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职场英语阅读第一书

# 叶卡捷琳娜的暗示

Ekaterina

James Schofield 著

张燕译



原版引进  
英汉对照

对应剑桥商务英语高级

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外文出版社  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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## 叶卡捷琳娜的暗示

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## Chapter 1

# Message from the dead

Wednesday morning — London, Capstan Consultants

### **Skim read the chapter once. Check:**

- who Sir Gilbert Villiers is.
- how often the message appears on the 7 Continents website.
- where Sir Gilbert Villiers's house is.

*‘My name is Ekaterina. I am eleven years old. I am dead.’*

The words hung in the air above the heads of the three people sitting staring at them in the darkened London boardroom of Capstan Consultants, flung onto the wall screen by a projector.

“That’s all?” asked Macey Church. She got out of her seat to go up and peer more carefully at the words on the screen. Her red brown hair shone in the projector light and one of the locks that regularly escaped from whatever type of hair grip she used had to be absent-mindedly pushed behind her ear again. She moved like the dancer she had trained to be, with a straight back which made her seem taller than she really was, while her blue grey eyes with their darker lashes stood out from the pale cream of her face. Her small nose was still dotted with small girl freckles although she was nearly thirty and her smile turned most people into friends for life. She came from New York, which she said gave her a head start as a consultant — it meant she had an answer for everything. It might not always be the *right* answer, but as long as

the client didn't have a better one, it would do.

Her boss, Carly Fiorentina, crossed the long legs of her trouser suit and finished her espresso before answering.

"That's all."

The short sentences stood out from the surrounding text and the pictures of smiling employees which obviously came from a company annual report. They seemed only slightly larger than the words around them which boasted about return on investment and corporate responsibility. The air borne dust in the room seemed to circle around them, giving them a halo for a moment before the air conditioning sucked the dust away.

"So have I got this right..." said Macey's neighbour Kirill Solokov. "Sir Gilbert Villiers is making his chairman's presentation at the 7 Continents Diamond Corporation annual general meeting, showing a fabulous return on investment from last year's mining operations and suddenly this message appears on the screen behind his head... with all the investment fund managers and international journalists watching?"

"That's right."

"What happened?" asked Macey.

"Well at first Villiers didn't notice but then he realised from the whispering and tittering in the audience that there was something wrong, turned around and saw the writing on the wall. But he's very cool. He just made some joke which the audience loved and carried on with his next slide. It never even got into the newspapers."

"What's the problem then?" said Kirill slowly, pressing his big hands together so that the joints all cracked at the same time. Not only his hands were large. He had broad shoulders

and a nose, broken in the boxing ring during his military service in the Russian army. He towered above Macey and it was always a comical sight to see the two of them in discussion; the large dark silent Russian stroking his chin and the small volatile American waving her arms in order to make her point.

Carly got up from her chair and went and opened the curtains to the room. June sunshine poured in causing Kirill and Macey to blink. "On the 19th of the month for the last six months this same message appears somewhere on the company website. Of course the company tecchies take the page down as soon as they find it. But the weird thing is that they can't seem to stop it appearing. They screen everything before it goes up, the pages can be altered only by the webmaster or her deputy, a log is kept of any alterations that are made and the firewall protection is top-of-the range, but somehow it keeps coming through and nobody knows who is doing it or how." Macey frowned. "But what do you want us to do, Carly? It's obviously the work of some hacker playing cat and mouse with the tecchies for fun. You just need to hire a couple of security experts to check out 7 Continents' website, surely."

"Villiers thinks it's more than that. He believes there's a plot to make trouble for him and 7 Continents at the moment. He wants us to find out what the message means, where it's coming from and stop it. And that's what Capstan Consultants gets paid for — to solve the problems our customers can't."

"I don't understand. Why would anyone want to make trouble for Villiers?" growled Kirill. "He's everybody's



favourite businessman, the British government loves him because he's so successful, the celebrity magazines love him because he's good looking and is married to a Russian ballerina... even the ecological people love him because he makes all this noise about saving whales and hugging trees every time his company digs up more diamonds somewhere in the world. He's... he's perfect!" Kirill ignored Macey's look and cracked his fingers again.

"Well, that's what you two have to find out — who is making trouble for Villiers? The point is this; in two weeks time at the end of June he's making a presentation to the United Nations in New York. Naturally enough he wants to make absolutely sure that this time no embarrassing messages go up on the screen behind him. I chose you two for a mixture of reasons. I think your computer skills might well be useful, Macey... just don't do anything illegal with them." Macey laughed and shifted uncomfortably in her seat. She had been offered a job by Capstan Consultants some time earlier after she had hacked into the company client database to show that their firewall was insecure. "And as for you Kirill, firstly you and Macey work well together and secondly there seems to be a Russian element involved in all of this. Ekaterina is a Russian name after all. Anyway, I sent your r e s u m e s to Sir Gilbert Villiers and he's approved you both. He has some more details but he said he wants to give them to you himself."

