



IAN
FLEMING

CHAPTER ONE

Murder in Jamaica

It was six-fifteen on a peaceful afternoon in February. The sun was sinking low in the sky over Kingston - the capital city of the beautiful island of Jamaica.

It had been a hot day but the air was cooler now. Insects and frogs had started to call and sing. A man had just left a large white building with wide grass lawns and tall trees in front of it. This was a club where he met his British friends. He went to the club every afternoon to have a cool drink. Now he was going to his house, where he also had an office.

The man's name was Commander John Strangways and he was Regional Control Officer for the Caribbean. Strangways worked in Jamaica for the British government. But he was really an agent of the British Secret Intelligence Service. He was a British spy who worked in Jamaica. Lots of people knew Strangways was a spy because he was not careful enough about his secret.

Every evening at 6.30, Strangways had to contact London and transmit his report to the headquarters of the Secret Intelligence Service on a radio transmitter. The time in Jamaica was five hours behind the time in London. If it was 6.30 p.m. in Kingston, in London it was 11.30 p.m. When Strangways had sent his report, he waited to receive his orders from the Secret Intelligence Service.

If Strangways couldn't make contact with the SIS in London at 6.30 p.m., he had to try again at 7.00 p.m. And if he couldn't send his message at this time, he would try again at 7.30 p.m. If London hadn't heard from him at that time, the SIS wouldn't try to contact him again. The headquarters would 'declare an emergency'. They

would immediately start an investigation. They would try to find out why Strangways had failed to make contact.

Strangways never changed his routine. He did the same things, at the same times, every afternoon. Every evening at 6.15, he left the club where he met his friends and he started his journey back to his office. And every evening he took the same route in his car - he drove along the same streets. Every evening at 6.25, John Strangways met his assistant, Mary Trueblood, at the office. By 6.25, Miss Trueblood had always prepared the radio transmitter, so that it was ready for Strangways to send his report to London immediately.

On this February evening, three large men had been waiting for Strangways on the street near the club. As soon as Strangways came onto the empty, silent street, they started to walk towards him.

The three men were all wearing dark glasses and carrying white sticks. The men were walking together in a line, one behind the other. The first man was holding a little metal cup. The second and third men were each touching the shoulder of the man in front of them.

Strangways began to walk towards his car. He looked at the men and thought that they must be blind beggars. There were some beggars in Kingston, but perhaps Strangways should have been surprised to see three blind beggars together. And he should certainly have been surprised that all three men were Afro-Chinese. This was an unusual mixture of races in Jamaica. Meeting three, blind, Afro-Chinese men begging together should have seemed very strange to Strangways. But he was thinking about his evening transmission.

Strangways carelessly put a coin in the tin cup as he passed the three beggars and he walked on. So he didn't see the men turn around and pull guns from their pockets. And he didn't really feel the bullets which hit him a moment later. He was dead before his body hit the ground.

A few seconds later, a big black car appeared in the street. It was a hearse - the kind of car that is used for funerals. It was driven by a fourth Afro-Chinese man.

The three killers suddenly took off their dark glasses and quickly opened the doors at the back of the hearse. They threw their glasses and their white sticks into the car. Then they picked up the body of the British agent and pushed it into a wooden coffin¹¹ which was in the back of the hearse. A few moments later, they had got into the car and it had driven away.

At six twenty-five, Mary Trueblood heard the door of the office opening behind her.

'The transmitter is ready for you, sir,' she said, turning around to welcome her boss.

But it wasn't Strangways who was standing in the doorway. It was a large Afro-Chinese man, and he was pointing a gun at her heart. Mary Trueblood opened her mouth, but the man shot her before she could scream.

A few minutes later, she was with her boss. Both of their bodies were in the coffin in the back of the hearse, and the office of the Regional Controller was on fire.

Another hour later and the killers had put some heavy pieces of metal into the coffin with the bodies. Then they had dropped the coffin into the deep water of a lake which was many miles from Kingston.

CHAPTER TWO

Bond's Mission

The secretary, Miss Money Penny, looked up and said, 'You can go in now, Commander. M's ready to see you.'

Commander James Bond, an agent of the British Secret Intelligence Service, walked into the office of the Head of the Secret Service. Bond was a tall, strong, handsome man with black hair. He greeted his boss and sat down.

M - no one at headquarters ever called him anything else - was sitting at his desk reading some papers. The old man glanced up at Bond. 'How are you, 007?' he asked.

M knew James Bond very well. The Commander was one of his best agents. But in this office, Bond was only ever called by his workname. Only the very best SIS agents had worknames which began with double-O. An agent whose workname began with two zeros was always sent on the most difficult and dangerous missions. And sometimes he was ordered to kill enemies of his country. He also had permission to kill people if they attacked him. James Bond - agent 007 - had a licence to kill.

Bond looked at M but he didn't reply immediately to M's question. The agent's cool, blue-grey eyes didn't show his feelings. So his boss spoke again.

'Are you well now, 007? Are you ready to start work again soon? I've a special mission for you. You're going to Jamaica. I want you to investigate a case there.'

Several months earlier, in Paris, Bond had been injured in a fight with a Russian agent. The woman had been an important member of SMERSH. SMERSH was the department of the Soviet Intelligence Service which trained people to kill enemy agents. The Russian had very nearly killed Bond with a knife which was hidden in her shoe. The knife had been covered with poison.

Bond had made a mistake on that mission. He hadn't guessed how the woman would fight, or what weapons she had hidden. He'd almost died and it was his own fault. Bond knew that, and M knew it too.

Bond had been in hospital after the fight. The poison had made him very ill. He'd been away from work for many weeks. But now he wanted to get back to his job, and he was pleased that M wanted him for a special mission. He'd been worried that M no longer trusted him, because the mission against the Russian woman had gone so wrong. He wanted very much to be trusted again. If M thought that Bond had lost his nerve, Bond's job as a special agent was finished. He would lose his double-zero workname - M would take away his licence to kill.

'Tell me about the Jamaican mission, sir,' Bond said.

'Well, it'll be an easy investigation,' M said. 'But I have to send someone to Kingston to check the facts. I want you to confirm what I suspect'. You'll be able to find the answers and close the case in a day or two, I'm sure. Then you can spend some time on the beach. You still need to rest, 007, and you need to get back your - your confidence. This easy mission will help you. It'll build your confidence again.'

Bond was angry. M didn't want to say that Bond had lost his nerve. So he spoke about 'building his confidence'. But Bond knew what his boss really meant. It was clear that M didn't trust him again - not yet. But Bond wanted M to trust him again, so he hid his anger.

'What has happened in Jamaica, sir?' he asked quietly.

'John Strangways - Our Regional Control Officer for the Caribbean has disappeared,' M replied. 'His assistant has also disappeared. One day, three weeks ago, Commander Strangways didn't make his evening transmission. The next day, we heard some strange news. Strangways's office had been set on fire and everything in it had been destroyed. No bodies were found in the burnt building. Nobody has seen Strangways, or his assistant, Miss Trueblood, since the fire.'

'The Acting Governor of Jamaica thinks that Strangways was in love with the girl and that he ran away with her,' M continued. 'He thinks that the two of them stole some money which belonged to the British government. Then they set fire to the office to cover their tracks.'

'I agree with the Acting Governor, 007,' M went on. 'Strangways and the girl haven't left Jamaica using their own names, we know that. We've checked the seaports and the airport. But Strangways could have made false passports for them both quite easily. In fact, he controlled the preparation of British passports on the island - that was part of his job. But we need to confirm all this. That's why I'm sending you to Kingston. You'll be the service's Acting Regional Controller on Jamaica while you find out what really happened to Strangways and Trueblood. You'll do Strangways's job until I find new people to send.'

'I'll take the next flight to Kingston, sir,' Bond said. 'But I think that you're wrong about Commander Strangways. I know him. I don't think that he would steal money. And I don't think that he would destroy his office and run away. He loved his country and he loved his work. I don't know Miss Trueblood. I agree that it's quite possible that Strangways had fallen in love with her. He does fall in love rather easily. But if he wanted to leave Jamaica and live with Miss Trueblood, he would have resigned from his job. I'm sure about this. He wouldn't set fire to his office and run away.'

'Love can make people behave very strangely, 007,' M replied. 'But I want you to find out the truth. Is there anything else that you

want to know?'

'Well, I'd like to know about the last case that Strangways was working on before he disappeared,' Bond said. 'There might be a connection.'

M picked up a brown file from his desk.

'There was a little problem about a place called Crab Key,' he told Bond. 'It's a small island between Jamaica and Cuba. There are some rare birds there. Six weeks ago, there was a complaint that some of these birds had been killed. I thought that the complaint was nonsense, but I asked Strangways to investigate. All the details are in here.' He gave Bond the file. 'Take it away and read it.'

CHAPTER THREE

The Island of the Birds

The story in the file which M had given Bond was a strange one. For many years, the island called Crab Key had belonged to Britain, and Jamaica had looked after it. In the nineteenth century, Crab Key had been rich because of 'guano'. The guano came from a kind of bird called the green cormorant. Huge numbers of these birds visited the island and left their droppings. The guano - the birds' droppings - was full of chemicals called nitrates, which were used as fertilizers. Farmers in Europe spread guano on the ground to make their crops grow. Guano became one of the most valuable products in the world.

There were only a few areas in the world where guano could be collected. Sometimes the price of guano was very high. At those times, the workers on Crab Key were busy. But when the price of the guano was low, work stopped on the island. This was because the guano on the island was not of very high quality. The highest quality guano could be bought from Peru. The guano from Crab Key couldn't be sold for as much money as Peruvian guano. Collecting the guano and transporting it to Europe cost too much money when the price was low.

From 1900 to 1930, guano prices had been low, so all the people left Crab Key. But at the end of that time, the island became famous for another reason. Scientists discovered that a rare kind of bird - the roseate spoonbill - was living there. Almost all the roseate spoonbills in other parts of the world had died. But a lot of them were still living on Crab Key. Many people had been excited by this discovery. And the members of the Audubon Society were the most excited. The Audubon Society bought a lease from the British

government officials on Jamaica for the small part of Crab Key where the birds lived. This part became a sanctuary for the spoonbills. The society sent two wardens to live on the island. These men studied the roseate spoonbills and they made sure that no one harmed the rare birds in their sanctuary.

Then suddenly, in the 1940s, the price of guano increased. At that time, a man contacted the Governor of Jamaica. He wanted to buy Crab Key. This man was called Doctor Julius No. Bond learnt from the file that one of Doctor No's parents was German and the other was Chinese. Doctor No offered a lot of money for the island. He also said that the Audubon Society could keep their lease on the small area where the spoonbills lived. The Governor of Jamaica talked to the government officials in London and they decided to accept Doctor No's offer. Since 1942, the island of Crab Key had been owned by Doctor No.

Doctor No had moved many workers to the island, and for some years the price of guano was high. But at the beginning of the 1950s, the price fell again. Doctor No had kept his workers on the island, but nobody could understand why. He couldn't be making any money from the guano now.

Then Bond read about what had happened in December of the previous year. One of the wardens from the spoonbill sanctuary on Crab Key had arrived on the north coast of Jamaica in a canoe. The man had been badly injured in a fire. Most of his body had been terribly burned and he died a few days later. But before he died, the warden told a very strange story. He said that one evening, a huge dragon had attacked his camp in the sanctuary. The dragon had breathed fire. It had burnt the camp with flames which came from its mouth. The dragon had burned him and killed the other warden.

After that, it had gone into the sanctuary and it had started to attack the spoonbills. Most of the birds had been killed and many had flown away in fear.

The story about a fire-breathing dragon was hard to believe, of course. The police in Jamaica thought that the warden's injuries had made him mad. But the Audubon Society sent two more people from the United States to investigate what had really happened. Unfortunately, their plane crashed as it tried to land on Crab Key and both men were killed. Later, Doctor No told the society that the plane had been flying too fast as it tried to land.

Soon after the plane accident, an American ship was sailing near Crab Key. The captain of the ship had contacted the Audubon Society. He reported that he hadn't seen any roseate spoonbills living on the island.

The Audubon Society had complained about this to the American government. Government officials in America had informed the British government. Officials in London had passed the facts on to the Secret Intelligence Service. They asked SIS to investigate the island discreetly. They didn't want to make any problems for the officials in Jamaica. But there was a difficulty. The island no longer belonged to Britain, Doctor No owned it. And he didn't like anyone, except his own workers, going there. He didn't want anyone else to visit Crab Key.

But something had to be done about the complaints, so M had made a decision. He'd told John Strangways to investigate Crab Key. It was the case that Strangways had been working on when he and his assistant had disappeared.

Bond read the notes in the file carefully. He was worried. He went to speak to his boss the next day.

'I've read the file, sir. And I believe that Commander Strangways and Miss Trueblood have been killed,' he told M. 'Six people have died recently because they visited, or tried to visit, Crab Key. Something bad is happening there.'

'I'm sure that you'll find out the truth, 007,' M replied. 'But be discreet. And enjoy your holiday in the sun. After that, you can get

back to some real work!"

CHAPTER FOUR

The Girl at the Airport

James Bond looked out of the window of the plane. The sound of its four large engines had changed a little. It was beginning to descend.

The plane had already flown over Cuba and it was now preparing to land. The bright afternoon sun was shining down on the sparkling blue water of the Caribbean Sea. Ahead, Bond could see the beautiful green island of Jamaica.

As the big plane turned towards Kingston airport, Bond thought about the man who was waiting there to meet him. The man's name was Quarrel and he was a good friend. Bond had worked with the huge black man five years before. At that time, Quarrel had helped him on a very difficult and dangerous mission. And now Bond needed his help again.

Quarrel wasn't a Jamaican. He'd been born in the Cayman Islands. But he was very well known in Jamaica. And everyone who knew him, loved him. If Bond had Quarrel by his side, ordinary Jamaican people would talk to him. People would trust Bond because he was Quarrel's friend.

'If Quarrel works with me,' Bond thought, 'I'll be able to find out things that the people at King's House won't be able to tell me.'

