

Flashback: a few days earlier.

The café near the headquarters of Gigantic Business.

Janice arrives to have lunch with her friends, who are already there.

Janice has had a pleasant morning at work.

Janice notices the man in the bay opposite her friends. The man has a cup of tea and a filled roll and is adding up his columns of figures.

'Is it him, the man at the launch event?' thinks Janice.

Janice joins her friends. Janice looks fed up.

"What's the matter Janice? You look fed up."

"Oh ... nothing."

"Is your boss in a bad temper again?"

"I can't say."

"Is it that business in the rural area? Have they got him annoyed again?"

"I mustn't say."

"Oh leave her alone, we're not in the typing pool now, Janice has her responsibilities, she mustn't say things about work."

"Is it a boyfriend?"

"No."

"Oh, so it is the boss."

"I mustn't say." insists Janice.

Talk turns to television soap operas.

Janice notices the man get up and leave.

'If he is the journalist, listening to our lunchtime chats, seeking a story, then try to find a story from that then.' thinks Janice.

Still in the flashback: later in the afternoon of the same day.

The Golden Astrolabe Hotel.

A smartly dressed man, giving the appearance of a senior businessman, is checking in to the hotel. He signs the visitors book. He notices the name Mariposa Prynter higher up the page, and notes that she checked in over a week ago. He notices her stated address as care of Enormous Telephones, but not the United Kingdom office, the headquarters

office. For his own address he writes the name of a business and an address, yet the business name is just that, a business name, and the address is of a mail forwarding service.

In his room he links to the Internet and searches for the name Mariposa Prynter. There are two results. One is a group photograph of graduates of a Master of Business Administration course. The other, somewhat older, is of a group photograph of graduates of a Bachelor of Arts in History course. Each has a caption. Each caption lists the names of the graduates. He determines which face is that of Mariposa Prynter.

He is walking in the grounds of the hotel. A car arrives, a man is driving, there is a woman passenger. The car stops. A man gets out and walks round the car and opens the door for the woman, who gets out. She smiles and says "Thank you.". She enters the hotel and the man gets back into the car and drives away. The supposed businessman has recognised John from the launch event for the Locomotive device. He recognises Mariposa from the photographs.

'So, the Master of Business Administration from Enormous Telephones head office, who does not seem to have a technical background, is linked to the research centre. And the Managing Director of Gigantic Business is in a bad mood about something to do with the research centre.' thinks the supposed businessman.

Evening. The supposed businessman is alone in the resident's lounge. The supposed businessman is reading a newspaper, hoping that Mariposa will come into the residents' lounge and that he can engage her in conversation.

Mariposa enters.

"Excuse me, is it alright with you if I put the television on so that I can watch the news?" asks Mariposa.

"Yes certainly." says the supposed businessman.

Mariposa watches the news, then turns off the television.

She goes to leave.

"Lovely countryside round here." says the supposed businessman.

"Er yes." says Mariposa.

"I'm here on business at present, I have to go to a meeting tomorrow. It is nice here though. I am thinking of bringing my wife here for a holiday sometime."

Mariposa smiles.

"Are you here on business or on holiday?" asks the supposed businessman.

Mariposa looks at her watch.

"Ah, excuse me if you will please, there is something I need to do."

With that Mariposa turns and leaves.

'Evasive when asked a civil question.' thinks the supposed businessman.

The next morning.

The supposed businessman is in the dining room eating breakfast. Mariposa is eating breakfast.

Mariposa leaves the dining room and goes upstairs to her room.

The supposed businessman takes the opportunity to sit in the foyer and read a newspaper from the selection that is available there.

After a while Mariposa comes downstairs and walks to the door.

The supposed businessman decides to have a walk in the grounds.

Mariposa is getting into the same car that she arrived in yesterday evening, with the same driver holding open the door for her.

'So it looks like she is working there, yet not employed there. And she is being provided with transport back and forth, while staying in a hotel. And she is being careful to say nothing about why she is here. And the Managing Director of Gigantic Business is annoyed at what is going on.' thinks the supposed businessman.

Mid-morning.

The supposed businessman checks out of The Golden Astrolabe Hotel.

The freelance contributor has a story to write, yet he will make no mention of Gigantic Business or of its Managing Director, neither directly nor without naming names, lest the source of how he got the story become apparent.

The flashback ends.