



Stories for the Train

Tales on the go

0:14:00

My cousins; Jan's pickled onions and later on a completely different story about sausages

By Roy Woodard

Part 1: The Pickled Onions

Ok,,, this may well be confusing so let me explain. Last night Anita [my cousin] tells me about Jan [her sister / my cousin #2] and the pickled onions. So today I'm at home writing this up when who walks in but Jan,,, , , takes umbrage at what she sees as us [me and Anita] talking about her behind her back,,, ,, ,,,, , and starts reading the story from over my shoulder..

Every so often she stops reading and corrects me on the finer points of the evening,, so of course I then start adding these comments to the story as she talks,,, , this does not go down well , .

Jan squidges in besides me,,, starts typing her own version of events,,,

- 'To set it all out straight' as she puts it,,, ,, - in a typewriter type erhh,, typeface, to differentiate..

Her comments and my responses are indented. Verbal in italic, and those written,,, , in upright.

In Part 2, „The Sausages: walk on parts and minor contributions are made by Manny, my wife, and Bob who is Anita’s husband.

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This is the story,,,,,,,,

It is Sunday,, , , we – Anita, Bob, me and Manny- are driving down to the Shankly Café in Liphook. Anita has got on her old riding boots - with sequins god help us- and is telling me about how she’s sitting with Jan in the Dolphin Fish Bar, Grayshott last Friday,, it was raining, ‘Christ it did pour, lovely fish, I had the hake and Bob’s [Anita’s’ husband] not fussed so he had the cod.’

I’m considering her -Anita’s- burgundy riding boots and a memory comes back from 50 odd years ago,,,,,,,,,“You remember those white,,, what were they, plastic / PVC boots you had,, and that miniskirt with the gold chain,,,,, you had a waist like what ,,,, , ?” I show her my hands, press thumb against thumb, index finger against index finger to demonstrate the impossible slightness of her youth.

“Yes she’s saying, ,, they were PVC, right up to my arse,, now that was classy,,,, I don’t think I ever took them off,, apart from,, you know,, emergencies, she hoots,, ,, course that’s when I had legs, now I don’t know what they are , or where they came from,,, [she looks down] I mean look at the scrawny things, like twizzle,, I mean,,, where did they come from?? Who’s got my legs, that’s what I want to know??

“So the dog then” I press on,,, [I couldn’t bear to talk about her legs again and I could see where this was heading],, “is she getting one?”

[The dog is Jan’s new project,, it’s our favourite topic at the moment.]

“Hwell” ,, her-well ,,,, Anita goes,, rolls her eyes,, “

[just like my mum used to do,,, it’s a long-time family joke, we both smile]

“She’s only talking about getting a Great Dane would you believe.”

Me; “argh,, so that’s it , I thought something was up,, she was talking about Great Danes last week - you know we went to the boot fair down in Ford don’t you? And then later, when I asked Manny what she was chatting about ,,,, , and Manny doesn’t answer, she just looks out the window and starts talking about trees or what’s for tea,,, this is what she does when she’s hiding something,, they call it a ‘tell’ in poker, people scratch their ear or some other subliminal tick when they’re under pressure ,, ,, Manny looks away and changes the subject,,,,, so I knew Jan had told her something, but she won’t let on. It’s in the genes,,, don’t you think,,, this craziness of Jans,,, it’s the family genes?, I have it too, I know I do,, I can see the signs ,, she’s so like my mum,,, was your dad like it,,, I can’t remember,,?”

[her dad and my mum,,, brother and sister]

“she gets a bee in her bonnet and off she goes,,, I thought she was,,,
,, ,, ,, ”

[,,, Jan; mid 60's,, two bad hips, arthritis, tendonitis in the right hand and now starting in the left, hates dirt, can't stand mess and just bought white carpets and white leather sofas, , she even has coasters under the legs of the coffee table to stop marks in the carpet, a bad shoulder, and a 'foot like a bloody stump' ,, - but also the proud owner ,, I am told ,,,, 'of one perfectly good fanny going to waste.']

Jan; 'I did say that, it is a perfectly good fanny, but you're wrong about the hips. It was three actually, ones been replaced, twice.

And so what have you got against coasters anyway, they're extremely sensible, you could do with a few.'

"Yes," Anita goes on,,, "the bees are certainly buzzing up there ,,, " making circular motions to her head with her index finger, "there'll be no stopping her now,, anyway we're sitting there in the chippy talking about this bloody dog she's getting ,, and you can imagine the creation when it treads it's muddy paws all over her worsted ,,,,, ,

Jan;; "well that's spelt wrong for a start,,

its worsted, any fool knows that"

,,, carpet,,, ,, she's finishing off my batter,,, it was far too greasy for me,,, and her on a diet too,, and helping herself to my mushy peas,,, ,

Jan; "no that's simply not true, I'm not having that,, I don't like mushy pees,,

*,
I don't like mushy pees!*

wouldn't touch them if you paid me, , did
she tell you that because it's not true!"

