

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

# "STRANGE ATTRACTORS

- Love in a Virtual World"

by

Kevin Fegan

Commissioned and produced by Contact Theatre Manchester  
in association with Granada Television computer graphics  
department 1994

Email: [kevfegan@gmail.com](mailto:kevfegan@gmail.com)

Website: [www.kevinfegan.co.uk](http://www.kevinfegan.co.uk)

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

**NOTE ON STAGING** - The play is staged as an immersive promenade experience where theatre meets virtual reality. All the chairs should be removed so that the audience interact with the performers.

**NOTE ON STRUCTURE** - There are three distinct "realities" which merge throughout the play:

1) spacetime - the objective physical reality

2) cyberspace - virtual reality

3) storyspace - surreality of the imagination

**CAST OF 8 - 4female 4 male**

## **CHARACTERS**

THREE - airport security guard

NINE - hairdresser in airport salon

EIGHT - labourer

HYPNOTIST

JADE - hairdresser

AMBER - hairdresser

SLATEY - labourer

BASALT - labourer

OTHER CHARACTERS PLAYED BY THE CAST

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 1

AN AIRPORT LOUNGE. PASSENGERS WAITING TO DEPART ARE MIXING WITH THE AUDIENCE. IN THE LOUNGE THERE IS A FOUNTAIN, AN OLYMPIC FLAME AND A WIND MACHINE ROARING.

AN AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD, THREE, IS AT HIS WORKSTATION OBSERVING THE PUBLIC. THE IMAGE FROM THE LIVE CAMERA APPEARS ON A LARGE SCREEN.

THE ROAR OF THE WIND MACHINE BECOMES A SOUND-EFFECT OF AN AEROPLANE TAKING OFF OVER THE HEADS OF THE AUDIENCE. ON THE LARGE SCREEN APPEARS THE IMAGE OF THE UNDER-CARRIAGE OF AN AEROPLANE TAKING OFF, AS LARGE AS POSSIBLE.

THREE

Waiting = stress. Affirmative.

Prolonged waiting = additional stress - stress squared.

No explanation for waiting = stress to the power of ten.

Recommend: limited information to passengers

(TANNOY) "Departures Terminal A on standby. All flights suspended until further notice. All passengers to remain in the lounge area. No cause for alarm."

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

(DIRECTLY TO AUDIENCE) Cause: suspect package.

Euphemism for huge fuck-off bomb. Two possible outcomes:

+ve outcome no explosion; -ve outcome serious injury or death.

Don't panic - wasted energy, outside your control.

Recommend: accept situation. Survival probability unknown.

Suggested action: maintain surveillance.

CAMERA PANS THE AUDITORIUM, LOOKING FOR A BOMB.

Objective: locate bomb.

CAMERA LOCATES BOMB SOMEWHERE IN THE LOUNGE  
AREA. AUDIENCE CANNOT SEE AN ACTUAL BOMB IN SITU

BUT THERE IS A BOMB ON THE SCREEN.

Huge fuck-off bomb.

Reaction: (HE SCREAMS). Nobody move. Stay calm. My job:  
watch, report, respond. Watch - no problem; report - piece of  
piss; respond - iffy, very iffy. Equipment: a Waldo - advanced  
V.R. robotics. Programme Waldo: bomb disposal. One head-  
mounted display.

HE PUTS ON A V.R. HEADSET.

One wired glove.

HE PUTS ON A V.R. GLOVE.

Telepresence established. My eyes - Waldo's eyes.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

HE TURNS HIS HEAD AND P.O.V. ON SCREEN CHANGES.

My hand - Waldo's hand.

HE WAVES AND IMAGE OF HAND ON SCREEN WAVES.

Six degrees of freedom: up/down, left/right, forwards/backwards.

First: disconnect timer.

HAND CUTS A WIRE ON THE BOMB.

Second: access ignition device.

HAND OPENS PART OF BOMB.

Third: disarm live wire.

VIEW OF TWO WIRES - ONE BROWN AND ONE BLUE.

Which wire? Brown or blue? Cut neutral wire: survive to tell grandchildren. Cut live wire: end up old photo on mantelpiece. Brown live? Blue neutral? Domestic bomb easy as a three-pin plug.

HAND CUTS BLUE WIRE. NOTHING HAPPENS.

Phew! More difficult than the real thing.

LOUD EXPLOSION OCCURS WHERE THE VIRTUAL BOMB IS SITUATED. THREE LAUGHS. SCREEN OFF.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 2

A PICTURE BOOK STAGE SET NEAR THE FLAME IN THE AIRPORT LOUNGE. NINE IS BROUGHT IN BY HYPNOTIST.

HYPNOTIST           Big round of applause for our next volunteer.

NINE                   I didn't volunteer, you grabbed me.

HYPNOTIST           And I'm very choosy. What's your name, love?

NINE                   Nine.

HYPNOTIST           A big girl for your age? I wanted your name?

NINE                   That's it - Nine, me name's Nine.

HYPNOTIST           Nine it is, no problem. Well it might be for your boyfriend - do you have a boyfriend?

NINE                   Yeah.

HYPNOTIST           What's his name - Thirteen?

NINE                   Eight.

HYPNOTIST           Eight and Nine, how very consecutive. Are you people for real? What will you call your children - Ten? Seventeen? Don't answer that. Call your boyfriend on stage, I think we should meet him.

NINE                   He's not here, he wouldn't come.

HYPNOTIST           Letting you have a night out with the girls?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                    No, he thinks all this hypnotism business is bollocks. He thinks you're a conman and it's all fake.

HYPNOTIST            Indeed? The last person I met like that ended up as a frog. His friends had to carry him home in a bucket.

NINE                    He says some people are pre-disposed to it, that you can only fill an empty vessel.

HYPNOTIST TAKES A CANDLE AND LIGHTS IT.

HYPNOTIST            Tell me, Nine, have you ever been hypnotised before?

NINE                    Never and I don't know as I want to be.

HYPNOTIST            Watch the flame. What do you do for a living?

NINE                    I'm a hairdresser.

HYPNOTIST            A hairdresser, that's a great thing to be. Watch the flame, think of the flame. Watch the flame, think of the flame. I'm going to take you on a journey. To another place, to another time. Reality is too small a place for the human imagination. This an experiment in imagineering, as infinite and harmless as dreams. An experience unique to you because only you can be there. Watch the flame, think of the flame. You are dancing, dancing like a flame. Let's see you dance.

BY NOW SHE IS HYPNOTISED AND SHE DANCES. SHE SUDDENLY STOPS.

HYPNOTIST            Why have you stopped?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                    Me boyfriend doesn't like me dancing on me own.

HYPNOTIST            Don't worry, Nine, relax, your boyfriend's not here. We can have some fun. You are on your own, dancing, remember?

SHE DANCES AGAIN.

Dancing like a flame, dancing... (WINKING AT THE AUDIENCE)  
on the planet Mars.

SHE STOPS.

The air is too thin to breath so you have to put on a special  
helmet.

SOME OF THIS RITUAL SHOULD ECHO THREE'S V.R.  
MOVEMENTS WITH HELMET AND GLOVE IN PREVIOUS  
SCENE.

You are light, so light that you bounce when you dance.

SHE BOUNCES.

Up and down. Good. Now forwards and backwards. Now  
visualise your environment. Move your head to the left, to the  
right. Can you see the little green men?

NINE                    Red, intense red. A desert of broken rocks. Like the ruins of a  
furnace.

HYPNOTIST            Try looking down. You can see the little green men from Mars.



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE (PICKING UP AN IMAGINARY ROCK) The rock is very cold. It's full of holes and crumbles in my hand.

HYPNOTIST (UNHAPPY AT LOSING CONTROL) That's because it's cheese - Red Leicester. Look up at the cucumbers circling overhead.

