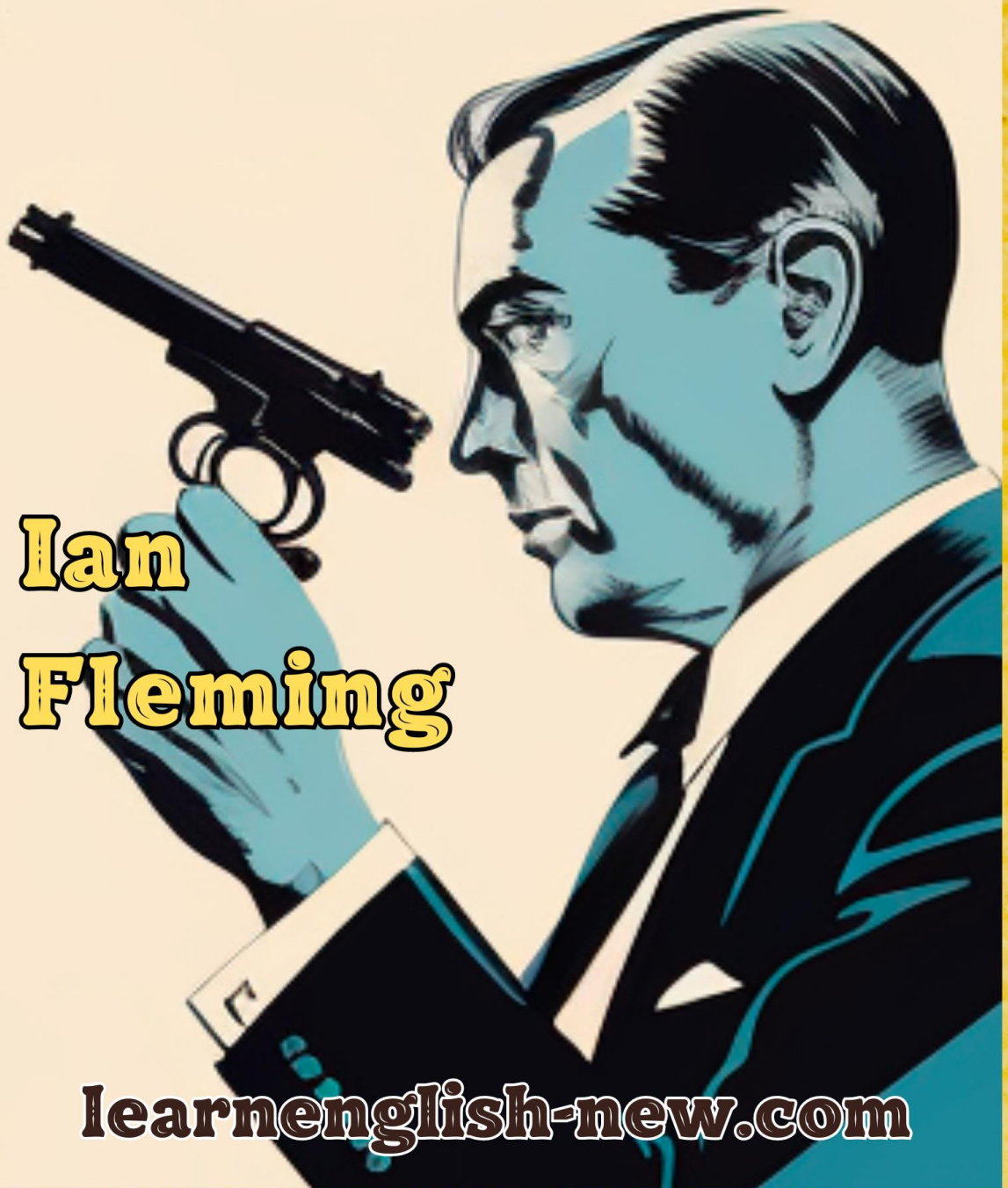


Diamonds Are Forever



**Ian
Fleming**

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Diamonds Are Forever

By Ian Fleming

Retold by
John Escott

Level 3

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A Note About The Author

Ian Lancaster Fleming was born on the 28th of May 1908 in Canterbury, England. He was a newspaper journalist and a writer. He created one of the most famous characters in twentieth-century fiction - James Bond.

Ian Fleming was educated at Eton - a famous school for boys. After he left Eton, he trained to be a soldier. He only stayed in this job for a short time. He then went to Europe to study languages at Munich and Geneva universities.

Fleming's first job was in journalism. From 1929 to 1933, he worked in Moscow for a news agency called Reuters. In this job, Fleming heard about Soviet spies who sold government secrets to other countries. Fleming sent reports about these spies to Reuters in London. He returned to London in 1933.

In the Second World War (1939-1945), Fleming was an officer at the headquarters' of the British Navy. Here, he learnt a lot about spying. After the war, Fleming worked for The Sunday Times newspaper.

Fleming decided to become a writer during the war. He wrote about spies and dangerous criminals. In 1952, he finished his first novel. In the same year, he married Anne Rothermere.

Fleming's first novel-Casino Royale - was about a handsome British secret agent called James Bond. Bond was a spy who loved women, fast cars, and good food and drink. He was well- paid because his job was very dangerous. James Bond had a 'Licence to Kill'. Sometimes he was told to kill his enemies.

Casino Royale was very successful and the adventures of James Bond, agent number 007, became very popular. When Fleming died on the 12th of August 1964, more than forty million copies of the James Bond books had been sold. The books are: Casino Royale (1953), Live and Let Die (1954), Moonraker (1955), Diamonds Are Forever (1956), From Russia, With Love (1957), Doctor No (1958), Goldfinger (1959), For Your Eyes Only (1960), Thunderball (1961), The Spy Who Loved Me (1962), On Her Majesty's Secret Service (1963), You Only Live Twice (1964), The Man With the Golden Gun (1965) and Octopussy and The Living Daylights (1966).

The first Ian Fleming book to be made into a film was Dr No. The film was first shown in 1962 and starred the actor Sean Connery. Diamonds Are Forever was made into a film in 1971. It was the seventh Bond film made, and was the last one to star Sean Connery. The Bond films continue to be huge international successes. Millions of people all over the world have seen and loved the films.

A Note About This Story

Diamonds Are Forever takes place in the 1950s. At this time, diamond smuggling was just beginning to be a big problem in the West African country of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is on the Atlantic coast and borders the countries of Guinea and Liberia. Together with coffee and cocoa, diamonds are one of the country's main exports to other countries.

Ian Fleming was very interested in diamond smuggling, and he wrote a book about it called *The Diamond Smugglers*. *The Diamond Smugglers* tells a true story about diamond smuggling in Africa. This type of smuggling still happens today.

The Mafia (sometimes called *Cosa Nostra*) is a secret criminal organization. It began in Sicily in the 19th century. At that time millions of Sicilian and Italian people were leaving Italy and Sicily to go and live and work in the United States. The Mafia came with them. Today, 'the Mafia' usually means Italian organized crime. It is involved in many criminal activities, for example, drugs, gambling' and computer crime.

The People In This Story



James Bond



Tiffany Case



Felix Leiter



M



Shady Tree



Jack Spang



Tingaling Bell



Ernie Cureo



Wint (Winter)



Kidd (Kitteridge)



Seraffimo Spang

Chapter One

The Beginning of the Pipeline

The large bush stood in the moonlight at the meeting place of three African countries. The man from the diamond mines had waited under the bush for nearly two hours. Suddenly, he heard the noise of a helicopter. He looked up and saw it coming towards him from the east.

He waited.

When the helicopter was just above the ground, an arm came out. A torch switched on and off, dot-dash, the morse code for the letter A. The diamond smuggler flashed back 'B' and 'C', and the helicopter came down safely. After a few moments, its engine was silent. The pilot opened the door and climbed down to the ground. The other man walked across to him.

'You're late again,' he said.

'I had engine problems,' said the pilot. 'Well, if you've got it, let's have it.'

The man from the diamond mines reached into his shirt and took out a packet. He gave it to the pilot. The pilot dropped the packet into the pocket of his shirt.

'Things are getting difficult at the mines,' said the diamond smuggler. 'A man has come from London. His name's Sillitoe. The Diamond Corporation has sent him. Some of my men are afraid. One day one of them is going to talk.'

'Do you want me to tell this to ABC?' asked the pilot.

'Yes,' said the other man. 'They must know about Sillitoe. Our mines are losing more than two million pounds a year because of smuggling. The Corporation wants the government to stop it. And that means "stop me".'

'What do you want?' asked the pilot. 'More money?'

'Yes,' answered the diamond smuggler. 'Twenty per cent more.'

'I'll pass the message on to Dakar,' said the pilot. 'If they're interested, they'll send it on to London. But don't push them too hard. Already three men have died in the last twelve months in "accidents". Two were stealing diamonds from the packets. The other man tried to run away.'

For a moment, the two men looked silently at each other in the moonlight. Then the pilot climbed up into the helicopter.

'I'll see you in a month,' he said.

The diamond smuggler watched the helicopter fly away to the east. With it went the diamonds, which would be sold for one hundred thousand pounds. His men had stolen them from the mines during the past month.

The diamond smuggler got on his motorcycle and rode off towards Sierra Leone. He rode fast towards the hills. Away from the great bush, where the pipeline for the richest diamond smuggling operation in the world began. And the end? Five thousand miles away, around the necks of rich women.

Chapter Two

James Bond – Secret Agent

Commander James Bond of the British Secret Service picked up the diamond from the desk and held it in front of the desk lamp. He was a tall, handsome man, with blue eyes and dark hair. He wore an expensive dark blue suit and a white shirt. Bond looked carefully at the diamond. It was a carat, and its many colours shone brightly in the light. 'It's beautiful,' Bond said.



M, Head of the British Secret Service, moved his hand towards a pile of paper packets on the desk in front of him. He opened a packet and pushed it across to Bond.

'What you're looking at is the best - a "Fine Blue-white",' he said. For the next fifteen minutes, M showed Bond many different kinds of diamonds. Finally, he sat back in his chair. He looked worried. 'Ninety per cent of all diamond sales happen here in London,' he said. 'It's big business - fifty million pounds a year. But two million pounds worth of diamonds are being smuggled out of Africa every year. We think they're going to America. To American gangs of criminals.'

'Why don't the mining companies stop it?'

'They've tried, but they can't. And the Government thinks that the problem is too big for a lot of separate mining companies,' said M. 'There's a big packet of smuggled stones in London at the moment. They're waiting to go to America. Special Branch know the name of the carrier who's going to take them there. They also know who's going to be watching him.'

'Why don't Special Branch or MIS stop them?' asked Bond.

'Because that won't stop the smuggling,' replied M. 'The carriers never talk. And they probably know nothing important. They get the diamonds from a man here, then hand them to another man when they get to the other side. We need to follow the pipeline to America and see where it goes over there. And the FBI won't be much help to us. It's a very small part of their fight with the big gangs. Have you heard of "the House of Diamonds"?''

'Yes,' said Bond. 'The big American jewellers. They're on West 46th Street in New York and the Rue de Rivoli in Paris.'

'They've got a small place in London, too,' said M. 'In Hatton Garden. They were once very big buyers at the monthly sales of the Diamond Corporation. Now they're buying less and less. But they're selling more and more. So where are they getting their diamonds? Their main man in London is Rufus B. Saye.'

'What do we know about him?' asked Bond.

'Not much,' said M. 'He has lunch every day at the American Club in Piccadilly. Doesn't drink or smoke. Lives at the Savoy Hotel.'

'So, what do you want me to do?' asked Bond.

M looked at his watch. 'You have a meeting with Ronnie Vallance at Scotland Yard in an hour. He's going to put you into the pipeline in the place of the carrier.'

'And then?' said Bond.

'And then you're going to smuggle those diamonds into America,' said M. 'You're going to be facing the Mafia and their American gangs, James. And you'll be on your own.'

Chapter Three

The House of Diamonds

At two o'clock, Bond was looking at two photographs in the office of Assistant Commissioner Vallance of Scotland Yard. They showed a dark-haired, handsome young man.

