his form tutor has noticed that he has not been in the dining hall at lunchtime. When she questioned him, David said that he now goes home for lunch. The form tutor rings his mother to confirm these new arrangements...

After a PE lesson. When they were getting changed, Emma and Susan noticed that their friend Sarah is covered in bruises. She got very upset, and said she fell off her bicycle, but the girls aren't so sure. They don't know whether they should tell someone...

In the form room at lunchtime. The boys are messing about, teasing the girls, taking their bags and throwing their things around the room. Then one of the boys finds a sanitary towel in Linda's bag, and begins teasing her about it in front of everyone...

At the hairdressing salon. Billie arrives with a cap on, hiding her hair. When she takes it off, Donna the hairdresser is astonished to see that great lumps of Billie's hair have been hacked off. Eventually, in tears, Billie reveals that some girls did it after school. She wants her hair cut really short so that it doesn't show...

Hayley is out shopping for shoes with her mother, when she meets a girl who always gives her a hard time. Next day in an Art lesson, this girl, Karen, and her friends, start taking the mickey out of Hayley's shoes. When Hayley tries to fight back, they put paint in her hair, and rip up her homework in her bag. What's worse, they tell her they'll be waiting for her after school...

Sophie has just joined a new school in year 11. She is both very attractive, and very hardworking, studying to get her exams in the summer. She is very popular with the boys, but this has made the girls jealous. They sit behind her in class saying things like: "Hi, my name's Sophie. I really love myself.."

David hates walking under the subway to school, because he knows it is where a gang of bullies hang out, so usually he takes the long way round to avoid it. One day, he oversleeps, and is very late for school, so he takes a chance. Unfortunately the gang are there, and set on him immediately. They tell him to get money off the young kids at school, and bring it to them at lunchtime, or else...

When he was at school Lee was frequently bullied by a boy named Darren. Several years later Lee has become a dentist. He discovers by chance Darren is one of his patients, and is not very keen on having fillings....

In the school canteen. A group of kids sitting at a table invite Luke over to join them. They don't normally talk to him, and make fun of him because he is fat. They ask him if he would like some pizza. When he says he wouldn't, they say that this is not very friendly of him. So he reluctantly agrees. Mark, the ring leader of the group, licks the whole of the pizza.

Mark: Eat it. You said you wanted it, fat boy.

Derek wears glasses and so Matthew assumes he must be smart at maths. Unfortunately he isn't. Matthew threatens him, and copies his answer in a test. When they both fail the test, Matthew waits for Derek after school...

Jeremy is out riding on his new bike. When he rides to a local beauty spot, he is set upon by a gang of teenagers who threaten him and steal his bike. Jeremy comes home in tears. His mother is sympathetic and wants to call the police. His father is scornful, and says, "Why didn't you fight back? Fancy just letting them take your bike off you!"

Bullying # 2

A bunch of raw recruits have just joined the army. The corporal in charge of them quickly spots that Nick is the biggest, the most talkative, and the toughest of the more of them all. The corporal tells him that he is the unit's "fall guy". If anybody in the unit does anything wrong, Nick will be punished. It's up to him to make sure that the others toe the line...

Tracey is bullied by a gang of four girls who corner her in the loo, the changing rooms, or on the way to school. Debbie is the worst, the leader. One day Tracey meets Debbie on her own outside school, and she immediately starts name calling, and teasing. Tracey decides she's had enough, and one against one is better odds...

Patrick has a stutter. All the English class have been told to prepare a talk, in pairs with a partner, about a hobby or an interest. He is dreading it, because the teacher often teases him about his stutter, not realising the offence it causes. Patrick is paired off with Helen because she is the only person who volunteers. He wants to duck out of the talk, but she persuades him to go through with it, because he is extremely knowledgeable about snakes. Helen suggests he brings one of his snakes with him on the day, to help illustrate their talk..

Tess was overweight, and suffered because of the teasing of a group of girls at school. It made her so depressed, that eventually she refused to eat properly, and became anorexic. She is now in hospital. Sonia, one of the girls who teased her, has a guilty conscience about it, and decides to visit her in order to try to help...

Alan doesn't fit in with the other boys in his class somehow. He gets picked on because he doesn't wear designer label clothes, and gets called "Oxfam" by some of the boys who are better off than he is. He persuades his parents to buy him some new clothes, and they agree, even though they can't really afford it, in the hope that it will make his life better. When he arrives at school with his new clothes, the boys gather round...

Nothing Melanie ever does is good enough to impress her father, who criticises her continually. Her father is a teacher at the school Melanie attends, and he seems to be extra hard on her so that the other children don't think he is showing favouritism. He is surprised when he is called into the Principal's office to be told that Melanie has been accused of bullying by another girl in her class...

Scott knows that his friend Martin is being bullied by a group of boys, and would like to help him. He suggests that Martin should report the bullying, or leave a note in the "Bullying box" for the teachers to read. Martin is uncertain, afraid that Scott's suggestion might make matters worse...

Elsa has been told that one way to stand up to bullies is to have a list of funny replies ready to give back to the bullies when they pick on her. Things like "If I were to hit you back, the RSPCA would be after me for cruelty to dumb animals!" She asks her friend Katie to help her invent her "put down" list, which she then practices in front of the mirror. Then comes the day to put them to the test.

Sean steals Ashok's homework, which has been done on a computer, and therefore cannot be identified by its handwriting. Ashok prints out another copy, and hands that in also. The teacher calls the two boys together, to find out who has been copying. She has a shrewd idea it is Sean, but she cannot prove it. Ashok knows that if he says Sean has been copying, he will get him after school...

When Natalie moves to her new school from a different part of the country, the girls in her class gather round, and ask her to say things so that they can hear her strange accent. At first Natalie thinks this is just friendly curiosity, but she begins to realise that there is something nasty about their interest...

Mary has started to grow hair under her armpits. When she goes swimming, the boys notice and make fun of her, shouting "Hairy Mary" after her. She is upset, but who can she tell...?

Jack has just had his eyes tested, and has been told he has to wear glasses. He is afraid to wear them in case others pick on him, and so finds it difficult to see the work on the board. His teacher tries to talk to him, to find out why his work has gone downhill recently, but Jack won't say....

Carol is the teacher's pet. She continually tells tales on the other children, especially the boys. One day, when the teacher is out of the classroom, some of the boys are messing about. When the teacher returns, Carol tells the teacher that they have been misbehaving and the boys are punished. On the way home from school, the boys gang up on her, punching her, and pulling her hair. One of the boys called Peter sees what's happening, but doesn't join in. The next day, the teacher investigates. Peter has a problem. Does he admits to being a part of the bullying in order to stay in with his friends, or does he deny being involved in order to stay out of trouble?

When Penny is picked on by other girls at school, her parents decide to send her to martial arts classes, in order to learn how to fight back. But on the first night of these classes, who should be there but one of the girls who is the worst of the bullies...

Marcus is spoiled by his mother, who gives him anything he wants, and thinks he is a wonderful boy. In fact, Marcus is a bully, and spends most of his time picking on other children. His teacher has evidence of this, and asks his mother to come into school to discuss her son's behaviour...

Jackie is being picked on at school, to such an extent that she no longer wants to go. She keeps pretending to be ill, having stomach upsets, headaches, and coughs. She won't explain what the real cause of her problems is. Her mother decides to take her to the doctor.

Gerald has two sons, Clifford and Bruce. Clifford, the elder son, can't do anything right in his father's opinion, while Bruce never does anything wrong. One day, Bruce is annoying Clifford, who hits him to make him stop. Bruce complains to his father, who will not listen to anything Clifford has to say, but punishes him immediately. Clifford decides to get his own back on his younger brother...

Tiffany has been bullied over a period of time. She keeps the diary of what has been happening to her. Write a week's entries in her diary and then dramatize these events in her life...

Linda's boss at work is always picking on the her, continually criticising her, setting her impossible deadlines, and picking up on small mistakes. He makes her life a misery. When anyone else is present however, he is charming and polite towards her, so that nobody sees the way in which he really treats her. Eventually she decides to complain to his superior....

Harry plays in goal for a league football team. Unfortunately, the team are not doing very well, and the manager always seems to blame Harry for their defeats. Harry thinks this is unfair, but when he protests the manager refuses to let him train with the others in the first team. When the reserve goalie is injured, however, the manager has to recall Harry, but he is not sure he wants to play for this team again...

Paul is on a bus, upstairs on the back seat. A bunch of older lads get on. When he attempts to get off at his stop, they block his way, preventing him getting off, so that he misses his stop. When he gets upset, they start to tease and make fun of him. There is only one other person on the top of the bus, an OAP. Paul appeals for help...

In school, at break-time, Joshua comes up to Pam. He whispers to her. He dreamt about her last night, and she was "great in bed". How would she like to make his dreams come true....?

David is a student teacher at a large secondary school, doing his first teaching practice. He is the perfect target for a group of unruly students, who set about making his life a misery...

A Century of Childhood # 1

1903. Homeless children, some as young as four or five, are sleeping out on London streets. Police are concerned about the number who are offered shelter by seemingly caring people, who in reality wish to train them into a life of crime...

1908. Two brothers, Frederick and George, aged 11 and 9, are involved in the petty thefts. They want to sell a ring they have stolen, but they know that the pawn broker will need a letter from their mother to prove it is hers to sell, as they are under age. Unfortunately, neither Frederick nor George, can read or write. They need to persuade Henry, the scholar in their class, to help with their scheme...

1912. *News item*: Neighbours complained to police about the father of a younger terror aged seven, who is causing great upset in the neighbourhood. He compelled his father to fetch him beer and cigarettes. The boy it was heard to say to his father "Go and fetch me some beer and cigarettes. If you don't I will give you a jolly good thrashing, or something worse". Neighbours say that he threatened his father with a brush, tongs, and a dolly peg. They say that the father should be made to accept his responsibilities...

1915. Two soldier boys, Edward and Jack Jones, have been charged with being absent from their regiment. They were discovered on a train going home without a valid railway pass. They have been escorted back to their barracks where they will face a court martial. Both boys are only 15 years old, too young to enlist in the army. However, both now face a lengthy prison sentence, or even the death penalty for being absent without leave during a time of war...

1915. The First World War is one year old, and the country is in the grip of spy mania. Children are convinced that German spies are everywhere. Every stranger is watched and followed. When a new teacher who talks with a foreign accent takes over their class, Len and Ginger decide they must catch him out, and prove he is a spy...

1919. Henry and Maud are young orphans. Their father was killed in the Great War, and their mother died of Spanish flu shortly afterwards. They are being cared for by a local charity. If no one is willing to adopt the children, they will be sent to Australia to begin "a new life". The children's aunt has six children of her own already, and does not want any more. A visitor from the local charity tries to persuade her, and her husband, to adopt Henry and Maud.

1926. Mr and Mrs Truman are having problems with their son Gilbert. They see this advertisement in the Church Times: "For unmanageable boys, try old-fashioned methods. On receipt of particulars from parents, an experienced headmaster will write fully or arrange an interview in London. Success guaranteed". They decided to apply, but will the headmaster's traditional methods work on Gilbert...?

1928. Elisabeth's mother has died. Her father is struggling to bring her up on his own, but is finding it difficult to cope, as she has a wild and wicked temper. He decides to send her to the church army for "training for service". She is to be trained as a servant, but at the moment she refuses to do what anyone tells her...

1931. *News item*: A farm labourer, Albert Higgins, aged 16, was sentenced to six months imprisonment, for unlawful association with a girl of 14, Hannah Parks. The girl's grandmother had told him to stop seeing the girl, but Higgins said in court today that the girl lay in wait for him on his way home from work. He admitted he had been up lanes with her, but claimed that most of the lads in the village had as well. Hannah is now expecting a baby, which she claims is Albert's child...

1934. Doll works as a barrow girl in Sheffield steelworks. She spends all day shifting bags of slack. By the end of the day she is black from head to toe. Washing facilities at home are very primitive. Water for the tin bath has to be heated in pots and kettles, and so she only has one proper bath each week. She has been invited on a date by a boy she really likes. The problem is, she either has to go out on the date without having a proper bath, or risk arousing her parents' suspicion. And they do not like this boy...

1941. Rosemary runs home from school with her friend Jenny for to find that her mother is in Jenny's house, covered in dirt. A bomb has fallen in Rosemary's garden during an air raid, and showered her mother with dirt. But it has not exploded. The girls decide that they have to rescue Rosemary's dog...

1942. When a German plane crashes in a nearby field, souvenir hunters strip the plane before the dead pilot is even removed. The chief constable issues a statement: everything must be returned within two days, or people found in possession of parts of the plane will be prosecuted. Tom and Spike have the German pilot's pistol hidden in their den. Tom is afraid of getting caught, and thinks they should hand it in. But Spike wants to keep it in case there is a Nazi invasion...

1944. In this year domestic subjects for boys are added to the school curriculum. Boys are now to be taught such things as how to set the table correctly, how to prepare sandwiches and beverages, and how to cook simple breakfast and dinner dishes. They will learn about washing and pressing suits and shirts, sewing on buttons, darning socks, buying foodstuffs and using cleaning materials. What happens in the first lesson when the boys begin this new course...?

1953. Blackpool and Stanley Matthews are playing in the FA Cup Final. Michael is the only kid in the street with a television. Tom would do anything to watch the final, even make friends with Michael, who nobody likes because he is so posh. Michael says he will invite him, providing Tom is prepared to be his "slave" for a week. Is even watching Stanley Matthews worth such a fate...?

1957. Paul is in love. He does not know how to tell Marjorie his feelings for her, and so he is pining badly. He has lost his appetite, but his mother thinks she knows the reason when she sees this advertisement in the newspaper: "When a bright lad seems dull, maybe it's constipation that is dulling his wits and putting a damper on him. That's when nature sometimes needs a little help and the wise mother relies on California Syrup of Figs, the natural laxative." Unfortunately, his mother's treatment coincides with Paul finally getting a date with Marjorie...

1957. A group of girls are holding a pyjama party, sitting in a circle prophesying each other's future. Gillian has been moody all night, but when Deborah jokingly predicts that she will have at least six children, Gillian bursts into tears...

1958. A vicar has banned youth club members who used bad language, stole 39 bottles of mineral water, boycotted a religious meeting in order to play cards, and disturbed the Conservative Party local election meeting by playing records loudly in next room. The youth club members are protesting at his actions...

1962. Mini problems. A girl writes to a magazine: "I'm 15 and all my friends are much more with it than me. They are wearing these very short skirts right above their knees. My parents say it's indecent. There are continual rows about my clothes. I feel like a laughing stock in long skirts and I'm dreadfully unhappy..."

1969. A group of children are messing about during school holidays. They are looking for excitement by setting each other dares. But the game gets out of hand as the dares get more and more dangerous...

1976. Johnny and Suzi form a band, The Exorcists. They are booked to play their first gig, at their school. The Head teacher's jaw drops when they turn up, dressed in black plastic bin liners, with green mohican hairstyles, and safety pins stuck through their ears...

Chinese Whispers # 1

When you play Chinese whispers, a message is passed from one person to the next, and the fun is to see how the message changes along the way. In real life, gossip is a bit like this, as people misunderstand what they hear, and interpret things in their own way. In these starters, you are given the "real" situation, and then the changed version which causes misunderstandings...

Real situation: Tom's cousin Samantha, aged 17 and stunningly attractive, arrives unexpectedly one weekend to stay. Tom takes her out to the cinema.

What gets said: "Your boyfriend Tom's two-timing you! I saw him out with another girl on Saturday!"

Real situation: Annie is a diabetic. She has to carry a syringe and insulin with her at all times, in case she needs to inject herself. She starts at a new school.

What gets said: "That new girl's a junkie! She's got a needle and everything, and brings it to school. I think we should tell someone!..."

Real situation: Barry's dad is in court for refusing to pay a parking fine. He wants to explain that his car had broken down, and that he had left it to phone the AA. The emergency lights wouldn't work, because the car had something wrong with the electrics.

What gets said: "Have you heard Barry's dad's up in court — and likely to get sent to prison!"

Real situation: Rosie and her new boyfriend get caught in a tremendous thunderstorm, and are soaked through. She invites him into her house, and lends him some clothes while her mum puts his in the tumble drier.

What gets said: "They were in her house, on their first date, and they both took all their clothes off!"

Real situation: Jacki asks her friend Sonya to tell her boyfriend Tony that she can't see him this week because she's been grounded by her parents, and is not even allowed to make any phone calls.

What gets said: "Jacki asked me to tell you that she doesn't want to see you.."

Real situation: Mary wins £68 in a lottery syndicate at work. As a joke, she tells a neighbour that she is going on a world cruise with her winnings, and will probably be moving soon into a mansion in the country.

What gets said: "Did you hear that Mary's won the lottery? Her and some people at work. She's giving up her job, and is buying a house in the Bahamas."

Real situation: Subhash is going into his bank when he is flattened by someone rushing out, not looking where they are going. They both go sprawling on the pavement, and Subhash has to go to hospital with concussion. A policeman stayed with him until the ambulance arrived.

What gets said: "Did you hear about Subhash catching a bank robber single-handed? He tackled him as he ran out of the bank, and got shot. He had to go to hospital for an operation on his brain. That boy's a real hero!"

Real situation: Penny suffers badly from hay-fever, and has to take anti-histamine pills whenever the pollen count is high. The pills can make her drowsy, so she does not drink when she has taken one. One spring evening, she is invited to a party. She has been having a bad attack, but her friends persuade her to go..

What gets said: "Your Penny was absolutely legless last night at that party. My son was there, and he told me she completely passed out!"

Real situation: Maurice is a keen bird watcher, an ornithologist. He has set up a hide in his back garden, and spends a lot of his time looking out of his bedroom window through binoculars. He has been noticed by the girl across the street.

What gets said: "I'm going to the police! He's a perv, a peeping Tom!"

Real situation: Jane is really ticklish. Her boyfriend Lennie knows this, and often delights in tickling her. One time however, she struggles so much, they bang heads, and she gets a black eye. She is annoyed with Lennie about this, and slaps his face. He is really sorry, and promises never to tickle her like this again.

What gets said: "They've had a real fight. He blacked her eye, and she slapped his face. Wait until I tell her mum what's happened!"

Real situation: Carly's elder sister Josie has been married for 6 months. She is feeling really sick in the mornings now, so much that she has taken time off work. She asks Carly to pop in to the chemist on her way home from school to get a pregnancy test, just to confirm what she already knows.

What gets said: "I saw her in the chemist, buying one of them pregnancy tests. You wait until I tell Steve. He'll brick himself!"

Real situation: An ambulance is making an emergency call, but cannot find the correct address. The driver draws up alongside Dave Jones, and asks for directions. "Better still", says Dave, climbing into the ambulance, "I'll show you the way!"

What gets said: "Mrs Jones! I'm glad I've caught you. My friend Mrs Humphries says she saw your husband being put into an ambulance.."

Real situation: Tony and Gary are at a weekend conference organised by their firm. It is being held in a hotel, and several other people from their firm are staying overnight as well. Unfortunately, Tony and Gary find they have been booked into a room with one double bed, instead of two singles. When they ask if this can be changed, they are told there are no other rooms available. Nothing else for it but to share...

What gets said: "Haven't you heard? Everyone's talking about it. Tony and Gary are gay!"

Real situation: Tina is inconsolable when her pet labrador is knocked over by a car, and killed. Her husband Charlie is less sympathetic, and thinks all these tears are a bit wasted on a dog. This leads to a noisy argument, and Tina storms off back to her mum. Later that evening, Charlie decides he'd better bury the dog in the garden...

What gets said: "I heard them fighting, and now Tina's not been seen for three days. And he was digging, in the garden, at night..."

Real situation: Kate is busy organising a surprise golden wedding anniversary party for her grandparents, inviting many of their old friends who they haven't seen for many years. She asks her brother to let her best friend Jill know that she won't be able to make their usual Saturday night out because of the party. He assumes Jill knows what kind of a party it is..

What gets said: "Kate's having a surprise party on Saturday. Everyone's invited. It should be a real rave.."

Real situation: Charlie has got a job in a new town. He finds lodgings in a boarding house while he intends to look around for a flat of his own. The landlady's cooking is so bad, he is really ill the day after he moves in. He can't get out of his room, but he doesn't want to embarrass his new landlady by explaining that she's given him food poisoning, and so doesn't explain that he's ill.

What gets said: "That new bloke's behaving very suspiciously, hiding in his room all day. He's not come out since he got here. I'm sure I've seen his picture on Crimewatch.."

Real situation: Tony works in a large department store. It is coming up to Christmas, when the regular Santa Claus is suddenly taken ill. There is a long queue waiting to get in to the grotto; someone will have to take over. The store manager decides Tony is the man for the job. He tells his secretary to phone the toy department manager to let Tony know. And to make sure he gets the sack, with all the presents in it..

What gets said: "Tony, I've got some bad news mate. I don't know how to tell you, but the Manager's secretary just phoned me. You've been given the sack..."

Class

Two cars meet halfway along a country lane, where there is no space to pass. One is a Bentley, belonging to a local landowner. The other is a VW camper van, with new age travellers off to a festival. Neither driver will reverse. They get out of their cars to negotiate...

Replay the situation above, but this time the driver of the VW camper van is an eccentric hippy lord who is allowing the festival to take place on his estate. The driver of the Bentley is a local businessman who has made his own fortune out of nothing...

On the common. A posh middle-class woman is taking her pedigree poodle for a walk. A working-class bloke is taking his mongrel. The two dogs have been let off their leads. The mongrel is busy seducing the poodle somewhere in the distance. The woman protests to the man about his dog's behaviour...

A couple are selling their house. They are very middle-class and house-proud. Everything is tidy and spotless. The garden is just so; the lawn looks like it has been cut with nail scissors. A family arrive to look over the house. They have any number of kids, and a dog. As the couple begin the guided tour, the family begin to make themselves at home...

A city centre, outside a department store. The mayor's limousine is illegally parked on a double yellow line. A young traffic warden approaches. She has not been informed that there is any official business on in the store today; she checks on her radio that there is none. Just when she is fixing a parking ticket to the windscreen, the mayor and chauffeur appear, carrying a number of bags bearing the store's name...

News item: The Lady of the Manor saw red when bailiffs entered her 17th century property to try to recover a £180 debt owed by her husband for traffic offences. She rushed upstairs, grabbed a double-barrelled shotgun, and ordered the terrified man and woman to leave, complaining that the female bailiff was polluting the atmosphere with cheap scent. When police arrived at the £1m house to arrest her, her daughter rushed to her defence brandishing a hockey stick...

The Queen is to visit the local factory as part of a royal visit to the town. The employees have a raffle to see who will have the chance to meet the her. Maude wins the raffle, and is delighted. When she wants to bring her husband Oliver with her, he refuses to come. He cannot stand the royal family...

In order to break down "class barriers", a comprehensive school in an inner city area arranges an exchange scheme with a posh public school. The idea is that a group of students from each school should spend a week at the other school, to find out "how the other half lives"....

Lord and Lady Moncur have fallen upon hard times trying to preserve their stately home, which has been in their family for many hundreds of years. Their bank manager persuades them that the only solution is to open the house to tourists. Much against their wishes, the first coach loads of tourists arrive, tramping through their prize possessions, and making themselves very much at home on the antique furniture...

It is late at night. Mr and Mrs Barrington-Forte are travelling by car to their holiday home in Wales. Unfortunately, their car breaks down, and the AA cannot reach them for several hours. The only place for miles is a transport café full of lorry drivers, serving good wholesome food, floating in fat...

A warm summer's day. Mr O'Reilly, the gardener, is struggling with the heat, and with his sixty-eight years. His employers, the Twitchells are sitting in deckchairs on the patio, enjoying a few drinks with some close friends. The conversation pauses only when they break off to give Mr O'Reilly his instructions. Have to keep him on his toes. Can't have him slacking off.....

Two police officers are chasing a number of youths who have attempted to rob somebody at knife point. The officers separate during the chase, and one of them is left to confront the youths on his own. He uses his walkie talkie to radio for back-up, but his partner does not respond. The officer is stabbed by the youths, and though badly injured he is not killed. Afterwards he accuses his partner of losing his bottle, and leaving him in the lurch.

A police officer is called to a shoplifting incident. He discovers that the thief is a drug addict who is trying to get funds to pay for his next fix. The addict resists arrest, and stabs the officer with a syringe. He claims that he is suffering from Hepatitis B...

A drunk is arrested for causing a disturbance, late one evening. He becomes aggressive, and has to be restrained by several officers. He is taken to the police station, where he is placed in a cell to sleep it off. Next morning, he is found, dead. An investigation into his death takes place, during which all the officers on duty the night before are interrogated about what happened to this man.

A man calls at the door, saying he is selling scratch cards for a local charity. He holds up some kind of an ID card, and has a pile of scratch cards in his hand. Annie is in the house by herself, but likes to do what she can for good causes, so she goes into the kitchen to get her purse. When she returns to the front door, she finds he has entered the house, and seems reluctant to leave when she has paid for the card. He says his brother is thinking of buying a house like this in the area, would she mind if he just had a look around...?

The Doyle family arrive back from holiday to find that their house has been burgled, and has been left in a real state. Everything has been thrown out of the drawers, everyone's privacy invaded. Cheryl is particularly upset. Her diary is missing. She refuses to sleep in the house ever again...

A cheeky burglar orders a take-away pizza while he is actually stealing from a house. The pizza is delivered to the address, and the burglar tells the delivery boy to wait while he goes to get the money. Instead, the burglar disappears out of the backdoor, with his pizza. The delivery boy waits for several minutes, then goes into the house to see what is happening. This is when the police arrive....

It is nearly bonfire night. Neighbouring streets have competitions to see who can hold the best bonfire, so gangs of kids scour the neighbourhood looking for wood, or trying to steal it from rival bonfires. One group of kids decide that theirs will be the best fire on the night, by setting fire to the one in the next street the day before. One of them, Macca, disagrees; he thinks they should make theirs the best without resorting to this kind of underhand tactics. What none of the kids know, is that their rivals are spending the night **inside** their bonfire, in order to stop anyone stealing their wood...

There are two rival teenage gangs, each with their own territory. They frequently try to invade each other's territory in order to prove their superiority. During one of these fights, a member of one of the gangs is killed. JoJo is a young boy who wants to join the gang. To be accepted, he must prove himself. His test is to kill the rival gang member responsible for this death. He is reluctant to do this, but can see no way out without losing face completely.

A businessman is travelling to work on the underground. A young man standing next to him, keeps bumping into him as the train sways. The businessman gets suspicious, thinking that the young man is a pick-pocket. Sure enough, when he feels for his wallet, it is missing. In fact, he has left his wallet at home. However, he does not realise this, and immediately threatens the young man, insisting that he hands over the wallet. The terrified young man does so, but when the train gets into the station, he fetches a policeman, and accuses the businessman of stealing his wallet...

A policeman is called to a shoplifting incident in a large department store. When he gets there, he finds that the alleged thief is an ex-girlfriend...

Crime # 2

A couple make a bogus insurance claim, saying that their sitting room carpet has been ruined. They do not expect the company to send an assessor, as this didn't happen the last time they claimed. When the assessor arrives unexpectedly, the husband quickly has to explain how the accident happened. In the middle of this, his wife arrives home, unaware of the excuse her husband has invented ...

A boxer has the opportunity to fight for the title, the highest point in his career. But he has been threatened by a gang of mobsters; "take a tumble, lose the fight, or else." He decides to ignore their threats, and to try to win the fight. His manager tries to persuade him not to. He has been in the fight game a long time, and he knows what will happen if these threats are ignored...

An old woman lives alone. Rumour has it that she has money hidden around her house. It seems like an easy job to break in and take it. At least Gary thinks so. Chris is not so keen on the idea, but doesn't want to lose face by saying so. Especially as Gary can get rough sometimes...

The lives of residents on an estate are made a misery by the criminal behaviour of one particular family. They demand money with menaces, break in to houses and flats, and deal in drugs. Anyone who stands up to them is threatened, or worse. The police are powerless because no one will testify against them. Then an elderly resident, whose flat had been burgled some days before, mysteriously "falls" down a lift shaft...

A young girl steals money from his mother's purse, spending it on sweets and ice-cream, treating all her friends. She returns home to find her mother in tears, convinced she's lost the money, which was the last she had to get through until the end of the week...

A derelict building. The local children use it as a play ground, ignoring the notices warning them against its dangers. Dusk is falling. The children are heading for home. One of them remembers he has forgotten his jacket, and goes back alone to find it. He climbs the stairs to an upstairs room, looks round for his jacket in the dark. He strikes a match, and is terrified by the face of a man. An escaped convict, who threatens to slit his throat from ear to ear unless he brings him some food...

In a supermarket. A store detective catches a homeless person shoplifting food, and attempts to march her to the manager's office. Customers in the store become aware of the disturbance, and start to take sides. One even offers to pay for the stolen food, as a charitable act. The supermarket has a policy of always prosecuting shoplifters, and the store detective is adamant. Eventually, the manager arrives to see what the fuss is about...

In a restaurant. A con-man orders a slap up meal, pretending to be Lord so-and-so. The owner is delighted to have such "quality" patronising his restaurant, and cannot do enough for his lordship. At the end of the meal, when he cannot pay, the con-man claims that his wallet has been stolen...

Ireland, the 18th century. The potato blight has destroyed most of the year's crop, whole families are starving. A tenant is caught poaching a rabbit on a landowner's estate by the gamekeeper. The landowner has to decide what to do. The gamekeeper wants the man punished, to deter others. But the tenant has been a decent man up until now, and the penalty for poaching could be deportation to Australia for life...

A businessman and his wife have a holiday home in Wales, where they like to spend the odd weekend to relax away from the frenzy of city life. When they arrive at the home late one Friday evening, they are annoyed and horrified to discover that the house has been taken over by a group of homeless people claiming squatters rights...

In a fashion store. Rachel is going to a party, and wants a new dress, but does not have enough to pay for it. Patsy persuades her to steal it. After all, she'd never been caught...

A group of teenagers hang around outside local shops. They can be noisy, and taunt shoppers as they pop in and out. After complaints from customers, the shopkeeper asks the police to move them on. That night, the window on the shop is smashed...

A PC and his partner make an arrest. On the way back to the station, the PC beats up the suspect, who later makes an official complain. The PC expects his partner to back up his story, saying the suspect resisted arrest, struck him first, reasonable force was used. His partner knows this is all lies, and is not sure what to do...

A teenager is involved in petty theft, shoplifting mostly. While her mother is putting away clean clothes in her daughter's drawer, she discovers a hoard of things she has stolen. She confronts her daughter when she returns home, and then horrifies her when she makes it clear she is going to turn her in to the police, "for her own good"...

An prisoner has just completed his sentence, and has been released. He has promised his wife that he will go straight from now on. He has been for several job interviews, but always seems to get turned down when they find out about his criminal record. He is getting pretty depressed about things, when he meets an old mate in a pub, who asks him if he wants to make some easy money...

A criminal gang has been infiltrated by a policeman, who has heard about a job they are planning to do from an informant. They stage the bank robbery, which goes horribly wrong. Someone gets shot, and the police backup fails to appear. The meet back at their "safe-house". They know one of them has set the gang up. But who is it..?

A small time drug dealer is selling his boss short, taking some of the gear he is supplied with for himself, mixing any kind of powder he can find to make up the shortage. After the death of a junkie, the police are getting interested, and the boss decides to check out his suspicions. If the dealer's been ripping him off, he intends to teach him a lesson...

A man caught stealing at work is sacked. He didn't steal much, just some bits and pieces to fix his car. Everybody does it, but he got caught. He now has to go home to break the news to his wife, who is expecting their first baby...

In a large department store. A woman is shopping with her children. A store detective watches her. She gives several items of clothing to her children. They put them inside a bag from a different store. She goes up to the checkout to pay for one small item. The store detective closes in...

Barry has a gambling habit which has been getting worse, and costing more and more. If he can just raise the stake for one last bet, a sure fire certainty, he can pay off his debts, and give up gambling for good. Or so he tells himself. He steals jewellery belonging to his mother, which has been in the family for generations, and hocks it to raise the stake. After all, he can buy it back when his horse comes in, can't he...?

Harry, a middle aged man, is out doing some shopping, when he gets involved in a chase after a shoplifter. Harry stops him, and keeps him pinned to the ground until the police arrive. He can't believe it when the police say they are going to let the thief go with a caution, because the store has got the goods back. Harry demands they arrest the shoplifter, and charge him with theft...

A new system of punishment has been introduced called Mediation. As part of their punishment, convicted criminals have to meet the victims of their crime, to listen to the upset and injury it has caused them. Invent a crime, a criminal, and a victim, in order to dramatise what happens when the mediation meeting takes place.

News item: A Scotsman who tried to pay for a tin of paint with a Scottish £10 note was arrested on suspicion of trying to pass counterfeit money...

Crime # 4

There are rumours that a sex offender who has completed his sentence is to be released, and rehabilitated into the community. An article condemning the idea has appeared in the local newspaper, and aroused public opinion. Coincidentally, a middle-aged man, a single parent, and his young daughter, are moving into the area. Suspicion is running wild...

A man travelling on a long journey by car stops at a supermarket to buy a drink. There is a special offer on "Orange whizz" so he buys a bottle, and drinks it. Shortly afterwards he is involved in an accident. He is routinely breathalysed, and is found to be over the limit. He cannot understand how this can be, until he discovers that "Orange whizz" is an alcho-pop. He decides to sue the supermarket for not making this clear when he bought the drink. He faces losing his licence, or worse, and claims it is not his fault...

Outside a football ground. A tout is selling tickets at extortionate prices. A fan is trying to persuade him to sell it to him more cheaply, as he cannot afford the price he is asking. When the tout refuses, the fan snatches tickets and cash, and disappears into the crowd. The tout complains to a police officer on duty...