NINE (LOOKING UP) The sky is swirling smokey pink, saturated in dust from the rocks.

HYPNOTIST Young lady, I don't know what kind of stunt you're pulling here but I think it's time you came back down to Earth.

(TO AUDIENCE) I guess that's enough excitement for one night, folks. I'm going to clap three times and on the third clap you will open your eyes and forget all about this experience.

NINE No, I must stay here. I have a story to tell.

HYPNOTIST CLAPS THREE TIMES AND SHE WAKES UP.

NINE Why did you bring me back? I found someone.

HYPNOTIST That's it, show's over.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 3

A COAL MINE. EIGHT IS TRAPPED UNDERGROUND. THE ROOF HAS CAVED AND THE TUNNEL IS FILLING WITH WATER. HE IS HAVING DIFFICULTY BREATHING. THE SET IS NEAR THE FOUNTAIN IN THE AIRPORT LOUNGE.

EIGHT

H-h-h-h-h-help me...I can't see behind me, in front; there's no left, no right; no up, no down. I can't hear anything but water. The earth has closed me down, reduced me to a single point. Is this fucking death? Is this all it takes to kill a creature? To kill me. To fill me up, this empty vessel. Drops of water spilling into a flood. I warned them, "The tunnel," I said, "It could cave in."

"Don't worry, Eight," they said, "Everything's under control."

Bastards. Here I am, in the tunnel, fucking caved in. No air, water rising. I was underground; they were in their offices, moving us around their maps. What did we know, we were just miners? We were only there, out of sight.

I want you to know, Nine, there was never a time I didn't love you, never a time I didn't love you...

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 4

AIRPORT LOUNGE. MUSIC. A CHORUS OF PASSENGERS MIX WITH THE AUDIENCE. THREE IS AT HIS WORKSTATION. A COMPUTER GRAPHIC OF THE "LORENZ ATTRACTOR" GROWS ON THE SCREEN

THREE (POINTING TO THE SCREEN) This is the face of maths. In computer, simple equations become sound/vision. Beautiful patterns. Compare to clouds. Turbulent clouds blown by wind. Mathematical clouds, not in sky, in space - cyberspace. Mathematical universe. Where numbers grow legs, strut around screen. Land of googols/reality engines. Where computers live/work. Flown by humans. Computers designing aeroplanes, computers training pilots, computers controlling air-traffic. Two billion instructions per second. New thinking tool. Computers: aeroplanes for the mind.

PASSENGER I've always wanted to travel on Concorde. I took all my savings out of the bank for this trip. I don't care where it goes; I know it's a round trip, I don't care where it goes; for me it's the ride that counts. Did you know Concorde travels at twice the speed of sound? That's faster than a bullet from a gun. That means I could shoot at you and Concorde could get in the way before the bullet hit you.

THREE We are stepping out of cave. Cave can never be same again. Out of reality into virtual reality. "Virtue" - Ancient Greek word

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

meaning "power to create, power of God". Computers have virtue. This computer has virtue. My job is surveillance. This is airport. I watch airport. Secure airport.

PASSENGER

We've had the holiday of a lifetime at Disneyland. We experienced The Grand Canyon. Magnificent views. A mile across and a mile deep - and there's me terrified of heights. There's a photo of us. We weren't actually there, of course. We were in Florida, on the other side of America. We just stood in front of a screen and pressed a button. We could have chosen Niagra Falls but I can't swim. We all loved Disneyland. Did you know that when Walt Disney died he paid to be cryogenically frozen, in case the time comes when we can bring him back from the dead; so he doesn't miss out, you know, on the future. Seems appropriate somehow for a cartoonist - suspended animation.

THREE

I have virtue. Link up with computers around world. University computers, commercial computers, military computers, government computers, business computers, personal computers. I communicate all day, every day - E-mail. Information, problem-solving, discussion, entertainment. My community is virtual community.

Compare airport to virtual community: no one actually lives here - passing through. Travellers: first time travellers, repeat travellers. All travellers with own destination, own reasons for

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

travelling. The fastest growing community in the world, global village of computers. Pioneers of electronic frontier, brothers and sisters of the Net, though none of us have actually met and none of us are actually here.

CHORUS

I'm actually playing contract bridge right now,

with three friends in Sydney, Delhi and Capetown.

I'm actually recording an entire album

without ever leaving my bedroom.

I'm e-mailing my friend in Los Angeles:

we're both homeless, he's the only friend I can afford.

I'm actually in a Shopping Mall in Tokyo,

on a public-service bulletin board.

Information is power,

ignorance is being left behind,

we're talking to each other every hour

on the Net, about everything you can find,

from space travel to supreme courts,

Grand Opera to guitar chords,

cancer to aids,

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

earthquakes to nuclear waste,

international recipes,

resources and directories,

genetics, eugenics

and selling techniques -

here is a Salesman.

PASSENGER

We started with fat-free fat and chocolate-free chocolate, that sort of thing. Our latest line is in brand new antiques, mainly for the overseas market; cameras for the Japanese which could have been developed a hundred years ago, but weren't; classic American cars which could have been built before the car industry started, but weren't.

CHORUS

Hacking and other tricks

to access global politics:

The White House and Westminster,

G.C.H.Q. and N.A.S.A.,

matters public and sinister,

creating your own virus

to hide and seek

and release military leaks -

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

here is a U.S.A. General.

PASSENGER We are plotting a map, the likes of which has never been plotted before. A digital World Map stored in a super-computer. We've already mapped the Americas and Russia, Europe and Australasia. Soon we will have The Middle East, Africa and Asia. Our super-computer generates images from satellites, detailing every town, every street, every house. It is, of course, classified information; although there will be many social benefits for a map of this kind. But please do not bother phoning to inform us about your kitchen extension - we already know.

CHORUS Plug-and-go on the information  
super-highway to organisations,  
universities and libraries  
around the world;  
access pictures, music, the written word,  
endless databases in cyberspace.  
Here is a Medical Scientist -

PASSENGER We are plotting a map, a map of the human body. The heart is complete. The skeleton is complete. You can peel away the skin one layer of tissue at a time, revealing every muscle, bone and nerve.

CHORUS Business as usual, the saying goes,

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

from video-conferencing

to interactive gameshows.

The public don't know they want it yet,

but the decision has been made by the market

Here is a Stockbroker -

PASSENGER Money: the world's largest virtual entity. Buy it, sell it, but never see it. The invisible economy: insurance, pensions, savings, banks, stocks and shares. \$87 trillion a year exchanged - several times the entire world's gross product. Numbers that don't really exist.

CHORUS Hyper-fiction is coming to a home near you,

Cyber-theatres bringing us something new.

Computer games, special effects,

dating on the Net, alternative sex.

Here is a Dating Agent -

PASSENGER Teledildonics, that's the future. Technosex. Fibre optic shagging. Two people, continents apart, can grope each other as an image. Believe me, people are gagging for it. Safe sex, kinky as you like, with as many different people as you like. Where's the harm in that? What's more important - privacy or a good poke.

CHORUS So you see,



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

if it's art or pornography,  
there's something in it for you and me.

By the end of the millenium,  
the computer will be at the centre  
of everyone's living room.

THREE SEES NINE GOING TO WORK WITH HER  
COLLEAGUE, JADE, TO THE AIRPORT SALON. HE  
FOLLOWS THEM WITH HIS LIVE CAMERA AND THE IMAGE  
APPEARS ON SCREEN.

JADE I don't know what the judges saw in the winner. If they'd have  
been up close, they'd have seen the state of her hands.

NINE That's men for you, they don't value good hands.

JADE Honestly, she had the complexion of a cat's tongue - rough, you  
know?

NINE Women should judge these beauty competitions.

JADE Men have no idea of what beauty is.

THREE ZOOMS INTO NINE AND FREEZES HER IMAGE.

THREE Video image successfully grabbed. Yes!