'He's Peter Franks,' said Vallance. 'You look a bit like him. Similar enough to fool someone who's only got his description. He stupidly talked about this job to a girl in a Soho club. The girl was secretly working for us. She immediately told us about it. Franks had been contacted by a friend of a friend and agreed to do a smuggling job to America for five thousand dollars. My girl asked him if he had the diamonds. He said no, but that his next job was to contact the "guard".'

'When?' asked Bond.

'Five o'clock tomorrow evening, in her room at the Trafalgar Palace Hotel. A girl called Case. She was going to tell him what to do and go to America with him.'

'Do these smugglers usually go in pairs?' asked Bond.

'Yes, the person carrying the diamonds is never fully trusted,' said Vallance. He got up from his desk and started to walk up and down the room. 'The diamonds certainly come from Africa. Probably from Sierra Leone, where our friend Sillitoe is investigating. Then the stones may get out through Liberia or French Guinea. Then into France. And because this packet has arrived in London, we think that London is part of the pipeline, too.'

Vallance stopped walking and turned to Bond. 'We know that this packet is on its way to America. But what happens there? We don't know. How was this five thousand dollars to be paid to Peter Franks? Who by? We need answers to these questions. You need to get past the man who pays you. You need to go further up the pipeline towards the big men.'

'OK,' said Bond.

'We're going to get Franks this evening,' said Vallance. 'Then you can make contact with Miss Case.'

'Does she know anything about Franks?'

'Only his description and his name,' said Vallance. 'She probably won't even know the man who contacted him. Everybody does just one job. It's safer that way if something goes wrong.'

'What do you know about the woman?' asked Bond.

'Age twenty-seven. She was born in San Francisco. She's not married. She's been over here twelve times in the last three years. Maybe more often, using a different name. She always stays at the Trafalgar Palace. The hotel detective says that she doesn't go out much. She never stays more than two weeks. You'll need to have a good story about why you're doing this job.'

Bond thought for a moment. 'What about this House of Diamonds?'

'I checked on Saye,' said Vallance. 'American. Age forty-five. Diamond merchant. He goes to Paris a lot - once a month for the last three years. He's probably got a girl there. Go and have a look at the place and at him.'

He picked up one of the phones on his desk. 'Send up Dankwaerts,' he said into it. 'And Lobiniere. Then get me the House of Diamonds on the telephone.'

Vallance walked across to the window and looked out. After a moment, there was a knock at the door. A small man came in. He had a pale face and he was wearing glasses.

'Good afternoon, Sergeant,' said Vallance. 'This is Commander Bond of the Ministry of Defence. I want you to take him to the House of Diamonds in Hatton Garden. He'll be "Sergeant James". You'll see Mr Saye, the top man there. You'll say that you think the diamonds from that Ascot robbery are on their way to Argentina through America. You'll ask Saye if he's heard anything about them from his New York office. Any questions?'

'No, Sir,' said Sergeant Dankwaerts.

A moment later, another man came into the room. He was carrying a small case.

'Good afternoon, Sergeant Lobiniere,' said Vallance. 'Come and look at my friend.'

The sergeant stood close to Bond and looked very carefully at his face for a minute. 'Who is he going to be, Sir?' he asked Vallance.

'Sergeant James, one of Sergeant Dankwaerts' men. Only for three hours. All right?'

Lobiniere took Bond to a chair by the window and opened his case. For the next ten minutes, he worked on Bond's face and hair. Bond listened to Vallance speak to the House of Diamonds on the telephone.

'Two of my men will be calling at 3.30 pm,' Vallance was saying. 'They'll need no more than ten minutes of Mr Saye's time. Yes. Thank you. Goodbye.'

Lobiniere held up a pocket mirror in front of Bond. Bond looked into it. And he saw someone who certainly didn't look like James Bond.

The waiting room at the House of Diamonds was quiet, except for the sound of a wall clock. There was a thick red carpet on the floor. In the centre was a round table and six armchairs. Bond guessed that they had cost at least a thousand pounds.

Bond and Sergeant Dankwaerts sat in armchairs and waited silently. Dankwaerts was reading a copy of the Diamond News. Suddenly, the door opened and a big, dark man stepped in and looked quickly at each of them.

'My name is Saye,' he said in a cold voice. 'What do you want?'

Dankwaerts walked round Saye and closed the door behind him. 'I'm Sergeant Dankwaerts of the Special Branch of Scotland Yard,' he said, calmly. 'This is Sergeant James. We're looking for information on the theft of some diamonds. You may be able to help us.'

While Dankwaerts told his story, Bond looked carefully at Mr Saye. He was a large man with a square face and short, black hair. His lips were a thin, straight line. He wore a black suit, white shirt and a thin, black tie. Bond decided that Saye was a hard, cold-hearted man.

'... and these are the stones we're interested in.' Dankwaerts was finishing his story. 'Have any of them come through your company here or in New York?'

'No, they haven't,' said Saye. He turned and opened the door behind him. 'Now, good afternoon, gentlemen.' And he walked out of the room.

Some minutes later, Dankwaerts was driving towards Bond's flat near the King's Road. 'Did you get what you wanted, Sir?' he asked Bond.

'I'm not sure exactly what I wanted,' said Bond. 'But I was glad to have a look at Rufus B. Saye. He doesn't look like a diamond merchant.'

'He's not a diamond merchant, Sir,' said Dankwaerts, smiling. 'I read out a list of missing stones. I mentioned a Yellow Premier and two Cape Unions.'

'Yes?'

'There are no diamonds with those names. And Saye didn't know that.'

Chapter Four

Tiffany Case

Bond knocked on the door of room 350 of the Trafalgar Palace Hotel.

'Come in,' said a woman's voice.

He walked into the small living room and shut the door behind him.

'Lock it,' said the voice. It came from the bedroom.

Bond locked the door and walked across to the middle of the room, past the bedroom door.

'Sit down,' said the voice.

Bond smiled and sat in an armchair next to a desk. He could just see her through the open door. She was getting dressed.

After a few minutes, Tiffany Case came out of the bedroom. She was very beautiful, with blonde hair and blue eyes. She was dressed in a black suit and a green shirt. She wore an expensive gold watch on her arm, and a large diamond ring on the third finger of her right hand.

'So you're Peter Franks,' she said. 'I'm Tiffany Case. Why did you decide to do this job? They told me that you were a burglar.'

'I am,' said Bond. 'Something went wrong on a job. There was an argument and a person died.'

'And now you want to leave the country,' she said.

'That's right. And I need the money.'

'Where are you going to carry the stones?' she asked. 'Do you have any ideas?'

'I thought perhaps the handles of a suitcase would be a good place,' said Bond. 'Yes?'

'No, because the customs men think the same thing,' she said. 'Do you play golf?'



After a few minutes, Tiffany Case came out of the bedroom. She was very beautiful, with blonde hair and blue eyes.

'Yes,' said Bond.

'Which golf balls do you use?' She took a piece of paper and a pen from the desk.

'They're called Dunlop 65's,' said Bond.

'OK. Have you got a passport?' she asked.

'I have,' said Bond. 'But it uses my real name. James Bond.'

She looked at him for a moment, then said, 'It's not important. Now listen. You're going over to America to see a man called Michael Tree. His friends call him

"Shady" Tree. Now this is your story. He's an American friend of yours, and you met him in Europe. OK?"

'OK,' said Bond.

'You'll stay at the Astor Hotel in New York.' She walked to the desk and opened a drawer. She took out a small packet and gave it to Bond. 'There's about five hundred pounds in there,' she said. 'Get a room here in London at the Ritz Hotel. Buy a good, used suitcase and pack your golfing holiday clothes. Get your golf clubs, then buy a ticket for the Thursday evening Monarch flight to New York. A car will come for you at 6.30 on Thursday evening. The driver will give you the golf balls.'

'All right,' said Bond.

'Don't think you can trick us and take the diamonds. The driver will stay with you until your bags go on the plane. And I'll be at London Airport.'

'What happens in New York?' asked Bond.

'Another driver will meet you and tell you what to do next. If anything goes wrong at customs, you know nothing.'

'Could we meet in New York?' said Bond, smiling. He liked this girl, and she could help him to get further up the pipeline.

She looked at him, then looked away. 'Well, I suppose we could have dinner Friday night, if the job goes OK. Meet me at eight o'clock at the Twenty-one Club on 52nd Street. Now I've got things to do.' She walked towards the door. Bond followed her. 'You'll be all right,' she said. 'Just stay away from me on the plane.'

She opened the door and Bond walked out of the room.

'See you at the Twenty-one Club,' he said. She closed the door behind him and waited to hear his footsteps go away.

Twenty minutes later, Tiffany Case walked into Charing Cross Railway Station. She went to one of the telephone boxes and dialled a number. After the usual two rings, she heard the click of the automatic recorder taking the call. For twenty seconds she heard nothing. Then the voice of her boss, who she did not know, said, 'Speak.'

She spoke quickly. 'Case to ABC. The carrier's real name is James Bond. He'll use that name on his passport. He plays golf and will carry golf clubs. I suggest we use golf balls. He uses Dunlop 65's. I'll call again later this evening.' She put down the phone.

In a rented room somewhere in London, the recorder stopped. A door opened and closed. Footsteps went softly down some stairs and out into an unknown street and away.

Chapter Five

A Bad Traveller

It was six o'clock on Thursday evening. Bond was packing his suitcase in his bedroom at the Ritz. His tickets and passport went into a smaller case which had been prepared for him by Special Branch. There was a narrow, secret space at the back of the case. This held a silencer for his gun and thirty rounds of .25 ammunition.

The telephone rang. It was the girl at the hotel desk. She said, 'A man from Universal Export has a letter for you, Mr Bond.'

A few minutes later, Bond opened the door to a man from headquarters. He gave a large envelope to Bond. 'I have to wait and take this back after you read the note inside, Sir,' he said.

Bond sat at the writing desk and began to read. The note was from M.

WASHINGTON REPORTS THAT RUFUS B. SAYE IS JACK SPANG, A POSSIBLE GANGSTER. HE IS TWIN BROTHER TO SERAFFIMO SPANG. TOGETHER THEY CONTROL THE 'SPANGLED MOB', A GROUP WORKING IN AMERICA. THE SPANG BROTHERS BOUGHT THE HOUSE OF DIAMONDS FIVE YEARS AGO. THEY ALSO OWN THE TIARA HOTEL IN LAS VEGAS. THIS HOTEL IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF SERAFFIMO SPANG.

WASHINGTON ALSO REPORTS THAT SPANGLED MOB BUY AND SELL DRUGS. THIS BUSINESS IS LOOKED AFTER BY MICHAEL (SHADY) TREE, A CRIMINAL KNOWN TO THE POLICE. THE GANG HAS OTHER HEADQUARTERS IN MIAMI, DETROIT AND CHICAGO.

THE SPANGLED MOB IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST GANGS IN THE UNITED STATES. IF YOUR JOB TAKES YOU INTO A DANGEROUS MEETING WITH THE GANG, REPORT AT ONCE TO HEADQUARTERS. WE WILL THEN GIVE THE JOB TO THE FBI. THIS IS AN ORDER.

Bond finished reading, then put the note into one of the Ritz envelopes. He gave it to the man from headquarters. After the man had left, Bond walked across to the window and looked out across Green Park.

Give the job to the FBI? M would hate to ask the FBI to finish a job. A 'dangerous meeting' would be something for Bond to decide about. He remembered some of his enemies from the past. He was sure that these gangsters could not be as dangerous as them. Or could they? He remembered the hard, cold eyes of Rufus B. Saye. Well, he would have a look at the brother - Seraffimo.

Bond looked at his watch. 6.25 pm. He put his right hand under his coat and took out the .25 Beretta automatic gun. He checked the gun carefully, then put it back in the holster under his coat.

The telephone rang. 'Your car's here, Sir,' the voice told him.

The large, black car was standing outside the Ritz Hotel. The driver put Bond's two cases and golf clubs in the back of the car. He told Bond to sit in the front passenger seat. As they drove through Piccadilly, he looked at his driver. The man's eyes were hidden behind black sunglasses and he was cold and professional.

After a time, the car stopped at the side of the road. The driver reached under his seat and took out a box of new golf balls. He got out of the car and opened the back door. He opened the pocket on Bond's golf bag. Carefully, he put the six new golf balls into the pocket with the old ones already there. Then he climbed back into the front seat and they drove on.