A farmer has been burgled on several occasions, and is frustrated that the police seem unable or unwilling to catch the culprits. Every evening he keeps vigil with his shotgun across his knee, lying in wait to catch the thieves if they come back to rob him again. And one night they do...

A paparazzi is dogging the heels of famous footballer, who is trying to enjoy himself on a night out. When the paparazzi takes a photograph of the footballer leaving a night-club at 3 a.m., the footballer loses his temper, grabs the camera, and smashes it on the pavement. The paparazzi calls the police...

Eddie is heartbroken when his teenage daughter dies from an overdose of drugs. He suspects he knows who sold her the drugs, and is determined to get his revenge...

Marshall is a young criminal who has been convicted of a large number of petty crimes. He is given the opportunity to take part in a community project instead of doing a prison sentence. The project involves attending a day care centre, and helping disabled children...

Several years ago Ruby was the victim of a violent assault. The police persuaded her to testify against her attacker, a notorious local villain called Eddie Squires. The police promised to protect her, but Eddie has now been released from jail, and is watching her house...

Inside one of the toughest prisons in Britain. There is a disturbance which is caused by alleged mistreatment of the inmates by prison officers. A group of prisoners take a warder hostage, and barricade themselves in a prison workshop. They threaten to kill the officer if their demands are not met....

A teenage boy holds up a building society using a toy gun. The alarm is set off during the raid, and armed police arrive at the scene. The young boy panics, and is shot dead by the police. The boy's parents accuse the police of murdering their son.

A Woman Police Constable and her male partner are called to a domestic incident. A husband is threatening to kill his wife, accusing her of having an affair with another man. The fact is, as the woman constable finds out when interviewing her, she has taken to prostitution in order to make ends meet, obviously without her husband knowing what she has been doing. The problem is, if he finds this out, will it make matters better, or worse?

Lewis plays in goal for a professional football club. He is casually approached by one of his team mates, who asks if he would like to earn some "easy money". Naturally, Lewis is interested enough to find out more, until it becomes clear that his team mate is talking about throwing a forthcoming match on behalf of a betting syndicate. Lewis wants nothing to do with it, but now wonders whether or not he should blow the whistle on his mate...

Lorraine is baby sitting her younger brother Marlon. She has invited her boyfriend Greg round for the evening, and is prepared to try anything to get her brother to leave them in peace....

Megan has agreed to go on a date with a foreign guy who doesn't speak any English at all. He brings along his mate who can speak English to act as an interpreter. The whole "chatting up process" is conducted through this third party...

Paul is trying to impress a girl who spends a lot of her spare time doing keep fit at a health club and gymnasium. Paul decides to join the club, and to work out regularly so that he can catch her eye with his "magnificent" body. Unfortunately, when he starts the course, he discovers he is not as fit as he thought...

Desmond is an ordinary sort of guy. He has managed to arrange a date with Phoebe, a very sophisticated woman who works in his office. He decides to try to impress her by taking her to a really expensive restaurant, which he cannot really afford. He is so nervous during the meal that he says the most ridiculous things, and behaves in the most clumsy way...

It is the end of year dance for the school leavers. Louise has accepted an invitation to go to the dance with Gregory. However, she would really like to go to the dance with Martin, but as he hadn't asked her, she accepted Gregory's invitation. Then the day before the dance Martin finally asks her. She asks her best friend if she should accept Martin's offer, or stick with Gregory and miss the chance of her dream date...

Richard goes on a date with Gail, a girl he really likes. The next day his friends tease him by asking him how far he got with her. Stupidly, he lets them believe that he got "all the way". When this rumour begins to spread Gail is very upset, and angry that he could say these things about her. She finds him out to give him a piece of her mind...

A group of friends decide to play a joke on a shy lad called Colin. They set him up for a date with a girl who has placed an advertisement in the personal column of a magazine. The joke backfires when the date proves to be really cool and attractive...

A mother decides it's time to give her 13 year old daughter "the talk" when she is asked out for the first time by a boy...

It is Valentine's Day. Ray has decided to buy some sexy underwear for his girlfriend. But when he gets as far as the lingerie department of the store, he gets embarrassed and begins to have second thoughts....

Billy is a Protestant. He has met Catholic girl called Sinead, who lives on the opposite side of Belfast. Billy would like to meet her again, but it is very difficult in this divided city. If he crosses the Peace Line, he may be putting his life in danger. He decides she is worth the risk...

Maureen went on a date with a colleague at work called Colin, mainly because he asked her to, so often. She didn't really get on with him, and so she turned down his request for a further date. Colin won't seem to take no for an answer, however, and keeps phoning her at home, writing letters to her, and leaving notes on her desk in the office. He seems to think that their one date was much more "serious" than it actually was. Maureen asks her best friend what she should do...

It is the day before Margaret's big date with Tony, the best looking boy in the school. She leaps out of bed full of the joys of life, looking forward immensely to the date. But when she looks in the mirror, she discovers she has a large, conspicuous spot right on the tip of her nose. What on earth can she do to save the date, and to avoid embarrassment?

Dating # 2

In the queue, outside a night-club, late on a Saturday evening. A guy and his girlfriend are on a first date. When they approach the door, the bouncer refuses to let the guy in because he is wearing trainers. The girl very much wants to go to this club, even if it means ditching her new date...

A 15 year old girl is dating a 30 year old man. Her parents are anxious, and think the age difference between their daughter and this man is too great. As she is preparing to go out to meet him, her parents make a decision: she cannot go out with this man until they have had a chance to meet him, and judge for themselves...

Tony and Jayne are having an engagement party. Tony's ex-girlfriend, Yvonne, is invited to the party, as she has been a friend of both of them for several years. She still secretly fancies Tony, and deliberately tries to upset Jayne by bringing up details of Tony's previous girlfriends...

Alison has placed an advertisement in the singles column of a magazine. Steve has replied, and phoned to arrange a date. Unfortunately, neither has been totally accurate in describing what they look like, nor in what they do...

Tom has asked Melanie out on a date to the cinema. They have arranged to see a film which has a 15 certificate. Tom is 15, but is short for his age. When they get to the cinema, the woman in the ticket kiosk refuses to believe Tom is 15. He has no ID with him, and there are friends of his in the queue waiting to see the picture...

Mick and Chris have dates to go to a night-club with two fantastic girls. It is the date of a lifetime. The problem is, they have no transport, and do not want to look like a couple of divvies in the eyes of the girls. Chris persuades Mick to borrow his dad's car without him knowing. The last time he borrowed it, he put a dent in it, so his dad has banned him from using it, and would not be very happy if he found out...

Invent a character who has applied to a dating agency. This person has been asked to go to the office in order to make a short video tape which will be shown to other possibly interested partners. What would your character say on the tape...?
(You will obviously require a video camera to produce this idea).

A young fan has won a competition in a magazine, a date with her favourite pop star. They meet at a restaurant, though he is not alone, surrounded by his agent, a photographer from the magazine, and various other hangers on. As soon as the photo call is over, the pop star obviously thinks the date is at an end, and he expects her to run along home. She is outraged at being treated like this...

Angie met Simon on holiday, and really fell for him, a wonderful holiday romance. Unfortunately, they live at the far end of the country from each other, but agreed to keep in touch, and maybe visit each other when they get back. Angie is determined that this holiday romance is going to last. She gets a part time job, and saves like mad to get enough money together to go and visit him. To make it even more of a surprise, she doesn't even tell him she is coming. Imagine his face when he sees her on his doorstep...!

Carl has a new girlfriend, Rita. They spend most of their free time together, but on Saturday he likes to meet his mates in the pub at lunchtime, and then go on to a football match. Rita asks if she can come too, but Carl doesn't really want to bring her. After all, football is for mates, not girlfriends, isn't it...?

Rona used to date Paul when he was singing in a local band. As his career took off, he took advantage of her, treated her badly, and eventually dumped her. She has met another lad, Simon, a solid reliable type, who she quite likes, and has been going out with for some time. By chance, though, she meets Paul at a night-club, and he starts to come on to her again...

Invent an educational film made in the 1950s for teenagers about "Dating". Show your innocent audience how to ask for a date, what to wear, where to go, what to say, and what to do when the date is over. Try to show how dating "rules" have changed between then and the present day.

When Cheryl, the best looking girl in the school, sends a valentine card to Rodney, the geekiest boy in the class, as a joke, she doesn't realize what she is letting herself in for. To teach her a lesson, all the other boys decide to throw the joke on her, by agreeing that none of them will ask her to the Valentine Dance. It begins to look like if she wants to go to the dance, she will have to go with Rodney...

Pamela agrees that Terry, her boyfriend can go to a football match on her birthday instead of taking her out, providing that he takes her to the ballet a week later. He agrees, forgetting that his best mate Steve has his stag night on the same night. If Pamela won't let him out of their deal, he will have some excuses to make up, and hope that his mates don't find out where he actually is going instead...

Lorna has fixed up a date to go to the cinema with Ross. At the last minute, Lorna's mother insists that she looks after her young brother Martin. They decide to go to cinema anyway, and bring Martin with them. The first problem arises however when they get to the kiosk and realise they cannot go in to see the film they want. There is no way that Martin be allowed into film for over 18s...

In order to save herself from being left out of things, Nita invents an imaginary boyfriend, who is supposedly fantastic looking, great fun, and has a wonderful job which makes him lots of money. Her friends are very impressed, and keen to meet this wonderful guy they have heard so much about...

When Lance signs on at the Social Security office, he finds out that the girl on the desk is the same girl he told a pack of lies to about his job and lifestyle at the disco the week before...

Melody plans a romantic evening with her boyfriend Steve. He agrees without checking that it is the same day as an important football match. He listens to the game on a hidden ear piece connected to a radio, and has to cover his wild exclamations and antics as the game progresses...

Geoff fancies Donna, and finally plucks up the courage to ask her out. When his friends hear about this date, they decide to have a bit of fun. They tell him that Donna is really freaked out by punk hair styles and clothes. He arrives for the date with his hair in spikes, dyed blue, and his clothes ripped to pieces...

After an argument with her boyfriend, Jane sends him a letter breaking off their relationship. Later that day, she regrets her hasty actions, and wants to stop the letter from reaching him. Early next morning she hides outside her boyfriend's house waiting for the postman, hoping to get the letter back before it is delivered...

At the airport check-in, Sarah is frantic to get back to an ex-boyfriend who is about to get married to someone else. The last plane which will get her there in time is full. She tries to persuade one of the other passengers to give up their ticket to her...

Ann has been dumped by her boyfriend. As a last ditch measure to get him back, she tells him she's pregnant, when in fact she isn't....

Graham is driving Caroline home from a date. They are driving along a lonely country lane miles from anywhere when the car runs out of petrol. Caroline thinks that this is the oldest trick in the book, just an excuse to stop for a cuddle. But she's even more upset when she finds out that they really have run out of petrol...

Dilemmas # 1

Night, getting late. A woman is driving alone along a quiet country road. The engine coughs and splutters, then dies. She tries to restart it, but it refuses. She has no mobile phone to call the AA. She switches on her emergency lights, uncertain whether to start walking to a phone, or to sit where she is. A car pulls up behind her. A man gets out, offering to help. Can he give her a lift to the nearest phone..?

A young child has been badly injured in a road accident, and is now in a coma, kept alive by means of a life support machine. The doctors have told the parents that the child is brain dead, and will not recover. They have asked the parents permission to turn off the life support machine, and have requested to use the child's organs for transplant operations. The parents have to decide what to do...

Gary and John are best friends. John has passed his driving test, but Gary has failed his twice already. He wants to pass his test badly, as it will help him to get a job he's after. Gary comes up with a plan. John can impersonate Gary, and do his test for him...

A group of students share a house, paying the rent on a lease. One of the girls has a boyfriend who has nowhere to stay. She wants the others to let him stay with her. But this would break the leasing agreement with the landlord; if they were found out, they could all be thrown out...

A couple want to sell their house badly, and so have put it on sale at rock bottom price. The reason is that next door, they have the original neighbours from hell. They desperately want to get away at any cost. The estate agent has arranged for a young, newly married couple to view the house. The husband thinks they should lie about the neighbours if they are asked. His wife thinks they should tell the truth. They try to resolve their argument as they wait for the visitors to arrive...

A nurse is working in a private home for elderly people. The residents are often mistreated, slapped for not finishing their tea, incontinence sufferers are forced to sleep in a wet bed, and then left unattended in a cold bath. She has noticed bruises on some residents when helping them to get dressed. The nurse needs the job, but thinks she should challenge the manager of the home, or even go to the newspaper or even the police if nothing is done...

Beverley is 28, and has a young child who is four years old. She is divorced from her husband, and meets a guy in a night-club. He is in the RAF and is soon to be posted abroad. Although he has only known her for a week, he asks Beverley to come with him, and she agrees. She goes to tell her mother that she is selling her house, and going to live abroad. Her mother thinks she is mad....

Tanya is waiting for her boyfriend Rob at the bus-stop. Nearby, a vagrant is lying in the doorway, apparently unconscious. She is worried in case the man is ill, and she ought to do something to help him. When Rob arrives, he dismisses her worries, and thinks they should carry on with their night out. She is not so sure. What if the man should die because they did nothing...?

A television series reports on actual crimes, and asks members of the public for their assistance in solving them. One case concerns a hit and run accident in which a young girl was killed. It involved a motorbike, which was damaged in the accident. James' parents watch the programme, and begin to realize that the motorbike is exactly the same as the one he rides, that he has recently repaired it, and that the accident took place not far from their home...

Dave's dad, Phil, has lost his job. His mother, Betty, is working all hours as a cleaner to keep the family afloat. She asks Dave to take his dad's suit to the cleaners, so that it is ready in case he gets an interview for a job. As Dave is making sure that there is nothing in the pockets, he discovers recent betting slips for large amounts of money. Dave wonders whether to tell Betty what he has found, or give Phil a chance to explain first...

In many times and cultures, parents have arranged marriages for their children. For example, this is the basic story line of Romeo and Juliet. Invent a situation in which a young boy and girl are in love, but one of them is told they have to marry someone chosen for them by their parents....

In the disabled day of a car park outside a supermarket. A driver who is obviously not disabled has borrowed his parent's car, which has a disabled sticker. Another driver who has had great difficulty finding a parking space questions whether the disabled driver should park there, and complains to the supermarket manager. She has to decide whether to follow up the complaint, and risk upsetting a customer who actually is disabled...

An army unit is cut off from its base. It is night, and snow is falling heavily. They have one blanket between them. Should it be given to the officer, to the medic, to the radio operator, or to the crack marksman? Who is the most vital member of the team?

King Leontes falsely suspects that Hermione his wife has been unfaithful to him with his best friend, Polixenes, the king of a neighbouring country. She is pregnant, but he will not listen to her claims that the child is his own. He thinks it is the child of his erstwhile friend. He sends his wife to prison, where she gives birth to the child. The king orders the baby to be put to death, and charges his most trusted courtier with the task...

Nancy and Lorraine share strong views against abortion. They join a pro-life group and actively protest against abortion by taking part in marches and meetings. Then, when Nancy returns home to the flat they share, she discovers that Lorraine is putting together an electronic device, containing what looks like explosives....

The members of a local youth club want to hold a fancy dress Hallowe'en party, but the local vicar (whose church hall the club uses) wants to ban Hallowe'en because he says it is an ungodly, satanic festival. The youth club committee meets to discuss the situation...

Hannah is delighted when she is chosen to appear in a television commercial for a designer brand of trainers. But then she discovers that the trainers are made by sweated labour in a third world country. She does not know whether to drop out from the advertisement, or to swallow her convictions and take part...

A child has been living happily with foster parents for several years, and has grown to think of them as real parents. Out of the blue, the real mother reappears, wishing to reclaim her child. The social worker put in charge of the case has to interview both the foster parents, the real mother, and the child, and recommend what should happen next...

Josie has too much to drink at a party, where she meets Nick. She goes upstairs to a bedroom with him, though not intending to have sex. He ignores her when she says "no" and rapes her because she is too drunk to resist. She is now pregnant, and completely at a loss what to do...

Barry and Kevin are truanting from school. In the shopping mall, they see a woman being attacked by a mugger, who is someone they know. Barry thinks they should come forward as witnesses, Kevin thinks they should say nothing. Is it worth getting into trouble for mitching from school, and what if the mugger finds out who grassed on him....

Leslie is on her way home after work, on an autumn evening. She is stopped in the street by a man with a bunch of flowers, who says he is looking for his new girlfriend's flat. He says he doesn't know the area, so could she give him directions, or even take him there...?

Post nuclear war. Martial law has been declared. Food is terribly scarce. There is a strict curfew; anyone caught looting will be shot immediately. There is no arrest, nor trial, just instant "justice". A squad of soldiers come across some children stealing food from a house. They have their orders; but one of the squad does not want to carry them out...

Elizabethan lowlife # 1

Some examples of Elizabethan tricksters and victims, similar to many which appear in plays of the period by Shakespeare, Jonson and others..

The art of "coney" catching

"Cones" were country farmers visiting London, who were very easy to spot because of the rustic clothes they wore, and their innocent misunderstanding of city life and its dangers.

"Cut-purses", pickpockets, operated in pairs. The job of the "foist" would be to distract the coney in some way, while the "nip" would actually steal the purse by cutting through the leather cord which attached the purse to a belt. The foist might pretend to know the coney, or to mistake them for someone they supposedly knew. Another ploy would be to pretend to fall suddenly ill in the street, or to have been robbed. When the coney came to the aid of the foist, the nip would steal the purse...

A "projector" pretended to have inside knowledge which would help people to make money by investing in some project which could not fail. For example, investing in a scheme to turn dog skins into leather, to make wine from raisins, or to extract sunlight from vegetables. The projector would find a "gull" or dupe who had more money than sense, and an equal proportion of greed. The plan then was to introduce the gull to the project, as if by chance, often making use of a third party who knew all the details of the project, suitably complicated to baffle the gull. All the project needed was funds...

The "crossbiter" ploy

This trickery employs a prostitute (a bawd), and a male colleague, the "crossbiter", whose role will be explained in due course. The bawd entices a victim (a "simple") to her room in an alehouse, pretending to be a woman of some virtue who cannot resist the simple's charms. At the very moment that the affair is to be consummated, the crossbiter bursts in, pretending to be the bawd's outraged husband, demanding that his honour is satisfied with the simple's blood. The tearful bawd begs her "husband" to spare the simple's life, on payment of a large bribe....

Bartolomew Fair, held annually just outside London's city walls, was the best known in England, attracting all manner of buyers, sellers, performers, cozeners and cut-purses. Any crimes which took place at the fair were not brought before the normal courts, but instead had to be settled there and then at the "Pie Court", overseen by a Justice of the Peace, on the day of the fair itself. Since the fair attracted large crowds, and equally large numbers of thieves and rogues, not much time was allowed for each case, and justice could be equally swift. Improvise a sitting of the court, overseen by Justice Overdo, in which a number of victims accuse the rogues who have cheated them. For example:

- A horse trader who tries to disguise the age of a sick, ancient animal by giving it a "cosmetic facelift".
- A pig-woman who uses her tent not only to sell roast pork, but also as a bawdy house.
- A puppet master who is accused by a Puritan of putting on an obscene show.

Nicolas Jennings was a professional beggar, a "counterfeit crank." He pretended to be a victim of the "falling sickness", and had (false) documents from the asylum at Bedlam to prove it. He dressed in rags, and travelled from place to place covered in mud and blood, playing on people's sympathies, in order to beg for alms. His method was to beg for money from a well-to-do person in a crowded place. If this person refused to give him anything, he would gradually become more and more agitated, until he fell down in a fit. He attempted this ploy on a certain Thomas Hardman, a butcher, in the middle of a crowded market place...

In fact Jennings made a lucrative living on the strength of his begging, and could be seen frequently walking the streets of his home town dressed as a gentleman in a black frieze coat, a pair of white hose, a fine felt hat, and linen shirt. By chance one day, Thomas Hardman was visiting this town, and met Jennings in the street. Hardman recognised him, and despite his protestations of mistaken identity, called a constable to arrest him....

Elizabethan alehouses were the meeting place of much low-life characters. To run an alehouse, the keeper had to apply for a licence to a Justice of the Peace, agreeing to the following conditions:

"Not to suffer suspicious persons, vagabonds, quarrellers, cheats and thieves, nor to allow any unlawful games as bowls, tennis, dice, cards, nor backgammon, nor to allow bastard births, the serving of meat in Lent, and unlawful acts of a carnal nature."

What happens when Justice Stringent pays a visit in disguise to Edward Bette's worthy establishment to see if the terms of the licence are being kept...?

Witchcraft...?

Zacharias Throckmorton was a farmer of some substance and no little greed. Margaret Hopkins, an impoverished old woman, called at his door to beg for alms or scraps of food. When Throckmorton threatened to turn the dogs on her, she went away muttering to herself. Shortly afterwards, one of the farmer's cows died, and he was convinced that Hopkins had put a curse on him. He brought her before the village council and accused her of being a witch...

The Art of Astrology

Joshua Lambe was an astrologer. He cast people's fortunes by interpreting the positions of the planets, and their influence for good or evil, at the time of the person's birth. People would ask for Lambe's advice on all matters, money, love, ambitions or career, for a fee of course. Lambe was consulted by Herbert Littlewit, concerning the suitability of his marriage to a supposedly rich widow, Dame Allenow. Lambe cast both their fortunes, and predicted that her mildness, her good nature, and her wealth would make her an ideal match for Littlewit. Only days after the marriage, however, Littlewit discovered she was a penniless shrew, with enormous appetites (in every sense). He brought his wife with him to Lambe to demonstrate her faults and to complain about the advice he was given....

The Mystery of Alchemy and The Philosopher's Stone.

Dr De Ville was an alchemist. He claimed, through having studied the most secret of arts, to have discovered The Philosopher's Stone, the most perfect element, which allowed him to turn ordinary metals such as brass, iron, and pewter, into gold. This was an expensive business, not only requiring a great deal of expensive equipment, and coals to heat his furnaces, but also quantities of these ordinary metals to turn to gold. Poligot, a rich merchant, as greedy as sin, was only too happy to provide whatever De Ville, and his assistant Dupe, required. He tried to persuade his good friend Thomas Doubtful to invest also, to bring the project to completion. Doubtful was convinced the whole thing was a trick, and accompanies his friend to De Ville in order to expose him and his trickery....

A tinker had been stealing from villagers, who complained to the Knight of the Manor. When the tinker called on the Knight to offer his services, the Knight offered him work mending any broken pots and pans he had in his kitchen. The Knight engaged him in conversation, aware that the tinker's doxy, his common law wife, was busy filling her basket with whatever she could find in the Knight's larder. When the tinker had finished mending the pots, the Knight praised his work, and paid him double what he had asked, but requested him to deliver a letter to the jailer at Lancaster prison, about a certain thief...

A bunch of strolling players were performing a play about Bartolomew fair, in which a cut-purse is scheming to relieve a coney of his purse. But this bunch of players was not against doing a spot of thieving themselves in real-life, so when the constable arrived to arrest one of them, they quickly had to pretend this was part of the play, and that the constable was one of the players...

Busy Fingers was a pedlar. He would travel from village to village selling all kinds of different wares, such as cloth, stockings, gloves, jewellery, perfume, and copies of ballads. Busy was not against adding to his stock on the way, by stealing clothing which has been spread out to dry and bleach on the hedges. On this occasion, when Busy arrived in the village, a number of the customers recognised their own belongings as part of his wares...

Family affairs # 1

Two brothers. Tony is single, with a high powered career and plenty of money. Steve is married with several young children, and a modest income. Tony has bought a new car, and wishes to give his brother a test run. Steve is minding the youngest child, but eventually agrees to go for a short spin, bringing the child with them. During the ride, the kid pukes up all over the back seat...

Two sisters. Katie, the elder, is always putting on Yvonne, particularly by asking her to look after her young child at short notice. Saturday afternoon, Yvonne is ready to go shopping. Katie drops by and leaves the child, claiming she has urgent business to attend to. Yvonne reluctantly agrees to take the child with her on her shopping trip. But while she is trying on some clothes in a store, the child goes missing...

Susan has three children, aged between 11 and 17. She has been separated from her husband, their father, for almost a year. She has now met a new man, Donald, and wants him to move in with them. Donald has one teenage daughter of his own. Susan decides to break the news to the children when they return home from school, and sit down for their evening meal...

When Susan and Donald marry, his teenage daughter Clare comes to stay at the weekends. Susan's children, Mary and Josh, do not get on with her very well, and she doesn't do much to try to fit in. One weekend there is an angry argument; Clare has borrowed some of Mary's clothes without asking her, and they are in a bit of a mess...

Matt and Paul are brothers. Paul, the younger, is good at school, always getting good results, never in any trouble. Matt is the exact opposite. It is school report time. Paul brings his home, and is eager to show his parents. Matt wants him to "conveniently forget" to tell them, which is what he intends to do about his own report...

A family are moving house. The father and elder son are doing most of the lifting and moving of furniture. The younger sister, Josie, wants to help. But these offers are treated with scorn by the elder brother. "You're not old enough to help. You'll only get in the way...". Her mother tells her to go and tidy away things so that the rooms are clear for the furniture to be moved. Josie does so, reluctantly, until she finds a Playboy magazine under her brother's bed which she thinks she might be able to use to her advantage...

Malcolm has a drug habit, which he pays for by furtively selling his belongings. So far he has sold his TV, video player and CD player. His sister Chloe notices these are missing from his room, and asks him where they are...

Barbara has a well paid, high profile job. Her sister Emma has been unemployed since leaving school. Their mother expects Emma to do most of the work around the house as she's at home most of the day. Fair enough, thinks Emma, but she doesn't see why Barbara should treat her like she's her maid. When Barbara complains that she hasn't washed her blouse, Emma loses her temper...

When an exorbitant phone bill arrives, the father accuses the rest of the family of being too extravagant with their calls. He threatens to put a lock on the phone if things don't improve. The rest of the family threaten to go on strike if he does...

When Lisa is picked on by bullies on the way home from school, she threatens to set her elder brother Tim on them. He is unhappy at suddenly finding himself in the middle of a conflict he didn't start, taking on a gang of thugs single-handedly, and in possession of a black belt in karate he just doesn't have....

Melanie is the apple of her father's eye. Without telling her, or her mother, he has entered her in a beauty contest, much against their feminist principles...

Harold and June have two children Natasha and Ronnie. One evening when they are sitting down for their meal, they all moan and argue about who has the easiest time of things, adults or children. As an experiment they agree to swap places for a day. The children will do adults things, and the adults will become teenagers once again...

Carl has discovered an old photograph of his sister Melanie. He has shown it to all his friends at school, and even to Melanie's boyfriend. She's embarrassed and upset, and plans get her revenge on her brother...

The Mackenzie family agree to accept a student from another country on an exchange programme. When the student arrives, it soon becomes clear that it's not going to be an easy week. The foreign student smokes, drinks, stays out late, and generally ignores every rule the parents have for their own children. It is 3 a.m. in the morning. The student arrives home with someone else...

Steve makes a cake for an exam project in his Home Economics lesson. He leaves it to cool in the kitchen, while looking for a container to store it in. His sister Madeleine finds the cake on the table, and eats a large slice of it, not realising that this is Steve's "homework" disappearing down her throat...

Ted and Ena Randall decide to invite all of their relatives to their place for Christmas. The house is very crowded with several generations of the family. The celebrations do not run smoothly when old grievances start coming to the surface...

Wayne has just arrived in England from Australia. His father and his mother separated more than 20 years before, and his father returned to England. Wayne doesn't know what caused the rift between his parents. He has come to England to see his father again, and to find out why his parents divorced. He appears on his father's doorstep unannounced.

Nita's sister Sasha was killed by a hit and run driver about a year ago, when she was 5 years old. Since the accident, Nita's parents won't let her go anywhere, nor do anything, and get upset and angry whenever she tries to talk about Sasha. Nita feels guilty, as if her parents wish she had been killed instead of her sister. One day, in school, a teacher finds Nita crying her eyes out. When she finds out why Nita is so unhappy, she decides to arrange a talk with her parents...

Alison's father drinks too much. This often causes arguments with his wife, who says he is an alcoholic, and should get some help. He says his wife just wants to stop him going out and enjoying himself, away from her. On this particular night, he gets home drunk, to find his wife has had enough, and has bolted the door so that he can't get in. It is raining, a miserable winter's night. He shouts for Alison to let him in, loud enough to wake up all the neighbours. Alison hates being caught in the middle like this. If she lets him in, her mother won't forgive her. If she doesn't, her father is likely to turn nasty later...

Beth's grandfather died recently, leaving her grandmother on her own. She is not in the best of health, and Beth's parents are concerned that she will not be able to manage. They invite her to sell her house, and to come to live with them. Eventually, the plan is to build an extension to the house, where she will have some independence. But in the meantime, Beth will have to give up her room, and share with her younger brother...

Penny lives with her mum, Andrea, new step-dad Barry, and his two younger children. They run riot the whole time, but Barry never does anything to stop them, and Andrea doesn't like to interfere. When they break some of her prize possessions in her room, she slaps them. Then she gets in to trouble with Barry and her mum....

Paula's dad comes home from work excited, and drops a bit of a bombshell. He has been promoted, but will have to move to the other side of the country to take up the new job. Paula is totally upset. It will mean leaving her friends, boyfriend, school. She won't go...

Fairs

Organise a fairground scene, using appropriate music as a background. Half of the players are stall holders, or the owners of fairground rides, the big dipper, the ghost train, the tunnel of love, the coconut shy, the hoopla stall, and so on. The other half of the players are customers. The stall holders advertise their wares, and the whole group mime actions to show what is happening at the fair.

Invent a number of disputes which take place at the fairground stalls and rides. A customer at each of the stalls is involved in an argument with the owner, for example:

- The coconuts are thought to be glued on to their stands, and will not fall off
- A ride is thought to be unsafe, or does not last long enough
- The wrong change has been given to a £10 note
- Metal strips have been placed behind the playing cards to stop the darts sticking in them
- The guns on the rifle range do not fire straight
- The hoopla stands are too large for the size of the rings
- A stall owner refuses to give the proper prize to someone who has won

A fairground traveller called Joe Andrews has bought a set of dodgems, but he cannot keep up with the payments for them. The bailiffs are threatening to confiscate the ride. This is the last straw for his wife Hetty. She tells him she wants to give up the travelling life, and become a "flattie", someone who lives in an ordinary house, and has an ordinary job. This is unheard of for travellers, so Joe is horrified...

An old fairground traveller called Pegleg has a traditional set of hobby horses which have been in his family for generations. He even got his nickname when he lost his leg in an accident on the ride. His son Jordan, and his wife, want him to give up the hobby horses and to move with the times, to buy an up-to-date modern ride, because the hobby horses are losing money. Pegleg doesn't want to know....

News item: Parents at a junior school in Devon refused to allow their children to attend today. They were protesting because the school has taken in the children of the fairground travellers who are camped on a nearby site. Police were called to sort out angry scenes at the school gates as local parents clashed with the travellers. Parents blame an outbreak of fleas at the school upon the fairground children...

Nikki is invited to the fair by two boys, Eddie and Dean. She doesn't want to hurt either of their feelings, so she suggests that they go as a threesome. The boys reluctantly agree. Once at the fair, both try to impress her with their strength and skill on the various stalls and booths, much to her amusement...

Sonya is in her last year at school, about to take her exams. She has met a boy, Fergal, who works at the fair, and fancies him like mad. But he will move on in a week's time, when the fair goes to its new pitch. Why doesn't she come with him, he says. He'll get her a job on the fair, some money in her pocket, and a life on the road more exciting than anything she can look forward to by passing her exams. All she has to do is follow the fair...

Barney's family own a fair ground ride. He travels round the country, spending a week in one school, and then moving on to the next, so that he finds it difficult to make friends with anybody except other travellers. The kids in the school look down on him and call him names, until he takes out a wad of tickets for free rides, then they're his best mates. If only he could find a way of making a real friend...

When Simon and his mates visit the fair, they are determined to have a laugh, especially on the Ghost Train. They hide in the tunnel, leap out as the cars go by, making hideous noises, and falling about laughing when the girls scream. The owner of the Ghost Train is not amused. He decides to prove that the Train is really haunted....

An old couple, live in a house out in the country, with no neighbours for miles. Night-time, and a storm is gathering. The couple alone, upstairs in the bedroom. Strange noises in the house below; the sound of a window banging open and shut? And the phone has gone dead..

A young girl is afraid of the dark. There is a scene at every bedtime because she refuses to go to sleep without the light on. Her brother refuses to let her move her bed in to his room; she is just being silly. Her parents are losing patience, and think it is time to put an end to the nonsense by insisting the light is turned off. But the dark shadow of a man she sees whenever the light is turned off is waiting to do her harm. She knows this....

Janet wants to go abroad with her boyfriend Brad. The only snag is, he is terrified of flying, but doesn't want to lose face by telling her his secret fear. He either has to own up, and risk being thought a wimp, or persuade her to take a different type of holiday, travelling strictly on the ground...

Someone is alone in the house, at night. Produce a piece of mime which shows how this person gradually becomes more and more anxious and afraid. Prepare and use a tape of sound effects (knocks, wind, window opening, scary film on TV etc) to which the character can react...

Mel is on a bus, late at night. A man got on to the bus at her stop, and is sitting a few seats behind her. There is no one else on the bus, except, of course, the driver. She gets up to get off at her stop, and the man does the same...

Maureen has been getting unpleasant phone calls recently, and regularly. She has tried going ex-directory, and even changing her number, but the calls continue, which makes it seem as if it is someone who knows her well. When the phone rings, whoever it is does not say anything, nor make any sound, just silence. Maureen is getting more and more upset by the whole thing. Her husband Ron says she is taking it too seriously, and making too much fuss, but she wants him to come with her to the police...

