

The
Living Daylights

Ian Fleming

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BY IAN FLEMING

James Bond lay in the five-hundred-yard firing point of the famous Century Range at Bisley. The white peg in the grass beside him said 44, and the same number was repeated high up on the distant butt above the single six-foot-square target that, to the human eye and in the late summer dusk, looked no larger than a postage stamp. But through Bond's glass—an infrared sniperscope fixed above his rifle—the

lens covered the whole canvas. He could even clearly distinguish the pale blue and beige colors in which the target was divided, and the six-inch semicircular bull's-eye looked as big as the half-moon that was already beginning to show low down in the darkening sky above the distant crest of Chobham Ridges.

James Bond's last shot had been an inner left. Not good enough. He took another glance at the yellow and blue wind flags. They were streaming across range from the east rather more stiffly than when he had begun his shoot half an hour before, and he set two clicks more to the right on the wind gauge and traversed the cross-wires on the sniperscope back to the point of aim. Then he settled himself, put his trigger finger gently inside the guard and onto the curve of the trigger, shallowed his breathing, and very, very softly squeezed.

The vicious crack of the shot boomed across the empty range. The target disappeared below ground, and at once the dummy came up in its place. Yes. The black panel was in the bottom right-hand corner this time, not in the bottom left. A bull's-eye.

"Good," said the voice of the chief range officer from behind and above him. "Stay with it."

The target was already up again, and Bond put his cheek back to its warm patch on the chunky wooden stock and his eye to the rubber eyepiece of the scope. He wiped his gun hand down the side of his trousers and took the pistol grip that jutted sharply down below the trigger guard. He splayed

his legs an inch more. Now there were to be five rounds rapid. It would be interesting to see if that would produce "fade." He guessed not. This extraordinary weapon the armorer had somehow got his hands on gave one the feeling that a standing man at a mile would be easy meat. It was mostly a .308-caliber International Experimental Target rifle built by Winchester to help American marksmen at World Championships, and it had the usual gadgets of superaccurate target weapons—a curled aluminum hand at the back of the butt that extended under the armpit and held the stock firmly into the shoulder, and an adjustable pinion below the rifle's center of gravity to allow the stock to be nailed into its grooved wooden rest. The armorer had had the usual single-shot bolt action replaced by a five-shot magazine, and he had assured Bond that if he allowed as little as two seconds between shots to steady the weapon there would be no fade even at five hundred yards. For the job that Bond had to do, he guessed that two seconds might be a dangerous loss of time if he missed with his first shot. Anyway, M. had said that the range would be not more than three hundred yards. Bond would cut it down to one second—almost continuous fire.

"Ready?"

"Yes."

"I'll give you a countdown from five. Now! Five, four, three, two, one. Fire!"

The ground shuddered slightly and the air sang as the five whirling scraps of cupronickel spat off into the dusk. The

target went down and quickly rose again, decorated with four small white discs closely grouped on the bull's-eye. There was no fifth disc—not even a black one to show an inner or an outer.

"The last round was low," said the range officer lowering his nightglasses. "Thanks for the contribution. We sift the sand on those butts at the end of every year. Never get less than fifteen tons of good lead and copper scrap out of them. Good money."

Bond had got to his feet. Corporal Menzies from the armorers' section appeared from the pavilion of the Gun Club and knelt down to dismantle the Winchester and its rest. He looked up at Bond. He said with a hint of criticism, "You were taking it a bit fast, sir. Last round was bound to jump wide."

"I know, corporal. I wanted to see how fast I could take it. I'm not blaming the weapon. It's a hell of a fine job. Please tell the armorer so from me. Now I'd better get moving. You're finding your own way back to London, aren't you?"

"Yes. Good night, sir."

The chief range officer handed Bond a record of his shoot—two sighting shots and then ten rounds at each hundred yards up to five hundred. "Damned good firing with this visibility. You ought to come back next year and have a bash at the Queen's Prize. It's open to all comers nowadays—British Commonwealth, that is."

"Thanks. Trouble is, I'm not all that much in England. And thanks for spotting for me." Bond glanced at the distant clock tower. On either side, the red danger flag and the red signal drum were coming down to show that firing had ceased. The hands stood at nine-fifteen. "I'd like to buy you a drink, but I've got an appointment in London. Can we hold it over until that Queen's Prize you were talking about?"

The range officer nodded noncommittally. He had been looking forward to finding out more about this man who had appeared out of the blue after a flurry of signals from the Ministry of Defense and had then proceeded to score well over ninety percent at all distances. And that after the range was closed for the night and visibility was poor-to-bad. And why had he, who only officiated at the annual July meeting, been ordered to be present? And why had he been told to see that Bond had a six-inch bull's-eye at five hundred instead of the regulation fifteen-inch? And why this flummery with the danger flag and signal drum that were only used on ceremonial occasions? To put pressure on the man? To give an edge of urgency to the shoot? Bond. Commander James Bond. The N.R.A. would surely have a record of anyone who could shoot like that. He'd remember to give them a call. Funny time to have an appointment in London. Probably a girl. The range officer's undistinguished face assumed a disgruntled expression. Sort of fellow who got all the girls he wanted.

