

Live and Let Die Study Guide

Live and Let Die by Ian Fleming

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Plot Summary

Secret Agent James Bond is on a mission to stop gold coins from being smuggled out of Jamaica. The pirate treasure is being smuggled by a Harlem gangster known as Mr. Big, a man from Haiti who uses voodoo to control a large African American community around the United States. Mr. Big uses the gold to fund SMERSH, the evil Soviet agency that is Bond's arch-nemeses. Bond heads to New York City to work with his old friend, Felix Leiter. While in New York Bond comes face to face with Mr. Big and sees the evil genius in the man's eyes. He also meets Solitaire, a beautiful woman being held captive by Mr. Big. The story then moves to Florida where Leiter is attacked by a shark and nearly dies. Bond discovers Mr. Big's operation and has to head to Jamaica to put a stop to it. In Jamaica Bond covertly enters Mr. Big's private island and is nearly eaten alive by barracudas and sharks. In the last pages of the book the story culminates as Bond saves Solitaire and destroys Mr. Big's yacht.

Bond first learns of the operation when he meets with his boss, M. M tells him gold coins believed to be part of the pirate Bloody Morgan's treasure have been showing up in America. The coins are worth millions of dollars and the money is being used to fund the Soviet agency SMERSH. M believes the coins are being smuggled out of Jamaica into America by an African-American gangster named Mr. Big. The gangster has a yacht on which he often sails between Jamaica and St. Petersburg, Florida. Bond's mission is to first head to America to assist the FBI and the CIA in tracking Mr. Big and trying to uncover how he is smuggling the coins. The operation will then move to the British colony of Jamaica where Bond will take over the investigation.

In New York Bond meets his friend from the CIA, Felix Leiter, who he has worked with in previous operations. Leiter shows Bond around New York and they then head to Harlem to try and get a look at Mr. Big. As they are drinking in one of Mr. Big's night clubs they are suddenly trapped into a secret passage. Bond is taken to Mr. Big's office and the men come face to face. Mr. Big warns Bond to leave the country and stop investigating him. It is here that Bond first meets Solitaire, a woman Mr. Big is holding captive, using her for her telepathic abilities. Bond is immediately attracted to the woman and feels a connection with her. As Bond is leaving New York that night he gets a terrified call from Solitaire as she begs him to help her escape. Bond arranges for her to get away from Mr. Big and she joins him on the long train ride to Florida.

As they are on the train to Florida, Bond and Solitaire are attracted to each other, but before they have time to start a relationship they discover one of Mr. Big's men on the train. They secretly escape the train during the night and head to St. Petersburg on a different train. When they finally reach Leiter at a hotel they learn they escaped just in time as their cabin was shot up by machine guns just after they left. Bond and Leiter leave Solitaire in the hotel as they go to investigate Mr. Big's partner. When they return to the hotel they find Solitaire has been kidnapped by Mr. Big's men. That night Leiter returns to Mr. Big's building and Bond finds him the next day, after he was attacked by a shark and nearly killed. Bond is furious over these developments and goes after Mr.



Big's man himself. He enters the building and finds the gold and kills Mr. Big's main man in St. Petersburg.

The scene then switches to Jamaica where Bond trains for the final step of the mission. He will scuba dive under the sea and enter Mr. Big's island. Bond puts an explosive onto Mr. Big's yacht so he can not escape. He is then attacked by barracudas and sharks trained by Mr. Big. He manages to escape death but is caught by Mr. Big. The big man ties Bond and Solitaire to the back of his boat and drags them behind it, intending to kill them. Before they are killed the bomb destroys the boat and kills Mr. Big and his men. Bond and Solitaire are saved and the gold is recovered. The end of the novel sees Bond and Solitaire finally start a romantic relationship.



Chapter 1 - The Red Carpet

Chapter 1 - The Red Carpet Summary

Secret Agent James Bond is on a mission to stop gold coins from being smuggled out of Jamaica. The pirate treasure is being smuggled by a Harlem gangster known as Mr. Big. The Haitian gangster uses voodoo to control a large African American community around the United States and uses the gold to fund SMERSH, the evil Soviet agency that is Bond's arch-nemeses. Bond heads to New York City to work with his old friend, Felix Leiter. While there, Bond comes face to face with Mr. Big and sees the evil genius in the man's eyes. He also meets Soliaire, the beautiful woman being held captive by Mr. Big. The story then moves to Florida where Leiter is attacked by a shark and nearly dies. Bond discovers Mr. Big's operation and has to head to Jamaica to put a stop to it. In Jamaica Bond covertly enters Mr. Big's private island and is nearly eaten alive by barracudas and sharks. In the last pages of the book the story culminates as Bond saves Solitaire and destroys Mr. Big's yacht.

