

Brief Encounter Revisited, or, The New Threes

This is a little story to help you remember the new three-letter words in CSW12.

So there I was on the train on my way to a rehearsal with this new experimental orchestra specialising in Chinese music, accompanied by my QIN which as you no doubt know is a sort of zither with silken strings. It's a rather delicate instrument, so I was not best pleased when this girl comes along and in an attempt to put her own bag on the luggage rack knocks mine off. 'Oh, SOZ', she says apologetically, 'I hope I haven't done any damage'. She's rather pretty, a dark Jewish-looking girl, with eyes full of what the French call AME or soul, but I bought the instrument in Laos and it cost me about a thousand million ATS (I know that sounds a lot, but an at or att is 1/100th of a kip, and there are 13000 kips to the pound). So I hesitate. 'ERM...' 'Oh dear' she says 'when someone UMS that means they want to tell the truth but don't like to. Can I make it up to you in some way? I've got an Indian takeaway here I could share with you'. She opens a box to show me a curry and a rather large ALU or Indian potato. 'MEH', I say, declining the offer; I'm not a great fan of Indian food. 'Tell you what, just tell me a bit about yourself and we'll call it quits'.

'All right' she said. 'I used to be a computer programmer for a trendy London advertising agency, writing applications in AWK, but the job got me down. There were a lot of fairly obnoxious OIS in the office, you know, blokes who were into taking GAK and TIK...' 'What are they?', I said; I can't keep up with the drug jargon of the young. 'GAK is cocaine' she explained, 'and TIK is crystal meth. Not my scene, and my RAV, my spiritual teacher, wouldn't approve at all. And I didn't much like having to write in AWK, it's clumsy when you have to manipulate things at the the level of the individual PEL or pixel. And then the boss wanted me to help out with market research, which basically meant having to SUG people – you know, you call them up pretending you just want their help with a survey, but really you're trying to sell them something. So anyway, I gave it all up and now I live out in the wilds in a GER, that's a sort of Mongolian skin tent, rather like a yurt.'

I look out of the window. There is a GAW in the sky, an imperfect rainbow, supposed to be a sign of coming wet weather. 'What's it like when it rains?' I ask. 'Oh, they're amazingly waterproof', she says. 'And although I've set up camp on a meadow by a river, to be near a source of water, it's actually quite a well-drained ING, so no problem there. Well, we're just coming into my stop. Been nice talking to you.'

I think of asking her for a date and she seems to hesitate for a moment but before I can get the words out the train stops and with a wave she's gone. So that relationship is just another of the great ifs and ANS, things which might have happened but did not. Ah well, I've learnt a few new words for next time I play Scrabble...

-- David Sutton