

18 February 2013 12:32AM

She was deep in thought, head down, flicking purposefully through a large volume of the Encyclopaedia Britannica - a small pocket version of the Oxford English Dictionary to her right, opened at a page with the word *esoteric* underlined heavily. Directly in front of her were numerous sheets of paper with crossword grids printed on them.

Eric sauntered in and plonked himself down on the edge of her desk. 'Hiya, how's it going - thought you did these at home and e-mailed them in?' he asked cheerily.

It was five seconds before she looked up, irritation etched on her face - 'Well I would, except it's pandemonium at home - got the builders in and thought I'd slip into work for some peace and quiet while I set tomorrow's Quick Crossword. You know, *peace and quiet without any interruptions?*' she said with obvious emphasis.

Eric leaned over to get a better look at the words and clues she was working on.

'Do you mind?' she said testily, covering her work with her arm.

'Just seeing if there's anything controversial in it. Couldn't give us a heads up so we'll know if we're going to busy down in the Mod Squad tomorrow?' Eric asked hopefully.

'Certainly not! You'll just have to wait like everyone else. Now if you don't mind....'

Eric didn't budge. 'You know they get upset if it's too hard or has clues that don't suit them' he mused.

'Er ... really? Well that's news to me Eric' she said with a touch of sarcasm.

‘The worst thing is when it’s too easy - then they go right off-topic and make work for us’ he sighed

‘Work? You mean you actually work? Look, Eric as much as I’d love to sit and chat, I do have a crossword to set. You know where the door is - it’s the same place you came in’ she said gesturing towards the exit.

Eric didn’t budge. ‘Some of the things they moan about - jeez, it’s only a crossword for fu....’

‘I’m counting to three Eric. One...’

‘...honestly, you’d think it was the end of the world....’

‘Two...’

‘You sure you can’t give me an idea.... ok, ok I’m going’ he said as he slid off the desk, hands held up in mock surrender.

It was when he turned towards the door that she noticed the post-it note with “**MOD ME BABY**” written on it, stuck to the back of his shirt.

She was about to say something then closed her mouth, suppressing a giggle as Eric disappeared through the doorway.

Three seconds later his head re-appeared ‘Certain you couldn’t just....’

The pocket dictionary missed his left ear by inches and thudded noisily into the wall opposite the doorway.