

[None of my business](#)

Published by: [Lilly Teal](#) on 18th Dec 2012 | View all blogs by [Lilly Teal](#)

"Uhm. Agent Woo... d... Agent?" the eggman gave up squinting at the absolutely terrible writing on the letter, the domain of everyone who's spent more than ten minutes in or near the medical profession, and instead took a wild guess based on physical description. How many tall playtupuses could there be, anyway?

Hopefully, for the sake of his future career, only this one. Holding out the letter, he stood stiffly to attention until she took it, then threw a salute and hurried away in a slightly less dignified manner. Impending lunch breaks did that to people.

The writing on the letter looked distressingly similar to that of a certain butcherbird who'd had a certain run-in with a certain platypus's tail... and it looked like some kind of directions and a scavenger hunt list. That was promising, surely?

Comments

45 Comments



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

She had told herself over and over again, that bending the rules to fit her would only leave her in trouble - and this was one of those moments.

She hated being the delivery-boy - or woman, in this case - but there wasn't much arguing to be done, so without giving the eggman another look - not even acknowledging his presence, she opened the letter, which contained a direct and very official order from Highcommand, as she had expected and...

Really? Really, she had to go Christmas-shopping for the butcherbird? She clearly remembered their last little run-in, not a pleasant memory of that, and shook her head. She memorised the list and the address' and without further ado headed towards her destination. No point in procrastinating and no use of complaining. Off she went.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

It was all down to personal perceptions, really. From Cornelius's point of view, their last meeting had been perfectly delightful. So much so, in fact, that he'd personally applied for High Command to give her this mission, so she could get out a little and not be stuck behind a desk all day as he assumed she would be. How thoughtful.

... alright, it wasn't wholly altruistic. The lure of a novel new supplier who might have novel new things was very great, and he was too busy to pop over himself and see what he could scrounge before FOWL tested the waters with this new fellow. Brogan would have to do.

The light shifted across the floor of the shop as the door opened, and the new fellow in question looked up from the large box he was steadily unpacking, with great ease despite the face that each packaged item was being laid on the counter with a worryingly heavy sound.

"Ah, good morning."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

The tall platypus nodded politely to the gentleman; "G'morning, sir."
She brought up from her bag the neatly folded paper that had been handed out to her, "I am searching for a mister Halden."
She didn't add much more, but awaited his reply.
She was after all a woman of few words.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"And you have found him very efficiently," he said, flattening the empty box neatly and sliding it out of the way. "But you appear to have the advantage of me, miss. Unless you'd prefer to keep that advantage, in which case we can skip right to how I might help you."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"I prefer the advantage," she replied politely.
"I come, not in my own name, but as a... 'favour' for a possible future client for you. We shall remain discreet for now."
She closed in and handed out the paper to the gentleman.

"I suppose these objects will be for you to retrieve - the price is of no issue."
She wasn't the one doing the paying anyway.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"That's quite an... interesting shopping list," he commented, arching an eyebrow as he took it and looked it over. "Whoever they are certainly know exactly what they want."

It was the case with many customers, but this was rather more highly specific than he'd ever run across.

"I have most of these in stock, so I don't see any problems along the way. If you'll take a seat, I'll make a start, unless you want to loo-"

A loud crash announced the door being brutally and rather unnecessarily forced open so hard it banged against the adjacent wall. A burly buffalo built like several tanks shouldered his way in and cracked his knuckles. "Where's our Angus, y'bleedin' butcher?"

Matthew just shut his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose with a small sigh. "Would you like to take a seat, miss? I won't be a moment."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

Duly noticed she did; but not before having given the brute a quick analyse, trying to figure out body-mass, muscle-strength and general weakness.

Just a bad habit, really.

She nodded to Mr. Halden, and took a seat, strategically well-placed so her back was covered, she was slightly covered and at the same time had a full vision of the scene that was to take place in front of her.

She knew brutes like this buffalo. Hell, she's worked with brutes like this buffalo. And it rarely ended very well.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

So civil and understanding. No screaming, no panicking, no OH MY GOD WHAT'S HAPPENING.

The customers were the nicest part of this business. Giving her a gracious little nod, he stepped around the counter. "I would ask, but I will go ahead and assume you mean the bull who tried to shoot me last week. A little rushed or a confrontation, but I have a customer, you understand," he said apologetically. It wouldn't be the gentlemanly thing to keep her waiting.

