

COLLECTIONS AGENT

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WNPL December

Prompt – Hank Boland: Working at a Collection Agency over the holiday season

A Man and a Woman stand, waiting for a bus. Finally:

WOMAN
Happy Holidays.

MAN
Excuse me?

WOMAN
Happy Holidays?

MAN
You too.
I don't remember the last time somebody wished me a Happy Holiday. I mean, except at the grocery store, but you know they're getting paid to say that. Probably have cameras on'em, a manager somewhere counting to make sure they're saying it enough times an hour. Probably their Christmas bonuses are tied to how often they say "Happy Holidays."

WOMAN
We don't get bonuses.

MAN
?

WOMAN
I'm a grocery cashier. At the Harris Tweeter down the street? We don't get bonuses.

MAN
Oh. My mistake.

WOMAN
You're right about the cameras, though. And the managers.

MAN
...

WOMAN

What do you do?

MAN

I'm a collections agent.

WOMAN

...

MAN

Which sounds... "Collections Agent." It sounds like I should, what, like manage collections, right? Like be in charge of stamp collections or baseball collections or like the collection of Beanie Babies somebody's holding onto in case they're worth something someday. Or, like, collections of Marilyn Monroe's old toothbrushes or famous guitars, like wheeling and dealing to make sure whoever's displayin' em pays enough money and that the collectors get their like royalties or whatever. That'd be a cool job, right? Sitting behind a big desk, on the phone all day being like "Yo, if you want Mick Jagger's Fender in your little museum, you're gonna have to *pay* for it, man!"

But that's not.

What I do.

I go around to people who are behind on their rent, or mortgage, or utilities, or credit cards, and I tell'em "Hey. Sorry. But if you don't give these guys their money, they're gonna come after you." Which is actually not quite right because really I'm the one doing the coming-after. Which is rough. I mean: people see me coming and they're like "foom"

(making an "outta there" gesture)

Outta There. Or like swearing at me and telling me what a terrible person I am, screamin' about their kids and stuff. Not a lot of Happy Holidays, you know what I mean?

WOMAN

Yeah?

MAN

Yeah. So you saying that, it actually means a lot.

But, um...

(looking at an envelope he's carrying)

You're Rose Henderson, right?

'Cause I've got a message for you.