Bond disembarks an airplane at Idlewild Airport in New York. As he is walking through the airport he is not looking forward waiting in the immigration line. As he approaches he is met by a man, Hollaran, who ushers him past immigration and right to a waiting car. Bond is pleasantly surprised. Hollaran works for the U.S. government and says he has been sent to pick up Bond and help him anyway he can. He gives Bond an envelope with one thousand dollars cash, he tells Bond it was taken from a Communist operation.

The two pull-up in front of the fancy St. Regis Hotel in New York City. Hollaran introduces Bond to Captain Dexter of the FBI. As they stand in front of the hotel, Bond looks across the street and sees a large sedan. As he notices it the car pulls off and Bond notices that the car is driven by a female African-American chauffeur and in the back of the car is a large black man. Bond sees the man look at him as the car drives away. Bond notes the car in his mind and the heads into the hotel with Dexter. They enter the elevator and go up to his room, a spacious corner suite.

Entering the room a man comes out of the bedroom. Bond is pleasantly surprised to see his old friend Felix Leiter. Leiter is a CIA agent who has worked with Bond in the past. He tells Bond they will be working together again on this job. Leiter says he will be working as a contact between the FBI and CIA. Bond is there to help the team when they work in Jamaica. Bond and Leiter discuss the case; they say it breaks down into two halves: the first in America and the second in Jamaica, which is a British territory. Bond will only observe while in America and take over when the case moves to Jamaica.



Chapter 1 - The Red Carpet Analysis

The gentlemen Bond sees in the car outside the hotel is more than likely Mr. Big and his entourage. This means that he probably knows about Bond and what he is doing there. The actual case is not yet known but it has something to do with America and Jamaica. As a British territory the Secret Service has jurisdiction which is why Bond has been sent. There is often competition between the intelligence services and there is some tension between Bond and Dexter, but Bond makes a point to quell it.



Chapter 2 - Interview with M

Chapter 2 - Interview with M Summary

Chapter two takes place two weeks before chapter one. This chapter gives background on the case and reveals what Bond is doing in New York. Bond is meeting with his boss, M, in the Secret Service building in London. M tells Bond they will be working with Stations A and C, which stand for the United States of America and the Caribbean respectively. M tosses Bond a coin, which Bond examines determines it to be a Rose Noble of Edward IV, an old gold coin. M has a pile of other gold coins on his desk which he says are all from before 1650. M suspects that the coins are all from pirate Bloody Morgan's treasure. About a thousand similar coins have turned up in America over the last few months, and they are believed to be stolen.

Someone is using African Americans in New York to move the coins around the country. The movers are a network of train attendants, porters and truck drivers. M hands Bond an FBI file containing details of the case. The file outlines one transaction by a black train porter in Harlem. He bought some coins in a popular restaurant called Heaven Bar-B-Q and sold them to a jeweler in New York. This is one typical case, all of the large transactions have taken place in Harlem or Florida. Everyone selling the coins have the same story: they are from an old pirate treasure found in North Carolina. But M says he is nearly certain that this is not true, that the coins are actually from a treasure currently held in Jamaica.

They believe the coins are being brought in by a large yacht called the Secatur, which has been making frequent trips between Jamaica and St. Petersburg, Florida. The FBI has traced the yacht to a Harlem gangster known as Mr. Big. Mr. Big is known to be working with the Soviets, and they believe the sale of the treasure is financing the Soviet Communists. Mr. Big is the most powerful Africa-American criminal in the world. He is also the head of the Black Widow Voodoo cult, and believed by many to be the zombie of Baron Samedi, the prince of evil. Mr. Big is a known to work for SMERSH, the very powerful Soviet spy agency. Mr. Big was born in Haiti and is part French, and was trained in Moscow before moving to America. M tells Bond he will be working with the FBI and the CIA to track down Mr. Big and the gold coins.

Chapter 2 - Interview with M Analysis

This chapter consists of pure background information for the story. It explains the mission and what will be happening. It reveals more about Mr. Big and his operations. This information sets up the rest of the story. All James Bond novels have a scene just like this, with Bond sitting across from M learning about what he is going to do. This is the only scene set in Bond's home town of London.