The buffalo just blinked. Clearly brutes were not bred for brains. Snorting through his nose, he flexed his arms and lunged forward, not registering the change in the ibex's stance. Hah, this would be easy, the goat was all talk and no show. Angus had just been caught off guard, that was a-

'HRK' was the sound of a large buffalo built like several tanks suddenly having an arm locked around his neck like a vice, but he somehow managed to secure a powerful and painful grip on the ibex, possibly attempting to crush him bodily before the other crushed his windpipe.

It was about then that the other two brutes showed up.

"Oh now this is MOST unfair," said Matthew, proceeding to be half-buried by the second mass of muscle while the third, a much faster looking character, decided to stay out of the confrontation. Taking out his knife, he instead rounded on the seated platypus. More bodies is good bodies.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

Brogan didn't move one inch at the prospect of an incoming brute; Instead she looked over at the Ibex with a slight unsatisfactory expression; "Mr. Halden, I am not sure how pleased I am with this way of greeting new customers..." But if before any answer could be given, it was caught short by Brogan jumping off of the chair, grabbing it with both hands and smashing towards the henchman.

She quickly turned her attention to the Ibex; "I suggest we cut 50% of the price, say, if I am to help you with this little problem," again before an answer could be given the brute was up, moaning and rubbing his head where the chair had hit... and where it would hit again in 3... 2... 1...
And down he went.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"25%," he growled, not because the prospect annoyed him, but because he was trying very hard to not get his stomach ripped open as the second good tried to force him onto

the buffalo's horns. "It's as much your neck as mine, miss. But I do agree I can't charge you full price for all this trouble."

Tossing his head, he rolled his horns to press one of his assailants against the wall and kept pressing, a satisfying crunching of bone accompanying a scream of pain.

"Will you manage? There's a metal bat under the desk if the chair breaks," he added helpfully.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"40% "

She yelled out as she slid over the desk, grabbing the bat with one hand and in a blink of an eye, jumped back to her victim. Under many a loud screams and yells of pains she strategically broke his leg, and thus he was out of the game.

She then turned her attention to the good Mr. Halden and his two uninvited guests.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"I can go as far as 30%, but you really are twisting my arm, miss," he commented, twisting the buffalo's arm to give him a little more freedom and leverage. More leverage for the horns, that kept on rolling, pressing, crushing the mess that used to be a powerful chest until the man couldn't scream any longer, and he sagged to the ground, blood oozing out of his mouth in place of any more sound.

The arm broke. A little too much twisting, perhaps. Rounding on the buffalo, Matthew began to give him his full attention, and mashed his face along the wall until he could get enough space to fling him violently into the desk, leaving him dazed.

"The bat, if you would be so kind," he asked, holding out his hand.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"35..." she commented at the last, tightening her grip on the bat. She wasn't one for bloody messes under non-sterile conditions, but might as well finish of the business, and being the nice client she was she saw no reason not to do it herself.

She raised the bat getting ready for one final blow to the head, but caught eye with the

Ibex, "oh... you don't mind, do you?" she let out, as if she was asking for another lump of sugar in her coffee.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

Would you like one lump or two?

Sorry, the desire for pre-mortem one-liners is nearly irresistible.

"Not at all," he said generously, inclining his head to her so she could go ahead. "And 35 it is. You drive a hard bargain. I hope you do the same with bats."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"I do not disappoint."

She never did.

She felt the rushing sensation of thrill as she could feel the crackling noise underneath the weight of the bat. Granted, a regular bat could have done it, but not in one hit, definitely not. The weight of the blunt object in her hand was so well-distributed it took next to nothing for her to figure out where to let the metal-piece get into close contact on the head and done it was.

Of course not without a mess.

Always the shirts, always! She should have known better than to put on her fancy suit. Her bad.

"There," as she rather elegantly placed the bat next to the diseased - which was such a morbid contradiction to the entire situation and the bloodbath that used to have been a neat clean shop.

"I must say mr. Halden, this is a rather unorthodox method of bargaining."
And now... what about coffee?



