

"Darjeeling Dave"

It was some years ago now, at Banbury Folk Festival, when I was accosted by a very strange looking young man. He swept across the room and greeted me like a long-lost brother, hugging me and shaking my hand with a strong grip.

Grinning at me, he announced "My name is Darjeeling Dave, just call me Da! I like your stories.". "Hello Da, thankyou." I responded comparatively weakly. He was indeed a strange looking cove, with hair cut un-fashionably short, brown corduroy trousers and a home-knitted multi-coloured tank top. But there was something about him I found intriguing.

He proceeded to tell me his life story. He had been born in Birmingham, but had moved to Banbury at a young age, when his parents relocated to work at General Foods, the company that made Birds custard and Maxwell House coffee, as well as Angel Delight. Dave was brought up as coffee drinker, if that's what you might describe Maxwell House as.

All that changed when he was at sixth form college, where a dusky girl introduced him to the delights of tea.

At this point Da burst into song, to the tune of Greensleeves, which I will try and emulate.

*"Green tea is my delight,
Green tea from morn til night,
Green tea won't get you tight,
I love to drink my green tea."*

"Changed my life", continued Da. "Really got into drinking tea. Now I start the day with a pot of strong Yorkshire, will have a mug or two of Earl Grey at lunchtime, and then, when I get home, a nice relaxing Darjeeling. That's how I got my name." He smiled again. "Before bed, I always have something delicate, a rose infusion perhaps, something like that."

"Got quite a collection of teas now. So much so, that I've had to build a pagoda in the garden, to hold everything. There's the tea caddies, just reached 200 of them, then 30 different type of tea pot, a multitude of mugs, cups, saucers and bowls. Not forgetting the spoons. One of my favourite tea sets is the one I got from Sankeys, you know the people that make toilets."

"How did that come about?" I enquired, for I was really starting to be interested in the tale Da was telling.

"Well" he said. "I'd been away on a training course, down in Bath, and I came across these super-smooth, non-flush urinals. They make use of nano-technology, don't you know. I'd had some difficulty in keeping some of my tea pots clean, so I contacted Sankey, and asked if they thought of making a range of keep-clean tea pots. Well, they hadn't then, but they do now, and I demonstrate them at trade events, alongside my day job as a lab tech. at GF."

"Wow!" was all I managed, before Da carried on.

"That's where I met her" he said, blushing. " It was up at the NEC."

He then burst into song again :-

*"One enchanted lunchtime,
Da he saw a strange girl,
Da he saw a strange girl across a crowded room.
So with mug in his hand, he went up and said,
My name it is Darjeeling Dave."*

"My name is Lucy, pleased to meet you." said the girl. "Would you like a beer? I like dark beers"

"I told her I was happy with my tea, and she accepted that." Da went on.

"She was striking, very striking. Just how many girls do you see with bright pink hair, long on one side, and shorn away on the other, to show off the 4 inch long glass earring. I asked her about the earring.

She said her dad had been a carpenter in the TV production arena, and had worked on the set of Only Fools And Horses. Do you remember the one with the chandelier?"

I nodded.

Da nodded in acknowledgement, and carried on. "Lucy's earring is made from part of that chandelier that fell. Honest."

"Lucy and I got on like a house on fire, and she's moved in with me. That's where I thought I might have a bit of a problem. She only drinks ale, no coffee, no tea, just real ale. The dark stuff.

So I've had to build her a shed with a bar in the garden just along from my pagoda.

Made a sign to hang over the door. She is proper happy with it."

"What does the sign say?" I asked.

"LUCY'S PORTER CABIN"

Hope you enjoy reading this Marv West!