"Himself?" asked Macey.

"Yes. He's asked the two of you to come and join him for the weekend down at his house in Forest Hill, in Sussex. You are his guests."

## Chapter 2

### Little secrets

**Friday afternoon — London to Forest Hill**

**Skim read the chapter once. Check:**

- what Tatyana Aslanovna Kerkomenova did before she married Gilbert Villiers.
- what Sir Gilbert found in Indonesia.
- how well Kirill knows Tatyana.

“Why do you have to take so much?” grumbled Kirill as he struggled to put Macey’s enormous suitcase into the boot of her car on Friday afternoon before driving down to Sir Gilbert Villiers’ country house in Forest Hill. “We’re only going to be there for a couple of days.”

“You have to be careful with these English weekend things,” warned Macey as she forced her way through the London rush hour traffic which was also heading towards the countryside. “You think it’s going to be real cool and informal and then you suddenly find you have cocktails and a dinner party with twelve people in long frocks and tuxedos on the Saturday night. And the first thing that happens when you arrive is three Labradors or Irish setters jump all over you with muddy paws and ruin what you drove down in. Then of course you need something to wear for church on Sunday and something completely different for walking across muddy fields with the dogs after lunch.” She switched traffic lanes suddenly to overtake a van and was loudly honked by a furious taxi driver coming in the other direction. She smiled and waved

back.

“Doesn’t sound like there’ll be much time for talking then. Maybe I should stay behind in London. I could do some more research on 7 Continents.” Kirill looked miserably out the window, searching for an underground station.

“Hey, what are you talking about, Kirill? I don’t want to visit these guys on my own. Come on we’re a team! Anyway, what’s bothering you? I thought you’d be pleased to see this trophy ballerina wife of his... what’s her name again? It was kind of long...”

“Tatyana Aslanovna Kerkomenova.”

“Yeah, that’s the one. I thought you liked ballet? What a chance to meet a great ballerina! Too bad he didn’t marry George Clooney!” she accelerated suddenly and jumped a traffic light before it changed to red. Kirill said nothing.

“What have you found out about Villiers anyway?” continued Macey. “I saw you had been googling him like crazy since Carly told us about the job.”

“As I said to Carly, he’s Mr Perfect.” said Kirill. “Graduated from Oxford with a degree in geology, was hired by 7 Continents Diamond Corporation when it was still a small operation. Worked in the field and was responsible for discovering the Long Kep mine in Indonesia. The story is that he first realised there could be diamonds when he saw rabbits coming out of the ground with blue markings on their fur. As a geologist he knew that this meant the soil there came from an old volcano. Diamonds are created by enormous heat and pressure and apparently the surrounding rock and earth is bluish. He started digging and after five minutes found a 100-

carat champagne-coloured rough diamond. The company made a fortune — the mine had the highest concentration of diamonds per ton outside of Botswana. Then Villiers disappeared for a few years — all I could find out is that he worked on sites in places like Armenia, Georgia and Kazbakistan. But about twelve years ago he suddenly came back to London headquarters and started in corporate strategy. And this is where his true genius lies. He organised a series of hostile takeovers that takes 7 Continents from being a small player to being one of the big boys in only ten years. His rise through the company is... how do you say in English? Meteoric! That's it...and five years ago he was made Chief Executive Officer."

"How old was he then?"

"Only thirty five — he had a lot of luck there as well. The previous CEO resigned unexpectedly — as the newspapers put it 'to spend more time with his family' — which everybody knows means that there was some skeleton in the cupboard about to come out. But since Villiers took over the company it's just grown and grown — and he is a public relations wizard. He won an ecological award from those environmentalists, ECO Warriors, he helped refinance the London Olympics, and he pushed the United Nations to stop the trade in blood diamonds from conflict zones like Sierra Leone and Angola. Finally he got a knighthood two years ago and is treated nearly like a pop-star everywhere he goes. "

"And his wife? She's really beautiful. There was a picture of her this week in some magazine I was reading. What do you know about her. "

Macey took an exit from the motorway and started following signs for Forest Hill.

“She was a ballerina at the Kirov. They have two children — Pavel five and Catherine three.”

“Yeah but she was great wasn’t she? I mean truly, I saw her in the theatre one time when she danced in New York. What was it? Giselle, I think... and I cried my eyes out. And you know me Kirill, that sort of stuff is really not my scene. I’m much more of a Quentin Tarantino kind of a girl.” Kirill said *nothing*. The roads approaching Forest Hill became smaller and smaller, and the late afternoon sun shone across the fields they passed which had a suitable sprinkling of sheep and cows.

“Did you ever see her dance?” continued Macey a couple of minutes later after overtaking a hay-carrying tractor on a corner which caused Kirill and the tractor driver to both shut their eyes.