Gregory is very shy, and finds it incredibly difficult to talk to girls. He is afraid to ask Susan out for a date, in case she turns him down. His best mate Malcolm has a solution. He will give Gregory "chatting up lessons", in which Malcolm will role play the part of the girl....

Steve is a keen football supporter. After one game, however, he gets caught up in a violent attack by a group of opposing supporters. Though he isn't badly injured, he is very shaken by the incident, and afraid to go to another match. His friends try to persuade him his fears are groundless, and to come with them to the game as usual....

WPC Helen Spurr is fairly new to the police force, and keen to get on. When she is asked if she will perform an undercover assignment, posing as a prostitute, she agrees at once. But as she begins to think it over afterwards, and realises she may be putting herself into considerable danger, she wishes she hadn't accepted so hastily. She is unsure whether she is more afraid of the humiliation of asking to withdraw from the assignment, than she is of the danger she may face. She asks a colleague for advice...

Louie is trying to go straight after a life of crime, associating with some very bad customers indeed. His doctor has told him his blood pressure is sky high, and any excitement could be fatal. So Louie determines to have a quiet life, afraid that he might pop his clogs at any minute. But who should call that very same day that Louie visits the doctor than Crusher McKinley, a very tough person indeed. He has a proposition to put to Louie, and Crusher does not take no for an answer....

Marty has a secret. He hates being in enclosed spaces, but he has never been able to tell anyone, not even his girlfriend Carol. He always tries to avoid taking the lift, but one day when they are out shopping, and loaded with bags, he can't think of a way to get out of it, not without provoking a row, or letting out his secret. Then the lift stops between floors...

Football # 1

Present a slow motion football sequence which might be used to introduce a television programme such as "Match of the Day", using a suitable piece of music to structure the snippets of action. Include plenty of shots, tackles, saves, fouls, disputes, goals, celebrations, and close-up expressions. Video record the finished sequence.

A lone supporter gets separated from his mates, and finds himself in seats surrounded by supporters of the other side. He decides discretion is the better part of valour, and to disguise who he really supports. Unfortunately, he finds this more and more difficult as the excitement of the game mounts, and the suspicions of the other supporters grow..

A father and son are playing football in their garden. The father belts the ball next door, and there is the sound of breaking glass. When the neighbour sticks her head over the fence to complain about her broken window, the father apologises, but tells her his son did it to save his own face. His son is not too happy about this...

Keith is a professional footballer, recently signed by a big club, and earning great money. He still tries to keep in touch with his mates who he played with at school, meeting them regularly for a drink, and anxious to prove that he has not got too big for his boots. One Friday night, he meets them for a drink, but intends to stick to orange juice as he has an important debut game the next day. Robbie is jealous, however, and starts to wind Keith up about his new drinking habits...

A boy plays for a local football team; he is very talented, top scorer every year. He has a younger brother who is affected by Downs Syndrome. The boy wants his brother to have a trial for the team. But when he brings his brother along for the trial, his team-mates suddenly don't like the idea...

A well off kid has the latest in football strips, and is forever boasting about his skills, even though he really isn't very good. The others tolerate him because he has a great football, but he gets on their nerves, because every decision has to go his way. When he threatens to go home (and take his ball with him) if he isn't given a penalty, one of the other kids flips, pushing him over, and accidentally tearing the new kit...

A Saturday league football match for youngsters. On the touch-line, the noisy parent of one of the players is giving out continual verbal abuse aimed at the referee. Who then has to send off the son, for a particularly nasty foul...

News item: JUNKIES AIM TO SCORE. A team from a Drug Rehabilitation Centre has applied to join a local football league in order to improve their fitness, and to help kick the drug habit in to touch. The idea has met with opposition from some members of the league, however, and a special meeting has been called to consider the application...

Michael has signed on a YTS scheme for a lower division professional football club. He thinks he has it made. After all, it will only be time before he is spotted by a bigger club, and then who knows. He is just a little too over confident for his own good. The club manager and pros set out to show him the ropes. When he reports for training on his first day, the caretaker hands him a mop, and tells him his first job is to clean out the toilets...

Nizam is a Muslim who is mad on football, and very talented. He has had a trial for a local team, and got a place in the squad. However, he cannot play in an important match because he has to go to the mosque. The team manager says he has to sort it out or he has no chance of playing for the team in the future...

Bobby has been a professional footballer for several years, nothing special, but good enough to earn a living. He is in hospital with a broken leg, caused by a wild two-footed tackle. Stan, the player who made the tackle, comes to visit Bobby in the hospital, to apologise. Annie, Bobby's wife, is there at the time, and is unforgiving. What will happen if Bobby can't play again...?

Tracey is a mad football fan. She goes to all her teams matches, home and away, never missing a game all season. Her sister Pauline is getting married soon, and Tracey has agreed to be a bridesmaid. What Tracey didn't realise at the time, is that the wedding will take place on the same Saturday as the biggest game of the season so far...

Darren is called in to the manager's office at the end of the season. He assumes it is to discuss his new contract, and thinks he should have a chance of a raise. Instead, the manager tells him he is being let go, there will be no new contract. Darren now has no club, no qualifications or skills outside of football, and a young family to support...

Eric runs a youth football team, playing in a local league. Most of his spare time is taken up with training and matches. Chrissie, his wife, is feeling rather neglected. She never gets taken out, except to discos put on by the club to raise funds, and is getting just a bit fed up of standing on cold touchlines in the middle of winter. Unexpectedly, Eric brings home a dirty kit, and asks her to wash it for a rearranged game the next day. Chrissie has finally been pushed too far...

Owen's dad runs the under 14 football team. In his dad's eyes, Owen can do no wrong, even though the boy himself knows he is not particularly talented. But he never gets dropped, and the other lads are beginning to take it out on him. Owen tries to persuade his dad that if he is picked, it has to be on merit...

Melanie plays for a girl's team, and they are all pretty talented. Her dad is always threatening to come to a training session and give them the benefit of his experience. After all, girls can't be very good, can they, and need all the tips they can pick up. Melanie has been able to put him off, until, after a defeat, he decides the time has come "to show them how it should be done"...

The dressing room of a local pub team, a sociable Saturday run out to keep fit and have a few beers. A good bunch of mates, and their wives, who are big-hearted enough to welcome a new player to the club, even though he has been in jail, with a criminal record as long as your arm. But then money goes missing from the changing room...

The manager of a local league team has done a great bit of business finding a new sponsor, a local beauty parlour. There is just one snag. The sponsors insist on changing the club strip to a nice shade of pink, emblazoned with their name "Little Beauties". The manager calls the team together to tell them the good news, and to meet the sponsor...

An opposing fan is being set upon by football hooligans. In an instant, Phil has to decide whether to go to his assistance, or ignore what's happening. Whatever he does, he will have to live with his conscience for the rest of his life...

For his birthday, Danny has asked for the latest version of the team strip of the club he supports, telling all his friends in advance what he is getting. His mother is a single parent, and when she finds out the price of the strip, realises she cannot afford it. Instead, she buys a cheaper "unofficial" version of the strip. It is Danny's birthday party, his friends are there, and he is about to open his presents...

Ralph and Stacey are twins. They share many talents, and interests, especially football. But Ralph is unhappy when his sister is picked for the team instead of him. He intends to make her career as brief as possible...

A new Italian footballer, Fabrizio Canone, arrives at a first division club. With him are his minders, a pair of tough looking mafia types in suits and dark glasses. The footballer begins to tell the manager how things are going to be, how the team is going to play, and how disappointed his family will be if he doesn't get picked every week. The manager is going to have to show some respect to his new signing....

Friends

Jodie is new in school, and meets Sandra on her first day. They get on well together, and both seem pleased to have made a new friend. The next day Sandra sees Jodie in the street, waves to her, and is upset when she completely ignores her. Sandra decides Jodie must be very stuck up, and tells all her friends what the “new girl” is like. A couple of days later, they bump into each other in the opticians. Jodie is very short-sighted....

Kate often visits an old lady called Rose. She finds she can talk to her easily, a different kind of friend from her school mates. Paula is jealous of Kate’s friendship, often teasing her about it. She says she wants to visit Rose too, to find out why she’s so special. Kate is not sure she wants Paula to muscle in like this...

Everyone looks to Sue for advice and help with their problems because she always seems so “together” and strong. Jenny in particular is always unloading her problems about home, school, boyfriends upon her. Until one day, when she starts to ask for Sue’s advice, she is astonished when she bursts into tears...

Becky just won’t give Yasmine any space. She’s always around, sulking if she tries to go out with anyone else, and calling all her other friends behind their backs. This has been getting on Yasmine’s nerves, but now she’s found a new boyfriend called Doug. Becky tells her she’s seen him flirting with another girl...

Marie and Kim have been friends since juniors. Now they’ve gone up to the secondary school, Kim has found a new friend called Fiona. She doesn’t like Marie, saying she’s not cool, and “should do something about her appearance”. Marie expected Kim to stick up for her, and was upset when she didn’t. Fiona is having a party at the weekend, but Marie’s not invited...

Paul is always on the scrounge from his mate Ross. He borrows his school stuff, his football boots, CDs, computer games, even his bike. He never gives any of it back, at least not without lots of hassle. And now he’s started asking Ross for money...

Mikila and Peter are good friends. But he is not her boyfriend, just a friend. The problem is, all their other friends seem to have trouble understanding this. How can they be “just good friends”? Mikila really loses it, when one of her so-called friends starts spreading a rumour that Peter is gay...

It was Tracey’s birthday at the weekend, and she had invited her closest friend, Emma, to join her family for a celebration meal in a posh restaurant. Tracey was really upset when Emma didn’t show up because her new boyfriend rang up unexpectedly to ask her out for a date. On Monday morning, Emma looks for an explanation, and an apology...

Sharan has made friends with the “worst girl in the school”, or so everybody thinks. In fact Trisha avoids trouble most of the time, and gives Sharan good advice about staying safe. But Trisha won’t let anyone push her around, and this is what gives her the reputation as a trouble-maker. Sharan’s parents tell her to stop seeing Trisha, and won’t listen to reason...

Liz and Donna have been friends for years, ever since infants school. They still get on well together, but now, Liz has found herself a new boyfriend, Chris. Whenever she invites him round to her house, Donna always seems to turn up too, without phoning first to see if it’s convenient. And when Liz wants to go to a club on Saturday night alone with Chris, Donna always seems to get herself invited. Chris says he doesn’t mind, that he doesn’t want to come between such good friends. But Liz knows the old saying “two’s company, three’s a crowd”; the problem is, how to get Donna to understand...?

Gary and Pete are best mates. Since they left school though, there have been strains on their friendship because Gary has found a job, but Pete hasn’t, and so never has any money to spend. There’s a big match coming up; Gary would willingly help him out with the price of the ticket, but Pete has his pride...

A cowhand is camping for the night by the side of a stream. He has caught a hare, built a fire, and is making some stew. Two strangers appear, attracted by the light of his fire, and ask if they can share his meal...

An Indian finds a white man who has been ambushed and robbed lying injured by the side of the trail. He tends to his wounds, places him carefully on his horse, and walks twenty miles or more to the nearest town. But when the Indian arrives there, some of the townsfolk accuse him of ambushing the man whose life he has saved...

A bounty hunter makes his living tracking down outlaws, and bringing them in to claim the reward. Seth is just such a man. He has been tracking an outlaw, who has stolen a horse, for several days, following the trail. He surprises him when he is sleeping, only to discover that the "man" is in fact a young girl....

Three outlaws hold up a bank, and escape with the money. Jess, the leader of the three, decides to keep the money for himself. All he has to do is to persuade Billy that Tom is plotting to kill him, to keep Billy's share of the money. When Tom goes off to find wood for the fire, Jess decides to tell Billy about Tom's "plan"....

The railroad is pushing its way through to the west, straight through land which has been used for raising livestock for generations. Mind you, the ranch owners are well rewarded for their land when it is bought by the railroad company. But if the owners don't want to sell, the company uses other "methods" to get its way. And Jake doesn't want to sell...

When she was just four years old, Annie's whole family was gunned down by a big-shot landowner, the richest man in the county, over a disputed piece of land. Not that the landowner was ever brought to justice. There wasn't much chance of that since he paid the sheriff his wages. Twelve years later, Annie returns, an attractive young girl, determined to use any means she can to get revenge for her family...

Lester got into a gunfight when he was drunk, and shot a man dead, in self defence he claims since the man drew a gun on him first. The sheriff has Lester locked up tight in the town jail, waiting for the judge to get in to town for the trial. An angry mob has other ideas, and has decided to string Lester up from the nearest tree. The sheriff isn't going to let this happen. There is law and order in this town. Even for a Negro like Lester....

Some years ago, the town marshal put the whole of the notorious Bate Brothers gang behind bars in the state penitentiary, and brought law and order to the town. The brothers have served their time, and have been released from jail. Word has it that they are heading back to town, vowing to get revenge on the marshal who put them away. The marshal needs all the help he can get. But no one is volunteering to become his deputy....

Jethro was a bank robber, along with his two brothers Adam and Walt. He has gold buried in a graveyard, lots of gold. When he is dying, he wants to share the gold between his brothers. But he knows they are the biggest pair of no-good-cheating-lying hombres the west ever did see. So he tells Adam the name of the graveyard, and Walt the name of the grave. Let them sort it out as best they can....

Cattle men despise sheep men because they fence in the range to stop their stupid sheep from straying. There is always bad blood between them, but when Jim Arnott fences in the range with the best watering place for a hundred miles, things turn ugly. The cattlemen decide to try to persuade Jim to see reason. But if he won't...

The townsfolk of Broken Wheel are being hounded by a gang of bandits, who ride into town, shoot the place up, demand liquor, women and money, and ride off again. But they will be back. The sheriff and his deputies have all been gunned down, and no one wants to take their place. The townsfolk decide there is only one thing to do. They must hire professional gunslingers themselves, to defend the town next time the gang show up....

Frontier tales # 2

Wounded Paw is a Cherokee Indian. He lives peacefully, according to his ancient tribal customs, and is scornful of the white-man with his fancy ways and lust for gold. Wounded Paw knows where there is gold, lots of gold, on his land. But he says nothing. He does not want the riches the white-men want. And he does not want them clamouring over his land. Until one day, his young son is sick. None of the ancient remedies seem to work. Perhaps the white man's medicine can cure his son? But how can he pay, except with a nugget of gold. And if they ask where it was found....?

The town of Hell's Elbow is in a bad way. There is no law and order, because the mayor, the judge, and the sheriff are the biggest crooks in the place. And if anyone steps out of line, they'll find themselves in the town jail one day, and dangling on the end of a rope the next. All nice and legal of course. But crooked as a mule's hind-leg. And then a stranger comes in to town. A stranger who doesn't wear a gun. A stranger who starts telling folks not to put up with the stink in this town any longer....

The white man is moving west, building forts and towns and railroads as he goes, killing the buffalo, driving cattle across the plains where the Indian nations have lived since the birth of the sun and the moon. The Indian chieftains meet to decide whether to accept the white man and his ways, and to live in peace, or to declare war and drive him from their land. How can they fight against superior weapons...?

The American Civil War is raging, North versus South. The land is devastated, towns are being burned, farms destroyed. Albie is from the south, but joined the north because he respects Mr Lincoln and thinks the cause is right. Albie rides through a place he seems to remember, though it's all been destroyed, trying to find his way back to his troop. He reins in his horse at a burned out farm, looking round the place for signs of life. Then pulls up short when he finds himself looking down the barrel of a shotgun, held by his brother...

A Yankee soldier is wounded, close to death. He manages to escape from the Confederate soldiers who shot him, but they are following his trail. He arrives at a house occupied by Betty Gallagher and her two daughters, too weak even to ask for help. He simply collapses at their door. If they take him in, and the Confederates find him, they will kill him, and burn down the house, or worse. If they don't help him, he is as good as dead...

Doc Holliday is tired. Tired of the way of life he's been leading for the past ten years. Saloons, poker games, gunfights. Always looking over his shoulder, always having to be fastest on the draw. All he wants now is a quiet life, a shot of whiskey or two, a friendly game of cards. But all these young gunslingers keep looking him out, eager to make a reputation for themselves as the man who shot Doc Holliday down. The Doc is sitting playing a quiet hand, whiskey in his glass, when another of these young hot-heads comes into the saloon....

Maxwell sells his Marvellous Medicine from town to town, setting up his stall in the main street, and claiming it cures anything and everything from saddle sores to a broken heart. The truth is, it's only water with a bit of colouring and flavouring, and it seems like the water in the last batch wasn't too clean. Which maybe accounts why everyone who's drunk some, including the most grisliest, orniest cowhands you're ever likely to meet is getting galloping gut rot, and is after the blood of the man who sold it them....

When her husband dies in Boston, Kathleen decides to make a complete change in her life, and head out west. After all, she's still a young and good looking woman. So she answers an advertisement in the Boston Chronicle from a "farmer of good stock" who is looking for a wife, and heads out for a new life. When she gets there, she is a bit surprised to find that Jack, the farmer, is not quite what she's used to, being a city person herself. There are a few matters concerning his table manners, his way of speaking and behaving, not to mention his personal hygiene, which need to be sorted if this courtship is to continue...

Lord Camberly turned out one of his servants in the middle of winter for being clumsy when waiting on table. He threw him out without even the chance to grab a coat, and the poor man died from exposure and cold as he staggered to the nearest village. But his ghost gains revenge, returning to haunt Lord and Lady Camberly's dinner parties, causing unseen mischief for his lordship and his guests...

New item: Security guards at the site of the Newbury Bypass were surprised to see protestors apparently dressed as Roundheads and Cavaliers from the English Civil War, speaking strangely, and engaged in a pitch battle. Work on the road has stopped at present while police investigate these strange claims...

A spitfire pilot is having a beer in the mess in the summer of 1940 as the Battle of Britain is at its height. A friend drops in to tell him about the latest dogfight he has been involved in. The pilot is slightly surprised; he did not expect his friend to have returned so soon. He buys the friend a beer, but he has disappeared. "Must have nipped out for a moment", the pilot assumes. Minutes later the squadron leader brings news; the whole flight has been lost....

Doctor McKenzie is settling down for a quiet whiskey before heading to bed. Outside his home, the wind and rain are blowing fit to burst. A knock comes on the door. Reluctantly, the doctor goes to answer it, knowing it is probably a patient. A small girl is at the door, soaked through, asking the doctor to come to her mother who is very sick. The doctor grabs his bag, and the two set off to the girl's house. When he arrives, he finds the girl's mother very ill; he has arrived not a moment too soon. But the family are amazed when he tells them who fetched him out; the little girl has died the year before...

In the year 1647 the Civil War between the royalists and parliamentarians is raging. King Charles 1 is staying in the Wheatsheaf Inn, just outside Northampton, preparing for a battle with the Roundhead forces the next day. During the night he wakes suddenly, and sees in front of him Lord Stafford. He advises the King to leave Northampton, to take his army north to regroup, and on no condition to fight at Naseby the following day. Then he vanishes as suddenly as he has come. The King is amazed; Lord Stafford was killed early on in the Civil War. The King calls his generals from their beds, to persuade them to change their well established plans...

Trevor is driving home one winter's evening. Rain is falling heavily, the windscreen wipers beating it away with a steady rhythm. In the headlights, at the side of the road he sees a girl hitch-hiker, absolutely drenched. Being a kind-hearted sort of guy, he stops, and picks her up. She sits in the back of the car, but says nothing. He even lends her his jacket to keep her warm, and goes out of his way to drop her off, right at her door. Next day, he remembers his jacket, and his wallet, so he returns to the house to collect it. But the woman who owns the house claims that no girl lives there. Trevor thinks she is trying to keep his jacket, and wallet, and threatens to call the police...

Private Murray of the Devon and Cornwall regiment is on sentry duty at the camp gate at night. Nothing is happening, no one is arriving, leaving or is there to talk with. Suddenly, out of the darkness, there appears a young girl, dressed in white. He challenges her in the usual fashion. She ignore him, and keeps coming towards him. He challenges again. She keeps coming. He goes to stop her. His hand goes right through her. Private Murray faints. He is found by an officer, and charged with neglect of duty. Will he be able to make the court martial believe his story..?

Several people report seeing a strange figure at night, always in the same place, on a bridge across a river. The figure appears to be a woman, her face white, her hair wild. She mouths silent words that no one can hear, and points to a spot in the turbulent river below. The police at first dismiss these reports, until the witnesses demand that they drag the water where the figure seems to point...

Ghosts # 1

Inspector Hardy has been on the police force for many years. He has seen most things, and been involved in just about any kind of case you mention. In short, he is not a man given to imagining things; he deals in evidence and facts. Until that is, the strange case of Mrs Tod. Her husband had beaten her for many years; one night in a drunken rage, he knocked her down, and killed her stone dead. Though tried for murder, he was convicted of the lesser crime of manslaughter. Five years later, he is out of prison. Then, Henry Tod's body is found, and three separate witnesses claim to have seen his wife kill him...

In Tibet, it is believed that spirits called *tulpas* can be brought to life by intense meditation. In the early 1900s a French journalist meditated and created the *tulpa* of a fat monk, who had a wicked sense of humour, and could suddenly appear anywhere he wanted. The *tulpa* was entertaining at first, but soon became a nuisance. Now, how do you tell a tulpa he is no longer wanted, and send him back where he came from..?

Blunden, the ghost of Langley Hall, has been dead for centuries. But he still hasn't got the hang of this haunting business. He has tried all the best moves, the head under his arm trick, rattling chains, disappearing through walls, even surprising people suddenly in the bathroom. But the new family in this stately home just won't take his haunting seriously....

Harold Luther had four sons. When he died, his Will left his entire estate to his eldest son, George. The other three sons were naturally unhappy about this. Emmanuel had a dream in which his father appeared, and told him about another Will which is sewn into the binding of the family Bible. When he woke up, Emmanuel went immediately to the Bible, and discovered the new Will exactly where his father's ghost said it would be. It was dated after the original Will, and divided the property equally between the sons. The three younger brothers tried to use this will, to secure their share of the property. But George was not going to give up without a fight, especially when this new Will has been found in such strange circumstances....

This advertisement appeared in the *Morning Post* of 19 August 1937: "Haunted wardrobe- Advertiser will be glad to deliver same to anybody interested, complete with ghost, which would also, no doubt, feel more at home if welcomed."

Paris 1623. Monsieur Le Blanc, his wife and family, are forced out of their house by an "invisible assailant". The ghost is never seen, and does not do them a great deal of harm with his (or her) antics, but appears to enjoy practical jokes and has a slapstick sense of humour. Le Blanc's claim is treated with scorn by his sceptical neighbours, until he challenges them to spend one night in his house....

In Iceland there was a law for many years which enabled people who were haunted by a ghost to summon it before a court of law, and have it bound over to keep the peace. Helvic visits his local police station in order to do just this....

In the eighteenth century there lived a notorious womaniser, Lord De Fleur. He had a reputation for breaking the hearts of all those women who found his charms irresistible. One night, the ghost of a married woman he had seduced appeared at the foot of his bed. She had committed suicide out of shame and grief; now she predicted De Fleur had only three days left to live...

In the West Indies, in a graveyard, at night. A shadowy figure casts coins, and a glass of rum on a grave, muttering a strange incantation. From the grave is summoned a duppy, a ghost who is so annoyed at being disturbed from eternal rest, that it will play any evil trick it is asked to do by the one who summoned it...

A couple in North Shields advertised an unusual feature in the sale of their house. Every night, the ghost of a long dead servant would appear, and do all the domestic chores while they were asleep. Unfortunately, the ghost often appeared in daytime to scold anyone doing a job whose work didn't come up to her own high standards...

Zeus and Hera

Zeus, the chief of the gods, has a wife Hera, to whom he is often unfaithful. Hera is jealous of the children born to Zeus' other "wives". When she has a son Hephaestus, he is so crippled and deformed that she cannot stand the sight of him. She throws him from Mount Olympus, home of the gods. Luckily, Hephaestus falls into the sea, where he is cared for by the sea nymphs, and becomes a master craftsman in his forge, making wonderful jewellery. When Hera finds out, she is reconciled to her son, and asks him to make something for her. He makes her a wonderful throne. She is overjoyed, until she tries to get up from the throne, and discovers she can't move...

Zeus and Io

Hera is jealous when she sees Zeus flirting with Io, a young nymph, from the top of Mount Olympus. When Hera tries to catch the guilty lovers together, Zeus quickly turns Io into a white cow. Hera pretends the cow is a present for her, and sets out to get her revenge...

The Labours of Hercules.

Hera, wife of Zeus, wishes to kill Hercules because he is the son of Zeus and Alcmene. To punish Hercules, she sends him mad. Because of this madness, he thinks that his wife Megara and his children are enemies, and slaughters them. Overcome with grief when his sanity returns, Hercules asks the Delphic Oracle how he may atone for his crime. The Oracle replies that he must undertake 12 dangerous, impossible Labours, fighting mythical beasts with amazing strengths and properties. Invent one of these beasts, a many headed, multi-limbed monster, (created by a group of players), and set Hercules the first of his Labours...

The Midas touch

King Midas is a foolish and greedy king. When Silenus a satyr (a wickedly playful creature which is half man, half fawn) arrives at his palace, tired and hungry, Midas makes him welcome, (because he knows it would be unwise to do anything else!) To pay for his hospitality, Silenus grants Midas one wish. He wishes that everything he touches should turn to gold. Everything, and everyone...

Perseus and the Medusa

King Polydectes wishes to marry Danae, the mother of Perseus. He knows that Perseus is against the idea, and so wants him out of the way, preferably permanently. He issues Perseus a challenge, to slay the gorgon Medusa. Medusa is the ugliest creature alive. Anyone who glances at her for the merest second is turned to stone. And if that isn't bad enough, her hair is made up entirely of poisonous serpents. She has permanent "bad face, bad hair days". Armed with a sickle, Perseus is also given three gifts to help with his challenge, a helmet, wings for his feet, and a shield polished like a mirror. When he arrives at the land of the Hyperboreans, he finds the stone statues of all those who have failed in the quest before him...

Pandora's Box

Zeus, chief of the gods, wants to revenge himself upon mankind because Prometheus gave them the secret of fire, against Zeus' command. He therefore orders his crippled son Hephaestus, a skilled craftsman, to make a girl from clay. Athene, Zeus' daughter, is commanded to breathe life into the girl. Thus Pandora is "born". Zeus gives Pandora a sealed casket on her marriage to Epimetheus, with strict instructions to him never to allow her to open the casket. Pandora cannot contain her curiosity; she attempts to persuade her husband to open the casket...

Latona's revenge

Hera exiles her rival Latona, denying her anywhere to stay to rear her twins, the children of Zeus. Latona arrives at a pool, suffering from thirst, and asks some foolish rustics who are there if she can drink from it, and give her children water. They refuse, jeering and threatening her if she doesn't go on her way. One jumps into the pool to stir up the mud and make it unfit to drink. But in revenge, Latona turns the rustics into frogs...

Health # 1

Heather's mother is cleaning her room, tidying things away, when she discovers hundreds of chocolate bars in a drawer. She has never so many before. As she looks further, she finds more, under the bed, hidden in the bottom of the wardrobe. She is totally bewildered. Anyone eating so much chocolate would surely put on weight, but if anything, Heather is thinner than before...

A health inspector makes an unexpected visit to a restaurant. Unfortunately, a pet rat belonging to one of the children who live above the restaurant has escaped. The children have to decide whether to tell their parents what has happened, or to try to find the rat themselves before anyone else does...

A boy suffers from asthma, and has just recovered from a bad attack. He has a note for his PE teacher excusing him from games for this week, but when he gets to the lesson, he can't find it. The teacher operates a strict rule; no note, you do PE. He provides the boy with spare kit, and tells him he has to take part in the lesson...

Angie has had sex with a boy she met at a night club. She had been going out with him for several months, until they fell out, and she told him she didn't want to see him again. To get his revenge, he writes to her and tells her he is HIV positive, and that she should get a test herself...

Terri has been very moody lately, especially at mealtimes. She won't talk, plays with the food on her plate, and claims she's not really hungry. When she starts wearing two thick jumpers on a mild spring day, her mother decides it's time to take her to the doctors...

Dog owners use the local park and playground as a place to exercise their dogs, and as a result, the place is littered with dog mess. The children who use the park frequently get soiled with it as they play. Mark returns home one evening smelling terribly after playing football. His mother goes mad, and blames him. He thinks this is totally unfair, and decides to get all the kids together to do something about the problem...

Fiona and Jill are sisters. Fiona is seriously ill; she has leukaemia and urgently needs a bone marrow transplant. The only close cell match is Jill, but she has a phobia of hospitals, and can't face the operation, even though it is the only way to save her sister's life. Her parents try to persuade her to go through with it...

Kate wants to become a fashion model, and has managed to get an interview with a modelling agency. The woman interviewing her tries to persuade her that she needs plastic surgery in order to complete "her look". The suggested surgery includes straightening her nose, removing a rib to make her waist look thinner, and taking out her back teeth to make her cheek bones more prominent. If she wants to succeed as a model, some small sacrifices have to be made...

Kate returns home from the agency. The cost of the surgery would come to £2000. She has to persuade her parents to pay for the treatment, if she is to follow her ambition...

While cleaning her daughter's room, a mother moves her daughter's diary, which drops open at a page with RAVE written across it in large capitals. As she reads on, she discovers that her 14 year old daughter has regularly been taking ecstasy...

It is "Giving Up Smoking Day". Show what happens when a character attempts to give up cigarettes. How do friends and family cope with the stress of it all...?

Suppose the Government decided to legalise drugs, as some people have argued, in order to cut down on "drug related crime". What do you think would happen, if drugs were available in supermarkets, were advertised on television, in the same way that alcohol is? Dramatise a typical day sometime in the future when drugs are freely available in this way...

Sarah is a heroin addict, desperately trying to kick her habit. While suffering withdrawal, she hallucinates about the events in her life which have brought her to this....

Due to a chronic shortage of beds because of a flu epidemic, a wealthy private patient is forced to share his room with a tramp brought in off the streets...

The nursing staff in a hospital are being balloted about strike action in order to secure better wages and working conditions. The majority of the nurses are in favour of the action, and are quite militant. But Jane is adamant she would never go on strike, ever...

Joe has had a heart attack, and is in hospital awaiting an operation. The doctor catches him having a forbidden cigarette...

Colin, a young rugby player, is paralysed from the neck downwards following an injury during a match. He wants the doctors to switch off his ventilator, to let him die with dignity. Kula, a young nurse, tries to persuade him not to give up hope in life...

A woman is brought in to casualty, claiming she got her injuries by tripping and falling downstairs. The doctor treating her is surprised at the severity of her injuries, and notices her husband also seems to have hurt his hand...

Louise is concerned that taking the contraceptive pill is not good for her health now that she's getting that bit older. She and her husband have decided they don't want any more children, so why doesn't Gary have a vasectomy....

When Leroy discovers that his son Irwin has started smoking, he decides to think of an imaginative way to help him kick the habit...

The Clarke family are having a meal in a restaurant when the youngest child who is aged 10 starts talking a very loudly about sex, and asking embarrassing questions that the whole restaurant can hear. It seems that the school has been running sex education lessons, but has neglected to tell the parents. The Clarkes have to deal with an embarrassing situation, and so decide to complain to the school...

Ernie is behaving very strangely. He is missing days off work, going out without saying where, and collecting the post quickly in the morning. He is acting very suspiciously. His wife Mary becomes convinced that he is having an affair with another woman. In reality, Ernie has a serious illness. He has been visiting the doctor and the hospital. He did not want to cause his wife any distress. But Mary accuses him of being unfaithful...

Dougal fills in a quiz in a health magazine for a bit of a laugh. The questions concern his diet, the amount of exercise he takes, and how much he drinks each week. When he checks his answers he is horrified to discover that he is a prime candidate for a heart attack! He decides to go on a fitness course...

At a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous each of the group members tells the story of their addiction, which is role played with the help of the others in the group...

Bob decides to give up smoking on what he hopes will be a stress-free day during the holidays. Unfortunately, being at home with his family is not quite as stress-free as he hoped, and events don't work out as he wished...

Joe has been in hospital following a heart attack. He is meant to follow a strict regime of diets, exercise, no smoking or drinking. Much to the dismay and efforts of his family he begins to cheat on this. They decide that his fitness plan must be enforced...

Jenny is a single mother with two teenage children. She discovers she has a lump in her breast, and after a biopsy, finds out she has cancer. She has to tell them the bad news

Health # 3

It is 1952 in the boardroom of a large multimillion dollar tobacco company. The company research scientist is to present his findings about the link between smoking and cancer to the board of directors. They have to decide what to do with the findings of this research, which make a strong connection between smoking and lung cancer. If they make this research public, it could drastically affect their profits...

A new landlord in a local pub imposes a no smoking ban. The regulars are divided. Some say they will drink elsewhere, while others welcome the opportunity to relax in a smoke free environment. The drinkers debate the ban with the landlord...

Jack is in hospital awaiting an operation. A patient, who has obviously just undergone surgery, is placed in the bed next to his. Jack overhears the sister tell the nurse that the patient must not be moved under any circumstances. Shortly afterwards, a porter arrives with a form instructing him to take the patient down to x-ray. Jack is horrified when the porter tries to wake the patient up, and to put him into the wheelchair. He tries to explain what he has overheard, but the porter has his job to do, and his form to prove it...

Danielle's parents like to think they are modern, up-to-date, broadminded sort of people, who can understand where "young people are coming from". But when Danielle gets her first boyfriend, she is shocked when her mother tells her she thinks she should go straight on the pill, "just to be on the safe side"...

Irene is woken in the middle of the night by a phone call from the hospital. Her daughter Sandra has taken an overdose. She has not seen Sandra for over a year since they had a big argument about her boyfriend, Gary. Irene thought he was no good, as he was always in and out of prison, but Sandra left home to move in with him. Now it seems Irene has been proved right...