The two men walked through the handsome façade of Club Row behind the range to Bond's car, which stood opposite the bullet-pitted iron reproduction of Landseer's famous Running Deer.

"Nice-looking job," commented the range officer. "Never seen a body like that on a Continental. Have it made specially?"

"Yes. The Mark IVs are anyway really only two-seaters. And damned little luggage space. So I got Mulliner's to make it into a real two-seater with plenty of trunk space. Selfish car I'm afraid. Well, good night. And thanks again." The twin exhausts boomed healthily, and the back wheels briefly spat gravel.

The chief range officer watched the ruby lights vanish up King's Avenue toward the London Road. He turned on his heel and went to find Corporal Menzies on a search for information that was to prove fruitless. The corporal remained as wooden as the big mahogany box he was in the process of loading into a khaki Land Rover without military symbols. The range officer was a major. He tried pulling his rank without success. The Land Rover hammered away in Bond's wake. The major walked moodily off to the offices of the National Rifle Association to try and find out what he wanted in the library under "Bond, J."

James Bond's appointment was not with a girl. It was with a B.E.A. flight to Hanover and Berlin. As he bit off the miles to London Airport, pushing the big car hard so as to have plenty of time for a drink, three drinks, before the takeoff, only part of his mind was on the road. The rest was reexamining, for the umpteenth time, the sequence that was now leading him to an appointment with an airplane. But only an interim appointment. His final rendezvous on one of

the next three nights in Berlin was with a man. He had to see this man and he had to be sure to shoot him dead.

When, at around two-thirty that afternoon, James Bond had gone in through the double padded doors and had sat down opposite the turned-away profile on the other side of the big desk, he had sensed trouble. There was no greeting. M.'s head was sunk into his stiff turned-down collar in a Churchillian pose of gloomy reflection, and there was a droop of bitterness at the corner of his lips. He swiveled his chair around to face Bond, gave him an appraising glance as if, Bond thought, to see that his tie was straight and his hair properly brushed, and then began speaking, fast, biting off his sentences as if he wanted to be rid of what he was saying, and of Bond, as quickly as possible.

"Number 272. He's a good man. You won't have come across him. Simple reason that he's been holed up in Novaya Zemlya since the war. Now he's trying to get out—loaded with stuff. Atomic and rockets. And their plan for a whole new series of tests. For nineteen sixty-one. To put the heat on the West. Something to do with Berlin. Don't quite get the picture, but the FO says if it's true it's terrific. Makes nonsense of the Geneva Conference and all this blather about nuclear disarmament the Communist bloc is putting out. He's got as far as East Berlin. But he's got practically the whole of the KGB on his tail—and the East German security forces of course. He's holed up somewhere in East Berlin, and he got one message over to us. That he'd be coming across between six and seven P.M. on one of the next three nights—

tomorrow, next day, or next day. He gave the crossing point. Trouble is"—the downward curve of M.'s lips became even more bitter—"the courier he used was a double. Station WB bowled him out yesterday. Quite by chance. Had a lucky break with one of the KGB codes. The courier'll be flown out for trial, of course. But that won't help. The KGB knows that 272 will be making a run for it. They know when. They know where. They know just as much as we do—and no more. Now, the code we cracked was a one-day-only setting on their machines. But we got the whole of that day's traffic, and that was good enough. They plan to shoot him on the run. At this street crossing between East and West Berlin he gave us in his message. They're mounting quite an operation—Operation Extase, they call it. Put their best sniper on the job. All we know about him is that his code name is the Russian for Trigger. Station WB guesses he's the same man they've used before for sniper work. Long-range stuff across the frontier. He's going to be guarding this crossing every night, and his job is to get 272. Of course they'd obviously prefer to do a smoother job with machine guns and what-have-you. But it's quiet in Berlin at the moment, and apparently the word is it's got to stay so. Anyway"—M. shrugged—"they've got confidence in this Trigger operator, and that's the way it's going to be!"

"Where do I come in, sir?" But James Bond had guessed the answer, guessed why M. was showing his dislike of the whole business. This was going to be dirty work, and Bond, because he belonged to the Double-O Section, had been chosen for it. Perversely, Bond wanted to force M. to put it in black and white. This was going to be bad news, dirty news, and he didn't want to hear it from one of the section officers,

or even from the Chief of Staff. This was to be murder. All right. Let M. bloody well say so.

"Where do you come in, 007?" M. looked coldly across the desk. "You know where you come in. You've got to kill this sniper. And you've got to kill him before he gets 272. That's all. Is that understood?" The clear blue eyes remained cold as ice. But Bond knew that they remained so only with an effort of will. M. didn't like sending any man to a killing. But, when it had to be done, he always put on this fierce, cold act of command. Bond knew why. It was to take some of the pressure, some of the guilt, off the killer's shoulders.

So now Bond, who knew these things, decided to make it easy and quick for M. He got to his feet. "That's all right, sir. I suppose the Chief of Staff has got all the gen. I'd better go and put in some practice. It wouldn't do to miss." He walked to the door.

