

11:50 am.

Edith is in the foyer of the research centre, behind the reception desk, continuing the training of a new receptionist.

They notice a car being driven into the car park and being parked in the visitors' car park.

A man gets out of the car and walks towards the building.

"Right," says Edith "you take the lead with this gentleman. Please remain seated and I will stand in the background so that it is clear to him that it is you to whom he should talk ... but you open the conversation anyway."

Edith stands and moves to the right of the trainee receptionist, and moves back a few paces.

However, as Edith is much older than the trainee receptionist, it is rather obvious that she might be supervising.

The man approaches the door of the building and as he does so the trainee receptionist presses a button so that the door slides to the side.

The man enters the building.

"Good morning sir, how may I help?"

The man looks a little embarrassed, and says "Good morning ma'am, my name is David Evans, .... I wonder if I could possibly speak to Ms Caroline Appleby please."

"I'm sorry, she's in"

"She's not here today." interrupts Edith, rather concerned that the trainee receptionist might have been going to say where Caroline is on holiday.

"Yes - she's not here today - I'm sorry. Can anyone else help?" says the trainee receptionist.

"Ahh, .... well .... not really .... I was .... err .... just passing and ...."

Edith interrupts "Were you perhaps intending to invite her out to lunch?"

"Well .... err .... I was .... possibly .... well, actually, .... yes."

"So you haven't eaten yet?"

"Err .... no."

"Ah, well you can if you wish have lunch with me ...."

"Well .... I .... err ...."

"A business lunch, on the research centre, you met her at the conference on communication through the language barrier and I would like to know more about the presentations at the conference please .... and don't worry, they won't present you with the bill just because you are male .... I've held business lunches there before and I simply sign the bill and it gets charged to the research centre's account."

“Um ...yes ... thank you.”

“If I understand correctly you are the gentleman who suggested and arranged the talk in the café.”

“Yes, ... you know about that? I suppose that Caroline ... Ms Appleby told you about that.”

“Well, yes, just an outline in an email, but there is the article in the New York newspaper and that has more detail, including mentioning you by name.”

“But that article was published before the talk in the café ... and I am not mentioned by name.”

“I think you are referring to the first article ...”

“A second one?”

“Yes.”

“I haven’t seen that.”

“So, lunch. We can each take our own car and I will lead the way if you like. I’ll go and get a copy of the newspaper article to show you.”

David looks slightly embarrassed.

“Lovely day ... good weather ...” he says to the trainee receptionist.

“Yes, it’s nice.” says the trainee receptionist diplomatically trying to put David at his ease.

Edith returns with the copy of the newspaper article and speaks to the trainee receptionist.

“Could you ring La Flava Floro and book a business lunch please.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Edith speaks to David “Shall we go then?”

“Right, yes ... thank you.” replies David.

David turns to the trainee receptionist.

“Thank you for your help.”

The trainee receptionist smiles in acknowledgement.

‘Ah,’ thinks Edith ‘a polite gentleman.’

Edith leads the way, the door opens automatically and Edith and David go to the car park, get in their cars, and set off for La Flava Floro.

As they leave, the regular receptionist returns to the foyer and sits next to the trainee receptionist. As well as getting the newspaper Edith had asked her to return to supervising

reception and to supervise the trainee receptionist in booking the business lunch at La Flava Floro.

Edith is driving at a steady pace along the rural roads, taking care not to leave David too far behind. Edith approaches a turn off to the right from the main road and wonders if David will follow or just drive straight on, in which case so be it. Edith signals to the right, David is about a hundred yards behind. Edith turns and carries on, wondering if David will follow, but he does and after a while they arrive at La Flava Floro, park their cars and walk to the restaurant entrance.

They enter La Flava Floro, and are met by Julia, who has been notified of the booking and that it is a business lunch, so no greeting of Edith as her aunt. Today it is 'ma'am'.

"Good morning ma'am, sir." says Julia.

"Good morning." says Edith.

"Good morning ma'am." says David.

"I'll serve you in the Incunabula Room if that is alright." says Julia.

"Excellent, thank you." says Edith.

Turning to David "The Incunabula Room is very special, there are framed reproductions of pages of printed books from the incunabula period decorating the walls. It is very impressive."

David looks interested.

Edith and David are in the Incunabula Room, waiting for lunch to be served. David is looking at the framed reproductions of pages of early printed books.

Julia enters with a serving trolley.

"These two pages are in Welsh." says David, somewhat surprised. "Not from the incunabula period as such yet from the 1500s."

Edith is puzzled, she had never noticed that before.

Edith looks at Julia with surprise in her expression.

Julia raises her eyebrows and smiles.

A flashback.

The trainee receptionist is telephoning La Flava Floro, after being instructed how to do so by the receptionist.

“Yes, could you book a business lunch for Ms Gatford and a visitor please: the visitor is a Welsh gentleman. Please charge both of the meals to the research centre. .... Yes, they are on their way now. .... Thank you.”

“Good, well done.” says the receptionist after the telephone call has ended.

The flashback ends.

David approaches the dining table.

“Before we eat, while our meals are being served, here is the copy of the second article from the New York newspaper.” says Edith.

David reads with interest.

Edith and David then eat their meals.

Edith has brought a copy of the conference programme with her and after they have eaten their meals she asks David about each of the lectures in turn.

They chat for about half an hour and Edith is impressed with the enthusiasm that David shows for saying what was discussed at the conference.

Their discussion draws to an end, Edith rings the bell.

Julia appears with the bill, which she presents to Edith. Edith signs the bill.

“Thank you, a delicious meal.” says Edith.

“Yes, thank you, delicious, .... thank you both.” says David.

Edith and David then walk to the car park, say their goodbyes and get into their respective cars, and drive away, Edith to the research centre and David to .... well, wherever he was going when he was just passing, as he put it.