HE TYPES INSTRUCTIONS INTO HIS COMPUTER.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

Load image into computer. Security Data Airport Employees.

Identify subject. Information search.

PHOTOSHOP IMAGE OF NINE APPEARS ON SCREEN WITH  
SECURITY DATA IN WINDOW.

Subject name: Nine.

Occupation: Hairdresser.

Place of Work: Airport Salon.

Security Risk Rating: Standard.

See Salon file for more information.

JADE Mind, I've nothing to be ashamed of; it's not as if I came last.

NINE I wouldn't dare take part.

JADE I don't really do it to win. Don't get me wrong, the money would  
have been nice; but I do it for a laugh.

NINE Doesn't your fella mind?

JADE Too bad if he does.

NINE Doesn't it bother him, all those men ogling you?

JADE And who is he to deny the world the pleasure of looking?

NINE It's not just looking though, is it? It's the thinking.

JADE If they only knew what I was thinking.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                    You don't?

JADE                    I imagine them all pumping away over my image.

NINE                    Jade! What are you like?

JADE                    Well, that's what they do, isn't it? It's only an image.

NINE                    I want to control what happens to my image.

JADE                    That's impossible. Anyway, what about your dirty thoughts?

NINE                    I don't have dirty thoughts.

JADE                    So what do you think about when Eight is humping away at you?

NINE                    Chocolate, usually.

THEY LAUGH THEIR WAY INTO THE SALON. THREE IS STILL STUDYING THE IMAGE OF NINE ON SCREEN.

THREE                    Somehow know her already. Strange attraction. Now I have entered her life. Must model her image.

AT THE SALON A ROW OF CLIENTS ARE SEATED UNDER DRIERS THAT RESEMBLE V.R. HEADSETS, FACING A LARGE MIRROR. A NEW HAIRDRESSER IS WAITING TO BE TOLD WHAT TO DO. NINE AND JADE TALK DIRECTLY TO EACH OTHER BUT VIA THE MIRROR TO THE CLIENTS.

JADE                    (TO NINE) I can't bear it if the phone rings when I'm in the shower; I just have to know who it is. Anyway, it was him, you

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

know, my latest and greatest. He says, "Take your time, why don't you?"

I says, "I'm in the shower." Of course, that's a trigger for him, isn't it?

CLIENT 1 I want you to make me look like Madonna.

JADE AND NINE EXCHANGE GLANCES.

JADE (TO CLIENT 1) Is that Madonna when she was blonde, black, redhead or with Baby Jesus in arms?

(TO NINE) So he says, "What're you wearing?"

"A champagne towel," I says, "To go with the glass of champagne." It was actually cheap sparkling plonk but you have to sound glamorous.

"Drop your towel," he says, "Let me take a look at you," cheeky bugger.

CLIENT 2 (HOLDING UP A PICTURE FROM A MAGAZINE) I've seen this picture -

NINE (TO JADE) Never! On the phone?

CLIENT 2 - it's just the cut I'm after.

JADE (TO CLIENT 2) Yes, but is it after you?

(TO NINE) Yes, on the phone. Before I know it, he's got me all horny. I says, "Have you got your thing out?"

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

He says, "Keep talking." I tell you, it was like two wild boars at a barbeque.

(TO AMBER) You must be the new girl?

MEANWHILE THREE IS MANIPULATING HIS COMPUTER MODEL OF NINE ON SCREEN, WHICH RESPONDS TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS.

THREE Sit down. Stand up. Walk towards me. Walk away. Profile left. Profile right. Face me. Close up: head and shoulders.

JADE (TO AMBER) No, you can't be called Jade here, love; I'm Jade. And we can't have two with the same name confusing the customers, can we? You can be "Amber", we don't have an Amber.

NINE Don't worry, before long you'll feel like an Amber. Everyone calls me "Nine".

AMBER (TO NINE) You should have your colours done.

NINE What's the matter with my colours?

AMBER It gave me confidence. No offence but I've trained as a Beauty Therapist. Your image is all mixed up: your hair's one colour, your eyes another, make-up another and your clothes -

CLIENT 3 (POINTING TO SOMEONE IN THE AUDIENCE) I want to look like her.

JADE I'll see to this one.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE AND AMBER ATTEND TO CLIENTS 1 AND 2.

ELSEWHERE THREE IS STILL MANIPULATING HIS IMAGE OF NINE ON SCREEN, TRYING OUT DIFFERENT "LOOKS".

THREE Longer hair. Shorter hair. More make-up. Less make-up. Smile. Cry. Kiss.

HE KISSES HER IMAGE.

JADE (TO NINE) Have you been back to see that hypnotist?

NINE I don't think I should.

JADE Nonsense, how else will you find out if you're possessed?

NINE I am not possessed.

(TO AMBER) She's got this "spirit guide" who talks to her.

AMBER Aren't you frightened?

NINE Once. Under hypnosis. And it wasn't a spirit.

JADE I'd have a male ghost, me.

AMBER You'll have to tell me all about it, I love ghost stories.

JADE Mind you, I wouldn't want any spirit watching the things I get up to.

NINE No need, you end up telling us anyway.

THREE CONTINUES TO EXPERIMENT WITH NINE'S IMAGE.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE Smart dress. Casual dress. Scruffy dress. Going to bed dress.  
"Birthday suit".

NINE TAKES HER CHAIR AND MOVES INTO A  
STORYTELLING POSITION. THE OTHERS GATHER  
AROUND HER TO LISTEN.

NINE (TO AUDIENCE) This is a story about windows and a character  
called "Lotte". Lotte loved cleaning windows. Large living room  
windows or small skylights, leaded or stained glass, single or  
double-glazed, PVC or mahogany frames. Lotte loved  
nothing more than smoothing glass with a yellow chamois  
leather. By day, she would take her chamois wherever she went:  
on buses and trains she would always make for a window seat.  
Out came her chamois and, in seconds, the window was clean  
and bright so she could sit back and enjoy the view.

"A clean window on the world," said Lotte, "Would brighten  
every day." By night, all the curtains in her flat would be closed  
and Lotte would sleep.

One day, Lotte found herself returning home on the train as  
usual. As she boarded the train, she made for a window seat  
and immediately wiped it clean. Somewhere along the journey,  
the train entered a tunnel and came to a halt. Lotte looked out of  
her window but could see nothing. The view was so dark that,  
for the first time, she saw herself in the window. Lotte was  
astonished.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

"That's me," she thought, "In the window. I'm in the window."

For the rest of the journey, she stared at her reflection and wondered how she had never noticed it before. It was night-time when she arrived home. This time, instead of drawing the curtains, she found herself in every window. From that day forward, Lotte never closed the curtains again.



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 5

PIT SHOWERS. EIGHT, BASALT AND SLATEY AT THE END OF THEIR SHIFT.

BASALT           Get your kit off, Eight, you dirty fucker.

SLATEY           His bird says she likes it when he's mucky. Isn't that right, Eight?

EIGHT            Too right, Slatey. This John Thomas has been aerodynamically designed to seek out pussy.

BASALT           Can't you control yourself?

EIGHT            It's full of millions of heat-seeking missiles, prepared to die to locate their target.

BASALT           You're in for a shock when you grow up, Eight.

SLATEY           What's up with you, Basalt?

EIGHT            Would you or would you not travel the length and breadth of the country on the promise of a shag?

SLATEY           Depends who's the shag?

EIGHT            I'd shag anything, me.

BASALT           You're an animal.

EIGHT            What's wrong with that? Women like it 'cause it gives them permission to be animals. Look, teeth marks in my cock.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SLATEY                Yeah, your teeth.

BASALT                I don't trust that new gate. I can hear it.

SLATEY                No different to any other tunnel.

EIGHT                 Not for us to decide, we're just the fucking moles.

SLATEY                They know what they're doing.

