



# PENNI

Boring, boring, boring. Home, school and holidays. Boring.

Nothing ever happens, Penni fumed inwardly. Nothing. BOR-ING.

The words of a song came back to her. The words had been on her brain all day, since she had first heard it on early morning radio. It was as if the words had been glued there and she kept finding them at the oddest moments.

'I see a bad moon arising,  
I see trouble on the way,

I see earthquakes and  
lightning, I see bad times  
today.'

Penni shook her head, trying to free it of the words. Bad times, she thought, more like boring times. Certainly no moon tonight!

She *could* ring Bobby. But she wasn't going to be first to call after their little exchange of opinions. Little! And in front

of the whole class! Wowiee! No way!

Well, not right now. Let him sweat a bit.

She could give Gina a call. But then Gina probably had something better to do on the eve of a long weekend. She looked at her watch. It was still early.

Penni sat and stared vacantly through the light, white curtain into the darkening street. At one stage, a lone figure, dressed in a long, dark coat and wearing a reversed cap, hobbled urgently along the opposite footpath, head bent as if protecting himself from a cold wind. There was no wind—just the depressing onset of another boring, damp evening.

Before the lone pedestrian slipped out of sight he looked quickly, almost furtively, back at the houses on the opposite side of the dismal street.

Penni wondered if he knew he was being watched. Did he care? She hadn't bothered to turn on the lights. He couldn't see her watching him like some cheap Peeping Tom.

In the street, the light, misty rain clung to the dull streetlights and entombed the houses. Not even night and already the streetlights were on! She felt isolated from the events—and the people—in the outside world.

The house was her security—and her cage! Little pigs were safe in their houses until something bigger broke in!

She shrugged her shoulders. Helps to break the monotony watching unsuspecting pedestrians, she rationalised. Nothing ever happens—unless *you* make it happen. She plonked herself down on the big leather lounge chair.

From *The Number You Have Called* by Alan Horsfield.