Edith and John are in the common room, drinking peppermint tea. It is mid-morning. John is facing the window, Edith has her back to it. They are discussing the play. This is not, however, a formal meeting, they just happen to be in the common room at the same time.

John is explaining his ideas for the signs for the scenes at the railway station, the hotel and the art gallery.

Suddenly he stops and exclaims "They're galloping."

Edith stands, turns and looks out of the window.

"Ah, yes, we need to investigate what is happening."

Edith and John enter the computing laboratory.

Edward and Caroline are working on computers.

"Don't worry, they won't harm us, but go and have a look out of the window." says Edith.

Edward and Caroline go to the window and look out across the grass.

"Wow!" says Edward. "What are they?"

"Software unicorns." replies Edith. "They are mythical animals and they are galloping to let us know that something is being written into software in this building that does not properly cover all situations that could possibly exist in relation to the application of that piece of software. So they are advising us that we need to look carefully at what we are doing. There is no harm done provided that we do not publish anything while they are galloping about. We need to find what is concerning them."

"They are very beautiful." says Caroline.

"Yes," says Edith "they are white unicorns, with nine green five-pointed stars on each side, and a golden horn, a golden mane, a golden tail, and golden hooves: please notice how one of the stars on each side is partly covered by the mane when they are stationary but when they gallop, the faster they go the more of the star is visible."

"Ah." says Caroline.

"Yet," continues Edith "we need to find what is concerning them. .... So, let us begin. Let us have a look at what you are working on please."

Edith, John, Edward and Caroline return to the computers.

"On what are you working?" asks Edith.

Edward replies "We are trying to write a very short play, a one-scene play, probably a bit longer than one of those one hundred word plays, but not very long at all."

"Good, that sounds interesting." says Edith.

"It is of two people having a short conversation through the language barrier. The intention is that a performance would be like the performance of the poems except that there would be two performers on stage and they would take turns to show a card and speak. The two people would each speak a different language than the other person. They would be having a conversation, just general greetings and talking about the weather."

"So far that is fine. Can you perform what you have please?"

"Well, we have not got the cards made ...."

"That's alright, just the words, both of you speaking English please."

Edward and Caroline look at each other somewhat self-consciously feeling a little awkward at being asked to perform without a rehearsal.

"Hello." says Caroline.

"Hello." says Edward.

"Is it snowing?"

"No."

"That's it, that's the problem, ... or maybe just one of them depending if there are more." says Edith, interrupting.

"They're slowing down." says John.

"Good." says Edith. "Edward, can you delete the 'No.' please."

Edward deletes the line 'No.' from the text of the play.

"They've stopped." says John. "They're starting to graze peacefully. .... They're starting to move slowly back to the meadow."

"Good," says Edith "we have found the problem and solved it. .... Edward, can you make the line that had 'No.' now be 'It is not snowing.' please."

Edward types the text into the computer.

Edith explains. "The thing is, some time ago there was an email from someone who had written to say that using just 'Yes.' or 'No.' to answer a question is not suitable for every language." She pauses. "The person named a particular language. It appears that in that language people answer with a whole sentence that is a statement. I am not a linguist, my knowledge of languages is little more than a general education level, but the person who wrote the email is an expert."

Edith notices John smiling and realizes that John realizes that she has used the phrase 'the person' specifically so as not to indicate the gender of the person who wrote the email.

"Pardon me asking," says Edward "but there are glyphs for 'Yes.' and 'No.' in the system, so why are they there?"

"Ah, they were in the system before the email arrived: they have not been deprecated because they can be useful and are no problem for direct person to person communication between people where the two natural languages of the people are such that using 'Yes.' and 'No.' is fine, the problem here is that you are producing a play where it is possible that at some time one of the performers would have as his or her natural language the language mentioned in that email. I do not know if there are any other languages that have that feature, maybe there are, maybe not, but one is enough and so we cannot publish a play that might go wrong at some future time."

"Oh, right. Thank you for explaining." says Edward.

"Thank you." says Caroline.

"By the way, it was the same person who suggested that a constructed language be used for the standard. The person did not suggest any particular constructed language. As it happens we are going to use Esperanto."

"One thing," asks Edward "the sentence 'It is not snowing.' is not in the list of localizable sentences that we have, and there is not a glyph either."

"Oh, add the sentence into the list please. As for a glyph, could you work with John to try to devise one please."

Edith looks at John.

"Yes, fine." says John.

After lunch, Edith and John walk down to the meadow and observe the software unicorns grazing peacefully. Edith remembers a poem, a poem that can also be a song.

A castle of software

in imagery seen

as a château in turquoise

and three shades of green:

yet a castle of software

can fall to the ground

if over its drawbridge

their golden hooves pound.