

“Hello Jane, how are you?”

Jane is at an exhibition of emoji art and is facing a wall looking at a picture. Margaret, the editor of Arts Magazine, has asked her to visit the Emoji Art exhibition and to write a review for publication in Arts Magazine. Jane thinks that she recognises the voice and tenses. She turns. It is, as she feared, the editor of Trade Magazine.

Jane remembers that she is a lady and speaks politely.

“Good afternoon.”

“Here in a personal capacity or has Edith sent you to find out about it all?”

Jane does not reply, but tries to smile but fears that her smile may look forced. The editor of Trade Magazine seems to think that she works for Edith now. Well, let him think that if he wishes. Jane decides that she will neither encourage that belief nor discourage it. All for the best if he does not know where she works now.

“Well, I must move on, I can’t let you keep me talking all afternoon.”

Jane seethes.

“Well clear off then!” snaps Jane quite loudly. “You came and spoke to me, not the other way round. I don’t work for you anymore and I don’t want to bother with you. I have not been keeping you talking. Clear off!”

Jane feels flustered.

The editor of Trade Magazine looks shocked and looks from side to side.

Jane looks from side to side and sees people looking.

The editor of Trade Magazine turns and walks off at high speed, heading for the door.

People, having looked due to the noise, gradually, yet fairly quickly overall, turn away and continue to view the pictures.

Jane continues to view the pictures, but her concentration is not really on it, as she is somewhat upset, both by having been approached by the editor of Trade Magazine and by the fact that she wonders if people are noticing her, and wondering if there will be any repercussions.

The next morning Jane is at her desk in an open plan office at Arts Magazine. She is trying to write a review of the Emoji Art exhibition and thinking over the fact that she did not really take a lot of it in after the rumpus.

“Why did he have to speak to me. I don’t work for him anymore and he sacked me.”

Jane is feeling that she made a fool of herself yet feels that she was justified in shouting at him. The two feelings do not seem to gel together properly.

“When he suggested that I would keep him talking I should have just smiled and said nothing. Why did I erupt at him? Well I was justified to erupt at him after the way he treated me, spying on me using a mobile telephone.”

Jane continues trying to write her article. She decides that, as the exhibition is open into the early evening that she will go along after work and try to gather more notes.

It is early afternoon.

“Jane.”

It is Melanie, the Deputy Editor of Arts Magazine.

“Could you come along to Margaret’s office please.”

“When?”

“Now.”

“Well I am in the middle of writing a paragraph”

“No, leave it please, Margaret is waiting.”

“Oh, alright.”

Melanie leads the way to Margaret's office. Margaret is seated behind her desk. She raises her right hand, palm upward, inviting Jane to take a seat on one of the chairs that is along the wall to Margaret's left. Jane sits on the fourth chair from the door of a row of seven chairs. Melanie sits on a chair that is one of a similar row along the wall to Margaret's right, though a chair nearer to the door than Jane.

“Jane,” begins Margaret “there is something that we need to talk to you about.”

Jane feels somewhat nervous.

“I gather that you became somewhat distressed at the art gallery yesterday.” continues Margaret.

Jane says nothing.

“Jane, we are very concerned for you.”

“Has he complained to you about me?” asks Jane.

“No.” responds Margaret.

“So was it the gallery owner, or someone else who was there gossiping?” asks Jane rather defensively.

“No Jane, nobody else is involved. The fact of the matter is that you have been sat at your desk all morning talking out loud, going over and over the story of what happened.” replies Margaret.

“Your colleagues, concerned for you, alerted Melanie and Melanie alerted me.”

“Me, talking out loud!”

“Yes Jane.”

“So what happens now, are you going to sack me too?”

“No Jane, you are not being sacked.”

“So what is this meeting about then?” asks Jane somewhat impetuously and nervously.

Margaret leans forward and presses the button on the intercom unit.

“Could you continue please?” she asks.

“Yes Ma’am.” replies the receptionist.

Jane wonders what is going on.

Nobody says anything.

Shortly afterwards, the door opens, the receptionist enters, followed by Edith. Margaret nods gently to the receptionist, who leaves the room, closing the door behind her.

“Hello Jane.” says Edith.

Jane is surprised and her expression shows the surprise. She wonders why Edith is here.