M. said quietly, "Sorry to have to hand this to you. Nasty job. But it's got to be done well."

"I'll do my best, sir." James Bond walked out and closed the door behind him. He didn't like the job, but on the whole he'd rather have it himself than have the responsibility of ordering someone else to go and do it.

The Chief of Staff had been only a shade more sympathetic. "Sorry you've bought this one, James," he had said. "But Tanqueray was definite that he hadn't got anyone good enough on his station, and this isn't the sort of job you can ask a regular soldier to do. Plenty of top marksmen in the

B.A.O.R., but a live target needs another kind of nerve. Anyway, I've been on to Bisley and fixed a shoot for you tonight at eight-fifteen when the ranges will be closed. Visibility should be about the same as you'll be getting in Berlin around an hour earlier. The armorer's got the gun—a real target job—and he's sending it down with one of his men. You'll find your own way. Then you're booked on a midnight B.E.A. charter flight to Berlin. Take a taxi to this address." He handed Bond a piece of paper. "Go up to the fourth floor, and you'll find Tanqueray's Number Two waiting for you. Then I'm afraid you'll just have to sit it out for the next three days."

"How about the gun? Am I supposed to take it through the German customs in a golfbag or something?"

The Chief of Staff hadn't been amused. "It'll go over in the FO pouch. You'll have it by tomorrow midday." He had reached for a signal pad. "Well, you'd better get cracking. I'll just let Tanqueray know everything's fixed."

James Bond glanced down at the dim blue face of the dashboard clock. Ten-fifteen. With any luck, by this time tomorrow it would all be finished. After all, it was the life of this man Trigger against the life of 272. It wasn't exactly murder. Pretty near it, though. He gave a vicious blast on his triple wind horns at an inoffensive family saloon, took the roundabout in a quite unnecessary dry skid, wrenched the wheel harshly to correct it, and pointed the nose of the Bentley toward the distant glow that was London Airport.

The ugly six-story building at the corner of the Kochstrasse and the Wilhelmstrasse was the only one standing in a waste of empty bombed space. Bond paid off his taxi and got a brief impression of the neighborhood—waist-high weeds and half-tidied rubble walls stretching away to a big deserted crossroads lit by a central cluster of yellowish arc lamps—before he pushed the bell for the fourth floor and at once heard the click of the door opener. The door closed itself behind him, and he walked over the uncarpeted cement floor to the old-fashioned lift. The smell of cabbage, cheap cigar smoke, and stale sweat reminded him of other apartment houses in Germany and Central Europe. Even the sigh and faint squeal of the slow lift were part of a hundred assignments when he had been fired off by M., like a projectile, at some distant target where a problem waited for his coming, waited to be solved by him. At least this time the reception committee was on his side. This time there was nothing to fear at the top of the stairs.

Number Two of Secret Service Station WB was a lean, tense man in his early forties. He wore the uniform of his profession—well-cut, well-used, light-weight tweeds in a dark green herringbone, a soft white silk shirt, and an old school tie (in his case Wykehamist). At the sight of the tie, and while they exchanged conventional greetings in the small musty lobby of the apartment, Bond's spirits, already low, sank another degree. He knew the type—backbone of the civil service ... overcrowded and underloved at Winchester ... a good second in P.P.E. at Oxford ... the war, staff jobs he would have done meticulously—perhaps an O.B.E. ... Allied Control Commission in Germany where he had been recruited into the I Branch.... And thence—because

he was the ideal staff man and A-one with Security, and because he thought he would find life, drama, romance—the things he had never had—into the Secret Service. A sober, careful man had been needed to chaperone Bond on this ugly business. Captain Paul Sender, late of the Welsh Guards, had been the obvious choice. He had bought it. Now, like a good Wykehamist, he concealed his distaste for the job beneath careful, trite conversation as he showed Bond the layout of the apartment and the arrangements that had been made for the executioner's preparedness and, to a modest extent, his comfort.

The flat consisted of a large double bedroom, a bathroom, and a kitchen containing tinned food, milk, butter, eggs, bread, and one bottle of Dimple Haig. The only odd feature in the bedroom was that one of the double beds was angled up against the curtains covering the single broad window and was piled high with three mattresses below the bed-clothes.

Captain Sender said, "Care to have a look at the field of fire? Then I can explain what the other side has in mind."

Bond was tired. He didn't particularly want to go to sleep with the picture of the battlefield on his mind. But he said, "That'd be fine."

Captain Sender switched off the lights. Chinks from the streetlight at the intersection showed round the curtains. "Don't want to draw the curtains," said Captain Sender. "Unlikely, but they may be on the lookout for a covering party for 272. If you'd just lie on the bed and get your head

under the curtains, I'll brief you about what you'll be looking at. Look to the left."

It was a sash window, and the bottom half was open. The mattresses, by design, gave only a little, and James Bond found himself more or less in the firing position he had been in on the Century Range. But now he was staring across broken, thickly weeded bombed ground toward the bright river of the Zimmerstrasse—the border with East Berlin. It looked about a hundred and fifty yards away. Captain Sender's voice from above him and behind the curtain began reciting. It reminded Bond of a spiritualist séance.