The men and women who worked at King's House - the headquarters of the British government on Jamaica - weren't going to be able to give him much more information. So getting information from ordinary Jamaicans was going to be very important. But there

were two other reasons why Bond wanted to work with Quarrel again. The first reason was that Quarrel knew everything about boats and the sea. He'd been a fisherman all his life. He knew more about sailing small boats around the coast of Jamaica than anyone else. If Bond had to go secretly to Crab Key, Quarrel could get him there safely by boat.

And the second reason was that Quarrel was very fit and strong. He kept himself very fit and he knew how to make other people fit too. He would help Bond to get strong again. Bond had lost a lot of strength since his illness. Now Quarrel would be Bond's personal trainer! Bond wasn't going to investigate the mystery of Crab Key until he felt strong again.

The plane's wheels touched the ground and Bond got up from his seat. In a few minutes he would be in the airport building. Bond hoped that he could collect his two cases quickly. His office in London had arranged for the airport staff to unload Bond's cases from the plane first. And he knew that no one at the airport would look inside them. This was a good thing. The cases contained many things that Bond didn't want anyone to see, including his guns - a .32 Walther PPK and a .38 Smith and Wesson.

Bond saw Quarrel as soon as he walked into the main building of the airport. The huge, brown-skinned man looked exactly the same as when Bond had last seen him. There was a wide smile on the Cayman Islander's handsome face.

'How are you, captain?' Quarrel asked as he shook Bond's hand. Quarrel had always called Bond 'captain'.

'It's good to see you again,' Quarrel went on. Then he looked carefully at his friend's face. 'Have you been ill?' he asked quietly.

'Yes,' replied Bond. 'I had a problem with some Russians. A lady from SMERSH poisoned me. She didn't like me very much. But I'm getting stronger every day. And you'll soon get me completely fit, I know that. After a week of your training, I'll be ready for anything!'

The two friends picked up Bond's cases and walked towards the main doors. But as they were about to leave the airport, something happened which worried Bond. A young Chinese woman with a large camera ran up to them. Before Bond could do anything to stop her, she'd taken a photo of him.

The girl looked at a piece of paper which she took from her bag. It was a list of names.

'You must be Mr Bond,' she said. Then she smiled. Bond was suspicious. He thought that the smile was false.

'I work for the newspaper here in Kingston - The Daily Gleaner,' the girl went on. 'I'm a reporter. I try to talk to all the interesting people who visit our island and I always take their photograph. The readers of our paper like to know about new visitors. And I'm sure that you're a very interesting person. Will you be staying in Kingston, Mr Bond?'

'Yes, but not for long,' Bond replied. His voice was cool and unfriendly. 'I'm on my way to somewhere else.'

'And which hotel will you stay at while you're in Kingston?' The girl asked. She smiled her false smile again.

'The Myrtle Bank Hotel. And now, I'll say goodbye to you,' Bond said.

The two men left the airport building and started to walk towards the car park.

'Quarrel, have you seen that girl taking pictures at the airport before?' Bond asked.

'Well, no, captain,' his friend answered. 'But The Daily Gleaner employs many reporters.'

As they walked, Bond was thinking carefully. This was a bad start. If his name and photo appeared in the paper, everyone would know that he had arrived on the island. Bond certainly didn't want everyone to know about his arrival.

'Mistakes that you make at the start of a mission are the hardest mistakes to correct,' Bond said to himself. He sometimes thought of his work as a kind of very dangerous sport. And he knew that in this sport of spying, it was bad if the enemy won the first game! But was there an enemy here on Jamaica? Perhaps he would soon know the answer to that question.

After a minute, the two men reached the car which Quarrel had brought to meet him. Then Bond knew that the reporter had been only the first of his problems!

The car was a black Sunbeam Alpine and it had British government registration plates³⁸. In a few seconds, Bond realized that this was the car which had been used by Strangways, the Regional Controller who had disappeared.

'Quarrel,' he said angrily. 'Why on earth³⁹ did you bring this car to meet me? Shall I put a sign round my neck with the words BRITISH SPY written on it?'

'The Acting Governor's assistant told me to bring this car,' Quarrel replied. 'His boss told him that you should use it while you're in Jamaica. It really belongs to your department. Did I do something wrong, captain?'

In a moment, Bond's anger had disappeared. He wasn't angry with Quarrel. This was the Acting Governor's fault. Now Bond was only angry with himself. He was angry with himself because he'd forgotten an important fact. This fact was that the Acting Governor was an idiot.

'No, it wasn't you who did anything wrong,' he told his friend. 'It was me. I sent a message to the Acting Governor.'

I asked him to contact you in the Cayman Islands. I asked him to bring you to Jamaica and to pay you well for working with me. I asked him to book me a room at the Blue Hills Hotel. I asked him to give me a car for the time that I was in Jamaica. And I asked him to send you to meet me today.

'But I didn't guess that he would send you to meet me with Strangways's car,' Bond went on. 'Any enemy of Britain will recognize this Sunbeam. It's the resident British spy's car! I should have guessed that this might happen. I should have taken a taxi to the hotel and met you there. Now, anyone who was watching for me at the airport will know who's helping me. And they'll know which car we're driving.'

It was now late afternoon, and the sun was going down fast. It would soon be dark. The two men got into the Sunbeam. Quarrel started the car's engine and drove away from the airport. After a few miles, Bond's fears were confirmed. He was now sure that an enemy had been watching at the airport.

'There's a car following us, Quarrel,' he said quietly. 'It's a taxi - a big black one. I saw it leaving the airport. But there's nobody in it except the driver. Taxi drivers don't leave the airport if they don't get a passenger after waiting for only a few hours. They wait for the next plane to arrive. Slow down a little. Let's see if the taxi will pass us.'

Quarrel slowed down and Bond turned around in his seat. The taxi slowed down too. Its headlamps shone on the road. The driver was trying to stay about a hundred yards behind the Sunbeam.

'Listen carefully,' Bond said. 'We need to get rid of⁴¹ this taxi. A mile ahead of us, this road divides at a junction. The road on the left goes to Kingston and the road on the right goes to Morant. Isn't that right?'

'Yes, captain, that's right,' Quarrel agreed.

'The taxi driver thinks that we're going to Kingston,'

Bond said. 'The girl with the camera must have given him that information. Or perhaps someone else had already told him. Well, we are going to Kingston, but not yet. Quarrel, when I tell you, I want you to accelerate suddenly. Drive very fast to the junction so that the taxi driver can't see which road we take. When we reach the junction, turn off all the car's lights and take the road towards Morant. Stop after five hundred yards. OK, accelerate - now!'

Quarrel did exactly what Bond asked, and a minute later the two friends were listening to the taxi disappearing fast down the road to Kingston.

Half an hour later, Quarrel stopped the Sunbeam outside the Blue Hills Hotel. Neither man noticed the big black taxi which stopped on the dark street opposite the hotel.

Later that evening, after he'd taken a cool shower and changed his clothes, Bond met Quarrel again.

'Let's go and have a drink and a meal,' Bond said to his friend. 'Where shall we go?'

'I'll take you to a restaurant that I know,' Quarrel replied. 'It isn't a place where British people go very often. But the owner is a good friend of mine. He's called Pus-Feller, and I've known him for a very long time. Pus-Feller comes from the Cayman Islands too. We used to go fishing together. Each of us owned half of the boat that we used. Then, one day, my friend had an accident. He was badly injured. After that, he didn't want to be a fisherman any more. I bought his half of the boat and he moved here to Jamaica. He's made much more money from his restaurant than I have from fishing!'

'What kind of accident did your friend have?' Bond asked.

'A bad one, captain,' Quarrel replied seriously. 'Pus-Feller was fishing near an island called Crab Key - it's about halfway between here and Cuba. A huge creature came out of the sea. It was a giant

squid, or maybe it was a giant octopus. It pulled Pus-Feller from the boat. It tried to pull him under the water and drown him. He fought with the creature. He stabbed its tentacles with his knife until it let him go. That's why we call him Pus-Feller.'

Bond thought about this story and said nothing.

'Pus-Feller's a fine man,' Quarrel added. 'And the food and the music at his restaurant are great.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Threats and Dangers

Bond had to agree with his friend. Pus-Feller was a fine man, and the food and music at his restaurant were great! Bond drank his favourite cocktail - a vodka martini - and Quarrel drank cold beer. As they ate a delicious meal, the two friends listened to a group of musicians who were playing Jamaican songs.

'Quarrel, tell me more about this island called Crab Key,' Bond said, when they had finished eating.

'It's a bad place captain,' the Cayman Islander replied. 'It's very bad luck to go there. A Chinese gentleman owns it. When he bought it, he took some men and women there to collect the bird droppings - the guano. But he doesn't let any of his workers leave the island. And he doesn't let anyone else visit his island. He has guards with powerful guns who watch the coast of Crab Key. And he has a radar system and a plane. He uses these things to search for strangers on his island. Some friends of mine have disappeared there. They were fishermen. They landed on the island, and no one has ever seen them again.'

'That's very interesting,' Bond said quietly.

Then he told Quarrel about Strangways and Mary Trueblood and when they had disappeared.

'Captain,' Quarrel said. 'If Mr Strangways and his assistant were interested in Crab Key, that Chinese gentleman ordered them to be killed. I'm sure about that. He hates people who become

interested in his island. And he kills anyone who interferes with his privacy.'

There was a movement behind their table and a sudden flash of light. Bond turned round quickly. The young Chinese woman from the airport was standing in a corner of the restaurant. She was holding up her camera. She was going to take another picture.

'Stop her! Quickly!' Bond whispered to Quarrel.

Quarrel jumped up from his chair and stood in front of the girl. He smiled at her. 'Good evening, miss,' he said politely. He held out his hand. The girl smiled her false smile and put her hand in Quarrel's, to shake it. But Quarrel grasped her hand very tightly and swung her round, moving like a dancer. Then he pulled her arm up behind her back.

'Don't do that! You're hurting me! Let me go!' the girl shouted angrily. 'I'll report you to the police!'

'My friend and I are going to ask you some questions, miss,' Quarrel said. 'I hope that you'll give us good answers.'

The girl looked at Bond. 'Please tell this man to let me go,' she said.

'Perhaps I'll tell him to let you go when I've heard your answers,' said Bond. 'Why are you trying to take more pictures of me?'

'The photo that I took at the airport wasn't good,' the girl answered angrily. 'My boss told me to get a better one.'

'Are you talking about your boss at The Daily Gleaner, or are you talking about some other boss?'

The girl didn't answer. Bond looked carefully at her face for a moment, then he asked, 'What's your name?'

'I won't tell you!' the girl said.

Quarrel pushed her arm further up her back. She fought like a fish that was caught in a net. But Quarrel's arms were as strong as steel. The girl screamed.

'OK! I'll tell you,' she said. 'My name is Annabel Chung.'

At that moment, Pus-Feller came up to the table.

'Is this girl making trouble for you, sir?' he said. 'Shall I make her leave?'

'No, thank you, Pus-Feller. We want to talk to her,' Bond replied. 'But there is something you can do for us. Please phone the office of The Daily Gleaner. Ask them if they employ a photographer called Annabel Chung.'

Pus-Feller hurried away.

'I'm sorry,' Bond said to the girl. 'But I can't understand why you or your boss want pictures of me. I'm just an ordinary traveller. I'm visiting Jamaica for a day or two. Why are you interested in me?'

'I've told you already,' the Chinese girl replied angrily. 'It's my job to take photos.'

At that moment, Pus-Feller returned.

'The people at the paper know her,' he told Bond. 'She isn't a reporter, she's a photographer. The people at The Daily Gleaner don't employ her, but sometimes they buy photos from her. She's a freelance photographer. She takes pictures for anyone who wants them.'

'Thank you,' Bond said. He smiled as the restaurant owner went back to his kitchen.

'Well, now we know two things,' he said quietly to the girl. 'You didn't ask Pus-Feller to help you. So I guess that you don't really want to report us to the police. And we know that you're a freelance photographer, not a newspaper reporter. Good! So next we need to find out who paid you to take pictures of me.'

Suddenly Bond's smiled disappeared and his eyes became cold. His voice was quiet and hard. 'Now! Tell me who's paying you!'

'No, I won't tell you!' the girl said. She was scared and she was in a lot of pain. But she wouldn't give Bond a name.

'Oh, let her go!' he told Quarrel.

Bond was angry with himself. He and Quarrel were certainly in great danger. Bond hated hurting women, but he'd decided that it was necessary tonight. However, he hadn't got what he wanted. Quarrel had nearly broken the girl's arm. But she was terrified of her boss. She'd preferred this pain to the pain that she would have if she told Bond her boss's name.

The girl grabbed her camera and walked to the door. 'He'll kill you for this!' she shouted as she left the restaurant.

'Well, that was a threat!' Bond said to Quarrel. 'And I'm sure that he will try to kill us. But we still don't know who "he" is. We can't do anything about that tonight, though. I need some sleep now. I'm going back to the hotel. Thank you for a very interesting evening, Quarrel. I'll see you in the morning.'

CHAPTER SIX

At Kings House

The next morning, Bond was still thinking about the Chinese girl's threat. He was now quite sure that John Strangways and Mary Trueblood had been murdered. And he believed that they'd been murdered because of their interest in Crab Key. It was possible that, whoever the murderers were, the orders for the killing had been given by the owner of Crab Key. And the owner of Crab Key was the mysterious Doctor Julius No. So it was possible that the 'he' of Annabel Chung's threat was also Doctor No. He was certainly Bond's main suspect.

Did Bond really need to find out more about Doctor No before he investigated Crab Key? He didn't think so. He knew what Quarrel and his friends thought already. But later, he would talk to the British officials at King's House. He would check the information that they had in their files about the owner of Crab Key. Soon Bond would need to visit the doctor's island. But before he went there, he would spend some time with Quarrel. He had to get stronger and fitter.

But the most important thing was for him and Quarrel to cover their tracks. Since he'd arrived in Jamaica, too many people had found out that Bond was working on the island. He needed to disappear, and so did Quarrel.