Chapter 3 - A Visiting-Card

Chapter 3 - A Visiting-Card Summary

Chapter three moves the time line back to the end of chapter one. Bond is in his hotel room in New York, reflecting on the details he has learned about Mr. Big. The man is forty-five years old, born in Haiti but half French and half Haitian. His real name is Buonaparte Ingace Gallia. His initials combined with his large stature are the origin of his nickname, Mr. Big. As a child he practiced voodoo. Upon moving to America he took work for a gang high-jacking trucks. He saved his money and eventually moved to Harlem and invested in a string of nightclubs and brothels. During World War II Mr. Big worked for the American Office of the Secret Services. After the war he disappeared and it is assumed he was being trained in Russia. He resurfaced in Harlem five years later and was quickly suspected by the FBI as a Soviet spy.

He seems to have unlimited funds and pays all his employees very well. He also runs an underground voodoo temple in Harlem. A popular rumor has that he is a zombie, the living corpse of Baron Samedi, the Prince of Darkness. Because of this he is feared and respected throughout the African-American community. It is believed Mr. Big killed a Soviet spy who defected and began working with the Americans. Bond admires the genius of Mr. Big's system. He uses the workers on the transport systems around the country as a surveillance system.

Bond orders breakfast to his hotel room and prepares for the day. After dressing he picks up a book on voodoo and begins reading. He learns about the dark religion and how many of the followers practice human sacrifice. They believe in zombies, dead bodies that come to life. Voodoo uses many dark symbols and Baron Samedi is paramount in all matters beyond the tomb. A knock at the hotel room door takes Bond away from the book but he is disturbed by what he read. At the door is a waiter who brings Bond's food and a package. Bond eats the food and ignores the package, thinking it is one of the many Leiter has sent him. Suddenly he hears a ticking noise in the room. Bond looks around and finally realizes the noise is coming from the package. Bond leaps behind a chair and takes cover.

As a ringing noise comes from the box, Bond braces for an explosion but none comes. Bond thinks he is safe and begins to sit-up, but as he does there is a loud crack. The package explodes, breaking the glasses around and scarring the wall, but it is not serious. Bond gets to his feet and immediately calls Dexter to tell him what has happened. Dexter is there in a few minutes with a man from 'Sabotage.' The man examines the explosive and finds a small cylinder. He opens it and finds a note, containing a message which is clearly a death threat, signed '1234567...?' The men determine there must be a large leak somewhere in Washington or in the FBI. Bond is not frightened, saying the bomb was just a 'visiting-card' and he will return the compliment.



Chapter 3 - A Visiting-Card Analysis

This chapter reveals more about Mr. Big and especially voodoo, the religion he uses to control his followers. Previous foreshadowing plays out here as it is now clear that Mr. Big knows not only who Bond is but where he is. Mr. Big's power is revealed as he is able to easily gain access to Bond's hotel room, and he is not afraid to risk killing a government agent. This proves Mr. Big is very confident and serious in his pursuits.



Chapter 4 - The Big Switchboard

Chapter 4 - The Big Switchboard Summary

Bond spends the morning wandering around the streets of New York. Later he meets Leiter and Dexter and they all go to police headquarters. They examine more files on Mr. Big and view pictures of his known associates. They then visit the Coast Guard to see what they have on the man. They learn that Mr. Big's ship, Secatur, has been bringing in rare fish from Jamaica and selling them to a fisherman in Florida. The Secatur also makes radio broadcasts in an unknown language, thought to be a secret voodoo language. The Coast Guard is trying to find someone who understands it.

Dexter tells Bond and Leiter he has instructions from Washington to stay in New York while Bond and Leiter go to St. Petersburg, Florida the next day. From there they will go onto Jamaica. Bond and Leiter decide to go to Harlem that night to have a look around and maybe see Mr. Big. Bond wants to get a feel for the man and his atmosphere. Bond then goes back to his hotel room to take a nap.

The scene then changes to a switchboard operator in Harlem. A man known as 'The Whisper' is alerted when a light on his switchboard ignites. He immediately picks up the phone and is speaking with a man he calls boss. The man on the phone tells him to alert all 'Eyes' to keep a lookout for three men and gives descriptions of Bond, Leiter and Dexter. The operator then takes a handful of plugs and begins sending out the message across the city.

Back at Bond's hotel room, Bond wakes up and gets ready for his evening out in Harlem. He meets Leiter at the hotel bar and is surprised to see he has died his blond hair black as an attempt to fit in better in Harlem. He tells Bond white people are not much welcome in Harlem, but Leiter says he knows the people there pretty well and they like him. The men walk out of the hotel to catch a bus up to Harlem.

Chapter 4 - The Big Switchboard Analysis

The Whisper is one example of how Mr. Big is so easily able to control the flow of information. This novel takes place in the 1950s, well before the time of cellular phones and mass communication. The man on the switchboard would be the only way to easily and privately distribute information to a large group of people. This is one example of Mr. Big's intuitiveness and how he controls his network of men.