BASALT                They don't know fuck all. They just shift their bits of paper  
around.

EIGHT                 He's right, the earth has a will of its own.

BASALT                If the earth don't get you, the fire will; and if the fire don't get  
you, the water will. We're fucked either way

EIGHT                 Dick in your ear, Slatey.

EIGHT TRIES TO SHOVE HIS COCK IN SLATEY'S EAR

SLATEY                Dirty bastard! I'm gonna tell your bird you're a closet ear-fucker.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 6

NINE'S FLAT.

ELSEWHERE, EIGHT IS RIDING HIS MOTORBIKE, IN FULL LEATHERS, GLOVES AND HELMET, ON HIS WAY TO NINE'S FLAT.

EIGHT

I fucking love this. Visor up, window on the world, the rain slapping my face, saying "Concentrate, your life is in every single moment." It's as if the bike's an extension of my body: my arms become the handlebars; my legs are levers changing gears or breaking hard. Feel my blood burning like petrol, smell the engine sweat, taste the rain on my tongue, hear every twist of the throttle, see my world open wide. I am in touch, in control; faster, more powerful, more alive.

S/FX OF MOTORBIKE SKIDDING. EIGHT ENTERS THE FLAT, LIMPING AND TRYING TO TAKE OFF HIS GEAR.

Me best fucking gloves, shit. (CALLING) Nine, give us a hand. Thank fuck for my leathers. Nine? Where are you, you daft bitch? Bastard, my hand's bleeding. Why aren't you ever here when I need you? Where does she keep the fucking bandages? I could be bleeding to death. God, I hate the sight of my own blood.

HE OPENS A DRAWER AND TAKES OUT A TOWEL.

Fuck it, this'll do.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

A MANUSCRIPT FALLS OUT OF THE TOWEL. HE WRAPS THE TOWEL AROUND ONE HAND AND READS THE SCRIPT WITH THE OTHER.

"We begin our journey in the Hellas Region on the planet Mars..." What is this bollocks? "Hellas is a huge basin formed by a massive meteoroid which punctured the surface three and a half billion years ago". What the fuck? "Numbers of this magnitude are as daunting as the task before us. As we look out to space, we realise that the universe is behind and in front of us. We are telling this story because it is our story.

NINE RETURNS.

NINE                    Eight? Is that you?

HE HIDES THE MANUSCRIPT.

NINE                    I saw the bike - have you had a scrape?

EIGHT                    Some daft cunt pulled out on me.

SHE DOESN'T LIKE HIM SWEARING.

What? What do you want me to call him? A fucking gentleman of the road?

NINE                    I didn't say anything.

EIGHT                    Not in words.

NINE                    You're upset.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

EIGHT My Anglo-Saxon too rich for you?

NINE Did he stop?

EIGHT Did he fuck?

NINE You should have called the police.

EIGHT They're no fucking use.

NINE You must be in shock. What have you done to your hand?

EIGHT I couldn't find a bandage.

NINE They're where we always keep them.

SHE TRIES TO UNZIP HIS LEATHERS FOR HIM. HE GRIPS  
HER BY THE HAND.

EIGHT You're a bit keen to get into my knickers, aren't you?

NINE What's got into you?

EIGHT Don't you want your towel back?

NINE You're hurting me.

EIGHT You'd know if I was hurting you.

HE REVEALS THE MANUSCRIPT.

NINE That's mine.

HE REFUSES TO RETURN IT.

You've no right. It's just a story.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

EIGHT                    Then why hide it?

NINE                     Because you won't like it.

EIGHT                    Why won't I like it?

NINE                     'Cause you won't understand it.

SHE SNATCHES THE MANUSCRIPT. HE PINS HER TO THE  
FLOOR. THEY KISS.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 7

AIRPORT SALON. WHEN NINE ARRIVES AT WORK, JADE HANDS HER A LARGE PACKAGE.

JADE                    This arrived for you.

NINE                    Who's it from?

JADE                    I can't wait to find out. It's internal mail.

NINE                    Someone at the airport?

JADE                    Well, it's not from Mars.

NINE OPENS THE PARCEL. IT IS A LAPTOP COMPUTER.

A typewriter?

NINE                    Computer.

JADE                    What are these?

NINE                    Speakers.

JADE                    There's a card.

NINE                    (READING) Turn me on.

JADE                    Now there's an offer you can't refuse.

NINE PLUGS IT IN AND SWITCHES IT ON. AS HER SCREEN LIGHTS UP SO DOES THE LARGE SCREEN FOR THE AUDIENCE.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                    Nothing's happening.

(READING THE CARD AGAIN) Type in:

Three@security.airport.com

JADE                    Go on then, the suspense is killing me.

SHE TYPES. THREE'S AVATAR (VIRTUAL SELF) APPEARS  
ON THE SCREENS.

ARCHIE                Hello Nine.

NINE JUMPS WITH SURPRISE.

Don't be frightened. Press the Command Key marked "Speech".

SHE DOES.

Good. You may now talk into the left hand side of the keyboard  
and I will hear you.

NINE                    Who are you?

IMAGE ZOOMS OUT, REVEALING ARCHIE IN A  
WHEELCHAIR. HE RESEMBLES THREE.

ARCHIE                Apologies. Allow me to introduce myself: Archie.

JADE                    Archie? Just when everything was going so well.

ARCHIE                I want very much to map you.

NINE                    Map?

JADE                    Watch this guy: wheelchair or not, he could be a serious pervert.



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

ARCHIE                    Sorry. Let me qualify my request. To map someone is to connect, electronically.

JADE                      Well, I've heard it called some things, but -

NINE                      Is this some sort of game?

ARCHIE                    No game, but it is intended to be enjoyable. I have a desire for dialogue. Please don't be alarmed, you are free to switch off at any time.

NINE                      Where are you?

ARCHIE                    I brought you these.

ARCHIE'S HAND REACHES OFF SCREEN, THEN BACK AGAIN WITH A FISTFUL OF FLOWERS.

JADE                      Does he expect you to put the screen in a vase of water?

NINE                      Are you on television or for real?

ARCHIE                    Television? Please, your average dishwasher has more microprocessing power. Could television do this?

HIS IMAGE MORPHS.

JADE                      Wow! "Terminator 2".

THREE ENTERS INTO THE SALON.

THREE                    Computers.

NINE                      (COMPARING ARCHIE AND THREE) How did you do that?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

JADE                    I prefer the upright version. Now that's what I call flesh and bone.

THREE                 Achieved by computers. Not film, not video, not television. You can stop showing off now, Archie

ARCHIE                Hello, Three.

NINE                    So Archie is your...

THREE                 A sort of doppelganger.

JADE                    He's got a German twin brother, I knew it.

THREE                 Archie is my Avatar, my virtual self.

JADE                    Obviously. (TO NINE) What's he talking about?

THREE                 Archie: terminate transmission, please.

ARCHIE                Message understood.

THREE                 You can turn off your laptop

SCREENS OFF.

NINE                    Pardon?

THREE                 Portable computer - laptop.

NINE                    How did it know what I was going to ask?

THREE                 Please, don't say "it", you'll offend Archie. Archie and Three very close; he knows my mind.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

JADE                    Why the wheelchair?

THREE                 Archie prefers it. It's not a drawback in his world. Archie actually flies everywhere.

NINE                    (HANDING BACK THE LAPTOP) You'd better take this back.

THREE                 No. You will need it.

NINE                    What do you want from me?

THREE                 Haircut?

JADE                    Reasonable enough request.

NINE                    Jade will do it for you.

THREE                 I had hoped...

JADE                    Nonsense, I'm far too busy; of course she'll do it.

NINE                    I'm not cutting his hair.

THREE                 What about lunch?

NINE                    No.

THREE                 Dinner? Drink? Ice-cream?

NINE                    Why would a professor be interested in me?

