

A Business Deal

Mohammed Asmati runs a prosperous shop in the business district of Cairo, Egypt. He sells office supplies such as paper, envelopes, pencils and scissors.

A Canadian, Françoise Dubois, is opening a branch office of her company in Cairo. She enters Mohammed's shop and begins to discuss buying a large quantity of paper and other office supplies. Françoise is in a hurry. She immediately begins to talk about special discounts and delivery dates.

Mohammed considers this client and the sale important. He asks his assistant to make tea and to set out pastries in the office behind the shop. Mohammed invites Françoise to join him and his wife in the office for tea, and courteously asks Françoise about her family.

Françoise drinks the tea quickly, refuses a pastry and continues to talk about delivery dates. She ignores Mohammed's personal questions.

Mohammed concludes that Françoise is not a serious customer. He responds very vaguely to questions about the sale. By the time Françoise leaves, both she and Mohammed are confused and dissatisfied. The details of the sale are not finalized.