

## Cat out of the bag: Julie Howard

Morrie's long frame is bent over his desk. His arm curls secretively as he prints laboriously with his left hand. One spiteful capital letter at a time, as I later discover. A slick of dark hair flops on his furrowed brow. Not for the first time I wonder. *What the hell am I doing here?*

Cat explodes into the dull room, peacock feathers fluttering. She grins 'Hey guys! Sorry to disturb but I'm off.'

'Everything sorted?' I ask.

'Yup.'

'Even the ministerial stuff?'

'All easy peasy.' She grins. 'Even fixed a couple of your subs Morrie.'

He gives her a sour look before turning back to his task.

'Well enjoy. See you in a couple of days.' I smile.

At this Morrie's head shoots up. 'Hope you've filled in a leave form, Catriona.'

I leap in. 'No Morrie there's no need, she's streaks ahead on her KPI's.

Cat just laughs, 'Ha! ha! You're funny, Morrie. Well, I'm off to have fun at the Lord Mayor's banquet. Wish me luck.' Then with a shake of her feathers she's gone.

Morrie's fingers grasp the pen once more and dig the final words onto his form before he slouches out of the room.

A couple of days later I pass Cat in the corridor. *Jeez she must have got in early.* She calls over her shoulder. 'Hey, left some stuff on your desk. Oh, and the boss wants to see you asap.'

The atmosphere in the office is frosty to say the least. He hands me a copy of the grubby little form. 'Read it and get back to me asap.' he says unsmilingly.

A surge of anger rises in me, yet another list of fruitless complaints about Cat. She's too flamboyant; laughs too loudly; dresses inappropriately; comes and goes as she pleases. *'Bloody hell, for months now we've covered for Morrie. Felt sorry for him even, because he's so slow witted. For goodness' sake he can't even read 'running writing' as he calls it. Now this!'*

Well, I've had enough. I leap up ready for a fight, but my eye catches the 'something on my desk' that Cat has left. Not the expected ministerial response but a bottle of

Moet with a golden ribbon. The message .... Walk out slowly, smiling because with this Moet our life of fun and flamboyance begins! Love you Cat.

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