"That's bombed ground in front of you. Plenty of cover. A hundred and thirty yards of it up to the frontier. Then the frontier—the street—and then a big stretch of more bombed ground on the enemy side. That's why 272 chose this route. It's one of the few places in the town which is broken land—thick weeds, ruined walls, cellars—on both sides of the frontier.... 272 will sneak through that mess on the other side, and make a dash across the Zimmerstrasse for the mess on our side. Trouble is, he'll have thirty yards of brightly lit frontier to sprint across. That'll be the killing ground. Right?"

Bond said, "Yes." He said it softly. The scent of the enemy, the need to take care, already had him by the nerves.

"To your left, that big new ten-story block is the Haus der Ministerien, the chief brain center of East Berlin. You can see the lights are still on in most of the windows. Most of those will stay on all night. These chaps work hard—shifts all round the clock. You probably won't need to worry about

the lighted ones. This Trigger chap will almost certainly fire from one of the dark windows. You'll see there's a block of four together on the corner above the intersection. They've stayed dark last night and tonight. They've got the best field of fire. From here, their range varies from three hundred to three hundred and ten yards. I've got all the figures and so on when you want them. You needn't worry about much else. That street stays empty during the night—only the motorized patrols about every half an hour. Light armored car with a couple of motorcycles as escort. Last night, which I suppose is typical, between six and seven when this thing's going to be done, there were a few people that came and went out of that side door. Civil-servant types. Before that nothing out of the ordinary—usual flow of people in and out of a busy government building, except, of all things, a whole damned woman's orchestra. Made a hell of a racket in some concert hall they've got in there. Part of the block is the Ministry of Culture. Otherwise nothing—certainly none of the KGB people we know, or any signs of preparation for a job like this. But there wouldn't be. They're careful chaps, the opposition. Anyway, have a good look. Don't forget it's darker than it will be tomorrow around six. But you can get the general picture."

Bond got the general picture, and it stayed with him long after the other man was asleep and snoring softly with a gentle regular clicking sound. A Wykehamist snore, Bond reflected irritably.

Yes, he had got the picture. The picture of a flicker of movement among the shadowy ruins on the other side of the gleaming river of light, a pause, the wild zigzagging sprint of

a man in the full glare of the arcs, the crash of gunfire—and then either a crumpled, sprawling heap in the middle of the wide street or the noise of his onward dash through the weeds and rubble of the Western Sector. Sudden death or a home run. The true gauntlet! How much time would Bond have to spot the Russian sniper in one of those dark windows? And kill him? Five seconds? Ten? When dawn edged the curtains with gun metal, Bond capitulated to his fretting mind. It had won. He went softly into the bathroom and surveyed the ranks of medicine bottles that a thoughtful Secret Service had provided to keep its executioner in good shape. He selected the Tuinal, chased down two of the ruby and blue depth-charges with a glass of water, and went back to bed. Then, poleaxed, he slept.

He awoke at midday. The flat was empty. Bond drew the curtains to let in the gray Prussian day, and, standing well back from the window, gazed out at the drabness of Berlin, and listened to the tram noises and to the distant screeching of the U-Bahn as it took the big curve into the Zoo Station. He gave a quick, reluctant glance at what he had examined the night before, noted that the weeds among the bomb rubble were much the same as the London ones—campion, dock, and bracken—and then went into the kitchen.

There was a note propped against a loaf of bread: "My friend [a Secret Service euphemism that in this context meant Sender's chief] says it's all right for you to go out. But to be back by 1700 hours. Your gear [doubletalk for Bond's rifle] has arrived and the batman will lay it out this P.M. P. Sender."

Bond lit the gas cooker, and with a sneer at his profession, burned the message. Then he brewed himself a vast dish of scrambled eggs and bacon, which he heaped on buttered toast and washed down with black coffee into which he had poured a liberal tot of whiskey. Then he bathed and shaved, dressed in the drab, anonymous, middle-European clothes he had brought over for the purpose, looked at his disordered bed, decided to hell with it, and went down in the lift and out of the building.

James Bond had always found Berlin a glum, inimical city, varnished on the Western side with a brittle veneer of gimcrack polish rather like the chromium trim on American motorcars. He walked to the Kurfürstendamm and sat in the Café Marquardt and drank an espresso and moodily watched the obedient queues of pedestrians waiting for the Go sign on the traffic lights while the shiny stream of cars went through their dangerous quadrille at the busy intersection. It was cold outside and the sharp wind from the Russian steppes whipped at the girls' skirts and at the waterproofs of the impatient hurrying men, each with the inevitable briefcase tucked under his arm. The infrared wall heaters in the café glared redly down and gave a spurious glow to the faces of the café squatters, consuming their traditional "one cup of coffee and ten glasses of water," reading the free newspapers and periodicals in their wooden racks, earnestly bending over business documents. Bond, closing his mind to the evening, debated with himself about ways to spend the afternoon. It finally came down to a choice between a visit to that respectable-looking brownstone house in the Clausewitzstrasse known to all concierges and taxi drivers and a trip to the Wannsee and a strenuous walk in the

Grunewald. Virtue triumphed. Bond paid for his coffee and went out into the cold and took a taxi to the Zoo Station.