THREE                 Me? No. Airport surveillance: glorified security guard with computer workstation.

NINE                    Either way, you're too brainy for me.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE            Computer has two-letter alphabet: ones and zeros. Easier than learning to read and write.

NINE             The why are most of us illiterate?

THREE            Tomorrow?

NINE             No.

THREE            Diary: any date, any time?

NINE             It's a five-year diary.

THREE            I am very patient man.

NINE             I can't, I'm too involved.

THREE            Boyfriend?

NINE             You don't understand.

THREE            Why frightened?

NINE             I am not frightened; I'm in love.

THREE            Possessive?

NINE             None of your business.

THREE            Too late, it is my business.

THREE LEAVES.

JADE             You must be mad passing up a routine like that. I know he talks weird, but he's well fit.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                   Shit, he left his computer.

JADE                   Sell it; be worth a bit that.

SOME TIME LATER, AS NINE AND JADE LEAVE WORK,  
THREE'S LIVE CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM. NINE IS  
CARRYING THE LAPTOP. SHE FEELS AS THOUGH  
SOMEONE IS WATCHING HER.

NINE                   (TO JADE) How can I? I'm virtually living with Eight.

JADE                   On his terms. He doesn't give you any space.

NINE                   I don't need space.

JADE                   You've got such a low opinion of yourself.

NINE                   It's just his way of protecting me.

JADE                   That's bullshit.

NINE                   What do you mean, I've got a low opinion of myself?

JADE                   You wait and see, he'll get you pregnant to stop you working.

NINE                   Do you feel like we're being watched?

THREE                 (VOICEOVER) Hello Nine.

JADE                   This guy's like the wind, he's everywhere.

NINE                   How much of that did you hear?

JADE                   That's creepy. Where's the camera?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE I don't like having my picture taken without my knowledge.

THREE Let us play game?

JADE Great, I love games.

NINE What sort of game?

THREE Simple numbers game.

JADE AND NINE DISCUSS.

JADE She says ok but she's crap at maths.

NINE I did not. I said I need to get home.

THREE Zero expertise necessary. Think of number.

NINE Why?

THREE Any number.

NINE IS RELUCTANT

JADE (TO JADE) Two, we'll have two.

(TO THREE) Yeah, she's thought of a number.

NINE RESIGNS HERSELF TO TAKE PART.

THREE Double it.

JADE Yeah, she's doubled it.

THREE Add six.

JADE Done.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE Double it.

JADE Yep.

THREE Take away the number of months in one year.

JADE Okay.

THREE Add eight.

JADE Yeah.

THREE Divide by four.

JADE Bloody hell, talk about long division.

THREE Take away the number you first thought of.

JADE Done it.

THREE If I can guess the answer, will you meet me, Nine, that many days from now?

JADE She will, she says she will.

NINE Jade!

JADE Leave it to me, I'll work on her.

THREE Then the answer is two.

JADE How could he possible know that? Genius.

THREE Two days from today.

JADE She'll be there.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                    Just a meeting, that's all.

THREE                 That's enough.

NINE                    Not a date.

THREE                 So your response equals yes?

NINE                    You forgot your computer.

EXIT NINE WITH JADE CHASING AFTER.



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 8

NINE'S FLAT. EIGHT IS RELAXING. ENTER NINE FROM WORK, CARRYING THE LAPTOP.

EIGHT                   It's all right, I've eaten.

NINE                     Sorry I'm late.

EIGHT                   A fry-up. I'll fix you something.

NINE                     I'm not hungry.

EIGHT                   Been for a meal?

NINE                     I'm only half-an-hour late.

EIGHT                   Take-away?

NINE                     What if I did?

EIGHT                   I thought so.

NINE                     You don't always get in at the same time.

EIGHT                   What have you got there? You been shopping as well?

NINE                     As well as what, Eight? A quick fuck on the way home with a chicken leg in one hand and the steering wheel in the other?

EIGHT                   You've not bought it then?

NINE                     It's from work, if you must know.

EIGHT                   "It"?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE Computer.

EIGHT Does it cut hair?

NINE What is your problem?

EIGHT Can you play games on it?

NINE What is it with fellas and games?

PHONE RINGS. NINE IS WORRIED WHO IT MIGHT BE?  
EIGHT PICKS IT UP BUT COVERS THE MOUTHPIECE. HE  
OFFERS IT TO HER.

EIGHT You answer it.

SHE HOLDS HER HAND OUT BUT HE WITHDRAWS IT.

If it's Basalt, I'm not in; he'll only be on the cadge.

HE OFFERS PHONE AGAIN AND WITHDRAWS IT AGAIN.

If it's Slatey, tell him I don't want to talk to him 'cause he's a  
snivelling bastard with big ears.

OFFERS AGAIN AND WITHDRAWS AGAIN.

And if it's anybody else, we're on our way out.

NINE (SNATCHING THE RECEIVER) No wonder you have no  
friends.

(ON PHONE) Amber! lovely to hear from you.

EIGHT We don't need friends.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE                    No, it's a shared line.

EIGHT                  There's no such thing as friends.

NINE                    Yes, all sorts of weird things happen in the middle of a conversation.

EIGHT                  They soon fuck off when you really need them.

NINE                    Missed you at work today.

EIGHT                  You can't rely on anybody.

NINE                    (TO EIGHT) And I suppose that includes me?

(TO AMBER) Yes, still here.

EIGHT                  Who says you're my friend?

NINE                    Sorry, yes, colours, I still want it done.

EIGHT                  You're my mate.

NINE                    Yes, tomorrow.

EIGHT                  (SQUEEZING HER) Animal mate. Fucking mate.

NINE                    (TRYING TO BREAK FREE) Thanks. No, I'm all right. Bye, yes, bye.

SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AND BREAKS FREE. HE GRABS THE LAPTOP AND OPENS IT.

NINE                    I'll show you how to -

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

EIGHT                    Technical is it, the lid?

NINE                     I'm responsible for it.

HE HANDS IT BACK TO HER.

EIGHT                    Show me, then. Switch it on.

NINE                     Why?

EIGHT                    Give it here.

NINE                     I'll do it.

EIGHT TAKES THE MANUAL AND READS.

EIGHT                    A multi-media experience...

ARCHIE APPEARS ON THE BIG SCREEN. SHE QUICKLY  
SHUTS THE LID.

Don't you know how to work it?

NINE                     You'll have to give me a minute, it has to warm up.

(TO THE LAPTOP) Archie, my "boyfriend" wants to use the  
computer.

EIGHT                    Who the fuck's Archie?

NINE                     It's my pet name for it, you know what I'm like.

EIGHT                    Let me on it.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

AS EIGHT TAKES IT, ARCHIE DISAPPEARS FROM THE SCREEN, REPLACED BY THE INSTRUCTION, "PRESS ENTER TO CONTINUE".

It's just a glorified typewriter.

HE PRESSES "ENTER".

Look, you just type in what you want.

HE TYPES AND THE WORDS APPEAR ON THE BIG SCREEN: "ARCHIE YOU ARE A FUCKING ARSEHOLE".

Look.

SUDDENLY THE WORDS RE-ARRANGE INTO "YOU ARE A FUCKING ARSEHOLE - ARCHIE".

Fuck me! How did it do that?

NINE Word-processing.

EIGHT (TYPING) Eight + Nine.

THE EQUATION APPEARS ON SCREEN:  $8+9=17$ . MORE EQUATIONS APPEAR: NINE DIVIDED BY THREE EQUALS THREE. A TRIANGLE APPEARS:

$$\begin{array}{cc} 8 & 3 \\ & 9 \end{array}$$

So who's three?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

NINE SWITCHES OFF THE COMPUTER.

MEANWHILE AT THE AIRPORT .

THREE

Reception terminated. Shit. Must extend gateway into her life.