At London Airport, Bond's bags went through customs without problems. Tiffany Case came into the departure lounge a few minutes after Bond.

There were about forty other passengers, but there was nobody that Bond recognized except Tiffany Case. He looked round. Were two of the passengers watching him? They looked like American businessmen. One of them was a young man with white hair. The other was fat and had a pale face. Bond heard them ask for double brandies at the bar. The fat man took some pills from his pocket and put one into his mouth. Then he drank some brandy. He had a small case with some writing printed on it. It said, 'Mr W. Winter - My blood group is P.

'A bad traveller,' thought Bond.

He slept through most of the flight.

Chapter Six

Shady Tree

Bond and his bags went through customs easily at New York's Idlewild Airport. A porter took his suitcase and golf clubs and followed him through the airport. Bond was near the exit doors when he heard his name.

'Mr Bond? I have a car for you.'

Bond turned to see a tall man with a narrow face and mean-looking eyes. They walked outside into the hot early-morning sun. Bond saw something square in the man's trouser pocket. It was about the size and shape of a small gun.

The car was a black Oldsmobile Sedan. Bond climbed into the front seat. He did not wait to be told where to sit. The porter put his suitcase and golf bag in the back.

They drove through the traffic to Manhattan. The car stopped in West 46th Street - the diamond district of New York. They were outside a smart-looking shop with the name 'House of Diamonds' above the door. Bond took his small case and reached for the golf clubs.

'I'll take those,' said the driver. 'You take the suitcase.'

Bond followed the driver to a small door at the side of the shop. Inside was a man in a porter's room.

'Can we leave the bags with you?' the driver asked him.

'Sure,' said the man. 'They'll be OK here.'

The driver waited for Bond to get into the lift. The driver carried the golf bag over his shoulder and they went up to the fourth floor in silence. The driver knocked on a door opposite the lift and opened it. Bond followed him inside. A man with bright red hair and a big, moon-shaped face was sitting at a desk. He stood up as they came in. He was a hunchback.

He walked slowly round Bond, then stood in front of him and looked up into his face. Bond looked calmly back at the hunchback, seeing the big ears, the half-open mouth, and the short, strong arms.

The hunchback's voice was sharp and high. 'London tells me that you have killed a man, Mr Bond. I believe them. Would you like to do more work for us?'

'Perhaps,' answered Bond. 'How much do you pay?'

The hunchback laughed, then turned to the driver. 'Rocky, get those balls out of the bag and cut them open.' He quickly shook his arm and a knife appeared from the arm of his coat and dropped into his hand. 'A throwing knife,' thought Bond, 'and he's fast.' The hunchback sat down behind his desk again.

Rocky took the knife and put the six new golf balls on the desk. He cut one of them open and put it on the desk. The hunchback took out three uncut diamonds. The driver went on with his work until Bond had counted eighteen stones on the desk. If the stones were good quality, they could be sold for about one hundred thousand pounds after cutting.

'OK, Rocky,' said the hunchback. 'Take the golf clubs and this man's bags to the Astor Hotel. He's staying there. Send them up to his room.'

After the driver had left, Bond sat in a chair opposite the hunchback. He lit a cigarette.

'Now, if you are happy, I'd like my five thousand dollars,' Bond said.

The hunchback slowly moved the diamonds in front of him into a circle. He looked up at Bond. 'You will be paid,' he said. 'And you may get more than five thousand dollars. But you'll get the money yourself, because it's safer. It is very dangerous for a man to suddenly have a lot of money. He talks about it and spends it without being careful. Then the police catch him and ask him where it all came from. He hasn't got an answer. Right?'

'OK,' said Bond. 'How do I get the five thousand dollars?'

'I'll tell you a story,' said the hunchback. 'Today you met your friend Mr Tree. That's me. You knew me in England in 1945, just after the war. OK?'

'OK,' said Bond.

'I owed you money for a card game that we had at the Savoy Hotel in London. Right? When we met today, I paid you. So now you have one thousand dollars. Here's the money.' The hunchback took ten one hundred-dollar notes from his pocket and pushed them across the desk.

Bond put them in his coat pocket.

'You decide to go and see some horse racing in Saratoga,' continued the hunchback. 'You put a bet on a horse and win another four thousand dollars. Now you have five thousand dollars. Now if anybody asks, "Where did it come from?" you have answers.'

'Maybe the horse will lose the race,' said Bond.

'It won't.' The hunchback smiled.

'Good,' said Bond. 'I'd like to stay away from England for a while. Do you need any extra help?'

The hunchback looked silently at Bond.

'Maybe,' he said after a few moments. 'Phone me after the race. This is my number. Write it down. Wisconsin 73697. And write this down, too. Fourth race on Tuesday - the Perpetuities Stakes. Put your bet on Shy Smile to win. He's a big horse with a white face and white feet.'

Chapter Seven

Felix Leiter

Bond went down in the lift and out into the street. He walked towards Times Square.

After a few minutes, Bond became sure that someone was following him. He looked back. But there was nobody suddenly moving into a shop. Nobody quickly putting up a newspaper to hide their face.

Bond turned right into the Avenue of Americas and stopped inside the entrance of the first shop he saw.

Suddenly, he felt something hard holding his right arm and a voice said,

'Relax, Mr Bond. Don't move, or you'll have bullets for lunch.'

He felt something hard push into his side.

Had he heard this voice before? He looked down to see a metal hook holding his right arm. Moving fast, Bond tried to hit the man behind him. But the man caught his arm and stopped him. Then came a laugh and a voice said, 'Sorry, James. You're caught.'

Bond turned to see the smiling face of Felix Leiter.

'You were in front of me!' said Bond. He smiled back at the American secret agent. The last time Bond had seen him, Felix had been lying on a bed, in a pool of blood, in a Florida hotel.

'What are you doing here?' said Bond. 'Come on, you can buy me lunch and tell me.'

'OK,' said Leiter. He put his metal hook into the right-hand pocket of his coat and took Bond's arm with his left hand. 'Let's go to Sardi's. It's across the street.'

They went upstairs in the famous actors' and writers' restaurant. Leiter walked slowly and with some difficulty. Bond saw that his right arm and left leg were false, and there were small marks above his right eye.



Suddenly, he felt something hard holding his right arm.

The waiter came and Leiter ordered a dry martini for Bond. Bond smiled - Leiter had remembered his favourite drink.

Leiter's smile was warm, but his eyes were watching Bond carefully. 'Tell me, what's your business with Shady Tree?'

Bond drank his martini and lit a cigarette. 'You tell me something first, Felix,' he said. 'Are you still working for the CIA?'

'No,' said Leiter. 'When I lost my gun hand, they could only give me desk work. So I work for Pinkerton's Detective Agency now. I'm a private detective. I investigate drugs and "fixed" horse races - races where they know who's going to win. And I organize men to watch the racehorses in their stables at night. What about you? Are you still with the same people?'

'That's right,' said Bond.

'On a job for them now?'

'Yes.'

'In secret?'

'Yes.'

Leiter looked unhappy. 'If it's about the Spangled Gang, you're crazy to be working alone. This is dangerous, but maybe we can help each other. I'll tell you why I was near Shady Tree's offices.'

'I think I know,' said Bond. 'You're interested in someone with a white face and four white feet. He's called Shy Smile.'

'That's right,' said Leiter. 'He's racing at Saratoga on Tuesday.'

'I'm going to bet one thousand dollars on him, and he's going to win,' said Bond. 'It's my pay for another job. I brought a big packet of uncut diamonds in by plane this morning, for Mr Spang and his friends. Why are you interested in the horse?'

'Because the horse that looks like Shy Smile is really a fast horse called Pickapepper. The real Shy Smile was a slow horse and didn't win races. They shot him.'

'Don't tell me,' said Bond. 'Pickapepper's also got a white face and four white feet.'

'Right,' said Leiter. 'And they've done a good job with any other small differences. They started planning this more than a year ago. They're going to make a lot of money. It's a very big race.'

'What are you going to do about it?' asked Bond.

'I don't know. I need to think about it,' said Leiter. 'Let's drive to Saratoga together on Sunday. We can both stay at a quiet place I know - the Sagamore Motel - and meet in the evenings.'

'Good idea,' said Bond. 'Now let's order some lunch and I'll tell you my story.'

He finished the story when they were drinking coffee. 'And we think that the Spangs are smuggling the diamonds, and that the House of Diamonds is selling them.'

'I don't know much about Jack Spang,' said Leiter. 'But I've heard about Tiffany Case. Her mother owned a cheap hotel in San Francisco. One day she decided not to pay money to the local gangsters. Some nights later, they arrived and broke doors,

furniture and everything else in the place. Then they attacked Tiffany. It was bad. She was only sixteen years old.'

'That's terrible,' said Bond, angrily.

'Next day, she ran away. She had several jobs - dancer, waitress - until she was about twenty. Then she moved to Florida and started drinking too much alcohol. One day a boy fell into the sea and Tiffany jumped in and saved him. Her name was in the newspapers. Some rich woman gave her somewhere to live and helped her to stop drinking. She took Tiffany around the world, but Tiffany left her when they got to San Francisco. She went to live with her mother for a short time, then moved down to Reno. She met Seraffimo there and he gave her a job at the Tiara Casino in Las Vegas. She's been there for the last year or two. She goes to Europe in between, I suppose.'

'I like her,' said Bond. He looked at his watch. 'I need some sleep. I'm staying at the Astor Hotel. Where shall we meet on Sunday morning?'

'Outside the Plaza Hotel, at nine o'clock,' said Leiter. 'You've got a dangerous job, James. Be careful. All American gangsters are bad, but these Spangled boys are some of the worst.'

Chapter Eight

A Warning from Tiffany

'The waiter at the Twenty-one Club brought the martinis, with pieces of lemon peel, as Bond had ordered. Tiffany put a cigarette in her mouth and Bond lit it for her. For a moment, their eyes met, and Bond could read a message. 'I like you,' her eyes seemed to say. 'But be kind. I don't want to be hurt any more.'

Another waiter came to their table with caviar and champagne.

'I'm going to Las Vegas tomorrow,' said Tiffany. 'I'm taking the train to Chicago, then to Los Angeles. What about you?'

'I'm going up to Saratoga,' said Bond. 'To bet on a horse and make some money.'

'I suppose it's a "fixed" race,' said Tiffany. There was no smile in her eyes now. 'You seem to be popular with Shady. He wants you to work with the Mob.'

Bond hated lying to this girl, but it was necessary. 'Good,' he said. 'But who is "the Mob"?' He lit a cigarette and felt her watching him closely.

After a moment, she said, 'It's called the Spangled Mob. Two brothers called Spang. I work for one of them in Las Vegas. Nobody seems to know where the other one is. Some say that he's in Europe. And then there's somebody called ABC. When I'm working with diamonds, all the orders come from him. The brother I work for is Seraffimo Spang. He's more interested in gambling and racehorses. Then there's Shady. He looks after the drug business and other things. There are other men - gangsters. They're tough. You'll meet them.' Then she added, unkindly, 'I'm sure you'll like them.'

'It's just another job,' said Bond, angrily. 'I've got to earn some money.'

'There are lots of other ways,' she said. 'Just think very carefully before you work for our little gang.'

'This diamond game looks easy,' said Bond. 'Why don't we just go on doing it together? Two or three jobs a year will give us good money.'

'These people aren't fools,' said Tiffany. She was angry with him. 'I've never had the same carrier twice, and I'm not the only guard. Also, I think that they had someone watching us on the plane. They check and double check everything they do. I've never even seen ABC. I just phone a number in London to get my orders. You have no idea, do you?'

Some time later, they went out into the hot night and got a taxi.

'I'm staying at the Astor, too,' said Tiffany.

Bond said nothing. He looked out of the taxi window. He wanted to say to her, 'Come with me. I like you. Don't be frightened.' But Bond couldn't. He had a job to do.

At the Astor Hotel, they took the lift to the fifth floor. Bond followed her to the door of her room. She turned, angrily, and started to say, 'Listen, you Bond person...' But she stopped and looked into his eyes. He saw that she was crying. Suddenly, she put her arms round him and her face next to his.

'Look after yourself, James,' she said. 'I don't want to lose you.' She kissed him long and hard on the lips. Then she turned quickly and went into her room and shut the door behind her.

