

“Hello Auntie Edith, lovely to see you.”

Edith and Jane have just entered La Flava Floro. The place is almost empty. There is a man in the far corner eating a meal.

“Hello Julia, lovely to see you, my favourite niece.”

Edith and Julia chuckle.

“This lady is my friend Jane.”

“Hello, I’m Julia. I’m Auntie Edith’s only niece.”

Jane smiles.

“Hello.”

“Could we have some lunch please?” asks Edith.

“Certainly, what would you like? We have a special today of white rice, peeled new potatoes and peeled and sliced organic pears.”

Edith glances at Jane.

“That sounds delicious.” says Jane enthusiastically.

“Right, we’ll both have the special please.”

“Fine, if you would like to sit down somewhere I’ll go and get your meal prepared.” smiles Julia.

Edith and Jane go to a table against a wall, away from the main route from the entrance to the reception counter.

Edith and Jane are eating their meal, just chatting generally. Jane seems to be a bit on edge. She seems to keep glancing at the man eating his meal.

After a while, the man finishes his meal, gets up and goes to the counter and calls out “Madame?”

Julia appears through an archway and accepts payment from the man.

The man returns to where he was sat, picks up his briefcase and leaves.

Jane looked relieved.

“Now that we are alone, I have a confession to make. Well, not so much a confession ....”

Edith looks attentively yet does not speak.

“Well, the editor of Trade Magazine gave me instructions, he said to get the story, write it up in detail and then add a final paragraph giving journalistic comment questioning the whole idea.”

“Oh!” says Edith.

“Well,” continues Jane “it is nothing personal to your project, he does it for any new idea that does not come from a well-established company. It happened with another article I wrote about a new idea. Well, I was unhappy about it so I wrote more than enough good stuff so that some would have to be lost but I did not write the knocking copy.”

“Good for you” says Edith. “So what happened.”

“Well, I knew when the time that Trade Magazine had to go to press would be, so I delayed a bit and got the story made ready to print just in time and so it was too late for any knocking copy to be added. I think he realized, but he did not say anything. Though I expect he may be making a point of looking at what is going on this time. I don’t know what to do. I need the job, I’ve only been there three weeks and he said when I applied that he would offer me a month’s trial. But I can’t write knocking copy about someone else’s dream.”

“Ah!” says Edith. “May I make a suggestion?”

“Yes, please do.” says Jane.

“Well, just say that your conscience was troubling you and that you told me over lunch in a local restaurant and that I thanked you for your honesty yet added that in view of what you had just told me that I would not let you back in the building nor let you discuss the project with the staff.”

“Oh, I couldn’t do that!”

“Why not, by the time that you tell him, it will be the truth.”

“Oh!”

“But do not worry, you can come and work for us if you like.”

“What?”

“I am looking for someone to learn all about localizable sentence technology so that we can produce a book for beginners. I would like you to find out, under certain specific conditions, everything about the project.”

“Conditions?”

“Yes, every question must be in writing, every answer must be in writing and if a demonstration is needed it will be recorded. That way what you learn and how you learn it will be recorded and we can then use that information to produce the book. You can be credited in the book, or not, as you choose, but you do not have to decide yet, only when the book is ready to be published.”

“Oh, and so that you will be telling the truth. Thank you for your honesty: in view of what you have just told me I will not let you back in the building nor let you discuss the project with the staff.”

“Oh, I was looking forward to seeing John and Henry again.”

“You can, I’ll send them out to you in the car park.”

“Oh! I suppose that you will tell them not to tell me anything at all about the project.”

“Yes, but I will not tell them why. If you choose to come to work for us, I will explain the learning process that you will follow and why that is happening. I say if you choose to come, it is your choice, the offer is definite and unconditional.”

Jane looks at Edith in amazement, she does not know what to think.

“Think it over, please take your time, sleep on it and make the decision that you feel is best for you.”

Jane feels confused, yet Edith is a friend and so says nothing.

Edith then starts a general conversation and Jane, at first hesitantly, joins in.

After a while, where Jane becomes gradually more relaxed, Edith suggests that they return.

“So, shall we go?”

Edith goes to the counter.

Jane follows.

Jane observes a sign on the wall behind the counter.

For service please call out Madame or press the button.

“Ah, that is why that man called Madame.” says Jane.

“Yes ... Madame ...” says Edith, raising the volume of her voice after saying Yes to Jane and before calling out Madame to Julia.

Julia arrives after a short time.

Edith pays Julia for both their meals.

“I’ll walk to your car with you.” says Julia.