Bond was thinking about all this as he sat finishing his breakfast in his hotel room. Someone knocked on the door. He opened it carefully and Quarrel came into the room.

'Hello, Quarrel. I'm going to spend my time at King's House today,' Bond told his friend. 'I won't need you with me. But I've got

some jobs for you to do.'

'OK, captain. Tell me what you want me to do,' the Cayman Islander replied.

'Well, first we must get rid of the Sunbeam Alpine,' Bond said. 'I'll give you some money. Go to a car hire company⁵¹. Hire a car for one month. Pay all the money now. We need a small, fast car. Next, find two men who look like us - one who looks like you and one who looks like me. Tell them that you want them to take the Sunbeam to Montego tomorrow. They must take the road that goes through Spanish Town. Tell them to leave the car in Montego. Give each man ten pounds to do this. Will you be able to find two men?'

'Yes, captain - that won't be difficult,' Quarrel replied.

'There's something else,' Bond went on. 'The men must look like us, and they must also be dressed like us. So buy them some new clothes - the kinds of clothes that we wear. They must wear these clothes when they drive the Sunbeam to Montego. If they ask why, tell them that you work for a mad American and that the clothes are his idea. Tell the men that they'll be well paid for driving the car. And tell them that they can keep the clothes. Perhaps they won't ask too many questions when they see the money.'

Quarrel laughed. 'I understand you,' he said. 'You want to cover our tracks. So you're going to make some false tracks. You want someone to think that we are in Montego. But where will we be, captain?'

'We'll move to the north coast. We need some privacy,' Bond replied. 'So the other thing that I want you to do today is this. I want you to rent a house for us on the north coast. Do you remember the house that we rented the last time we worked together?'

'Yes, it was near Morgan's Harbour. It was in a place called Beau Desert,' Quarrel replied.

'Find out if we can rent that house again,' Bond said. 'If this isn't possible, try to find another house in the same area. Rent whichever house you can get for a month. Pay all the money now. Tell the company that owns the house that Mr James wants to rent it. I'll write to them if they need more information. But get the house keys today.'

'I won't see you again today, Quarrel,' Bond went on. 'But please come here at 6.15 tomorrow morning. Bring the new car. And bring the men who are going to drive the Sunbeam to Montego. Be careful today, my friend. Don't let anybody follow you. We'll be in great danger until we get out of Kingston!'

Bond gave his friend a thick bundle of banknotes.

'Here's some money,' he said. 'That should be enough to pay for the house, the car, and the two men who will look exactly like us - our doubles!'

At King's House, Bond was welcomed by the Acting Governor's assistant. Bond wanted to discuss the details of his mission with the assistant. But first he would have to talk to the Acting Governor for a few minutes and be polite to him.

The Acting Governor's assistant took Bond into his boss's room, then he left the two men alone.

Bond already knew a lot about the Acting Governor. The man had never been well liked anywhere. He was going to retire from government work soon, and this would be his last job. He would be working on Jamaica for only a few months more. And his only wish during this time was to avoid any trouble. Bond thought that the man was an idiot. The decision to give Strangways's Sunbeam to Bond had confirmed it! And after a few minutes' conversation with the man, Bond learnt more about him. The Acting Governor disliked all members of the Secret Intelligence Service. He wasn't interested in what had happened to Strangways and Miss Trueblood. And he

certainly didn't want James Bond - an Acting Regional Controller from the SIS - on the island.

'Mr - er - Bond, that file is closed,' the Acting Governor said coldly. 'You must not start another investigation. Strangways and the girl have run away together. They've taken government money with them. I don't want to hear any more about it. And I don't want you making trouble on this island. That's my decision. Is there anything else that you need to do here, now that you've come?'

For a moment, Bond looked at the big, red-faced man without speaking. 'Yes, sir,' he replied at last. 'I'll report your ideas about Miss Trueblood and Commander Strangways to London. But while I'm here, I have to investigate something that has been happening on Crab Key. It's something about birds. The British government has asked me to do this.'

Suddenly, the Acting Governor became more friendly and Bond knew why. Crab Key didn't belong to Britain any longer. It was owned by Doctor Julius No. If Bond caused any trouble there, it wouldn't be the Acting Governor's problem. He was only going to be on Jamaica for a few months more.

'That's a good idea, Bond,' he said. 'Birds are very important. You must talk to the Colonial Secretary. He might have some information about Crab Key.'

The Acting Governor spoke a few words into a phone. A moment later, his assistant came back into the room.

'Take Mr Bond to see Mr Pleydell-Smith,' said the Acting Governor.

An hour later, Bond was finishing his lunch. He was in a restaurant with Mr Pleydell-Smith, the Colonial Secretary. Mr Pleydell-Smith was a friendly, thirty-year-old man, with untidy hair and bright, intelligent eyes.

When they'd met earlier, Pleydell-Smith had surprised Bond. He had recognized Bond's name. He'd spoken kind words about the trouble which Bond's last visit had caused for some people at King's House. He'd told Bond that, a few days earlier, he'd found a report about Bond's last mission in Jamaica. Someone had taken the file from the storeroom and left it on a desk. Pleydell-Smith had read the report with interest and enjoyment.

'I hope that you can stir things up again, Commander Bond,' he said. 'It's very boring here at the moment. What's your problem this time? Perhaps I can help you with it.'

They sat drinking coffee while Bond told the Colonial Secretary about Crab Key.

'When we get back to my office, I'll ask my secretary - Miss Taro - to find all the information that we have about the island,' Pleydell-Smith said. 'There'll be a file of reports.'

And I know a little about guano myself, so I can tell you about that.'

As they walked back to King's House, Bond asked the Colonial Secretary a question about something which had been worrying him for the last hour.

'Why did someone take the file about my last visit out of the storeroom in King's House?' he asked. 'Did somebody important want to read the report?'

'Well, that was strange,' Pleydell-Smith answered. 'I found the file on my secretary's desk. I think that Miss Taro got it out of the storeroom. She's only worked at King's House for a few weeks. But she likes her job and she works very hard. Perhaps she was tidying the old files and putting them into better order.'

As soon as the two men entered Pleydell-Smith's office, the Colonial Secretary picked up a phone and spoke to his secretary.

'Miss Taro, will you bring me the file on Crab Key, please? I need the report about the sale of the island. And I need the report about the warden of the bird sanctuary who died.'

He put the phone down and spoke to Bond. 'Please sit down, Commander. Miss Taro will go to look for the file. While we're waiting, let me tell you all about guano.'

Bond thanked the Colonial Secretary and sat in the chair facing his desk. Pleydell-Smith was still speaking about guano when his secretary opened the door half an hour later.

'I'm sorry, sir,' the young woman said. 'I can't find the Crab Key file. It's missing. It isn't in the storeroom.'

'It's missing? Well, who was the last person to use it?' the Colonial Secretary asked. 'Everyone who looks at files from the storeroom has to sign their name in a book.'

'Commander Strangways was the last person to sign the book, sir,' the girl said.

'But he brought the file back. He brought it to this room.'

I remember that well,' said Pleydell-Smith. 'What happened to it after that?'

'I don't know. I'm sorry sir,' the girl replied.

Bond turned in his chair to look at the secretary. And for a moment, she looked carefully back at him. Then she smiled a false smile and left the room.

Suddenly, Bond realized what connected his investigation with the people who had been watching him. Doctor No, Annabel Chung and Miss Taro were all Chinese.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Gift

After he left Pleydell-Smith's office, Bond worked for an hour in the library at King's House. He found a good map of Crab Key and he made notes about the geography of the island. He also made a drawing of the map.

Crab Key was about 20 miles north from the northern shore of Jamaica. Doctor No's island wasn't very big. It was about 12 miles long, from east to west, and about 4 miles wide, from north to south. There was high ground at the western end of the island. At the furthest western point, there was a mountain. On one side of the mountain, a steep cliff went down to the sea. It was on this part of the island that the green cormorants lived. The birds lived on the rocks of the steep cliff. The birds' droppings - the guano - was collected from the rocks and loaded into ships.

The larger part of the island - the eastern part - was an area of swamp. In the middle of this low, swampy ground there was a lake. And from this lake, a small river ran towards the sea in the south. The river flowed into the sea at a small sandy beach, about halfway along the island's south coast.

Bond knew that the bird sanctuary was in the swampy area of the island. He guessed that the wardens' camp was probably close to the place where the river flowed out of the lake. The wardens could drink the water from the lake. Also, the river was an easy route to the sea.

The wardens' camp was not shown on the map in King's House library, but that was because the map was old. It had been made

many years before the roseate spoonbills were found on the island.

By four o'clock, Bond had done everything that he could do at King's House. He felt tired. He decided to return to the Blue Hills Hotel and rest for a while.

As Bond entered the hotel, a member of the staff called out to him.

'Mr Bond! Mr Quarrel phoned earlier this afternoon,' the young woman said. 'He gave me a message for you. He said, "I've arranged everything." Also, a messenger brought a gift for you. It's a basket of fruit. The messenger took it up to your room.'

'That's strange. Who sent this gift?' Bond asked.

'The messenger said that it was from the Acting Governor's assistant at King's House,' the young woman replied.

Bond went to his room and very, very quietly unlocked the door. Then he took out the Walther PPK. With the gun in his hand, he suddenly kicked the door open. There was no one in the room, so he entered carefully. He checked all the cupboards in the bedroom. Then he checked the bathroom. When he was sure that no one was hiding anywhere, he shut and locked the door of the main room.

On a table in a corner of the room there was a huge basket of fruit - oranges, grapefruit, bananas, apples, peaches. On top of the fruit, there was a white card with a message which said: A GIFT FROM THE ACTING GOVERNOR.

Bond knew that the Acting Governor disliked him. Why on earth would the man send him fruit? Bond was very suspicious.

He put his ear next to the basket and listened very carefully. There were no strange sounds. Next, he quickly pushed the basket off the table and jumped backwards. The fruit fell onto the floor.

There was nothing else in the basket. No bombs, no poisonous snakes or spiders. But he was still suspicious about this gift.

Bond picked up one of the peaches. It was very ripe⁵⁶. Soon it would be too ripe. Anyone who wanted to eat the fruit would eat this peach first. Bond put the peach on the table. Then he took a small magnifying glass from one of his cases. As he unlocked the case, he noticed something. Someone had tried to open the case while he'd been out that day. They hadn't opened the case because it was very strong and it had special locks. It had been made by an SIS engineer. But someone had tried to open it, and that made Bond more suspicious than ever.

He looked through the magnifying glass and checked the peach very carefully. He found a tiny, brown hole in the skin of the fruit. Had someone put something into the peach? Was someone trying to poison him?

'Well, this is a war, then!' Bond said to himself. 'Doctor No has decided to start a war with the SIS. It's time for me to stir things up for that gentleman!'

Bond checked all the other fruits. They all had tiny holes in them. Somebody wasn't sure if Bond liked peaches!

Bond picked up the phone by his bed and he called Kings' House. He asked to speak to the Colonial Secretary.

'You said that you wanted to help me,' Bond said to Pleydell-Smith, when he answered the call. 'Well, there is something that you can do for me. I've received a gift - it's a basket of fruit. It's here in my hotel room. I want you to find a scientist who can make some tests on it. I want someone to find out if there's poison in the fruit. Please can you send a messenger to collect it now? I won't be here tomorrow.'

Bond listened for a moment to the other man's reply. Then he spoke again.

'I'll be at Beau Desert, near Morgan's Harbour, for the next week or two,' he said. 'Will you send the scientist's report to me there, please? Please don't tell anybody else about the report. And please don't tell anybody where I've gone. You wanted me to stir things up again, and I'm going to do that soon. But the Acting Governor won't like it. So don't tell him what I'm doing. And please don't tell your secretary, Miss Taro, about this. This is most important. I'll explain the reason when I see you again. Goodbye.'

When he'd finished his call, Bond started thinking. Should he contact London? Perhaps he should tell his boss that everything had changed and that he needed some help from London. There were some dangerous people doing some bad things on Jamaica. Bond could ask M to declare an emergency and to send more agents. He could tell M that Doctor No had tried to kill him with poisoned fruit. But was that a good idea? He didn't know yet if the fruit was poisoned. And he wasn't sure that Doctor No had sent it. M might think, 'What's this nonsense about poisoned peaches? 007 has completely lost his nerve and now he's become crazy. He must come home.'

After a few minutes, Bond decided not to contact London. But he was taking a risk. If something did go wrong now, and he hadn't sent a warning to M, Bond would be in trouble. He might lose his job. Or he might die.

'Well,' he told himself. 'I must make sure that nothing goes wrong!'

After the messenger from King's House had taken away the fruit, Bond had a meal and a few drinks. Then he locked all the windows of his room. Finally, he packed his bags and he went to bed early. He had to be ready to leave the hotel soon after six o'clock the next morning. The night was hot, so he covered himself with only a sheet.

In the middle of the night, James Bond woke up suddenly. What had woken him? He listened carefully. There was no sound. The

room was very dark, so he could see nothing but the numbers on his luminous watch. The time was 3 a.m.

Then Bond felt a movement on his right foot. Something was starting to move slowly up his leg. Was it a snake? Was it an insect? If it was some kind of insect, it was a big one. Bond thought that it must be about six inches long. And he could feel its feet lightly touching his skin as it moved. How many feet did this creature have? A hundred?!

Suddenly Bond knew what was crawling over his body. It was a centipede. As he realized this, the hair on his head stood up straight and he went cold with fear. He knew that some centipedes in the Caribbean were very, very dangerous. If this creature bit him and its poison went into his body, Bond would probably die!

Now the centipede had reached his knee. Bond knew that there was only one thing that he could do. He had to remain completely still. If he moved, the creature would bite him. But it was difficult to remain still while the centipede moved up his body. The next five minutes passed very slowly for Bond - they seemed more like five hours. The centipede walked across Bond's stomach and onto his chest. Bond started to sweat - drops of water started to come out of his skin.