The pretty young trees round the long lake had already been touched by the breath of autumn, and there was occasional gold amongst the green. Bond walked hard for two hours along the leafy paths, then chose a restaurant with a glassed-in veranda above the lake and greatly enjoyed a high tea consisting of a double portion of *Matjeshering*, smothered in cream and onion rings, and two *Molle mit Korn*. (This Berlin equivalent of a boilermaker and his assistant was a schnapps, double, washed down with draught Löwenbräu.) Then, feeling more encouraged, he took the S-Bahn back into the city.

Outside the apartment house, a nondescript young man was tinkering with the engine of a black Opel Kapitän. He didn't take his head out from under the bonnet when Bond passed close by him and went up to the door and pressed the bell.

Captain Sender was reassuring. It was a "friend"—a corporal from the transport section of Station WB. He had fixed up some bad engine trouble on the Opel. Each night, from six to seven, he would be ready to produce a series of multiple backfires when a signal on a walkie-talkie operated by Sender told him to do so. This would give some kind of cover for the noise of Bond's shooting. Otherwise, the neighborhood might alert the police and there would be a lot of untidy explaining to be done. Their hideout was in the American Sector, and while their American "friends" had given Station WB clearance for this operation, the "friends"

were naturally anxious that it should be a clean job and without repercussions.

Bond was suitably impressed by the car gimmick, as he was by the very workmanlike preparations that had been made for him in the living room. Here, behind the head of his high bed, giving a perfect firing position, a wood and metal stand had been erected against the broad windowsill, and along it lay the Winchester, the tip of its barrel just denting the curtains. The wood and all the metal parts of the rifle and sniperscope had been painted a dull black, and, laid out on the bed like sinister evening clothes, was a black velvet hood stitched to a waist-length shirt of the same material. The hood had wide slits for the eyes and mouth. It reminded Bond of old prints of the Spanish Inquisition or of the anonymous operators on the guillotine platform during the French Revolution. There was a similar hood on Captain Sender's bed, and on his section of the windowsill there lay a pair of nightglasses and the microphone for the walkie-talkie.

Captain Sender, his face worried and tense with nerves, said there was no news at the Station, no change in the situation as they knew it. Did Bond want anything to eat? Or a cup of tea? Perhaps a tranquilizer—there were several kinds in the bathroom?

Bond stitched a cheerful, relaxed expression on his face and said no thanks, and gave a lighthearted account of his day while an artery near his solar plexus began thumping gently as tension built up inside him like a watchspring tightening. Finally his small talk petered out and he lay down on his bed with a German thriller he had bought on his

wanderings, while Captain Sender moved fretfully about the flat, looking too often at his watch and chain-smoking Kent filter-tips through (he was a careful man) a Dunhill filtered cigarette holder.

James Bond's choice of reading matter, prompted by a spectacular jacket of a half-naked girl strapped to a bed, turned out to have been a happy one for the occasion. It was called *Verderbt, Verdammt, Verraten*. The prefix *ver* signified that the girl had not only been ruined, damned, and betrayed, but that she had suffered these misfortunes most thoroughly. James Bond temporarily lost himself in the tribulations of the heroine, Gräfin Liselotte Mutzenbacher, and it was with irritation that he heard Captain Sender say that it was five-thirty and time to take up their positions.

Bond took off his coat and tie, put two sticks of chewing gum in his mouth, and donned the hood. The lights were switched off by Captain Sender, and Bond lay along the bed, got his eye to the eyepiece of the sniperscope, and gently lifted the bottom edge of the curtain back and over his shoulders.

Now dusk was approaching, but otherwise the scene (a year later to become famous as Checkpoint Charlie) was like a well-remembered photograph—the wasteland in front of him, the bright river of the frontier road, the further wasteland, and, on the left, the ugly square block of the Haus der Ministerien with its lit and dark windows. Bond scanned it all slowly, moving the sniperscope, with the rifle, by means of the precision screws on the wooden base. It was all the same except that now there was a trickle of personnel leaving

and entering the Haus der Ministerien through the door onto the Wilhelmstrasse. Bond looked long at the four dark windows—dark again tonight—that he agreed with Sender were the enemy's firing points. The curtains were drawn back, and the sash windows were wide open at the bottom. Bond's scope could not penetrate into the rooms, but there was no sign of movement within the four oblong black gaping mouths.

Now there was extra traffic in the street below the windows. The woman's orchestra came trooping down the pavement toward the entrance. Twenty laughing, talking girls carrying their instruments—violin and wind instrument cases, satchels with their scores—and four of them with the drums. A gay, happy little crocodile. Bond was reflecting that some people still seemed to find life fun in the Soviet Sector, when his glasses picked out and stayed on the girl carrying the cello. Bond's masticating jaws stopped still, and then reflectively went on with their chewing as he twisted the screw to depress the sniperscope and keep her in its center.

