

Spectacular Hotel. Jane has arrived early for the launch event and has already checked in. Straight in, no queuing. Jane does not like queuing.

Jane is wandering around the Palm Court, looking at the palm trees.

“Hello Jane.” says a male voice from behind her.

Jane turns and sees a man wearing a very smart suit.

Suddenly she recognises him.

“Michael Walker, ... fancy seeing you here, are you a journalist now or do you work for Spectacular Hotel?”

“Neither, I work for Gigantic Business. I am their Chief Programmer.”

“What, programming as in computer programming, I never knew you did that.”

“Well I didn’t when you knew me before. About two years after you left the company got taken over and, well, in many such takeovers a lot of people get made redundant, but the new owners had a no redundancy policy and gave us aptitude tests and redeployed us. They suggested that I try computer programming and, in fact, I took to it and, dare I say so, I was good at it. Some time later that company got taken over by Gigantic Business and I gradually moved upwards. My immediate boss back then later got promoted to Managing Director and is now semi-retired and is now the Chairman of the company. I am here today as part of the launch event. ... I programmed the Locomotive device.”

“Have you met the people from LocSARA yet?” asks Jane.

Michael goes quiet.

“Ah,” says Jane, “I suppose that you have been told not to say anything about that as it is regarded as just speculation in one of the newspapers. But I know that three of them are coming, from an entirely different and reliable source.”

“It’s meant to be a surprise when the Managing Director announces them.” says Michael almost whispering.

“Ah,” says Jane, “the secret is safe with me. ... But have you met them yet?”

“No, not yet, I gather that the Secretary-General and two of his staff are coming.”

“Not exactly ...” says Jane with a smile.

“Oh, I was told the Secretary-General and two others.”

“Yes that is correct.”

“But” says Michael “Ah is the Secretary-General a lady?”

“Indeed. And you know her.”

“What? ... Who?” asks Michael, who is somewhat surprised at this.

“Do you remember the chess board and the atoms of gold, one for the first square, two for the second square, four for the third square, eight for the fourth square and so on ... and the story of the software unicorns?”

“Yes, ... is it her, is that lady now the Secretary-General of LocSARA?”

“Indeed, and one of the two people accompanying her is John, did you ever meet him?”

“Yes indeed, at one of the meetings, maybe at more than one meeting.”

“The other person is not from back then, she is much younger.”

There is the sound of a raised voice, both turn to look.

“Well there has been a mistake somewhere, go and check with your boss, I’ve known him for years.” says the Editor of Trade Magazine who is being denied admittance at the registration desk.

“Tell him it’s George.” he adds.

Janice is looking a bit confused.

“Very well, please wait here.”

Janice walks across the room. There are not many people already arrived but Janice feels that they are all watching her as she goes to find her boss, the Managing Director of Gigantic Business. Indeed some are, wondering what is going on.

Janice goes through a door.

Janice returns, following her boss as he walks over to the registration desk.

“George, good to see you.” as he greets the Editor of Trade Magazine.

“Hello Walter.”

“Sorry George, there’s been a mix up. I gave instructions about not letting in that young hothead after what happened last time ... I didn’t mean you.”

Janice remembers.

A flashback.

“And if that man from Trade Magazine arrives, don’t let him in.” says the Managing Director to Janice.

The flashback ends.

Janice had not been at the earlier meeting.

Janice feels a bit miffed as her instructions are now being reported in a retrospectively changed way.

“Ah, he’s got a desk job now, I’m not letting him out for a while until he learns a bit of sense.” says the Editor.

The Managing Director speaks to Janice.

“It’s alright, please register this gentleman.”

Janice issues the Editor of Trade Magazine with a name badge.

George and Walter are walking and talking and Jane hears part of their conversation as Walter is speaking.

“... and I am wondering if it was him who took those two Locomotive devices down to LocSARA, someone did a sneaky thing there and I am wondering if it was him ...”

Jane feels rather shocked. She had not thought of the taking of the two devices to LocSARA as in any way sneaky. It was just well, just part of the whole progress of it all.”

The show over, Jane and Michael continue their conversation.

“I’m a journalist now, I work for Arts Magazine.”

“Yes I know, and not just from your name badge, my wife subscribes to Arts Magazine and I have seen your articles about localizable sentences.”

“Ah, you’re married now.”

“Yes, to Samantha. She used to work as the Chairman’s personal assistant, well, when he was Managing Director and before that, she left a short while before our daughter was born. I met her through work.”

“That’s nice.”

While they have been talking more people have arrived and time is passing.

“I’d better get going,” says Michael, “the event is due to start in ten minutes, though judging by the way that that queue is building up there might be a delay.”

“Yes, I’ll go and get a seat ready for when it starts.” says Jane “It’s been nice meeting you again.”

Jane starts to think.

‘Whatever he thinks, it was not sneaky, there was nothing wrong at all. I need to do something about this, I can’t have that young man blamed for what I did, and maybe even being regarded as sneaky it could damage his whole career. Anyway it was not sneaky. No, not at all, not sneaky, not at all, no.’

Jane starts to think.

‘But what can I do?’ thinks Jane.