

In the Département du Gard – yes, you’re right, where Nîmes and the Pont du Gard are located: in the south of France - there was an elderly lady working as a clerk in a post office. She had a rather nasty habit: she opened the letters and read them. Only a little, of course. Everybody knew it. That’s the way things are in France: concierge, telephone and post office are sacred institutions, so nobody would touch them. The elderly lady in question could go on and on reading the letters. Her indiscretions gave the people a hard time.



There was a clever count who lived in a beautiful castle in the department. As he was clever, he did the following one day:

He sent for a bailiff to the castle and wrote a letter in his presence:

Dear friend,

As I know that the postmistress Emilie Dupont is always opening our letters and reading them because she is bursting with curiosity, I am sending you a live flea to put a stop to her.

With best regards

Count Coco de Ricot

flea: bug
elderly: old
clerk: assistant
nasty: bad
habit: practice
concierge: caretaker
department: county, shire
sacred: holy
bailiff: marshall, sheriff
curiosity: interest

He sealed this letter in the presence of the bailiff. But he did not put a flea in it.

When the letter arrived, there was one inside.

(Story after Kurt Tucholsky)

Think about how the story could continue:

Emilie Dupont was about to sort out the mail when
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