Lovereading.co.uk
Helping you choose your next book

You loved your last book...but what are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

Nomad

Written by Alan Partridge

With Rob Gibbons, Neil Gibbons and Steve Coogan

Published by Orion Books

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Alan Partridge

NOMAD

ALAN PARTRIDGE

With Rob Gibbons, Neil Gibbons and Steve Coogan



First published in Great Britain in 2016 by Orion Books,
an imprint of The Orion Publishing Group Ltd,
Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment,
London EC4Y 0DZ

An Hachette UK company

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Copyright © Rob Gibbons, Neil Gibbons, and Steve Coogan 2016

The moral right of Rob Gibbons, Neil Gibbons and Steve Coogan
to be identified as the author of this work has been
asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs
and Patents Act of 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the
prior permission of both the copyright owner and the
above publisher of this book.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

ISBN (Hardback) 978 1 4091 5670 3
ISBN (Export Trade Paperback) 978 1 4091 6787 7

Typeset by Input Data Services Ltd, Bridgwater, Somerset

Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc



www.orionbooks.co.uk

nomad

/ˈnəʊmad/

noun

1 a person who does not stay long in the same place; a wanderer.

2 a member of a people that travels from place to place to find fresh pasture for its animals and has no permanent home.*

3 *Scottish*: ‘not mad’.

*The author would like to point out that he does have a permanent home.

PROLOGUE:

WHAT I TALK ABOUT WHEN I TALK ABOUT RAMBLING

***

PUMFF. A FOOT IS DOLLOPED onto the ground. In under a second it is load-bearing, locking in place to become a willing pivot for the body as a whole. It accepts the load dutifully, bending a little at the knee in a small act of genuflection. Above it, a roll of the hips tells the trailing leg to scramble and it responds by hoisting itself aloft and catapulting its cargo (the other foot) forwards. This foot reaches out and finds land. Pumff. Then it too locks in place and takes the weight of its owner before silently passing the centre of gravity back to its counterpart like an Olympic torch made of physics.

This transaction is repeated, back and forth, back and

forth, and it's soon clear that this tandem act is propelling the whole unit forwards in fluid locomotion.

What I've just described might sound complex, but it's not a newly invented dance or corporate team-building activity, it's something we all[1] do every single day. Give up?

I'm talking . . . about *walking*. Because this book is *about* walking.

Yes, walking. 'Oh,' some of you are saying. 'I don't walk. I'm not a walker.' Oh really? Then how did you get to the bathroom for your morning toilet? How did you make it from your house to your car? How did you get from the door of the newsagent's to the freezer where they keep the Magnums (Magna)? Perhaps you slithered there? Or was it teleportation? No. You walked, mate. Accept it. Because we all walk. All of us.[2]

It's an activity that has been part of our lives for so long we take it for granted. A walk can be as humdrum as strolling to the larder to grab a plate of eggs or popping from your desk to a colleague's desk to tell her to turn her music down. It can be as emotional as walking down a church aisle, to give away a daughter at her wedding or bear a pall at a funeral. Our walks are as unique as we are – from the pert strut of a Strictly Come Dancer to the no-nonsense galumph of a Tory lady politician. Yes, walking has been with us for some time and looks set to stay with us for many more years to come.

When I stroll, my heart swells, my mind races, my soul

1 Not all.

2 With some exceptions.

soars. For that is the power of walking. It doesn't just transport us, it *transports* us – which I know is the same word twice, but the second time should be said louder and slower.

When I promenade, I am overcome with gratitude. Not for the scenery – the UK Highways Agency and our obsession with 'affordable housing' have seen to that – but for my own legs. Legs are the heroes of walking. They are among the largest limbs on the human body, comprising an average of 45 per cent of our overall length, and yet so little is known about them. What I can say is that these dignified, uncomplaining peninsulas are integral to walking. I'll go further: they are essential. These are my steeds, my ferrymen, and they deliver me onwards.

And with that thought tumbling round your head like hiking socks in a washing machine, please enjoy this book.

Alan Partridge, August 2016

1.

COLD OPENING

***

FOUR MINUTES. Four minutes to save East Anglia.

Four minutes. Just 240 seconds. I look at my watch, and in slow motion I mouth the word 'Mooooootherrrrrfuuuuuckerrrrrrrr' (motherfucker). The brow of the hill is still some way away and the bald facts are these: I have just four minutes to make it to the top or I risk the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of men, women and children. People will die.

My feet pound the asphalt, really giving the popular road surface what for. Wham, wham, wham, wham. The cat's eyes peer back at me, as if the frightened earth is peeping out at its punisher from beneath a tarmac duvet.

Wham, wham, wham, wham. Want more, do you? Wham, wham, wham, wham.

I pick up the pace. Another check of my watch. Sixty seconds, forty-five seconds. Twenty seconds.

I'm so close I can almost smell the hill's brow.

Ten seconds, five seconds. Three seconds. One second. Half a second. A quarter of a second. A fifth of a second is all that stands between triumph and disaster. Ten metres to go. A sixth of a second remains. Five metres. Exactly one seventh of a second left. Two metres. My calves are so distressed they're almost mooing, like their farmyard namesakes. Just one-hundredth of a second and then . . . YES!

I've done it. I've done it. *East Anglia is saved.* I look down from the hilltop at Norfolk, silently weeping for the lives that were so close to being snuffed from us. They shall never know how close they came to death. For I have reached a roadside bench atop a hill, from where I can look down on Suffolk, literally as well as metaphorically.

Right on cue, the clouds give way and beams of sunlight fire through them, as if God is trying to laser off an unsightly tattoo (Suffolk). Having saved so many souls, I am overcome with a full-body euphoria and I realise I'm celebrating, jumping up and down, arms aloft, like Rambo on the steps of Philadelphia town hall.

And then: sandwiches.

***

As the tuna-and-sweetcorn filling explodes in my grateful mouth, I reflect on what has just happened. In reality, of course, no lives were at risk. And even if they had been I

could have done little or nothing to help them. So what gived?

Well, what I've just been describing was little more (little more!) than a stunningly effective motivational technique. I'm attempting a long walk and I find I'm able to cover great distances by dividing the journey up into chunks, telling myself they have to be completed in a certain (arbitrary) time frame, and attributing grave consequences to failure.

It's a technique I pioneered in primary school. 'Climb to the top of this rope or Grandad kills himself.' 'Catch the ball three times in a row or you contract herpes.' And in this case, 'Get to the brow of that hill in four minutes or Norfolk is destroyed by an insane billionaire who is ready to detonate a subterranean munitions dump hidden beneath the county and blow the landmass sky-high.'

And it's working. Yes, I sometimes have to artificially elongate the final second by splitting it into half, a third or hundredths of a second and counting them slowly, but I'm chipping away at the walk. And God Christ, it needs chipping away at. The Footsteps of My Father Walk is 160 miles long.

I look ahead to the brow of the next hill, and the sunlight lasers into my eyes. I allow them both to squint, the bony caves of my eye sockets narrowing a little, as if they're each trying to grip an ill-fitting monocle. I enjoy this expression. The seriousness of the frown percolates down into my body and I feel more Dimbleby than ever.

I fix my gaze on the horizon, or just past it, lean into the wind and begin to stride towards it, desperate to get there in six minutes to prevent the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

from being simultaneously beheaded with one long sword. I am Alan Partridge. I am under a little pressure but I am focused and happy.