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"I do hope it hasn't lessened your opinion of the business," he said solemnly, taking out his handkerchief and wiping off his horns carefully. "It isn't usually this messy. Now, can I offer you tea or coffee to take the edge off?"

Setting the bloodied cloth aside, he reached into the cupboard and took out a clean towel to offer her.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

She took the towel, and started trying to remove the worst.

No such luck - this shirt was ruined, *to bloody Hell!*

"Coffee thank you. And not in the least. Business is business. Of course I just need to ensure that this isn't going to become a police-matter? We can deal with the families and the gangs, but we'd rather avoid any further connections with the public authorities and SHUSH."



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Absolutely not. I can't have police boots tramping all over my nice clean floors," he said with a shadow of a grin. Being alive did wonders for the sense of humour. "In any case, they have this terrible habit of asking questions I don't appreciate, so I've learned to keep things off the beaten patrol-path. They won't see hide nor hair of this escapade."

It's doubtful anybody will see hide or hair of these three once he was done cleaning up, in fact. Fixing his tie, he produced another chair, motioned for her to follow to a cleaner part of the shop where he set it down, and began to brew some coffee.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

She followed, leaving the towel behind.

"Mind, I do not wish to seem rude or pushy," nevermind the dead bodies or the broken chair in the other room, "but do you per chance have a spare shirt I could borrow - going through town looking like this would certainly catch the police's attention and then the questions will commence."

"Oh, and pardon the broken chair." A casualty of war.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"No trouble at all. One can't make any headway without breaking a few chairs over people's heads."

I thought that was 'you can't make an omellete without breaking a few eggs...'

Leaving the coffee to brew, he headed further inside to a cupboard and began to rummage. Naturally he had extra clothes. A few changes were necessary now and again. Unfortunately they were all HIS shirts.

"I apologise, this is the smallest one I can find," he said, handing it to her. "You can change in there, and a wash-up, if you fancy."

By the time you're out, hot piping coffee for all.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Appreciated," she nodded, not giving the other room a chance of a thought, as she took off her blazer and removed the ruined shirt. Once the borrowed shirt was neatly buttoned and tugged into her trousers, she turned her attention back to mr. Halden. Surely having bashed plenty of heads in, he could cope with a woman in a brassiere. And now the coffee.

She took a seat; " 35% and all, but I do not hope this will be the main-way of negotiating in the possible future, mr. Halden."

She couldn't helped but having been entertained by the previous encounter. Professional or not, the rush and the thrills would always get the better of her, and she couldn't complain.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"As do I. I did hope to wrap all this up cleanly, but it appears I may have to send our interrupters a firmer message if we're to have any hope of more civil future meetings," he sighed, pouring out steaming coffee into two mugs and laying out sugar and cream for his guest.

"I have nothing against bloodshed, but whatever happened to subtlety? A touch of class wouldn't be amiss."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"I think subtlety went out the window once you got them antlers bloodied up, sir," she said taken a seat and accepting the coffee.

"I make a policy of never asking about our clients and suppliers personal affairs," didn't mean it usually stopped her from investigating them, "but I need to confirm that they won't get in our way. I represent a rather large company who is big on subtlety and a strict 'don't-ask-don't-tell'-policy from our partners and the people we work with."

She took a sip, and gave a discreet loopsided smile; "Good coffee..."



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"I do not disappoint my guests, as a rule," he said with a little smile of his own. "Your company policy sounds rather like the old firm that trained me. You have my word, this group will certainly never rear it's head around here again. Ah the troubles that come with trying to establish a modest business..."

Like murder and more murder.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Indeed."

She took in the design of the room, already analysing it's escape-routes, its weakness and its advantages.

It's was her default-mode, analysing and storage the information inside her head. When you didn't have much of a private-life, it gave you time enough to perfect your better abilities.

"Pardon my intrusion, but given your accent, you are pretty far from home."
Oh smalltalk, Brogan - not your strongest ability.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"I could say the same for you. But yes, you are correct," he nodded, taking a sip of his own coffee. "I spent a lot of my life in England. Long enough for quite a well-established life, at that. But even that was a alien country for a long time. And you? At a guess..."

Australia?"

How very far away we both are.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Born, but not bred. Spend a lot of time travelling."
Very far indeed - and very vague.