Chapter Nine

A Fast Horse

On Saturday, Bond stayed in his hotel room for most of the day and wrote a report to send to London. The diamond pipeline began somewhere near Jack Spang, also known as Rufus B. Saye. It ended with Seraffimo Spang. The stones came to Shady Tree. Then they went into the House of Diamonds for cutting and selling. Someone known as ABC seemed to be the Big Boss. He was probably in London. Bond would try to get further up the pipeline, using Tiffany Case. He wrote the report in code.

At nine o'clock on Sunday morning, a black Studebaker car stopped outside the Plaza Hotel. Bond was waiting there with his suitcase. He threw it onto the back seat and climbed in next to Leiter.

'It's about two hundred miles,' said Leiter as they drove out of the city. There was a straight, empty road in front of them. Leiter pushed his right foot down to the floor. Suddenly, Bond was thrown back into his seat. He looked at the speedometer - eighty, ninety, ninety-five miles an hour.

'Not bad for a Studebaker,' said Bond.

Leiter looked at Bond and smiled. 'This isn't a normal Studebaker.'

At 12.30 they found a place to stop for lunch. Leiter told Bond about Saratoga.

'It's a spa town,' he said! 'For eleven months of the year, it's very quiet. People sometimes come to go in the waters or to have mudbaths, but that's all. Then for one month - August - it goes crazy. It's probably the best race meeting in America, and the place is full of rich people. A lot of the racehorse owners are gangsters, like the Spangs. Sometimes they "fix" a race. The Spangs hope to get fifty thousand dollars from the Shy Smile race.'

They finished their lunch and drove on. Bond slept for a short time. When he opened his eyes, they were entering Saratoga.

There seemed to be horses everywhere. Crossing the streets, walking along the sides of the roads, coming out of lorries. Horse trainers and jockeys talked on street corners.

Leiter left Bond at the Sagamore Motel, just outside town. They agreed to meet only at night or 'by accident' at the races.

'We'll visit the racetrack early tomorrow if Shy Smile is there,' Leiter told Bond. 'I'll know about this and a lot more after an evening at The Tether. It's an all-night restaurant and bar. Most of the criminals of the racing world go there.'

At the motel Bond paid thirty dollars for three days, and got a key to room. He had a shower, dressed, then walked down the road. There was a restaurant on the corner, and he ate a chicken dinner. Afterwards he bought a Saratogian newspaper. He saw that T. Bell would be riding Shy Smile in The Perpetuities Race.

Soon after ten o'clock, Felix Leiter knocked softly on the door of Bond's room and came in. Bond was lying on the bed. Leiter sat down in an armchair and took out a cigarette.

'We get up at five o'clock tomorrow morning,' said Leiter. 'They'll be timing Shy Smile at 5.30 am. I want to see who's there. The owner of the horse is Pissaro. He's one of the directors of the Tiara Casino in Las Vegas. The jockey is "Tingaling" Bell. He's a good rider, but he's not always honest when he's paid well. I want to speak to Tingaling. The trainer is another gangster, "Rosy" Budd.'

'What are you going to do?' asked Bond.

'I've got a few ideas,' said Leiter. 'I'll wake you at five o'clock.'

Bond woke early and the two men drove to the racetrack. They walked through the trees to the white fence round the track. The early-morning air was wonderfully cool and the sun was beginning to come out.

Three men came through the trees. One of them was leading a large horse. The animal had a white face and white feet.

'Don't look too interested in them,' warned Leiter. 'Turn round and watch the line of other horses coming up the track. I'll watch our friends.'

Bond turned and looked away.

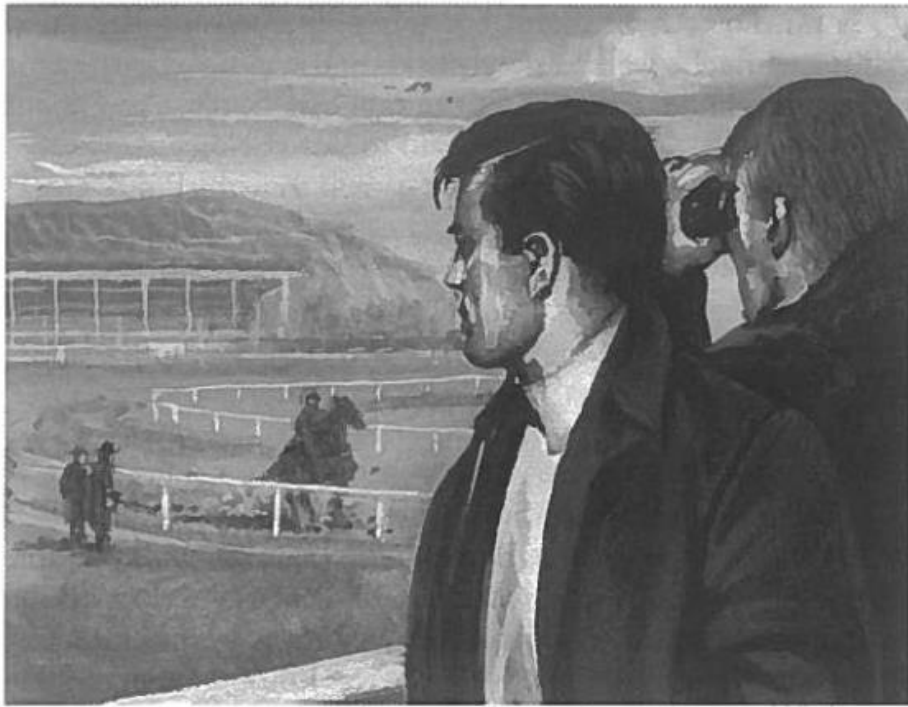
'A man is leading out Shy Smile,' said Leiter. 'And there's Budd and Pissaro. It's a nice-looking horse. The man is getting on him now. The gangsters have got their watches out. They've seen us, but don't worry. When the horse starts moving, they won't be interested in us. OK, you can turn round now, James. Shy Smile is on the other side of the track. They're watching him through their binoculars.'

Bond saw the two men with binoculars. They had watches in their hands.

'He's started!' Leiter said.

Faraway, Bond could see a brown horse moving fast round the top of the track. They watched him turn and come towards them. Horse and rider came quickly round

the corner in front of Bond and Leiter, and on towards the watching men. Then the horse was past them, and Bond's eyes moved to the two men. He saw them look at their watches to check the time that the horse had taken.



Leiter touched Bond on the arm and they walked back to their car.

'He ran well,' said Leiter. 'Faster than the real Shy Smile could run. If he moves like that, he'll win. Let's get some breakfast, James, then I'm going to see Tingaling Bell.'

After breakfast, Bond spent some time at the racetrack. Later he had lunch, then he watched and put bets on the afternoon races. It was a beautiful day, and by the end of the afternoon he had won fifteen dollars.

He walked back to the motel and had a shower. Then he found a restaurant and had dinner. Afterwards he walked over to the sales ring and watched racehorses bought and sold. After a time, Bond heard a small noise from the seat behind him. It was Leiter. He sat forward and spoke quietly in Bond's ear.

'It's done,' he said. 'It's cost three thousand dollars, but Tingaling will do it. See you in the morning, James.'

Bond didn't look round but went on watching the sales. After a while, he walked slowly back to the motel. He thought about Shy Smile, who wasn't the real Shy Smile. And about Tingaling Bell, who was being paid to lose the race.

'He's playing a very dangerous game,' thought Bond.

Chapter Ten

The Race

Bond sat high up in the grandstand and watched Shy Smile's owner through binoculars. Pissaro was at a table in the grandstand restaurant, not far below Bond. Rosy Budd sat opposite him. There was half an hour to wait before The Perpetuities Race started. Shy Smile was horse number ten. He was the bottom horse in the betting. The two favourites to win were Come Again and Pray Action.

Bond put down his binoculars and remembered what Leiter had told him earlier that day. Leiter had gone to see Bell and had told him that he was a private detective.

'I know about Shy Smile, who is really Pickapepper,' Leiter had said to Bell. 'If you win, I'll tell everyone what really happened. You'll never ride a racehorse again, Tingaling. Or... you can win the race but be disqualified. Knock into the horse nearest to you and stop him winning. Do that and I'll give you one thousand dollars now and another two thousand after the race.'

A frightened Bell had agreed. But he wanted the two thousand dollars to be given to him at the Acme Mud and Sulphur Baths. He went there every evening after the races, at six o'clock.

Bond had the two thousand dollars in his pocket. If Shy

Smile got disqualified and lost the race, he would go to the Acme Baths at six o'clock and meet Bell.

When it was time, the horses came down to the starting place. First came number one, Come Again. A big black horse. Then came Pray Action, a fast-looking grey horse. The big, brown horse with a white face and white feet was behind all the other horses. A nervous-looking Tingaling Bell sat on his back.

The horses came to the starting gate, and Bond watched the race through binoculars. A bell sounded, and they moved quickly away...

Shy Smile, number ten, was close to the fence...

Horse number five was just in front...

Come Again and Pray Action came along next to him...

Shy Smile was behind them...

Round the corner, and now Come Again was at the front...

And Shy Smile was fourth...

Down the long straight part of the racecourse, and Shy Smile and Pray Action rushed past number five...

Shy Smile was almost next to the front horse...

Now Pray Action and Shy Smile were side by side...

Together...

Moving quickly away from the others...

Coming to the last corner...

Racing towards the finish...

There was a camera filming the race. Bond stopped breathing. 'Now! Now!' he thought. 'Do it now!'

Pray Action was nearest the white fence...

Tingaling Bell moved Shy Smile nearer to him...

Tingaling looked away so that he could not see the grey horse next to him...

Suddenly, Shy Smile's head hit Pray Action's head.

He pushed Pray Action towards the fence...

Pray Action's jockey stood up, and had to slow his horse down. Angry shouts came from the crowd...

Now Shy Smile was in front! Going faster... faster...

Moments later, Tingaling Bell took him past the finishing post.

He had won!

Or had he?

'Very clever riding, Tingaling!' thought Bond.

Some minutes after the end of the race, a voice came over the loudspeaker. 'Attention please. Number ten, Shy Smile, has been disqualified. Number three, Pray Action, is the winner!' Bond smiled and walked towards the bar.

Chapter Eleven

Mud Baths

The small red bus had the words 'Acme Mud and Sulphur Baths' on its side. It went down a short hill towards a group of dirty, grey buildings. A tall, yellow chimney stood up from the centre. Black smoke came from the chimney.

The bus stopped by the baths. There was a seat near the entrance, under some dead-looking trees. Bond sat there for a few minutes, trying to prepare himself. He was not happy. He did not like the look of the place, and he did not like what was going to happen to him inside.

But after a few more moments, he went inside. The bad smell of sulphur was strong. A woman sat behind a desk, reading a paperback book. She looked up. 'Yes?'

'I'd like a bath,' said Bond.

'Mud or Sulphur?' asked the woman.

'Mud,' said Bond. He paid for a ticket.

At the back of the room were two doors. One said MUD, the other SULPHUR. Bond went through the MUD door. He found himself in a long room with a window in the roof and changing rooms along the walls. It was hot and steamy in the room. Two men sat at a table playing cards. They were naked except for towels around their waists. They looked up at Bond.

'Ticket?' one of the men asked.

Bond gave him his ticket and the man gave him a key for one of the changing rooms. He pointed at the door at the end of the room. 'The baths are through there,' the man said.

There was nothing in the changing room except a thin towel. Bond took off his clothes and put the towel round his waist. He pushed the money into his coat pocket. Then he walked out and locked the changing room door behind him.

He went through the door at the end of the room. A large black man with no hair met him on the other side.

'Follow me,' said the black man.

The room was square and grey, and there were long tables against the walls. On each table was a heavy wooden box like a coffin. It had a wooden top that covered most of the box. Men's hot, wet faces showed above the sides of most 'coffins'.

Bond followed the black man to a wooden seat next to two shower rooms. Bond sat on the seat and the man went across to an empty coffin. He put a sheet into it. Next he went to the middle of the room and got two buckets. They were filled with hot brown mud. He poured mud into the empty coffin until the bottom was full.

