

Ronald in Transit: Julie Dawson

Ronald lives life in his head. Always knotting out problems - other peoples of course. His own life is well regulated.

For the past 30 years as editor of *Manifold* not only does he sort problems of syntax, but also the more intricate issues of engineering. So, when transit lanes are introduced, disrupting the order of his life, he approaches the problem with his usual calm intellect.

He reads the media release three times. He needs two people to accompany him on his daily trip to the office. What to do? He makes a pot of Earl Grey tea and considers. He doesn't relish mixing with others, blossoming only in his own company. Everything about his lifestyle, even his office, is unwelcoming. People quickly come to the conclusion that an email might suffice.

Actually, choosing his morning transit passengers is a problem Ronald relishes. He looks at Cynth's photo. She could be a bit lippy, he thinks. Do I need that in the mornings? Sandy looks a bit limp. Well, she won't say much. But Greg? He sighs and pours himself another cup of Earl Grey. Well, by the look of him, he might have an opinion or two.

For once he can't decide and so in the end, it is the three of them.

At first, it's a bit awkward but then he gets into the swing of it. Sandy's first in the car. She just nods as he checks her seatbelt is firmly secured. Cynth's ruby lips and doctored eyebrows unnerve him a little and Greg's macho assurance makes him question the whole venture, but after a while he gets the hang of it.

'How are the kids?' he enquires of Sandy, and she nods politely.

'Night on the town again?' he asks Cynth and watches her lopsided smile in the mirror. But it is Greg that spurs Ron on to rage about current affairs.

Life is good until THAT day!

The transit police, who usually wave him on without a second glance, pull him over.

'Good morning sir. You do realise that you need two passengers to travel in a Transit Lane.'

'Of course, officer. I have my friends Sandy, Cynth and Greg with me.'

The Officer smirks and hands over the penalty notice, saying 'Mate they may be your friends, but the rest of us call them inflatables.'