

Eat at the Unis



6:45 a.m. – the Gilgamesh Express pulled into the station right on schedule, its big, black locomotive gushing steam and a haughty attitude. The blue-suited engineer pushed up his special W-ray goggles and leaned out the cab’s window to peer ahead into the morning gloom. The tracks were not well lit because the train had no headlamp. The owner of the railroad had decided that the light was an expensive luxury so he’d removed it. Instead, he reserved the front of the engine for advertising. New Deal dealerships, lighter-than-hair products, the Hummer School of Podiatry, the American Hemorrhoid Alliance – no company that paid in advance was denied. The current advertiser was The Unis Café, and the front of the engine was *supposed* to read “Eat At The Unis.” Unfortunately, the sign painter had left out the first “a,” plus “The Unis” was nowhere to be seen – that part of the sign must’ve fallen off the engine since the last train station identification. The engineer hadn’t discovered this yet. He was only aware of a familiar aroma seeping into his nasal corridors. This station wasn’t named Ginkgo Junction for nothing! High overhead, the local skywriter had also committed an advertising blunder. He’d been hired to publicize the Exact Altitude Astronomy Syndicate, but a sudden bout of dyslexia jumbled the words. Surely these two presumably unrelated events were anomalies, and Ginkgo Junction was otherwise a paradigm of orderliness. Or *was* it?!