



Blackmail

How wonderfully cool the window feels against his face. But the moment of relaxation passes quickly. He feels stressed as he looks around his large, minimalist office. **Usually** he enjoys the atmosphere of power his office gives him. But today he feels only **pressure** and even, he realizes, a **rising** panic.

He is a **successful** businessman who has worked extremely hard to get where he is now. God knows it hasn't been easy. And now there are these **threats**. Another letter arrived in the post this morning. He recognized the envelope as soon as he saw it. The letter said the same thing as the others before: They want his money. A lot of money. Just like that. And if he didn't pay...

Suddenly, there is a knock at the door.

"Come in?" he says. It isn't an **order** but a question.

The door seems to open slowly. He looks at his watch. Whoever could it be at this hour? he asks himself. My first meeting isn't until 9 o'clock.

A face **appears**. Janet, his secretary, smiles.

"Good morning, Mr Battlebolt," she says. "Did you and Mrs Battlebolt have an enjoyable evening last night?"



blackmail	Erpressung
usually	normalerweise, gewöhnlich
pressure	Druck
rising	(an)steigend
successful	erfolgreich
threat	Drohung
order	Befehl
to appear	sich zeigen, auftauchen
to breathe a sigh of relief	erleichtert aufatmen

Richard Battlebolt **breathes a sigh of relief**. Of course! he thinks. It's Janet. Just Janet. He gives a small laugh.

Janet looks at him, a little **confused**. "I'll take that as a yes."

"What?" he asks. "Oh! Sorry, yes, our evening. Yes, it was lovely, thank you, Janet. We went to Lesley's favourite restaurant in Knightsbridge. Wonderful place. They really know how to cook..."

He stops, **mid-sentence**. A small man with short grey hair and a large, **pointed** chin has appeared beside Janet. He is holding a hat in his hands and is looking around the office.

"Sorry," Battlebolt says. "Erm... yes, they really know how to cook steak there..."

Battlebolt is speechless now as the small man steps right into his office and starts walking around the modernist sculpture by his bookcase. **What on earth** is he doing? Who is this man?

Janet notices her boss's confusion is slowly turning to **anger**.

"Mr Battlebolt," she says. "This is Charles Steede. Mr Steede said you wanted to see him. I told him

he would need an **appointment**, but he said it was **urgent**."

Suddenly, everything makes sense. Charles Steede! Of course!

"Ah, yes, Mr Steede!" A nervous smile appears on Battlebolt's face.

"Thank you for showing Mr Steede to my office, Janet." He **nods** at his secretary to make it clear that she should leave.

"Please, Mr Steede. Do take a seat."

But Steede has already hung up his jacket and pulled out the chair to sit down.

Battlebolt **examines** the man in front of him. He seems even smaller in the large chair. His grey **moustache** makes him look older than



confused	verwirrt
mid-sentence	mitten im Satz
pointed	spitz
What on earth...!	Was zum Teufel...!
anger	Zorn
appointment	Termin
urgent	dringend
to nod	nicken
to examine	untersuchen
moustache	Schnurrbart

he probably is, Battlebolt thinks. **In any case**, Battlebolt had a very different picture of Mr Steede in his head. He thought Steede would look a bit like himself. Tall, maybe, and **smartly dressed**. Above all, he thought Mr Steede would look **wealthy**. But the little man sitting in front of him now looks more like an **aging** maths teacher than a private detective.

Exercise 1: Opposites. Verbinden Sie die Gegenteile!

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> tall | a) poor |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> wealthy | b) relaxed |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> easy | c) short |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> stressed | d) difficult |

"As you know, I'm from Steede and Nug. You spoke to my partner, Mr Nug, yesterday, and told him you needed our help as soon as possible. So here I am. What can I do for you?"

Steede is looking Battlebolt straight in the eye, and Battlebolt simply looks back.

"What exactly is your problem, Mr Battlebolt?" Steede adds.

Battlebolt is a little shocked. People never speak to him so directly. He's the boss, the one with the authority and power. He gives orders. He doesn't receive them.

"Well then, if you don't want to talk to me, please excuse me, Mr Battlebolt," Steede stands up. "I certainly don't have time to **waste...**"

"I got another one this morning," Battlebolt says.

Steede smiles and sits back down. "Have you got it here?"

"Yes," Battlebolt says. "Just give me a moment."

The note is with the others, in a large envelope in the bottom drawer of his desk. He takes it out and passes it to Steede.

Steede takes out five smaller envelopes. Each one is the same. Battlebolt's business address is printed on the front in capital letters:



in any case	wie dem auch sei
smartly dressed	elegant gekleidet
wealthy	vermögend
aging	alternd
to waste	verschwenden
chief executive officer (CEO)	Geschäftsführer
to imagine sth.	sich etw. vorstellen
to bribe	bestechen
planning officer	Beamter für Stadtplanung
MP (Member of Parliament)	Abgeordneter

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, PISCES HEALTH, 1 UPPER BEAUMONT ROAD, LONDON. Steede's eyes move to the top right-hand corner, where he sees the Queen's head against a golden background. The letters were all sent first class ⁱ

Printed above the stamp it reads SOUTH ISLINGTON POST OFFICE. So the letters were all posted locally, he thinks.

Battlebolt reaches over and pushes one of the envelopes towards Steede.

"I received this one today."

Steede pulls out a sheet of white

A4 paper with a short paragraph of text printed at the top. He looks up at Battlebolt. He's nervous in his own office, Steede thinks.

"So, let me see. 'Mr Battlebolt. I still haven't got my money. Maybe you think this is a joke? Well, **imagine** this. The front page of every newspaper in London announces: **BUSINESSMAN BATTLEBOLT BRIBES ISLINGTON PLANNING OFFICER**. Are you laughing now, Battlebolt? I don't think the people of Islington will want you as their **MP** when they know about your

Briefe, die am nächsten Tag ankommen sollen, werden in der Regel **first class** verschickt, d.h. mit einem Aufpreis. Die regulären Briefmarken sind **second class stamps**.