The girl was taller than the others, and her long, straight, fair hair, falling to her shoulders, shone like molten gold under the arcs at the intersection. She was hurrying along in a charming, excited way, carrying the cello case as if it were no heavier than a violin. Everything was flying—the skirt of her coat, her feet, her hair. She was vivid with movement and life and, it seemed, with gaiety and happiness as she chattered to the two girls who flanked her and laughed back at what she was saying. As she turned in at the entrance amidst her troupe, the arcs momentarily caught a beautiful, pale profile. And then she was gone, and, it seemed to Bond,

that with her disappearance, a stab of grief lanced into his heart. How odd! How very odd! This had not happened to him since he was young. And now this single girl, seen only indistinctly and far away, had caused him to suffer this sharp pang of longing, this thrill of animal magnetism! Morosely, Bond glanced down at the luminous dial of his watch. Fifty-five. Only ten minutes to go. No transport arriving at the entrance. None of those anonymous black ZiL saloons he had half-expected. He closed as much of his mind as he could to the girl and sharpened his wits. Get on, damn you! Get back to your job!

From somewhere inside the Haus der Ministerien there came the familiar sounds of an orchestra tuning up—the strings tuning their instruments to single notes on the piano, the sharp blare of individual woodwinds—then a pause, and then the collective crash of melody as the whole orchestra threw itself competently, so far as Bond could judge, into the opening bars of what even to James Bond was vaguely familiar.

"Moussorgsky's Overture to *Boris Godunov*," said Captain Sender succinctly. "Anyway, six o'clock coming up." And then, urgently, "Hey! Right-hand bottom of the four windows! Watch out!"

Bond depressed the sniperscope. Yes, there was movement inside the black cave. Now, from the interior, a thick black object, a weapon, had slid out. It moved firmly, minutely, swiveling down and sideways so as to cover the stretch of the Zimmerstrasse between the two wastelands of rubble. Then the unseen operator in the room behind seemed satisfied, and

the weapon remained still, fixed obviously to such a stand as Bond had beneath his rifle.

"What is it? What sort of gun?" Captain Sender's voice was more breathless than it should have been.

Take it easy, dammit! thought Bond. It's me who's supposed to have the nerves.

He strained his eyes, taking in the squat flash eliminator at the muzzle, the telescopic sight, and the thick downward chunk of magazine. Yes, that would be it! Absolutely for sure—and the best they had!

"Kalashnikov," he said curtly. "Submachinegun. Gas-operated. Thirty rounds in seven sixty-two millimeter. Favorite with the KGB. They're going to do a saturation job after all. Perfect for range. We'll have to get him pretty quick, or 272 will end up not just dead but strawberry jam. You keep an eye out for any movement over there in the rubble. I'll have to stay married to that window and the gun. He'll have to show himself to fire. Other chaps are probably spotting behind him—perhaps from all four windows. Much the sort of setup we expected, but I didn't think they'd use a weapon that's going to make all the racket this one will. Should have known they would. A running man will be hard to get in this light with a single-shot job."

Bond fiddled minutely with the traversing and elevating screws at his fingertips and got the fine lines of the scope exactly intersected, just behind where the butt of the enemy

gun merged into the blackness behind. Get the chest—don't bother about the head!

Inside the hood, Bond's face began to sweat and his eye socket was slippery against the rubber of the eyepiece. That didn't matter. It was only his hands, his trigger finger, that must stay bone dry. As the minutes ticked by, he frequently blinked his eyes to rest them, shifted his limbs to keep them supple, listened to the music to relax his mind.

The minutes slouched on leaden feet. How old would she be? Early twenties? Say twenty-three? With that poise and insouciance, the hint of authority in her long easy stride, she would come of good racy stock—one of the old Prussian families probably or from similar remnants in Poland or even Russia. Why in hell did she have to choose the cello? There was something almost indecent in the idea of this bulbous, ungainly instrument between her splayed thighs. Of course Suggia had managed to look elegant, and so did that girl Amaryllis somebody. But they should invent a way for women to play the damned thing sidesaddle.

From his side Captain Sender said, "Seven o'clock. Nothing's stirred on the other side. Bit of movement on our side, near a cellar close to the frontier. That'll be our reception committee—two good men from the Station. Better stay with it until they close down. Let me know when they take that gun in."

"All right."

It was seven-thirty when the KGB submachinegun was gently drawn back into the black interior. One by one the bottom sashes of the four windows were closed. The coldhearted game was over for the night. 272 was still holed up. Two more nights to go!

Bond softly drew the curtain over his shoulders and across the muzzle of the Winchester. He got up, pulled off his cowl, and went into the bathroom, where he stripped and had a shower. Then he had two large whiskeys-on-the-rocks in quick succession, while he waited, his ears pricked, for the now muffled sound of the orchestra to stop. At eight o'clock it did, with the expert comment from Sender—"Borodin's *Prince Igor*, Choral Dance Number 17, I think."—who had been getting off his report in garbled language to the Head of Station.