Paul is a very good footballer, and plays for the city team, as well as for his school, and local club. This means he plays lots of games, sometimes four or five each week, and this is taking its toll in injuries. He has an important game coming up, at which there will be scouts from Premier League clubs, so he is determined not to miss it. He has been carrying a knee injury for some weeks, so he goes to the doctor to see if he will prescribe some pain killers, just for this one game...

Tricia goes to a rave with her boyfriend Mike. He persuades her to take some pills, which he says will "give her a great buzz". She has a good time at the rave, but next day she comes out in a terrible rash, like severe acne. She cannot go to the doctor, because then she would have to explain that she was taking illegal pills. She decides to confront Mike. He got her into this mess; he will have to get her out...

Diabetes runs in Scott's family. His mother has had it for many years, but keeps it well under control through her medication, and sensible diet. Scott seems to blame his mother for the illness, and refuses to act sensibly to keep it under control. He takes insulin, obviously, but won't help himself by eating properly. He drinks too much, and says what's the point of living if he can't have fun, when his mother tries to make him see he is harming himself. She knows he is storing up problems for himself in later life, and so asks his new girlfriend Susan if she will try to get him to see sense...

Phil's dad, Tom, has been driving for 50 years, since he was 18. Now his eyesight isn't what it was, and Phil is concerned that his dad is not safe to drive any more, even when he's wearing his glasses. He tries to persuade him that he must give up his car, and that Phil will drive him anywhere he has to go. But Tom is stubborn, and thinks his son is making a fuss about nothing...

Elaine's brother is undergoing treatment for leukaemia. The chemotherapy makes him very weak, so that he has to use a wheelchair. Her parents want her to take him out for some fresh air each day, but Elaine feels awkward and embarrassed pushing the wheelchair...

On a plane full of package holiday makers. Every seat is taken. A passenger tries to make conversation with the person in the next seat. There is no response. Gradually the passenger realises this person has died. The passenger alerts the air crew...

A boy has a crazy, accident-prone friend, who can never resist a dare, and spends most of his spare time in the local casualty department. The boy tries to persuade his parents to take this friend with them on holiday...

A group of kids from the city decide to go off into the country for a camping holiday. They don't have much idea about country ways. When they get there, it is getting dark, so they pitch the tent in the first field they come across. In the morning, they wake to find themselves in a field with a bull, and an angry farmer...

The camping holiday goes from bad to worse. It is late, dark, and wet. The group are tired, hungry, and beginning to get on each other's nerves. They are cooking their last supply of rice on a small primus stove, and it seems to be taking an age to boil. Then someone accidentally knocks over the stove...

The last straw on this camping holiday. The group wake up one morning to discover that someone has stolen their clothes, food, money, belongings in the middle of the night. They only have the clothes they have slept in. This cannot be happening; one of them must be playing a practical joke, mustn't they...?

Every year, Dennis goes on holiday to Blackpool with his elderly father, staying in the same boarding house, doing the same things which they've done since Dennis was a child. This year, Dennis, now aged 34, has met a young woman. He wants to go abroad with her for his annual holiday. But he is not sure how to break the news to his father, nor how he'll take it...

Jackie is 17, and has been going out with Mark for several weeks. She would like to go abroad with him for a holiday, but she is not sure how her parents will take it...

A mother and daughter have gone on holiday together to Majorca. The mother is entering into the swing of things, having a great time with all the other holidaymakers on their tour. She has been drinking rather a lot, and letting her hair down. When she leads a drunken conga down the beach at midnight for an impromptu skinny dipping session, her daughter has had enough...

The Robinson family are on a caravan holiday. It is a wild, wet and windy day, and they are stuck on a caravan site in the middle of nowhere. Even the car will not start because of the damp, and so they can't even go for a trip somewhere. As there is no television, there is nothing for it but for the family to make their own entertainment, and to reach for the monopoly board...

Tracy and Lorraine go on holiday to Ibiza. They are chatted up in a bar by two French boys who seem to have plenty of money, and are willing to spend it. The two French boys seem to think that English girls are "easy", and will sleep with anyone who treats them to a good time. Tracey thinks that they should play along with the foreigners and take them for anything they can, but Lorraine thinks this may be asking for trouble...

Before heading off on holiday Mary tells her husband Jack not to touch the car himself but to take it into a garage to be serviced. He ignores her advice to save money, thinking he can do the job just as well himself. They haven't gone far down the road when the car breaks down. Mary is furious, and intends to phone the garage to tell what she thinks of the workmanship...

Maggie and Stan book an airline flight for a camping holiday in Cuba. They become a little concerned when they notice the plane is flying over Belgium, and even more so when they recognise Italy from the window. They eventually decide to ask the flight attendant where they are going...

Holidays # 2

Greg and his girlfriend Susie are on holiday abroad together. Unfortunately, on the second day in the hotel, Greg comes down with a stomach upset, and has to take to bed. He tells Susie to go out and enjoy herself, but is secretly glad when she stays with him. Though on the fourth day, when he is still poorly, Susie is getting bored. Her holiday is slipping away, and she hasn't had much fun. She thinks she might pop out to a disco, or night club, just to see what they're like, ready for when he's better....

Jackie and Leah are travelling across Europe by train. Jackie is bossy, a real organiser, or likes to think she is. Leah is more laid-back, a bit careless and carefree. On the train, Jackie suddenly discovers that the tickets, which she has been looking after, are missing. The ticket inspector is in the next compartment...

A group of tourists abroad in a foreign country require directions to get to the zoo, or the cinema, or the theatre, or to a football match. They do not speak the language. They try to make themselves understood to one of the locals by acting out where they want to go....

Lance is on holiday in Spain. He has spent much too long in the sun on the first day, and got very sun burnt. He is sore all over, can barely move, and cannot bear to be touched. Unfortunately, he has previously arranged a hot date with a fantastic girl at the disco that evening. He does not want to miss the date, but he also does not want to confess how stupid he was lying out too long in the sun. How does the evening turn out?

A group of tourists are visiting India. They enter a Hindu temple with their shoes on, much to the dismay of local worshippers. The worshippers do not speak English, and the tourists do not understand what they are trying to say...

Trevor is on holiday with his family in Spain. He is involved in a car accident, which was not his fault. He is horrified when he finds himself in a police station facing a manslaughter charge. He does not know where he can turn to get help...

The Martin family are on holiday in Florida, when they are mugged at gunpoint. All their money and credit cards are stolen. They are effectively penniless. They complain to the local police chief, who does not seem concerned about their predicament...

While on holiday in California, a young boy called Daniel breaks his arm. His family take him to the hospital, but the doctors there refuse to do anything until they know if he is insured so that his treatment will be paid for. The family will need to contact their tour company to find this out. Meanwhile Daniel is in pain...

Ross and Mandy are on holiday in Italy, staying at a hotel. They have to share a bathroom with an annoying couple, who always seem to get to the bathroom first, and leave it in a mess. Ross wants to complain to the hotel manager, but Mandy thinks this will cause bad feeling with the couple, and will spoil the holiday. She thinks they will just have to put up with it...

The Lawson family are on the beach, even though the sun has nearly gone down below the horizon, and it is getting quite dark. They are digging and looking in the sand. This is because they have lost the key for their hotel somewhere on the beach, and do not dare to return to the hotel to face the battle-axe of a landlady without it...

Susie and Tony are spending the summer in Ibiza. They are trying to find jobs in pubs or night-clubs in order to keep themselves, but without any luck. Their money is running out, and their rent is up at the end of the week, so that they will have to find somewhere else to live. Susie sees an advertisement for an exotic dancer. She wants to apply for the job, but Tony is not too keen on the idea. (Alternatively, she is not keen on the idea, but Tony wants her to apply).

A wife is on her way out, shopping. She checks her purse, and realises she needs more money. She finds her husband's jacket, slips out his wallet, takes some notes. As she does this, a piece of paper falls to the floor. It says simply, "Michelle" and has a phone number...

A husband is having an affair with a colleague at work. He is both feeling guilty, and tired of leading a double life. He decides to break off the affair, but the colleague threatens to tell his wife if he does, and make life difficult for him at work...

At the supermarket checkout. A wife is busy, getting the stuff out of the trolley, through the till, and packed into the bags. Her husband is standing idly by, smoking a cigarette, watching her struggle, but making no move to help. The checkout girl is amazed:
"Well, I've seen everything now. Are you just going to stand there, or are you going to help?"

A husband buys a second-hand car from a mate, without telling his wife what he is going to do. He drives it home, and shows it off proudly. She is not pleased, especially when she lifts the front seat and discovers a large hole underneath: "And what exactly do you call this? A sunshine floor?"

On the promenade of a northern seaside resort. A savage wind is whipping spray off the sea. A husband and wife struggle against the wind. One complains to the other, shouting above the sound of the wind: "Some honeymoon this is! I told you we should have gone abroad!"

A husband wants to celebrate his wife's fiftieth birthday in style. He has organised a secret party, inviting all her friends. He has also put up a large sign at a nearby traffic roundabout, telling everyone how old she is. She arrives home fuming, upset that everyone now knows just how old she is...

A wife is becoming increasingly afraid of her violent husband. He loses his temper easily, and has hit her, and the children, several times. She has decided to leave, taking the children with her while he is at work. She has packed the cases, organised the children, and is about to leave, when her husband returns unexpectedly...

Ingrid and Douglas are a young married couple. She has a better paid job as an assistant bank manager than her husband, who is a double glazing salesman. She is offered promotion in the bank provided that she moves to a branch some hundreds of miles away. This means that Douglas would have to give up his job, but she might not get this opportunity of promotion again if she turns it down now....

Peter and Mandy are a young married couple with a new baby. Mandy wants to go back to work now that the baby is six months old, and Peter knows that they need her money if they want to maintain their lifestyle. She wants him to persuade his widowed mother who lives nearby to look after the baby. But his mother thinks that children should be looked after by their parents...

Cheryl has been having an affair, and finally leaves her husband Derek for this other man. Derek is left on his own to look after the children. He juggles work with minding the children, and is doing his best to cope. Then several weeks later, she returns, and says she wants to take the children away to live with her new partner.

Patrick is a workaholic, working very long hours for his firm. He says that he has to work like this in order to keep his job, and hopefully to gain promotion. His wife Kim thinks that he does it because he wants to, and that he's neglecting her and the children. She decides to take control of her own life. If Patrick isn't home on time for the evening meal, they eat without him. One night he comes home fairly late to find that there is no meal for him, and that she and the children have gone to the cinema. He remembers that he promised to get home early to take them. He sits brooding over what will happen when his family return...

Husbands and wives # 2

Emma and Nathan are a young married couple. Because Nathan is out of work, though looking hard for a job, they are presently living with Emma's parents. Emma has a part-time job in a supermarket. Nathan is getting very fed up, being stuck at home with her parents all the time. He wants to go out for an evening, just to get out of the house. She doesn't think that they can afford it, or that her mother will approve. Nathan and Emma's mother do not get on....

It is the middle of the night. A couple are asleep in bed. We hear a sound effect, a young baby crying. The couple wake up. Both wait for the other to get up to attend to the child, pretending to be asleep. Finally one says, "It's your turn!"

Rosanne is suspicious that her husband is having an affair with one of his colleagues at work. When he tells her that he has to go on another business trip to London, she decides it is time to put her suspicions to the test, and turn up at the hotel where he is staying, unannounced...

It is said that it is the little things which finally wreck marriages. Those irritating habits both partners have which really annoy the other. Things like changing the television channel without asking. Or leaving toe nail clippings on the bathroom floor. Choose several irritating habits which a husband and a wife each have. Invent a scene in which these irritating habits are shown, and from this develop the real reasons behind the marriage break-up...

Larry goes out once a week with his mates, most of whom are unmarried. He tells his wife that he only goes for a drink, but he comes home very late, and his wife Nancy suspects that he is going clubbing. One night he arrives home at 5 a.m. with what looks like a love bite on his neck...

A married couple go to a party at their neighbours. The wife has a little too much to drink, and starts flirting with her neighbour. Her husband gets more and more angry as the night goes on, and eventually decides to drag her home...

Melvyn is very house proud. He spends his time vacuuming, polishing, dusting, and decorating. Everything has to be exactly so. His wife Sarah is getting fed up with it as he seems to suggest that her standards are just not good enough. The final straw arrives when he complains that she has left hairs in the plug hole of the bath...

A husband and wife have had an argument. The next morning they are not speaking to each other. Show their hostility to each other as they prepare and eat their breakfast...

A husband and wife go to a marriage guidance counsellor for help. The counsellor suggests that their real problem is a lack of communication. Before the next interview, each partner is to prepare a list of things which they resent about the other. They are to talk about the lists at the next interview. (The characters playing the husband and wife should prepare a list of complaints each, but without showing the other partner)...

A married couple disagree over when they should have children. He wants to put it off for a few years, but she is getting broody. He thinks she's using the contraceptive pill, until he finds a pregnancy testing kit in the bathroom...

When Mildred and Jack are on holiday, they meet by chance a man who used to go out with Mildred before she was married. Tony is now a successful, wealthy businessman who spends a lot of his time at his villa in the resort where they are staying on a package holiday. Much to Jack's annoyance Tony seems eager to rekindle this old flame...

Malcolm decides to give his wife Julie a special birthday present, a year's membership to a health club. She thinks he's trying to imply that she's overweight, and isn't too pleased at all by his birthday generosity...

James has been separated from his wife Gillian for some time. He has found a new girlfriend called Nadia, and has moved in with her. He still visits his wife from time to time, to see his children he says. But then Nadia discovers that Gillian is pregnant again...

Several years ago, a young couple agreed that she should have an abortion because they did not think it was the right time to start a family, as it would interfere with their careers. She has always secretly regretted this, and blamed her husband for it. Now that she has persuaded her husband to have a family, she pays a visit to the doctor. After examining her, the doctor tells her she cannot have children because of damage caused by the abortion. She returns home in distress....

Leslie is about to have her first baby. She wants her husband Guy to be present at the birth. He is not at all sure about this, as he is very squeamish about these kind of things. He tries to invent reasons to avoid being present...

When Emma gives her husband Randy a sex manual for his Christmas present he is totally insulted. What exactly is she trying to tell him?

Andy runs his own business, and comes home late every evening, completely tired out. Now that the children are bigger, his wife Lorraine wants to start enjoying herself again. She has decided to take up ballroom dancing lessons. If Andy won't join her at these lessons, she will have to find herself another dancing partner...

Nicola is working in the garden, a hobby she enjoys, and which she is good at. A friend of her husband called Herbert comes to pay a short visit, and immediately starts criticising her gardening skills. Nicola is annoyed because her husband Gerry does not stick up for her and seems to agree with Herbert's comments, even though he knows nothing about gardening...

Keith has had a drug habit for several years. His wife Nancy has supported him financially, working in an office during the day, and in a bar at night. She has tried to persuade him to give up the habit, but always without success. Now she is pregnant. She thinks she has to leave him for the good of her child.

Howard usually does all the decorating in the house. His wife Ellen decides to surprise him by doing the dining-room when she's at home one day. When Howard comes home, he immediately criticises what she's done....

Carl has been involved in an accident, and is seriously ill in hospital, in a coma. His wife Gina is at his bedside. Another woman approaches and introduces herself. Her name is June, and she says she has been having an affair with Carl for over six months...

Martha has a highly paid job with a computer firm. She has recently had her first baby, and soon has to decide whether she wants to take a career break, or to go back to work. Her husband, Doug, works in a Job Centre. He is not well paid, and is always complaining how boring his job is, and how much he hates it. But when Martha suggests that he gives up his job, to stay at home to mind the new baby, Doug is taken by surprise. Apart from anything else, what would his mates say...?

Terry is a keen footballer, who has always played for one local team or another. His wife has always supported him, standing dutifully on the touchline. Deciding to share her husband's interest, she trains to become a referee, and passes all the exams. As luck would have it, her first full game in charge, is to referee a match in which Terry is playing...

Martha and Stanley are about to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. Martha wants to give him a special surprise, by having all their photographs professionally mounted in an album. She is going through all their photographs, which have been kept in an old trunk over the years. In an envelope she comes across a photograph of her husband, in uniform during the war, with his arm around a young French girl. And what is more, there is a letter...

Journeys # 1

The *Canterbury Tales* provides the best model for the use of a journey. Change the setting to a modern day context (for example, a group of travellers heading off on a package tour, stranded at an airport, or a bunch of football supporters travelling to a match). Each member of the group of travellers has to come up with a story, which the rest of the travellers improvise.

Arizona. Otis Barnaby is a convicted killer, but for a crime he claims he never committed. While on Death Row in Dallas, Texas, he escaped. But his freedom is short lived, and he has been re-captured in Arizona. Two law enforcement officers from Texas have been sent to bring him back to Dallas. To face the electric chair...

In the mountain pass between the village and the town, lives a Troll. He is the ugliest thing you have ever seen. He can jump eight feet high and twenty feet long. He never lets travellers pass. He ties them up and hoists them high into the branches of trees. His larder, he calls it. The villagers say you can hear him munching their bones. But Anders, the village blacksmith, doesn't care. He has a plan to outwit the Troll, so that he can get to the town to sell his wares. He just needs someone to go with him, to help with the plan...

America, during the Depression. Two railroad bums have been travelling together for a couple of weeks, hitching rides on freight trains, dodging the railroad police, generally looking out for each other. They plan to spend a day fruit picking, to earn a bit of cash, and get a new bedroll each before the winter comes on. At the last minute, Jack cries off, claiming he's got a bad gut ache, so Slim goes to the job alone, prepared to share what he makes with his buddy. When he gets back, he finds that his bundle has been opened, and Jack has gone. Food is missing, and worst of all, his most precious thing; a map of the railroads....

France, 1943. An RAF pilot has been shot down in occupied territory. He has parachuted from his plane, badly spraining his ankle when he landed. Unless he wants to spend the rest of the war in a Prisoner of War camp, he must get to the coast, and somehow find a boat to England, or get to a neutral country, Spain or Switzerland. But most importantly, he needs food, help, and shelter. Will he find someone to put their own life at risk to help him? Who could he trust...?

Carrie's life is in danger. It has been ever since she saw Tony Lorenzo gun down one of his underworld rivals. She was the key witness at his trial, and even though he has been sent down for a life stretch, she is not safe. He has friends who will do his bidding, even though he is locked away inside. The FBI promise to put her on their witness protection plan, give her a new name, a new identity, a new life in Florida. It isn't safe to get a plane, or a train. Lorenzo's friends will be watching. Brad, an FBI agent, is ordered to drive her from New York to Miami, posing as her dad. Only one agent, less likely to attract attention. They stop at a diner on the road for something to eat. Who is the young guy who joins them at their table, and starts making out with Carrie? And should they give him the hitch he asks for....?

The first manned mission to Mars, a crew of six, each with their own specialist skills and knowledge. A successful mission. They blast off for the return to Earth, elated by their success, but tired by the long months in space, looking forward to get home. But then, a sudden disaster. The ship is struck by a small meteorite, knocked off course, tumbling headlong in space. The crew manage to regain control, but the ship has been crippled. The voyage will take much longer, and their oxygen will not last. Two of the six must sacrifice themselves so that the remaining four can reach Earth...

It seemed like the perfect honeymoon. They read the brochures, admired the sunsets over tropical beaches on a faraway island, pictured their romantic bliss. But then the plane developed trouble and was forced to land. The only way to reach their island is by bus to the nearest fishing village, and then a boat across. Sandy is the kind of girl who likes her home comforts, so sharing a bus with goats and chickens, as well as the locals, is not her idea of fun. And the hotel at the village? Her worst nightmare. Rob tries to make the best of things, but the tension is beginning to tell. And there is still the boat trip to come...

Viv and Bob are off on holiday by train. They arrive at the station with their young children, Viv's mum, thousands of bags and suitcases, and their youngest—a baby in a fold-up pram. When the train arrives, they pile into a carriage, finding a seat wherever they can. Both Viv and Bob think that the other has put the baby and the pram on board. To their horror, when they check to see that everyone is safely aboard, they realise that they have left the baby and the pram on the platform. The train is gathering speed out of the station, and the next stop is sixty miles down the line....

When Mike picked up the hitch-hiker, he seemed ordinary enough. Plenty of stories, lots of jokes, helping to make the time pass quickly. But what is he carrying in that large parcel...?

A young couple are doing a tour of India by car, a really old VW campervan. They go off for a spot of sight seeing, leaving all their stuff in the van. When they get back from their walk, they find the van has been stolen, along with their clothes, money, passports, food - everything. It is a 20 mile walk to the nearest village where they can report the theft...

Guy is travelling by train for a job interview, a job he doesn't really want, but at least it will give him a chance to settle in to the city. On the journey he meets a smart looking young woman, whom he starts to chat up, attempting to impress her with his stories about himself, all of them untrue. When he gets to the interview, the woman is on his interview panel for the job...

It is the last day of the school's trip to Paris, and the kids have been allowed to spend the day looking around the shops, buying things to bring home with them. At the end of the day, the coach is waiting, with only enough time to get to the ferry. Two of the kids haven't returned, but the coach will have to leave without them. One of the teachers has to stay behind to try to find them. But if he can't, they'll just have to make their own way home...

Russell has just bought a new 4x4 off-road vehicle. He has been boasting about it all week to his girlfriend Amber, who is a bit fed-up hearing how it can "drive straight up the side of a mountain". Russell invites Amber to help him put the vehicle through its paces. She isn't too keen, but agrees. Unfortunately, the 4x4 gets stuck in some marshy ground out in the middle of nowhere. They have to trek to the nearest farm for help. The farmer is scornful of "townies" with their toys scorching round the countryside and destroying his peace. If they want him to tow them out with his tractor, they are going to have to pay...

Ronnie has been robbing banks ever since he can remember. He's spent much of his life in jail, but he doesn't care, as long as he can enjoy his life when he's out, with plenty of money to spend. But this is his last job. And this time he doesn't intend to share the pickings. He's running away with the money, and his gang are hot on his tail....

Hayley is on a tour of the far East, backpacking round as many countries as possible during her summer vacation. She meets a guy called Ed, and they begin to tag along together. He seems like a decent guy, and they plan to catch a plane to their next port of call. At the last minute, she gets a phone call from him. Something has come up and he will be delayed. Can she take his things with her on the plane, and he'll meet up with her later? What she doesn't know is that his bag contains a stash of heroin, that he's using her as a courier. The penalties for smuggling drugs are severe...

Ben's daughter Kim has run away from home, to be with a man "old enough to be her father". Ben is afraid his daughter is being used. He sets off to find her, retracing her footsteps as best he can. Beginning at the motorway services where she was last seen...

It is late at night. Chris and Sarah are walking home after a night out. The last bus has long since gone; not a taxi to be found. They reach a point on their walk where they have to make a choice. Take a shortcut down a lonely path, or walk the long way round by the well lit road. Sarah is getting tired. There are two of them; the shortcut will be safe. Chris is not so sure...

Love songs

All of these ideas are based on traditional songs and ballads, which may be incorporated into the work to explain the narrative.

Johnny Todd

Liverpool, at the turn of the century. Johnny is engaged to Betty. They plan to marry when he can find a job. But he doesn't feel like settling down just yet, and with jobs hard to find, he has a ready made excuse. What he does want, is to see a bit of the world first. He signs on as a sailor without telling her, and is to leave the next day. A year later. Johnny has travelled the world, writing home from time to time, but not really able to keep in touch. He has made a bit of money, enough to set himself up as a tradesman, to settle down. He assumes Betty still feels the same about him, as he does about her. But when he gets back into Liverpool, he finds she is engaged to another man...

Frankie and Johnny

New Orleans, the late 1800s. Frankie is a bargirl, working as a dancer in a saloon. It is a rough kind of life, and she meets some pretty low down types. Lately she has fallen for Johnny, a gambler. He loves her well enough, but cannot help flirting and being unfaithful. When the news of his betrayal reaches her, Frankie is beside herself, and goes for a gun...

The Black Velvet Band

London, early 1800s. Bartholomew has an apprenticeship with a lock-smith. The hours are long, and the pay is poor, but in a few years, he will be a craftsman with his own trade. Until one day he meets a dark haired beauty, who ties her hair with a black velvet band. Bartholomew is captivated, unable to believe his luck, that such a fine looking woman would take up with the likes of him. He dismisses the warnings of his friends, but one day while out walking, she steals the gold watch from a gentleman, and places it in his hand. Bartholomew is horrified; if he is caught, he will be transported to Australia...

Maggie May

Liverpool, early 1800s. Tom is a sailor, just back into port from his first voyage, and with his pockets full of money. He gets off his ship, and heads straight for Canning Place, to have a few well earned drinks, and perhaps find some female company. His luck is in, and he meets up with Maggie May, who takes him back to her place at the end of the evening. Next morning when he wakes up, Maggie has flown, along with the rest of his money, and most of his clothes. Worse still, Maggie's landlady is demanding her rent...

Lady Mary

Lady Mary dresses in fine satin and lace, but is cold and strange to her husband, Lord Gareth. He seeks consolation from a village girl Nancy. She knows he is using her, but falls in love with his sad dark eyes. Soon afterwards, Lord Gareth dies. Why does Lady Mary not cry at his funeral? What can Nancy do...?

The Charming Young Widow (I met on the Train)

Ben's uncle dies, leaving him a large sum of money. To collect it, he must travel from Vermont, down to Boston. With his new found wealth, he books himself a first class ticket, and into his compartment comes a charming young widow, nursing a small baby. He engages her in conversation, and is both enchanted and distressed to hear her tale of misfortune which lead to the death of her husband. When the train pulls in to a station, she asks Ben to look after the child, while she goes to compose herself. But when the train begins to move, she has not returned. The baby it seems, is a dummy; his watch, wallet and ticket are missing, and the ticket collector is on his way...

Lost Jimmy Whelan

Jimmy Whelan has drowned in the river. His young bride sits each night on the riverbank, weeping for him. A traveller overhears her invoking Jimmy's promise to meet her the night of the full moon, and is astonished to see him rise out from his watery grave, to meet his young bride. The two embrace, and disappear together into the water. The shocked traveller hurries on to the nearest town, to persuade people about what he has seen...

51 AD. Prasutagus, the King of the Iceni tribe (who live in what is now East Anglia) is dying. He has managed to live alongside the Roman invaders for several years, and hopes the settlement of his kingdom on his death will allow this to continue. His lands are to be divided equally between his two daughters, and the new Roman Emperor Nero. The Romans do not accept the settlement. They flog Prasutagus' wife Boudicca, and publically rape and torture his two daughters. Boudicca, a large wild, red-haired woman is stricken with grief and revenge. She flies to persuade the chieftains of local tribes to join her in a revolt against the Romans, to attack Verulamium and Londinium, to drive the Romans back into the sea. If they are men enough...

England is in turmoil. The King, Henry III, has broken promises to the barons, and is waging expensive wars on the continent. The barons, lead by Simon de Montfort, have risen against the King, and taken him prisoner. While this lack of firm rule continues, the ordinary people suffer at the mercy of arbitrary justice dealt out by local Sheriffs, who can take what they want from them in taxes. William de Fevre takes the law into his own hands. To feed his family, he goes poaching deer in the forest near Nottingham. So far, he has escaped, his skill with the longbow, and his knowledge of the forest, helping him to escape the clutches of the Sheriff, William de Grey. He has even earned himself a nickname, "Robehood". To capture him, the Sheriff invents a cunning plan. He stages a competition for the best archer in Nottingham, with a rich prize, knowing that "Robehood" will not be able to resist the temptation to take part, and win....

Christopher Columbus spent seven long years attempting to find someone to fund his dream, to find a route to China by travelling to the West across the Atlantic ocean. People thought he was mad. Didn't he know the world was flat, and any ship sailing too far to the West would surely drop over the edge? Finally, he persuaded King Ferdinand and Queen Isobella of Spain to finance his mad scheme. In August 1492, he at last set sail with three ships, the Pinta, Nina and Santa Maria. It had been difficult to find a crew, until Columbus hit on the idea of offering convicted criminals a royal pardon if they volunteered for the voyage. By the first week in October, this crew was turning ugly. Supplies were running out, and there were no signs of land, no birds, no rain, no floating bits of wood. Columbus knew a mutiny was at hand, unless he could persuade the crew to trust him for just a little longer, and convince them of the riches soon to be theirs....

13th May 1604. Robert Catesby is meeting with his friends and cousins at Mrs Herbert's lodging house in Butcher's row, London. Present are Tom Winter, John Wright, Thomas Percy, and Guido (Guy) Fawkes. All are Catholics, persecuted by a Protestant King, James 1st, and a Parliament which passes harsh laws against them. Catholics are forbidden to practise their religion, they are heavily fined, and have their lands confiscated. If they harbour Catholic priests, they are executed. They are not allowed to hold high office, since they are considered to be traitors in league with Catholic Spain. Catesby has a plan; to tunnel beneath the houses of Parliament, and on the 5th of November to blow up the King, his family, and all his ministers of the crown, when the new session of Parliament is opened. The penalty, if they are discovered, will be terrible, hanging, drawing and quartering. Catesby tries to persuade the others to join his plan, especially Fawkes, who is an explosive's expert recently returned from fighting alongside the Spanish army...

The village of Eyam, Derbyshire 1665. A tailor, George Viccars, receives a bundle of cloth from London. The cloth has been soaked, so Viccars spreads it before the fire to dry. He does not notice the fleas attached to the cloth, nor does he realise that they are carrying the plague, The Black Death, which is rife in the capital at this time. Viccars, and the Cooper family with whom he lodges, soon fall sick, covered in dreadful black tumours. The Rector, William Mompesson, calls a village meeting to propose a plan to deal with this outbreak. Boundaries to the village must be marked with stones, and no one in the village must leave, so that the disease cannot spread to neighbouring towns. This includes his own wife Catherine, and his children George and Elizabeth. It includes Emmott Sydall, who will be unable to meet with her lover Rowland Torr, who lives in the next village. It means that food will have to be placed at the boundaries by neighbouring villagers, paid for with coins disinfected with vinegar. It means a self-imposed isolation, and probably their lives...

Making History # 2

9th April 1812. A group of four croppers meet in a pub in Longroyd Bridge, near Huddersfield. Their names are George Mellor, William Thorpe, Thomas Smith and Benjamin Walker. They are angry because the woollen mill owners are investing in machines, gig mills and shearing frames, which are putting skilled croppers out of work. Their job is to raise and trim the nap on the woollen cloth with heavy iron shears; now a machine can do it instead. Their solution is to do what the followers of Ned Ludd (the Luddites) did in Nottingham; to smash the machines which are taking their jobs. The plan is to attack Joseph Foster's Mill at Horbury, to bundle Joseph and his three sons out of their house in the middle of the night, and to smash the shearing frames with large hammers. Benjamin is unsure that he wants to be a part of this, especially when George reveals he has a gun...

Summer 1909. Emmiline Pankhurst has called a meeting of the Women's Social and Political Union to discuss the next steps they should take in their protest movement to enable women to have the Vote. The "suffragettes" are becoming disenchanted with political methods. Her daughter Christabel wants more direct action, chaining themselves to railings, carrying out arson attacks on golf and cricket clubs, disrupting meetings, pelting politicians with rotten fruit. Emmiline is unsure these new tactics would be wise. After all, one of the movement, Marion Dunlop, has gone on hunger strike in prison. The authorities are force feeding her, by clamping open her jaws and pushing rubber tubing up her nose. Where will it end...?

Early July, 1944. General Friedrich Olbrich meets with Ludwig Beck, and Carl Goerdeler at Hitler's heavily guarded headquarters, the "Wolf's Lair". Olbrich is becoming increasingly disturbed at the progress of the war, the damage it is doing to Germany, and the treatment of the Jews in concentration camps. He has personally witnessed atrocities, and has come to the conclusion that a radical solution is required; to assassinate Hitler. He is considering confiding his plans to Claus Von Stauffenberg who has recently been assigned to headquarters after losing an eye, his right hand, and the fingers of his left hand, in battle. Is he like-minded? Can he be trusted? Is he physically able to plant and arm a bomb under the heavy oak map table in Hitler's briefing room...?

Los Alamos, USA, June 9th 1945. A meeting of the Scientific Advisory panel is taking place. Their task is to decide whether to use the Atom Bomb to bring the war with Japan to its conclusion. The members of the panel include Stimson, the Secretary of War, James Byrne, the Secretary of State, and Ralph Bard, the Under Secretary of the Navy. Robert Oppenheimer is the chief scientist behind the project. His colleagues include Enrico Fermi, Arthur Compton, Dr Vannevar Bush, Ernest Lawrence, and Leo Szilard. A successful detonation of the first bomb produced has taken place. Everyone now knows the awesome power that is unleashed, the injuries and devastation that the bomb can cause. The panel is divided; Bard, Compton and Szilard wish to demonstrate the weapon to the Japanese rather than dropping it without warning on the civilian population. The others believe the bomb is the only way to bring the war to a rapid conclusion, and save many Allied soldiers' lives...

29th January 1972. Tension is rising in the British Army HQ in Derry. A Civil Rights march has been planned for the next day, Sunday, to protest against Internment, imprisonment without being charged, and without trial. The march is to begin in Bishop's Field on the Creggan estate, the "Bogside", and to end at the Guildhall in the centre of the city. A bandstand has been erected at Free Derry Corner, where speeches are to be made. Lt. Colonel Derek Wilford meets with his fellow officers to discuss tactics for the next day, whether to prevent the march from taking place, or to use tear gas, plastic bullets, colour-dyed water cannon. A show of strength is called for, perhaps even some live rounds above the heads of the crowd....?

The bare bones of the situations are presented here. This is one topic which will benefit greatly from further research, into the characters and the events...

