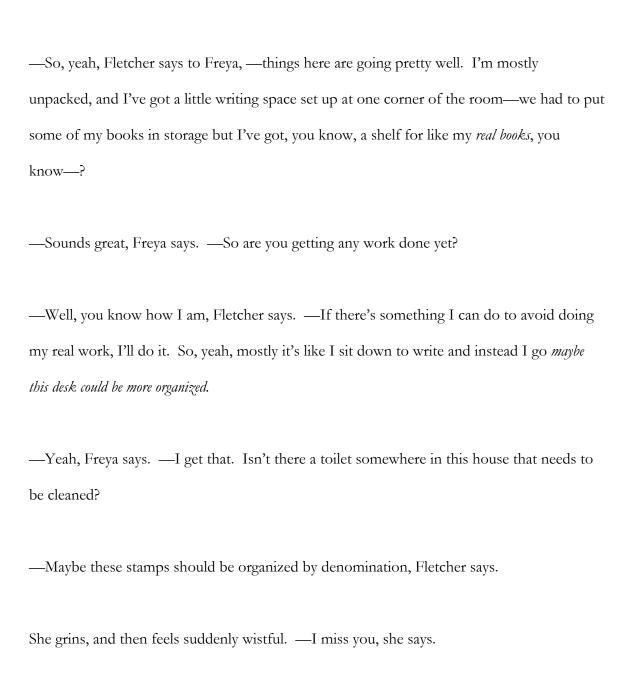
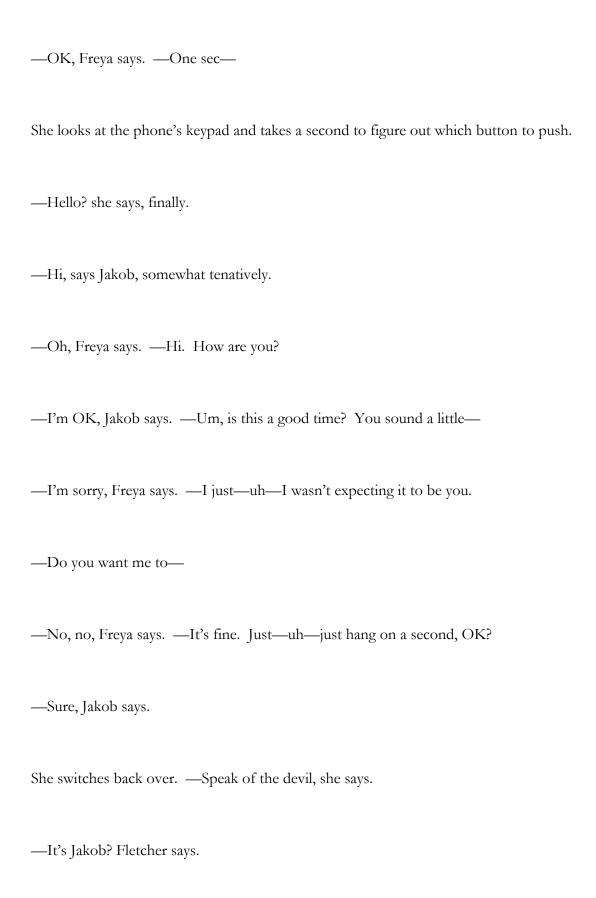
This is an excerpt from *Imaginary Year*, a work of serial fiction by Jeremy P. Bushnell. Visit the *Imaginary Year* website (http://www.ImaginaryYear.com) on Mondays and Fridays for new updates.

73 / IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FUN



—I miss you, too, he says. And then there's a minute where there really isn't much to say
either way.
Fletcher finally ventures out into the silence. —So, uh, he says, —how are you, anyway?
—Not bad, Freya says. —I just renewed the lease on this place, but I can't really afford it on
my own, so I'm still thinking about getting a roommate, which, let me just tell you, does not
sound appealing. But I think I can go for a while longer yet—I've cut back on some of, uh,
I guess what you'd call niceties, so—I don't know. We'll see, I guess.
—I'm kind of sad, you know, that the idea of you and I as roommates didn't work out. I thought it would maybe have been fun.
—It would have been fun, Freya says. —But I think you're at a really good place right now.
And I wouldn't have wanted to-oh, wait, can you hang on a second? I'm getting a call on
the other line.
—Sure, Fletcher says.
—I'm really sorry, Freya says. —I hate call waiting, I always think it's so rude. It was Jakob's
idea to get it on this line in the first place and I've just been too lazy to figure out how to
cancel it—
—Go already, Fletcher says.



—Yeah, believe it or not. Listen—I hate to cut this short, but I should probably take this
—OK, says Fletcher. —Uh—tell him I said <i>hi</i> .
—I will, says Freya. —Take care, OK?
—I will, says Fletcher.
—Talk to you soon?
—Absolutely.
—OK, she says, —bye.
—Bye, Fletcher says, and she switches back over.
—Hi there, she says.
—Hi, Jakob says.
—Sorry about that—I was just on the other line, with Fletcher. He says <i>hi</i> , by the way.
—Oh, Jakob says. —Tell him—um—will you tell him I said <i>hi</i> back?

—Sure, Freya says. —Did you know that he moved to Pennsylvania?
—I think last time I talked to you you said he was thinking about going.
—Well, Freya says, —he went.
—Damn, Jakob says. —That's crazy.
—Something like that, Freya says.
—So, um, Jakob says. —I was just wondering what you were up to tonight.
—Well, Freya says. She shoots a glance towards the duffle bag, leaning, stuffed with clothes,
against the door frame. —Actually—I was actually thinking about spending my evening
down at the laundromat. Pretty hot plans for a Friday night, don't you think?
—Yeah, Jakob says, laughing a bit. —Um—well—far be it from me to interfere with getting
your laundry done, but I was just wondering—I mean, it's been a while since we've— he
stops here, flustered, and recalibrates something in his head before beginning again. —I
guess what I want to ask is do you want to see me?
—Are you asking me if I want to come over? she asks.

—Um, he says. —I guess. Yes.
She thinks this through. —I'm not going to come over, she says, finally. —But if you want to meet me over at the SpinCycle you can.
—That might work for me, Jakob says. —I think I have some laundry that needs to be done. What time do you think you'll be getting there?
She looks at the clock. —Let's say eight.
—Okay, he says. —I might be a little late; to get over there I need to take a bus.
—That's fine, she says. —Should I wear a rose in my hair so you know it's me?
—No, Jakob says. —I remember. Unless you've changed that much.
—No, Freya says. —I haven't.