Restricted access. Must download desire in stages. Love finds  
its own level.

INTERVAL

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 9

AIRPORT AND SALON. NINE IS ON HER WAY TO WORK.  
THREE AT HIS WORKSTATION. LIVE CAMERA ON SCREEN.  
ALONG THE WAY PASSENGERS OFFER HER ADVICE  
ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS.

PASSENGERS I know it's none of my business but I wouldn't put up with that  
sort of behaviour from my man.

You can't run back to mother because of a little slap.

Take my advice: you're lucky to have a man who's bothered.

For what it's worth, that's the way men are.

I shouldn't interfere but you should think about the effect that  
putting up with it is having on other women.

Everyone has affairs, you don't want to miss out, do you?

I'll pray for you.

THREE Good morning, Nine. Sleep well? Dream in triangles? I did.

NINE Please, you're embarrassing me.

THREE Apologies. Intention is to please.

NINE You've no right to invade my privacy like this.

THREE Correct. Schedule face-to-face meeting?

NINE Just piss off with your games, will you?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE                    Your face? Do I see surface bruising?

NINE                     Leave me alone.

THREE                   Effect: bruising. Cause: Archie's triangle. Please confirm or deny?

NINE                     Stop stalking me.

NINE RUSHES INTO THE SALON.

AMBER                   I'm glad you're early.

NINE BURSTS INTO TEARS. AMBER OFFERS A TISSUE.

Your mascara's run. I've got this new tear-proof mascara you can borrow -

NINE SOBS AGAIN.

I'll fetch Jade.

JADE                     What's he done to you?

NINE                     It's nothing, really. I just want to be on my own for a while.

JADE                     Amber, open up for us, will you.

AMBER LEAVES.

Listen, there's always my flat if you need space to breathe for a while?

NINE                     Thanks Jade, but I can't.



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

JADE                    Think what's best for you for a change.

NINE                    It's all my fault.

JADE                    You haven't done anything wrong.

AMBER RETURNS.

AMBER                  There's a man out front looking for you. What shall I say?

JADE                    She's not here. Is he on a motorbike?

AMBER                  No. I told him you weren't in yet, but he said he saw you come in.

NINE                    It's Three. I don't want to talk to him.

JADE GOES TO FIND THREE.

AMBER                  Boyfriend trouble?

NINE                    He's not my boyfriend.

JADE                    Now is not a good time.

THREE                  I was worried.

JADE                    She doesn't want to see anyone. So, unless you have an appointment, I suggest you leave.

THREE                  (TO HIMSELF AS HE LEAVES) I was correct. Physical violence from Eight. Need to help her. Insufficient data. Need to find out more about Eight.

EXIT THREE.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

AMBER I'm not very good with tears, sorry.

NINE It's not your problem, thanks.

JADE Sorted.

NINE Thanks, Jade,

JADE What for?

AMBER I'll go and set up.

NINE For not giving me advice.

JADE I wouldn't dream of it - leave him.

NINE What?

JADE You don't live together. Just stop seeing him.

NINE I love him.

JADE That's not love, it's control.

NINE How do you know? You don't stay long enough with anyone to find out.

JADE If you don't want my help -

NINE I'm sorry, that was cruel.

JADE You should date other men.

NINE Like who?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

JADE                    I dunno, anyone would be better than Eight. Three is clearly into you.

NINE                    You go out with him, if you like him that much.

JADE                    I'm needed in the shop.

NINE                    Jade, something weird is happening to me. You know when I went to see the hypnotist?

JADE                    You're not still on about that?

NINE                    I've been writing about it.

JADE                    Writing what?

NINE                    A story. About Mars. It seems so real.

JADE                    Mars? Really?

NINE                    I knew you'd think I was crazy.

JADE                    Think about it: a lousy cabaret act hypnotised you. You've never been hypnotised before. You're impressionable.

NINE                    What does it mean?

JADE                    You're looking for excuses.

NINE                    Excuses for what?

JADE                    For finishing with Eight.

NINE                    Is that why he hates my story?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 10

AT THE PIT, EIGHT, BASALT AND SLATEY ARE SHOVELLING COAL. THE PASSENGERS ARE IN THE FOUNTAIN.

PASSENGERS Water is an energy.

If we're all made of water, no wonder it's turbulent when we splash together.

Relationships form. Patterns emerge. Common interests. Communities.

Love comes in waves. It's not enough to watch it, you have to experience it. Wade in, up to your neck. Total immersion. It renders you weightless.

EIGHT Have you got a sweat on, Slatey?

BASALT He doesn't know what hard work is.

EIGHT Drive the birds wild with sweat, don't you Slatey?

BASALT And dogs.

PASSENGERS Men are easy once you know how to handle them.

I give up, they're a completely different species. I'm never going out with a woman again.

What have I been missing out on all these years? You can keep the opposite sex, this is what I call a party.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

You know that floaty feeling like you're a bubble about to go pop? I think I'm in love.

SLATEY Look at them daft bastards.

EIGHT I could be like that.

SLATEY Bollocks.

EIGHT All you have to do is stand up and hold on.

BASALT I think we should join them, don't you?

EIGHT Go on Slatey, jump in.

SLATEEY I can't.

EIGHT What do you mean, you can't? Just jump in.

SLATEY I can't swim.

BASALT He can't swim.

SLATEY Well, I can swim, I just can't breathe.

EIGHT On a planet two-thirds covered in water? Bad move.

BASALT We must have evolved from fish.

EIGHT Can't you get your bird to teach you, Slatey?

SLATEY Not everybody finds it easy to swim.

EIGHT Bollocks, you just do it.

SLATEY I don't float.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

BASALT            Everybody floats.

EIGHT            Eventually, when they've drowned.

SLATEY           Okay, I admit it, I'm scared of water.

BASALT           There's one way to cure that.

THEY GRAB SLATEY AND HOLD HIM OVER THE WATER.

SLATEY           No help, I need armbands, a wetsuit, a lifeboat.

EIGHT            If your bird won't teach you, we will.

SLATEY           Please, she's finished with me. Don't chuck me in.

EIGHT            Did you hear that, Basalt?

BASALT           Poor Slatey. He needs to meet new people.

EIGHT            There's plenty more fish in the sea.

PASSENGERS    All aboard the H.M.S.Sadbastard.

If you've seen no one in weeks

and there are voices in your head,

you know it's time to put to sea

and be miserable there instead.

It only takes one rogue wave

to capsize the strongest craft,

when there's nothing more they can do to you,

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

it's your turn to have the last laugh.

When our sailing ship rights itself

but the going is dead, dead hard,

remind yourself we're all shipmates

on the H.M.S.Sadbastard.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 11

HYPNOTIST'S DRESSING ROOM. HE IS LOOKING INTO A MIRROR. HE TAKES OFF HIS WIG AND GOWN TO REVEAL HE IS A WOMAN. ENTER NINE.

HYPNOTIST I'm sorry, I don't do autographs.

NINE I need to talk to you. It won't take long.

HYPNOTIST Have we met?

NINE You hypnotised me and -

HYPNOTIST There's no redress, I'm afraid. If it's compensation -

NINE I need you to do it again.

HYPNOTIST Fine, dear, catch the next show. Leave me your name, I promise I'll call you up on stage.

NINE I need you to hypnotise me now.

HYPNOTIST Look, the show's over.

NINE You took me to Mars.

HYPNOTIST It's you. You pissed on fire, trying to sabotage my act.

NINE I was hypnotised.

HYPNOTIST You were faking.

NINE I swear, I -



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

HYPNOTIST        You think I don't know when someone's hypnotised?

NINE                Something extraordinary happened to me. Please.

HYPNOTIST        You need a doctor.

NINE                Please. You can take me back there.

HYPNOTIST        I can't do it; you could get me into legal trouble if it went wrong.

NINE                Then show me how to do it.