He left it to cool and went to a bath full of ice. From this he took several wet towels, then walked round the room. At each coffin, he stopped to put a cold towel around the head of the red-faced man inside. When he had finished, he walked across to the empty coffin.

'OK,' he said to Bond.

The man took Bond's towel and key. Bond climbed into the coffin and lay down in the hot mud. The man put a cold towel under Bond's head, then took one of the buckets of hot mud. He put the mud all over Bond's body. When he had finished, only Bond's face and a very small part of his body round his heart was white. The man then pulled the sheet round Bond until Bond could only move his fingers and his head. He felt like a trapped animal.

'Twenty minutes,' the man said to Bond. He closed the lid.

It was six o'clock.

Bond was uncomfortable and hot. At three minutes past six, the door opened and Tingaling Bell came into the room. The black man came across and put a towel around Bond's head. It felt wonderfully cold.

The jockey climbed into a coffin in front of Bond. The black man covered him in mud and put the sheet round him. Then he shut the lid over Tingaling's body.

Bond closed his eyes. How was he going to give Tingaling the money? In the changing room after the bath? On the way out? In the bus?

'OK, nobody move!' It was a hard, frightening voice and came from the doorway.

Bond opened his eyes. The door to the room was open and a man stood by it. Another man walked quickly into the middle of the room. They both carried guns and had black hoods over their heads. There were holes cut in the hoods for their eyes and mouths.

'Where's the jockey?' the man in the middle of the room asked. He moved across the room and hit the black man with his gun.

The black man, afraid, pointed.

The man with the gun walked towards Tingaling. When he went past Bond, he stopped and looked for a few seconds. Then he moved over to the jockey.

'Hello, Tingaling,' he said, coldly.

'What's wrong?' The jockey's voice was high and frightened.

'Wrong?' said the man with the gun. 'Maybe you've never heard of a horse called Shy Smile. Maybe you weren't there when he was disqualified this afternoon.'

The jockey started to cry softly. 'It... it wasn't my fault, Boss. It was an accident.'

'My friends think that it wasn't an accident.' The man put the gun to the jockey's head. 'They found a thousand dollars hidden in your room. Where did it come from?'

'I've saved it!' cried Tingaling. 'It's all the money I've got!'

The man took the gun away. 'You've been riding too much, Tingaling. You need a rest. In a hospital, maybe.' He walked across and picked up one of the buckets of hot mud and walked back.

The jockey started shouting, 'No! No!' as the hot, brown mud came out of the bucket and onto his head.

When it was empty, the man threw the bucket across the room. 'Don't call the police,' he said as he walked to the door. He laughed and pointed at Tingaling's coffin. 'You'd better get him out before he begins to cook.' Still laughing, the two men went out of the room.

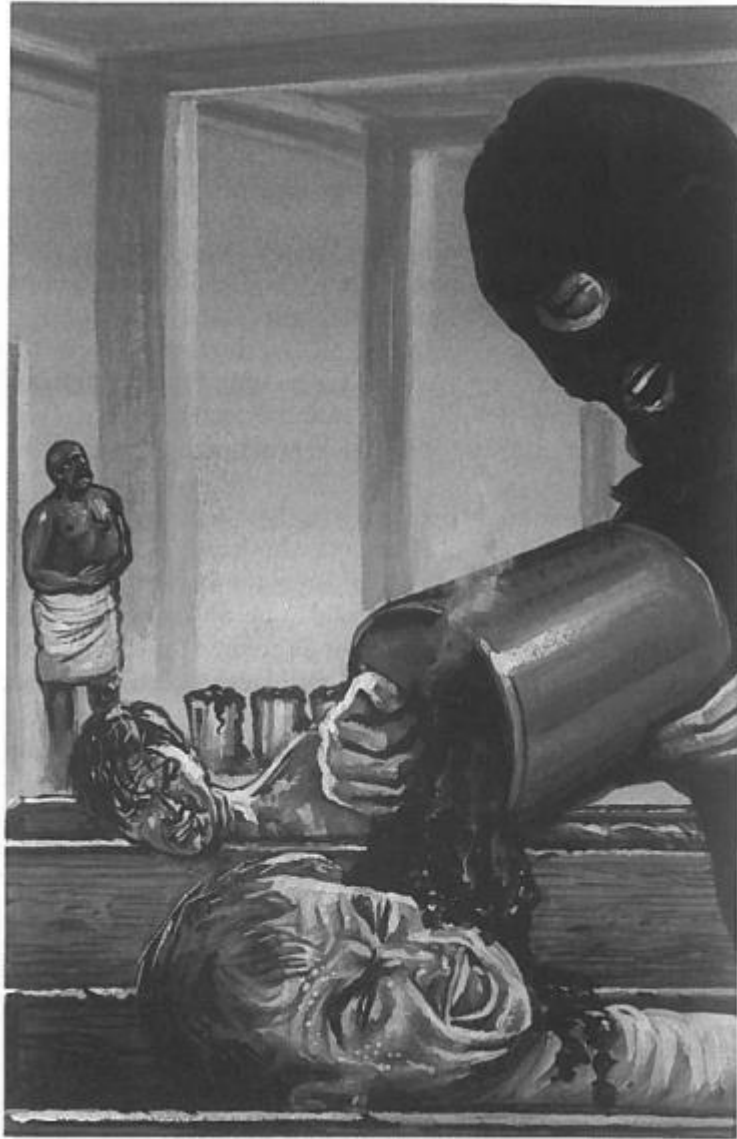
Sometime later, Felix Leiter was sitting in Bond's room at the motel.

'What happened next?' he asked.

'The two ticket men came running in,' said Bond. 'They took the lid off Tingaling's box and pulled off the sheet. Then they carried him to the shower. He was half dead, and all of his face was burned.'

'Describe the two gunmen,' said Leiter.

'The man by the door was small and thin,' said Bond. 'The other man was big and fat. He had a red wart on his right thumb.'



The jockey started shouting, 'No! No!' as the hot, brown mud came out of the bucket and onto his head.

'Wint,' said Leiter. 'And the other man was Kidd. They work for the Spangs and they always work together. Wint is always sucking that wart on his thumb. He's called "Windy". He gets sick in cars and trains, and he thinks that planes are going to crash at any minute. Kidd's got white hair, but he's only about thirty years old. I'll tell the police about them and about Shy Smile. I won't tell them about you, James. I'll be back in an hour.'

Bond got dressed, then went to find a telephone.

He spoke to Shady Tree. 'Shy Smile didn't win,' he said.

'I know,' said Shady Tree. 'Tell me where you are staying and I'll send you another one thousand dollars. You'll get the money in the morning. Now, listen carefully. Come to New York and get a plane to Los Angeles. Then get another plane to Las Vegas. There is a room booked for you at the Tiara Casino. At ten o'clock on Thursday evening, go to the centre table of the three blackjack tables near the bar. Sit down and bet the one thousand dollars. Do this five times. Then get up and leave the table. Don't bet any more, but wait for more orders. OK?'

'OK,' said Bond.

Later, Felix Leiter returned and he and Bond went out to dinner.

'My boss wants me to go to Las Vegas,' said Leiter, when they were eating. 'He wants to know where the real Shy Smile's body is buried.'

'Then we're both going to Las Vegas,' said Bond. He told him about Shady Tree's orders.

'I'll be there by the end of the week,' said Leiter. 'Maybe we could meet sometimes. Listen, Pinkerton's have got a man there. His name's Ernie Cureo. I'll tell him that you're coming and he'll look after you. But be careful, James.'

Bond smiled. 'I'll be careful. But I've got to get further down the pipeline. Also, I've got to get close to Seraffimo Spang. I really don't like the Spangs. I don't like what they did to that black man and Tingaling.'

'Are you still an agent with a double "O" number?' asked Leiter. 'The number that means you're allowed to kill?'

'Yes,' said Bond, quietly. 'I am.'

'Good,' said Leiter.

Chapter Twelve

Las Vegas

Bond came out of the airport building at Las Vegas.

A voice said, 'Are you going to the Tiara?'

Bond turned and saw a short, heavy man with large, brown eyes. 'Yes,' said Bond.

'OK, let's go.'

Bond followed him to his car. It was a taxi. He threw his suitcase onto the back seat and climbed in after it. They drove out of the airport.

'I'm Ernie Cureo,' said the driver. 'I'm a friend of Felix Leiter. He told me to look after you. Are you staying long?'

'Maybe for a few days,' said Bond.

After driving for some time, the wide road went on through lines of coloured lights and signs until they were in downtown Las Vegas. The sun was uncomfortably hot.

'We're coming into the famous Strip, now,' said Cureo, after a minute or two. 'Here are all the big hotels and casinos. That's The Flamingo, and that's The Sands. And here's The Desert Inn and The Sahara. Over there is The Thunderbird, and across the road is The Tiara.'

He slowed down and stopped outside the Spang hotel.

'I guess you know all about Mr Spang,' said Cureo.

'I know a little,' said Bond. 'You can tell me the rest another time.'

'OK,' said Cureo. 'I am sure you'll be safe on your first night.'

Bond had lunch next to The Tiara's big swimming pool, then went to his room. It was very comfortable, with expensive furniture, a radio and a television.

He slept for four hours.

During this time, a secret wire-recorder under the table next to the bed recorded complete silence. When Bond woke up, it was seven o'clock. The wire-recorder heard him phone the hotel desk.

'I want to speak to Miss Tiffany Case...' A pause, then, 'All right, please tell her that Mr James Bond called.'

The recorder heard him move about the room. It heard the noise of the shower. And, at 7.30 pm, it heard the noise of the key in the lock when he went out and shut the door. Half an hour later, the recorder heard a knock on the door. A man wearing a waiter's uniform came into the room with a bowl of fruit. There was a note with it:

From the Hotel Manager

The man walked quickly to the table by the bed and removed the wire from the recorder. He put a new wire in the machine. Then he put the fruit on the table and went out and closed the door.

For several hours after that, the wire-recorder heard nothing.

Bond sat in the Tiara bar and slowly drank a martini.

'Has Mr Spang been in tonight?' he asked the barman.

'I haven't seen him,' said the barman. 'He usually comes in about eleven o'clock.'

Bond walked across to the blackjack tables. He stopped at the centre table - the table where he was going to sit at ten o'clock. It was now 8.30. Eight players sat round the table, opposite the dealer. The dealer was about forty years old. He dealt two cards into the eight numbered spaces on the table in front of the bets. The bets were mostly five or ten silver dollars, or counters worth twenty dollars. Nobody spoke. The waitresses moved around in the space inside the circle of tables. From this space, two tough-looking men with guns at their waists watched the tables and players carefully.

Bond watched the game for a short time, then walked to The Opal Room restaurant. He sat at a corner table and ordered a steak and a martini. Then he ate his dinner and thought about the rest of the evening. He was becoming bored with this job. And he did not like taking orders from a cheap gangster, or trying to please Mr Spang.

Just before ten o'clock, he walked into the Casino.

'There are two ways of doing this job,' he thought. 'Sit and wait for something to happen, or make something happen.'

Chapter Thirteen

An Interesting Evening

The dealer now at the centre blackjack table was Tiffany Case.

'So that's her job at the Tiara,' thought Bond. All the blackjack dealers at the tables were pretty women. They all wore the same smart Western clothes - short, grey skirt with a wide, black belt, a grey shirt and a black handkerchief round the neck, a grey cowboy hat and black boots.

'So Tiffany is going to help me to win five thousand dollars,' Bond thought. He sat down opposite her.

'Hi,' she said, smiling politely.

Bond put ten one hundred-dollar notes across the betting line on the table. One of the two tough-looking men walked across and stood next to Tiffany. He was called a 'pit-boss'.

'Maybe this man would like new cards,' the man said, looking at Bond. He gave Tiffany a new pack of cards, then he moved away.

Tiffany shuffled the new cards quickly, then 'cut' them - divided them into two parts - and put them flat on the table. But Bond saw that the two halves were not quite the same. When she shuffled them again, she was going to put the cards back into the same place. She put them in front of Bond to cut. He watched her shuffle them again, cleverly moving the cards just where she needed them. And so, the 'new' pack of cards was 'fixed'.

