

Edward has arrived for his first day at work and John has been showing him around.

They are now in the common room and drinking cups of peppermint tea.

Edith enters.

Edward stands.

“Welcome Edward. I hope that you are settling in well.”

“Yes, thank you.”

“John, sorry to interrupt but could you come along to the office to discuss something that has come up please. You can bring your drink with you.”

“Yes certainly.”

John turns to Edward.

“I don’t know how long I will be, so take your time to have your drink and then if you could go back to the lab and say to Henry that I have had to go to a meeting with Edith and then carry on with the learning curve that would be great.”

“Yes.”

Edith and John leave and go to Edith’s office.

Edward sits alone, from time to time taking a sip of peppermint tea, and thinking.

There is now a flashback sequence.

It is the next week after the Poetry through the Language Barrier evening. It is press day at Trade Magazine. Yesterday Edward had sent his completed article to the editor of Trade Magazine.

Not having heard anything back, Edward wonders what is happening, so goes to the print studio to ask one of the printers.

“Hello, I’m Edward Stanley, I’m one of the staff journalists. I’m new.”

“Hello lad.” says a much older man.

“Has my article arrived with you?”

“It certainly has.”

“Oh good.”

“It’s up to you I suppose but it’s a bit nasty that last paragraph.”

“Oh!”

“Well, it’s up to you.”

“Well what exactly, I thought that it was a good, very positive write up.”

“Look lad if you think that that is positive wait a minute, let’s check this out properly.”

The printer brings the article up on the screen. It has been typeset using a different font, with the title now in a larger size of type than the article and the Trade Magazine logo is at the very end of the last line of the article, as it is with all articles in the magazine.

“Just have a look at that lad. Is that what you wrote?”

Edward, somewhat concerned, looks through the article. It is looking as if it is probably exactly what he wrote, until he gets to the last paragraph, which seems to use bits of what he wrote about it being a very pleasant evening and that the technology clearly works but then saying that the idea lacks any useful practical purpose and although it might well be fun for a few poems and the like that sensible people will not bother with wasting time to find any serious practical uses as there are millions and millions of possible sentences that can exist and that it is ridiculous to consider encoding them all.

“I never wrote that last paragraph!” cries Edward indignantly. “It’s nasty rubbish. I praised the idea. The project does not suggest encoding every possible sentence that can exist!”

“I’m sorry lad. I take it back. Something’s happened.”

“Well, the editor asked me to send it to him early as he wanted to check it as I am new. That sounded reasonable at the time.”

“Ah. Well, we have to print what we’re told to print.”

“Oh.” says Edward, somewhat concerned.

“However. Your name is on the article, so if you say to change it, then I can change it. But be advised, if you do change it you might be in trouble with him. There was a journalist here a few weeks ago who refused to write a put-down article for him and she was sacked. She was older than you though, so more used to life. Nice woman named Jane.”

“... Yes, I understand. But”

“Look, have you got your original article so that I can have a look at it?”

“Yes, it’s on this memory stick.”

Edward hands the memory stick to the printer, who attaches it to his computer and copies the file from it onto his own computer, then returns the memory stick to Edward.

“Look, it’s time for mid-morning break, you go and have a cup of tea in the canteen and think about it. Think what you want us to do then come back and tell me.”

“Yes thank you.”

Edward is having a cup of tea in the canteen, he is worried.

If rubbish like that goes out with his name on it he will feel foolish and cheated. Yet he needs a job. It was very difficult trying to find a job and he was so happy to get one and now there is this problem.

“Hello, may I join you?”

Edward looks up. It is a young woman.

Edward stands.

“Yes certainly. Please do.”

“I’m Angela, I work on reception.”

“I’m Edward, Edward Stanley.”

“Yes I know. I saw you when you came for your interview and when you checked in when you started.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t recognise you.”

“No, don’t worry, you wouldn’t have done. There are several of us on reception, what with visitors and answering the telephone and I was just in the background on both occasions.”

“Ah.”

“You looked worried. Is there a problem?”

Edward feels like telling all to his new friend and asking her advice, but thinks that he should not, both not to spread the story and not to burden her with making his decision.

They chat generally for a while.

“Must get back then.” says Angela and stands to leave.

Edward stands.

“Thank you for chatting.” says Edward.

Angela smiles, then turns and goes.

Edward returns to his problem. The chat with Angela, not about the problem at all, has cleared his mind and he thinks.

Edward remembers two things and links them.

The printer had said ‘... she was sacked. ... Nice woman named Jane.’

A lady named Jane had said to him ‘Did the editor give you any special instructions?’ after he had said that he was from Trade Magazine.

Was it the same Jane?

Maybe, maybe not.

Edward pauses.

'Regardless of whether it is the same Jane or not, a lady named Jane stood up for what she believed was right. I shall do the same. I shall change it back to the original version. My reputation is worth more to me than this job. Right.'

With that, Edward purposefully stands and walks confidently back to the print studio.

Edward enters the print studio.

"Too late lad, you took too long. I had to get on. Nothing you can do now whatever you decided."

"Well, I decided to ask you to change it."

"I don't want to know what you decided."

"Oh."

Edward feels dejected.

"Well, thank you anyway. I am sorry I took too long."

The printer nods and Edward turns to go.

Another older man nearer the door calls him over.

"You would have taken too long if you had turned round and come back in as soon as you went out that door before."

"Oh." says Edward.

"Don't worry lad. Richard has seen you right. It's just that when the balloon goes up Richard can say that he had no instructions from you."

"Oh, thank you."

"Best get back to your office so that nobody notices that you have been here."

"Yes thanks."

With that Edward turns and goes, feeling relieved, yet wondering quite what will happen if the editor notices yes of course he will notice wondering what will happen when the editor notices.