



Hi Yo Silver!

Today for our story, let's grab something 'at random' from the vast list of story ideas that I keep on file here ... how about this one - a cryptic note: RFTT ...

I think you would probably have to be Canadian to have any kind of chance to guess what that stands for. It is 'Reach For The Top', and is the name of a game show on Canadian television, one that features teams of four students from each high school, competing against each other to answer general knowledge questions. Winning teams progress through various levels of the competition, and the whole thing culminates in a national championship every year.

As to why this item is in my 'story idea list', well of course you can guess; I was a member of our school team in my final year of high school. (And no, I can give you the bad news right away, we didn't make it to the national championship!)

The process for selecting the four students was left up to each individual school, and in our case, the four of us were 'hand-picked' by the teacher who had been assigned the job. She went at this fairly methodically, making the selection with the intention of covering as many 'bases' as possible. Rather than pick four math whizzes, she tried to make sure that our team had at least one person who could be expected to answer each question, no matter what genre.

I was the 'music man' on our team. Each program always featured a few questions on classical music, and whenever these came up, the other three members of our team sat back and relaxed; "This one is for Dave!"

I mentioned earlier that we didn't make it to the championship, but how far did we get? Not very. We won our first game - by quite a wide margin - so were feeling pretty cocky, but our second game was a much more closely fought affair. It was decided by only a few points, and we came up just a bit short.

And I was partly responsible for that, having made a mess of the music questions. "Identify this well-known piece of music," came the question, followed by a recording of an orchestral 'gallop'. "Ah, I know that," I thought to myself, "it's the William Tell Overture!"

"No, it's the Light Cavalry Overture," a little voice said inside my head. William Tell! Light Cavalry! Which was it ... At this point, I can no longer remember which I answered, but I had guessed wrong, and the question went to the other team, which now had a very easy answer!

That was not my only error, so you can well imagine my feelings when we ended up losing by such a small margin. "It's all my fault!" Well, of course it wasn't just me; we had all answered some correctly, and some incorrectly. Once it was all over, and we were being treated to hamburgers at a drive-in on the way back to our school, there was no finger being pointed at David as the 'goat'.

This was long before the days of home video, so all I have left of the experience is a bromide photo that they presented to each member of the losing team as a keepsake, and I have mixed feelings about that. On one hand, I would love to see those programs now, watching David from more than 40 years ago spring for his buzzer as the questions came along, but I don't think I could bear to see his face as he struggled with that decision ... William Tell? Light Cavalry? Quick! Quick! Answer!

David Bull
Seseragi Studio
Nagabuchi 8-4-5 Ome City
Tokyo Japan 198-0052
<http://astoryaweek.com>



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Nagabuchi 8-4-5 Ome City
Tokyo Japan 198-0052
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