In the middle ages, plays were usually based on stories from the Bible, and were performed on public holidays, the main church festivals. The actors were amateurs, belonging to the craft guilds. Every trade had its own guild, such as the stone masons, the carpenters, the blacksmiths, and so on. Each guild would choose a story which had some kind of connection to their trade, for example, the carpenters would do Noah's story, because he built the Ark. These plays were called Mystery plays, not because there were unexplained events in them, but because "mystery" is a French word which meant "mastery of a skill", of which all trade guilds were very proud. The Bible stories were performed in a very down to earth sort of way, and added to, as the performers thought fit...

Adam and Eve live in bliss in Paradise, the Garden of Eden. Satan is jealous that they should have the happiness that he has been denied, and so decides to tempt them into disobeying God. God has forbidden them only one thing, not to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Satan visits Eve in the form of a serpent, in order to persuade her to tempt Adam to eat the fruit...

God tells Noah that he intends to punish mankind for its wickedness by means of a Great Flood. Since Noah is a good man, he is to be spared. He must build a great boat, an Ark, big enough to take two of every animal on earth so that life can continue. Noah sets to work straight away, much to the amusement of his neighbours, and the annoyance of his wife, who all think he has gone mad...

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are the most wicked and sinful on earth. Everybody spends their whole time getting drunk, fighting, gambling, and having sex. Three angels, disguised as strangers, visit Abraham, and his nephew Lot, to tell them that God intends to destroy the cities with fire and brimstone. Abraham pleads with God, that if he can find ten good men or women in the city, that God will spare it. While he sets out on this search, Lot tries to persuade his wife, daughters, and sons-in-law to leave the city, or to perish in the fire, blinded by its light...

Abraham's son Isaac has twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was the elder by minutes, but Jacob was his mother Rebekah's favourite. She tries to persuade Jacob into tricking his brother out of his birth-rite, the right to inherit all Isaac's goods and wealth which belongs to the eldest son. One day, Esau comes home from hunting nearly starving to death. Jacob has cunningly prepared a pot of stew, which he offers him in exchange for his birth-rite.

Jacob's uncle Laban has two daughters. The elder, Leah, is rather plain, while the younger Rachel is extremely pretty. Jacob agrees to work for his uncle for seven years in order to marry Rachel. When the seven years are up, on the day of the wedding, Laban disguises Leah by means of a heavy veil, and tricks Jacob into marrying her...

Jacob eventually has 12 sons, the youngest of whom, Joseph, is his father's favourite. He upsets his brothers by having dreams, and claiming he will one day have power over them. When Jacob gives him a wonderful multi-coloured coat, and sends him with a message to his brothers, who are out in the wild looking after the sheep, it is the last straw. They decide to sell Joseph into slavery in Egypt, soak his coat in goat's blood, and pretend he has been eaten by a lion...

Joseph spends several years in Egypt as a slave, working for his master Potiphar. His wife accuses Joseph of forcing her to have sex with him, (the opposite was really the case), so that Potiphar has Joseph thrown into prison. In prison, Joseph meets the Pharaoh's butler, who has been having strange dreams. Joseph is able to tell him what the dreams mean. When the butler is eventually released, he discovers that the Pharaoh has also been having strange dreams, in which seven thin cows eat up seven fat ones. The butler, trying to get back into the Pharaoh's good books, remembers Joseph. He is released from prison, and called to see the Pharaoh. He explains that the dream predicts seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. The Pharaoh is so impressed he makes Joseph his Chancellor, and puts him in charge of storing food to survive the famine...

Medieval Mystery Plays # 2

Some years later, the Pharaoh's son is alarmed at the number of Israelites in Egypt, and so orders all their babies to be slaughtered. Moses is placed in a basket by his mother, where he will be discovered by the Pharaoh's daughter, and so be saved. Years later, having been exiled into the wilderness, Moses returns to Egypt, determined to free the Israelites from slavery, and lead them to their promised land. He threatens the Pharaoh with seven plagues, unless his people are released...

Samson, the strongest man alive, champion of the Israelites, falls in love with Delilah, a devious prostitute. Their enemies, the Philistines, promise her a great deal of money if she can discover the secret of Samson's strength. Samson has told no one alive what this is, but she tricks him by saying that if he really loved and trusted her, he would tell her. By this means she finds out that the secret of his strength is his long hair. While he sleeps, she cuts it off, leaving him helpless. The Philistines capture him, put him in chains, and put out his eyes. Thinking the blinded Samson is no longer a threat, they foolishly allow his hair to re-grow. Samson has a plan; to topple the pillars of the palace, and to kill all those who have tortured and betrayed him...

Some years later, the Philistines discover a champion of their own, a giant of a man called Goliath. He challenges the Israelites to find someone to meet him in single combat, to decide the outcome of the war between the two nations. None of the Israelites want to accept the challenge. Only David, a skinny shepherd boy, is willing to try, armed only with a slingshot and stones, but no one will take him seriously....

David becomes King of the Israelites. He is looking out of his palace window one day, when he sees a most beautiful woman, Bathsheba, taking a bath on the roof of her house. She is married to one of David's generals, Uriah, whom David sends at the front of his troops to do battle. Uriah is killed. After the battle, Nathan, a prophet, accuses David not only of deliberately getting Uriah killed, but also of making Bathsheba pregnant...

Solomon, David's son, has the reputation of being the wisest of kings. His judgements in disputes are legendary for their justice. His reputation is put to the test however, when two prostitutes bring a case before him. They are in dispute about who is the rightful mother of a new born baby. Solomon's judgement creates considerable concern and alarm in the court. He orders that since neither woman will give way, and admit the truth of the other's claim, the only thing to do is to cut the child in half, and give half to each woman...

Jonah, the prophet, never has much luck, or courage. When God tells him to go to Ninevah to settle a dispute, Jonah saves his skin, and boards a ship bound for Tarshish, in entirely the opposite direction. But as soon as the ship hits the open sea, a great storm blows up. The crew draw lots to find out who is to blame for this bad luck, so that he can be thrown overboard. Jonah, of course, draws the short straw, and is tossed into the sea, where he is swallowed by a passing whale...

Joseph, a 48 year old carpenter from Nazareth, is to marry Mary, a teenage bride. But then she drops a bombshell – she is already pregnant! Stranger still, she claims that she was visited by an angel, who told her that the baby will be the son of God. Rumours are rife, and Joseph is uncertain whether to call off the wedding...

Mary is almost nine months pregnant, when she and Joseph have to travel to Bethlehem, the place of their birth, in order to take part in a census commanded by the Roman authorities. When they get there, the city is packed with thousands of travellers, all looking for somewhere to stay. Joseph, goes from place to place trying to find somewhere with shelter. But there doesn't seem to be any room at any of the inns...

High on a hillside, a group of shepherds are complaining about the cold, moaning about the price of mutton, and the cutback in government subsidies. They've had a few drinks to keep out the cold, and so don't quite believe it when a stranger appears, telling them to find a stable in Bethlehem, if they want to see a really wonderful thing...

A group of people run a lottery syndicate at work. Each week, every member pays in a fixed amount to pay for the tickets. Whatever the group win, is to be shared amongst them. One member never pays regularly without being reminded, or some weeks never pays at all. This week, the syndicate has a big win. The non-payer arrives with the stake money, expecting to receive a share. The rest of the group have to decide what to do.

A builder has recently replaced a roof. The house owners are dismayed when shortly afterwards, rain water starts coming through their bedroom ceiling in the middle of the night. When the builder finally pays a visit to view the damage, he insists the leak is caused by storm damage, and not his shoddy workmanship...

In a restaurant. A group of diners have finished their meal, and are sorting out the bill, which is to be divided equally between them. No problem, until it gets to the tip for the waitress. One of the group does not believe in tipping, and refuses to put in a share. The others refuse to accept such blatant meanness...

Terry makes a living selling a bit of this, and a bit of that, mostly to mates in pubs. It's Christmas, a good time of the year for him, especially having sold a hundred sets of electric curling tongs. The problem is, the tongs are a little "hot", in more ways than one...

Enid is looking for ways of making a little extra money. Her friend Caroline suggests holding an Ann Summers party. She's done this in the past, made a little money, and had a good time. Enid is rather innocent, and expects it to be like a Tupperware party, so she agrees. As the party gets underway, she gradually begins to realise what kind of party it is, and the kind of things which are being sold...

A Youth Club has been given a grant of £1000 to spend improving the facilities. The committee meets to decide what to spend it on, and there is likely to be disagreement between those who want to install more equipment, such as a new pool table, and those who wish to improve the actual buildings themselves...

Donna has set up her own hairdressing business, taking out a loan from the bank to do so, and using her house as security. She works long hours trying to build up a "bank" of clients, because competition is quite fierce. She gets to the point where she needs an extra pair of hands, and asks a long time friend to come and work for her. But the friend turns out to be careless, unpunctual, and has made a mess of several customers' hair. If this continues, the business could take a nosedive. Donna could lose her house if it does...

Every day when the morning post arrives, Andy immediately jumps to collect it before his wife can get it. She suspects he is hiding some letters, perhaps from a woman he's seeing? In fact, the letters he hides are bills; he is heavily in debt and doesn't want his wife to know. She finally decides to tell him her suspicions...

Craig borrows £400 from his best mate Vic in order to buy a camera to go on holiday. He says he will pay it back as soon as he returns and gets his next month's wages. But payday comes and goes, and Vic still doesn't have his money. He decides to tackle Craig about it...

Nancy wants to take her son to Disneyland. He has been suffering from leukaemia, and though he is expected to make a full recovery, she has promised him the trip of a lifetime as soon as he is out of hospital, and fit enough to travel. To pay for the holiday, she has been paying money from the firm where she does the accounts into her own bank, intending to pay it back little by little later. However, the auditor has discovered the thefts. She has to return home to break the news to her family that she has been arrested, interviewed, and is likely to be charged...

A pop singer, Sapphire, celebrates her first number one hit record. Her career is taking off, she has the prospect of a TV show, and an American tour. But then she gets a phone call from an ex-boyfriend reminding her of those topless photos he took of her. He intends to share in her success, or else...

Money matters # 2

Jordan and Fay are newly married and do not have a great deal of money once all the bills have been paid. Jordan is still very extravagant in spending money on himself, buying lots of clothes, music, and going out for a drink. Fay decides it is time to put her foot down or else they are not going to make ends meet...

Mike is sacked from his job, but gets some redundancy money. He decides to invest this in a removal van, in order to set himself up as a small business. He asks his best friend Joe, who is also unemployed, to join him, and says he will pay him a decent wage. This business arrangement puts a strain on the friendship especially when Joe damages an expensive piece of furniture through his carelessness...

Gilbert and Gwen are having difficulty making ends meet. They decide to take in a lodger in order to help pay their bills. But when the lodger starts acting strangely, Gwen demands that Gilbert tells him he has to go...

Lennie is a plumber. When his tools are stolen, he has a real problem. He does not have then insured, as his wife had told him to, and he needs them to be able to carry on with his work. He decides to sell the watch his wife bought him in order to buy some new tools. He hopes that she won't notice that his watch is missing...

When Nathan discovers that he has been paid too much by mistake in his pay packet, he comes home ready to take out his wife Elisabeth to celebrate. He is amazed when she says that they must pay the money back....

James is given a false £20 from the cash dispenser at his local bank. This is discovered when he tries to use the note to buy a drink in a pub, and he later receives a visit from the police. He goes back to the bank in order to complain...

Denise is 16, and has a part time job in a supermarket. All her friends have mobile phones, and so she decides to buy one herself, with money she has saved from her job. When her parents find out about the phone, they are furious, saying that it is an unnecessary luxury, and that she should have saved the money to buy essentials, like clothes, while she is still at school. They want her to take the phone back, and get a refund, but Denise is digging her heels in...

When Mr and Mrs Doyle find out that a distant relative has died and left them thousands of pounds in the Will, it seems that all their many money troubles are over. They immediately throw a big celebration party, and buy all kinds of new things on credit, because the money hasn't actually been paid to them yet. Unfortunately, other "relatives" appear from everywhere to contest the Will, and it soon becomes clear the money is not going to arrive...

Desmond is a loudmouth. He is always talking, boasting, gossiping, to such an extent that it gets on everyone's nerves. The ideal opportunity to get a little peace arrives when his wife suggests that he should take part in a sponsored silence for a local charity. Des, of course, thinks he can do this easily, and tells everybody so, endlessly. Some of his mates think he has no chance, and so a "side-bet" is arranged. If Des breaks his silence, he will have to stump up the money out of his own pocket. If he succeeds, his mates will have to double the total. They don't intend to lose their money...

Invent a situation in which a customer has ordered an item over the phone from a mail order firm, but the order gets misunderstood. For example, a keen golfer who orders a new iron is dismayed when a steam iron is delivered, much to his wife's amusement. How does the customer attempt to correct the mistake, with the delivery man, or by means of a phone call? Here are some other items which might create confusion:

- An elderly lady orders a parasol, but is sent a parachute.
- A young businessman orders a new Porsche, but is sent a porch.
- A mechanic orders a hydraulic ram, but is sent a male sheep.

Next door's cat uses the neighbour's prize lawn as a toilet, much to their annoyance. As a last resort, they've taken to shovelling up the mess, and throwing it back over the fence. Unfortunately the cat owner happens to catch them...

The eccentric old gentleman next door refuses to get rid of anything, even his rubbish. As a result, his garden has turned into a junkyard, or worse. Rats have been seen, the council have been told, but nothing seems to be done. The neighbours decide to take the law into their own hands...

The neighbours in the flat upstairs have just moved in. They hold noisy parties every weekend, playing loud music until all hours in the morning. An elderly couple on the floor below cannot get to sleep, and finally go upstairs to complain...

Two neighbours are in dispute over parking their cars outside their houses. The house on the corner has recently had double yellow lines painted in front of it, so the Lennons who live there, have taken to parking their car in front of the house next to them, the Starrs. The Starrs object, claiming that the parking space in front of their house is their own. The argument has escalated. The Starrs have put up traffic cones and no parking signs. The Lennons have thrown these into the Starrs' garden. The Starrs return just as the Lennons are parking in their place, yet again...

The next door neighbours decide to change their life style, giving up their jobs in order to become self-sufficient, growing their own crops in the garden, and making all their own food. However, when they begin to move in several pigs, the other neighbours begin to object...

Michelle lives next door to Hannah, who is a Christian evangelist. Michelle has no strong views or beliefs about religion, and so Hannah is always trying to enlighten her to "bring Jesus into her life". Michelle finds this a bit intrusive, though other than this, likes Hannah, and gets on well with her, so that she does not want to offend her, nor lose her friendship. She decides to try to make Hannah understand her point of view...

The Jacksons reluctantly agree to look after their neighbours' house while they are away on holiday. When they are checking the house the day before their neighbours return, they accidentally break an expensive, antique vase. Since it cannot be replaced, they decide to invent a burglary...

When new neighbours move in to the house next door, the Tanner family decide to be hospitable and to invite them around for a barbecue. However, they discover that the new neighbours are vegetarians, and disagree with them on just about everything you can mention.

The Porter family are having an extension built to their house, to the annoyance of their neighbours, who have complained that it will block out their light. While laying the foundations, the builders cut through an electricity cable. The electricity to the whole street has to be turned off while it is repaired. The neighbours arrive to complain...

It is a blistering, hot summer. There is a hose-pipe ban because of a possible water shortage. However, Tom continues to water his garden every evening, and to use his hose to wash his car. There is a threat that the water will be turned off, and will have to be collected from a stand-pipe. The other neighbours try to make Tom see sense...

Brian lives next door to Joe, and is a mad keen DIY enthusiast. Joe is quite handy, but only really does what he has to. He quite likes Brian, but is getting a bit fed up with him. Every time Brian comes round, he points out jobs which he thinks Joe should do. Joe's wife then starts nagging him until he does them. This is bad enough, but when Joe does do a job, Brian appears out of nowhere to give him expert advice....

News items # 1

Police in Middlesex today stopped a car which had been involved in a collision only to find an alsatian dog in the driver's seat. The "passenger" had previously been banned from driving, and had no licence or insurance. When questioned, the passenger claimed the dog had knocked the car into gear and was responsible for the accident...

A woman in the West Midlands has been arrested for being drunk in charge of a pram containing her six week old child. Police do not intend to press charges, but the Social Services department has been asked to help the woman, who is said to be suffering from depression...

A young baby has been found abandoned in a telephone box on Christmas Eve. The baby appeared to be well looked after, and was warmly wrapped, but was only a few days old. Police are trying to contact the baby's mother who is probably in need of medical attention herself...

An armed robbery on a building society went horribly wrong today. Staff managed to set off the alarm when the two robbers demanded the money. The quick response from the police prevented the two men from escaping, but they took a young female clerk hostage, and have barricaded themselves into an office. Police have made contact with the men by phone, and a special hostage squad has been called in to control the situation...

A couple who left their two children aged 8 and 11 "home alone" while they went on a holiday to Spain flew back today after neighbours alerted the social services department about the children's plight. "They had plenty of food, and we told them to go to the neighbours if there was a problem", said their mother, "I can't understand what all the fuss is about..."

The mother of Britain's youngest mum hit out today at press harassment of her daughter. Since the 13 year old girl gave birth to a baby boy, she has been hounded by reporters, who have offered her £2000 for her story. They have followed the girl to school, the local swimming pool, the shops, and even wished to interview her inside the cinema while she was watching the film. In a phone call to a local radio station, the mother is reported as saying, "The next reporter who shows up on my doorstep is going to regret it for a long time!"...

Mr Harry Greenley, the landlord of The Crown public house, has been sacked by the brewery chain which owns the pub. In a bid to increase custom, the brewery wish to turn the premises into a 70s theme pub. Mr Greenley refused to co-operate with the idea when the brewery insisted that he wears flared trousers. "Listening to ABBA is bad enough", he said, "but if they think I'm wearing those things, they've got another think coming". The case appears before an industrial tribunal today...

An incompetent bunch of thieves held up a bank in Liverpool today. Since none of them could drive, they arrived at the bank in a taxi. Unfortunately, they forgot to tell the taxi to wait...

A 15 year old living on a council estate was astonished to discover she had been left a stately home, a fortune, and an elderly butler, by a distant cousin she did not even know existed. The girl, Emma Carrisbrook, was adopted when she was a baby, and therefore did not know anything of her family history. The news had still not quite sunk in among her classmates at the local school who will now have to use Emma's full title, Lady Carrisbrook...

A tattooist in Brighton was attacked by the irate mother of a 12 year old girl who had her nose pierced without telling her mother what she intended to do...

A bank robber armed with a hand-grenade and a shotgun staged an unsuccessful raid on a London branch yesterday. He was overcome by the excitement of the raid, and collapsed, complaining of pains in his chest. Anxious bank staff cared for him until the police and paramedics arrived simultaneously. The robber was 74 years old, and was staging the hold-up to pay for a hip replacement operation for his wife.

A police helicopter, patrol cars, and a dog unit, were sent to a house at midnight last night when a woman dialled 999, claiming that she was too scared to leave her bedroom because of sounds downstairs. After entering and searching the premises, officers found and removed a mouse...

A woman from Brighton who held a repair a man hostage for over seven hours after eight attempts to get her £1000 television set fixed, has been offered a replacement set by the retailers...

A Midland man dialled 999 for an ambulance at 4 a.m. because he had a sore thumb caused by biting his nails...

A circus performer from Newcastle-upon-Tyne is setting up a dating agency for lonely clowns and single women with a good sense of humour. Now what do you suppose might happen on their first date...?

Firemen had to scale a 30 foot tree in St Leonards, East Sussex, to rescue a man who was trying to catch his pet iguana...

A thieves who stole a car on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent, had to decide quickly what to do when they discovered a baby asleep in the back seat...

The wife of a Staffordshire wildlife expert imposed a sex ban until her husband agreed to remove a Russian steppe eagle he had allowed to sleep in their bedroom because it was lonely.

Two children who were reluctantly going on a family holiday to Bournemouth placed a joke sign in the rear window of their car, which read "Help Us! We are being kidnapped!" The joke misfired however, when a police car came to their assistance, forcing their bewildered father to pull over off the road, and explain why he was abducting children...

An American tourist was fined £150 for trying to find out what a Scots guardsman outside Edinburgh castle was wearing under his kilt. She was arrested for sneaking a look after deliberately dropping a coin, and bending down to pick it up. The angry guardsman claimed it was a "sexist assault on his privacy", and that she would have been very upset if he'd done the same to her...

Two 70 year old members of a veterans Crown Green Bowling team have been banned for two years for fighting during a match. Both have lodged appeals against the ban with the club secretary, claiming they may not live long enough to see out the ban...

Two burglars who broke into a school in Manchester were surprised when members of the martial arts class came out to investigate the sound of breaking glass....

The congregation of a church in Surrey has trebled since the vicar started dressing in a Darth Vader outfit to deliver sermons on the struggle against evil....

The landlord of a pub in Leicester has been sent a bill for £526 to pay for damage to a bus that knocked him down. The landlord is not amused....

Two teenage boys attempted to blackmail their Headmaster into paying them two hundred pounds so that they would not inform the local health inspector that the school kitchen was infested with cockroaches. The blackmail note was sent anonymously, made up from letters cut and pasted from newspapers...

Parents of a seven year old boy in Oldham were bewildered when a van drew up outside their house containing nearly a ton of chocolate bars. The seven year old had ordered the bars on the Internet, by chance typing in the number of a credit card belonging to a man in Chile...

Offbeat # 1

Stoned Age

Archaeologists have discovered hemp seeds and magic mushroom spores near the sites of stone-age cave paintings. They suggest that stone-age man (or woman) was probably high on drugs when they painted these pictures, and perhaps this explains why several pictures of bison have been discovered painted upside down. Professor MacIntyre said, "I suppose you could say stone-age man was a bit like a 60s hippy..."

Jive talking

All teenage groups develop their own "argot", teenage slang which is only readily understood by themselves and their peers, and is often incomprehensible to their elders. Solid, top word, the dog's, veg out, your mum, the pants. Collect together a list of the slang you use, or have heard being used, and then work the list into a short scene in which a group of teenagers attempt to converse with their elders, who find the whole thing totally baffling...

Hairy business

A balding man goes to the barber for his regular "trim and polish". The barber claims to have invented a wonderful hair restorer, and sells a bottle to the customer. He is delighted at first, when hair begins to re-grow on his head. Unfortunately, he then starts to grow hair all over his face, finds he has developed a tail, and howls at the full moon. The customer returns to the barber to complain...

Monkeying around with nature

A science programme on television is investigating research into the transfusion of chimpanzee and monkey blood into humans. Unfortunately, during the interview, the human "guinea pigs" who have been involved in the experiment begin to exhibit strange characteristics...

Foreign film flop

This requires two pairs of players. One pair are the actors in the worst foreign film you are likely to see. They speak in a foreign language throughout. The other pair act as the "subtitles" or "dubbed dialogue", explaining what the first two players are saying. Invent a short situation from a French love story, and Italian western, a Spanish soap, or a Chinese Kung Fu film, and dub it for an English speaking audience...

Confidence Pill

A new Confidence Pill is on sale. The advertisements say that it will help shy, withdrawn people to overcome their handicap. There is only one problem, which the manufacturers do not mention: the effects of the pill wear off unpredictably. What happens if this occurs when someone who is taking the pill is doing one of these things?

- On a first date
- At the job interview
- Performing a play
- Flying an aeroplane
- Playing a musical instrument in front of a large audience
- Taking a driving test

Mesmerizing

The members of the audience who take part in a hypnotist's act get more than they bargain for when the hypnotist collapses in the middle of the show, without removing them from the suggestions he has placed them under. Decide what each character has to do when they hear a particular trigger, a word or a sound. Show what happens to them next day until the hypnotist can release them from the spell...

Alternatively... A power cut during a hypnotist's show on television means that everyone watching remains under the spell by mistake, and cannot be de-hypnotized until the show next week. So, for a whole week, the blokes will think and act as if they are women, and the women will think and act as if they are blokes...

On the scrap heap

Andy is in hospital for a minor operation. While drowsy under the anaesthetic, he hears two doctors talking about their cars, one of which is "ready for the scrap heap" and "won't last much longer". Andy thinks they are talking about him, and that when he gets out of hospital, even if his operation is successful, he won't have much longer to live. He decides to put his affairs in order, and make his peace with the world...

Work experience

Instead of the usual boring week spent making tea or stacking shelves, what would happen if students did some **real** Work Experience, and tried their hands at proper jobs for the week, Private Detectives, Brain Surgeons, Spies, Formula 1 racing drivers, Film Stars, for example....

Judgment Day

The god Ay Ron Ee sits in judgment over the Dead at the Portal of Good and Evil. Those who wish to enter paradise have to atone for their sins in this life by returning for a period of time, to be punished for their failings. The god has a wicked sense of humour, and always makes the "punishment fit the crime". Rich men become beggars, masters become servants, thugs become wimps, but it may take them some time to acknowledge their new role...

Me and my conscience.

Terry has got problems. He is dating two girls at the same time, he has "borrowed" money from his parents without their knowing by using their credit card, and will be sacked from his job at the undertakers if his boss finds out that he has been using the hearse as a "love wagon". As he tries to sort out these problems, another character plays the role of his conscience, giving him advice, but not actually able to intervene in any situation....

A hard life for a guardian angel

Mandy is a real live wire, full of life and vitality, always ready to take on any thing, not afraid to go anywhere, or to face up to anybody. Barry is her guardian Angel. His heavenly assignment is to protect her at all costs. He must help her fight off muggers, rescue her from bank raids, and pull her from in front of runaway vehicles. At the end of the first week Barry is shattered. He tries to persuade her to take the life a little more gently...

Soap Opera

Dramatise a scene from a soap opera of your choice or invention. However, instead of speaking the dialogue, **sing it in operatic style**. This involves much repetition of lines of dialogue, as well as over-dramatisation of the simplest of lines. For example:

Grant: Wotchyoun want then? Wotch? Wotch? Wotch? You want?

Tiff: It ain't none of your business. Of your business. Not any. At all. Of your business. It ain't none of your business. None.

Grant: Wotchyoun saying tome? Wotchyoun saying tome? Wotch? Wotch? Wotch?

Tiff: Nuffin. Nuffin. Nuffin. I ain't saying nuffin. To you, you big ape!

A visit to the capital

Two friends, Rob and Dave, are on a visit to London from Newcastle. They go into a pub, and gradually realise that they are in a gay bar....

Cross dressing

Place one item of clothing for each player in a large box. Label each item with a letter. Prepare a series of cards with these letters written on them. Each player then takes a card at random, and is given the item of clothing which corresponds to their letter, regardless of their sex. (So that male players may have female items of clothing, and vice versa). Divide the players into groups, who then each have to invent a character who is in possession of this item of clothing, for some reason. The group must then develop a situation in which all these characters are involved. (Do not allow players to exchange their items of clothing.)

Once upon a Time.. # 1

...there was a Queen who had no children, and was very sad because of this. A poor woman who lived nearby had so many children she could not feed them all, but loved them all dearly. The Queen offered to adopt one of her children, and to bring it up as a prince or princess. She would feed the woman and all the other children for the rest of their lives. The poor woman did not know what to do, nor which of her children to pick to be a prince or princess if she agreed to the plan...

... a King had a daughter who was a terrible liar. The King declared that if any man could get her to tell the truth, he would allow him to marry her. Three brothers Tom, Dick and Harry, decide to try their luck. But how to trick her into telling the truth...?

...there was a very cruel and thoroughly nasty King. Because of this he had very many enemies who were always trying to kill him. His personal bodyguard seldom lasted more than a week without being killed. Nobody wanted the job,s however much it paid. Then Dim Donald arrived in the town, and was tricked into taking the job...

... a knight committed a grave crime and was to be executed. However, the Queen took pity on him, and said his life would be spared if he could find the answer to a question: "What is the thing that women most want in life?" He had one year and a day to find the answer. If he couldn't find the answer, his life would be forfeit. The knight sets off on his quest...

...a poor woman did a good deed for an old man, who turned out to be a wizard. He granted her one wish. Thinking it over, she asked for her pot always to overflow with stew, so that she would never go hungry. And overflow it did, so fast that it began to fill the room...

...there was a farmer who was really bad tempered. He complained that he had to work too hard everyday in the fields while his wife sat at home having an easy time. One evening in hay making time, he came home scolding and swearing and making a commotion about his wife as usual. His wife said, "Dear love, don't be so angry there's a good man. Tomorrow let's change jobs. I'll go out with the mowers and mow, and you can stay at home to mind the house and the children". The husband thought this was a good idea...

...there was a pedlar who went from town to town selling his wares. His goods were so bad, that he usually couldn't stay too long in one place, as he wasn't very popular. One-day however, when he came into a town, he was amazed because everyone was looking at him, pointing him out, and even doffing their caps to him. He asked the inn keeper what it was. "Sire", said the inn keeper, "We know you are the prince, and have put on this disguise to learn what your subjects think about you in secret. Please sit down, and have some food and drink on the house". Now the pedlar thought that this was a grand idea being mistaken for the prince. Until that is, he was captured by brigands in the dead of night, and held hostage in their hide-away until the King pays the ransom....

...there was an old couple who had no children. All their neighbours ridiculed them, and did not believe the excuses the husband made up about why they had no children. Eventually when he was drunk one night, he boasted that his wife was pregnant, and would produce a child that very next day. He even bet his cottage and all his land that this was so. When he sobered up the next morning, he held his head in his hands and moaned, and had to tell his wife what he had done. Thinking quickly she said "There is only one thing to do. Put that piglet in the cot, and we will pass it off as our new child"...

...a traveller coming along the road chanced upon an old man stuck to his waist in a bog. The old man begged him to help. "What'll you give me if I do?" asked the traveller. "Isn't the deed itself reward enough?" said the old man, sinking still further. "Indeed it is not", said the traveller. "Then I'll give you whatever you wish for whenever you wish it", said the old man, "if that's what you're sure you really want?" "Sounds more like it", said the traveller, throwing the old man his belt and dragging him out of the bog. "Be careful what you wish for, traveller", said the old man as they went their separate ways, "What you wish for is not always what you really want".....

...there was a King who was surrounded by flatterers at court. He wanted to be a good king, and to find out what his subjects really thought about him. He pretended that he was travelling to visit a King in a neighbouring country, but secretly disguised himself as a beggar, so that no one would recognise him, not even his Queen...

...a huntsman was walking through a deep, deep forest after chasing a deer which he had slung over his shoulder. He came across an old woman, who he guessed was a witch. The huntsman knew that you must never answer a witch's question except with another question, or else she would take something from you. The huntsman did not want to lose his deer, and he also knew that if she answered his question with anything other than a question, she would have to grant him a wish...

...a woman had two sons who wanted to make their way in the world. "Alas", she said, "if you leave your home, only one of you will live to return". The sons were not in the least discouraged by this prophecy, and so she offered them the choice of the only two things she had which could help them on their way. The first was a silver sword, and the other was a pipe. "The sword's mine!" said the elder, and he went immediately on his way, leaving the younger with the pipe. But this was no ordinary pipe, for whoever heard its tune could not prevent themselves from dancing, nor stop while the music lasted...

...there was a vain old man who was very, very rich. He wished to divide his wealth among his three daughters, and decided that the daughter who proved she loved him the best would be given the biggest part of his riches. He asked his daughters what they thought of the plan. The two greedy daughters thought it was excellent, while the third refused to take part in what she thought was a foolish idea from start to finish. The rich man grew very angry with his third daughter, and told her he never wanted to see her again...

...there was a rich merchant, Mammon, who was so mean, he would never give anything to anyone, even if they were starving and asked him for the scraps off his table. So while his neighbours had barely enough to feed themselves, his barns were stocked with food, his cellars with wine, and his rooms with the finest carpets and furniture. Then Sparkwit, a neighbour, thought of a plan. He had one horse left, the thinnest, scraggiest horse you ever did see, with barely a tooth in its head. He collected the last silver coins his neighbours possessed, and shoved them firmly up the horse's backside. He took the horse along to Mammon, and offered him for sale. Mammon laughed in his face when he saw the state of the horse. "Granted he looks on his last legs", said Sparkwit, "but this is because he shits money. Provided of course, you keep him in your best room, not a stable. You may keep him overnight, and see if I'm not right".....

...a father had a contrary daughter. Whatever you said to her, she would say the opposite, just for badness. If you said, "That's a grand, sunny day!" She would say, "No it's not. It's cold and wet!" Or if you said, "My you're looking well today!" She would say "No I'm not! I feel terrible!" Eventually the father asked the Wise-man what he should do. The Wise-man said that there was only one way to cure his contrary daughter. He must tell all his friends and neighbours to act as if she said the opposite of what she had actually said at all times. So if she says, "I think I'll go to bed. I'm so tired", grab her by the hand and say, "A ten mile walk! I think I'll come with you!"

...an old man wanted to know what to do with his house, goods, and farm animals when he died. He wanted to leave them to the person who deserved them the most, and not to some greedy relative who had lots, but wanted more. He asked a sorcerer to cast two spells. The first spell would make it look as if the old man was dead. The second spell worked like this. If anyone tried to make off with any of his goods, thinking him dead, they would stick to whatever they'd stolen. And if anyone tried to help them, they would get stuck to them too. This way when the old man awoke from the spell he could easily see who had tried to make away with his things...

One upon a time... # 3

...a good master had very lazy servants, who took advantage of his goodness, and ate, slept, and drank, but never did any work. The good master hadn't the heart to sack them and when he told them off, they just ignored him, or laughed in his face. One day, a friend came to visit. He saw what the lazy servants were doing, and being a wise man, he cast a spell on them. "Now", he said to the good master, "they will do **exactly** what you tell them to. Watch". One of the servants, who supposed to be clearing the table, was asleep in a chair. "Jump to it!" shouted the wise man. And the servant had to jump, to actually jump, while he cleared the table. "Pick your feet up!" He said to another servant and this is exactly what she had to try to do....