She dealt him two cards, then gave two to herself. Bond looked at his two cards. A jack and a ten. He looked up at the girl and shook his head. He didn't want another card. She turned her cards over. They added up to sixteen. She took another card - a king. Now the three cards added up to more than twenty-one. She had 'busted'. She had silver dollars and counters for twenty dollars next to her. But the pit-boss moved quickly to her side with a thin, thousand-dollar plaque. She pushed it across to Bond.

Bond bet again. She dealt him two more cards. Seventeen. Again, he shook his head. She had twelve, and took two more cards - a three and a nine. 'Busted' again. And the pit-boss was there with another thousand-dollar plaque. With his next bet, Bond got cards that added up to nineteen. She turned over a ten and a seven and had to 'stand'. Another thousand-dollar plaque came to Bond.

More people were coming into the gambling room now. Soon they were going to be round the tables. This was his last bet. After this he was supposed to get up from the table and leave her. She dealt him two cards and he picked them up. Twenty. And she picked up two tens. Bond smiled. Both took another card and busted. She quickly dealt him two more cards, just as three more players, came to the table. He had nineteen and she had sixteen. And that was the end. Bond took his last thousand-dollar plaque.

He got up from the table and looked across at the girl. 'Thank you,' he said. 'You deal beautifully.'

Tiffany Case looked hard at Bond. 'You're welcome,' she said.

Bond turned and walked away to the bar. So now he had his five thousand dollars. He remembered what Shady Tree had told him, 'Don't bet any more.' Bond smiled, then finished his drink and walked across the room to the nearest roulette table.

'Five thousand dollars on Red,' he told the croupier.

The croupier looked closely at him, then put the five thousand-dollar plaques onto the Red. Bond saw him push a button under the table with his knee. A moment later, the pit-boss walked across to the table. At the same time, the croupier turned the wheel.

Bond lit a cigarette. He had a wonderful feeling of freedom. Nobody was going to tell him what to do any more. And he knew that he was going to win.

The wheel turned more slowly and the little ball fell into its red place.

'Thirty-six. Red,' said the croupier.

He pulled in some losing counters and pushed some money across to the winning players. Then he took a large, thin, five thousand-dollar plaque and put it next to Bond.

'Put it on Black,' said Bond.

Now several more people came to watch. Bond felt their eyes on him, but he looked across the table to the pit-boss. The man looked a little nervous.

Bond smiled at him as the wheel turned.

'Seventeen. Black,' said the croupier.

There were noises of excitement from the watching crowd. They watched the croupier push the big plaque in front of Bond.

Now there was another man standing next to the pit-boss. He was a big square-shaped man, and he was looking at Bond with hard, bright eyes. It was Seraffimo Spang. He looked a little like his brother in London.

'Now for the last throw,' thought Bond. 'And then I'm leaving here with twenty thousand dollars of Spang money.' He looked across at his employer. Spang's eyes were still watching him.

'Red,' said Bond. He gave the five thousand-dollar plaque to the croupier.

The wheel turned. The little ball fell into its place.

'Five. Red,' said the croupier. And there were more noises of excitement from the people around the table.

'I'll take my money,' said Bond. 'Thanks.'

Bond put the four plaques in his pocket and moved through the crowd. He walked across to the cashier's desk. 'Three notes of five thousand and five of ones,' he said to the man. The cashier took Bond's four plaques and gave him the money.

Bond went to the hotel desk and asked for an air mail envelope. Then he moved to a writing-desk next to the wall. He put the three large notes in the envelope and wrote on the front:

The Managing Director

Universal Export

Regents Park

London, NW1

England.

Then he bought stamps at the desk and put the envelope into the US mailbox. He hoped it would be safe. He looked at his watch. Five minutes to midnight. He looked round the room for the last time. There was a new dealer at Tiffany Case's table, and Mr Spang was not there anymore.

Bond walked back to his room and locked the door. It had been an interesting evening.

Chapter Fourteen

Gunfights!

For most of the next day, Bond waited at the hotel for something to happen. When he got tired of waiting, he phoned Ernie Cureo.

'Let's meet for a talk,' he said.

Cureo came to get him that evening, and they drove away from the Strip.

'What happened last night?' asked Ernie Cureo. 'Did you win anything?'

'I won some money at roulette,' said Bond. 'It won't worry Spang. He's rich. How does he spend his money?'

'He's crazy about the old West,' said Cureo. 'He bought himself a ghost town out on Highway 95. It's called Spectreville. It has a Western saloon bar, a hotel and even an old railway station. And Spang bought one of the old trains. He keeps it in the station at Spectreville. At weekends he takes his friends for a ride to Rhyolite. It's another ghost town, about fifty miles away. It gets lots of visitors.'

'That's why I haven't heard from Spang or his friends all day,' thought Bond. 'It's Friday, so they'll be out playing trains.'

After some minutes, Cureo said, 'We're being followed, front and back. Do you see that black Chevrolet in front, with the two men? They've got two driving mirrors and they're watching us. Behind us is a little red Jaguar. Two more men, with golf clubs on the back seat. They belong to the Detroit Purple Gang, and they don't play golf. I'll try and lose them.'

Bond took a thousand-dollar note from his pocket and pushed it into Cureo's shirt pocket. 'That's for any damage to your car. OK, Ernie. Let's see what you can do.'

He took his Beretta out of its holster and held it in his hand. 'This is what I've been waiting for,' he thought.

It was a straight road with not much traffic. Ahead, the tops of the mountains were yellow in the evening sun. They were riding easily along with the Jaguar behind them and the black Chevrolet in front. Without warning, Cureo pushed his foot down hard and stopped the car suddenly. The Jaguar hit them from behind and there was a crash of metal and glass. Cureo then drove away fast down the road.

Bond looked out of the back window. 'They're out of the car,' he said. 'The windscreen is broken - there's glass everywhere. They're trying to pull the front part of the car off the wheels. Good work, Ernie. It's stopped them for a little while.'

'Get down,' said Cureo. 'The Chevrolet has stopped at the side of the road. They may try some shooting.'

Bond felt the car move forward fast. Cureo was half lying on the front seat, driving with one hand. There were two loud cracks as they went past the Chevrolet. Glass fell around Bond. The car almost went off the road before Cureo got it straight again. Bond pushed out the broken glass in the back window. The Chevrolet was coming after them.

'I'm going to turn suddenly and stop in the next side road,' said Cureo. 'It'll give you a clear shot when they come round the corner after us. Now!'

The car went round the corner on two wheels and Bond held on to his seat. The car stopped suddenly. Bond jumped out, his gun in his hand.

The Chevrolet came round the corner fast.

Bond fired his gun. Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! All four bullets hit the car.

The Chevrolet went across the road, hit a tree, turned completely round and went slowly over onto its side. And stopped. Bond watched fire come from the front of it.

Someone was trying to get out of a window. Soon the flames were going to find petrol on the ground and the whole car was going to explode. It was going to be too late for the man inside.

Bond heard a sound behind him. He turned to see Ernie Cureo fall from the driver's seat of the taxi and across the passenger seat. Bond forgot the burning Chevrolet and pulled open the car door. There was blood all over Cureo's arm. Bond pulled him carefully onto the passenger seat and his eyes opened.

'Get me out of here,' he said. 'And drive fast. That Jaguar will soon be coming to find us. Then get me to a doctor.'

'OK, Ernie,' said Bond. He got into the driving seat and started the car. He moved fast down the road, away from the burning Chevrolet.

'Can you see anything in the mirror?' asked Cureo.

'There's a car coming fast after us,' said Bond. 'It's the Jaguar.'

'We have to find somewhere to hide,' said Cureo. 'There's a drive-in cinema near here. There! Turn right. See those lights? Get in there quick. That's right, between those cars. Turn off your lights. Stop.'

The taxi stopped in the back line of six rows of cars. They looked towards a large cinema screen. A man was saying something to a woman on the screen.

Two more cars drove in and stopped. Neither of them was the Jaguar. A girl came up to the taxi.

'That's a dollar, please,' she said. She connected a loudspeaker to a metal post next to the car. Then she hung the speaker inside the window next to Bond. The voices of the man and woman on the screen filled the car.

The girl moved away to the next car.

'Turn the sound off!' said Cureo. He spoke with difficulty. 'Watch the entrance. We'll wait a little while, then you can get me to a doctor.'

Bond found a switch and the voices stopped. He looked out into the darkness towards the entrance, but could see nothing. Suddenly, a dark shape came up from the ground, and a gun was pointing at Bond's face. Then a voice from outside Ernie Cureo's side of the car whispered, 'OK, boys, don't do anything stupid.'

Bond looked at the face next to him. 'Get out, or we'll shoot your friend,' the man told him. 'You and the two of us are going for a drive.'

Bond turned and saw the gun pushed into Cureo's neck.

'I'll go with them, Ernie,' he said. 'I'll soon be back to get you to a doctor.'

'Sorry, friend,' said Cureo, in a tired voice. 'I think...' There was a soft noise as the gun hit him behind the ear. He fell forward and was silent.

Bond stepped slowly out of the car, and the three men walked towards the entrance.

Chapter Fifteen

Spectreville

The red Jaguar was outside the entrance, its windscreen broken. They took Bond's gun before he climbed in next to the driver. 'Where are we going?' he asked.

'You'll see,' said the driver. He was a thin man with an unkind face.

They were soon driving along a moonlit road towards the mountains. There was a big sign which said '95'. Bond remembered that Spectreville was on Highway 95. So these men were taking him to Mr Spang.

Bond suddenly felt that he did not know enough of the answers. Did they know who he really was? He could say that he had not understood his orders about the gambling. But how to explain all the shooting? He could say that he thought the four men were from another gang.

'Well, now I'm about to get to the end of the pipeline,' he thought.

After two hours of driving, they stopped outside some high gates. There was a sign outside. It said: SPECTREVILLE. DO NOT ENTER. DANGEROUS DOGS. On the gate was a button and a speaking box. A small sign next to it said: RING AND SAY WHO YOU ARE. The driver pushed the button and a voice said 'Yes?' from inside the box.

'Frasso and McGonigle,' said the driver, loudly.

'OK, McGonigle,' said the voice. There was a 'click' and the gates slowly opened.

They drove through them and down a narrow road. The gates closed behind them. The road went on for about a mile, then there were lights in front of them. They went down a hill and suddenly there were brightly lit buildings. Past them, the moon shone down on a single, straight railway line. It went on as far as Bond could see.

The car stopped in front of grey houses and shops. One bigger building had a sign outside. It said: PINK GARTER SALOON BAR. From behind the Western swing half-doors, yellow light came out onto the street. The sound of a piano playing came from inside. It was all like something out of a Western film.

'Get out,' McGonigle told Bond.

The three men climbed out of the car and onto the wooden pavement. Bond stopped.

'Come on,' said McGonigle.

Bond slowly followed him to the door of the saloon. He stopped for a moment as the swing half-doors came back towards his face. He felt Frasso's gun pushing into his back.

'Now!' thought Bond. He jumped through the doors and threw McGonigle round and into Frasso. The two men crashed back onto the pavement. McGonigle was up on his feet first, with a gun in his hand. Bond's hand came down on the gun and knocked it to the ground. Frasso fired two shots at Bond. But the secret agent dropped to the ground and picked up the gun at McGonigle's feet. He fired two quick shots at Frasso from the ground. Then McGonigle stepped on his hand and fell on top of him. Bond went down, but he saw and heard Frasso crash down onto the pavement outside.

Then McGonigle's hands were on him. For several seconds the two men fought silently, like animals. Bond got up on one knee and pushed the other man off him. As he did this, McGonigle's knee came up and hit Bond's face. Bond fell back but then stood up. McGonigle came towards him with his head down.

Bond turned away quickly. But the gangster's head hit him in the chest, and two fists crashed into his body. The gangster's head came up, and Bond hit him hard in the face. McGonigle fell back, but Bond went after him. He reached for the gangster's foot and pulled it away from the floor. Then he turned and threw the man into the room. McGonigle's flying body crashed down on top of the piano. The piano fell to the floor, with McGonigle flat on the top of it.

'Stop!' A girl's voice came across the room from the bar.

Slowly, Bond turned round.

