

Cara a Cara (Tête-à-Tête)

by 'Musafir'

I get some specialized medical supplies from a mail-order pharmacy. It so happened that my last consignment didn't arrive on time, so I called their toll-free number for assistance. The announcement said, "for English press one. Para el espanol la prensa dos." I simply pressed one on my phone dial. There was another announcement, "All the agents are busy serving other customers. Your call is very important to us. Please wait for the next available agent. If this is an emergency, please hang up and dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency."

After that, I was treated to the most boring English folk song, "Lady Greensleeves" in the background for 33 minutes. I was so annoyed that I feared having a heart attack. Suddenly, a voice came on the phone, "Did you know that heart attack is a leading cause of death among American males. Please check your blood pressure and cholesterol regularly.

"Lady Greensleeves" started playing again in the background. Another ten minutes passed. The voice on the other end said, "Our agents are still busy serving other customers. Your call is still very important to

us. Please stay online. someone will help you as quickly as possible. "Lady Greensleeves" started playing again in the background.

Another five minutes passed. I heard a clicking sound and my call was disconnected. I don't know about them but



the call was really very important for me. So, I pressed redial on my phone. The announcement said, "For English press one. Para el espanol la prensa dos." Thinking that el Espanol may be faster I pressed dos. Yes! El espanol was faster.

"Si tiene fiebre presione 1, de lo contrario presione dos (If you have fever press 1, else press 2.)"

I had a fever for the first two days. I did not have it on the day I called the pharmacy. I pressed 2.

The next question was "si tiene tos presione 1 de lo contrario presione dos (If you have cough press 1, else press 2)."

I had a mild and minimal cough, but there was no option for that. I pressed 1.5 by pressing 1 followed by the star (*) and then 5.

Suddenly, the phone at the other end started ringing then I heard a recording that said, "Si quieres recibir taco de res presiona, para prensa de pollo 2, para frijol prensa 3 (If you want to receive beef taco, press 1, for chicken press 2, for bean press 3.)"

I just pressed 3 in a hurry because I didn't want to be disconnected again. Later it asked me for my name address and the mode of payment. At last, I had a nice Mexican lunch which was better than waiting till eternity to get my medical supply.