

2002 September

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Thursday 19

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Friday 20

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21 Saturday

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Sunday 22

*I've never used this diary  
before, but there was an earth-  
quake this morning, affecting  
the whole country, and I had  
to write that down. I was  
scared, but it was over quickly.*

September 2002

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## 23 Monday

*There doesn't seem to be any damage to the house from the earthquake. I've checked all the walls and pipes as well as an amateur can, and I couldn't find anything wrong. No slates fell off either, which is amazing given the problems we've had with the roof before. I suppose last time we got it fixed they must have done a better job than usual. I still feel really shook up. No one died, so perhaps I can indulge myself.*

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## 24 Tuesday

*I suppose now that I've started using this diary, I might as well carry on. I've always liked the idea of having a journal, and hence I've got half a dozen diaries for past years sharing a dozen entries between them. Perhaps I'll do a bit better this time. In any case, Susan is barely letting me talk to her these days, so I guess I need somewhere to put my thoughts down, such as they are.*

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## 25 Wednesday

*Amazing that no one in the whole of England died in the earthquake. We must have been lucky. I can only imagine what it would be like to live in a place constantly wracked by these things. It must affect your whole world view – though on the other hand they've banned smoking in California – if my theory was right wouldn't they care less about the future than the rest of us?*

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Thursday 26

*Howard, said Susan yesterday, I think it's time for you to go back to work. You need to save some annual leave for Christmas. Alright, I said, I will. Seeing as she doesn't want me moping round at home, I might as well. But why's she so keen to get me out – even when she is in the foulest of moods, I still want to be around her. I don't understand her at all – maybe I need to make more of an effort.*

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Friday 27

*Work's the same as ever. They were glad to see me, but only so they didn't have to cover for me any more. Marketing Manager, they call me, but what I have to manage is a shambles. Late books, recalcitrant authors, a disreputable boss. No wonder they hated taking over for a week. Luckily I enjoy it. Who wouldn't want to work in the wonderful world of publishing?*

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28 Saturday

*Wish I was still at work!  
There's been nothing good on tv and I can't afford to buy anything new to read. Picked up an old paperback Lovecraft, for the hundredth time.*

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Sunday 29

*Reading Lovecraft yesterday reminded me of Lumley's The Burrowers Beneath. Imagine if last week's earthquake was caused by creatures such as those? Susan thinks not.*

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October 2002

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### 30 Monday

*Another day at work, No one there seems to care that we might all have been swallowed up by the earth only a matter of days ago. People are resilient, I suppose. You can't be afraid of everything. The sky might fall on our heads. Guns n' Roses might release a new album! You can't spend your life in fear, they say. I'll never understand that. I've been terrified since the first day I was able to read.*

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### 1 Tuesday

*There was another tremor this morning. Susan's mother had said that there was going to be one, but we hadn't heard anything about it, so I'm not sure where she got her information from. It was not as big as the one last week, but it only seems to have affected Birmingham. I can't help feeling jumpy. It looks like there is probably going to be a war with Iraq, too. None of this bodes well!*

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### 2 Wednesday

*There wasn't a great deal of information about yesterday's tremor in the papers today. It must have been just normal – they're not expecting another one. When I got home from work today, Susan was only just getting in. I know that she had booked the afternoon off, so I am suspicious. I didn't ask her directly, and she didn't give me a straight lie, but she certainly tried to give the impression she'd been at work,*

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Thursday 3

*I took a leave of absence from the office today. Officially, it is to begin work on one of the novels I have been contracted to write, oh, for some years now. Either *The Cartesian Conundrum*, a thriller based around the idea of a criminal syndicate, wherein mind and body are separate, or *First the Eyes, Then the Brains*, a zombie novel. So from tomorrow I shall stare at the screen, and hope something emerges.*

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Friday 4

*After Susan left this morning, I sat down to work on one of the books. *First the Eyes* seems at first blush the easier option, just some routine hack work, so I thought I'd start with that. But three or four minutes after Susan left, the telephone rang. I picked it up, only to hear nothing but the sound of the other phone slamming down. Caller ID was withheld. Probably just the boss, getting me in the mood...*

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5 Saturday

*In the usual manner of diarists, I now find myself, on May 20, 2003, picking up this incomplete volume, wondering at how diligently I completed it for the first few days, and how*

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~~Sunday 6~~

*utterly then I abandoned it. Needless to say, I had a year of incredible ups and downs, adventures, earthquakes, aliens and love. If I let you down by not documenting this amazing*

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October 2002

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~~7 Monday~~

*time in my life, I apologise, I am but human. Or at least I was until January 22nd, ha ha! Nevertheless, despite my failure to record those events, I shall not throw away this diary. Every entry is a photograph, a snapshot of those times, and they should not be lost for want of more. My readers will appreciate how this finds reflection in the pattern of my life – my friend has often said to me, as I found myself*

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~~8 Tuesday~~

*upon the edge of another cliff, looking down to the delighting abyss: do not throw it away for want of more. Well, for now, I sign off, I leave this volume to the mercies of history. It will judge me a failure, no doubt, a starter not a finisher, an abandoner of projects, of people, of life, but never of love. For love abandoned me, and never gave me the chance to return the disfavour. Yours, H Phillips.*

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9 Wednesday

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