There were four people standing with their backs to the bar. Mr Spang stood in front of the other three. He was dressed like a cowboy, with shiny, black boots and two guns in holsters at his sides. Tiffany Case stood next to him. She wore a Western dress of white and gold. She stood and watched Bond. Her eyes were shining and she looked nervous. Then there were the two men in black hoods, the two from the Acme Baths at Saratoga. Each of them pointed a gun at Bond.

'Bring him this way,' said Mr Spang.

He left the room. Tiffany Case gave Bond a warning look as she followed him. The two men came close to Bond. The big one said, 'Move'. Bond walked slowly after the girl and the two hooded men walked behind him.

Bond pushed through a door behind the bar. He looked around and saw that he was now in a railway station waiting room. 'Turn right,' said one of them. Bond turned and went through a door.

In front of him was, probably, the most beautiful steam train in the world. There were three metal, shining lights on the front of the big, old engine. The name The Cannonball was painted along the side in black and gold. Behind the engine was a dark blue carriage. Bond looked at the train, but then he felt a gun in his back.

Bond climbed up into the carriage. First there was a small, but beautiful, dining room, then a narrow room with three doors at the sides. With the two men still behind him, Bond walked to the end and pushed open the door into a big room. It was a sitting room with bookshelves on each side and expensive curtains. A thick red carpet covered the floor.

Mr Spang stood at the far end of the room. In the middle sat Tiffany Case. She was nervously smoking a cigarette.

Bond walked to a comfortable chair. He turned it towards Spang and Tiffany and sat down. He crossed one knee slowly over the other, then lit a cigarette.

'Stay here, Wint,' said Mr Spang. 'Kidd, go and phone Detroit. Tell them to send more men.' He turned towards Bond and his eyes shone angrily. 'Now. Who are you and what's happening?'

Bond did not like Spang's question. 'I'll need a drink if we're going to talk,' said Bond. 'Bourbon.'

'Get it, Wint,' Mr Spang said coldly.

The big man walked out of the room. Minutes later, he came back and pushed a glass into Bond's hand. 'Thanks, Wint,' said Bond. He drank some of the bourbon then put the glass down on the floor next to him. He looked up at Mr Spang.

'I did my job and got paid,' said Bond. 'It was my money, and I decided to gamble with it. Then a lot of your men came after me. If you wanted to talk to me, why didn't you just telephone me? When they started shooting, it was time for me to shoot back. So I did.'

Without taking his eyes off Bond, Mr Spang slowly pulled a piece of paper from his shirt pocket.

Bond knew that the piece of paper was bad news for him. Really bad news.

'This is a message from a good friend in London. It says, "Peter Franks is held by the police. Find out if the job is in any danger, then kill the new carrier and send a report."'

There was silence in the room. Mr Spang looked hard at Bond. 'Well, Mr Whoever-you-are,' he said at last. 'This looks like a good year for something horrible to happen to you.'

Bond tried to stay calm. He knew that they were going to hurt him - badly. But how? He reached down for his drink. Now he knew that the two Spangs were the beginning and the end of the diamond pipeline. He had completed his job. He knew the answers. Now, in some way, he must get the answers back to M.

'I took the job from Peter Franks,' he said. 'He decided that he didn't like it, and I needed money.'

'You're lying,' said Mr Spang. 'You're with the police, or you're some kind of private detective. I'm going to find out who you are, who you work for, and what you know.' He turned angrily to Tiffany Case. 'How did he trick you? Are you stupid?!'

'No!' said Tiffany. 'ABC sent this man to me, and he seemed OK. Was I supposed to tell ABC to try again? And maybe this man is telling the truth.' Her angry eyes turned towards Bond, and he saw fear in them - fear for him.

'Well, we're going to find out,' said Mr Spang. 'Wint, get Kidd and the boots.'

The boots? Bond sat silently. He had to be strong now. He must tell them nothing. He had to think of Ernie Curo and Felix Leiter, and maybe Tiffany Case.

He heard the two men come up behind him.

'Take him out onto the station,' said Mr Spang.

'OK, Boss,' said Wint.

The two hooded men sat down. They put football boots down on the thick carpet next to them. Then they started to take off their shoes.

Chapter Sixteen

The Cannonball

'James!' said Tiffany Case. 'Wake up!'

J After some moments, Bond's blackened eyes opened with difficulty. He looked up at her from the wooden floor. She shook his blood-covered arm, afraid that he might fall asleep again. He seemed to understand and slowly pulled himself up onto his hands and knees.

'Can you walk?' she asked.

'Wait,' he said. He could feel his feet and hands. He could move his head from side to side. He could see the moonlight. He could hear her. 'It should be all right,' he thought. But he just wanted to sleep. Or to die. Anything to stop the pain that was in him and all over him. Anything to kill the memory of those four boots kicking him.

'We're in the waiting room,' she whispered. 'We must get to the end of the station.'

She opened the door and Bond got up on his feet. With Tiffany's arm round him, he walked slowly out and to the end of the station.

And there was a railroad handcar.

Bond looked at it. 'Petrol?' he whispered.

Tiffany pointed to some petrol cans by the station wall. 'I've just filled it,' she whispered back. 'They use it to check the railway line. Get on it.' She smiled. 'Next stop, Rhyolite.'

'You're a great girl,' whispered Bond. 'But there'll be a lot of noise when we start that thing.' He turned and looked at the buildings behind him. 'I've got an idea. Have you got some matches or a cigarette lighter?'

She took a lighter out of her pocket and gave it to him.

'What's the idea?' she said. 'We need to get moving.'

Bond went across to the cans of petrol and started opening them. He threw petrol over the wooden walls. When several cans were empty, he went back to her. 'Start the handcar,' he whispered. He picked up an old newspaper from next to the railway track. Tiffany started the handcar engine.

Bond lit the newspaper with the lighter, then threw it towards the petrol cans. BOOM! Flames shot into the sky.

'James!' cried Tiffany.

Bond got onto the handcar as it started to move away.

Soon they were speeding along the track, and Bond felt the cool night air.

'Are you OK?' asked Tiffany. 'You look terrible.'

'Nothing's broken,' said Bond.

'I had to sit and listen to them kicking you,' she said. 'Spang stayed and listened and watched me. After they put ropes round you and threw you into the waiting room, everyone went to bed. I waited an hour before I came down to you.'

'You're going to be in trouble if they catch us,' said Bond.

'Don't worry about me,' she said. 'First we have to get this thing to Rhyolite. Then we'll have to find a car and get to California. I've got money. We need to get you to a doctor and buy you a new shirt. I've got your gun. I got it after Spang went to bed.' She opened her shirt and took it from her belt.

Bond took it from her and pushed it into the top of his trousers. His shirt was covered in blood.

The miles went by. Every few minutes, Bond turned and looked behind them. They had been travelling nearly an hour when they heard a new sound.

'It's The Cannonball!' said Tiffany.

They looked back along the railway line. Was that a small light far away?

'How far is it to Rhyolite?' asked Bond.

'About thirty miles.'

'How fast can this thing go?'

'About thirty miles an hour.'

After fifteen minutes, Bond could see the lights on the front of the big engine.

'Are we OK for petrol-' he asked.

'Yes,' she said. 'I put in a whole can.'

Almost before she finished speaking, the little engine went 'Put. Put-put.'

'Oh, no!' said Tiffany.

And again. 'Put. Put-put.' Then 'Put-put... hissss...' and suddenly they were moving down the track in silence, the engine dead. Minutes later, the handcar stopped.

'No more petrol,' said Bond. He looked round. There was flat, open land for two miles on the left, and mountains half a mile away on the right.

'Come on, Tiffany,' he said. 'We've got to go.' He looked round - and saw her running down the track in front of the handcar. After a moment, she turned and ran back.

'There's a side line in front,' she said. 'If you can move the points on the track we can push this thing down the side line. Then the train will miss us.'

Bond smiled. 'I've got a better idea. Come on. Start pushing!'

Once it started moving, the handcar moved down the track easily. They came to the points by the side line and Bond went on pushing until they were past them.

'What are you doing?' asked Tiffany.

Bond ran back to the points. 'We're going to send The Cannonball down the side line. Help me move the points switch.'

They both pulled hard on the switch. The pain in Bond's arms was terrible. But slowly the old metal moved for the first time in fifty years. Then it was done and Tiffany helped Bond back to the handcar.

Suddenly the night air was full of the noise of the great metal train as it rushed towards them. 'Get down and don't move!' shouted Bond. He pushed Tiffany down behind the handcar. Then he went across to the side of the railway line and took out his gun.

Crack! A bullet hit the ground next to him. Crack. Crack. Crack. Now he could hear the gun above the sound of the engine.

And then the big engine flew into the side line with a scream of metal. Bond saw Spang in the cab of the engine. He was almost falling out, holding the side of the cab with one hand and driving the engine with the other.

Bond lifted his gun and fired four shots. He saw Spang's white face suddenly turn up to the sky. Then the great black- and-gold engine was past him and rushing towards the Spectre Mountains. Its lights cut through the darkness and a warning bell began to ring. But nothing could stop it now.

Bond put the gun into his trousers as Tiffany Case ran across to him. They watched the engine go behind a large rock. And suddenly there was a terrible crash and a great burst of fire. And then... silence.

'And that's the end of one of the Spangs,' thought Bond.

'Let's get away from here,' said Tiffany.

It took them an hour and a half to walk the two miles to the main road. Tiffany half-carried Bond. When they reached the road he fell down, full of pain. The girl sat and held him against her. She cleaned his face with the corner of her shirt. An hour later, a low, black car stopped next to them. A head came out of the driver's window. A friendly Texan voice said, 'Felix Leiter, Miss. What can I do for you on this beautiful morning?'

'... and when I got into town I called my friend Ernie Cureo,' said Leiter. 'His wife told me that he was in hospital. So I went and saw Ernie and he told me the whole story. So I drove through the night to Spectreville and saw that the place was on fire. The gates were open so I went inside. The only person there was a man on his hands and knees, trying to get away. He had a broken leg, and his name was Frasso. I made Frasso tell me everything. Then I left him for the Fire Department to find when they arrived. Next I drove towards Rhyolite. I found a pretty girl in the middle of the road. And here we are. Now tell me your story.'

'So I'm not dreaming,' thought Bond. 'I am in the back of the Studebaker, and this is Tiffany's arm under my head. And that is Felix, and we are going down the road to a doctor, some food, a bath, a drink, and sleep.' He lay still and listened to their voices.

At the end of Tiffany's story, Leiter said, 'We'll be in Los Angeles by lunchtime. Before that, we could stop at Olancha and get James to a doctor. But we must get you and James out of the country as soon as possible. Once the rest of the Spangled Mob finds you, they'll kill you. We need to get you on a plane to New York tonight and on your way to England tomorrow.'

'But who is this man Bond?' said Tiffany 'Is he a private detective?'

'Ask him yourself,' Bond heard Leiter say carefully. 'Don't worry, he'll look after you.'

After that, Bond fell asleep. He woke up outside the house of Doctor Otis Fairplay in Olancha. The doctor cleaned Bond's cuts. Then he, Leiter and Tiffany got some breakfast before they drove away again.

Chapter Seventeen

On the Queen Elizabeth

The bar of the Beverley Hills Hotel in Los Angeles was dark and cool. There were new suitcases next to Bond and Tiffany. Bond wore his nice, new Hollywood clothes and sat drinking his martini. There was a telephone on the table next to the drinks. Felix Leiter finished talking to New York for the fourth time that evening.

He put down the phone. 'My friends at the office have got you tickets for the Queen Elizabeth and a passport for you, Tiffany. The ship leaves from New York for England tomorrow night at eight o'clock. They'll meet you at La Guardia airport in the morning. They went to get the rest of your things from the Astor, James.'

'Thanks, Felix,' said Bond.

'There's a report in the newspaper about the Spectreville fire,' Leiter went on. 'Nothing about Spang. My friends tell me that the police aren't looking for you, but the gangsters are. They'll pay ten thousand dollars to the person who kills you. Get on the ship and stay in your cabins for two or three days. Now, I've got to get back to Las Vegas tonight.'

Leiter drove them to the airport.

'You've got a good friend there,' Tiffany told Bond, when they were watching him drive away.

On the plane, Bond sat in his seat and thought about the beautiful Tiffany sitting next to him. He knew that he was very near to being in love with her. But what about her? Would she ever be able to trust, and perhaps love, a man again?