“When I was a student in St Petersburg and before she became famous I saw every single performance she danced at the Maryinsky Theater.”

“Wow, you’re a real fan, Kirill! You’ll have to tell her when we meet!”

“Oh, I think she knows. You see... we were engaged to be married.”

## Chapter 3

# Tea on the lawn

Friday afternoon     Forest Hill

**Skim read the chapter once. Check:**

- why Kirill broke up with Tatyana.
- what kind of dogs Tatyana has.
- if Tatyana is unfriendly towards Kirill.

“*What!*”

Macey braked sharply and pulled over to the side of the road after this bit of news. The farmer on the tractor that overtook them a moment later tapped the side of his head at Macey. “And when exactly were you planning to tell me?”

“When it seemed to be the right time ... which was thirty seconds ago.”

“What happened? Why did you break up? Did she dump you?”

Kirill didn't say anything for a minute and started tearing up a shopping receipt for some shoes which he had found on Macey's dashboard into a long strip.

“No... ” he said finally. “I dumped her. You see, she was only twenty, she was just beginning to get offers to go and dance with other companies and these long distance relationships never work. The partner is away, you meet somebody else and start telling lies to each other and finally you split. So I thought I would do it first, before we spoiled everything with lies. And five years later she met Villiers,

gave up ballet and married him. ”

“But you never did meet anybody else, did you? *That’s* why you didn’t want to come!”

Kirill held up the receipt which he had turned into a long thin continuous strip. “I hope you didn’t want to take those shoes back. Come on. Let’s get it over with. ”

Ashdown Hall was a Palladian-style building which the guides to southern England would tell you had been built by the neo-classical architect John Carr for Rear Admiral Sir Rodney Collingwood in 1803. It was reached by a long drive from the main road which led you across an abandoned railway line and through meadows up to the main gardens that surrounded the house. This was set slightly above the green lawns which spread away in front of it, dotted here and there with beech trees which provided shade. Underneath one of them a family group was having a noisy tea party and as Kirill and Macey got out of the car they all got up and headed towards them. The smallest one quickly fell on her nose and burst into tears whereupon the largest stopped, picked her up and cuddled her. As Macey had predicted they were reached first by a pack of enthusiastic dogs, though as she later admitted, she had the scale wrong. Three tiny fur-balls surrounded them and bounced up and down, yapping as loudly as they could. Macey grabbed Kirill’s arm. “You tell anybody we were beaten up by three manic powder puffs Kirill and I’ll never forgive you!”

Kirill laughed. “Tikho! Sidet!” he barked at them in Russian, and the Pomeranians suddenly stopped and looked at him in surprise. A small boy panted up to them. “Mischa,

Rudi, Irek ... be good!" The dogs turned and scampered down the steps onto the lawn and went back to their mistress who was now approaching with a small girl balanced on one hip. The girl had stopped crying and was sucking her thumb, her blonde curly hair and blue eyes contrasting with the straight black hair and nearly black eyes of her mother and brother. Macey stepped forward and shook the hand that was free. "Lady Villiers, how wonderful to meet you."

"No, no... I am Tania, please. At heart I'm still a good communist you know! You must be Macey, Macey, this is Pavel and this is Catherine." The little girl jumped down and went behind her mother's cream linen skirt and peeked around. Tatyana put her hand forward. "Kirill. You are looking well. It is good to see you again." Kirill shook it solemnly and looked very serious.

They looked at each other for a moment in silence and Macey wished she was somewhere else. Then Tatyana burst out laughing, grabbed Kirill's ears and pulled his head down to her level and kissed him, Russian style, three times. "There... you idiot! I am so pleased to see you. Stop looking tragic. Come and have some tea before Gilbert arrives."



## Chapter 4

# Getting the details

Friday afternoon and evening — Forest Hill

**Skim read the chapter once. Check:**

- what game Kirill plays with Pavel.
- who Dr Roy Marsden works for.
- what is in the box.

Tea was a great success. Tatyana was good at putting people at their ease, and very quickly Kirill relaxed. After a time Pavel insisted Kirill should play football with him, which of course the Pomeranians decided to contribute to. They took their football very seriously but couldn't decide whose side they were on, so all three had to chase the ball in every direction and try to trip up Kirill and Pavel at the same time. Macey and Tatyana were laughing so much at the sight of Kirill flat on his face while Mischa, Irek and Rudi jumped all over him yapping frantically because he was hiding the ball, that they didn't hear the housekeeper's footsteps approaching them across the lawn.

"Madam... Madam... Sir Gilbert's here and he'd like to see the guests in the library straight away please."

Ten minutes later, after Macey and Tatyana had brushed the dog hairs and grass off Kirill's clothes, the two of them were shown into the library by the housekeeper. Sir Gilbert was standing by the French windows watching his wife who was now playing football with Pavel and not seeming to care