The creature stopped for a while over Bond's heart.

'If it bites me there,' he told himself, 'I'll certainly die.'

But the centipede moved on slowly and it reached Bond's shoulder. Bond tried to hold his body absolutely still. But the muscles of his stomach, arms and legs started to tremble. He must not move!

He felt the centipede crawl up his neck, onto his chin and over the corner of his mouth. Then it moved along his nose. He closed his eyes. A moment later, the creature was moving over his left eye. Bond felt ill with disgust and fear.

The centipede stopped for a while on his head. What if the creature got caught in his hair? Bond realized that it was drinking his sweat. Then it slowly crawled off his head, onto his pillow.

A moment later, Bond jumped up from the bed, switched on the light, and grabbed one of his shoes. He watched while the huge brown centipede crawled down the side of the bed and onto the floor.

Then he crashed the shoe down onto the insect, as hard as he could. The centipede's body burst open and yellow liquid came out of it. Bond ran to the bathroom and vomited.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Journey to Crab Key

At six-thirty the next morning, Bond and Quarrel were driving out of Kingston in an Austin A30. They were driving towards the north coast. They'd already seen the two men who were dressed like Bond and Quarrel drive off towards Montego in the Sunbeam Alpine. The two men that Quarrel had hired were not honest people. But they wanted the money and they were happy to do the job. Bond was pleased with his friend's choice.

'Annabel Chung must have given descriptions of us to her boss,' Bond told his friend. 'If any of Doctor No's men are watching the road for the Sunbeam Alpine, they'll have those descriptions with them. The men that you hired look very like us. So the watchers will think that we are in the Sunbeam. Now, I've a question to ask you, Quarrel. What do you know about centipedes?'

'Centipedes are bad creatures, captain,' Quarrel replied. 'And Jamaican centipedes are very poisonous.'

'But where do they usually live?' Bond asked.

'Oh, they always live in dark, dirty places,' Quarrel answered. 'They live under old wooden buildings and in other places like that.'

'Do they ever go into clean, tidy places - places like hotel rooms?' Bond asked. 'Do they ever climb into people's beds?'

'No, captain,' said Quarrel. He looked at Bond carefully.

Bond didn't say any more about centipedes. He didn't want to worry his friend. He asked Quarrel about the best way to get to

Morgan's Harbour.

But later Bond thought again about what Quarrel had said.

'If I found a centipede in my hotel room, then someone put it there,' he told himself. 'Someone's certainly trying to kill me.'

He decided not to tell his friend about the fruit.

The house at Beau Desert was exactly what Bond wanted. It was a small, white, wooden house beside the sea. On three sides of the house, there were fields. There were no other houses close to it. Bond and Quarrel would have privacy there.

After they arrived, they ate supper. Then Quarrel asked Bond what his plans were.

'Well, first I need to get completely fit,' Bond replied. 'For the first week, that's all that I'm going to think about. You'll be my personal trainer. We'll work on my fitness every day. Please think of a training routine for me. Then, when I'm really strong again, we need to visit Crab Key. But I don't want Doctor No to find out about our visit. We'll go in a small boat - perhaps a canoe.'

'Captain, you must be crazy,' Quarrel said. 'Crab Key is a very dangerous place. I've heard stories about it. Very bad things happen there.'

'It'll be OK, Quarrel,' said Bond, smiling. 'I don't want to go near the places where Doctor No and his workers live. I only want to visit the wardens' camp at the bird sanctuary. I need to find out what happened there. And I do need your help.'

Quarrel was silent for a few moments. Then he spoke.

'I'll help you captain - you know that,' he said quietly. 'But there's one thing that I want to ask you. I have a family in the Cayman Islands. If I die, they'll be poor. Will you buy some life

insurance for me? Then, if anything bad happens, my family will have some money.'

'Yes, I'll do that for you,' Bond answered. 'We'll go to Port Maria in the morning. I'll arrange everything there. I'll insure your life for five thousand pounds.'

'You're a good man, captain,' said Quarrel. 'Where do you want to land on Crab Key?'

'There's a sandy beach halfway along the south side of the island,' Bond replied. 'A small river flows into the sea there. I want to land at that beach, then move up the river. I think that the wardens' camp was beside that river, near a lake. No one must see us arrive. That's most important.'

'We'll go at night,' said Quarrel. 'We'll go in a canoe with a sail. We'll make the journey in about one week's time. The winds will be blowing in the best direction then. Also there won't be much moonlight in seven days' time. We'll be able to land without anyone seeing us. We'll need to take enough food for three days.'

'OK,' Bond replied. 'Bring your knife. I'll bring a gun.'

The next morning, the two men went into Port Maria and Bond bought Quarrel some life insurance. And the morning after that, the fitness training began.

Each day, Bond and Quarrel got up at 7 a.m. and they swam a quarter of a mile in the sea. Then they had breakfast, rested in the sun for one hour, and ran a mile along the beach. Then they swam another quarter of a mile. At midday, they ate lunch. After that, they slept for an hour, rested in the sun for another hour, then swam a mile. After all this exercise, they took hot baths and then Quarrel massaged Bond's body. He rubbed oil into the parts of Bond's body which had lost their strength during his illness. Then the two men ate dinner. By 9 p.m. they were asleep.

This training routine was hard work for Bond, but after a week he was feeling much stronger and fitter.

During this week, two things happened which made Bond more suspicious about Doctor No. First, he read a report in The Daily Gleaner newspaper about a road accident. Two men had been killed near Spanish Town, on the road between Kingston and Montego. A truck had been travelling too fast. It'd crashed into the Sunbeam Alpine that the men were in. The police wanted to talk to Mr James Bond, who had borrowed the car from the Acting Governor.

The other thing that happened was that a note arrived from Pleydell-Smith. A scientist had checked the fruit which had been sent to Bond at the Blue Hills Hotel. Each fruit had contained a lot of powerful poison.

Bond burned the newspaper and he didn't tell Quarrel about the note. Quarrel was already worried about the mission to Crab Key. Bond didn't want to worry him more.

At the end of the training week, Quarrel hired a canoe from a man in Port Maria. The canoe was a simple kind of boat which was made from half of a tree. It had a small sail as well as two heavy wooden paddles.

For three days, Bond and Quarrel practised sailing and paddling the canoe along the northern coast of Jamaica.

'It's a good canoe,' Quarrel said. 'It'll get us to Crab Key easily. We'll be able to use the sail for the first seven or eight hours of the journey. After that, we'll take down the sail and only use the paddles. If we don't use the sail near the island, Doctor No may not see us on his radar.'

At last, the evening came when Bond and Quarrel were going to start their dangerous mission.

Bond was excited. He put on a pair of black jeans and a dark blue shirt. It was good to get back to work. He had a good man to help him. And he knew that his enemy - Doctor Julius No - was a very bad person. Bond was licensed to kill. And now he had to kill Doctor No before Doctor No killed him.

Bond checked both his guns. Which one should he take on this mission - the Walther PPK, or the Smith and Wesson? He decided to take the Smith and Wesson. It could shoot further than the Walther PPK.

The night was very dark. There was no moon in the black sky, only sparkling stars. At about half-past eight, Bond and Quarrel put their backpacks into the canoe. The packs contained enough food for three days. Then they pushed the canoe out into the sea and picked up the paddles. Nobody saw the two men leave.

For fifteen minutes, Bond used his paddle to pull the canoe through the water. Quarrel was steering the boat with his own paddle. At the end of that time, Bond stopped paddling and the two men put up the sail. Soon the canoe was moving quickly through the water.

All through the night, one of the men would have to steer the boat. He would have to look at the stars in the sky to find the right direction. And while one of them steered the boat, the other could sleep. They decided that first Quarrel would steer for three hours while Bond slept. Then, Quarrel would wake Bond, and Bond would steer while Quarrel slept. When they got near the island, both men would have to be awake.

Bond was tired, and after a few minutes, he fell asleep. He slept until half-past midnight, when Quarrel woke him. For the next three and a half hours, Bond steered the canoe while his friend slept.

Although the night was too dark to see anything around him, there were sounds for Bond to hear. Sometimes fish were swimming beside the boat. Bond could hear them jumping out of the water and

falling back into it. And Bond knew that in the sea, deep below the boat, much bigger fish were swimming - sharks, bonito, barracuda, perhaps even giant squids.

Quarrel woke at 4 a.m. 'We must be near the island now, captain,' he said.

The two men took down the sail and they started to use the paddles to pull the boat through the water. Soon, there was a narrow line of light in the sky to the east. And then, in the first light of the morning, they could see Crab Key ahead of them. They worked hard with the paddles as they got nearer and nearer to the land. They turned towards the east, and then they steered the canoe along the island's shore. Now there was enough light to see the little river and the sandy beach.

'We must hurry,' Bond said. 'We need to hide the canoe before anybody sees it. We must hide the canoe and we must cover our tracks.'

There were some bushes at the edge of the sandy beach. Bond and Quarrel pulled the heavy canoe into these bushes and covered it with leaves and branches. Then Quarrel cut some big leaves from a palm tree. He used these to sweep the sand. As he walked backwards towards the bushes, he brushed sand over their footprints. He covered their tracks.

It was five o'clock now, and both men were tired. They hid in the bushes and lay down on the sand. In a few moments, they were asleep.

CHAPTER NINE

The Girl on the Beach

Bond woke suddenly. He looked at his watch. It was now ten o'clock in the morning. Quarrel was no longer lying nearby.

'He must have woken earlier and started exploring,' Bond thought.

A moment later, he heard someone moving through the water on the shore. Then the sound stopped.

Bond looked through the bushes, towards the sea. He was expecting to see his friend on the beach. But it wasn't Quarrel who was standing there. It was a young woman who was wearing a swimsuit. She had her back towards Bond and she was looking at the sea. A green rubber diving mask was pushed onto the top of her head. She was holding a large bag made of a piece of fishing net. There were many large pink, white and purple seashells in the bag.

Around her waist, the girl had a wide leather belt with a knife in it. Her skin was a golden-brown colour and her legs were long and slim. Her long, pale blonde hair was cut off straight at her shoulders.

Bond looked at the girl's beautiful body for a moment longer. But this wasn't a good time to think about beautiful women. Bond was on a dangerous mission. This girl was going to be a problem for him.

'If she lives on the island, she's a danger to us,' Bond thought. 'If she lives here, she either works for Doctor No or she's his girlfriend. If she finds out that Quarrel and I are here, she'll tell Doctor No. And then he'll send his men to find us. But if she came to

the island secretly, like us, she'll still be a danger to us. If she's a secret visitor to Crab Key, perhaps she's been less careful than we were. Doctor No's radar might have told the guards about her already. And if Doctor No's guards come to look for her, they might find us too. I need to talk to her.'

Before he moved, Bond looked more carefully along the beach. A small canoe had been pulled up onto the sand. The girl must have come to the island in the canoe. So she didn't work for Doctor No. Tracks in the sand led from the canoe to where the girl was standing. There was only one set of tracks, so there was nobody else with her.

Bond stood up and walked quietly out of the bushes onto the beach.

'Good morning!' he said. 'Who are you?'

As the girl turned around quickly, she pulled the long knife from her belt. Her face was as beautiful as her body.

'If you try to touch me, I'll kill you!' the girl said angrily.

'Please don't do anything silly. I don't want to hurt you,' Bond said. 'Have you got some more clothes in your canoe?'

The girl nodded her head.

'Good. Please put them on,' Bond said politely. 'I need to talk to you.'

The girl walked towards her canoe, picked up a white shirt and a brown skirt and put them on. Then she turned back towards Bond and smiled at him. She had very beautiful blue eyes.

'I'm sorry that I was rude to you,' she said.

'It's OK. Forget about that,' Bond replied. 'Now tell me about yourself, please. What's your name? How did you get here? Where have you come from? What are you doing here?'

'What a lot of questions!' the girl said. 'Well, my name is Honey Rider. I'm Jamaican. I came here in the canoe that you can see. I came here from Morgan's Harbour. I often come here at night. I collect seashells from the sea around this island. I dive deep into the water to find them.'

Bond was surprised. It was a long and difficult journey from Morgan's Harbour to Crab Key. If the girl often came to the island alone, she must be a very good sailor.

'Why do you collect seashells, Honey?' asked Bond. 'It's a long way to come just for some shells.'

'Collecting shells is my job,' the girl replied. 'There are some very valuable shells in the sea near this island.' She pointed at the shells in her net bag. 'These shells are very rare and unusual,' she went on. 'Some people will pay a lot of money for unusual shells. I sell the shells that I find to a man in Kingston. He sells them to a store in Miami - in the USA.'

'How do you know which shells to collect?' Bond asked.

'Oh, I know all about the creatures that live in the sea and on the land in these islands,' the girl told him. 'I've been interested in them since I was very young. I wanted to get a job studying the small animals that live in the sea and on the shore near the sea. But you need to study at a university before you can get a job like that. That wasn't possible for me. I didn't have enough money to go to a university. So now I collect and sell shells.'

'Now tell me about you,' Honey said after a few moments' silence. 'Who are you?. What are you doing here?'

'My name is Bond - James Bond. I'm British,' Bond replied. 'I'm here because I'm interested in birds. There are some very rare birds here on this island. They're called roseate spoonbills. I want to study them, but the owner of this island - Doctor No - won't let anyone come here to see them. So I've come secretly, with a friend. My

friend is exploring the island at the moment, but he'll be back here soon.'

'Oh, I know about the spoonbills,' Honey said. 'There used to be lots of those birds on this island. But they've gone now. The Chinese man who lives here has a dragon. It hunts in the swamps. It kills things by breathing fire at them. I've seen it. It attacked the spoonbills. It killed some of them and the others left.'

'There aren't any dragons here,' Bond said. 'Dragons are not real animals. They only exist in stories. You must know that - you know all about the animals of these islands. I don't know what creature you saw, but it certainly can't have been a dragon.'

'I'm not stupid!' the girl replied angrily. 'Nobody has ever lived at the east end of this island. Perhaps a strange animal lives there which no one else has ever seen.'