He thought, too, about the diamond smuggling pipeline. One part of it was finished. But Seraffimo was only the end of the pipeline. Jack Spang and the mystery-man ABC were the real bosses. Did Jack Spang and ABC know about his and Tiffany's escape?

So now they had to find Jack Spang, and then ABC. The Secret Service could only find the man at the beginning of the pipeline in Africa through ABC. He planned to send a report to M when they were on the Queen Elizabeth. Vallance's men could then do the rest. There would not be much for Bond to do in London, only write reports.

At about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon, Bond and Tiffany went to their cabins on the Queen Elizabeth. A man watched them go onto the ship. He then walked quickly to a telephone.

Three hours- later, two American businessmen got out of a black car and walked onto the ship. One was a young man with white hair. The name on his small case was B. Kitteridge. The other man was big and fat. He looked sick. The name on his suitcase was W. Winter. Below the name were the words 'My blood group is F'.

Three days later, Bond met Tiffany in the ship's Veranda Grill for dinner. The weather was fine and the sea was calm.

'Now tell me, James,' said Tiffany. 'What do you do and who do you work for?'

'I work for the Government,' said Bond. 'They want to stop the diamond smuggling.'

'You're a sort of secret agent.'

'Just a government worker,' said Bond.

'OK,' said Tiffany. They were silent for some minutes, then she suddenly put a hand on his hand. 'Listen, you Bond person. I love being here with you.'

'And I love being with you, Tiffany,' said Bond. He paused, then went on, 'Felix told me a little about you. About the attack...'

'Oh,' she said. 'Did he?' She began to shake a little.

'Don't think about it,' said Bond. 'This is today, here and now. Not yesterday or a long time ago. Tell me about your work as a dealer at the casino.'

She became calmer, and they talked about blackjack. 'Now tell me about you,' she said. 'What sort of a woman do you like?'

'Somebody who can make good Sauce Bearnaise,' said Bond, smiling. He looked closely at her. 'And she's got to have gold hair and blue eyes. And she must know how to play cards. The usual things.'

She laughed. 'And would you marry this person?'

'I'm almost married already. To a man. His name's M.'

Later Bond took her back to her cabin, then went to his cabin and had a shower.

Soon after, there was a knock on the door. A waiter came in carrying a small tray.

'What's that?' asked Bond.

'It has just come up from the kitchen,' said the man. He went out and closed the door.

Bond looked at the tray. On it was a bottle of champagne, a plate with four small pieces of steak, and a small bowl of sauce. Next to this was a note. It said:

Miss T. Case made this Sauce Bearnaise without my help.

The Chef.

Bond smiled and filled a glass with champagne. He put a lot of the sauce on a piece of steak. He ate it, then he went to the telephone.

'Tiffany?'

He heard a little laugh at the other end. Then he said, 'Well, you can certainly make wonderful Sauce Bearnaise...'

He put the phone down carefully.

Chapter Eighteen

Dead Men Can't Speak

It was eleven o'clock the next evening. There were only a few people left in the Veranda Grill. It was quiet, with only the soft sound of the sea outside. Bond and Tiffany had finished their dinner. They were holding hands and looking silently into each other's eyes. After a time, they got up and walked to the smoking room. They found a small table in a corner and ordered coffee.

Bond suddenly saw that two men were looking at him. They were sitting at a table across the room, and they looked away quickly. One man had white hair, and the other was big and fat. Bond looked carefully at the fat man. Had he seen this man before? He turned back to Tiffany.

'Those two men across the room seem interested in us,' he said.

She looked past his shoulder. 'They're not looking at us now. The fat man's sucking his thumb. The white-haired man just looks stupid.'

'Sucking his thumb?' said Bond. He was trying to remember something.

'Forget it, James,' said Tiffany. 'Let's go.'

They finished their coffee and went down the stairs to the deck below. Bond put his arm round her, and Tiffany put her head on his shoulder. They walked in silence until they were inside Bond's cabin. Then Bond put his arms around her and said softly, 'My darling...'

Bond woke up to the sound of the telephone. The last thing he remembered was the door closing after Tiffany had left sometime during the night.

The telephone bell rang again.

Bond picked the telephone up. A voice said, 'There is a message for you, Sir. Shall I send it down to you?'

'Yes, thanks,' said Bond. He looked at his watch. Three o'clock in the morning. He climbed out of bed and went into the shower. Afterwards he pulled on a shirt and trousers. There was a knock on the door. Bond opened it and took the message from the man outside.

It was from the Chief of Staff in London. It said:

SECRET CHECK OF SAYE'S OFFICE FOUND MESSAGE TO 'ABC'
FROM 'Q.E.' SIGNED BY WINTER. WINTER KNOWS THAT YOU ARE ON
QUEEN ELIZABETH. REPLY ADDRESSED TO WINTER ORDERS HIM TO

KILL TIFFANY CASE. WE BELIEVE SAYE IS ABC. SAYE FLEW TO PARIS YESTERDAY AND IS NOW REPORTED TO BE IN DAKAR. WE THINK THAT MAN AT SIERRA LEONE IS BEGINNING OF PIPELINE. HE IS BEING WATCHED. YOU WILL FLY TO SIERRA LEONE TOMORROW NIGHT.

Bond sat quite still in his chair. So somebody from the Spangled Gang was on the ship. Who? Where? He quickly picked up the telephone and phoned Tiffany. He heard it ring once, twice, three times. Bond dropped the phone and ran to her cabin.

It was empty.

Bond tried to think. Would the man question her before he killed her? Would he try to find out what she knew about Bond? Would he take her to his cabin? But which cabin?

Bond ran to his cabin and found the Passenger List. Winter! Cabin A49. Suddenly, he remembered everything. Winter. Wint and Kidd. The two men in hoods! The two men on the plane from London!

Bond got his gun and pushed it into the top of his trousers. A49 was below his cabin.

'That helps,' he thought. He opened one of the two round windows in his cabin and looked down. How far down was A49? More than two metres. The sea was calm, and there was no wind.

'It's a hot night,' Bond thought. 'Will one of their windows be open?'

He took the sheets from his bed and began to tie them together. He tied one end of the 'rope' round part of the window. Then he threw the tied sheets down the side of the ship.

'Don't look up and don't look down,' he told himself. 'Don't even think about it.' His mouth was dry and he could feel his heart beating fast.

Some minutes later, he felt the metal window of A49 beneath his feet. It was open! His foot told him that the curtains inside the window were closed. He climbed on down.

There were voices inside the room. Suddenly, a girl's voice cried, 'No!' There was a moment's silence, then the sound of a slap. It was as loud as a gun firing a shot.

Bond pushed himself through the curtains and into the cabin. He crashed to the floor, rolled over, and came up with his gun in his hand. It pointed at a place between two men.

'Who sent for you?' said the fat man, calmly. He was sitting in a chair opposite Tiffany. She was sitting on another chair. She was naked except for a pair of pants. She looked at Bond, and her eyes were wild and frightened. The white-haired man was sitting on the bed. He smiled at Bond.

'Tiffany,' said Bond. 'Go into the bathroom and close the door. Then get into the bath and lie down.'

She moved quickly to the bathroom and shut the door behind her. 'Now she's safe from bullets,' Bond thought. 'And she won't see what I have to do.'

'Forty-eight sixty-five eighty-six.' The fat man said the words fast. Were the words an American football signal? The fat man suddenly threw himself onto the floor. The white-haired man started to roll off the bed and away from Bond.

Bond fired his gun. A hole opened up just below the man's white hair. His body fell.

The fat man on the floor had his gun half-out of his trousers.

'Drop it and get up!' ordered Bond.

The fat man dropped the gun and stood up. He looked into Bond's eyes. He was afraid.

'Sit down,' said Bond.

The fat man turned and walked back towards his chair. He sat down. Suddenly, his right hand reached down the side of his leg and came up with a throwing knife.

Crack! The bullet from Bond's gun and the knife went past each other in the air.

The eyes of the two men showed sudden pain. But the fat man's eyes closed a moment later. He fell backwards with his hand on the hole in his chest. Bond's eyes looked down at the blood on the front of his shirt. The handle of the knife was hanging down from his shirt.

He turned and looked out of the open window. Very slowly, his body started to relax. After a moment or two he pulled the knife from his shirt and threw it out of the window into the darkness.

He walked across to the bathroom. 'Tiffany, it's me,' he said, and opened the door.

She was lying face down in the bath with her hands over her ears. He helped her out of the bath and stood with his arms round her.

'You're hurt,' she said.

She took off his shirt and washed the cut on his chest with soap and water. Bond collected her clothes from the cabin and brought them back to the bathroom.

'Get dressed,' he said. 'Then clean everything that you've touched. We don't want to leave any fingerprints.'

He went back into the cabin. For the next half hour, he did everything very carefully. He held the gun over the hole in the fat man's shirt, and fired a second bullet through the hole. Now there were smoke marks around the hole. Next he put the gun in the fat man's right hand. 'You shot yourself,' he told the dead man.

He went across to the white-haired man and picked him up. He carried him to the window and pushed him through it.

He looked back at the fat man. 'You and your friend had a fight,' he said. 'You shot yourself after you threw your friend out of the window. That's the story. I hope the police like it when we get to Southampton.'

He cleaned his fingerprints off everything that he had touched, pulled the sheets off one of the beds, then went to get Tiffany. He had to get her back to his cabin without anyone seeing them. And then - sleep, with her body close to his and his arms round her forever.

Forever?

He looked at the dead eyes of the body on the floor. They seemed to speak to him, saying, 'Nothing is forever. Only death is forever.'

Chapter Nineteen

The End of the Pipeline

It was hot under the large bush at the meeting place of three African countries. The smuggler listened. The helicopter was coming!

The smuggler walked out into the moonlight to get the packet of diamonds from his motorcycle.

A mile away, an army truck was behind a low bush. Three men stood next to it - two soldiers and Bond. Near them was a large gun, pointing at the sky. They could hear the noise of the helicopter.

'Get ready,' said Bond. 'Is the loudspeaker switched on?'

'Yes, Sir,' said one of the soldiers.

Bond looked up into the sky. He thought about Tiffany, safe at his home in London. He wanted this job to be finished so that he could go back and see her again.

The smuggler from the mines was also looking up. The helicopter came down and flew above his head. An arm came out and a torch flashed the code for 'A'. The man on the ground flashed back 'B' and 'C'. Then the helicopter landed.

The pilot started to climb out. He was wearing a flying helmet.

'That's unusual,' thought the smuggler. 'And he looks taller than the usual pilot.'

'Have you got the stuff?' asked the pilot. It was an American voice.

'Yes,' said the man from the mines. 'Where's the usual pilot?'

'He won't be coming again. I am ABC. I am closing the pipeline.'

'Oh,' said the smuggler, nervously. He gave the pilot the packet.

Suddenly, the pilot took a gun from his coat and shot the smuggler three times. The smuggler's eyes opened wide with shock. Then he fell to the ground and lay still.

'Don't move or we shoot!' The voice from the loudspeaker came across the open ground.

The pilot ran towards the helicopter and climbed in. The door crashed shut behind him. Moments later the helicopter began to move up into the sky.

Bond shouted, 'Now!' He was sitting on the seat behind the gun.

The two soldiers turned the gun towards the sky and Bond shot at the helicopter.

Bang - bang - bang, bang - bang - bang - bang! Red fire filled the sky, and then there was a much louder BANG!

The helicopter began to come down crazily to the ground. Inside it, Jack Spang - who was also Rufus B. Saye of the House of Diamonds, and also the Big Boss, ABC - came down with it.

Before the sound of the crash died, flames shot up into the sky.

Bond lit a cigarette and sat watching the orange flames from the helicopter.

'That's the end of the diamond pipeline,' he said softly. 'The end of the Spangled Mob. But not the end of the diamonds that are in the centre of the fire. Diamonds don't die. Diamonds are forever.'

And Bond suddenly remembered the eyes of the dead Wint. They had been wrong. Death is forever. But so are diamonds.

He jumped down from the truck and started to walk towards the fire. All these thoughts about death and diamonds were too serious. For Bond it was just the end of another adventure. He thought about the beautiful woman waiting for him in London. And he smiled.

— THE END —

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