Me; " No, No,, it was me,, I made up the
mushy pees."

Jan; "so why'd you make it up then,
what's the
point of that?"

Me; "it's a story Jan,, it's a story,, it
gave,,I don't know,, a sort of balance to
the sentence,a sort of rhythm,, and it was
funny."

Jan; "But why lie,,??? Whats so funny
about mushy peas,?, ,Theres nothing funny
about peas you know,,, I bet she did
tell you I ate her peas,, didn't she,,,
well I didn't, I hate the things."

Me; "No Jan no, , oh my sweet lord ,,, ,
I made it up,, it's just a story Jan for
Christ sake."

Jan; "well you are such a lying bugger
sometimes

'' ,

MY COUSIN IS A LYING BUGGER!

no ,, that's not right,, I take that back,
Your

problem , , , , , , , if you don't mind me saying so , , , , , is that you can't tell the difference between the truth and your own stories and you get things all mixed up , sometimes I don't think you even know when your talking rubbish.

And then the two of you are talking about me , , , , , then having the gall to tell me about it , , , , , and then you're writing about it , , , , , **writing about it!!! AND while I'm still standing here!!**

..... But I put my hand up to the batter, it was delicious"

Me: Jan starts tapping away at the laptop , , , , ,

Jan; "might as well set it straight, and I'll fix your spelling while I'm about it. And what on earth are all these commas for, it's virtually unreadable, not to mention extremely irritating."
'I put my hand up to the batter, it was delicious'

Me; "no, no , , , , , leave the commas , , , and the spelling , , , I like it that way , , , , ,"

Jan; "You are odd you know , , , , , You've always been a bit,

*,,, ,, well lets just say,,,
different,,. Let me get rid of a few of
them,,,, at least put the worstead
right,,,"*

*Me; "No, NO,, , just leave them be,,, its
fun,,, its art,,,,"*

Anita: *,,,,, , you would think she would get her own peas but she never does,,, no,,, why should she when she can have mine,, ,,,, then she half inches all the ketchup sachets off the table,, all of them,,, and those little individual milk cartons,, sticks them in her bag and that's when she remembers her pickled onions,,, bloody hell,,, pulls them out of her bag –she's brought them from home in a bit of cling film,,,,, 'no point paying for them' she goes,,, plonks two on her own plate , then two on mine,, then three on Bobs,,, and Bob,, you know,,, he can't stand the things, never has, never will,, and she knows that."*

Jan; "Bloody daft,,, if your going to write it,, I,, well you might as well do it properly",,,, 'It wasn't cling film, it was one of those fridge food bags. Self-sealing so it wouldn't stink out my bag,, think I want the smell of vinegar in my bag,,,,, nooo thank you very much.

Did she tell you then about the pickle onions? Did she tell you I tried to stick my fork into a particularly round and smooth one and the bloody thing shot past my right elbow, hit the wood panelling behind me and rolled down to the floor,

most surprising really,, you wouldn't think it had so much get up and go.'

End of part one

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[laughs]

'Now my problem was - do I eat it (it would now be dirty) or leave it there. If I left it there they would know I had brought it with me,, -the ones they sell at the chippy are big, dark brown and uneven in shape, not very nice at all, although you can be sure they don't roll I suppose. It's laying there on the floor for all to see so I give it a shove and it rolls into the corner. I left it there nestled by the panelling.'

[We're all sitting around laughing,,, early afternoon,, Colombo's on the telly,,

, cups of tea,,, ,

Me, Manny and Jan,, banging out her side of things on my laptop]

Anita goes on; I told her, that dog will kill you ,, she'll never be able to hold it,,,,, , , , ,

Jan; "I can,, course I can, , Great Danes don't pull,, that's a fact, you can look it up,, I've had two in the past,,,,,",,
'Great Dane's don't pull, I've had two in the past, she knows that!'

Me: "yes thirty odd years ago,,, when you were fit,,, what happens if it sees a cat,, it will , , ,,"

Jan; "Rubbish,, I can hold a dog, and they don't pull,, , everyone knows that, and it's nobody's business anyway, not yours, not Anita's not anybody's."

'IT'S NOBODY'S BLOODY BUSINESS !!!!!'

,,,,, it'll pull her over, have her legs up over her ears within a week. And then who's going to be looking after her,,, muggins here that's who. You won't like that will you Bob,,, Bob,, [she nudges him],,,, when Jan comes to live with us,, with the dog,, bed baths,, , with the broken leg,,, I say you won't like that,,, will you Bob?"

I look at Bob, who continues to stare at the road in front of him , both hands gripping the wheel, [he is a cautious driver, maintaining a judicious 37 miles an hour no matter if the limit is thirty or forty or fifty, we go everywhere at 37 miles an hour, even the car park] anyway he makes no response, ,,what he's got is the look of a man thinking of better things,,,, a man dreaming of golf courses; that final glorious drive to the eighteenth,, or that last runner at the Cheltenham Cup [he always has been a keen sportsman] or could it be as simple and as wholesome as those doughnuts on Brighton pier last Friday [a decent man,, and big,,, coming up to 17 stone, he has that rugby player type of solidness,,, he loves a good doughnut does Bob] hot from the fryer, a dusting of casting sugar smudges those cupid lips, a gentle breeze falling on his rosy cheeks.

