

Comm's Tale

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As the last of the daylight faded to black, he turned off his small radio transmitter and replaced it in the battered leather suitcase, retrieved the long wire aerial looped around the beam above and neatly wound it up before stowing it carefully next to the service revolver with one bullet left in the chamber, and the radio that would remain mute until his next scheduled transmission. It had been two days since he had parachuted in alone under the cover of darkness and he was cold and hungry, having eaten the last of his meagre army rations 12 hours ago. He sat on the loose hay strewn over the rickety barn loft floor, searching his pockets for the berries he had picked in the forest earlier that day. The gentle lowing and shuffling of the cattle in the stalls below him was oddly soothing given the knife-edge danger he was facing. He had sent his brief message using a narrow window of opportunity and now, as he looked through the gaps in the timbers of the barn walls, eating the tart berries, he could already see torch lights dancing jerkily in the distance and faintly hear shouted commands in a foreign language. He pulled his knees up closer to his chest, placed the folded, crumpled newspaper in his lap and risked sparking up his lighter to briefly illuminate the Quick Crossword, hoping to solve 15 across before things became interesting.

About 350 miles northeast, Major Pilluck-Smythe watched the golf ball track across the carpet, just missing the lip of the glass tumbler lying on its side - a sharp rap on the door interrupting his concentration.

'Enter' he called, just as Pte Smart strode in, snapped to attention and saluted.

'This just came in Sir. Thought you'd want to see it straight away Sir' he said proffering the sheet of paper.

The Major took the sheet and quickly perused the neatly typed message.

‘This *is* genuine I presume?’ he asked.

‘Yes Sir, as far as we can tell Sir’ Smart replied with authority.

‘What do we know about this *Subernoj* chappie. Is he reliable?’ the Major inquired.

‘Australian Sir. Supposed to be reliable, although....’ Smart trailed off

‘Although what?’ the Major asked, anxious now.

‘Er... well Sir, he is a Colonial....’

‘Mmm...yes...I see what you mean’ the Major mused. ‘This new Comms Code we’ve come up with - is it foolproof?’

‘Doubt the enemy will crack this one Sir’ Smart replied confidently, ‘The boffins in Crypto have been working on it for months now Sir - they think it should turn the war in our favour’

‘Yes, well better send off a reply. Carry on Private’ the Major ordered, dismissing Smart who saluted again, wheeled around and crisply marched out the door.

Major Pilluck-Smythe sat down, scratched his head, a perplexed look on his face, wondering just how well this damn war was going. He looked again at the message before him, none the wiser :

Erudite Nelly Erudite Moth Yum - Cake Lurk Oh Shite Erudite.

**Duh Oh Whoops Nelly - Try Oh - Lurk Arse Shite Try -
Bollocks Utter Lurk LurkErudite Try.**

Shite Erudite Nelly Duh

Arse Nelly Shite Whoops Erudite Recommendo

15, Arse Cake Recommendo Oh Shite Shite

Shite Utter Bollocks Bollocks Idiot Erudite