'There were two men who lived in this part of the island for a while,' Honey continued. 'They had a camp near the place where the birds lived. I think that the dragon attacked them too. I haven't seen them for a long time.'

Bond thought about the words that the bird-warden had spoken before he died. The man had talked about a fire-breathing dragon. The 'dragon', whatever it really was, sounded dangerous. But Honey didn't seem very worried about it. Perhaps she should be more worried.

'Listen to me, Honey,' said Bond. 'Doctor No will be very angry if he finds out about your visits. It's very dangerous here. You should stop coming here.'

'Oh, don't worry about me, Mr Bond,' said the girl.

'Please call me James,' said Bond quietly.

'Well, James, please don't worry about me,' the girl said. 'I often come to this island. I need to earn money and this is the only place where I can find the most valuable shells. Sometimes I've seen Doctor No's men searching the island, but they've never found me. I've always hidden from them quite easily. There was never any danger for me.'

'Perhaps there wasn't any danger until now,' Bond replied. 'There wasn't any danger because Doctor No's men weren't watching for secret visitors. But the doctor found out about my arrival in Jamaica. He knows that I'm interested in Crab Key. So now he's expecting a visit from me. His men will be watching this coast very carefully. He's already tried to kill me twice.'

'He tried to kill you just because you're interested in those birds?' said Honey.

'Yes,' Bond replied. 'And he'll certainly try to kill me again if he finds me here. But he'll kill you too, if he finds you here. Did you use your sail for the whole of your journey from Jamaica? Were you using your sail when your canoe approached the shore here?'

'Oh, yes, I used the sail until I landed,' the girl said. 'I always do that.'

'Then Doctor No's radar must have shown him your arrival this morning,' Bond said. 'I'm sure of that. We must get away from this beach soon.'

At that moment, Quarrel came out from the bushes.

'Hello, Quarrel,' Bond called to him. 'Where have you been?'

'I've been exploring, captain,' the Cayman Islander replied. 'I went as far as the headland at the west end of the beach. And who is this young lady?' he asked.

'This is Honey Rider,' Bond said. 'She collects shells from the sea around the island. Honey, this is my friend Quarrel.'

Then Bond looked carefully at his friend. 'There's something worrying you, Quarrel. What's wrong?'

'When I was at the headland, I saw a boat coming along from the west,' Quarrel replied. 'It's coming along the coast quite fast and it's coming towards this beach. Doctor No's guards must know that we're here, captain.'

'OK, we must hide quickly,' Bond said. 'Honey, you must stay with us for now. And we must hide your boat. We'll all hide until Doctor No's men have gone. Perhaps they'll decide that nobody is here. Perhaps they'll think that their radar isn't working properly.'

Bond and Quarrel pulled the girl's canoe into the bushes. They covered it with some branches. It wasn't as well hidden as their own boat. But there was no time to do more.

Quarrel used palm leaves to sweep sand over Honey's footprints. Then they all walked into the thick bushes. Bond and the girl went first. Quarrel came last, walking backwards, sweeping away their tracks as they walked. As they all hid among the bushes, they heard the sound of a boat's engine.

CHAPTER TEN

The Hunt

Doctor No's boat arrived opposite the empty sandy beach.

It was a large grey boat, with a powerful engine. Bond, Quarrel and Honey watched it from their hiding-place in the thick bushes. As they watched, they heard the boat's engine stop. The boat stayed about fifty yards from the shore. For a few minutes, everything was completely quiet.

There were three men in the boat. They were all Afro- Chinese. One man was standing at the boat's controls. One man was standing behind a powerful machine-gun which was fixed onto the deck of the boat.

The third man was standing at the back of the boat. A loudhailer was hanging from a strap around this man's neck. He was looking along the beach through a pair of binoculars.

Suddenly, the man with the machine-gun looked straight towards the place where Honey's canoe was hidden. He said something to the other men, and a moment later all three guards were looking towards the same place.

'They've seen the canoe,' Bond whispered to Quarrel and Honey. 'There'll be trouble now.'

The guard with the loudhailer lifted it to his mouth and began to speak. His voice was loud and clear.

'We know that you're there!' he said. 'We've seen your canoe. Come out onto the beach now. If you've got weapons, throw them

down on the sand. Then stand with your hands above your heads. Surrender now, and we won't hurt you!

Bond, Quarrel and the girl didn't move. They kept very still and they tried to make no sounds.

After a minute, the man with the loudhailer repeated his message. When there was still no answer, the man became angry.

'You've had a chance to surrender peacefully!' he shouted. 'So now we'll have to make you come out. And this won't be so peaceful!'

A moment later, the terrible sound of the machine-gun rattled and crashed around the quiet beach. The guard was firing hundreds of bullets above the bushes where Bond, Quarrel and Honey were hiding.

'Are you coming out now?' said the man with the loudhailer.

Bond put his arm round Honey and pulled her close towards him. Her body was shaking with fear.

'Don't be afraid,' he whispered. 'They'll go soon.'

The man fired the gun again.

This time, the machine-gun bullets flew lower. They cut off the tops of the bushes where Bond, Quarrel and Honey were hiding. Some bullets passed only a few inches above their heads. The noise was terrible.

'We'll be back here soon,' said the voice from the loudhailer. 'If you're still alive, we'll find you. You won't get far. We'll bring dogs to hunt you!'

As soon as the guard had finished speaking, the boat's powerful engine started. Then the boat turned, and it moved away. It

went back in the direction from which it had come. When they could no longer see the boat, Bond spoke.

'Quarrel, we must go to the river immediately,' he said. 'Then we must move along it towards the lake, as fast as we can. There'll be lots of places in the swamp where we can hide if those men start looking for us. We're fugitives now, but they'll never find us in there!'

'We'll leave our canoe hidden here,' he went on. 'Then we can use it to escape from the island when we return to the beach. I hope that we'll be back here tomorrow night.'

Then he turned to the girl.

'Honey, those men shot at your canoe. It has lots of holes in it. It's useless now,' he said. 'You'll have to come with us.'

'Why can't we leave the island tonight?' the girl asked.

'I still have to find out what happened to the roseate spoonbills.' Bond replied.

An hour later, Bond, Quarrel and the girl were walking in the river. The brown muddy water smelled bad. And it was deep - it came up as high as their waists. They had to walk in the water because there were mangrove trees growing on the banks of the river. The trees grew so close together that there was no ground to walk on. For about a mile, the river was narrow, and the branches of trees on the two banks met above the fugitives' heads. The trees made a kind of tunnel, which protected the three people from the sun. The midday sun was very hot, so this was a good thing. But they could walk only slowly on the soft, muddy bottom of the river. Soon, the two men and the girl were tired and very dirty.

'We must keep going forwards,' Bond said to the others. 'Those men will come back soon. They'll be hunting for us. We need to get as far from the coast as possible.'

At last, the tunnel of trees ended and the river became much wider. Bamboo plants grew here. To the west, Bond, Quarrel and Honey could now see the mountain at the end of the island. The mountain was covered with white guano and it was shining in the sun. There was a narrow track of metal built on the side of the mountain. Small carts on wheels ran on this track. The carts took the guano from the top of the mountain to Doctor No's factory. Around the bottom of the mountain there were some large, grey huts. These were where the guano workers lived and worked. As the three fugitives watched, a big truck came out of one of the huts. It started to move quickly towards the mangroves and the river.

'They're coming to look for us, captain,' Quarrel said.

'That road doesn't come straight to the lake,' said Honey. 'It leads past the camp where those men who watched the spoonbills lived. I know because I've been there once.'

'I think that when Doctor No's men get to the lake, they'll leave their truck and come down the river towards us,' Bond said. 'They'll come in small boats. But there'll be guards at the beach now, so we can't go back to our canoe. We're in trouble, and there's not much that we can do!'

'There is something that you can do,' Honey said. 'You can cut some pieces of bamboo. A bamboo plant has a strong round stem like a tube. It has a hole down the centre of it. Then you can lie on the bottom of the river, with your head under the water. If you put one end of the bamboo tube in your mouth and keep the other end just above the surface of the water, you can breathe air through the tube. It's easy - I've done it myself. If you hide where the mangroves grow down into the river, no one can see the tops of the bamboo tubes.'

'That's a good idea, Honey,' Bond said. 'Quarrel, please will you cut some pieces of bamboo? While you do that, we'll find a good hiding-place in the mangroves.'

Soon Quarrel had the bamboo tubes, and Bond and the girl had found a good place to hide.

After ten minutes, they heard the sounds of dogs barking and men shouting. The hunters were getting close! Bond, Quarrel and Honey put the bamboo tubes in their mouths. Then they closed their fingers tightly over their noses, and disappeared beneath the surface of the muddy river.

Half an hour later, Bond, Quarrel and the girl were moving up the river again.

Doctor No's hunters had come and gone. There had been men in rubber boats. There had been men walking in the river with huge dogs. The hunters had carried powerful guns and they had searched the area where Quarrel, Bond and Honey had been hiding. But because the fugitives were under the water, the dogs had been unable to smell them. And none of the guards had seen the three small bamboo tubes amongst the mangroves at the edge of the river. Soon, the sounds of the hunters and their dogs had disappeared. The hunters had gone, but Bond had waited for five minutes before he stood up.

And when Bond had stood up, he'd realized that he hadn't been careful enough. The hunters had left one guard behind. The man saw Bond and lifted his rifle - he was going to shout for his friends. With great speed, Bond had pulled his Smith and Wesson from his pack and shot the man. Quarrel had pulled the guard's rifle from his hands. Then they had pushed the big Afro-Chinese man's body under the water and it had disappeared.

A few minutes later, Bond, Quarrel and Honey moved on slowly and carefully.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Dragon

The sun wasn't quite so hot now. As the air became cooler, insects and frogs started to call and sing.

'It must be after four o'clock,' said Bond. He was guessing the time. His watch was no longer working. 'We'll reach the lake in about an hour from now. We'll make a camp there. We'll be safer when darkness comes.'

'James, why is everyone trying to kill you?' Honey asked him. 'You haven't told me the truth about yourself, have you? You aren't here because of the spoonbills. Nobody takes a gun to study birds! And Doctor No's men are hunting you. Why? What are you doing here? Are you some kind of policeman?'

'I'm sorry, Honey,' Bond replied. 'I'm sorry that I've led you into danger. I'll tell you all about it this evening. But - yes, I am a kind of policeman. I work for the British government. I've come here to find out why two men from a bird sanctuary have died.'

'We should be safe if we camp on the east side of the lake this evening,' Bond went on. 'It's quite a large lake, and we'll see the hunters moving round the edges of it if they come. We'll have time to get away.'

'We can escape from the hunters,' Honey said. 'But perhaps Doctor No's dragon will come for us. The dragon can go through the water - I've seen it swim.'

Bond laughed. 'Oh, the dragon! Well, perhaps the dragon will have an injured tail,' he said. 'Perhaps it'll have to stay at home

tonight.'

'You won't laugh when you see it, James,' Honey said.

A few hours later, Bond, Quarrel and Honey made a camp amongst some trees near the lake. Bond cleaned and dried the Smith and Wesson with his shirt. Quarrel dried the rifle. The girl tried to dry the food which had been in the men's backpacks. The food had got very wet when the fugitives were hiding in the river. But they couldn't make a fire, because it would be seen by Doctor No's hunters.

While the food was drying, Bond explored the edge of the lake near the camp. He saw some tracks in the mud which surprised him. They looked like the marks made by very large wheels. But Bond didn't understand what could have made the tracks. They were bigger than any wheel tracks he'd ever seen.

After he'd returned to the camp, Bond, Quarrel and Honey ate the cold food. Then Bond and the girl got ready to sleep. Quarrel was going to watch the lake.

Bond and Honey sat together in the dark. Bond could feel the warmth of the girl's beautiful body beside him.

'Tell me about your family, Honey,' Bond said.

'My family was poor,' the girl replied. 'We didn't have much money. My mother and father worked for a British man. He wasn't a kind man. Both my parents died when I was five years old. Then an old Jamaican woman looked after me.' For a moment, the girl's voice became angry. 'When I was fifteen, the British man wanted me to be his girlfriend. I didn't want that, but he wouldn't listen to me. He attacked me one night and he hurt me.'

Then suddenly her voice became quieter and softer. 'That man is dead now,' she said to Bond. 'He can't hurt me again.'

'He's dead?' Bond replied. 'How did that happen?'

'I killed him,' the girl said. 'I know all about the animals that live in these islands. I know where they hide and what they can do. One hot evening, I caught a spider - a Black Widow. It's a very poisonous kind of spider. The man always slept with his window open when it was warm. So that night, I went to his house. I dropped the spider through the window, into his bedroom.'

'In the morning, the man was very ill,' the girl went on. 'He must have been bitten by the spider. A week later he was dead.'

Before he fell asleep, Bond thought about the centipede that someone had put into his hotel room. It was good to know about poisonous creatures if you wanted to kill someone in this part of the world.

It was about midnight when the dragon came.

Quarrel heard it first. It was smashing and breaking the trees on the other side of the lake. As it moved forward, the thing made a terrible roaring noise. Quarrel ran towards Bond and the girl and woke them. They all looked out from the trees, waiting for something to happen. Then suddenly, they saw the dragon on the other side of the lake.

There was no moon shining in the sky - the only light was from the stars. But they could just see the shape of an enormous animal with a long neck and two wings.

The dragon moved into the water and started to cross the lake towards the fugitives at great speed. It had huge, very bright, eyes. Every few seconds, flames shot out of its mouth.

'Oh, James, the dragon is coming for us!' Honey said. 'You didn't believe me. Now you can see it for yourself.'

But Bond quickly understood what the dragon was. And he understood the tracks that he'd seen in the mud too.

'It's not an animal, Honey,' he told the girl. 'It's a machine! It's head and body are made of metal. They're fixed to a kind of tractor. The roaring noise is the sound of the tractor's engine. It has huge wheels, so it can move easily in swamps. It can cross rivers and lakes if they're not too deep. The dragon's eyes are really the tractor's headlights. And inside the head, there's a flame-thrower - a gun that shoots burning liquid.'