HYPNOTIST        Lady, it took me years to get where I am.

NINE                I'll never bother you again. Why do you dress up as a man?

HYPNOTIST        Are you threatening me?

NINE                No. I promise.

HYPNOTIST        They think the public won't trust a woman in this business. You  
can't get the bookings.

NINE                So show me how to do it. It's not like I'm going to set up in  
competition.

HYPNOTIST        You'll have to pay.

NINE                Yes. Whatever you charge for a booking.

HYPNOTIST        Pass me that candle.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 12

NINE'S FLAT. SHE IS SURROUNDED BY CANDLES. THREE IS WATCHING HER FROM HIS WORKSTATION VIA A LIVE CAMERA CONCEALED IN THE FLAT.

NINE

Watch the flame, think of the flame. Blue to red to yellow. Dance like the flame. I am dancing, dancing like the flame. I am light, I am heat. Watch me glow. Watch the flame, think of the flame. Watch the flame, think of the flame...

Imagination is real. As real as the burn from a flame. I live inside my head more than I live in the physical world. I might be simply washing my hands but my imagination is making love. I am watching the flame yet I am walking on this planet. This is my storyspace...

The days are much like Earth days in length. The crater is behind me. I am moving Northwest along the Valles Marineris. A major tectonic upheaval once tore this surface apart. I have to complete my mission before the dust storms gather and sweep across the planet.

SF/X MOTORBIKE. EIGHT ENTERS.

EIGHT

Powercut?

NINE COMES ROUND AND TRIES TO BLOW OUT THE CANDLES.

Leave it, it's romantic. I know how much you like candlelight.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

HE TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS. SHE RESISTS.

NINE Is that all you think about?

EIGHT Why, what are you thinking about? Don't tell me -

NINE Why are you so scared of my imagination?

EIGHT Why are you always trying to escape from me?

NINE You shouldn't have hit me.

EIGHT I didn't hit you, it was a slap.

NINE Am I supposed to be grateful?

EIGHT Come on, you know I'd never really hurt you. All animals fight.

NINE Really? You think we're animals?

THREE (TO HIMSELF) She must leave him. With or without me.

Open Character Assassination file.

Display accumulated evidence.

Persuade Nine to watch.

Persuade Nine to leave.

Destroy Eight.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 13

AIRPORT AND SALON. THREE ENTERS THE SALON.

THREE (TO NINE) Think of number? Answer equals two. Two days later: meeting.

JADE (TO NINE) Go on, take an early lunch. I'll cover for you.

NINE AND THREE WALK TO HIS WORKSTATION.

NINE How's Archie?

THREE Wheelchair problems.

NINE Do you have other characters like Archie?

THREE Yes. I see actual characters and invent avatars for them. Do you invent?

NINE Of a kind. I write stories.

THREE Download inventions for me.

NINE Sorry?

THREE Tell me about inventions.

NINE Maybe.

THREE Perhaps computers can help?

NINE Computers can't do everything.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE Not at present. Do you know female voice is used instead of computers in fighter pilot training?

NINE I don't suppose I do.

THREE Apparently pilots respond faster to intimate female voice than computer commands.

NINE Fascinating.

THEY ARRIVE AT HIS WORKSTATION.

So this is where it all happens?

THREE Workstation computer beautiful.

NINE But can it create beauty?

THREE If I had you in computer.

Welcome to my world. Software to the stars.

NINE Sounds impressive. Do you have images of Mars?

THREE N.A.S.A. Viking programme - pictures from Lander spacecraft. Computer enhances video footage into 3-D images. request visit?

NINE You mean, have a look? At the surface of Mars?

THREE More than simply look. Be there. Virtual Reality. Like living dreams.

NINE You won't get into trouble?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE Please position yourself centre of sensor-pad. First: Head Mounted Display for 360 degree vision.

THREE PLACES V.R. HEADSET ON HER.

Comfortable?

NINE Fine.

THREE Second: Wired Glove to drive Lander spacecraft.

THREE FITS THE GLOVE.

Ready?

NINE When you are.

HE SWITCHES IT ON.

THREE Telepresence established.

P.O.V. OF SPACECRAFT APPROACHING MARS. THE IMAGE APPEARS ON LARGE SCREEN.

NINE This is unbelievable.

THREE Polar ice-cap, like Earth but covered with carbon dioxide frost.

NINE I can see two moons.

THREE The inner one circles clockwise and the outer one circles counter-clockwise.

NINE Can I land?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

- THREE                    Of course. Force Feedback simulates actual conditions without risk of disintegration.
- NINE                     Shit. I think I've crash-landed.
- THREE                   Possible to rewind. Try again if requested.
- NINE                     No, I'll carry on if it'll let me.
- THREE                   Six degrees of freedom: forwards/backwards, left/right, up/down.
- NINE                     Valles Marineris.
- THREE                   You know it?
- NINE                     How do you get this detail?
- THREE                   Texture mapping: computer landscape built from polygons - thousands of little triangles.
- IMAGE CRASHES. NINE TAKES OFF THE HEADSET AND GLOVES.
- System failure. Report.
- NINE                     It's not how I imagined it. It's like seeing the film of the book, it's not the same.
- THREE                   Virtual Reality augments human imagination. Compare driving car to walking.
- NINE                     So you can travel further and faster in a car, so what? It isn't an improvement on walking, just different.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE Computers can cut out what we don't need to see.

NINE Which I'm sure is fine for air traffic control or the secret police,  
but not for our imagination.

THREE You are upset. Mars detail too accurate.

NINE Where I go in my head is a different place. Your Virtual Reality is  
someone else's reality, not mine. It's imagination by numbers.



SCENE 14

NINE'S FLAT. SHE IS ALONE AGAIN WITH HER THOUGHTS, SURROUNDED BY CANDLES. THREE IS WATCHING HER FROM HIS WORKSTATION AND IMAGE APPEARS ON THE LARGE SCREEN. EIGHT ENTERS, UNSEEN BY EITHER NINE OR THREE.

NINE All stars reveal their true make-up by the quality of light they emit. I am inside the flame. I know what it is. I have reached a plateau, heading towards Olympus Mons, the largest volcanic mountain in the solar system. From here, on Tharsis Ridge, I can see Earth hiding its scars behind its blue beauty.

EIGHT I'm living with a fucking madwoman.

NINE That's right, try to hurt me to hide your own scars.

EIGHT I thought you'd given up on this shit.

NINE You're jealous, jealous of my imagination.

EIGHT I live in the real world.

NINE You call this relationship real? I'm not letting you bring me down. I'll find someone who values me for who I am.

EIGHT Go on then, fuck off and find somebody who'll put up with your stories.

NINE Can't you see you're pulling it all down around yourself, you stupid bastard?

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

HE GRABS HER. SHE RESISTS.

You can't just wash it away with a shag! Is sex your only emotion, you fucking animal?

HE SLAPS HER.

NINE

Get out! Just go!

EXIT EIGHT. NINE SOBS. THREE REWINDS THE IMAGE TO THE POINT WHERE EIGHT SLAPS NINE. HE DESTROYS EIGHT'S IMAGE BY LIQUIFYING HIM INTO A POOL OF WATER.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 15

SALON. EIGHT ENTERS.

AMBER            Can I help you?

EIGHT            Where is she?

AMBER            Who is it you'd like to see?

EIGHT            Nine, where is she?

JADE             She isn't here. You might as well leave.

EIGHT            Where are you hiding her?

JADE             She phoned in sick. I think you know what's the matter with her.

EIGHT            You should stick to making people pretty.

JADE             While you mess them up, you mean?

EIGHT            Don't get smart with me.

JADE             I wouldn't want you to be out of your depth.

EIGHT            I'll find her. She can't have strayed far from her cave.

EIGHT LEAVES. THREE ARRIVES.

