

Phaeton came down upon the lock-ups of Bonnyrigg in his full glory, scattering the neds hither and thither in his Wrath. For his burning desire was to possess a lock-up and work therein upon his wheels. Phaeton had cast his covetous eye upon the lock-up garages of Bonnyrigg, those maintained and rented out by the Council; and he was greatly desirous thereof. "Behold," said he to his father Helios, pointing a godly finger at the lock-ups, flames darting from the very fingernails and smiting down the stray alsatians who were busy fouling the footpaths and gnawing at exposed babies, "Yonder shall be my forge and my workshop, therein to work upon my chariot." Helios regarded his son with a thoughtful glance. "What chariot would that be, Phaeton, my dearest son? For you have as yet no driving-licence, let alone a set of wheels in which to drive, like me, across the span of heaven from dawn until dusk." Phaeton laughed and said: "I may not yet have my licence, divine father, but I have passed the Theory Test, and the practical is booked for two weeks hence; and at that time I shall build me a great and glorious chariot from a kit, more splendid and costly and powerful than any chariot which has heretofore been seen in the skies above Bonnyrigg." Helios said nothing, but retired to his own chariot above the grey clouds, and rode upon his way into the setting of the sun.

It came to pass, then, that Phaeton acquired his full driving-licence at the first attempt, and on that very day came down again with Wrath upon the lock-ups of Bonnyrigg. He sought out for himself the most palatial, the best-maintained of all the dozen lock-ups, dealt its present rightful tenant a mortal blow, and made his way to the Council offices to transfer the rent to his own name. "That's P-h-A-e-t-o-n, doll," said he to the clerk who took his details, "And if you'd like to go joy-riding with me any time, here's my mobile number." The young clerk smiled prettily and said she'd text him soon as she was off work; and so they parted, the god and the god-smitten maiden.

And so began Phaeton to build him a Special XQ-type Kit-Kar, complete with square number-plates, rear spoiler, spinning wheel-trims, illuminated underparts, lowered suspension, bucket seats and twin-exhaust. Flames were painted arising from the wheel-arches. By night and by day did Phaeton labour at his task, wielding blow-torch, mighty hammer, screwdriver and socket-set. Oil did spill and flame. Metal did grind and clank. Fumes arose to the very heavens. A godly sound-system was the first and most important part of the car, all other moving and non-moving parts being built around it. There were twin speakers fore and aft, speakers in the doors, speakers in the roof, each outputting some 120 watts. Ten days and ten nights did Phaeton bend him to his task; surely and slowly did an mighty chariot arise from the piles of gleaming metal.

But his labours did not go unnoticed by the neighbours. After the first day and night, with a storm of hammering and club-anthems throbbing from the lock-up, the neds, the alsatians, the teenage mums, the criminal under-5s, the nosey neighbours did gather about the divine workshop, demanding answers to their many questions. Phaeton ignored them at first, but then turned his wrath upon the neds and alsatians, and finally upon the old codgers who complained of the noise and the dirt and the possible pollution of surrounding streams with hazardous liquids. Limb from limb did he tear them. "You interfering worthless has-beens!", he cried. Eyes were gouged out and hung in the Classical manner upon cheeks. Bowels were split open and the contents thereof spilled out upon the recycling boxes which the Council had failed, once again, to collect on the promised day. Heads were cracked

and skulls shattered. Phaeton was wrathful in his wrath, enraged in his rage, vengeful in his vengeance; he was dire in his ire, mighty in his smiting, contemptuous in his godly contempt. "You dare to bad-mouth me!" he demanded, "Me, Phaeton, what is the son of Helios, and the very swiftest boy-racer ever seen by mortals this side of sun-rise! I will teach you manners!" Which is not behaviour to which the residents of Bonnyrigg were unaccustomed; it was just the usual Friday night tantrum; only a thousand times worse because Phaeton was after all, a god, come down to drive recklessly among mortals, wearing a baseball-cap, bass pumping relentlessly from twelve speakers, two skinny girls in the passenger-seat, all of them popping pills and drinking from a bottle of Buckfast.

At last, on the eleventh day, a complaint was made to Council officials, and almost immediately, and certainly within the five working-days promised in the Council's well-publicised targets, an inspection was made of Phaeton's lock-up, chariot and general demeanour. There was cause, among the officers of the Council, for great lamentation, and the pursing of lips. Phaeton was issued a verbal warning to mend his behaviour, or face a termination of his rental of the lock-up. This warning was backed up by an official letter handed to him, as stipulated, within three working days. Phaeton laughed uproariously, cast from him the very letter and leaped aboard his chariot for a spin down the High Street, darting thunderbolts at passers-by and bus-drivers.

Within ten further working-days, since no evidence of improved behaviour was noted after frequent visits by Council officers, and after a very voluble deputation to the Councillor for Bonnyrigg, an ASBO was issued upon Phaeton, of unknown residential address.

But the ASBO was never carried out. For that day, he set out across the sky in his Special XQ-type Kit-Kar, ran out of control on the first sharp bend, and perished. A teddy-bear tied to a fence-post, and a forlorn bunch of flowers beside a country road, are all that marks his passing.