The mention of rare fish is probably foreshadowing their importance later in the story. The end of the chapter sets up the next chapter as Bond and Leiter will be heading to Harlem, and possible see Mr. Big for the first time. Letier says the people of Harlem like him which may also be foreshadowing, as this may be useful later.



Chapter 5 - Nigger Heaven; Chapter 6 - Table Z

Chapter 5 - Nigger Heaven; Chapter 6 - Table Z Summary

Three men are watching the bus traffic coming into Harlem. As Bond's bus arrives at their stop one of the men gets on and discretely looks around the bus. He notices that Bond matches the description they have been given. He gets off the bus at the next stop and phones The Whisper, telling him the bus' location. The Whisper in turn starts making calls to all the night spots in the area, making them aware of Bond's presence. As soon as Bond and Leiter get off the bus there are people watching them everywhere they go. They are unaware of this and continue on into a bar. They sit down at a booth and take in the scene. Bond listens to a black couple in the booth next to him speaking a unique language that Leiter tells him is a mix of Deep South and New York City spoken by people all over Harlem. Bond listens for a while and gets use to the way of speaking.

Bond and Leiter order some food. Leiter begins to ask around about Mr. Big but gets a very cold reaction. One of the waiters tells him he can't answer him because he has a family to look out for. Bond and Leiter move onto another bar and Bond observes the streets of Harlem. Bond is amazed by the distinctiveness of the area in the middle of New York City. The two men continue down the street and visit several bars. Leiter finally learns that Mr. Big will be at a bar called The Boneyard, close to his headquarters. As they move from place to place their location continually leads back to The Whisper. The man telling Leiter Mr. Big's location was instructed to do so by The Whisper. The man at the switchboard calls The Boneyard and they make plans for their arrival. Mr. Big calls the restaurant personally and gives the barman special instructions on what to do when Bond and Leiter come in.

Bond and Leiter walk into the nightclub and speak to the waiter. The waiter consults his seating chart and makes a show of finding a good table for them, finally leading them to the table he has prearranged with Mr. Big. Bond and Leiter sit down and order drinks, taking in the feel of the place. They notice the smell of marijuana in the room. Eventually a show starts and a sexy woman comes on stage and causes a huge commotion in the bar. Everyone crowds the stage wanting to see the exotic dancing. Pandemonium erupts and Bond and Leiter are just able to remain aware of their surroundings, then suddenly the room goes dark. Bond feels himself moving, the floor and wall seem to have moved along with him. Bond and Leiter have been trapped as their table and chairs have gone underground. Suddenly they hear a voice and the lights come back on. A large black man takes Bond roughly by the arm, frisks him and finds his gun, then starts to lead him away. Bond struggles but the man overpowers him. The man continues to lead Bond away from Leiter and tells the men there are unlikely to see



each other again. The chapter ends with the man telling Bond he is going to visit Mr. Big.

Chapter 5 - Nigger Heaven; Chapter 6 - Table Z Analysis

Mr. Big's network of men immediately picks out Bond, proving that the man does have very good control of his home turf. This will probably be an example of things to come for the story, as it seems to be hard to move anywhere within Mr. Big's reach without being noticed.

This chapter also gives Fleming's view of Harlem, one that he is explaining to a largely British audience that has never been to the area. The end of chapter five strongly suggests that something bad will happen to Bond and Leiter in the next chapter. In chapter six Bond and Leiter are proved to be controlled by Mr. Big. This chapter transitions the story for the next chapter, which should be very important as Bond meets Mr. Big.



Chapter 7 - Mister Big

Chapter 7 - Mister Big Summary

Bond is lead down a long underground passage, estimating that they have walked over a block. Finally they reach a carpeted hallway and enter an office. Bond is lead into the room and is met by Mr. Big who greets him and invites him to sit down in front of his large desk. Bond is immediately impressed by the man's size and presence; he can feel the power radiating from him. Bond looks around the room; it is full of books and a large voodoo effigy of Baron Samedi sits in one corner. Finally Mr. Big speaks, first telling Bond he has a gun built into his desk that is pointed directly at him if attempts to escape. Mr. Big continues speaking, revealing that he knows a great deal about Bond's history. Bond assumes he has gotten the information from the Soviets. Mr. Big demands to know what Bond, a British Secret Agent, is doing in America.