"And I suppose business brought you here in the first place." Because it always does...
Either business or women, which also seemed to be the fall of man.
How poetic, really.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Quite. Well, with the old firm crumbling away, I felt I should look for somewhere else to settle and carve myself a niche. It's been... an interesting experience, starting all over from the beginning. And especially in this city. It's certainly madder than I'd initially expected."

But one could never call it boring, no.

"It isn't all alien, which is a comfort. I ran across an old friend," he said in a tone that implied that it wasn't the kind of old friend you could discuss the old days with, so it had hardly been a helpful meeting.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

She gave her cup a sly smile; "well, I am sure you run across many friends in general. I am also very sure that it is not always a good ending for the before-mentioned *friends*" she smiled, rather charmingly despite the topic. "With all due respect."
She leaned back in the chair and kept her eyes locked on the little neatly folded paper, with the list of Cornelius' wishes; "keep the note."
She'd memorised the demands, anyway.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Not always, no," he grinned, finishing off his coffee. "But always neatly done. At least by the end result."

Finishing his coffee, he took the paper in hand and stood with a little sigh. "Today might take rather longer for a neat end result... let me look for your things."

He began to rummage, setting them out for packaging and pricing with commendable professionalism, before a particularly heavy item made him wince. Frowning, he took off his coat and tugged at the collar of his shirt to try and look at the back of his own shoulder, with no success.

"I hope this isn't imposing, but while I mark these up, could you determine how bad of a mess is back there where I can't see? I feel the buffalo might have been marginally successful after all."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Not at all, but if it comes down to stitching it up together, I will request removal of my shirt once again, whether or not it crosses your idea of class and subtlety," she said with a rather daring smirk, as she got up; "One bloody shirt a day is enough."

She carefully took a look at the mess on the back of his, and quickly decided it was worse at a second glance; "A high tolerance for pain?" He must have that - it was rather brutal-looking.

"No worries; Just a flesh wound - looks worse than it is", of course the flesh-wound could sometimes hurt the most, what with the nerves becoming all exposed and flesh ripped apart.

"Stitches and a few days of R&R should do it. I suppose you have a professional to fix you up in these situations."



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Sadly, no," he murmured, hissing through his teeth as the fabric of his shirt pulled away from the wound. "I tend to do it myself when necessary."

Matilda would clean up, would bandage, and these days it had been Lilly, as innocent as her parents, but the worst of the worst he'd always done himself when he could reach it. There was never any need to scar them with that.

... well, almost all himself. There was that one time since he'd come here...

"Call it pride or stubbornness... but I suppose I should make a few contacts, if my back is going to become a tempting target. Ah... do you have any experience?"



• by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"I have what it requires" which basically meant years of experience, military trained and with a professional precision. But nevermind telling him that - one look at the stitches and just a partly knowledgeable person could deduce her military background, just by her stitches.

But then again she rarely stumbled upon partly knowledgeable people.

She got up, "I imagine you have the equipment required then."

She got up and prepared what would become the surgery-corner, "take a seat," she requested.



• by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Always prepared," that was the key, after all. "The cupboard in the corner, past the shirts," he indicated with a light jerk of his head, pulling off his shirt with a stiffly contained wince before taking a seat.

"I do apologise for the rather sudden upsurge towards such high levels of unprofessionalism," he added with a little chuckle. Being shirtless and bleeding on the first meeting was hardly how a typical interaction was supposed to go.



• by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Nevermind, I've had worse first encounter," she said out loud from the cupboard grabbing the items. "At least we both made it," it could be heard, stuffed, as she bended over, from inside the wooden furniture, only her tail visible.

She got up and out, throwing him a quick smile, "in our line of profession one must be quick to adapt after all. You of all people should realise that. Manners or not."

She filled a bowl of water, stocked up on towels and went back to the Ibex; "All right, mister Halden, pardon my crude behaviour, but this will have to do."

She removed her shirt and took a seat, but just before she was about to 'dig' in, she realised; "You don't take anything with this, do you? Scotch, rum, vodka? Most people

prefer something to calm down their nerves."
How thoughtful of her.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Considerate nurse," he said with a trace of amusement. "A little vodka will do, there's some just there. A high tolerance for pain will only take you so far. Feel free to some once you don't require steady hands."

