

It falls to Tera Pascoe to make an earth-shattering discovery—a very improbable candidate for posterity indeed. Armed with a Psychology degree that has so far been useless to her, she has retreated to the town where she was born and her dead parent's house on the remote Western Australian coast, where she ekes out an existence faking it as 'Town Psychologist' but really is a part-time librarian in nearby Geraldton and the Child Minding Centre in nearer Dongarra. Not the prettiest girl around and with a reputation as the 'local bike', her only real companion is Alice Liddell (Yes, the one who went to Wonderland) who was her childhood imaginary friend and is still hanging around now that Tera is 30.

But Tera discovers that, weirdly, seemingly random people are dreaming exactly the same dream. Moreover, it appears that each person who has dreamed the strange dream appears to become more intelligent. And that each 'victim' lives a little further westward, and that they all live along exactly the same parallel of Latitude—29° South in fact. She creates a website to see if anyone else has noticed but at first no one has, since the parallel is very sparsely populated. But then she makes contact with retired US professor Dalby Telford and his wife Abby who are studying the dying art of the siesta in Argentina. They too have noticed the dream and that those affected are behaving strangely.

At Telford's expense, they go to Africa as the effect creeps slowly across Swaziland and the Orange Free State. Tera is able to do before-and-after IQ tests and determines that the dreamers raise their intellect by about 10%, while the Telfords utilise every imaginable ray and particle detection test and find nothing. But by now they realise that the band along the parallel is ever widening, effecting increasing numbers of people; that the shared dream changes to a very different dream about once a fortnight and, most startlingly of all, that it occurs only when the subject is in the REM state at precise moment that the centre of the galaxy passes directly overhead.

Telford can offer no explanation, but when Tera has reached 2000 subjects, each dreamers with provable increased intelligence, he decides to publish their findings. The serious scientific journals ignore them completely. In desperation, Tera goes to the media and makes a complete dill of herself as she tries to announce their results. She is roundly ridiculed by serious scientists but does manage to attract great interest from the New Age whackos.

A year after it began, the effect passes once more over Australia but by then the band is kilometres wide, many thousands are affected, the scientific community is realising it is all true and Tera is a great hero. Now every media outlet wants to interview her but she finds she has made serious enemies as well. For the increased IQ is only a symptom—what the subjects are actually gaining is wisdom, and as a result they are collectively intolerant of the superstitious nonsense of religions, immune to the marketing manipulations of the big corporations, wise to corrupt authority and undeceived by the spin of politicians and utterly opposed to the murderous ways of the military establishment. John Lennon's dreams are beginning to become reality.

But by the time the band engulfs the entire Earth, everything changes. The distant powerful aliens responsible make direct contact and Tera (along with Alice who they seem to think is a real person) is the conduit through who they deliver a dire warning.