'People use flames-throwers to destroy trees, bushes and grass,' Bond continued. 'But soldiers also use them to destroy their enemies. Doctor No uses the dragon to frighten people away from his island. And he uses it to kill people who can't be frightened. It was this machine which frightened and killed the spoonbills. It also killed the wardens who used to live in the bird sanctuary!'

The terrible killing machine had almost reached the trees where the three people were hiding. Quarrel, who had been listening to Bond's words, suddenly ran forward.

'You stay here with the girl, captain!' he shouted to Bond. 'I'll try to stop the dragon.'

Quarrel was a very brave man, but he didn't have a chance against the machine. He fired the rifle at the dragon as he got close to it and one of its eyes disappeared! But then a huge flame shot out of its mouth. Quarrel screamed as the flames hit him. A moment later, his burnt body lay on the edge of the lake.

Honey cried out and tears ran down her face. Bond was shocked and very angry. His good friend had tried to help them and he had died in a terrible way.

The dragon stopped about six feet from Bond and Honey's hiding-place. The sky was lighter now. And Bond could now see that the vehicle was coloured with red, black and gold paint. It looked like

a dragon in a Chinese picture. A loud voice came from the vehicle. Its driver was speaking through a loudhailer.

'Surrender now, or I'll kill you too!' the voice said. 'Throw down your weapons on the ground. You have ten seconds to surrender.'

'We have no choice, Honey,' Bond said quietly to the girl. 'We have to surrender. Come on!'

The two of them walked to the edge of the lake and Bond threw down his gun. He tried not to look at the burnt body of his friend, lying in the mud.

A door opened in the back of the dragon and two men got out of the vehicle. They were both strong Afro-Chinese men. The tallest man held a machine-gun. The other man was carrying two pairs of handcuffs.

'Don't try to escape,' the man with the gun said. 'I've killed your friend. I'd be happy to kill you too. But Doctor No wants to talk to you. If you both come with us quietly and calmly, you might still be alive tomorrow. If you try to escape, I'll kill you now - both of you!'

The tall man kept his gun pointed at Bond, while the second man put a pair of handcuffs around the girl's wrists. Then he put handcuffs around Bond's wrists too.

The two men pushed their prisoners inside the tractor and a moment later, the tall man started the engine.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Doctor No

Bond and the girl were sitting in a large, pleasant bedroom in Doctor No's headquarters. The building was deep inside the mountain, at the west end of the island. Bond and Honey were prisoners. The bedroom had no windows and there were no handles on the doors. But Bond and Honey had been treated well.

They hadn't met the mysterious Doctor No yet. When they'd first arrived, early in the morning, a Chinese woman had looked after Honey and Bond. She'd given them clean kimonos - long, loose Japanese robes. She'd spoken to them kindly. She told Bond and Honey to give her their wet, dirty clothes so that they could be washed. Then Bond and the girl had been locked in the bedroom and left alone to sleep.

The prisoners found a delicious breakfast waiting for them when they woke. After they had eaten the meal, the kind woman had come to the room. She had told them that they would meet Doctor No that evening, and that they'd have dinner with him. She asked what kind of food they preferred.

When she'd left them alone again, Bond started to think carefully. He'd soon decided that Doctor No must be doing something more important on Crab Key than collecting guano. The inside of the headquarters was cool and pleasant. The furniture was comfortable and expensive. But the building was as strong as a prison.

'Perhaps I'll find out this evening what the doctor's real business is,' Bond thought.

He looked at the girl. He felt angry with himself. They were in danger and he'd led her here.

'Honey,' Bond said to the girl. 'Please don't say much when we meet Doctor No. If he asks questions, let me answer them. Then agree with anything that I say. I'll tell him that we're only interested in birds and seashells. I want him to believe that. If he believes that story, perhaps we'll be able to leave this island alive.'

At nine o'clock in the evening, the Chinese woman took Bond and Honey to a large room which was further down inside the mountain. At the end of the room, there was a huge window that went from the floor to the ceiling. It was the only window in the room and it was made of thick strong glass. But Bond and Honey couldn't see the land and sky through the glass. They could see rocks and hundreds of fish. Large sharks and barracudas swam slowly past the window.

An octopus was stuck to the glass. Doctor No's headquarters were built below the surface of the sea!

In the centre of the room there was a large table. It was prepared for a fine meal, with plates, knives, forks, spoons, and sparkling wineglasses on it.

'Doctor No will join you very soon,' the woman told them. Then she left the room, locking the door behind her.

A moment later, another door opened, and a very strange man walked slowly into the room.

The man was very tall - at least six inches taller than Bond - and he was very thin. But he was also completely bald - there was no hair at all on his round head. The skin of his face was smooth and his lips were thin and pressed together in a cruel smile.

The man was wearing a long, silver-grey kimono which reached to the ground. But two things about the man especially

shocked and surprised Bond. The first thing was that the man had no hands. Instead of hands, he had large metal claws at the ends of his arms. And the second thing was that he had strange black eyes.

'I am Doctor Julius No,' the man said. 'I can't shake your hands. As you can see, I have no hands. But please don't be frightened of the way I look. And please don't think that I'm blind. These see everything.'

As he said the last words, he touched his eyes with his steel claws. Bond and Honey heard little tapping sounds. They were like the sound of someone's fingernail tapping a wineglass.

'We're not frightened, Doctor No,' Bond said after a moment's silence. 'Perhaps you're trying to frighten us. There are lots of men with steel hands. Some of them are brave men who were injured in the war. And many people don't wear spectacles. They wear contact lenses in their eyes instead of glasses. Your contact lenses are unusually dark. But they aren't frightening. I'm not frightened, because you're really just a man like me.'

'Well, I'm not really like you, Mr James Bond of the British Secret Intelligence Service,' Doctor No answered. 'I have great power, and at the moment, you have none. But I want to talk to you about other things now. We have many things to say to one another.'

'Any man who has a gun has power over a man without one,' Bond said quietly. 'But only countries and governments have real power. Doctor No - if you hurt or kill me, my country will make you pay for it!'

At that moment, one of the doors opened and two Chinese servants entered the room. The men carried plates of food and bottles of wine which they put on the table. One of the servants poured wine into the wineglasses by Bond and Honey's plates. After that, both men stood against the wall behind the prisoners' chairs. The men looked strong and powerful.

'Before we begin our conversation, I must tell you this,' Doctor No continued. 'I don't want to hear any lies, Mr Bond. I know a lot about you and why you are here. Do you understand?'

Bond looked at the tall thin man.

'Yes, Doctor,' Bond said. 'But before you tell me anything, please let the girl go. She isn't a danger to you. She didn't come here with me. She doesn't work for my government. She's Jamaican. I found her on the island yesterday. She came, in her own boat, to collect seashells.'

'Then she's very unlucky,' said Doctor No. 'Nobody who visits this island without my permission ever leaves it alive. No one can interfere with my work here. Strangways and his assistant tried to interfere, so I had them killed.'

'The girl will stay and listen to us talk, Mr Bond,' Doctor No said in a cold voice. 'Then both of you will die. But first, please eat your food. You'll both need to be strong for the ordeals that are waiting for you. And, while we eat, I'll tell you my story.'

'Well, my dear, we have no choice,' Bond said to Honey. 'We must listen to this madman.'

'Perhaps you are right, Mr Bond,' Doctor No said. He spoke calmly and softly. 'Perhaps I am mad. But all great men are mad. And I'm certainly a great man.'

So Bond and Honey tried to eat while Doctor No told them about his life.

'My father was a German man who lived in China. And my mother was a Chinese woman, from a good family,' he began. 'But my mother and father were not married. After I was born, I lived with my aunt, but she didn't love me. I left her house as soon as I could and I went to work in the city of Shanghai. I worked for gangs of

criminals - Tongs. I enjoyed the work. I enjoyed hurting people and killing people.'

'After a few years, I went to live in America - in New York,' Doctor No went on. 'I worked for the Chinese gangs there. One day, I stole some money from the Hip Sing Gang. I stole one million dollars. I should have left America then, but I didn't. For the only time in my life I was stupid. I tried to hide from the Hip Sing Gang. But they found me and tortured me. They hurt me very much. They tried to make me tell them where the money was. My ordeal was terrible. But I didn't tell them what they wanted to know. So they cut off my hands and let me go.'

While Doctor No was speaking, Bond was thinking carefully. How could he escape? And where could he get a weapon? The knife that he'd been given to eat his meat was very sharp. It would be a useful weapon, if he could hide it. He had an idea. He moved his arm suddenly and knocked over his wineglass. Then while he was cleaning up the liquid, he carefully pushed the sharp knife into the sleeve of his kimono. Doctor No didn't see what Bond was doing. He was only interested in telling his own story. And the servant who took away Bond's plate and brought him a dish of fruit didn't see that a knife was missing.

'I moved to the west coast of the United States,' Doctor No was saying. 'I used the million dollars very well. I paid a doctor to change the shape of my face. I had these contact lenses made for my eyes. I had all my hair removed. I started to wear special shoes which made me look much taller. I changed my name. Then I went to a college and studied medicine. I knew that I wouldn't be able to work as a doctor, because doctors need real hands. But for many years I studied peoples' bodies and minds. Those subjects interest me the most. But of course, I had to earn some more money.

'When my medical studies were finished, I bought this island,' the doctor said. 'I brought some workers here and I started to collect and sell the guano. I've lived here for fourteen years. I'm proud of what I have done, Mr Bond. I was tortured by the Tongs, but I lived

after that terrible ordeal. And now I'm a very rich and a very successful businessman. That's why I'm a great man, Mr Bond.'

'Well, I'm sure that you are a very clever man, Doctor No,' Bond replied. 'But I don't believe that you live here just to collect guano for fertilizer. You live here for another reason. You're working for somebody else - I'm sure about that.'

'You're a clever man too,' Doctor No said. 'And, of course, you're correct. I am here for another reason. You're a British spy, Mr Bond. You must know about an island called Turks Island. It's about 300 miles from here. It's where the Americans fire their new weapons and study how they work. Who do you think might be interested in that place?'

'The Soviet Union?' Bond replied.

'And once again, you are correct,' said Doctor No. 'My headquarters here on Crab Key has the most modern spying equipment. With this equipment, I can spy on Turks Island. I can listen to radio transmissions. I'll find out information about the American weapons. And the Soviet government is going to pay me an enormous amount of money for that information.'

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Endurance

Doctor No stopped speaking and looked at Bond and Honey for a few moments. When he spoke again, his voice was almost sad. 'I can tell you everything tonight, because neither of you will be alive to tell anyone else about it tomorrow,' he said.

They'd finished eating their fruit now. One of Doctor No's servants took away the wineglasses and the empty plates. The other servant put a box of cigarettes and a gold cigarette lighter next to Bond.

'Please smoke a cigarette if you want to, Mr Bond,' said Doctor No. 'You have a few more minutes to enjoy yourself.'

Bond lit a cigarette, and waited until the Chinese servant was standing by the wall again. Then Bond carefully pushed the cigarette lighter into the sleeve of his kimono. He now had two weapons!

'Well, I think that we've said all that there is to say,' Doctor No said. 'When you've finished your cigarette, Mr Bond, your ordeal will begin. The girl's ordeal will be different from yours.'

Doctor No looked at Honey for a few minutes. Then he continued speaking. Now his voice was soft and cruel.

'You'll feel more pain than you've ever felt before,' he said. 'I'm interested in pain. And I'm interested in how men and women can endure pain!'

'Endurance is a very interesting subject,' Doctor No went on, in a quieter voice. 'Sometimes I make experiments on people like you

two - people who come here without my permission. You two have made a lot of trouble for me, so I'll give you a lot of pain! But please remember this. You'll die, yes. But your deaths will be useful. Your deaths will increase our knowledge about peoples' bodies. One day, I'll give the results of my experiments to the scientists of the world. My experiments will make me famous!

Doctor No pointed at Honey.

'You'll die in an unusual way,' he told her. 'I've only made this experiment once before. I experimented on a woman who worked for me on the island. That woman endured pain for three hours before she died.'

Bond was listening to what Doctor No was saying to Honey but he was also thinking about how to save her.

'This island is called Crab Key because many thousands of crabs live here,' Doctor No told the girl. 'You're a Jamaican, so you must know about these crabs. They're as big as plates and they have black bodies. At this time of year, the crabs come from their homes by the seashore and they climb up towards the mountain. They eat anything that they find in their paths.'

'One of their paths to the mountain is very close to this building,' Doctor No continued. 'And tonight, as the crabs walk along their path, they'll find a young woman. She'll be tied to the ground. That woman will be you, Miss Rider. The crabs will touch your body with their claws. They'll eat you slowly. It'll be a horrible death. How many hours will pass before you die? Can you guess?'

The girl cried out, then she closed her eyes and her head fell forward. She didn't move or speak. She had fainted.

A moment later, Doctor No spoke some words in Chinese to the servant who stood behind Honey's chair. The man moved forward, picked up the unconscious girl easily, and put her over his shoulder. Then he walked towards the door. The door opened and

he left the room. At the same time, the other servant walked up behind Bond, grabbed Bond's arms and pressed them tightly to his sides. The servant's hands were huge and strong.

For half a minute, there was silence. Bond was thinking as quickly as he could. He was thinking about the sharp knife and the cigarette lighter, which were hidden in his sleeve. How could he use these things? If he could get near Doctor No, then he'd have a chance to kill the madman. But the servant was still holding Bond's arms to his sides. He couldn't move. Doctor No spoke again.

'Mr Bond,' the doctor said. 'Do you still believe that only countries and governments have real power? Perhaps you've changed your mind now. I can decide how the girl will die. And I can decide how you will die. So I'll tell you now about your own death. That is real power.

