

Task 1. Script

Yes, that was a wonderful story. I was ... there was a new railway line constructed across far western China, from a place called Urumchi, through a pass called the Zungarian Gate ... into what is now Kazakhstan ... and I thought it would be nifty to ride on one of the first trains, of course it's an extremely remote part of the world. So I go with a friend of mine called George Robertson, and the two of us go out from Urumchi, crossing the desert and now we're about 150 miles west of Urumchi and it's just sand dunes and nothing. And then suddenly the train stops and I look out and there's this 'halt'. I mean it's not a station, there's no town there's just a sort of watering tower, and so I said to the conductor 'Why have we stopped?' and he said 'Oh, we're taking on water' or something like that and we'll be stopped for half an hour. So I get out and stretch my legs in the blazing sun, sand dunes, camels until I go and talk to the engine driver and while I'm doing so, I hear a voice from the si... behind me, saying in pretty impeccable English: 'Excuse me, do you speak English?' And I turn round and there is this vision of loveliness, this beautiful Chinese woman and I said 'Yes, I do actually,' and she said 'Good!' in a very sort of matter of fact slightly unsmiling way.

Task 2. Script

She looked at her watch and she said 'This train is stopping here for another 27 minutes. Have you ever read the works of Anthony Trollope?' And I'm thinking, wait a minute this is really strange, but 'Yes, I like Trollope a lot.' 'Good,' she said. 'Would you be willing to discuss with me *The Eustace Diamonds*, particularly the character of Lady Glencora?' I'm thinking 'this is not happening', but I do my best, struggling. I mean I must have read *The Eustace Diamonds* twenty years before. I could just about remember odds and ends, so I struggle through a conversation with her and then the guard waved his green flag and blew a whistle and she said 'Quick, quick go back otherwise you'll miss your train.' So I ... but I said 'You're beautiful. I love you. I want to live with you for the rest of my life'. And she said, 'Don't be so silly! Get in the train. Give me your business card.' So I didn't have one, but George had one so I scribbled my name and the train was moving. And the last vision I have of her was her scrabbling on her hands and knees to pick up my card while we went round the corner and I went back into the compartment and I said 'George, I've just had the most really strange experience ...' So we then went travelling all the over Siberia for the next couple of months and I arrived back in Hong Kong and there was a letter ...

Task 3. Script

...there was a letter and she said: 'Dear Mr Winchester, I just want you to know that meeting you that day was just one of the most extraordinary events of my life. I...am married to a cadre in the Chinese communist party and we were... he committed some infraction and we were sent to this ghastly little town ... It was called Kwi Tun. Nothing happens here. It's 30 miles away from the road and from the railway line. There's no one here that speaks English. I'm the only person, but I'm desperate not to lose my language, so the international train goes through every Tuesday and Thursday and I cycle all the way across the desert, down to the train station, wait for it to come in, knock on every compartment to see if there's anyone there that speaks English. Occasionally there's some sort of migrant worker ... but one day I meet this man who not only can speak English, but is English and, my passion is Trollope. He knew all about Trollope. I was able to speak for 25 minutes about Trollope and it was like ... you were like an angel from heaven. It was wonderful.' Anyway, we're the very best of friends. We have been for years.