

Enjoy Sex but Be Responsible

The Department of Health & Future Planning reminds the general public that the mandatory sterilisation law comes into force on 1st January 2112. All males who turn 16 next year must undergo a simple vasectomy procedure. This is part of the Conscious Evolution Project or CEP.

You are also gently required to pay a visit to your local sperm bank and leave a deposit for future use. When you have made three such deposits, the bank will issue a certificate of verification in your name. You are reminded that you will not be granted the free vasectomy procedure unless you are in possession of a valid certificate of verification from one of the official sperm banks around the country. There are heavy penalties for all offenders who are not yet sterilised when they turn 16 years old.

All other persons are kindly reminded that procreative sex has been declared illegal since 1st January 2111 and if they would like to apply for a pregnancy permit they can pick up a form at any one of the official IVF clinics around the country. The act of sexual intercourse should be practised strictly for recreational purposes. Pregnancies are illegal and punishable by law.

Thank you for your cooperation
Your Ministry for Health and Future Planning

The two girls walked fast, giggling. They'd been to see a movie in Dryzone and had come back to Cat Hill on the 9 o'clock raft. It was drizzling the same sick English drizzle it did every evening. They'd seen a really old American movie from the early 21st century about a man whose life is turned upside down when his little girl gets kidnapped. But like most people in the cinema, they weren't interested in the story so much as in the sky. Everybody knew the ending anyway.

In this movie, as in so many other movies from the 20th and early 21st centuries, the sky was blue. Impossibly blue. Had the sky ever been anything but grey? Could the movie be portraying the truth or was it some kind of special effect to make the picture brighter with the sole intention of making you want to continue watching the movie?

There was a great sense of nostalgia in these blue-sky movies. They were very popular. People loved them and paid money to see them over and over again.

“Bye!” giggled one of the girls. She had reached her trailer. “See you tomorrow morning on the school boat.”

“Right,” said the other one as she hurried on towards the next lot where her family’s trailer was. “School!” Her name was Lanessa Fern.

It was dark and the raindrops clung to her glasses but in the distance she thought she saw – what exactly? She wasn’t sure but she hurried on. It was only another five-minute walk to her trailer but she always hated walking alone after watching these stupid old thrillers that made her jumpy.

But there it was again. It was green and it glowed. And then – Whoosh!

Something – someone – hit her hard and she was lying on her face in the mud. She tried to shout but hands grabbed her. She was dragged away from the trailers. She couldn’t turn around and so she never saw who her assailant was. Assailants – she was sure there was more than one.

The three men took turns, alternating between holding her down and raping her.

“Happy birthday,” said one of the rapists as

Lanessa inched away from them, crawling through the mud, weeping silently.

“Happy birthday,” said another one.

The men laughed and didn’t seem to notice or care that their victim was moving away. They’d lost all interest in her now.

“Yeah, happy fucking birthday,” said the third.
“Let’s get out of here.”

And they ran off, laughing.

Saturday 7th November 2111

Dear Reader from the past,

My name is Erick Noyle. I live with my mum in one of the dynamo trailers on Catastrophe Hill. I really wouldn't like to bore you with too many details but I must. Some strange force is mysteriously compelling me to tell you a few things about Catastrophe Hill and also about dynamo trailers.

Catastrophe Hill is what people have come to call it after the great floods of the 2040s. That was a long time ago. I wasn't even born when it started being called Catastrophe Hill and it's over 30 years after your time so you still wouldn't know about it in 2011. Although, now that I think about it, you might live long enough to witness the great floods. I mean, it all started around 2012 or 2013. But anyway the

real bad part came towards the end of the 2030s.

Wow! If you're really reading this, just try to find a house on higher ground because the weather is going to get nasty, you'll see! But now it's okay again. Well, we don't get much sun and the days are never bright with blue skies like they are in the movies of your time. We get a constant drizzle of rain most days but the really bad storms have become infrequent now, so it's much better than it was.

When everyone ran to the hills in the '40s because of the floods and people made their temporary homes in tents after so many houses ended up under the water, someone famous said "my God, this is a catastrophe!" and there, on the spot where she said that, they put up a sign saying "Catastrophe Hill". The sign is still there today, crumbling away. I don't know if this story is true. It is what we call an urban legend but I guess you have those 100 years ago so I don't have to explain.