THREE            Lost contact with nine. Need to communicate.

JADE             Eight's looking for her.

THREE            Can you relay message to her?

JADE             Be quick.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE                    Open invitation to workstation. No conditions. Tell Nine.

EIGHT RETURNS.

EIGHT                    Who the fuck are you?

JADE                      He's airport security. We're trying to find Nine.

EIGHT                    Nice uniform. What exactly is your interest, Robocop?

THREE                    Protect Nine. From virus.

EIGHT                    Word of advice: never come between any creature and its mate.

THREE                    When creature fights mate, mate finds alternative creature.

EIGHT                    Have you been sniffing around my woman?

THREE                    Subtlety level: zero. Vulgarity of arcade games.

EIGHT                    Who you calling vulgar?

THREE                    Nine safe with Archie.

EIGHT                    You're Archie? Where is she, you freak?

THREE                    You pissed on her flame.

EIGHT KNOCKS THREE TO THE GROUND. JADE PULLS HIM  
OFF.

JADE                      Stop it! You'll kill him!

EIGHT LEAVES.

NINE RETURNS TO HER STORYTELLING CHAIR.

NINE

Once upon a time there was a young man. He was of good health and pleasant manner. He dressed in loose red robes to draw attention to his presence but to hide his shape. The young man realised that his people were suffering in ways they did not understand. Their talk was of Armageddon, their spirits were searching.

One day while he was walking by a lake, he found a small piece of crystallised rock. It was a shiny yellow colour which lit up his face and made him smile. Because the crystal never failed to light his face, day or night, Summer or Winter, he called his crystal "certainty". The young man talked to his people. He allowed them to hold this certainty and they smiled when it lit up their faces. The crystal seemed to alleviate their suffering, so he determined to travel widely to show it to as many people as possible in one lifetime.

He was pleased to have spent his life in this way. When his legs refused to carry him further, he decided to make a gift of the crystal to the next child who happened along, so that child might enjoy bringing pleasure to others. But, the man's heart refused to serve him any longer and he died as the next child came along. The child was worried that the crystal had killed the man so she smashed it to the ground, where it shattered into a thousand tiny crystals, each one a perfect representation of the original. When she held a piece to her face, she realised that it

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

lit up her eyes. She distributed the pieces to friends, family and strangers and they were scattered around the known world.

Eight more generations passed and the crystals were smashed again and again. Each time less and less of the face was illuminated as the crystals became smaller and smaller. The smaller the crystals became the more desirable the crystal.

Huge mines opened to search for the lost crystal and wars broke out across the world, in the name of the shiny yellow crystal.

The Tenth Generation, One-Zero, was also known as the Digital Generation. In the Digital Generation the pieces had become so small as to be worthless. They had reduced to a size beyond the natural sight of the human eye. The mines were closed and the wars ceased, as there was nothing to fight for. And the people's faces darkened once more as they learned to cope in a world without the shiny yellow crystal.

SCENE 16

NINE'S FLAT, WHERE EIGHT IS WATCHING TV AND WAITING FOR HER, AND AIRPORT, WHERE THREE IS AT HIS WORKSTATION, OBSERVING HIM. IMAGE ON LARGE SCREEN

EIGHT                    No rush, sit and wait, watch tv. She'll be back now I've sorted Archie. A few spanners short of the full toolkit, that one. All hot air, burst like a fucking balloon.

NINE ARRIVES AT THREE'S WORKSTATION. HE TURNS OFF THE CAMERA WATCHING EIGHT.

NINE                    I didn't tell Eight about you, I swear.

THREE                  What is to tell? You are here, that is enough.

NINE                    I'm sorry. I won't stay. I've done enough damage already.

THREE                  You are unstable. Passing through phase transition. Matter to energy, Nine to herself.

NINE                    How do you know so much about me?

THREE                  Three and Nine share common denominator.

NINE                    You see everything as numbers.

THREE                  Maths is language of universe. Therefore universe computable.

NINE                    Does that apply to everything? Even love?

THREE                  Love is strange attractor.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THEY KISS.

Do not go back to him, Nine. Heat cannot flow from cold object to hot.

NINE                   What is it, Three?

THREE                 Storm inside. Whirlwind of watching. Held back for so long. My love for you.

THREE SWITCHES ON A LIVE CAMERA OF THEM KISSING. IMAGE APPEARS ON LARGE SCREEN. THREE TRANSMITS THE IMAGE TO THE TV EIGHT IS WATCHING. EIGHT GETS UP TO EXAMINE THE TV.

EIGHT                 Nine? Is that you? Where the fuck are you? What are you doing with that nerd?

THREE                 (VOICEOVER) Mating season, Eight. View the show through your window. See how creatures enjoy each other.

EIGHT IS SEARCHING FOR HOW THIS IS HAPPENING.

EIGHT                 How is he even doing this? You're fucking dead, Archie. I'll find you and I'll bury you alive.

THREE                 (VOICEOVER) Eight into Nine does not compute. Three into Nine computes.

THREE LAUGHS. EIGHT KICKS THE TV AND EXITS.

SCREEN GOES BLANK. EXIT THREE AND NINE.



"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 17.

AIRPORT. EIGHT ENTERS THREE'S WORKSTATION.

THREE'S LAPTOP HAS BEEN LEFT ON AND EIGHT TAKES A LOOK. ON THE BIG SCREEN IMAGES APPEAR OF THREE AND NINE MAKING LOVE THE NIGHT BEFORE. HE CHECKS FOR MORE IMAGES AND FINDS NINE'S AVATAR, CREATED BY THREE TO MANIPULATE HER IMAGE.

EIGHT

That sick fuck. Wait 'til Nine sees this, she'll know what a pervert he really is.

SCREEN GOES BLANK. EIGHT TAKES THE LAPTOP AND LEAVES. THREE RETURNS AND REALISES HIS LAPTOP IS MISSING.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 18

NINE'S FLAT. EIGHT IS SHOWING NINE THE IMAGES ON THE LAPTOP, WHICH APPEAR ON THE BIG SCREEN

EIGHT                   What's it like being a film star?

NINE                     I thought he really loved me.

EIGHT                   He doesn't love you, he loves your image.

NINE                     Please go. I need some time on my own.

EIGHT                   Look, I admit I was possessive. You went off with that freak for a bit of cold comfort. Now you're back. Every relationship goes through this sort of thing. I don't want to lose you, Nine.

NINE                     It's too late.

EIGHT                   At least think about it.

NINE                     There's no rewind button, no going back. It's over, Eight.

EIGHT LEAVES.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

SCENE 19

AIRPORT. EIGHT IS BY THE FOUNTAIN. NINE IS BY THE FLAME. THREE IS AT HIS WORKSTATION.

EIGHT I can see my face, my reflection in the water. A little window on my world. The water is still rising. The water whispers:  
"Your life is in every single moment."

NINE I am at the top of the flame. I can hear the universe from here, the echoes of creation. This is where I belong, in my story.  
Watch the flame, think of the flame...

THREE Physical reality is rooted in entropy: everything decays. Archie does not decay.

ARCHIE APPEARS ON BIG SCREEN.

ARCHIE Hello Three.

THREE How is virtual self today?

ARCHIE Cruising.

THREE Programme complete, Archie. Ready for next adventure.

ARCHIE What's next?

THREE What would you like? A walk through Van Gogh's paintings?  
Orbit planet earth? Fly into the eye of a hurricane?

ARCHIE Request honeymoon assignment with virtual mate, Nine.

AVATAR OF NINE APPEARS ON SCREEN AND THEY KISS.

"Strange Attractors" by Kevin Fegan

THREE Request granted.

A V.R. HAPPY ENDING ON SCREEN AS ARCHIE AND NINE'S  
AVATAR WALK OFF INTO THE SUNSET.

PASSENGERS A clean window on the world will brighten every day.