

Nemesis

Agent Nemesis boarded the bustling train, quickly located a vacant compartment, slid the bronze door closed, then perched on the threadbare seat, feeling overwhelmed and apprehensive ... although she was well-trained, this was her first independent mission, and it involved meeting with the ultra-experienced, highly-regarded Agent Hephaestus. Nemesis's final training session as a recruit had been intense, learning unusual forms of martial arts, including aikido, and had concluded yesterday with a stern warning about the hazards of poisoned paper: if you even just skimmed it with your fingertips, your final view before slumping into oblivion would be your vibrant crimson skin ... this espionage game was terrifyingly ruthless!



Nemesis quivered and mentally revised the description of super-agent Hephaestus given by the agency—fair-haired, with a newspaper-wrapped bouquet of midnight black arum lilies. As she was pondering this, the door squealed open, revealing a blonde female carrying lilies, who murmured the predetermined cryptic statement ('Nekhbet was the goddess of vultures and oversaw the oldest oracle in Ancient Egypt') just as a second figure strode in: a slender man with a flaxen mohawk, also carrying an armful of lilies. Without delay, he too uttered the same secret sentence.

The pair glowered at each other as Nemesis's heart palpitated uncontrollably ... which one was the imposter? She battled to regain her composure and abruptly remembered something—a second phrase the master spy had given her to use during this mission if a situation like this occurred ... whichever agent responded instantaneously to it was likely to be Hephaestus. So Nemesis stammered that she felt dehydrated, and wondered if either of them had something to drink.

Without hesitation, the woman nimbly plunged her hand into her oversized leather knapsack and tossed a labelled plastic bottle containing a vivid liquid to Nemesis, who neatly caught it just as the male spectacularly leapt into impressive and decisive superspy action, frantically and energetically endeavouring to propel the bottle away with a forcible spin kick ... before he was expertly and adeptly restrained in a proficient taekwondo joint lock by the first agent.

The man shrieked, struggling ineffectually against his masterful opponent, screaming in agony and yelling that Nemesis was an absolute imbecile to have touched the bottle label. Nemesis was confounded, then realisation dawned ... with sickening fear and trepidation flooding her veins, she turned over her palms, which were horribly reminiscent of the colour of overripe cranberries.

Travel Inventions

How many times have you been caught in difficult, awkward or perhaps even downright desperate situations while travelling and have yearned for the perfect gizmo to make your adventures more comfortable, exhilarating, better organised, safer or less frustrating? Look no further than these awesome travel inventions.



The **smart suitcase** is a futuristic-looking piece of aluminium alloy luggage that has many mind-blowing features—not only is it fireproof, recyclable and lightweight, it also boasts a built-in LED light that illuminates in low lighting, a removable power bank with a USB connection for your smart devices and it can link to a smart tracking app that can alert you if the suitcase is opened by someone in your absence.

The **smartphone gimbal** is a pivoting support that allows your phone to rotate along a single axis. More simply put, it allows you to eliminate shaky or blurry footage when filming those holiday movies. The more expensive ones may also feature intelligent zooming wheels, multiple time lapse modes and comfortable ergonomic handles.

How about a **miniature travel vacuum**? Before you stop reading in disgust, we should clarify things—we're not suggesting that you do housework on your vacation! This amazing contraption actually helps you with your packing; it is a baggage compressor, equipped with a pressure detecting sensor, that is designed to make your clothes take up 50 per cent less space, allowing you to squeeze in all those souvenirs you have accumulated in your dream destinations.

If you've ever had a problem with contaminated water in remote locations while globetrotting, you will know that it can cause many serious health conditions. This ingenious **water purifier bottle**, with its replaceable cartridges, can transform any tap or natural water source into safe drinking water (protecting against viruses, bacteria and dangerous chemicals and metals in seconds), helping to avoid the need to buy bottled water.

