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Concertinas Anonymous

by Kenneth Tyndal

She was on holiday in the town, not exactly a holiday looking after a house of a friend of a friend, who had gone to Uruguay for the winter.

The visitor had been to this town before, this town in the south east of England. She liked it, its winding streets, its narrow lanes, its view of the hills from the top of the town, the gentle curves of its hills. She liked hills.

She was relaxed in this quiet town and with the easy going manner of the inhabitants. She had been here three or four weeks, slipping into the relaxed swing of the place, strolling around, striking up conversations with strangers at a drop of a hat.

But she was becoming so relaxed, that she began to feel that she should...push herself...(it's hard to put into words), try something different..."to take her out her comfort zone".

She picked up a copy of a monthly magazine which included listings of local events. And so she saw it, under the musical section, Tuesday evening, 8.00pm, at a well-known pub, "Concertinas Anonymous practice session".

"I'll go along and see what that's about" she told herself. She had never picked up a concertina in her life. She was intrigued by the name of the group, "Concertinas Anonymous".

The Tuesday evening was dark, dismal, damp and windy. Just the right sort of evening for the "Concertinas Anonymous" to meet up, she thought, as she hunched her way through the elements.

She arrived five minutes early. Went up to the bar and asked a fresh faced long-haired young man, "Excuse me, do you know which room Concertinas Anonymous are in tonight?"

"Who?" he asked.

"Concertinas Anonymous" she said

"Is it a pub game?"

"No, it's a musical instrument"

"I'm sorry, I don't know what..."

He was interrupted by an older woman sitting up at the bar with a glass of white wine next to her.

"What is it you want, love?"

"I'm looking for Concertinas Anonymous, a group that meets here on a Tuesday night".

"There's no-one of that name in here tonight, the function room already has a group in there and it's notwhat did you say the group's called again?"

"Concertinas Anonymous."

"Never heard of them. What do they do?"

"Play concertinas I expect. I have never met them before. I saw the ad in the local magazine."

"What magazine is that?"

She told her.

"John, pass me over the What's On mag, please," she said to the young barman.

The visitor pointed out the Tuesday night listings for "Concertinas Anonymous" at her pub.

"I've never heard of them and they are not booked here for tonight."

At that moment, two friendly-faced, grey-haired men walked into the bar. They were carrying small square shaped boxes.

"Have you got concertinas in those boxes?" the visitor asked.

They looked at each other and then at the visitor.

"Yes."

She didn't know what to say next as she knew they didn't have a room to practice in.

At this specific moment in time, in this pub, in this dark, wet, windswept town in the south east of England, Concertinas Anonymous indeed were anonymous.

But this was only the beginning.

