

Once upon a time, and far, far away, there was a young girl.
She lived in an ordinary house, in an ordinary road, with ordinary parents. Really, there was only one reason why you would look twice at her, and that was because she was at that extraordinary moment of beauty when a girl turns into a woman. It was the night of her 16th birthday, and she was in her bedroom admiring her present haul.

Downstairs, her Mum and Dad were congratulating themselves.

`Well, my love - I think we've done it!`

`Yes, thank goodness. Nothing's going to happen now!`

`I never really thought there was anything in it anyway. Bloody stupid, we were, listening to that old fortune teller.`

`But she was right about Davy's accident - and about when my Mum died. Everyone said she'd got second sight!`

`Well, it didn't work with our little girl, did it - she got it all wrong there! I feel a right idiot for listening to her, I really do!
How did that daft poem go?

 "Touch a pen fore sweet sixteen
 Oblivion till a hundred cycles been."

What the hell does that mean, anyway? - it's pure gibberish!

`Scared both of us at the time, though, didn't it! Thank God we don't have to pratt around any more. I've lost count of the number of times I've told a teacher that she's allergic to the plastic on a biro, or some other stupid lie. And now we can stop buying pencils by the truckload!`

`Yeah. Here, let me pour you some more wine, and we'll celebrate. What were we doing this time 16 years ago, anyway?`

`We were walking up and down the hall in the hospital! Don't you remember, my labour stopped, and that's what they made us do to get it going again? She wasn't born until almost midnight.`

Upstairs, the girl lay slumped over her new graphics tablet, its pen fallen to the floor. The PC monitor showed white letters slowly blinking on the blue screen:

```
Until x=100
    sleep 1E999
    x++
done
```