This is one of the biggest hills in the area. It's got a good water system and hundreds of dynamo trailers on it. Dynamo trailers are little homes – the one we have is okay for just mum and me, we each have our own area with bed and all. They are not connected to the power station like the expensive houses in Dryzone. There is a big wheel in the middle of every group of five trailers and the people from the

five trailers have to turn the wheel for 30 minutes twice every day. The big wheel is what we call the dynawheel because it is the dynamo wheel and it provides us with power for refrigeration and so on. But even though we have the big dynawheel, we still have lots of stuff that has to be wound up inside the trailer like the kettle and the radio and even the fan when it's hot. The electric switch has a crank which you can pull out and wind for a minute or two if the lights fail to switch on. That's cool cos I can read at night with my led lamp. Some trailers still have solar panels on the roof. These aren't used anymore since the sun is completely covered by grey clouds now.

We take it in turns to push the dynawheel. I get to push at least once every day because the Keyes are too old to push and the Lehers are always too drunk and always fighting. That leaves the Benedicts and Matilda O'Connor. Matilda is a crazy old woman. Sometimes she comes out naked. Luckily the Benedicts are three brothers all over forty and they push the wheel as frequently as I do. It isn't very fair because Matilda's tiny trailer is connected to the same dynawheel. So she and the Lehers and the Keyes get free power. And, to add insult to injury, Matilda always calls the Benedicts names! At least the pushing isn't hard except that it's boring unless you've got some music going. Sometimes, when we

go fast, I get dizzy but mostly I'm used to it. The Benedicts are okay, once you get to know them, but they don't speak much. Turning the wheel with one of them is like turning it on my own, except that there's more push and we finish sooner.

Today is Saturday and I'm meeting my friends this evening. We're going to have a party at Ezekiel's house as his parents are away and his big brother who's supposed to be taking care of everything is going to be sleeping at his girlfriend's house since her parents are away with Ezekiel's parents on some kind of spiritual retreat. What we call a break. I'm looking forward to the party because they live in a real house in Dryzone and they have television. They have football in Dryzone but I prefer waterball. Waterball is the best.

My mother makes small cakes. She loves making them and people love eating them. They come around from all over the hill for mum's cakes. Ours is the best-smelling trailer on the whole hill. When we don't sell them we eat them ourselves for dinner. Mum got all the equipment through a government grant about ten years ago. Sometimes the oven doesn't work because it's getting old so a man comes to fix it and mum gives him free cakes in return. I call him Mr Fixit as that's what he does. He also comes over when there's something wrong with the trailer which

we cannot fix ourselves. I don't even know his real name. He tells mum that she's too young and pretty to be living like this. She watches him very carefully when he fixes the oven because she wants to learn to fix it herself. I don't think she likes his attentions much. Maybe it's because he's married or maybe he just isn't her type but I think mum is still in love with dad, whoever he was. Once he (Mr Fixit) came looking for mum late at night and he was drunk and I was asleep. I must have been around eleven years old then. He caused a great scene and woke up all the neighbours – except the Lehers, obviously.

Mum is going through her annual bad time. It always starts in late autumn or the beginning of winter. Then she goes away for her birthday and comes back better. I wonder where she goes. Maybe she goes on some spiritual retreat like Ezekiel's mum and dad but she never tells me. She's wonderful, my mother. She's going to be 33 next month. I never get to see her on her birthday but she always returns in time for mine and she makes me the best birthday cakes ever. She says that she's a mother because I happened to come along and that I define her existence. She says I'll understand better when I grow up but I understand now. She says I'll understand even better when I have children of my own. I ask her about dad but she refuses to say much. She just

says that he was a very special man who loved her very much but who was unlucky. When I ask her if he's still alive she says she doesn't know but that it's very doubtful that he is. I wonder why. I would like to know who my dad was/is. From what mum says I think I would like him. Who knows? Maybe one day I'll find him and he'll be a rich man and I'll end up living a life of blissful comfort with the old man paying for everything and feeling guilty that he left me to be raised alone with mum and he'll always try to make up for his failings. Not that I would ever leave mum to go and live with him. And anyway, I will soon leave mum to have a place of my own. I will be sixteen just after Christmas.

I'm busy all day tomorrow with the anti-sterilising march which is very important for our society. I'm hoping that Michelle Jakes will be there. She's hot. She's had foexes done and they suit her very much. I think she likes me but I'm pretty sure this is not what you want to read about.

Last Wednesday, a very neatly dressed government official from the Health Department came to our school and gave a talk in the main hall where all the fifteen-year-olds were gathered, and told us that this law was being passed for our own good, for the future of humanity. It will enable the government to make sure that all the babies born would be healthy