'I'm interested in what peoples' bodies can endure,' Doctor No continued. 'But I'm also interested in the endurance of peoples' minds. For example, how does a person's mind endure terror? The worker who I left out for the crabs didn't die from the injuries that the crabs made on her body. She died of terror. But I want to find out how long a human body can endure pain before it loses all its strength. So I've made a new experiment. I've made a kind of obstacle course. And you, Mr Bond, will now be the subject for my experiment. Your body and your mind will be tested. Some of my obstacles are physical - you'll have to endure pain and injuries to your body. Other obstacles are mental - you'll have to endure fear and doubt in your mind.

'You've slept well and eaten good food,' Doctor No went on. 'Your body is strong and fit. Now I want to see how long you can endure my obstacle course. I want to know how many obstacles you'll overcome before you die, Mr Bond. You won't complete the course. You will die before the end. There'll finally be one obstacle that you can't overcome. Which will it be? Yes, I ask myself that! Which will it be?

'And after your death,' Doctor No said with a terrible smile, 'I'll examine your body very carefully. You'll be the first man to be tested on my obstacle course, Mr Bond of the British Secret Intelligence Service. You're very lucky. Please try to think about that as you die!'

The doctor finished speaking, turned away and walked out of the room.

Now all Bond's thoughts were about escaping. If he could escape from Doctor No's guards for few minutes, he might be able to find the girl. And if he couldn't help Honey to escape, he might be able to kill her quickly. That would be better for her than the death which Doctor No had described.

As Bond thought about this, the servant pulled him from his chair. Bond kept his arms tightly against his sides. Between his right arm and his body, he was now holding the sharp knife and the cigarette lighter.

The Chinese man took Bond out of the room and pushed him into a lift. The lift travelled upwards for a few minutes, and then stopped. When the doors opened, Bond was taken down a long corridor.

At the end of the corridor, the two men stopped in front of an open door. The door had the letter Q marked on it. The Chinese servant pushed Bond through the doorway.

Bond was now in a small room, about 15 feet long and 15 feet wide. The walls were made of stone and there was a wooden chair in the middle of the room. On the chair were Bond's jeans and his shirt. They had been washed and dried.

'Well, here you are, my friend,' the servant said. He smiled a horrible smile. He knew what was going to happen to Bond and thinking about it pleased him.

'There's nothing to eat and there's nothing to drink in here,' the guard went on. 'There won't ever be anything to eat or drink. You can sit on the chair and wait to die. Or you can find your way out to the obstacle course. Good luck!'

A moment later, the man left the room and locked the door behind him.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Obstacle Course

Bond looked more carefully around the little stone room.

The door was made of strong metal and there was no handle on it. Above the door, there was a small window made of very thick glass. He wasn't going to escape that way! But high up on one wall, in a corner, there was a ventilation grille. The grille was made of thick wire and Bond could feel cool air coming through it. The grille covered a circular opening which was wider than Bond's shoulders.

'Well, that grille covers a ventilation shaft,' Bond said to himself. 'I guess that the shaft leads onto the obstacle course. I must hurry. Doctor No's men must have taken Honey out onto the mountainside already.'

Bond took off the kimono and quickly put on his own clothes. He looked at the cigarette lighter and the knife. Perhaps he could use these two things as weapons. They might be useful during the ordeal that he was going to endure. But then he saw that the frame of the grille was made from one long piece of wire. If he could pull the grille away from the wall and straighten the wire frame, perhaps he could make a spear from it.

Bond put the lighter in his pocket. Then, holding the knife in his teeth, he moved the chair. He put it against the wall, just under the grille. He stood on the chair and grasped the metal grille with his right hand. There was a flash of blue light. Bond felt a terrible pain in his arm and he was thrown backwards off the chair. His head hit the stone floor and for a few moments he was unconscious.

Bond woke up. There was a smell of burning skin in the air. Bond looked at his right hand. A red mark across his fingers showed where the grille had burnt him. The grille had been electrified! And as he looked at the burn, he started to feel pain in his hand.

Then he thought about Honey Rider. She was on the mountainside, waiting for the crabs to come. He had to get out of this room!

'Doctor No doesn't want me to die here,' Bond told himself. 'That was just the beginning of my ordeal. That was the first physical obstacle - pain. Has the doctor turned off the electricity now? I think that he'll let me go on. He wants me to endure different kinds of pain. Now, this is one of his mental obstacles. Will I be able to touch the grille again? Or am I too frightened of the electricity? He wants to know if I've lost my nerve. Well, I haven't!'

Bond cut a piece of cloth from the kimono and wrapped it around his injured hand. Then he climbed onto the chair again and he grasped the grille with his left hand. There was no flash this time. He pulled the grille with all his strength. After a moment, the whole frame came away from the wall. He grasped the electric cable which was attached to the frame and he tore it away. Then he started to pull the wire frame off the grille.

Soon, Bond had pulled the wire frame straight. He had made it into a simple spear, about four feet long. At one end, there was a sharp point. Bond bent a few inches of the wire to make a hook at the other end. Then he bent the spear in half, and he pushed it down inside one leg of his jeans. Now the hook was on the outside, over his belt.

Bond put the knife between his teeth again. Then he jumped up onto the chair and pulled himself up through the circular opening in the wall. A moment later, Bond was inside the horizontal ventilation shaft. The shaft was about four inches wider than Bond's shoulders and it was made of shiny, slippery metal. When he lit his cigarette

lighter for a few moments, Bond saw that the shaft continued straight ahead.

Lying flat on his stomach, Bond began to crawl forwards. The air in the shaft was cool. Soon, Bond knew, something else would happen to him. He would reach another obstacle. But his enemy didn't want him to die yet. Doctor No wanted to know how much pain Bond could endure. Bond was sure that there would be several more obstacles before the end of the course. Perhaps he would die at one of them. Or perhaps he would reach the end of the course.

'But what then?' Bond asked himself. 'If I'm still alive at the end of the course, Doctor No will try to kill me.'

'So, is there any hope for me?' Bond thought, as he crawled forward. 'Doctor No wants me to believe that there's no hope. That's another one of his mental obstacles. But he doesn't know about my three weapons. And he doesn't understand how strong my feelings are. I want to stay alive and kill him!'

After a few minutes, Bond reached the end of the horizontal shaft. Now there seemed to be a light shining above him. Bond turned over carefully, so that he was lying on his back. Above his head, there was another shaft of bright metal - a vertical shaft. There was a light far away at the top of this shaft. Bond guessed that the shaft was about 50 yards high.

Carefully, Bond stood up. Could he climb up this smooth, vertical shaft? He thought that he could. He took off his shoes. Then he took a deep breath of air and pressed his shoulders against the sides of the shaft. While his elbows held his body still, he pulled his legs up a few inches. Then he pressed his feet against the sides of the shaft. His feet held him in his new position while he pulled in his shoulders and straightened his legs. This movement pushed his body a little higher up the shaft. The bare skin on his hands and feet stuck to the metal walls of the shaft. It stopped him slipping back down.

Moving like this, about six inches each time, Bond slowly climbed up the shaft. It was painful and tiring. The muscles in Bond's stomach, arms and legs began to shake. When he was about halfway up, his feet began to slip on the shiny metal. He had slipped about a yard back down the shaft before he could stop himself. He realized what the problem was. He was getting hot and his hands and feet were wet with sweat. So he closed his eyes and he stayed in the same place for ten minutes, until he was cooler. Then, very carefully, he wiped each foot on the cloth of his trouser legs, and started to climb again.

It seemed a very long time before Bond reached the top of the shaft. When he did reach it, he noticed two things. First, he could feel cold air on the left side of his face. Then he saw that the light, which he had seen while he was climbing, came from a glass window. The window was the ceiling of the shaft.

After a few moments, Bond realized that the cold air came from another horizontal shaft which joined the vertical one here. He would be able to pull himself into it. When he did that, he would be able to lie flat for a while and rest. His feet and arms and shoulders were terribly painful. But after a rest, he could continue on the obstacle course.

Using the last of his strength, Bond pulled himself into the new shaft, and turned onto his back. For a few minutes he lay there, unable to move. Then suddenly, he fell asleep.

Bond woke slowly. He didn't know how long he had been sleeping. But he knew that he felt a little stronger now. It was time for him to move on to the next obstacle. Before he turned onto his stomach, he looked up at the window in the ceiling. Someone was behind the glass, watching him.

Bond said something very rude about Doctor No. The person couldn't hear what Bond said. But Bond hoped that the person saw the shapes of the words on Bond's lips and understood them.

A moment later, Bond was crawling along the new shaft. Like the first shaft, this one was dark. There were no lights or windows in it. After a few minutes, Bond realized that the metal walls of the shaft were getting hot. The further he went on, the hotter the metal became. And the air was no longer cool - it was hot!

Bond came to a place where the shaft went around a corner. He lit his cigarette lighter and slowly put his head round the corner. What he saw made him pull his head back. The metal walls of the shaft ahead of him weren't shiny. They were dull and red with heat. So heat was to be the next ordeal! How could he crawl along this hot metal? He would be terribly burned.

'What shall I do?' he thought. 'I could go back. I could go back to the room with the chair. If I go back, I know that I'll die there. But if I go on, perhaps I'll escape.'

'Doctor No doesn't want me to die yet,' Bond told himself. 'He's testing me again. He wants me to endure some more physical ordeals before I die. So this metal won't be too hot. The heat will injure me, but it won't kill me.'

He thought about the metal burning his skin. And then he thought about the beautiful girl. Honey was waiting on the mountainside for the crabs to attack her. He couldn't go back now!

Bond took his knife from between his teeth and cut some pieces of cloth from the front of his shirt. He tied the cloth around his hands and feet. For a short time, the pieces of cloth would protect his hands and feet. His shirt would protect his shoulders and the legs of his jeans would protect his knees for a short time, too. He put the knife in his mouth and crawled forward. He tried to keep his bare skin away from the hot metal.

Bond moved as fast as he could. But soon the cloth around his hands and feet started to burn. The cloth on the knees of his jeans started to burn too. Only the sweat which was running down his arms and legs stopped the cloth from bursting into flames.

'Keep going! Keep going! Keep going!' he told himself.

The metal became hotter and hotter. With each movement, the pain became worse. And each time that he moved, Bond screamed. He could smell his skin burning. But he knew that he had to go on until his skin was burned from his bones.

Suddenly, his head hit something. It was a thin metal door. And as Bond's head touched it, the door moved aside. He crawled past it and suddenly everything changed. Here, the metal walls of the shaft were cool. Ice-cold air was blowing all around him.

Bond fell forward. His eyes closed. He couldn't see or hear anything. He was unconscious.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Last Ordeals

When he woke again, Bond slowly turned over onto his back. He saw that there was another window in the ceiling of the shaft, just above his head. He saw a face behind the glass. Another of Doctor No's men was studying him. The man wasn't interested in Bond's injuries. He was only interested in how much pain Bond could endure. He was only interested in how long Bond was going to live.

For a moment, Bond was angry. Then, as he felt the pain from the burns on his knees and feet and hands move through his body, he made a noise like an animal.

Bond turned over once again. Again, he began to move forward slowly along the shaft. At first, he moved without thinking. But after a while, there was a little less pain. Soon, he was able to think again.

It was nearly an hour before Bond came to the next obstacle on Doctor No's course. Bond knew that the obstacle was there before he understood what it was. Ahead of him, Bond saw tiny, sparkling, red lights. They were moving about. And when he stopped moving himself, he could hear a sound. It was a soft, tapping sound.

As he crawled forward again, the tiny red lights came closer and the tapping sound grew louder. What was waiting for him now? Bond lit his cigarette lighter, held it up, and found the answer to his question.

Three feet in front of Bond there was a metal grille. The grille was like a curtain made from very thin metal wires. Behind the grille, there were about twenty, large hairy spiders. This was a cage of

giant tarantulas! The little red lights that Bond had seen in the dark were the spiders' eyes. The tapping sound was made by their soft hairy feet on the metal wires of the cage.

Bond tried to remember everything he knew about tarantulas. These poisonous spiders were the largest in the world. Their bodies were about four inches long and their legs were five inches long. Their bodies and their legs were covered in long hairs. Their teeth were sharp and full of poison. If one spider bit a man, he would be ill and in great pain for a while. He probably wouldn't die. But Bond had to crawl through this cage with twenty tarantulas in it. If more than one bit him, he probably would die.

Bond looked at the spiders, and remembered the centipede in his hotel room. Again, he felt cold with fear and disgust. But that was what Doctor No wanted, Bond knew that.

'If I think about these spiders on my body and in my hair, I won't be able to go on,' he said to himself. 'If I think about them biting me, I won't be able to go on. But I must go on. I'm going to rescue Honey. Perhaps Doctor No thinks that this is the ordeal that'll kill me. But he doesn't know about my three weapons!'

Bond carefully took the spear from inside his trouser leg. He unbent the wire and pulled the spear to its full length. Then he turned a little wheel on his cigarette lighter, which made the flame bigger. Finally, he cut a large hole in the grille with his knife, and crawled into the cage.

The spiders started to run towards him, but when they saw the flame from the lighter they stopped. They were afraid of the fire. They didn't know what to do. And while the spiders were standing still, Bond began to stab his spear into their soft, hairy bodies. After he had killed several of them, the other spiders started to move forward again. But they wouldn't come near the flame from the lighter. They started to bite the dead and dying spiders that Bond had stabbed.

And while they were doing this, Bond killed more of them.

When at last all the spiders were dead, Bond pushed their bodies to one side of the cage. He quickly crawled towards the grille at the back of the cage, cut a hole in it with his knife, and climbed through. When Bond left the cage, he bent the spear in half again. Then he pushed it down inside one leg of his jeans. He put the lighter back in his pocket, and he put the knife between his teeth again.

A light came on above his head. Bond looked up and saw what he expected to see. Another of Doctor No's watchers was looking at him. But this man moved his head slowly from side to side. Then he looked very, very sad. Finally, he held up his hand, with the thumb pointing downwards.

'He's telling me that this is the end,' Bond thought. 'He's saying, "The next ordeal will kill you."'

