

THE PROFESSIONAL

The Professional sets her briefcase down by the door and sits behind her mahogany desk. The late afternoon sunlight pours through the floor to ceiling windows of the corner office, turning the leaves of the plant in the corner bright emerald green. She crosses her legs, leans back a little and lights a cigar. The pungent smoke swirls as she opens the paper. She turns quickly to the financial pages, and there it is, in glorious black and white, the merger she had negotiated. Of course, as a Professional, she understood that she shouldn't expect any of the credit. It rightfully belonged to her boss. Bringing together shareholders from both companies, the endless haggling over conference tables, working through contracts, word by word, that sneering trustee from the family of the original founders who could barely be bothered to show up but whose vote was essential, she had worked through it all, steering the enormous, unwieldy ship into harbor. It was enough to feel the deep sense of job satisfaction.

She folded the newspaper and turned her attention to her inbox. She worked methodically through the files, updating the notes, making corrections. She knew her bonus wouldn't be as large as the other partners, why should it be? As her boss had helpfully pointed out, having her on the team was more of a liability than anything. The board of directors would have been trying so hard not to be distracted by her long legs, to keep their minds on the words coming out of her mouth rather than her supple breasts. She always made sure she dressed as simply as possible, kept herself impeccably groomed, but some things couldn't be helped.

She had done such a wonderful job, they were considering hiring another woman. Of course, they'd given the last open position to the chairman's nephew, such a promising young man, wonderful at golf. The Professional was sure he had a bright future in front of him.

Georgie Flood is an artist, animator and insurance underwriting assistant based in Los Angeles. She has a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. Her work most recently appeared at the Nightingale Cinema in Chicago as part of Quickening: Experimental Animation by Mothers. She has recently participated in group shows at Gallery Also, LACE, and Actual Size, all in Los Angeles, as well as 221a in Vancouver, Canada.