Cambridge English Readers

Level 5

Series editor: Philip Prowse

Dolphin Music

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1999
Reprinted 1999

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Printed in the United Kingdom at J.W. Arrowsmith Ltd, Bristol

Typeset in 12/15pt Adobe Garamond [CE]

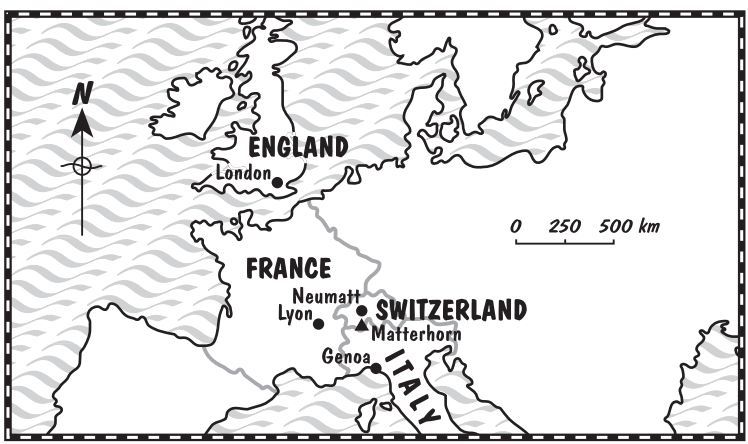
ISBN 0 521 66618 X

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Characters

Saul Grant: writer and music critic.
Caroline Fry: musician, Saul's girlfriend.
Ruth Hunter: member of PACE.
Sue Hunter: Ruth's granddaughter, also a member of PACE.
Captain Marrs: head of BEATCON, an anti-terrorist organisation.
Dick Lane: a BEATCON special officer.
The Controller: head of Control, the ruling government of Europe.
Peter: the Controller's brother.
Wind: a dolphin.
Marc: a member of PACE.



Chapter 1 *Life was good*

Tuesday 27 May, 2051. 2 p.m. Richmond, England.

'We have been working on blue with black letters for three hours, five minutes and twenty five seconds.' Saul Grant's computer spoke with a Scottish accent. 'We will now change to black and white for one hour.'

'OK,' Saul told the machine. He yawned and rubbed his red eyes. He had been working for too long today. His computer knew that. His computer knew everything. It knew Saul's voice and Saul could talk to it if he wanted to.

But he did not like talking to his computer. He liked writing and found it difficult to think and talk at the same time. He did not know why, but he did know that many of the Web writers had the same problem.

Saul Grant was a writer. He was a music critic for the Central England Web Guide. He loved music and he loved writing about music. Many people wanted his job, but he was good at it and his bosses were pleased with him.

But next week he had to stop writing and do six months of community work. Saul hated community work.

Everyone had to do it. Saul knew that. There were too many people and too few jobs. Today, no-one was allowed to work for more than one year without a break, except for those working for Control. Control managers worked every

year. But then Control made the rules. Control ruled the Web. Control ruled everything. Control was short for Control Europe Ltd. It had replaced all other European governments.

And what Control said about community work made sense. Someone had to look after the old people. Today, more than three-quarters of the population of Europe was over seventy years old and needed someone to look after them. So all young people under thirty had to help the old people. Saul hated it. He wanted to stay at home and write about new music.

Today most new music was written by dolphins. And dolphin music was beautiful. Only five years ago they had discovered that dolphins could not only sing, but could actually write music. And now they had taken dozens of dolphins to recording studios, so that everyone could hear their music on the Web. Every dolphin had a quite different song and could write music that sounded as individual as the music written by people. But it was so much better, thought Saul. It was wonderful. He loved listening to dolphin music and enjoyed writing about it.

Saul leaned back in his chair and switched his windows open. It was another burning hot summer day outside. You could not go outside without wearing a helmet or eye mask and special anti-reflection material, called anti-glare. No-one could work outside – the countryside was now almost empty – and it was very expensive to put anti-glare on cars or over gardens.

Most transport was by jet power and wind power and people only travelled when they had to. People lived in small groups of houses and everything was delivered

through the tunnels. When you did go out, you always had to tell Control where you were going and why.

Once, Saul knew, people had enjoyed walking in the countryside. They had climbed mountains and swum in the sea. Today everyone went virtual travelling in their exercise rooms. You put on a helmet or mask and chose where you wanted to go, and then the type of sport, and there you were. One day you could be water skiing in the Indian Ocean and the next day you could be walking in Tibet, in the Himalayas.

The virtual world is a happy world, as Control said, and Saul was happy; he enjoyed his work and his life, he met interesting people at virtual concerts and he had a wonderful girlfriend.

Her name was Caroline Fry. She played the cello in the Europafest Confederation Orchestra and she lived and worked in Neumatt, Switzerland. She and Saul would get together on the Web most nights and talk, and at weekends, when they were not busy, they would go on virtual walks and holidays together. He had never actually touched Caroline. But virtual touching was fun. You could be with the person you loved and imagine what it felt like to touch them. When Saul and Caroline got married, they would meet, of course. But at the moment they both enjoyed their lives. The Web controlled their lives, but that was how things were.

'You've never had it so good,' said the screen every night before it switched itself off.

And, listening to the dolphin music in his comfortable house, Saul would think that Control was right, that life today was good.