There was nothing Bond could do. He had to move forward. Soon he realized that the shaft was sloping downwards. And he realized that the metal walls were more slippery than before. After a few minutes, the weight of his own body was moving him along. Bond didn't have to crawl any more. He didn't have to move his arms and legs at all. For a while, this felt pleasant. He was able to rest and move at the same time. But then the slope became steeper, and Bond realized that he was moving faster and faster. He pressed his hands and feet against the sides of the shaft, but the metal tore his skin. He couldn't stop now, even if he wanted to.

And then suddenly, he could see bright sunshine ahead of him. As he got closer to the sunlight, he could smell the sea. In a moment, he came to the end of the shaft and fell out into the air beyond it. A hundred feet below him, Bond saw the blue-grey water of the Caribbean Sea. He had just enough time to remove the knife from his mouth and stretch his arms out in front of him before he entered the water.

As he hit the water, Bond fell unconscious for a few moments. But by the time that his body had come up to the surface of the water, he was conscious again. He started to swim, and as he swam he looked around him.

Bond was swimming in a small inlet that had the shape of a triangle - it had three sides. On two sides of the inlet there were tall cliffs of rock. But the third side of the inlet was a tall fence. The inlet was separated from the open sea by this fence which was made of very thick, strong wire. The fence stood ten feet above the surface of the water. And as he swam up to the fence, Bond could see that it went down many feet beneath the surface too.

On the two sides of the inlet which were cliffs, the water was against the very steep walls of rock. There were no beaches, and there were no paths up the cliffs. Bond was very tired and his body was full of pain. But he knew that he had to climb the fence.

The fence was like a huge metal net. There were lots of places where he could put his feet and hands when he started to climb. Bond pulled himself out of the water and up onto the fence. He stopped with his feet on a horizontal wire which was about three feet above the surface of the water. For a moment, he looked out to the sea through the holes in the fence. Then he turned round to look at the inlet behind him.

He pushed his knife into the belt of his jeans. With both his hands, he grasped the vertical wires above his head. He looked down at the hundreds of small fish swimming in the water beneath him.

'I'm safe here for a while,' Bond thought. 'I'll rest until I feel stronger.' But then he asked himself these questions.

'Why is this inlet here? And why is this inlet separated from the open sea? Doctor No must have made this fence.'

But I don't believe that the last ordeal on this obstacle course is a wire fence. Climbing over it will be much too easy. Doctor No isn't interested in easy obstacles.'

Then Bond looked again at the inlet behind the fence.

'Perhaps this is the place where Doctor No wants me to die,' he told himself. 'The inlet is like a big cage. Perhaps it is a cage. But what kind of animal does Doctor No keep in it?'

He soon had an answer to his question. First, all the small fish disappeared. They swam quickly away from the fence. Then a moment later, the shape of an enormous grey creature appeared in the water just beneath the place where Bond was standing. It was a giant squid.

At first, the creature had been deep down in the water. But now it was coming nearer and nearer to the surface. Bond just had time to remember Quarrel's story about the giant octopus which had attacked his friend, Pus-Feller, near Crab Key. As he remembered the story, a huge tentacle came up out of the water. The tentacle was as broad as the top part of Bond's arm. It touched the fence below Bond's feet.

'So, this is my final ordeal,' Bond thought.

He tried to climb a little higher on the fence, but he was weak and in pain. He climbed very slowly. He looked down again and he saw two eyes looking up through the water at him. The eyes were as large as footballs. They looked calm and almost friendly.

For a moment, Bond thought that the squid wasn't interested in him. But then it moved its tentacle and touched one of Bond's legs. The tentacle moved over Bond's leg, then grasped it, pressing it hard.

'It's asking itself if I'm good to eat,' Bond told himself.

A moment later, the squid attacked. A second long tentacle came up out of the water and grabbed Bond's left arm. Bond pulled his knife from his jeans with his right hand. He stabbed and cut the tentacle with the knife. But now there were more tentacles moving up the wire fence. They held Bond's body, pulling him down towards the water. And they were terribly strong.

Then the creature's enormous head appeared. And now Bond thought that its eyes looked angry. The squid's huge sharp beak was opening and closing near Bond's feet. In a moment, the creature was going to start eating him.

There was only one thing to do. Bond pulled the wire spear from his trouser leg and stabbed it deep into one of the terrible creature's eyes. He stabbed the eye again and again. The last time, he left the spear there.

For a few seconds, the surface of the sea looked like water boiling in a cooking pan. Then suddenly, the colour of the water changed. The sea around Bond was no longer blue - it was black! When Bond had stabbed the squid, it had released ink from its body. Bond and the fence were covered in the stinking black liquid.

Suddenly, Bond felt the squid's tentacles falling away from his body. In a moment, the creature had swum away and the water became calm again.

After the giant squid had gone, Bond rested on the fence for a while. Then he slowly climbed over the top of the fence and dropped down into the sea on the other side. He swam towards the shore of the rocky headland on the south side of the fence. Soon he could see a path in the rocks of the headland. He thought that the path must lead up to Doctor No's headquarters.

All night, there had been two thoughts in Bond's mind. He wanted to live long enough to kill Doctor No, and he wanted to save Honey from the black crabs. But it was many hours now since Bond had started his ordeal. It had been late evening when Doctor No's

servant had locked him in the stone room with the ventilation grille. And now it was morning.

The girl must be dead. The only thing to do now was to find Doctor No.

'I still have the knife!' Bond told himself.

As Bond pulled himself out of the sea, he had a surprise. He heard a loud sound. It was the sound of a ship's siren. It was coming from somewhere close to where Bond was standing.

The path in front of him led along the bottom of the cliff and went around the end of the headland.

'There must be a quay on the other side of this headland,' Bond thought. 'It must be the place where guano is loaded into the ships.'

As he walked towards the end of the headland, Bond heard another sound. But he couldn't guess what was making this noise. It sounded like lots of pieces of metal crashing together.

At the end of the headland there was a large rock. Bond stopped behind it. He would have to look very carefully round this rock before he went any further. There might be guards with guns on the other side!

Bond moved very slowly and looked carefully round the corner. For ten seconds, he looked at what was beyond it. Then he moved back and hid behind the rock again.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Licensed to Kill!

Bond hid behind the large rock. He thought about everything that he'd seen during those ten seconds when he'd looked beyond the rock. He tried to make a picture in his mind.

In front of him and below him, Bond had seen a quay which was built out into the sea. The quay was about 20 yards long and had the shape of a letter 'T'. A large old ship was tied beside the T of the quay. Bond hadn't seen any men on the deck of the ship. He guessed that they were in their cabins, below the deck.

The ship was being loaded with guano by two machines - a long conveyor and a crane. It was these machines which were making the strange noise that Bond had heard.

The conveyor stood on tall metal legs. It was built down the side of the mountain to the quay. Its belt was covered by a metal roof. Guano was carried from the mountain, to the ship waiting at the quay, along this belt. The end of the conveyor which was nearest to the quay did not stand on metal legs, it moved from one side to another. It was like an arm. At the end of the conveyor's arm, there was a huge sleeve of strong cloth.

The crane stood on the quay beside the ship. The crane also had a long arm made of metal. As the guano travelled along the conveyor, the crane's arm moved the arm and sleeve of the conveyor. The crane moved the sleeve of the conveyor above some openings in the deck of the ship. The crane moved the sleeve to each of these openings until the ship was completely loaded with guano.

The arm and sleeve of the conveyor was controlled by one man - the driver who sat in the control cabin of the crane. There was a steering wheel and levers and buttons in front of the driver. He turned the wheel and pulled and pressed the levers to control the long arm at the front of the crane. And the cabin of the crane was just on the other side of the big rock, only ten yards from where Bond was standing now.

Bond thought about all this. And he thought about two other things that he'd seen. The first thing was the position of the crane's arm. It was controlled by the steering wheel in the cabin. If this wheel was turned as far as possible to the right, the sleeve of the conveyor wouldn't be above the ship. It would be above the quay.

The other thing was this. Standing on the quay, watching the loading of the guano, was a tall, thin man. Doctor Julius No! If someone turned the crane's steering wheel as far as possible to the right, the sleeve of the conveyor would stop above his head!

'Yes, I must do it!' Bond told himself. 'But first, I'll have to get rid of the crane driver.'

Bond was agent 007 - he was licensed to kill. He knew that he had to kill Doctor No. The madman was dangerous and cruel. He enjoyed torturing people. Slowly and carefully, Bond looked around the rock again. As he did this, the crane driver turned his head. Bond recognized him immediately. It was the big man who had driven the 'dragon'. It was the man who had killed Quarrel! Quarrel had died in a terrible way, so now Bond wanted to kill this man very much.

Bond waited till the crane driver was looking at the ship again, then he moved fast. He pulled his knife from his belt, ran to the crane's cabin, and pulled open the door. Before the tall Afro-Chinese man could turn around, Bond had grabbed his hair. Then Bond pulled back the man's head, and stabbed the knife deep into his neck.

As the driver fell dead onto the floor of the cabin, Bond grabbed the steering wheel. He turned it towards the right, as fast as he could. The arm of the crane started to move the arm and sleeve of the conveyor away from the ship.

Down on the quay, Doctor No didn't realize what was happening at first. He'd stopped looking at the guano falling from the sleeve and into the ship. He was looking out across the sea. But when the guano started to fall on him, he looked up quickly and started to shout. Then he turned and looked at the crane's cabin. He saw Bond at the controls. And at that moment, Doctor No understood what was happening. He tried to scream and he tried to run, but it was too late. The guano poured from the sleeve of the conveyor like a river. The stinking dust fell into Doctor No's eyes and mouth. The river of guano knocked him to the ground and covered his head and body. In a few seconds, only his arms could be seen, waving in the air.

Two minutes later, Doctor Julius No was under a pile of guano which was twenty feet high. He was dead and Bond was happy about it. Doctor No would never torture another person and the Russians wouldn't get their information about Turks Island!

Bond switched off the conveyor's engine. He took the gun from the dead man who was lying at his feet. It was a Smith and Wesson .38 - a good gun! Then he ran from the quay. He had to find Honey.

Bond climbed up the rocks and ran into a tunnel. As he ran, Bond heard the ship's siren. Somebody had realized what had happened at the quay. Somebody was warning Doctor No's men.

Bond was tired. There was pain in every part of his body. His strength was nearly gone, but he kept running.

The tunnel had only a few lights in the ceiling and it smelled of guano. Bond couldn't see clearly and he couldn't breathe easily.

Suddenly, someone was on the path in front of him. The person started hitting him and biting him. Bond had just enough strength to lift his attacker off the ground. Then he saw that it was a girl with long, pale blonde hair.

'Honey! Stop! This is James,' he said.

There was silence for a few moments. Then the girl started to cry and Bond held her tightly in his arms.

'Oh, James, my darling!' she cried. 'I thought that you were dead. I thought that Doctor No had killed you. I love you, James. Please don't leave me again.'

'I thought that you were dead, too,' Bond replied. 'I thought that the crabs had eaten you.'

'Oh that stupid man doesn't know anything about the animals who live on these islands,' Honey said. 'I was never worried about the crabs. I know all about them. They eat plants, they don't eat meat. And they don't usually attack people. Perhaps if someone had an injury, with lots of blood, the crabs might bite a person. Perhaps that happened to the other girl that Doctor No told us about. But I didn't have any injuries. The crabs just walked over me and went on up the mountain.'

'But you fainted when Doctor No told you about the crabs,' Bond said. 'When that happened, I believed what he'd said about them.'

'I was afraid for you, James,' Honey replied. 'That's why I fainted, my darling. I thought that he was going to torture you terribly. Was it terrible?'

'Yes, it was terrible,' Bond said. 'But it's all finished now. Doctor No is dead. Now we must escape from this island before his men kill us! We've got to get to the beach as fast as we can. We've got to find the canoe!'

After all their ordeals, Bond and Honey reached the beach easily. They stole the dragon!

Doctor No's men had hunted Bond and Honey for a while. They had followed the fugitives out of the tunnel. They had brought dogs to follow the fugitives' tracks. But then Bond shot five of Doctor No's men, and the hunters let Bond and the girl escape.

Bond and Honey found the dragon and drove it towards the lake. And after driving through the mangroves for an hour, they reached the beach and found the canoe. With the last of his strength, Bond pulled the little boat from its hiding-place and pushed it into the water. Then he fell into the canoe and lay there, unable to move.

It was Honey who sailed the canoe back to Morgan's Harbour. For most of the journey, Bond lay in the bottom of the little boat, resting and sleeping. But when they were near to the Jamaican coast, the girl woke him.

Bond sat up slowly and looked at the sea. He was thinking about the future, and about the past.

When they landed, he would take the girl to Beau Desert. He would leave her there for a day or two. While she rested there, he would be in Kingston. He'd go to King's House and he'd send a message to M in London. And then he'd tell the Acting Governor everything that he knew about Crab Key and about the work that Doctor Julius No had been doing for the Soviet Union. He'd also tell him that Strangways and Trueblood had been murdered.

Bond thought about everything that had happened since his arrival in Jamaica. He thought sadly about his friend Quarrel. Soon, he would have to talk to Quarrel's family. Bond would tell them about Doctor No and about Crab Key. He'd tell them that Quarrel had been a good man and a good friend. He'd tell them about the money that they would soon have from Quarrel's life insurance. But he wouldn't tell them exactly how his friend had died.

Bond thought about Honey too. She was clever. She could study sea animals at a university. He'd ask Pleydell-Smith to arrange that. And he'd ask the Colonial Secretary and his wife to look after Honey for the next few years. He couldn't do more for her than that.

Soon there would be another mission for Bond. Soon he'd have to return to London. But before he had to leave, he would spend some time alone with Honey. They wouldn't have much time together. He hoped that the girl would understand that. She'd said that she loved him. But the life of an SIS agent was a lonely and difficult one. There wasn't much time in an agent's life for love.

James Bond was very thoughtful as he watched the coast of Jamaica get nearer and nearer.

- THE END -

Hope you have enjoyed the reading!