

Brief Encounter Revisited Part Two, or, The New Fours

This is a little story to help you remember the new four-letter root words in CSW12. It excludes inflections of threes, but for completeness these are listed in a supplement. The new words are capitalised.

So here I am on the train again on my way to yet another rehearsal with this new experimental orchestra specialising in Chinese music, but this time I'm carrying my ERHU, which is a two-stringed instrument played with a bow. And imagine my delight when the same pretty girl gets on the train. 'Hi', I say, 'How are you doing?' 'Oh, hi' she says, 'nice to see you again. You off to music practice? I'm just off to my MAHA yoga class.' 'Ah, is that like hatha yoga?' I say. 'Similar but it incorporates all eight of the classic yoga disciplines. Have you ever done yoga?' 'No, my thing's judo', I say. 'Had a good bout at club last night, went on for a quarter of an hour and at the end I won by just one KOKA, that's three points, the lowest score awarded for a hold or throw'. My stop is approaching and this time I manage to pluck up courage. 'Look, I don't suppose you'd like to come round to my place for a meal tonight, I mean if you're not doing anything. I cook a pretty good Indian'. 'I'd like that' she says. 'About eight suit you?' 'DEFO' I say, and then add 'NANG!' which is not like me because I'm not into street slang, but I'm feeling a bit flustered. 'I take it that means cool', she smiles. 'See you then'.

After practice I make the mistake of telling my Scots friend and fellow musician Hamish about the date and my meal plans. 'Och, you want to cook her a bit of HASS', he says. 'That's a kind of oatmeal pudding made with sheep's gullet. AWFY tasty. It has this wonderful OATY flavour.' 'No, no', joins in Enrico, another of my orchestra friends, who comes from Naples (we're a very cosmopolitan lot). 'You want a good-a Italian dish, with a nice-a meat sauce like RAGU or SUGO'. 'Don't make me want to FLOB with your PUKY Scots and Italian dishes' says Vladimir, another musical colleague. 'Why not a beautiful chicken KIEV, that is named after my home town?'. 'Non, non, if you want to impress this girl with your cuisine it must be French' says another friend Jean-Claude. 'What about a TIAN, a vegetable gratin baked in an earthenware dish, like my old Provençal grandmother used to make?'

But as I say, I've already made up my mind that it's going to be an Indian evening, and on the way home I call on my good friend Deepak, who runs the 'Ye OLDE Indian Corner-shop'; it doubles as an OFFY or off-licence, so I can pick up some wine there as well. 'Let's see, I say, 'I need cauliflower, potato, pigeon pea and spinach, so that's some of your GOBI, ALOO, DAAL and SAAG. Oh, and some betel leaf, that's PAAN isn't it, and do you have any of those GOJI berries?' Deepak calls his BAHU to deal with the order; it's quite handy having a daughter-in-law who lives with the family, especially when you're trying to run a shop. 'Preparing a feast, are we, BHAI?' says Deepak (I like the way he addresses me as brother). 'Who could be coming round, some MILF perhaps?' Deepak prides himself on his command of English slang, so much that he sometimes leaves me behind. 'What's a MILF?' I say. 'Why, a sexually attractive middle-aged female', he says. 'She's not in the least middle-aged', I say indignantly, 'and neither am I'.

But I realise when I get home that I am in fact a bit out of practice with these situations. How did young women expect to be entertained these days? What sort of music might she like? She didn't strike me as any kind of GRRL, into punk rock and that sort of CACK. More likely to have classical or operatic leanings; perhaps she'd be a fan of some DIVO like Pavarotti. We hardly wanted to spend the time watching television, even if it hadn't been the usual load of KACK on that evening, a long documentary about some so-called showbiz SLEB. I put some wine-glasses out; after the derogatory remarks she'd

made at our last meeting, about her colleagues being on tik or TINA – that's crystal meth – I knew she wouldn't be expecting anything in that line.

I prepare the table and for a touch of atmosphere add a DIYA, a small oil lamp used in Hindu devotions, that Deepak gave me for Christmas. I'm not sure that this is a good idea, because I manage to spill hot oil on my hand. 'ARGH', I say. An oil lamp can be a tricky thing, what my Irish grandmother would call a HOOR. Lucky I didn't set the place on fire, as I only rent the flat and might have found myself saddled with a large bill for BOTE, or compensation for damage to property.

All is ready and I even have time to do a bit of work on the computer. I'm an experienced programmer, though a bit of a NOOB when it comes to the Internet, and I add a few lines of code to the program I'm currently working on, knocking up a quick routine to BLIT some data, that is, to transfer a large array of bits between different locations in the computer memory. Next I look up a few things I wanted to know on Wikipedia. I'd been reading a book about a naturalist's travels and had run into a few unfamiliar words; a dictionary's OK but the advantage of a WIKI is that it often gives you an image. Ah, so that's what a WELS looks like, a sort of giant catfish, originally American but introduced into European rivers. And that's a SUNI, a small S. African antelope. And a CRIA is apparently the offspring of a llama, while a DEGU is a small rodent native to Chile, also known as the Brush-tailed Rat. And what was that other word I didn't know? Ah yes, TEIN, a monetary unit of Kazakhstan, one hundredth of a tenge.

Finally I have a quick look at my Maori friend Tairongo's VLOG, or video log; we had been in touch by VOIP the evening before – it's so handy now that you have this system for converting analogue signals to digital so you can make very cheap telephone calls over the Internet. It showed him at a celebration with his NGAI, his tribe, after his rugby team – he plays for Auckland – had won a match against RONZ, or the rest of New Zealand. 'Great show', I'd told him. 'CHUR', he said, which is how these taciturn New Zealanders express informal agreement.

Then there is a knock at the door and there she is. She looks stunning in an Indian-style dress; I think the material is AIDA, a finely meshed cotton fabric nearly as soft as FLOX or floss silk, and it's decorated in the traditional style with ZARI, a kind of thread made of fine gold or silver wire.

We eat and get to talking. She tells me about her holiday in North Africa, where she had stayed in a RIAD, a traditional Moroccan house with an interior garden. I wondered if she had encountered any prejudice, being Jewish in a Muslim country, but she said not at all, that the UMMA, or body of Muslim believers, set great store by hospitality and had been very kind, though the man of the house had had to leave after a few days as he was making an UMRA, a lesser pilgrimage to Mecca made at the same time as the greater pilgrimage or hajj. She had missed his company, as he had been a very educated man and they had had some interesting discussions about FIQH, or Islamic jurisprudence, an expansion of sharia law.

The evening goes all too quickly. I see her home. She doesn't ask me in, saying she has a very early start tomorrow, which dashes my spirits a little, but then she says 'Next time!', which raises them again, and kisses my cheek with a big MWAH. I walk home, feeling that kiss burn on my cheek like a big XRAY or letter X. Next time!

Supplement:

The new fours also include plural or third person singular forms of the new threes, and also a number of new plurals for existing threes that did not take –S before.

Plurals for new threes: ALUS AMES AWKS GAKS GAWS GERS INGS PELS QINS
RAVS SUGS TIKS

New plurals for existing threes: AKAS AUAS CUMS FEWS HAOS UMUS

I also regret that I found it impossible to incorporate the new four-letter word CLIT, colloquial for an intimate part of the female anatomy, without jeopardising what I felt to be the delicate romantic nature of the piece. Readers are welcome to remedy this deficiency according to their own imaginations....

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