"Just going to have another look. I've rather taken to that tall blonde with the cello," Bond said to Sender.

"Didn't notice her," said Sender, uninterested. He went into the kitchen. Tea, guessed Bond. Or perhaps Horlick's. Bond donned his cowl, went back to his firing position, and depressed the sniperscope to the doorway of the Haus der Ministerien. Yes, there they went, not so gay and laughing now. Tired perhaps. And now here she came, less lively, but still with that beautiful careless stride. Bond watched the blown golden hair and the fawn raincoat until it had vanished into the indigo dusk up the Wilhelmstrasse. Where did she live? In some miserable flaked room in the suburbs? Or in one of the privileged apartments in the hideous lavatory-tiled Stalinallee?

Bond drew himself back. Somewhere, within easy reach, that girl lived. Was she married? Did she have a lover? Anyway, to hell with it! She was not for him.

The next day, and the next night watch, were duplicates, with small variations, of the first. James Bond had his two more brief rendezvous, by sniper scope, with the girl, and the rest was a killing of time and a tightening of the tension that, by the time the third and final day came, was like a fog in the small room.

James Bond crammed the third day with an almost lunatic program of museums, art galleries, the zoo, and a film, hardly perceiving anything he looked at, his mind's eye divided between the girl and those four black squares and the black tube and the unknown man behind it—the man he was now certainly going to kill tonight.

Back punctually at five in the apartment, Bond narrowly averted a row with Captain Sender because, that evening, Bond took a stiff drink of the whiskey before he donned the hideous cowl that now stank of his sweat. Captain Sender had tried to prevent him, and when he failed, had threatened to call up Head of Station and report Bond for breaking training.

"Look, my friend," said Bond wearily, "I've got to commit a murder tonight. Not you. Me. So be a good chap and stuff it, would you? You can tell Tanqueray anything you like when it's over. Think I like this job? Having a Double-O

number and so on? I'd be quite happy for you to get me sacked from the Double-O Section. Then I could settle down and make a snug nest of papers as an ordinary staffer. Right?" Bond drank down his whiskey, reached for his thriller—now arriving at an appalling climax—and threw himself on the bed.

Captain Sender, icily silent, went off into the kitchen to brew, from the sounds, his inevitable cuppa.

Bond felt the whiskey beginning to melt the coiled nerves in his stomach. Now then, Liselotte, how in hell are you going to get out of this fix?

It was exactly six-five when Sender, at his post, began talking excitedly. "Bond, there's something moving way back over there. Now he's stopped—wait, no, he's on the move again, keeping low. There's a bit of broken wall there. He'll be out of sight of the opposition. But thick weeds, yards of them, ahead of him. Christ! He's coming through the weeds. And they're moving. Hope to God they think it's only the wind. Now he's through and gone to ground. Any reaction?"

"No," said Bond tensely. "Keep on telling me. How far to the frontier?"

"He's only got about fifty yards to go," Captain Sender's voice was harsh with excitement. "Broken stuff, but some of it's open. Then a solid chunk of wall right up against the pavement. He'll have to get over it. They can't fail to spot

him then. Now! Now he's made ten yards, and another ten. Got him clearly then. Blackened his face and hands. Get ready! Any moment now he'll make the last sprint."

James Bond felt the sweat pouring down his face and neck. He took a chance and quickly wiped his hands down his sides and then got them back to the rifle, his finger inside the guard, just lying along the curved trigger. "There's something moving in the room behind the gun. They must have spotted him. Get that Opel working."

Bond heard the code word go into the microphone, heard the Opel in the street below start up, felt his pulse quicken as the engine leaped into life and a series of ear-splitting cracks came from the exhaust.

The movement in the black cave was now definite. A black arm with a black glove had reached out and under the stock.

"Now!" called out Captain Sender. "Now! He's run for the wall! He's up it! Just going to jump!"

And then, in the sniper's scope, Bond saw the head of Trigger—the purity of the profile, the golden bell of hair—all laid out along the stock of the Kalashnikov! She was dead, a sitting duck! Bond's fingers flashed down to the screws, inched them round, and as yellow flame fluttered at the snout of the submachinegun, squeezed the trigger.

The bullet, dead-on at three hundred and ten yards, must have hit where the stock ended up the barrel, might have got

her in the left hand—but the effect was to tear the gun off its mountings, smash it against the side of the window frame, and then hurl it out of the window. It turned several times on its way down and crashed into the middle of the street.

"He's over!" shouted Captain Sender. "He's over! He's done it! My God, he's done it!"

"Get down!" said Bond sharply, and threw himself sideways off the bed as the big eye of a searchlight in one of the black windows blazed on, swerving up the street toward their block and their room. Then gunfire crashed, and the bullets howled into their window, ripping the curtains, smashing the woodwork, thudding into the walls.

