



Coffee and Sauerkraut

The look that the girl gave Thomas Schmitt was almost deadly. She was wearing her blonde hair in a ponytail, bright-red lipstick, and thick, black mascara. Angela Haffner was clearly **offended** by what Thomas had said. She looked him in the eye and waited for a reply.

An uncomfortable atmosphere filled the room. The group of colleagues looked at each other. Everyone was waiting for someone else to speak.

offended

beleidigt

awkward

hier: unangenehm

intern

Praktikantin

to spoil

verderben

It was meant to be a joke, Thomas thought to himself.

But Angela was clearly not amused by the suggestion that she and other Berliners needed to “lighten up and learn how to have a good time” He searched his head for something to say to break the **awkward** silence.

“Sorry, Angela, I... er... I didn’t realize you...”

“It’s okay,” the young German **intern** answered. “I know you were only joking, but I get so sick of all the clichés: orderly Germans, no sense of humour and an obsession with punctuality. I thought you would understand? I mean, you’re German, too.”

Thomas began to answer, but Angela interrupted him.

“Forget it,” she said with a sigh. “I’m overreacting. It’s been a long day. I shouldn’t have said that carnival was childish and stupid. Don’t let me **spoil** your fun.”

Thomas and Angela were both **employees** of Chrimarsan Sauerkraut Ltd. They were standing in the hallway of their office in Oxford among a group of co-workers. Most were putting on their coats and preparing to step outside into the bitter cold of a mid-January Friday evening. Angela was right: it had been a very long day. It was after ten o'clock in the evening and the team had spent the whole day rushing to put together an important **sales pitch**.

"Well, I think it's a great idea, Tom," said George Ratcliffe, one of the managers. "**Fancy dress** and German beer – what better way to celebrate your fortieth birthday? So carnival is a big thing for you, isn't it?"

"It's huge," Thomas replied, relieved by George's enthusiasm. "Especially back in Cologne. A huge parade goes through the city on Rose Monday. And because my birthday's on Rose Monday this year, I just thought..."

"It would be the perfect opportunity to celebrate both events together?" George asked, finishing Thomas's sentence.

The **ginger-haired Geordie** playfully punched Thomas on the arm and smiled.

The other colleagues nodded in agreement and laughed. Thomas was glad that he could **rely on** George to lighten the mood.

"I can't wait!" said another voice in a **camp**, excited tone.

It was Ewan O'Brian, the **Accounts Manager**

"What should I wear?" he continued.



employee	Mitarbeiter
sales pitch	Angebot (Vertrieb)
fancy dress	Verkleidung
ginger-haired	rothaarig
Geordie	Person aus Newcastle
to rely on sb.	sich auf jmd. verlassen
camp	affektiert, übertrieben
Accounts Manager	Leiter der Buchhaltung

Übung 1: Match-up. Welche der folgenden Wörter gehören zusammen? Ordnen Sie zu!

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> spoil | a) the mood |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> lighten | b) the whole day |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> break | c) the silence |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> spend | d) the fun |

“Wear whatever you like,” Thomas answered. “I’m sure you could make use of your red trousers. Or your cowboy boots? As long as it’s fancy dress, fun and...”

“Fabulous?” Ewan asked. “Oh, don’t you worry, Thomas. Whatever I wear, it will definitely be fabulous.”

The employees laughed again. It was a typical comment from the Accounts Manager, whose sense of fashion made a decorated Christmas tree look rather **dull**. Angela, too, was laughing. The uncomfortable moment had passed, and Thomas was happy that his idea had caught his colleagues’ imagination.

Now with their coats zipped up tight, the group moved towards the door and began to stream outside. When Angela Haffner had left the building, Thomas caught George Ratcliffe’s attention.

“Thanks for your enthusiasm, George. You managed to rescue me from quite an embarrassing situation.”

George laughed, showing his big, white teeth. “No problem.”

“I’m still learning the rules of office politics. I’ve only been here for four months. It’s different to the German **branch**.”

dull

branch



eintönig

hier: Zweigstelle

"Yes, but you've spent those four months as Marketing Manager. In a position like that, politics really matter."

It was true, and Thomas knew it. His **objective** was to **persuade** the Brits that sauerkraut was the new fish and chips. To be successful, he first had to create a comfortable working atmosphere and gain his team's trust.

"Aren't you coming with us?" George asked when he saw that Thomas had no coat on. "You've put in enough hours this week."

"I need to add the final details to my presentation, I'm afraid. I just want to get it finished. Alexander won't be happy if it's late."



objective

to persuade

Ziel

überzeugen

"Well, don't stay too long. It's not good for you."

"I won't," Thomas replied, then said goodbye to his colleague.

As he walked back to his desk, he breathed a sigh of relief. George had believed his lie. He hated lying to him, but it was the only way.

Übung 2: Question tags. Wie lautet das korrekte Frageanhängsel?

1. It's different from the German branch, _____ ?
2. You're coming, _____ ?
3. It will definitely be fabulous, _____ ?
4. I've worked long enough, _____ ?