Jan has another thought; " and I bet she didn't tell you how she [Anita] won first prize at the Churt garden flower show,,, her pansies had all died a few days earlier .,, she had to get some more from Tesco's that Saturday morning,,had the cheek to put them in the show,, and she only went and won,,, 1st prize would you believe it!!!,,,

"And I bet she didn't tell you about the year before when she had pinched my lovely -AND HIGHLY SCENTED!!- double headed daffodils and entered them. Won first prize again and not only that but *then* she gave them away after the show.

To one of the judges of all things and
they were
mine! My flowers don't you know."

'They were my flowers!'

"Bet she didn't tell you that, pinched
them from my front garden while I was down
the shops,,,, then had the nerve to ring
me up and laugh about it,,I mean,, such a
bloody cheek she has on her."

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Me to Jan; "so what do you think of it  
then,,  
the story"

Jan; "It's all right,,, very confusing,,,  
not  
as good as your other stuff"

Me: "So you don't like it then"

Jan; "No, not really, sorry honey  
bunch."

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## Part 2: The Sausages

Like I say,, I am writing about how we are sitting in the Shankly; me ,  
Manny, Bob, Anita.

And Jan is still reading, and typing.

Manny offers me a sausage,, , “I can’t manage it,,,, do you want my  
sausage” she asks.

“No” I say,,,,, “that’s what you do, you’re a feeder, trying to make  
me fat so that I’m not fatally attractive to other women,,,

Manny sighs; ‘Not the sausages again’,,

I know your game now,, it’s like this,,, I’m ,, what, about 3 stone  
overweight,,, not obese but it’s not good, well is it,, I should be about  
13 stone and I’m what,, 16?”

*Jan; still irritated by the onion  
story,,,,, raises an eyebrow,, .*

*“If that makes you happy,,, and why wasn’t  
I invited,,,?”*

Me, “Well think about it, we have, what,,, call it one fry-up a month  
for,, how long have we been together,,?”

"38 years last , , , , " , , , says Manny

*Jan; I wasn't invited!*

*Me; "Jesus Jan, , , your on a veggie diet, , , and you refuse to eat at the Shankly"*

Me, "Exactly that's my point, , , , now you have 2 sausages and I have 2, , but you always give me one and I always take it, , and now we come to the devious part, , , I've been thinking about this for some time now,

"Yes" says Manny, , , , , "I know you have, you've told me."

I've been thinking, *assuming*, that I'm only eating one more than you, , , only I'm not am I, , it's all an illusion, a delusion, and you're a, , , what did I say you were, , , , , an enabler, , , , you give me one of yours and so you have one but I've not got two have I , , , no, , now I've got three, , , so that means I'm eating three times as many sausages as you, , , every time , , so that's me eating 2 more than you every time we sit in a café. Okay so, , , , , , , , that's one fry up a month , that's 12 a year, multiply that by 32 years and that's what, , 320, , call it 360, , that's, , that's 360 breakfast's times two extra sausages..

Bob: "384."

Me: "What?"

Bob; "384, , , 12 a year for 32 years that's 384."

Me: "Well thank you for that Bob, So okay then that's ,, 384 sausages multiplied by two ,, because I have two more than you so that makes,, erhh,, 600 and ,, 700 and ,, Jesus Christ Bob,,, what is that then?,,,"

Manny: "I don't think it works like that Roy,,, I mean what about all the puddings,, the pasties you like at the butchers at the top of the road, the beers, the,,,,, ,, " ,

*Jan:* "She's right,, you do like your puddings,  
but I have to say,, you don't drink much,,, ,  
hardly at all."

Me: "yes ,, yes,, so I eat the occasional pudding,, I know,, , now can we just get on with the maths,,,,, ,, " ,,  
,, , okay then , I accept that about the pasty,,, but, I'm on to something here and you know it,,, let me work this out,,,,, ,, so that's 360 ,, 384 breakfast's multiplied by my two extra sausages, that's,,,,, ,, 7,,, , two 350's plus a couple of 34's are,,, ,, 700,,, ,, two 34's are,,, ,, 68,,, ,, that's seven hundred and sixty eight sausages,, so then you say there's,, what,, 8 sausages in a pack,, so that's about ,, about 80 packs,,, now a pack of sausages is usually ½ a lb., so that makes 40lb. and that, that is almost 3stone. ,, add the pasty from yesterday,, what's that,, ½ lb / 8 ozs. And there you have it,, which is exactly how overweight I am,,, 3 stone,,, I rest my case,,, I tell you it's a plot Manny,,, a conspiracy,, , and you're the head honcho of this outfit Manny,, the ringleader, the Mr Big,, ,, *El*