Behind the roar and zing of the bullets, Bond heard the Opel race off down the street, and, behind that again, the fragmentary whisper of the orchestra. The combination of the two background noises clicked. Of course! The orchestra, that must have raised an infernal din throughout the offices and corridors of the Haus der Ministerien, was, as on their side the backfiring Opel, designed to provide some cover for the sharp burst of fire from Trigger. Had she carried her weapon to and fro every day in that cello case? Was the whole orchestra composed of KGB women? Had the other instrument cases contained only equipment—the big drum perhaps the searchlight—while the real instruments were available in the concert hall? Too elaborate? Too fantastic? Probably.

But there had been no doubt about the girl. In the sniper's scope, Bond had even been able to see one wide,

heavily lashed, aiming eye. Had he hurt her? Almost certainly her left arm. There would be no chance of seeing her, seeing how she was, if she left with the orchestra. Now he would never see her again. Bond's window would be a death trap. To underline the fact, a stray bullet smashed into the mechanism of the Winchester, already overturned and damaged, and hot lead splashed down on Bond's hand, burning the skin. On Bond's emphatic oath, the firing stopped abruptly and silence sang in the room.

Captain Sender emerged from beside his bed, brushing glass out of his hair. Bond and Sender crunched across the floor and through the splintered door into the kitchen. Here, because the room faced away from the street, it was safe to switch on the light.

"Any damage?" asked Bond.

"No. You all right?" Captain Sender's pale eyes were bright with the fever that comes in battle. They also, Bond noticed, held a sharp glint of accusation.

"Yes. Just get an Elastoplast for my hand. Caught a splash from one of the bullets." Bond went into the bathroom. When he came out, Captain Sender was sitting by the walkie-talkie he had fetched from the sitting room. He was speaking into it. Now he said into the microphone, "That's all for now. Fine about 272. Hurry the armored car, if you would. Be glad to get out of here, and 007 will need to write his version of what happened. Okay? Then over and out."

Captain Sender turned to Bond. Half accusing, half embarrassed he said, "Afraid Head of Station needs your reasons in writing for not getting that chap. I had to tell him I'd seen you alter your aim at the last second. Gave Trigger time to get off a burst. Damned lucky for 272 he'd just begun his sprint. Blew chunks off the wall behind him. What was it all about?"

James Bond knew he could lie, knew he could fake a dozen reasons why. Instead he took a deep pull at the strong whiskey he had poured for himself, put the glass down, and looked Captain Sender straight in the eye.

"Trigger was a woman."

"So what? KGB has got plenty of women agents—and women gunners. I'm not in the least surprised. The Russian woman's team always does well in the World Championships. Last meeting, in Moscow, they came first, second, and third against seventeen countries. I can even remember two of their names—Donskaya and Lomova. Terrific shots. She may even have been one of them. What did she look like? Records'll probably be able to turn her up."

"She was a blonde. She was the girl who carried the cello in that orchestra. Probably had her gun in the cello case. The orchestra was to cover up the shooting."

"Oh!" said Captain Sender slowly. "I see. The girl you were keen on?"

"That's right."

"Well, I'm sorry, but I'll have to put that in my report too. You had clear orders to exterminate Trigger."

There came the sound of a car approaching. It pulled up somewhere below. The bell rang twice. Sender said, "Well, let's get going. They've sent an armored car to get us out of here." He paused. His eyes flicked over Bond's shoulder, avoiding Bond's eyes. "Sorry about the report. Got to do my duty, y'know. You should have killed that sniper whoever it was."

Bond got up. He suddenly didn't want to leave the stinking little smashed-up flat, leave the place from which, for three days, he had had this long-range, one-sided romance with an unknown girl—an unknown enemy agent with much the same job in her outfit as he had in his. Poor little bitch! She would be in worse trouble now than he was! She'd certainly be court-martialed for muffing this job. Probably be kicked out of the KGB. He shrugged. At least they'd stop short of killing her—as he himself had done.

James Bond said wearily, "Okay. With any luck it'll cost me my Double-O number. But tell Head of Station not to worry. That girl won't do any more sniping. Probably lost her left hand. Certainly broke her nerve for that kind of work. Scared the living daylights out of her. In my book, that was enough. Let's go."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Fleming was born in London in 1908, and was educated at Eton and Sandhurst and at the Universities of Munich and Geneva. From 1929 to 1933 he worked for Reuters in London, Berlin, and Moscow. The next six years he spent first with a firm of merchant bankers and then as a partner in a firm of stockbrokers. In the spring of 1939, Fleming went to Moscow as a special correspondent for the *Times* of London. In June of the same year he joined Naval Intelligence, became Personal Assistant to the Director, and served throughout World War II. Before his death, Mr. Fleming was a consultant on foreign affairs for the London *Sunday Times*. He divided his time between Jamaica, where he wrote many of his books, and London.

As far as is known, "Octopussy" and "The Living Daylights" represent the last of the Ian Fleming-James Bond stories.

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Thrilling Cities

THE ADVENTURES OF JAMES BOND

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Doctor No
Goldfinger
For Your Eyes Only
Thunderball
The Spy Who Loved Me
On Her Majesty's Secret Service
You Only Live Twice
The Man With the Golden Gun

FOR CHILDREN

Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang

[The end of *The Living Daylights* by Ian Fleming]