Margaret continues.

“Jane, I have an assignment for you. I would like you to go to the Poetry through the Language Barrier evening that Edith is putting on, and write an article about it for Arts Magazine.”

“But, I haven’t finished the article about the Emoji Art exhibition, I need to go back to finish looking at it.”

“Not a problem Jane, just forget that article.”

“But you want it for the magazine.”

“Yes, and Caroline and the trainee have gone to see the exhibition this afternoon. They will write the article, well Caroline will write most of it, the trainee will be learning yet hopefully will make a few suggestions and if so then maybe Caroline will be able to use one or two of them.”

“But Oh.”

“You can, if you wish, stay in a hotel, on expenses of course, though Edith has kindly offered that you can stay at her place if you wish and has offered to drive you down this afternoon if you agree.”

Jane feels somewhat confused, everything seems to have been arranged.

“We can call in at your home for you to get some clothes and whatever if you wish.” says Edith.

Jane has accepted Edith’s offers and, having stopped off at Jane’s house on the way, they are now travelling to Edith’s home.

“I feel foolish.” says Jane.

“No need, you have been under stress.” replies Edith.

“I felt sure that the editor of Trade Magazine would complain about me.”

“Well he did, though not to Margaret, to me.”

“To you!”

“Yes, he evidently thought that you were working for me. Shortly after nine this morning he rang me and complained.”

“Did you tell him that I don’t work for you?”

“No.”

Jane looks at Edith.

“Edith ...” and a smile appears on Jane’s face.

“Well no, it was not that. The thing is, one of my staff, Caroline, not the Caroline at Arts Magazine of course, another Caroline, well she had noticed the Emoji Art exhibition advertised and she told me about it. I wanted to know if there was anything in it about communicating through the language barrier at all, so I offered her the chance to go as a business trip and she agreed. So when the editor of Trade Magazine rang I thought at first that he was referring to Caroline. Your name was not mentioned.”

“Oh.”

If this is a movie version then the following is a flashback sequence with Edith in her office and voices of Edith and the editor of Trade Magazine.

The telephone rings.

Edith picks up the receiver and answers.

“Hello.”

“Is that Edith Gatford?”

“Yes. Who’s calling please.”

“I’m the editor of Trade Magazine. I ringing to complain about that woman that you sent to the Emoji Art exhibition. She’s rude and stupid.”

“How so?”

“What do you mean, ‘How so?’. She told me to clear off, twice, loudly in the art gallery. People turned and looked. You need to do something about her. Either sack her or keep her under control in your building.”

“Ah, could you put your complaint in a letter please, not an email, a proper letter, and send it to me please.”

“What do you need a letter for, I’ve told you what happened. Just do something about it.”

“Well, I need to investigate and I have to be prepared in case the matter ends up before an Industrial Tribunal and I need to present documentary evidence.”

The flashback is now complete.

“What did he say?” asks Jane.

“Well, I don’t know what, if anything, he said: he put the phone down. I was somewhat concerned. I needed to find out what had happened rather than just leave it, but I was concerned to keep an open mind and to hear both sides before making any decision. I was thinking about what to do when the telephone rang and it was Margaret telling me of her concerns about you and asking my advice.”

“Oh.”

“She was concerned for you, to help you, not to pick on you.”

“So I offered to drive over to offer support. I was thinking about it all and it did occur to me that maybe you had been talking out loud about your worries in the office when you worked at Trade Magazine and that that was how the editor had known that I had offered you a job.”

“But the mobile telephone that had been left”

“Well, this is not some story where everything that is mentioned must be a clue. In real life lots of things happen. So, a man had lunch and left his mobile phone by mistake, it was left on, and many people have their mobile phones on all the time in case they get an incoming call or text message.”

“Are you one hundred percent sure of that?”

“Well no, I cannot be one hundred percent sure. But, well, ...”

“Maybe you are right, yes you are right, I need to just forget about that mobile phone and just accept that I probably put two and two together and got a large number!”

Edith smiles.

“You are not the only one who has put two and two together and got a large number.”

“Oh, you mean that editor fool.”

“Oh, and me, I assumed, quite wrongly, that he was talking about Caroline. By the way, I did not mention anything about it to Caroline.”