What a very... unique first meeting this has turned out to be.



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

She got up and poured him a generous glass; She had worked with bigger guys, who had turned out to contain feebler nerves than first anticipated.

She would politely decline the drink once it came to it, but for now, she kept the conversation short, as she handed him the glass and took a proper seat.

"Now, this will sting," as she poured the fluid to sterilise and clean the wound.

The next minutes was spent in complete silence from her part, concentrating with surgeons precision that the stitches were small yet strong.

Wouldn't want to leave an ugly scar afterall. Not if she was to work with him in the future.

And a little voice in her head said that that might be the case.



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

Call it pride, call it stubbornness... or call it a higher tolerance than expected, who can say, but despite the generous measure he drank a minimal amount, just enough the warm the bones and make it a touch more bearable.

Or perhaps it was because he never afforded himself the luxury of even a lightly clouded head even with people he trusted. And entertaining as this meeting had been, capable as this woman was, it would be quite insulting for the both of them if there was any trusting going on. Setting the glass back down, he allowed himself a smile as he felt the strong, precise stitches. Ah, there had been a time, just a time, when someone who really knew wounds had patched him up, and this was a familiar hand.

"I seem to be doing far more intruding than is good for anyone, but you feel like you have military experience."

A long history of wounds and patches could teach you a lot without even having to look.



•

by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Intrusion indeed," she commenting under heavy brows and full-on concentrated face. At his question she yanked the needle just a bit - not quite aggressively enough to be confirmed as being on purpose, but being as good as she was, it wasn't just a 'glitch'. She smiled though; this was her way of teasing - as incredible subtle and discreet as possible.

She finished up, cutting the thread; "But yes." And that was as far as she was willing to elaborate on that subject.

"Look at us; not even an hour of acquaintanceship or exchange of names, and yet here we are, covered in blood," *yours and the victims currently covering the floor and desk.*



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by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

He made a little mental note at that yank. Some subjects, some subjects. But the limits would only be found out when he stepped on them, so he was probably due a few more.

'She can stave in a skull with a bat like an old pro. She's cheeky, clever, quick, and I don't think I'll ever trust her, and not in the best of ways. Perhaps not even in the mildly good way. She's entitled to her secrets' he thought to himself, allowing amusement as he pulled his shirt on and turned back to her, inclining his head in thanks.

"Indeed. Such familiarity. We must take care it doesn't get out of hand." His amusement came out on his face in a half-grin. As if either of them seemed likely to let anything get out of hand for long, no matter the circumstances.

"Now, your Christmas shopping. I believe it was 35% off?"



•

by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"That was before the stitching" she announced, turning around to clean up the mess and also hide a smile that came only from how amusingly bizarre this entire situation.

Well, bizarre in that fact that she seemed to have found a rather interesting subject - not the violence, that was ordinary.

She took a towel, cleaning up her hands before she grabbed the shirt that had been handed out to her earlier.

She was pushing him, she knew that... And she liked it.

"What do you say mister," she turned, without decreasing her smile, "nurse-discount?"



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"Hm..." his smile broadened as he considered. "Cheeky. What oh what are we going to do with you?"

What oh what indeed?

"Well, let's be generous and not consider this a one-off," he said, placing everything carefully in the required bags before fixing his full attention on her again. "I'd be tempted to go to forty for someone who'd come again. Call it an introductory offer."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"I make no promises mr. Halden. Call it... a policy of mine. Afterall you never know what the future might have in store."

She took the bags, her eyes locked with his as she raised an eyebrow, "if it is due to happen, though, don't expect me to use doors. That is a rare commodity for the sake of being polite - just this time."



by [Lilly Teal](#) 2 years ago

"And for that rare courtesy, you shall have your forty percent off," he said solemnly, totting up the final price for her and handing it to her along with a piece of paper before meeting her eyes again. "In case it is ever due to happen." Contacts were contacts, after all.

"Happy holidays, miss. It's been... very interesting."



by [Woodward-Hooter](#) 2 years ago

"Indeed mister Halden," Brogan replied, taking the package, before giving him a little nod.

Heading towards the door, nameless, mysterious as she had reputation for.

She stopped, with her hand on the doorknob, and looked back, "and don't worry - I'll return the shirt."

And off she was.