...a wood cutter and his wife lived in the middle of the forest. They were very poor, and had very little food. They had barely are enough to feed themselves, let alone their two children. Eventually the wife, who was a very cruel woman, decided to persuade her husband to lead the children into the middle of the wood, and leave them there. "Let the beasts of the forest eat them", she thought, "and good riddance!"

...a princess declared that anyone who asked her a riddle that she could not solve within three days could be her husband. But if she solved the riddle, he should have his head cut off. A young man was in love with her, but where could he find a riddle she would not be able to solve?

...a magician had an apprentice who was to learn all the secret arts of his trade. One day the magician was called away unexpectedly. He told the apprentice that he must not touch his wand nor his spell-book under any circumstances. But while the magician is away, the apprentice cannot resist the temptation to experiment for himself....

...a fisherman caught a golden fish, which said that it would give him a great deal of gold, as much as he could carry home in his fishing bag, if the fishermen would throw him back into the water. The fishermen was delighted, and staggered home under the weight of the gold in his bag. The fish had told him that he must not tell anyone, not even his wife, where he had got the gold from, or else it would disappear. When he wouldn't tell her, his wife thinks he must have stolen the gold, and so do all of his neighbours...

...a soldier was returning from the war, where he had lost his leg. He had no money, because the King refused to pay him when he could no longer serve in the army. On the way he met an old beggar woman. She asked him for some money, but he had nothing to give her. So she asked him what he wanted most of all, and he replied that he would like his leg back. "What will you do for me?", she asked, "if I grant you your wish?"

....a poor wood-man had a very beautiful daughter, the most beautiful girl in all the kingdom. She was in love with a young blacksmith who lived in the village. One day as the King was riding through the village, he saw the girl. He immediately decided to take her as his wife, even though she was so poor. When the King told her father that he wanted to marry her, he did not expect that the girl would turn him down. The King was furious, and threatened to have the blacksmith put to death if she did not agree to become his queen...

....an old labourer was gathering sticks in the forest. He was so tired, he said aloud, "I cannot bear this life any longer. I wish Death would come and take me!" Straight away, Death appeared, but as soon as he saw him, the old man had second thoughts. Death explained that once he has been summoned, he has to take his victim, before He falls asleep. The old man sniffs a chance out of his predicament. Perhaps Death would be kind enough to help him with his daily work, before taking him from this world...?

...a sultan was jealous of his rich neighbour, who had the most marvellous turban the world had ever seen, made of the finest silks, and in the richest of colours. The sultan wanted one better, and arranged for all the weavers to appear before him at court, so that he could judge their wares. Nothing was good enough, until finally one of them showed him cloth so fine, it could hardly be seen. In facts, some foolish people couldn't see it at all....

Invent a day in the life of a homeless person, recently arrived in London, who is caught in the Catch 22 situation which faces all young people who have left home with nowhere to go. In order to get a flat, you need to put down a month's deposit, but in order to get a job to get the deposit, you need to have a fixed address. So you can't get a flat because you don't have a job, and you can't get a job because you haven't got a flat. How does your character try to persuade landlords, employers, or the Social Services to break through this cycle of frustration...?

A young person is begging on the streets. Show the different reactions of people as they pass by, or stop to talk. Who gives money, and who dishes out unwanted advice?

When Sheila's mother finds herself a new boyfriend, things get unbearable at home. The boyfriend gives her the creeps, especially when he moves in, and starts to seem more interested in Sheila than her mum. She tries telling her mum, but she won't listen. Sheila is afraid what might happen next, refusing to be on her own with him in the house. Either he has to go, or she does....

Andy is lucky to be living in hostel accommodation after leaving his foster home when he was 16. However Jess, a menacing character in the hostel, is stealing other people's giro's when they arrive in the post. Andy has tried waiting for the postman to make sure he gets it, but Jess simply shoves him out of the way, and says the giro hasn't come. Andy will lose his place in the hostel if he falls behind with his rent. He goes to the Social Services department to see if they will allow him to pick up his giro in person. But this is against regulations, and they probably won't have a free interview slot for several days...

Nita is a young Asian girl who has run away from home because she did not want to marry a man she has never met, and has only seen in a photograph. Her parents are outraged, and are determined to get her back so that the arranged marriage can go ahead. Her brother comes looking for her, and tries to drag her into his car off the street. Sam, a boy Nita has met, sees what is happening, and thinks her brother is a punter looking for sex...

Following protests to council leaders about the state of the streets, the refuse collectors are sent to clear away the large numbers of cardboard boxes which litter London's streets. The only problem is that people are living in them....

It is nearly Christmas, and it is cold on the streets. An old dosser called Lionel decides to get himself arrested so that he can spend a few nights in the cells, in out of the cold. However, whatever he tries to do, the police don't seem to want to know...

Tony busks to make enough money to buy food. He lives in a squat with a number of other young people. His only real possession is his guitar. One day he returns back to the squat to find that his guitar is missing, and one of the other squatters has suddenly disappeared ...

Charlie has hit upon a novel way of keeping warm during the day. He gets enough money to buy a ticket to go one stop on the Underground, on the Circle Line. Instead, he travels the line in the opposite direction, round and round all day long. Finally however, a ticket inspector begins to get suspicious....

It is late at night. A group of street people are trying to catch some sleep in spite of the cold, when a Rolls Royce pulls up at the kerb. The driver is rather drunk, and wakes them up to borrow some money. He needs change for the toilet, but only has a £50 note. Could they possibly help him out....?

A pair of old dossers spend their day arguing about what is wrong with the country, and why people like them have to live on the street, while other people are rich with more money than they know what to do with. They decide to list their complaints, and write a letter to the Queen explaining what should be done. When the letter is finished, they are so pleased with the result, that they decide to deliver it in person....

On the Streets # 2

Trudy has been living on the streets for several months. She is weak from hunger, and suffering badly from bronchitis since getting a cold. Eventually, she feels so ill, she decides she has to get medical treatment. But when she arrives at Casualty, the nurse seems to think she is only pretending to be ill in order to get a bed for the night...

Moogsie has come up with an ideal scam to get a hot meal, a few bob, and who knows, a place to stay. He has decided to climb up on a bridge over the railway line, and threaten to jump off in front of a train, causing all kinds of delays for people getting home from work. He thinks they will offer him all kinds of bribes to "talk him down". The only problem is, when he climbs up on the bridge, he discovers he doesn't have a very good head for heights...

Sal is on a shop-lifting expedition in a supermarket. But when she passes the pets' food shelves, she comes across a woman buying tins and tins of expensive cat food. Sal decides to persuade her to give the cat the left-overs, and give her the money she would have spent on cat food instead...

Jenny left home after an argument with her parents two years ago. Since then she has been homeless, living on the street, looking out for herself as best she can. Winter is coming on, and she doesn't know if she can bear another year of cold and hunger. She decides to go home, to see if she can patch things up with her parents, who haven't heard from her in two years. She doesn't know what to expect, nor the kind of welcome she'll receive...

A reporter writing an article about homelessness tries to persuade some of the people on the street to tell her their stories. But why should they? What's in it for them...?

Jordan and Grace look out for each other. Not exactly boyfriend and girlfriend, because it doesn't quite work like that when you've nowhere to call your own. Jordan has a habit, which is getting worse, and costing him more every day. He's getting more desperate to find the money to pay for his fixes, shoplifting, burglary, taking more and more risks. Grace is worried. She thinks he has started mugging people on the streets...

It is another rainy day in the city. Kevin is desperately trying to keep warm, and dry, but everywhere he goes, no one wants him. He gets slung out of the café, after sitting for two hours with one cup of tea. The security guys in the shops kick him out as soon as they see him—or smell him, as one of them put it. Perhaps a bit of culture, the Art Gallery, Museum or Library? Present a typical day for Kevin as all he tries to do is to keep warm...

Gwen has arrived in London with nowhere to go, looking for work. She has been round several agencies, but so far has been out of luck. She is sitting in the café at the station, wondering what to do next. Pick up her luggage from the locker, and go straight back home on a train while she still has the fare? That goes against the grain. She can hear the "told you so" from her family already. Then a young guy sits at the table, starts to talk to her, even offers to buy her a coffee...

Christmas Eve, morning, early. Outside a large department store, a group of shoppers are camping out, ready for the "January Sales" which begin on December 24th. They are singing carols loudly, having a picnic out of their flasks, well protected from the cold in their sleeping bags. Nearby, a group of dossers are trying to get some sleep, but are finding it difficult with the jollity the shoppers are making. One of the dossers eventually decides to complain...

News item

There was uproar on Christmas Eve at a hostel for homeless people when a large supermarket chain donated "Christmas hampers" as a special treat. Press and television reporters had been invited to the event, and were on hand to record the outcry which took place when the residents in the hostel discovered that all the food being distributed to them was well past its sell-by date. "Just because we're dossers", said one resident, "it doesn't mean we have to eat stuff no one else wants and they can't sell!"

A dad finds out that his son has been using the Internet to download pictures from pornographic sites. The son knows that his dad has done this sometimes too. The dad changes the password to the Internet, to prevent his son getting access. The son wonders if his mum knows what his dad has been getting up to..?

A girl is getting ready to go out on a date with a new guy. She asks her mum to iron her favourite blouse while she washes her hair and puts on her makeup. Her mum reluctantly agrees, though she's busy cooking a meal at the same time. She leaves the iron on the blouse when the meal threatens to spoil. As she rushes to get out, the girl discovers the blouse has a hole burned right through..

In a DIY store on a busy Saturday. The parents are buying stuff for decorating. Their young child is bored, noisy, and making a nuisance of herself. To pacify her, they allow her to carry a tin of paint. In the queue for the checkout, the child drops the paint, which explodes open, showering the other customers with spots of emulsion...

A mother with teenage children thinks she may be pregnant again. She doesn't want to tell her husband until she is sure, so she confides in her teenage daughter, and asks her to pick up a pregnancy test kit on her way in from work. The daughter leaves the kit in her room. Her dad sees it when he goes to fix the drawer on her bedside cabinet. He assumes it is his daughter's, and immediately goes to confront her...

In the park. A father and son are playing football. The ball is kicked towards some teenagers who begin playing their own game with it. They tease the son, playing "piggy in the middle" with him as he tries to get the ball back. He looks to his dad to get his ball back...

A mother is fed up of her children's rooms being untidy, in spite of frequent warnings, pleadings, and threats. Finally she tells them that anything which is left lying around will be thrown into a bin bag, and put out with the rubbish. The children, of course, think this is all bluster. Until they come back home one Saturday afternoon, and find all their prize possessions have disappeared...

Two sisters have to share a room. The elder sister has left school, found herself a job, and goes out clubbing several nights in the week, enjoying her life as she says. She comes home at all hours, and often wakes up her younger sister, who is studying hard for the exams she will take in a few weeks time. The younger sister has finally had enough when she is awoken yet again at three in the morning...

After having an argument the day before, a teenager refuses to talk to her parents. They need a strategy to make a break her silence....

In a clothes shop. A mother and son are on a shopping trip. He wants the latest (expensive) designer clothes, knowing that his mates will jeer him if he shows up in anything else. She wants him to compromise for some cheaper, no-designer label clothes. An assistant hovers, awaiting a sale...

Toni's parents want to go out for the evening, which means she has to look after her younger brother and sister – again. When her friend calls round, and asks her to pop out for a few minutes, Toni doesn't think they can come to much harm. Until she gets back, and finds out there has been an accident....

Karen is 16 and pregnant. She refuses to tell her mother who the father is, and is fiercely independent. It is her own mistake, she says, and she will sort it out. Her mother wants her to live at home so that she can help her when the baby is born. Karen thinks her mother is interfering, and just wants to run her life, like she always has done. She applies to Social Services for a place of her own; a social worker pays a visit to the family...

Parents and children # 2

A teenage girl has been to get her tongue pierced. She has not told anyone she was going to do this. She arrives home, finding it a little difficult to speak properly, and with her tongue rather sore... (Alternatively, substitute a tattoo for the tongue piercing).

Lisa wants to go to a party. She persuades her parents to let her go, providing that she goes with her friend, and comes home with her by 1.00 am. At the party, her friend Marie gets off with a boy, and wants her to stay later...

A policeman calls, in the early hours of the morning. He informs the parents that their son has been involved in a road accident. He is not injured, but has knocked down and killed a pedestrian. He has been breathalysed, and found to have three times the permitted level of alcohol in his blood. He is likely to be charged with manslaughter. The parents go to visit their son at the police-station...

Ian's parents have divorced, and he now lives with his mother and her new husband. He has frequent arguments with his mother, and resents his new stepfather. To let things cool off, he agrees to go and live with his real father, and to work on his farm, for the summer ...

Debbie's mother has died, and her father has taken it badly. He drinks far too much, and has let the house and home go to pieces. He has expected her to take on the role of her mother, looking after the other children, but gives her very little support. It is 3.00 am, and Debbie is waiting up for her father to come home, drunk again. When she hears his key in the door, she immediately flies at him:

Debbie: "Couldn't you at least ring and let us know that you're all right?"

Joe and Rose have been going out together for some time, and are now in the 6th form at school. At a party, they both had too much to drink, and ended up having sex for the first time. Now Rose has discovered she is pregnant, and her mother has found out because of the morning sickness she has been having. In a rage, Rose's mother rings Joe's mother to tell her what she thinks of her son...

Anita's father is very strict. He objects to her clothes, her friends, her makeup, just about anything she wants to do, and anyone she wants to meet. When she does get a chance to go out, she has to get changed, and put on her makeup at her friend's house. One evening, she is seen in the pub by a friend of her father's, who immediately phones him. Her father appears at the pub, intent on dragging her home...

Karen is 18, and her brother Tony is 20. Her parents allow Tony's girlfriend Christine, who is also 18, to sleep with him in his room when she stays over. But Karen's boyfriend Pete has to sleep in the spare room whenever he wants to stay...

Sally shares a small flat with her mother Helen. Helen is a single parent, and has brought Sally up single-handedly since she was born. Sally, now 16, has found herself a boyfriend Gary, who is as ugly as he is rude. Helen has accepted him, and allows him to share the flat with them, in order not to distance herself from her daughter. But then money starts going missing from her purse....

Sam's parents place great importance on doing well at school, and passing exams in order to get a career. Sam is getting very stressed by their concern, to the point where he can't sleep, nor concentrate, even though he spends hours revising. On the day of the exam, Sam is brought home by a teacher. He has collapsed, and couldn't finish the paper...

Jason and his friends hold secret drinking parties at each other's houses when their parents are out. The parents are unaware of this, until one night Jason staggers in the door at midnight, and is violently sick...

Parents always have long lists of “unwritten rules” which they expect children to obey without question. Things like:

- You must not sit around in pyjamas on a Saturday morning to watch TV in case somebody comes to call.
- Polish your shoes before going to bed and don’t leave them until the next morning.
- Sit up straight on the sofa and don’t lounge about or lie down on it even though this is extremely comfortable.
- You must have butter or margarine on your bread; you cannot eat it “dry” because this will obviously cause your digestive system to fail.
- Too much tomato ketchup on your chips poisons your blood.
- Never go out with wet hair even if it is raining because you will catch pneumonia.

You can add many more of these rules to the list, so collect together as many as possible, and see how many you can work into a single scene lasting not more than 3 minutes. (NB There must be some “connection” between the rules; one thing must lead to another).

Samantha has ambitions to become a Page 3 model. Her parents are against the idea, but she is very determined. She needs them to sign a consent form, as she is only 17...

When she was 2 years old, Gail’s parents were divorced. She has never met her real father since, and cannot remember him. On her 14th birthday she surprises her mother when she asks her what she would like as a present by saying, “I’d like to meet my real dad...”

When the parents nag their children about doing more jobs around the house, Lisa and Billy claim that they should be paid for each job they do, and not exploited. The children promptly draw up a list of “charges”; washing the car £5, making beds 50p each, doing the dishes £2, and so on. Their parents retaliate by drawing up their own list of “charges”; evening meal £1.50, bed and breakfast £3, lift to school 50p etc. What happens when the two sides try out their “charges” for a week? Who ends up better off...?

(Both sides should draw up their lists before beginning the scenes).

A father is at the supermarket checkout with his young child, who is misbehaving. The child keeps asking for sweets from the prominent display at the checkout; the father does not wish to give in to this “blackmail”. Eventually, he smacks the child in an attempt to make it stop whining on. The checkout girl objects to his hitting the child, and calls the manager...

Lucy has left school having gained a few GCSEs. Her parents are concerned because she hasn’t done anything about sorting out her future. They are keen that she either finds herself a job, preferably one with some prospects, or goes back into the 6th form to take more exams. Lucy knows what she wants to do. She wants to be a singer. It is nearly September, and her parents think it is time to get things sorted out...

Jan, a social worker, visits an old woman, Mrs Ledger, who lives at the top of a high rise flat. She is growing old, and is having difficulty looking after herself properly. Jan discovers that she only has one relative, her son, who she hasn’t spoken to for ten years following an argument. She has a cupboard full of presents and Easter eggs she has bought every Christmas and Easter for her son’s children, but has never given to them. Jan decides it is time to visit Mrs Ledger’s son...

Ron has not seen his son Geoff for several years. Geoff left home after an argument with his parents, and has not been in touch with them since. Ron and his wife did everything they could to find him, but without any luck. And then, one Saturday afternoon, Ron is asked for money by a homeless beggar in the street. When he gives the man his loose change, Ron realises it is his son...

A mother gets a job at a restaurant where her daughter hangs out with her friends. The daughter tries to persuade her mother not to take the job, even though they badly need the money, so that she won’t be embarrassed in front of her friends...

Parents and children # 4

A man has two sons. When the younger son comes of age, he asks his father if he can have his inheritance now, instead of having to wait until his father dies. The elder son protests, but the father gives in to the younger son's request. The younger son then goes to the city, and wastes his entire inheritance, losing it all on gambling, drink and women. Eventually he ends up looking after pigs for a farmer in order to make enough to live on. At last, he can stand this life no more, and decides to go home to ask his father's forgiveness. When he returns home, his father is so relieved to see him, he lays on a big party in his honour. The elder son, who has stayed at home all this time working on the farm, is not very happy...

The Potters have a teenage son called Wayne. Wayne has been in and out of trouble several times. But when he brings a letter home from school saying that he has been suspended for threatening a teacher, his parents disagree on how to handle the situation. Mr Potter is very angry, and thinks Wayne should be taught a severe lesson. He thinks his wife treats their son too leniently. Mrs. Potter thinks that a Wayne is deliberately provoking his father for some reason, and that they should talk it through as a family. For Mr Potter the letter is the last straw. He turns to his wife and says, "This is all your fault!"....

Stewart and Ruth have been married for 20 years, but the marriage has had difficulties for some time. They have frequent arguments, and eventually decide to get a divorce. Their children are all in their teens, and so the parents ask them who they would like to live with when the divorce goes through...

The Rudman family visits a restaurant. The children have no table manners, squabble among themselves, use bad language, and disturb the other diners with their noise. As their parents ignore all this bad behaviour, the manager of the restaurant tells them to control their children, or to leave his restaurant...

Peter is openly gay. He has told his parents this, and has asked if he can bring his partner Rodney to meet them, and stay the weekend. One of his parents is very disturbed by this news, especially when the sleeping arrangements are discussed...

When Kevin gets into trouble at school, he tells a pack of lies to get out of it. He invents a whole range of imaginary problems at home in order to excuse his behaviour. He says that his parents are getting a divorce, that they have terrible financial difficulties, and that his elder sister is pregnant. Unfortunately, his teachers alert the social services department who send around a social worker to counsel Kevin's parents...

When Daisy and Trevor give a long list of the presents they want for Christmas to their parents, their mother and father give them a lecture about the "true meaning" of Christmas. The children take this message to heart, and bring home a homeless person to spend Christmas with the family...

Dave is 17. He has been offered a job in London, quite some distance away from where he lives at the moment. It would mean he would have to find a flat, look after himself, and manage his finances. He quite likes the idea, though is a little apprehensive. But he feels smothered at home, especially by his mother, who he knows will be against the idea. If he can get his dad on to his side, he may be in with a chance...

Clare is 16, has done well in her exams, and is staying on in to the 6th form. She has been going out with the same boy for several years. He is a couple of years older than Clare, has a good job, and his own flat. They have been discussing the possibility of Clare moving in with him, but don't quite know how to suggest it to her parents...

Pamela's parents are very anxious that she does well in her exams. They try to persuade her to have a private tutor for mathematics. She doesn't think it will make any difference, as she just can't do it. When she brings home her results and report, her teacher has advised her to move to a lower maths set. She has to break the news to her parents...

Dramatise the situations in these letters. Begin each scene when the writer confronts the problem, or asks someone close for advice...

My friend is always two-timing her boyfriend who is one of the nicest boys you could hope to meet. I get upset with her, because she tells me what she is getting up to, and I know he has no idea what is going on. Last night she phoned me and asked me to tell John I was with her if he asked. I don't want to lie to him, or be any part of her deceptions, but if I don't he may find out, and my friend will blame me. What do you think I should do...?

My boyfriend is really putting pressure on me to sleep with him, and keeps telling me everyone else does it, so why won't I? I really like him, but I'm not sure if I want to go to bed with him yet. We're going to a party at the weekend, and he wants me to stay over, and tell my parents I'm at a friends. I'm frightened of losing him if I don't. Please help.

I've had a boyfriend for 18 months, and though he's over 30, he still lives with his mother. Recently we went on holiday together for the first time, and he loved it. Since then I've been looking to buy a house, and suggested he moves in with me. He's not sure, but I told him he had to tell his mother, or I wasn't going to wait around any longer. Do you think I did the right thing?

I really like a man who works across the road from my office, but I am shy and not at all confident about asking men out, or even talking to them. I see him quite often, and he seems nice and friendly. In fact, I have been told that one of his colleagues said **he** was too shy to ask **me** out. I'm afraid of being rejected, so do you think I could ask a friend to talk to him, and see about a date..?

I am a boy of 13 and I have just had braces fitted to my teeth. I think I look really ugly with them, and have to keep them in for at least two years. How can I possibly get a girl to like me, and even if I did, how do you kiss someone with braces in your mouth. I've a good mind to tell my parents that I want them taken out. Do you think this is a good idea?

There's a boy I've liked since September, and I want to get to know him, but I'm sort of afraid to. He's got a bit of a bad reputation, smoking and doing drugs. Now he's asked me out. What should I do?

I went on holiday and met a boy. The only thing is, I already have a boyfriend back home. The new boy, Damion, kissed me one night, and I spent the whole next day thinking about whether I was cheating on my boyfriend. Finally, I came to the decision that you're only young once, so I didn't care, and had a great time for the rest of the holiday. When I got back, I told my best friend, or so I thought. Now the story's everywhere, and I'm afraid my boyfriend will find out. Do you think I should tell him the truth before he finds out...?

My girlfriend and I have been very close for over 9 months now. She has always used birth control, but recently something went wrong, and now she's pregnant. We still haven't told anyone about it, because we don't know what to do. If we tell her parents they are bound to freak out, and maybe stop me seeing her because to tell the truth they don't like me so much. What would you advise for the best...?

I met this girl recently who I think is really cool. But there's this big problem. Her parents hit her sometimes, once she stayed home from school with a black eye and a cracked rib. When she tried to call me, her mum hit her with the phone. What I would really like to do, is go round there and sort them out, once and for all. But she won't let me. She says they're really good to her most of the time. I can't stand to see her being treated badly. Do you think I should take some action...?

I'm really jealous of my sister. It's got to the point where I really hate and despise her. The thing is she's a year older than me, and a model, a really successful one too. My parents keep on and on about her. I feel I'm not wanted, and want to run away...

Problem pages # 2

I was raped when I was 13 and now it's hard for me to be with someone. Whenever things start to happen with a boy, I just freak out, I get really scared. I've tried to get over it, but I really can't. I've never told anyone about the rape, so I've never had any help with it. Now I've met this really nice boy, do you think it would help if I told him what happened to me, and why I feel like I do? I'm so afraid he'll dump me when he finds out...

I have a sister who is just a bit older than me. When we are at home, she is so happy to be around me, and do stuff with me. But the minute we get out in public, or around her friends, she doesn't want to be within a ten mile radius of me. And if I hang around, she slags me off in front of them. It really hurts when she does this. Do you think if I gave her a piece of my mind in front of her friends the next time she does this it would help...?

How do I tell my mom that I need privacy? She keeps butting in my life, and walking in my room and moving my things around when I'm gone. How do I get her to back off..?

My problem deals with my dad. I have a younger sister (11) who gets to do whatever she wants. She is over at her boyfriend's house nearly all the time, but if I ask if I can go over to see my boyfriend, he just yells at me, and says I go over there too much. Another thing is, we have to do jobs to get pocket money. My sister hardly does anything, and gets £10, and I have to do loads, and get £5. I try to talk to my mom about it, but she's out at work in the evenings when most of this stuff goes on. One of these days I'm really going to tell my dad where he's at...!

How can I get my son to pick up after himself, and help me around the house? He leaves a mess behind him when he's fixing something to eat, he leaves rubbish lying around instead of throwing it out. And when I ask him to do something, he's watching a movie, or he's too busy. How can I get him to pull his weight..?

My parents are getting a divorce, which I'm really happy about, because my dad has always hit me and my brother, and is a complete drunk. The night my mother left him, she called the police and he was arrested for domestic violence. He got off, just like he always does, and now the real problem is the court says I **have** to see him at weekends. To be honest I can't stand him, and never want to see him again. Do you think I should tell him so...?

I need some advice badly. I am just 14 but I am sexually active if you know what I mean. The thing is, boys try to grab me and touch me, they think because I had sex with a guy that I am easy. Everyone keeps coming up and saying they've heard this and that about me, I'm getting so tired of it, because most of it isn't true. Then, a couple of nights ago, this one guy was waiting out for me, and came on really heavy if you know what I mean. I think I should report him, in case he tries something worse next time. Who can I tell, and who'll believe me if I do?

Ever since I had sex with my boyfriend, my best friend won't speak to me. She tells me I'm immoral, a slag and a slut and stuff like that. I don't think I am, because I really like this boy, and we've been going out together for over two months. And now my best friend is saying she'll tell my folks and get this boy arrested (I'm only 14) if I don't drop him. What can I do...?

My friend is dying of cancer. Today they gave him 72 hours to live. I don't know how to deal with it, all I can do is sit here and cry. I can't eat, I can't sleep, can't study. In school, all I do is just sit there. How do you prepare yourself to have a close friend die? How am I supposed to deal with things after he's dead? Who can I talk to...?

I am 13 and have a group of friends that I have known for years. The problem is, some of them are getting too fast for me. They keep talking about how cool it is to smoke, go out drinking, doing drugs, and having sex. If I say I'm not into these things, they turn round and laugh. I feel like I'm being forced out of the group. Do you think I should start doing these things, I mean, how can I give up my friends...?

I have a problem with my best friend. She was going out with this boy for nearly a year, so I got to know him as well. She dumped him about a month ago, and told me she never wanted to see him again, it was all over etc. I started going out with this boy last week, and ever since she has been making my life a misery, telling everyone I'm two-faced, have taken her boyfriend, and much worse, saying I was doing things with him while he was going out with her. This is all lies! What's more, she's going out with another boy herself, so all this fuss is about her EX! I'm really going to lose it with her soon if she doesn't stop. Please HELP!

My best friend is very depressed and has taken to hurting herself, putting small cuts on her wrists, not deep enough to do any real harm, but just to draw attention to herself. She has sworn me to secrecy so I can't tell anyone. The dilemma I have is, do I tell her to grow up and stop trying to draw attention to herself like this, "ignore it when she does it" sort of thing, or should I break my promise not to tell anyone. What if she really hurts herself...?

I smoke and go through a packet a day. I think I'm addicted to cigarettes and I hate it. I know all the health dangers, and how it makes you smell disgusting, but it goes in one ear and out the other. I tried quitting, but my best friend smokes, and gives me a cigarette when I get bad cravings. How can I persuade my friend that we've got to stop, and that if we do it together we might just kick the habit...?

I'm bored. Can you suggest anything I can do during the summer...?

My question is about babysitting. I've never babysat before in my whole life, but one of my teachers at school asked me and I said yes I had, lots of times. So now I've got to sit on Friday night, and I'm worrying what might happen. I keep thinking the kid will swallow something and I'll have to do that respiratory thingamajig to get it to breathe again. What if it won't do as it's told, or has an accident? Do you think I should come clean, or make an excuse and say I can't sit, or just go along and hope nothing bad happens...?

I have a problem with my mother, but it is not the usual type of problem that you might think. I got in from school the other day, and I found her unconscious at the foot of the stairs. At first I thought she had fallen, or had a heart attack or something. But then I smelled the drink on her breath. I don't know why she drinks like this, and my dad has no idea. My mother has told me not to tell him, but I don't know what to do for the best...

Why won't my parents treat me and my brother the same? He is 2 years older than me, but he never gets nagged to do any of the jobs around the house. Just because he is a boy and I am a girl! He was allowed to do a paper round when he was my age, but I am not, and he could stay out later than I can. And always the same answer, "It's different for a girl". Well why is it different? How can I get my parents to see sense...?

I had sex with my best friend's boyfriend, and now I feel guilty. What should I do?

I can't get along with my mother. No matter what I do, it is never good enough for her. I have tried everything, and it is getting to the point where I don't know how much longer I can live with her. Recently she just gave my dog away, just because she didn't like the dog. I am about to just leave, even though I know that won't solve anything, and I have nowhere to go. What should I do?

I know these problem pages are supposed to be for teenagers, but could you spare a while to listen to a parent's problem? You see my daughter Barbara has disappeared. She just went, without saying anything or telling us what she was doing. Her mother and myself were distracted with worry, looked everywhere for her, told the police, who didn't seem interested as thousands of teenagers apparently just leave home every year. Then we got a lead; she has got involved with a group of bikers, Hell's Angels types, who are into drugs and goodness knows what kind of things. The police say there is nothing they can do, but perhaps she is being held against her will? How can we get our daughter back....?

Props

A department store in a busy shopping mall. One of the staff realises that a bag has been left unattended..

A pin, on the floor. Do you pick it up, or leave it?

"See a pin and pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck.

See a pin and leave it there, all the day, you'll have woe and care."

Make these signs, large, and fix them around the walls. What happens if someone disobeys their warnings?

- No ball games, skateboarding, or cycling in this area
- Danger! Military Test Area. Keep Out!
- Do not tamper with this life-belt. The life it saves may be yours.
- Danger! Radioactive Waste in Transit!
- Beware rapid tides. Check times of high and low water before exploring rocks and caves.
- Area 51. Defence Department Property. Absolutely no admittance to unauthorised persons.
- Private land. Genetically Modified crops. Keep off.

Two refugees, brother and sister, are escaping from a war zone, with their young brother. The only thing they have with them is a blanket, which they use to carry the child, keep warm, and shelter under...

A bunch of large keys. Who do they belong to? What do they open? What do they protect, or who do they imprison...?

An alarm clock doesn't go off. Each member of a family sleeps in. And each member has their own important reason for not being late on that particular day. Follow their day through, beginning with their panic to get out and make up on lost time...

A ransom or blackmail note. Prepare a note, using letters cut out of newspapers and glued on to a piece of paper. Invent a suitable message on the note: "Bring the money or the girl gets it.."

A bunch of flowers. Does it mark a special occasion? Is it a peace offering, a romantic gift, or the sign of a guilty conscience?

A miniature camera. Who has been using it, and what have they been taking pictures of? Why is it necessary to be able to conceal the camera easily?

A gun. To whom does it belong? Do they own it legally? Where is it kept? When and why has it been fired?

A medal. What kind of a medal is it? Who won it, when did they win it, and how did they win it? Where is it now, and what memories does it hold?

A set of tools. It contains a drill, screwdrivers, crowbar, a hammer, and a number of electronic devices. Who is carrying it, where they going, what are they going to do with it?

A computer disc. To whom does it belong? What information does it contain? What will happen if this information falls into the wrong hands?

A piece of rock. Where did it come from, what special properties does it have, what elements does it contain? Who has it in their possession, and who else wants it?

An electronic microchip. What does this do, who invented it, and who currently owns it? How much is it worth, and who would like to get hold of it?

Carol, a coloured girl, goes for a job in a chemist's. The manager doesn't even interview her, telling her straight away that the job has been taken. Melissa, a friend of Carol's, who is white, has also applied for this job. She goes along to the shop later, and is offered it! When she finds out, Carol is angry that Melissa still intends to take the job, and with the manager of the shop, for lying to her. She decides not to take things lying down, but to give them both a piece of her mind...

On a street in an American town.

White police officer: What's your name boy?

Coloured man: Doctor Andrews. I'm a physician.

White police officer: What's your first name boy?

Coloured man: Stephen. My first name's Stephen. And I'm a man, not a boy.

Jason is getting married to Mila, a coloured girl. When she arrives at the Registry Office, there is a small crowd outside. They are not the well-wishers that she thinks at first. Instead they are chanting racist abuse. She is so upset, that she cannot go through with the wedding, but immediately gets her dad to drive her home. Jason comes round to find out what on earth is going on...

Jane arranges with her dad to pick her up in his car after a night out, to make sure that she gets home safely. She thinks that he is being over-protective, and is a bit embarrassed by it, but if it keeps the peace at home, well, why not. When her dad picks her up, he sees her talking to a coloured lad, and when they get home, he is fuming about her talking "to a boy like that"....

Jane continues to see her boyfriend, Jay, without her parents knowing. She doesn't see why their prejudice should ruin her life, and perhaps she can persuade them in time. Jay offers to pick her up at her house, and to leave her home to her door, to make sure she's safe. Jane can't afford to let her parents meet Jay, and eventually she has to tell him the real reason. He is upset, and wants to meet her parents to get it out into the open. Jane doesn't think this is such a good idea...

