

Edith's office. Mariposa had asked to see Edith and has just arrived and she and Edith are both seated, opposite each other in the lounge area of Edith's office.

"The reason that I asked to see you is to say well, I've been sacked. I no longer work for Enormous Telephones. I was told by email and it just said that my project to be an observer at LocSARA has finished and it is not possible for me to rejoin the management training course as I have missed so much of it. I am being paid one month's salary in lieu of notice and an additional sum to cover the cost of my return journey to my home country.

"I only found out yesterday evening after getting back to the hotel and putting my computer on. I was intending to write to my employer to find out what was going on, because, just after I arrived back at the hotel, the manager asked me to go into his office, where he told me that that afternoon he had tried to charge the cost of my next week's accommodation to my company credit card and the payment had been refused. I was going to email my manager to try to find out why but I found the email waiting for me."

"Oh, I am sorry to hear that. When do you leave?"

"Well, I'm not actually going to go, at least not immediately. The thing is well, I've been seeing someone, we do ballroom dancing on Wednesday evening and I have been going on weekend day trips with him to various National Trust properties and the like and well I don't know if it will last but if I go back to my home country now then I feel that I will always wonder what might have been, and so I am going to stay in England and find out. I can always go back to my home country later if well, you know."

"So where are you going to live?"

"Well, I paid for another week at the hotel using my own credit card and hopefully I can find somewhere to rent and not need to pay for another week. If I stay more permanently then I can think about trying to buy a house or a bungalow."

"Well, thank you for telling me."

"I haven't told the others yet, I thought it correct to tell you first. I didn't even tell John when he gave me a lift to work this morning."

"Well, thank you for that courtesy."

Mariposa leaves.

Edith sits and thinks.

Edith feels emotion building up inside her.

'Seeing someone, why didn't she just say his name and be done with it. And him, after all the years we've known each other. I know there's nothing official between us, but, well, I thought he would have the decency to have told me. All that driving her back and forth. Men! If I had known that the observer was female I would have gone to the station myself. I'm too trusting. I wonder if they all know.'

Edith feels as if tears are about to run down her face.

'None of them must see me like this. What if Rose knocks on the door, knowing that I am in here.'

Edith heads for the office door, out into the corridor, turns right and walks quickly down the corridor and goes out through the emergency door at the end of the corridor, a door that only has a handle on the inside, and closes it behind her.

Edith turns right and rushes along outside the rear of the building, past her office window, past the common room window, past the meeting room window, past the computing laboratory window, oblivious to whether anyone might be looking out of the window.

Edith moves quickly, almost running, heading for the meadow, tears running down her face.

As she approaches the meadow, Edith notices that the software unicorns have been becoming restless.

Edith stands by the lake, watching the software unicorns galloping around at the other side of the lake, kicking their rear hooves in the air.

'I'm not surprised you are upset, I'm upset, I know I shouldn't be, but I am.'

Edith notices a figure approaching from the direction of the building.

'Oh, he's going to try to explain I suppose! Men!'

As the figure approaches and Edith is wondering how to respond with dignity, Edith realizes that the figure is Henry, and is somewhat surprised.

'Dare not come himself I suppose!'

Henry approaches.

'Hello Edith.'

"Hello."

"I was in the common room and I saw you go past the window so I walked down to see if you are alright."

"I'm fine thank you. I just wanted a bit of fresh air in my mid-morning break."

"Oh good, I thought that perhaps you might have a touch of a 'flu-like illness or something.."

'A flu-like illness? I know he is naïve at times but if he thinks I've got a 'flu-like illness he must be, well'

Edith looks at Henry and their eyes meet.

Gigabytes of information flow between them in seconds.

'No, he's just being very tactful and deeply kind - maybe that deep kindness is what Jane sees in him.'

"We were all in the common room and Mariposa was telling us her news. She's staying in England as she's met someone, he works as an Assistant Manager at a bank in Ruralham, I don't know which bank, she didn't say."

Edith stares at Henry.

"Apparently she and Caroline Ruralby so enjoyed the dancing at the recent event and so they wondered if there was anything local available and found that there is a ballroom dancing class on Wednesday evenings at Ruralham Leisure Centre and they've been going along. That is where she met the man that she has been seeing.

"We were all in the common room and I was sat facing the window, nobody else was. I saw you go past, so I waited a couple of minutes then I got up and said 'excuse me' and left. They probably thought I had gone to well, you know.."

Edith looks at Henry quizzically.

'Is that true or just some pack of lies?'

A software unicorn stares at Edith and whinnies.

'No, Henry would not allow himself to be dragged into something like that.'

The software unicorn starts to graze peacefully.

"So, shall I drive you home so that you can try to sleep off the 'flu for the rest of the day and then get back tomorrow?"

"That's kind of you, but I'll drive home, I'm alright."

"Let me follow you to make sure that you get there alright - just in case your car breaks down."

"Well"

"Once I get you to your front door I'll come straight back here. I'll mention to Rose that you've gone to have a lie down as you've got a touch of 'flu or something. I won't say anything to anyone else."

"Thank you."

Edith notices that all of the software unicorns are now grazing peacefully again.

'They weren't upset because I was upset. They were upset because I had made an error, several errors, big errors. I feel confused. Best not dwell on it, hopefully a good night's sleep will put things in a better context.'