Garth plays for a local league football team, and is the only coloured player in the side. At an away game, one of their supporters throws a banana on the pitch, and starts making monkey noises, aimed at Garth. He's met this kind of thing before, and so he ignores it. At the end of the game, though, he is making his way to the clubhouse for a drink, when he discovers this supporter is "on the door". He tells Garth he cannot come in, along with more racial abuse. Garth looks to his team mates for support...

Narwinder has worked in the same factory for several years. During the whole of this time, he has been subject to racial abuse and bullying by some of his co-workers. Graffiti have been sprayed on his locker, he has been offered cans of dog food at lunchtime, and his car has been vandalised. The final straw comes when the foreman bringing round wage packets throws his down on the floor, and tells him to pick up his "wog money". Narwinder decides to make a formal complaint to the factory manager, and to get union backing for his case...

A woman on a flight from South Africa complains to the air hostess about having to sit next to a coloured man. She insists that she is found another seat, but there are no other unoccupied seats in the second class section of the plane. The woman keeps on complaining, demanding that the air hostess checks whether there are any seats in the first class section of the plane. The air hostess checks, and finds that there is one seat left in the first class section. She invites the coloured man to take the first class seat...

Alice and her boyfriend Shofig are going to a talent show at their local pub. There are a variety of acts, singers, magicians, jugglers, and finally, a comedian. He begins to go into a routine which includes a lot of racist jokes. Alice becomes more and more angry at his act, and wants Shofig to protest. But he thinks this will only make things worse. Alice decides to take matters into her own hands...

Race # 2

In a Balti restaurant, late one Friday night. A group of young men and women have come for a meal, straight from the pub. They look through the menu, while the waiter hovers to take the order:

Drunk: Ain't you got any English food? Not this wog muck?

Waiter: This is an Indian restaurant. We serve only the highest quality Indian meals.

Drunk: Well why don't you do English food too? I like to know what I'm eating. You lot put all sorts in this muck.

Waiter: If you want an English meal, why don't you go to an English restaurant. Or to a fish and chip shop. For some good old fish and chips..

Drunk: There's none of them open. Only you wogs stay open late.

Waiter: Exactly.

Drunk: What's that supposed to mean?

A coloured professional footballer is legally parked in his BMW at the side of the road. A police patrol stops, and asks if the car is his own. The footballer has no ID with him, nor proof of ownership...

On a tube train. It is fairly crowded. One of a group of teenagers begins flicking litter at a coloured passenger. Gradually the others join in. Eventually the passenger has had enough:

Passenger: Now listen to me you kids. You stop that at once, or I'll call the guard and get you put off at the next station.

At the bus stop. A Muslim woman is waiting to board the bus, her face covered by her hejab, the veil worn by Muslim women. The bus driver insists that she removes the veil so that he can check her identity against the photograph on her travel pass. When she refuses, he orders her to get off the bus...

A businessman is entertaining clients in an Indian restaurant. He is boasting about his knowledge of India, and the East, claiming to have travelled extensively, and learned a great deal about the culture of these places. When the waiter brings him the menu, he tries to show off his knowledge, claiming that the food on the menu is not authentic Indian cuisine, but is a westernised substitute. He asks for his guests to be brought a genuine Indian meal. He is not very happy when the waiter shortly brings each customer a ball of boiled rice, and some lentils...

A man has lost his keys, and is getting into his own house through a window. He is seen by a passing police patrol, who immediately stop to question him. BUT: Use two separate groups to explore this situation, but don't tell either group what the other is doing. In one group, the man getting into the house is white, in the other, he is black. Present the two scenes, and compare differences between them.

Jason is a National Front supporter. He ends up badly injured in the casualty department of the hospital when a racist march and demonstration ends in violence. Bina, a coloured doctor, arrives to tend to his injuries...

At the check out of a supermarket. A coloured girl is about to take over from a white girl at the till. A woman in the queue protests about being served by a coloured person...

The Websters live next-door to the Whytes. The Websters have put their house up for sale. When a coloured couple arrive to view the Websters' house, the Whytes are unhappy because they do not want coloured neighbours. When Mr Webster introduces the coloured couple to the Whytes, they do everything they can to put them off buying the Webster's, house, much to their annoyance...

Lorna has one of the main parts in a school play. After several weeks rehearsals, she realises she has to kiss a coloured student, and refuses to do so. This leads to problems for all concerned...

A scam is a trick played upon an innocent victim in order to get money out of them. In the following situations, the Scam Artist and the Victim are given separate "cards", so that the victim does not know what the situation is about, not even that the main idea of this work is about a scam. The Scam Artist has to use his or her wits to fool the innocent party...

Scam Artist:

You want to take advantage of so-called "art lovers" who buy paintings as an investment, in order to make money, but who know very little about art. Your latest idea is to market oil-paintings produced by chimps—"Chimpressionism", as you call it. Convince your victim it is a brilliant idea, the next big thing in the art world, worth every penny of the extortionate prices you intend to charge.

Victim:

You have inherited a bit of money, and want to invest it. You have heard that buying paintings is a good way to do this, as they will always increase in value.

Scam Artist:

You have hit upon the ideal way to steal cars. You find people who have recently bought a car, wait until they have brought it home, and then tell them you have to re-possess the car because the person who sold it had fallen behind on the payments. Produce papers to support your claim, and give the victim the number of a friend who will pretend to be your "office" to support your story.

Victim:

You have just bought a second-hand car from an advertisement in a newspaper. It is a model you have always wanted..

Scam Artist:

You run a dodgy garage business. Whenever anyone brings a car in for repair, you convince them it is not worth fixing, and is not even safe to drive away, however small the actual fault may be. Sell them a new car, by offering a generous trade-in on their model. Then of course you sell their old car, and make two lots of profit.

Victim:

You have had slight trouble starting your car, and decide to take it into a garage for a service.

Scam Artist:

You have hit upon a foolproof way to steal people's furniture, right from under their noses. It works like this. You knock on somebody's door, and tell them you represent a furniture company. You have a van with the company logo painted on outside, and a "cameraman" filming the whole thing, as if it was a "surprise" advertisement. Convince the householder that they have won an entire house-full of new furniture as part of a competition, providing of course that they agree to appear in the advertisement on TV. All they have to do is to accompany you to the store to pick any furniture of their choice. Drive them to the store, while the rest of your gang steal their furniture. At the store, tell them to choose anything they like, while you go to "fetch the manager". Disappear quickly, like their furniture...

Victim:

You are having a quiet afternoon in, watching the television..

Scam Artist:

You have found an easy way of making money out of women whose husbands have deserted them. They're easy to find, if you keep your ears open at the school gate when they pick up their kids. Simply call at their door, and say you're from a Debt Collecting Agency. The husband has run up large bills before he left, for which the wife is legally responsible. Say you'll settle for cash now, even if only a part payment, or else you'll have to repossess the furniture straight away..

Victim:

Your husband has recently left you. Money is tight, and you don't know where to turn next.

Scams # 2

Scam Artist:

You make money out of young girls who want to be models. You set up an office for a couple of weeks, and advertise as a model agency in the local paper. Tell girls who apply that they need a portfolio of photographs, which you can provide for £150. Suggest that cosmetic surgery, a nose or boob job, might increase their chances. Offer to arrange this, for a small agency fee, with a reputable plastic surgeon. Take their deposits and run.

Victim:

You are a 16 year old girl with ambitions to be a model. You see a Modelling Agency's advertisement in the paper, and decide to apply.

Scam Artist:

You have set up as a "Weight Watchers" clinic, offering guaranteed weight loss to all your clients. The motivation to lose weight is this; the course is quite expensive, but if a client loses an agreed target weight, their fee is returned, doubled. If they don't reach the target, they have to pay. You offer a number of "treatments", but early weight loss is guaranteed since you give your clients laxative pills. The pounds simply disappear. At the end of the course, everyone weighs in on your "dodgy" scales...

Victim:

You are overweight, and decide to join a scheme which promises to give you back your course fee doubled if you reach your target weight. How can you lose?

Scam Artist:

Work with a partner on this double-handed scam. The first scam artist approaches a victim in a pub, pretending to be both drunk, and short of funds to get home to patch up his marriage with his wife. He offers to sell the victim a genuine Rolex watch (it is the real thing), in order to pay for his fare home. If the sale goes ahead, the second scam artist moves in, pretending to be a police officer. He (or she) arrests the victim for handling stolen goods, and confiscates the Rolex as evidence.

Victim:

You have had a win on the horses, and are having a quiet drink in the pub to celebrate your winnings..

Scam Artist:

You pretend to be a travelling salesman, specialising in jewellery. You stay in boarding houses up and down the country, taking with you a brief-case full of your samples (all cheap costume jewellery in fact), which you make a great show of keeping locked, and fussing about security in the boarding house. You take the landlady into your confidence, and try to get her to show you any jewellery she may have. Pretend one piece is very valuable. Offer to have it properly valued for insurance purposes. Say you can provide emergency insurance immediately, for a small fee naturally...

Victim:

You are the landlady of a small boarding house which caters for travelling salesmen and businessmen.

Scam Artist:

This Lottery scam is the simplest ever. Get as many people as you can to join your syndicate. Collect their money week after week, but don't bother to buy any tickets. After all, the chances of winning are astronomical..

Victim:

You have heard that there's a lottery syndicate at work, and would quite like to join.

Scam Artist:

You run a slot machine scam, offering to hire machines to publicans. You have a brochure which explains what the typical takings from a machine will be. The publican pays a fixed amount each month, and pockets any takings above this as profit. All that's required is one down payment, to cover installation. (There is no machine of course...)

Victim:

You run a pub, and would welcome any way in which to increase your profits.

Scam Artist:

You run a "Work at home and make lots of money" scam. It goes like this. You place an advertisement in the newspaper offering large sums of money to people who invest in a franchise to work at home. You visit people who reply, bringing with you a box of materials suitable for making "Hand sewn and painted dolls". For a down-payment, to cover the cost of materials, and a licence to join the franchise, they can make lots of money by assembling these dolls, and selling them to a store. They keep all the money the store gives them. (The store doesn't exist, but a bogus "order form" does). When the mug has made 200 or more dolls, refuse to accept them, because they are below quality..

Victim:

You have answered an advertisement in the newspaper about making £100 per day by working at home.

Scam Artist:

You run a "charity" scam, which usually involves "helping" animals which have been mistreated. It doesn't matter what; donkeys mistreated in Spain, dolphins caught in fishing nets, puppies abandoned after Christmas, sea-gulls caught in oil slicks, "refuges" for hunted foxes. You've used them all. Simply spot the pet-owners in any street, have some fake ID and leaflets handy, knock on the door, and ask them to sponsor some poor animal, to save its life..

Victim:

You are a pet owner with a very soft spot for all animals. You can't bear them to be mistreated in any way.

Scam Artist:

You operate a "Listed Buildings" scam, which works like this. You find a street with old, prosperous looking houses in it. Knock on the door, and pretend to be from the "University" conducting an historical survey of the area, looking for buildings to appear on the "Timewatch" programme on TV. Have some fake ID and papers handy, including an "ancient" map of the area. You believe that this house might be built on the site of a medieval monastery, and could become a "Listed Building", which would of course increase its value immensely. Ask for a tour of the house, if possible. Get more and more excited. Finally, explain that the house needs a proper "historical" survey, which normally costs over £1000. But this is so exciting, you offer to do it just for your expenses, say £200...

Victim:

You have recently bought an old style house. It was quite expensive, but should be an investment, though the mortgage payments are a bit steep. You are thinking about selling it.

Scam Artist:

You run a "cable TV" scam with a partner. It works like this. Whenever a cable company is digging up the road, you go into pubs in the early evening, wearing a company jacket, as if you have just knocked off work for the day. Start up a conversation with your mate, about the things you can see on cable TV (football and sex mostly!). Get the people in the pub interested, but don't make it too obvious. Then, when they're hooked, offer to lay a cable straight to their house, no questions asked, no bills, nothing, ever. £100 down now, and another £200 when the job's done (it won't be of course, but they don't know that..)

Victim:

You have called in to the pub for a quiet drink on your way home from work.

Scam Artist:

You run a "gem stone" scam, offering people the chance to invest in a sure-fire return on their money. Place an advertisement in the newspaper, offering investors the chance to buy gems from a Chilean mine, the last chance before the government puts a tax upon importing the gems. You'd obviously buy them all yourself, but you just don't have the funds. However, you can make a small profit by acting as an agent. Have some samples to show, and some "Certificates of Authenticity". But they have to act fast. The government tax becomes law by the end of the week..

Victim:

You have some money to invest, and have seen an advertisement for buying gemstones...

Scams # 4

Scam Artist:

You operate an "amazing invention" scam. You have advertised in a local paper, offering people the opportunity to invest in your latest invention, so that it can be put into production. Everyone who invests will get shares in the company to be formed to market the invention, so the profits will be tremendous. Because this is a sure fire winner, as seen on "Tomorrow's World" on TV. The invention is an "Electricity Diluter". It looks just like a normal adapter plug (because it is!), but when it is plugged into the socket, any appliance which operates will use half the electricity. Electricity bills will be cut in half overnight. Everyone will want one, in fact one for every socket in their house. Invent some technical nonsense about using electromagnetism to "focus" the electrons, and prevent them escaping, to explain how it works.

Victim:

You are interested in an advertisement in the local paper which has been placed by an inventor who claims his invention will cut electricity bills in half.

Scam Artist:

You run a "Give up smoking" scam. Place an advertisement which offers a sure-fire way of giving up smoking. Produce lots of bogus recommendations from people who say it has cured them. You offer smokers a course of "self-hypnosis" to help them increase their will power. This is basically a cassette tape which the smoker listens to while asleep, repeating over and over again the message "You will stop smoking! You can stop smoking! You never want to touch a cigarette again!" and so on. The course costs £250 altogether, but the smoker can "borrow" the first tape, for a deposit of £15, quite free, for the first week. Of course, no one ever gets their deposit back..

Victim:

You desperately want to stop smoking, but don't seem to have the will power to do so. You answer an advertisement in the paper which guarantees a sure-fire cure..

Scam Artist:

You run a "water purification" scam, which works like this. You knock on people's doors, with fake ID, pretending to be from some government agency which is testing how pure people's water is, and whether it is safe to drink. Offer to conduct tests on the water supply there and then, if the person will just provide a sample of water to put under the microscope. You have a slide containing lots of nasty looking bugs ready prepared, which you switch for the slide of the drop of water provided by the householder. Show them the bugs, and advise them strongly not to drink the water. Offer to install a water purification system which will sort out the problem. There are not many left, and everyone will want one...

Victim:

You are at home cleaning the house thoroughly because you are a very health conscious person.

Scam Artist:

You run a scam at nightclubs and discos, which works like this. There are chemicals called pheromones, which all animals (including insects) have. These chemicals make animals attractive to the opposite sex. For example, a male moth knows how to find a female moth at a distance of two miles because it senses her pheromones. The same with people. So here's the scam. You work with a number of female partners. You get talking to some sad single bloke at a disco, and while you're talking your female partners find you irresistible. They can't keep their hands off you. And of course, the sad guy wants to know your secret. At which point you produce your pheromone spray. Except of course, it's really hair spray or deodorant or something with a label stuck on it. Sell it to the guy at an exorbitant price. Though really it cost you twice as much, didn't it. But to help out a mate..

Victim:

You don't have a date, but think you'll try your luck at a nightclub (again!) One of these nights, you're bound to click....

In the dinner queue. A teacher pushes into the queue ahead of the students. One of the students makes a comment; teachers should take their turn like everybody else. The teacher threatens punishment.

Teacher: Any more remarks like that, and you'll be in after school.

Student: That's right, punish me, when it's you that's in the wrong...

Out on the playing fields, lunchtime. A group of students are eating their sandwiches in the sunshine. Then along comes Sean, who is always scabbing, taking their food by force. After he's gone on his way, with most of their lunches, someone has a bright idea. Everyone to bring dog food sandwiches the next day, and see how Sean likes that. The others are not too sure. What will happen when Sean finds out....?

Year 10, and the new prefects have been chosen. One of their duties is to police the doors into the school buildings at lunchtime; no one is allowed in except with written permission from a teacher. A new prefect is confronted at the door by a group of year 10 students, until recently peers and friends, who want to be let in...

In the form room, lunchtime. On wet days, students are allowed to stay in their form rooms, provided they act responsibly, and look after the room. Some of the form prefer to stage a game of indoor rugby with someone's bag instead. Others in the form object:

Student: You're gonna get us all chucked out in the rain if you carry on like that. When are you gonna grow up..?

The beginning of a lesson. Students bustling into the classroom, jostling to their places. Someone is sitting in the wrong seat:

Student 1: Oi, you. That's my seat. Get out and sit somewhere else.

Student 2: Who says so? Got your name on it has it?

Student 1: I always sit there. So get out if you know what's good for you.

Student 2: In your dreams. Go an' sit over there. Next to thingy.

Student 1: No way! I ain't sitting next to her. She smells...

The end of a PE lesson. One of the students is picked on by others because he always wears full school uniform, and doesn't mix very well. The others deliberately hide his clothes, and swap them for items taken from the gym lost property box. He tries to complain to the PE teacher, who is too busy to listen. The student arrives at the next lesson in some distress, wearing tatty uniform, quickly spotted by the teacher, who is a stickler for such things...

Abbie can't swim, and is terrified of the water. In year 7 she escaped swimming lessons for non-swimmers by claiming she could swim. She thinks she can do the same in year 8, but is horrified to learn that the whole year is being taken swimming this time, not just the non-swimmers. She has to find some way of dodging swimming lessons for the term, or face being "thrown in at the deep end..."

Parents' evening. Karl's parents are divorced, but insist on going round all his teachers with him together. The evening goes from bad to worse, as both parents attempt to blame each other for Karl's poor performance at school. And then, finally, there's Karl's worst teacher, and his worst subject ...

On litter picking detention. The detainees have plastic bin bags which they have to fill before they can go home. While she isn't looking, Mat swipes all the litter from Sophie's bag, and legs it. She isn't too happy, and plans her revenge...

The whole class is given extra homework as a punishment for their noisy behaviour in a lesson. They all agree this is unfair, and decide not to do it, as a protest. Everyone is unanimous at sticking up for their rights, until the next day. They've all done the extra homework, except for one poor sucker who is now going to have some difficult explaining to do...

School # 2

A student wearing scruffy uniform walks past a teacher, who does not stop the student, or say anything. The Head happens to be in the corridor, and sees this, stopping both the student, and the teacher. The Head reprimands the teacher in front of the student:

Head: Perhaps you shouldn't be in this school if you don't want to uphold the rules?

The end of a drama lesson. Karen complains that money is missing from her bag, saying that someone has stolen it. The teacher is suspicious, because this same situation has happened before. On that occasion, she gave Karen money for her lunch, assuming that she lost the money somehow during the lesson. Now she thinks she is trying it on. The teacher decides not to do anything, other than get everyone to look around the room, to see if the money can be found. But Karen insists that everyone is searched, or she will get her parents to come up and complain...

One of the teachers is leaving. The form are collecting for a present for him. But one student doesn't want to contribute, however much persuasion the others use. The teacher enters just as this "persuasion" is in progress...

Robbie has a new laptop computer which he brings to school, and starts showing off with during lessons, boasting about how it makes his work easier, and will improve his grades. At lunchtime, another student "borrows" the laptop while Robbie is away having his meal. Some of the others want to use it too; in the pushing and pulling the laptop is broken...

After school. The play rehearsal is in full flow, the performance is next week. Then the caretaker appears, and says he has to lock up. The teacher wants to carry on, but the caretaker refuses...

The new year 7s are playing football out on the pitch. Then the year 11s turn up, claiming its their pitch, and chucking the youngsters off. To add insult to injury, they also take their ball. The years 7s plot their revenge...

There is a new girl in the class. Two of the lads fancy her, and volunteer to "show her the ropes", help her settle in, take her to the right rooms. Usually these two are friends, but all is fair in love and war. They each try to sabotage the other's help for the new girl, and to make a lasting impression themselves...

At a local garage. A teacher is taking his car in for its annual MOT. Who should be the mechanic in charge of the test, but one of his old students, and one he didn't get on particularly well with at that. The mechanic rubs his oily hands in anticipation...

Before school, first thing in the morning. A teacher prepares the form room, getting ready for the day ahead. Then Becky arrives, with her bags, portable TV, CD player – all her worldly possessions including her pet rat. She announces tearfully that she has left home...

There is a shy boy in the class who secretly likes one of the girls. His mates know this, and tease him about it. They decide to stitch him up by writing a love letter in his name, and putting it in her bag. But when she finds it, she complains to the teacher...

On a school trip, lunchtime, and the group must be fed. The overwhelming opinion is to head for MacDonald's for cheese burgers, fries and a coke. Except for Nita, who thinks that they should go somewhere with an altogether healthier menu, vegetarian perhaps...?

A teacher keeps money for a school trip locked in the drawer of his desk. He forgets to hand it in to the office at the end of the day. When he gets to his room the next day, he finds the drawer has been forced, and the money is missing. There is a likely suspect in his class; when the boy arrives, the teacher immediately confronts him with the theft...

An understudy in the school play secretly plots to make sure that the person taking the main part will be unavailable on the night...

Darren is 14, and doesn't see the point of school. He would much rather be allowed to leave and get a job, than wasting his time in lessons, and making a nuisance of himself. He truants much of the time, mainly because he has a part-time job helping the milkman on his morning round, and is tired out from getting up at three in the morning each day. The truancy officer has been round to see his mum, and told her she'll be prosecuted if Darren doesn't start attending school regularly. The milkman says he'll sack Darren if he misses his round...

A class are waiting outside their room for a lesson. One of the girls takes a football from a boy and starts kicking it about, in spite of his protests. The ball smashes one of the tiles in the ceiling of the corridor. The teacher arrives, just when the boy has retrieved his ball, and appears to be caught "red handed"...

Two students are fighting in class before the lesson begins. When the teacher arrives, he separates them, and tries to find out what is going on. But when one of the boys is cheeky to him, the teacher clips him round the ear. The next day, the boy's parents come to the school to complain...

Luke is determined to get revenge upon Clinton because he got his Gameboy confiscated by taking it out of his bag without permission, and playing with it during the lesson. He steals a calculator during the maths lesson, and plants it in Clinton's bag, so that he will be accused of the theft when the equipment is checked at the end of the lesson. Matthew sees what Luke has done, but is afraid of him....

Angela is a bit fed up with her friend Teresa, because in their English class, Teresa never bothers to read any of the books, and always expects Angela to tell her what they are about so that she can answer the questions which are asked by the teacher in discussions. She decides that it is time to teach Teresa a lesson. When Teresa asks her about the book they are currently studying, Angela makes up a very strange story-line indeed...

Duane has been expelled from school for being totally disruptive and refusing to do what anyone says. He is a real handful for his mother, who desperately wants to get him into another school. She and Duane have an interview with the Headmaster of the new school, to see if Duane can get in. What Duane hasn't told her is that the new Headmaster has already met him, when he sent him off in a football match between the two schools, for swearing at him...

When the grass is cut on the school playing fields, the boys gang up on the girls, grabbing hold of them, and shoving grass down their clothes. When this happens to Tina, she is convinced it isn't just a joke, or a bit of rowdy fun. She thinks the boys use it as an excuse to "cop a feel", and she isn't happy about it at all. She decides to report the boys to her form tutor, but unfortunately he is a man, and may not take her seriously...

Angela has just started at secondary school; it is her first week. One thing that has really been bothering her is that she knows everyone has to have a shower after they have done PE or games. She is rather shy, and doesn't see why she should have to take a shower in front of everyone. She has tried to explain this to her parents, but they seem to think she is making a fuss about nothing. When the first PE lesson arrives, however, she is determined she is not going to have a shower...

Mark is Head Boy of the school, about to take his "A" Levels, and wanting to go to university when he leaves school at the end of term. One of his friends bets him to do a streak at a school football match, and as Mark has a good sense of humour, and is not one to miss a dare, he accepts the challenge. Though everyone at the match sees the funny side to his streak, the Principal does not, especially as the incident is widely reported in the local papers. The Principal suspends Mark from school, threatening to expel him, which will mean he cannot complete his "A" levels, and will miss out on university. Mark's parents arrange a meeting with the Principal to try to get this decision reversed...

Science Fiction # 1

An advanced alien life form has made contact with earth. Technologically inferior, humans are defenceless against them. The whole world is tuned to their television sets as the aliens issue their conditions for human survival:

1. Since humans are an inferior species, they will be bred for alien food, on large farms, where they will of course be properly treated until fat enough to eat.
2. Humans will be hunted for pleasure by aliens as a means of recreation. This is a popular form of entertainment on the alien planet. Humans will learn to enjoy this activity also.
3. Humans will be kept in laboratories, so that new drugs can be tested on them, for the benefit of alienkind.
4. Experiments will be carried out to enable organs from human donors to be transplanted into aliens.

Earth has 24 hours to give an answer...

Fifty years from now. The Government is so keen that falling standards in education are stopped that they have passed new laws. Every child must do 3 hours homework each night, without fail. There are strict punishments for any children failing to do so, and for their parents. Remember, the Homework Police may burst into your home at any time, to check up on what the children are doing...

A mysterious illness is causing the inhabitants of a small American town to age rapidly. Where did the disease come from? Why is only this town affected? Will it spread if it cannot be contained? They have 24 hours to find a cure...

On the planet Zorb. The Space Highways Committee is in session, meeting to discuss whether a lesser known heap of rocks known as Earth should be destroyed in order to clear the route of an Interstellar Highway. Agent Mikon has lived on Earth for 6 months, able to transform him/her/itself (Zorbians are tri-sexual) to look like the puny, insignificant life form known as homo-sapiens. Mikon must persuade the committee that there is intelligent life on earth, bringing with him video-recordings (how primitive!) of human life on Earth...

When Martin gets a virtual reality suit as a present, he is the envy of all his friends. Now he doesn't have to sit at a console, looking at a screen to play the game, he becomes part of it. And if the excitement is too much, all he has to do is hit the panic button to get back to reality. Until one day, playing the latest release of Tomb Raider 6, pursued by a cohort of mummified Pharaoh's guards, he hits the button, and nothing happens...

Nina is amazed when she finds out that a new kid in the neighbourhood is an extra-terrestrial. After all, he looked like a regular boy, though he had been very vague about where he lived. Stranded on earth when his spacecraft malfunctioned, the alien can assume human form for short periods, but when he grows tired he is likely to revert to his true form. Nina agrees to help him find what he needs to repair his craft, but in the meantime he must remain undetected...

MI5 have developed a truth drug, disguised as an aerosol deodorant spray. Unfortunately one of their agents carelessly leaves it in a briefcase on the tube. When Liam and Sally discover the briefcase, and try out the deodorant, they spend the rest of the day telling the exact truth to everyone they meet. Meanwhile, the agent is trying to get the drug back...

Rupert Winkle is injured in a car accident. He is kept in suspended animation, in a frozen state, for 40 years, until his injuries can be cured by new surgical techniques. He awakes from his operation to find a completely strange world, that his girlfriend is now in her 70s, and he owes 40 years rent on his apartment....

It is the year 2032. A company called "Where They're At" is advertising its latest gadget on television. This is an electronic tracking device which is implanted into children so that parents know where they are at all times, for their safety. Mr and Mrs Clarke see the advert and try to persuade their children to have the gadget fitted...

Dr Frank has created a mechanical android, the ultimate servant of mankind. The android has remarkable intelligence, yet is ideally suited to perform the most humble of tasks around the house. The advertisements for the androids have been a great success, the production line is rolling, people are queuing up to buy one. But then the androids begin acting strangely...

In the year 3010 the population on Earth has exploded out of all proportion. Earth's resources just cannot support the number of human beings now living on the planet. The solution; on reaching the age of 40, everyone is entered into a secret Death Lottery. If your number comes up, you become part of the population cull, hunted down by a government Hit Man. No one knows this; deaths are disguised as accidents, as street crimes, as illnesses. Then Dillon hacks by chance into government records, and finds out his number is up. And that his Hit Man could be anyone, even a best friend or a wife...

A company has developed a microchip called the "Shrew Tamer". Husbands who are afflicted with argumentative, disobedient wives can secretly arrange for the chip to be implanted as part of a beauty therapy. Tony has had one fitted to his wife; he tries to persuade his best friend Matt to do the same...

Space voyagers on the starship Vortex are thrown off course by a sudden radiation storm. The ship is sucked down a wormhole in the space / time continuum, and comes to rest on a planet similar to Earth in a parallel universe. Very similar, but with one important difference. On this Earth, Time runs backwards. The voyagers have to learn to blend in with the inhabitants of this backward running world, and try to find a way of returning to their own universe...

While riding the tube, Marilyn mistakenly picks up a briefcase identical to her own. Inside, it contains nothing more exciting than a TV remote wand. Until she discovers while experimenting with it, that the Action Replay button does exactly that; it replays time. And that any time things don't go her way, she can replay her life to make it turn out just as she wants. No more embarrassing situations, no more put downs, no more guys dumping her before she can dump them...

On board the Starship Enterprise. The crew, their families, androids, aliens and space pets have been taking a short holiday on a planet around which they are in orbit. A group of these space holiday makers beam aboard the Starship at the same time. Unfortunately, there is a malfunction, and their molecules get slightly mixed up. Their personalities get mixed up too as a result of this, with some strange results. For example, Captain Kirk starts behaving like his six year old son....

Present a typical day in a space-colony on another planet, where the gravity level is only one sixth of that on earth, or is six times greater...

"The machines stop". What happens on a day when every machine we rely on and take for granted breaks down or crashes?

Volunteers are asked to take part in an experiment to test a new drug, which is meant to delay the ageing process. Unfortunately, the drug not only delays the process, it sets it into reverse. The volunteers become younger and younger as the drug continues to work...

2037. Discipline in schools is at an all-time low, and the government decides to use technology to solve the problem of disruptive, anti-social behaviour. Troublemakers are to be fitted with a microchip which gives them an electric shock if they become angry, aggressive, or antisocial. Marvin is one such troublemaker. While the "treatment" has the desired effect in class, it also makes Marvin an easy target for all of his victims who have scores to settle....

The Sea

Set up blocks and staging to turn the drama space into a sailing ship. Divide the players up as members of the crew, each with their own specific task, preparing the ship to set sail. This can include:

- * Loading cargo and provisions
- * Setting the rigging, hauling on ropes
- * Swabbing the decks
- * Weighing the anchor on the capstan

Use sea-shanties to provide the rhythm of the tasks, either as background music, or preferably sung by the sailors themselves..

Sound effect, a storm at sea, gathering in intensity. The crew battle against the elements, trying to steer the ship into the wind, climbing the rigging to furl the sails, lashed by the rain and spray. They stagger across the lurching deck, battening down the hatches, manning the pumps, desperately trying to keep the stricken vessel afloat. But at last the back of the ship is broken, the crew swim for their lives...

Daybreak. Warm sun over a white, sandy beach, fringed with palm trees. The survivors of the shipwreck lie exhausted in the gentle surf. Gradually, they regain consciousness and strength, tend to the injuries of their companions, examine the beach for flotsam from the wreckage, looking for anything which might be of use. And then, explore the island...

Barnabus is hard up and out of work in the winter of 1804. He can barely afford the price of a pint of ale in the Crown and Anchor, so he can hardly believe his luck when a man he doesn't know makes his acquaintance, and offers to buy him a drink. What Barnabus doesn't realise is that the man is the leader of a Press Gang, out to assemble a crew for a ship by fair means or foul...

1856. The "Saint Bridget" is a three days out of Liverpool, bound across the Atlantic to New York. The captain is one of the hardest seamen you are likely to meet. On board there are emigrants from Ireland, hoping for a new life in the New World. A stow-away is discovered hiding in the hold, and since water and provisions for the journey are likely to be scarce, the captain decides to throw the stow-way overboard, much against the wishes of his First Mate, who tries to persuade him to change his mind...

The date is December 3rd 1872. The brigantine *Marie Celeste* leaves harbour in New York, bound for Genoa in Italy, carrying a cargo of wood and alcohol. She has a crew of 8, and 3 passengers. Eleven days later, on the 14th December, she is found drifting about 600 miles west of Gibraltar. There is no one on board, though the life boat has been lowered. There is no sign of any damage, nor disturbance of any kind. The captain's log records no strange events. What possible explanation could there be for the crew to abandon a fully seaworthy vessel, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean....?

A poor fisherman has been out in his boat for several days, but has caught nothing. His family will starve unless he brings home a catch to sell at the market. He curses his bad luck, but decides to cast his net one last time before sailing his small boat back to the harbour. And this time, he can hardly haul the net in, the weight of the fish! His fortune will be made! He struggles to pull the net over the side of the boat, and can scarcely believe his eyes. He has caught a mermaid. If he brings her back with him, he can make a fortune, exhibiting her all over the country. She pleads with him to let her go. For if she does not go back to the sea, she will gradually die...

30 miles south west of the Moruroa atoll in the South Pacific ocean, site of early tests of the atomic bomb. Native fishermen are casting their nets by moonlight. From the depths of the ocean, an enormous swell overwhelms their boat, casting them into the sea. Those who manage to make it back to the island talk of a terrifying sea-serpent, rising from the deep. A team of scientists is sent to investigate...

A diver is exploring a wreck in the Caribbean, looking for gold in a Spanish galleon sunk by pirates centuries before. The time limit for the diver to resurface expires. The support crew winch him to the surface. When they take off his heavy suit, they find his hair has gone white, and his face is set in a mask of terror which leaves him speechless...

A plantation scene. The slaves sing gospel spirituals while carrying out their daily toil under the supervision of the overseer and the plantation master. The slaves pick cotton, carry bales, dig and hoe the ground, cut down trees in the swamp, saw them into logs, and stack the wood in piles...

A slave woman has given birth. The mistress of the plantation sends word asking what colour the child is. She hears that it is a mulatto, half coloured, half white and has a strong look of her husband...

When the master of the plantation dies, all the property including the slaves is to be divided among his three children Sally, Ned and Jacob. The names of the slaves are written on separate pieces of paper and put into a box, to be drawn out in turn. This means that slave families will be split up. The three children of the plantation master disagree about this method of dividing the slaves. Sally wants to give the slaves their freedom, Ned thinks that they should be drawn together as families, while Jacob wants to do it the traditional way...

The son of the plantation master has debts, and is stealing his father's pigs. The master blames the slaves, not thinking that his own son could steal off him. He says he will flog all of them unless the culprit owns up. The slaves don't know what to do. Some say that they should run away. Others say to tell the master that his own son is the thief. Another says that they should draw straws, and that one of them should own up to stealing the pigs to spare the rest. Yet another says to say nothing at all...

A runaway slave, still in his irons, weak from hunger and thirst, knocks at the door of the Baptist minister and his wife. He begs for food and shelter. The penalty for harbouring a slave is a jail sentence...

A young slave has been ordered to hoe an acre of cotton before he can rest for the day. On Saturday night he leaves three or four rows to do on the Sunday morning. But the plantation master is up early and catches him. He determines to flog him on Monday for working on the Sabbath. The plantation master's daughter tries to intervene...

A slave decides to runaway to get to one of the free states. To do this he needs a passport, a piece of paper which says who he is, and that he is a free slave entitled to cross into a free State. He has saved \$100, and offers to give it to the young son of the overseer, if he will write him a passport. Slaves can neither read nor write. The boy agrees, takes the money, and writes "This is a runaway slave"...

The plantation master is determined to sell off the younger slaves to raise some capital to buy cattle. The mother of these children is distraught, and pleads with him not to sell the children....

A newly married slave is working in the fields as usual. He sees a gang of slaves in the distance coming down the road, chained together. As they draw near, he recognises his wife. She has been sold without him even knowing, to a new master, who now threatens him with a pistol if he tries to interfere...

A slave saves one dollar a week giving it to his young master each week to buy his freedom. His master gives him receipts each week, which the slave carefully saves. At last he has paid \$600 to his master, and presents the receipts expecting his freedom. Instead his master tears up the receipts and throws them in his face. The slave collects the fragments of his receipts, and decides to run away to the town to seek justice from the law...

One slave in the field is made to whip the others if they are not working hard enough. If he doesn't flog them hard enough, he's flogged himself. If this doesn't work, the overseer will flog his wife in front of him. One day, the "whipping boy" is told to flog his own son...

Slavery # 2

It is against the law to teach slaves to read or write. The mistress of the plantation discovers that her daughter has been doing so, and has to decide whether to tell her husband...

A trusty slave is waiting at table on the master of the plantation, as a domestic servant. The master is heavily involved in gambling, and has organised a poker game with some of his neighbours. If he loses, the slaves will be sold, and all their families will be split up. The trusty has to find some way of making sure that the master doesn't lose at cards...

Slaves have been stealing fruit from the orchard. The plantation master orders that the fence around the orchard should be painted with tar. Anyone breaking in to steal fruit, or trying to break in, will be covered in tar and they will be caught. A young slave who does not know about this gets tar on himself when fixing a mule's split hoof. The overseer drags him before the plantation master...

The white overseer has a policy of whipping slaves for nothing, for looking askance, answering back, for anything at all. He deliberately picks on small things in order to prevent more serious offences. He attempts to whip one slave for not lifting his hat. But this is the last straw. The slave attacks him, for which the penalty is death. The overseer orders the other slaves to help him beat off his attacker, or to share the same consequences, a rope...

It is unlawful for slaves to know how to read and write. However, one of the slaves has learned and holds classes on Sunday for the others. To throw the overseer off the scent, they have to pretend to be doing all those vices that Negroes do on their days off, drinking, wrestling and gambling, whenever he is around. One of the slaves keeps lookout, and whistles to the others when they need to put a temporary halt to their education...

A group of slaves are organising an escape. One of them has got them passports, and they intend to make a break on Saturday night after work. When another slave they don't know very well asks to join their breakaway, they are uncertain what they should do...

At a slave auction two buyers are haggling over their goods. One wishes to sell a horse, and the other to exchange it for a slave. They both inspect each other's property, trying to pretend that their goods are better. The slave owner even claims he is selling an African Prince...

The plantation master's younger son rubs pennies with quick silver in order to pass them off as quarters of a dollar. He sends one of the young slaves to the fruit stall to buy fruit with the counterfeit money. The old man who runs the stall spots the fake coins and calls the overseer...

The plantation master refuses to allow a young slave girl to marry a free slave who is the father of her child. The master threatens to sell the child if she doesn't agree to sleep with him...

The plantation mistress has a young child. A young slave girl is told to watch over the child, and to attend to it during the night. She falls asleep, exhausted after a day in the cotton field. The plantation master hears the child crying, and finds the slave girl asleep. He drags her outside, and flogs her so severely that she dies. The following day, the sheriff calls to investigate what has happened...

During the American Civil War, the Northern Yankees are driving southern plantation owners from their land. It is night, and raining heavily. A family of slaves are in their shack boiling pease and ham bone in a pot. There is a knock at the door. A white woman and her children ask for food and shelter...

The aftermath of the Civil War. The slaves have been granted their freedom, but at a cost. They celebrate losing their chains, but the plantations on which they have worked are being sold by "carpet baggers". They now have their freedom, but no homes. They head north...

Channel surfing

Television experts in America have calculated that 84% of children have never watched a whole programme all the way through without changing channels at least once, however briefly, while it is on. Choose at least 3 (and possibly more) different channels, and decide what each channel is showing, for example:

* A love story * A DIY programme * A wrestling bout

Show what happens when a viewer surfs between these programmes, and how the events in each become comically interwoven with the others...

When he finds his children are spending most of their free time watching TV, Harry decides it is time to stop the whole family turning into couch potatoes. He decides it is time to turn it off, to spend their time doing more useful things. The rest of the family are enraged; he spends just as long as they do watching the box. The challenge is laid down, whoever cracks first and switches on, loses. If the family lose, the TV stays off. But if Harry loses, and tunes in to his favourite sports, he pays for a cable connection...

Reginald is an exceptionally proud gardener. His garden does not have a single blade of grass out of place. A television archaeology programme is filming in the area. The producer of the programme wants to dig up Reginald's lawn because he thinks that there are Roman remains buried beneath it. The producer and the star of the programme call to arrange the dig, unaware that Reginald might object...

Invent a super hero or heroine who has particular powers, and one weakness. Pit him or her against a super villain, and produce an episode of a television programme in which the world is saved once again...

"Coming shortly!" Prepare a series of clips from a forthcoming movie to advertise its attractions to a TV audience. Decide upon a genre of film, think of a good title, and make up a plot line. Choose the most exciting, romantic, action packed moments to show. Use one of those deep, husky-throated, American voices to do the voice-over which tells the audience about the film...

"Here is the News..." Except that on this particular day, there doesn't seem to be any, and the newsreader has to make it up as he or she goes along...

Lionel thinks it will be a wonderful surprise for his wife Doreen when he invites a TV *Changing Rooms* programme to completely re-decorate their house while she is away at her mother's for the weekend. Unfortunately, when Doreen gets back, she hates the way her house has been changed, and says so, even though the cameras are still rolling...

The Ultimate game show. Contestants can win £1 million. All they have to do, is to get to the money ahead of the chaser team, all great athletes, hard as nails, and crack shots. And one little detail. The bullets they use are real. Harrison is desperate enough to take part...

It seemed like a good idea when the Adams family signed up to take part in a real life docu-soap. A film crew is to live with them for six weeks, filming everything they say and do. All their rows, their falling out and making up will be there for the whole world to see. But after the first week, tempers are getting frayed, and the film crew are getting under foot, following them everywhere, determined to miss nothing that might make "good TV"...

Present an episode of the Jerry Springer show, or similar talk-show. Choose one of the following topics, or make up something equally controversial to keep the ratings high:

- "Lara Croft stole my man".
- "I am married to Queen Cleopatra of Egypt".
- "My mother dresses like a tart".
- "Bodybuilding is turning me off my girl".
- "There's something I haven't been telling you..."

The Unexplained # 1

The Edwards family were preparing to go on holiday to Florida, including a long awaited trip to visit Disneyland. Their cases were packed, and everything ready for the flight the next day. During the night, Mrs Edwards had a strange, terrifying dream. She can clearly see herself and her family on board the plane, when suddenly it begins to plunge helplessly out of control, down, down. She hears the silent screams of the passengers around her, and the horror on their faces, powerless to prevent their fate. She awoke in terror from the nightmare, and immediately roused her family to tell them they were not going on that plane...

The control tower of a small, provincial airport, late at night. There are only two controllers on duty, and things are quiet until the package tours from Italy and Spain are due to arrive in the early morning. The radio suddenly crackles in to life, a distress call from a plane, one engine on fire, losing height, requesting permission to make an emergency landing. James, the traffic controller is suddenly wide awake, trying to make contact with the plane. His companion checks the given position of the plane, 10 miles out, on an approach to the runway. So why does it not appear on the radar....?

(Produce a tape of the radio messages from the plane, to be introduced at appropriate stages in the scene).

News item: In Kensington Magistrates Court today, Mr Harold Trotter was accused of reckless driving. Although Mr Trotter has had a clean driving licence for 23 years, and has not had an accident in the whole of that time, on the night of Tuesday 15th November he swerved his car off the road, demolished a garden wall, and came to rest in the front garden of a house on Teddington Road. In his defence, Mr Trotter claimed he saw an old-fashioned bus, of the type used in the early part of the century, heading straight towards him. He reported that there were passengers on the open top upper deck of the bus, dressed in old-fashioned clothes. He swerved to avoid this vehicle, and the accident occurred. The case continues today...

A group of tourists in Austria are on a sight-seeing holiday. They organise a car excursion into nearby mountains, and stop to picnic on a mountainside overlooking a wide valley. On the far side of the valley is an amazing castle, the kind you read about in fairy tales. The tourists were enthralled by the sight, and took several photographs of the castle. It was too late to visit it on that particular day, so on arriving back at the hotel, they ask for details about the castle in order to organise a further trip, and visit if possible. To their astonishment, none of the staff in the hotel know anything about the castle they describe...

Mr and Mrs Growcot, residents of a council house in Leeds reported strange events taking place over a period of weeks. Objects would move of their own accord, or suddenly fly across the room. A cooking knife embedded itself in the door, narrowly missing Mrs Growcot, and a vase flew off the mantelpiece as if aimed at Mr Growcot's head. Noises have been heard at night, and sudden chills have been reported. Council officials called in to investigate the complaints are unconvinced, believing the reports are nothing more than a clever scheme by the Growcots to move to another house...

George Crumlin enjoys a flutter on the horses from time to time. On the night before the Derby, however, he has a dream. He sees the first three horses past the post in the Derby, and though he doesn't know their names, he works this out from the jockeys' colours. He places small bets on each of the horses; they all win. Several weeks pass, and then George has another dream. The next day, he tries to persuade his wife to put their entire life-savings on a bet....

Farmers in Nebraska report losing livestock, apparently attacked by a wolf, even though no wolves have been seen in the district for several years. They organise a vigil to watch out for the animal, and to kill it. During the night, they see the beast, and even manage to get off a few rifle shots at it. Next morning, Monica Peakman, one of the farmer's wives, is amazed to find her husband out in the barn, with a bullet wound...

Sandy plays a computer soccer game on her PlayStation, since the boys won't let her play real soccer with them. She plays the big games before they happen, and she always gets them right. Down to the scorers, the minute, the action replay. The boys, of course, do not believe her, until she shows them. And then each week, the pressure; to play the games before the day, and make sure the result is the one they want...

Margaret is an imaginative child. The stories she comes out with, the things she claims to see! Like her imaginary friend, Billy. Her parents, her teachers, her friends are used to her stories by now. They laugh them off, take them with a pinch of salt, smile and nod indulgently. Margaret is getting mad, and Billy is going to help her get revenge...

A man walks into a police station. He cannot remember who he is, where he lives, or how he got there. The police interview him, trying to piece his life back together...

Wanda is admitted to hospital after being knocked down by a car, and suffering a serious blow to the head. As her injuries heal, and her headache subsides, she discovers she has gained a strange power. She can read the minds of everyone about her, knows what they think, hears their unspoken words. But does she really want to know? Is this power a gift, or a curse as she sets out to put her life back together...?

A traveller once came across three bodies, a chest of gold lying near a freshly dug hole, and a half drunk bottle of wine, underneath the tree. One of the bodies had died from a blow from a spade. The second had a knife in its heart. The third had a glass in its hand...

1926. A husband and wife are going to the theatre. They live on a farm, some miles from London. Their young son, Michael, has been left at home, to be looked after by the maid, and the boy's grandmother. While waiting for the performance to begin, the wife "hears" her son calling for her. She immediately feels a strong need to go home, and tries to persuade her husband to take her...

This advertisement appeared in the *Morning Post* of 27 February 1919: "*Haunted or disturbed properties*: A lady who has deeply studied this subject and possesses unusual powers, will find out the history of the trouble and undertake to remedy it. Houses with persistent bad luck can often be freed from the influence. Strictest confidence. Social references asked and offered."

A road works crew are digging up a main street in order to lay a new water main. They have dug down quite deeply, as the pipe is very large, and the old main has to be removed. Once they have done this, they are surprised when they suddenly strike something hard, metallic. Closer inspection reveals a long cylindrical object, made from a strange kind of metal which is totally unaffected by rust...

A murder has been committed, and the homicide team are called to the scene. There is one piece of forensic evidence which is puzzling however. A number of clear fingerprints have been discovered, on the door handle, on the throat of the victim, on the murder weapon itself. These fingerprints match those of a convicted murderer, who was executed for his crime ten years ago, still claiming his innocence. His last words in the electric chair declared his innocence, and his intention to be revenged on all those who brought him to this fate...

Rosalie is driving home late at night, towards her lonely farmhouse in Arkansas. She sees a bright light on the road ahead of her, and the car suddenly comes to a halt. She feels herself being drawn out of the car, upwards towards the source of the light, and then nothing... until she wakes up several hours later. She heads back into town to tell people what has happened. No one, not even her husband, believes her tale of alien abduction. And then, a month later, she discovers she is pregnant....

War # 1

London, during the Blitz. All the children are being evacuated from the city, and sent to safety in the country. A mother refuses to send her children, and is prepared to argue her case whatever his teacher, or the police, have to say about the matter...

London, during the Blitz. Roy and Stella are on their first date at the cinema. Things are just beginning to get romantic, when the air raid siren goes. Stella is anxious to get home, but Roy tries to persuade her that there is nothing to be afraid of, and that they should stay to watch the picture...

A refugee camp, some distance from the front line of the war. The aid agencies have brought some food and shelter, but there is never enough to go round. It is cold and wet, even inside the aid organisers' own tent. There are the sounds of angry voices outside. Some of the refugees drag in another. She has been caught stealing food, and they want her punished...

A trench in France in the First World War. Two soldiers argue whether they should take the valuables of their dead comrade, killed by a sniper, lying dead in the bottom of the trench...

Eunice is nine months pregnant, and the baby is due any day. She begins to have labour pains in the middle of an air raid. There is no way she can contact the midwife or the doctor. Her sister Veronica will either have to get her to the hospital, or deliver the baby herself...

Robert receives his call-up papers to join the Armed Forces. But he is a conscientious objector who thinks that killing is wrong under all circumstances. His parents are horrified, and fear he will bring disgrace on them by being labelled a coward. They try to persuade him join up and play his part in the War...

A soldier has been separated from his unit, and is wandering behind enemy lines, trying to get back to his own side. By chance, he comes across his training sergeant, a man who treated him very badly during his basic training. The sergeant has been wounded in his leg, and cannot walk unaided...

A group of soldiers arrive in the village they have conquered and destroyed. They encounter a woman nursing her dead child, killed by their gunfire...

A 17 year old private hides in the middle of a battle. Technically this is desertion under fire, the penalty for which is death by firing squad. The sergeant in command of the unit has to decide whether to lodge an official report. The rest of the unit urge him not to...

In the trenches during the first world war. The second in command of a unit has to decide what to do about his commanding officer. This officer is a good friend, but his drinking problem is costing men their lives...

There are two soldiers in the recovery room of a field hospital. One is an enemy that the other has critically wounded. The enemy killed his best friend. The soldier complains to the doctor, saying that it is not right that he should save the life of the man who killed his friend...

A group of soldiers are on the frontline in the first world war. They are exhausted and tormented by the horrors they have seen. When they snatch sleep, their dreams reveal the nightmares they have lived through, and the happier lives that they have left behind, but hope to regain some day....

Michelle is a young girl in a village which has been occupied by the German army. She has been going out with a young enemy officer. A group of villages meets to decide what should happen to this collaborator. Is she going with the officer to help feed her family, or is it for her own selfish affections?

A group of World War 2 veterans who were in a Japanese POW camp go to Burma, to revisit the scene. By chance, they meet one of their Japanese guards, on a similar pilgrimage...

Two soldiers capture an enemy. One of them wants to take everything he can from him, his boots, his coat, his food, anything they might need to keep warm or to survive. The other soldier thinks it is wrong to do this as the enemy will die slowly from the hunger and cold...

The Baxter's house is damaged during an air raid in the Blitz, and the family is evacuated to safety. When they return next day to see what can be salvaged from the ruins, they are astonished and horrified to find that neighbours have stolen many of their things...

It is 1941. Rita has a dream that her mother will be killed in an air raid. She wonders how this can be because they live in the country far away from the nearest town. She worries about her dream all day, and eventually decides to tell her mother. She makes light of Rita's fears, telling her that there is nothing to be afraid of. That night they are woken by the sound of a plane coming closer...

During the blackout. Henry, who is home on leave from the frontline, is walking home smoking a cigarette. The air raid warning siren sounds, and Henry is stopped by an A. R. P. warden. He is told that he will be arrested if he doesn't put out the cigarette. Henry recognises that the warden is an old adversary, Jack Straw, who has avoided conscription into the army because of his flat feet. Henry objects to being told what to do with his cigarette, the last one he has, and in short supply because of rationing...

Tommy and Derek have been evacuated to the country from their home in the east end of London. Their own home is very poor, the boys have old clothes, are infested with fleas, and will only eat chips. Vera and her brother Barry are really upset by the two newcomers, especially when Vera is told that she must share her bedroom with her brother.

Mr and Mrs Lampem treat the children who have been evacuated into their care very badly indeed. They barely feed them enough to live on, take their sweet coupons from them, make them work too hard on their farm, and beat them if they do slightest thing wrong. When the children's parents write asking if they can pay a visit, they threaten them with awful consequences if they tell their parents what has been going on.

1942. Bernard Jones has just died. His body is lying on his bed. His relatives have gathered round, and have been arguing over his clothes. They say that it is a waste for him to be buried in his best suit when there is a war on, and that if the news of his death were delayed for a day or so, they could make use of his remaining ration coupons before anyone found out. His daughter is horrified at these suggestions...

Prisoners of war in a German camp are digging a tunnel in order to escape. The German guards are suspicious, and search all the huts trying to find the entrance. Fortunately they do not find the entrance, which is underneath the wood stove in the hut. A prisoner from another hut asks to join the escape, and threatens to tell the Germans about the tunnel if they don't agree...

A front-line trench during the first world war. An officer reaches the trench with orders for the soldiers to retreat. They have been under continual bombardment for several days, and one of them is suffering from severe shell shock, and has gone mad. When the order to retreat arrives, he refuses to go...

Nadia and her family have escaped from the war, walking hundreds of miles to reach the safety of the border, and a neutral country. But at the border, the guards are brutal, and turn them back. Nadia pleads for their lives...

Harry has survived the first world war, and has returned home to try to rebuild his life. However, he cannot stand any kind of loud noise, and immediately starts to shiver and tremble whenever he hears a noise of this kind. He has found a job working in a factory. It is his first day. He has survived the war, but will he be able to resume his previous life, and will anybody care?

Wedding bells

Present a wedding as a series of photographic slides. Each slide is to be presented as a tableau created by a number of players. A narrator can be used to explain what is happening in each of the slides, and to control when each slide changes to the next...

Two girls, Sally and Nerys, have been friends for many years. Sally is getting married soon and has asked Nerys to be her maid of honour. However, Nerys has found out that Sally's fiancée has been cheating on her, and has been seeing another girl behind her back. The wedding is only a week away, and Nerys doesn't know whether she should tell her best friend what she knows.

Jackie is pregnant. Max, her boyfriend, has offered to marry her, but she isn't sure that she loves him, nor is Max sure that he loves her. Both of their sets of parents are keen that they do get married, but as the wedding gets closer, neither is sure they're doing the right thing...

Warren and Jennifer are getting married soon. Warren has an old sports car, which he has been restoring for several years. Jennifer wants him to sell it, in order to buy new furniture for their home...

Drew used to go out with Lisa, but she left him for his best friend Neil. Lisa and Neil are now getting married, and ask Drew to be their best man, believing that he has got over the way they treated him. Drew uses his "Best man's speech" to get his revenge...

Naomi and Lee have been living together for several years. They get on together well and have reached the point where they think they would like to start a family. They decide to get married, but as soon as they make this decision, and begin to make the wedding arrangements, both start to have second thoughts. They start to feel trapped, and think they should just continue as they have been. However, both sets of parents are keen that the wedding should go ahead...

Gillian's parents divorced when she was young. There is still a great deal of hostility between them. She is getting married shortly, and feels obliged to invite both of her parents to the wedding. Both parents say that they will not come if the other is invited. Gillian can do without this extra stress, and is unsure what she should do. Maybe she should not invite them at all, or invite both, but without telling them the other is coming too. It has started to cause tension between her and her fiancé, Trevor...

Barry has done well for himself, working hard to develop his dad's building firm into a prosperous business. He is getting married to Sophie, a girl he met on holiday, who comes from a well-to-do middle class family. Neither are really looking forward to the wedding. Barry's family are a bit "rough and ready", while Sophie's relatives are a bunch of snobs with appalling airs and graces. They both dread what might happen when the two sides meet...

Paul wakes up late on his wedding morning, rather worse for wear from the night before. There is no real need to panic, however, still plenty of time if he gets a move on. Until he comes to try on his hired morning suit. To his horror, the jacket is much too small, and the trousers are much too large. He has less than half an hour to get into town, try to get the suit changed, and get to the church....

It was a great stag night until one of the stripper-grams dressed as a cave woman hit Marty over the head with her club and knocked him out. Next morning, when he wakes up in hospital, Marty has lost his memory. He is due to be married in a couple of hours time, but he can't remember who he is, nor who he's marrying. Worse still, his mother-in-law to be is very suspicious of this sudden turn of events...

Claire trusted her fiancé Roger to make all the arrangements for their honeymoon, especially when he promised her it would be "unforgettable". It certainly was, a jungle trek to discover the lost tribes of the Amazon....

What if animals could talk? Take a trip to a farm, or a zoo, or a pet shop and listen to what the animals have to say...

Or, what if you were in the garden talking to your plants, spreading good dollops of dung on their roots, and getting ready to prune off a few branches, when the plants started to talk back?

What if it was your birthday, and no one remembered? No cards, no greetings, no presents, nothing at all....

What if there was a day when everyone was really nice to each other, when teachers didn't set homework, parents didn't complain, and children did the washing up without being asked...?

What if you won the lottery..?

What if you woke up one day, and discovered that you had turned into a giant insect, which everyone was frightened of..?

What if someone slipped a truth drug into the water supply at the House of Commons...?

What if a dead body was found in the crime section of the Public Library..?

What if Time suddenly slowed down for everyone else except you, so that they all looked as if they were moving and talking in slow motion, and you decided to rob a bank, enter for the Olympics, or get your own back on the school bully...?

What if little old ladies suddenly started behaving like a bunch of teenage yobbos..?

What if you were arrested, but no one would tell you what you were accused of...?

What if you were visited in the middle of the night by the Ghost of Your Life to Come, who told you he had something to show you..?

What if a tramp suddenly turned up on your doorstep one day, and claimed to be a long, lost relative..?

What if you woke up to find that your worst nightmare had come true...?

What if you rented a video from the shop, but when you went to play it, found out that it was the instructions to a Mission Impossible...?

What if you were identical to someone famous, and people mistook you for this celebrity all the time...?

What if a future race of cyborgs, half-human, half-computer, started going wrong? Suddenly locking up or slowing down, or repeating things over and over again, and needing a visit from a cyborg technician ("We can fit you in Friday week at the earliest") to replace their memory, fit a new sound-card, or update their operating system from boring, middle-aged couch potato to super-cool, hip-hop dude...

What if you woke up one morning, and discovered that you had completely lost your voice?

What if you had an attack of the hiccups that wouldn't stop, no matter what anyone tried...?

What if human beings had two heads, which would never agree with each other about anything...? (Fit two people inside a large coat to do this one..)

What if the world was going to end tomorrow..?

Work # 1

A young hairdresser has just started work in an expensive salon. The boss is called away when a particularly awkward (but rich!) customer arrives for a weekly appointment. The young hairdresser persuades the customer to go ahead with the appointment, but is horrified when hair starts coming out in clumps..

Two men do small building jobs in their spare time, to make a little extra cash. Alan knows little about building, but assumes his partner Doug (who gets most of their jobs) does. They have been asked to build an extension to a house, which involves knocking through the outside wall. They set to work with large hammers, and knock out a sizeable hole. At this point, Doug enquires: "Right then. What do we do next?"...

A working mum rings up a nanny agency. Her child-minder is ill, her husband is away, and she has no one to look after her young child. It is a critical day at work, so she cannot afford not to go in. The agency arrange to send someone around immediately. She is so relieved, until the "nanny" arrives, and turns out to be a man...

Mark is a new apprentice, who has started work at a garage, training to become a motor mechanic. The boss gives him his first job, to change the brake linings on a car. Mark discovers the whole system needs renewing, and tells the boss so. The boss is only interested in doing a quick, cheap job, and tells him to get on with it. But if he does, the car won't be safe, and he'll be to blame...

One of the paperboys at a newsagents leaves the job. Instead of finding someone to replace him, the newsagent tells the rest of the paperboys/girls that he is dividing the round between them, so that they will have to deliver more papers, but for the same money. One of the paperboys/girls tries to persuade the others not to agree to this plan, and to go on strike if need be...

Two friends hear about a job which is available locally. Both really like the sound of the job, but one friend persuades the other that she is not interested, because the job is so terrible and poorly paid, in the hope that her friend won't bother applying. On the day of the interview, they meet up in the waiting room...

Two school-friends set up a car washing round in order to supplement their pocket money. One of the friends always arrives late, only wants to do the easy parts of the job, and is very slipshod. One of the car owners complains about the quality of their work, and refuses to pay. The friends disagree about whose fault it is...

A man and his girlfriend have run a taxi business for several years. He is fanatical about making it a success, and making money. She has worked all kind of hours, does the books, operates the radio, even drives a taxi herself if the need arises. But this kind of life, with no leisure or relaxation, is getting her down. She's had enough. She wants to get married and have children before she's too old...

In a shoe-shop on a busy Saturday. A customer has very smelly feet. The assistant tries to get rid of the customer as quickly as possible, but buying a pair of shoes can take a considerably long time...

A father and son both work in a coal-mine. There is a strike in progress, to try to prevent the pit from being closed. The father supports the strike, as he has worked in the pit all his life. His son thinks closure is inevitable, and that the strike will only make it come sooner rather than later. The son goes to work, breaking the strike. On Friday evening, after a week of tension, he returns home with his wages, which he places on the table in front of his father...

Christine has written for a job on a building site, and been told to start work the next day. When she turns up, there is some confusion because she is a girl, which is explained because she signed herself "Chris". The boss tells her he cannot employ a girl...

At the supermarket checkout. It is a new Saturday girl's first day. The queue is grumbling because she is too slow, but it is difficult to remember everything she's been told. And then one customer claims she gave her a £10 note, while the girl is sure it was only £5...

A Driving Test. The Inspector recognises that the examinee is a woman he used to go out with many years before. To his horror, he realises that she recognises him as well, and begins to flirt madly with him, in an obvious attempt to pass the Test. To his further horror, he realises she is the worst driver he's seen in ages...

In a department store. A woman wishes to buy a new dress, something daring for a party she's going to. She tells the assistant she is a size 14, whereas the assistant can tell at a glance she's a size 16 at least. The art of diplomacy is called for...

News item: An airline stewardess who stripped to her underwear, put on a lifejacket, and ran the entire length of the plane was called to explain her actions to a disciplinary committee today. She claims to have performed the feat to settle a bet with the captain over the time of arrival of the aircraft. Passengers who witnessed the event were said to have enjoyed it immensely. British Airways officials were said to be less amused, and will consider what action to take after interviewing the stewardess today...

It is a young apprentice mortician's first day at the funeral parlour. In time honoured tradition, the other morticians intend to play a joke on him. One of them hides under a sheet on the mortuary slab, while the others tell the apprentice stories to frighten him. And then, casually, they ask him to check on the body down in the mortuary...

Present "A Day in the Life of..." the following people at work:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| * A driving instructor | * A stunt man (or woman) | * A kiss-o-gram |
| * A private investigator | * A children's entertainer | * A traffic warden |

Margy is a social worker. She spends her entire day sorting out other people's problems. But at the end of the day, she has to return home to sort out her own. And who is around to help her...?

(Invent a number of "cases" for her to tackle during the day. Then decide what are the problems she faces herself, who they affect, and how she tries to solve them).

At the Job Centre. Billy has turned up for his six weekly review. The truth is, he doesn't want a job, he has one already. But not an "official" job you understand, as he is also claiming benefits. Pamela is determined to find Billy employment, but he is equally determined to find excuses to avoid her suggestions...

A Hell's Angel visits a tattoo parlour. He wants a tattoo on his forehead which says "Satan's Slave". Unfortunately, the tattooist makes a slight mistake. Still, "Santa's Slave" is not such a bad inscription for the whole world to see...

Angela is unhappy at work. When her boss made a pass at her, she made it clear she wasn't interested, but now he criticises her work all the time, gives her too much to do, and sets unreasonable deadlines. One evening he says she will have to stay behind to finish, or else she'll be sacked. It means she'll be left alone in the office with him. She asks her friend for help...

12.45 pm Georgina is happily working away at her job as the production manager of a small firm, overseeing 40 people.

1.00 pm Georgina is standing outside the factory having been made redundant, with her P45 to follow, and the possibility of reapplying for her job to the company which has taken over the factory.

Dramatise how Georgina and her co-workers attempt to fight for their rights, refuse to take redundancy lying down, and attempt to stop the new company from employing other people to take their jobs...

Work # 3

Dean cannot bring himself to tell his wife that he has lost his job. He goes out at the same time every morning, and comes home "after work". He spends his time looking for jobs, or wandering aimlessly with his mates. He gets back one evening to find his wife in tears, with a letter from the building society saying that the mortgage hasn't been paid for several months...

Louise wants to go on a course, and eventually to get a degree in order to get a career for herself. Brian her husband doesn't see the point in education and objects to having to baby-sit the children while she's out at the evening classes. He really gets upset when she returns home one evening and says that she has to go away on a weekend course if she wants to do the degree....

Jock has been unemployed for several years. He has tried several jobs, but did not like any of them, and did not think that they paid enough. Eventually he decides to apply to become a prison officer. When he tells his friends what he has done he is surprised by their negative reaction...

An insomniac customer complains to the milkman that his whistling and clinking of milk bottles at 4 a.m. continually wakes him up. The milkman is not amused...

Sally has applied for a job, and has got it, but she lied about her previous experience and her ability to do the job. It is her first day at work, and she is desperate not to be found out...

At the office Christmas party. Maggie has held a grievance against her boss for a long time. Unfortunately, she has too much to drink at the party, and decides to tell her boss to her face what she thinks of the her...

Laura has just left school and has decided that she wants to become a police officer just like her brother. Her parents are against it, as they know the dangers that her brother faces. They try to persuade her to take up a different career...

Oscar has worked for the same firm for several years, as a salesman. He thinks his sales figures merit a rise, and so puts a request in writing to his boss Mike. In the letter he suggests he might resign, and look for a job elsewhere if his demands are not met. Mike calls him in to his office to discuss his request, prepared to call his bluff, and tell him he can go if he wants...

Barbara is the manager of a small office. One of the workers in the office called Sonia suffers from bad body odour. The other workers tell Barbara that they will refuse to work with Sonia unless she does something about this problem. Barbara has to call her into the office for a friendly chat...

Trevor and Colin are bored in the office where they work. They decide to liven their days up by issuing each other challenges. For example, Trevor challenges Colin to treat his boss as if their roles were reversed, greeting every suggestion the boss makes with "I like your style!", and "shooting him" with his finger. Colin challenges Trevor to make out all his colleagues are totally incompetent, holding his head in meetings, and groaning "I don't believe I'm hearing this.!" The challenges are getting a bit out of hand...

It is the annual "Take your Kids to Work Day", and the school which Darren attends is very keen that as many of the students as possible gain a little "work experience" alongside their parents. Darren's dad Gergorio is not so keen. He is the chef in a high class restaurant, and the last thing he needs is his clumsy but very-eager-to-please son under foot in his kitchen. Gregorio is outnumbered. The teachers think it's a good idea, his wife thinks it's a good idea, and Darren thinks its an excellent idea to spend the day with his dad, who he idolises. Gregorio has a bad feeling about the day, but does not want to hurt his son's feelings...

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