Bond does not respond at first, considering his options. Mr. Big warns him that he will be able to detect if he is lying. Finally Bond decides to tell him a half truth. He tells him that there are English gold coins being circulated in America and the U.S. Treasury department has asked for his help tracing them. Bond also says Leiter works for the Treasury. Mr. Big immediately responds telling Bond he knows that Leiter works for the CIA, and also says that Leiter's position at the moment is very dangerous. Mr. Big pauses in thought then finally instructs one of his men to tie Bond securely to the chair. Next a secret door in one of the bookshelves opens and a very beautiful woman is brought through it.

Mr. Big tells Bond the woman, Solitaire, is very extraordinary. He found her in Haiti and with her telepathic powers she would be able to tell if Bond is lying. Mr. Big instructs the woman to sit down next to Bond and listen to his story. Bond repeats what he has told Mr. Big about his mission. He looks into the woman's eyes and feels a connection with her; Bond seems to know he has a friend in this woman. He is attracted to her and feels that she is attracted to him. After Bond repeats his story the woman tells Mr. Big that Bond is telling the truth.

Chapter 7 - Mister Big Analysis

This chapter further proves that Mr. Big is very clever and well informed and is a worthy opponent. It also further explains how he uses voodoo to his benefit. He plays up myths that he is a zombie, putting the fear of death into his followers and ensures that they will do whatever he wants. This is even greater motivation than money as people are genuinely afraid for their lives. Fleming is making the assumption that nearly all African-Americans believe in voodoo, a belief that is a necessary component of the story.

Finally the novel introduces Solitaire, the female protagonist of the story. Bond will no doubt have further dealings with her as they have a strong connection.



Chapter 8 - No Sensayuma; Chapter 9 - True or False ?

Chapter 8 - No Sensayuma; Chapter 9 - True or False ? Summary

Mr. Big presses a button on the intercom sitting on his desk. He speaks to someone and orders him to hurt Leiter considerably and then drop him off in front of the hospital. He then turns his attention back to Bond and orders one of his men to break the small finger on Bond's left hand. The man gladly does so; Bond tries to control the pain but finds it hard to remain calm. He finally passes out from the pain. Mr. Big orders his man to wake up Bond, which the man does. Mr. Big tells Bond that he must leave the United States immediately. He warns Bond that if he sees him again he will kill him. Mr. Big then instructs his man to take Bond, hurt him and throw him in a fountain in Central Park.

Bond is lead into the hallway and then to a stairwell. As they are walking up the stairs Bond feels the man's grip on his arm loosen slightly and he takes the opportunity to fight back. He kicks the man hard and after a short struggle kicks the man over the railing and he falls down into the large stairwell. Bond pauses and listens but hears nothing and cautiously continues down the stairs. He reaches the man and determines he is either dead or dying, so he takes his gun and keeps moving. He finds the door to a garage and stops, listening to the other side of the door. Bond prepares himself and then quickly kicks the door open. He sees a car with the engine running and two men standing next to it. Bond shoots at the men, hitting them both. Bond runs to the car and gets in the drivers seat, pulls out of the garage and begins driving as fast as he can. He struggles to stay on the correct side of the road and tries to get his bearings. Finally he finds streets that he recognizes and heads out of Harlem. Once out of town Bond parks the car and gets out. He flags a taxi and heads back to the St. Regis Hotel. As he enters the hotel he finds a message from Leiter instructing him to call immediately. Bond goes up to his room and collapses in a chair, finally taking a minute to breathe and thank god for his luck.

Bond speaks with Leiter on the telephone and tells him he only has a broken finger and is relieved to hear that Leiter was not seriously hurt either. Leiter tells Bond that Mr. Big has telephoned the policed, telling them that an Englishmen went crazy at one of his bars and killed three of his men. Mr. Big has enough influence to cause a big incident and Bond knows he must get out of town. Bond gives Leiter the real story of what happened and tells him about Solitaire. He suspects they can use her against Mr. Big. Leiter then tells Bond he will get a doctor to his hotel to take a look at his broken finger and they make plans to meet later.

Bond next calls M in London and reports what happened. M tells him he will get any support he needs. Leiter then calls back and tells Bond everything is calming down and



that the FBI is covering up the killings of Mr. Big's men. Leiter tells Bond they will be going down to Florida to follow further leads. Leiter will fly while Bond will take the train. Leiter tells Bond that a cabin has been reserved for him the following morning. As Bond is packing his bags the phone rings again. He answers it and hears a woman's voice on the other end—it is Solitaire. She says she is calling from a pay phone and has to be quick. She needs Bond's help to escape. She sounds frightened and says she has to get away from Mr. Big. If she can't get away, she says, she will kill herself. Bond is weary of a trap but the tone in her voice tells him she is serious. He tells her to meet him at the train station and gives her the train information. The chapter ends with The Whisper calling around telling all of Mr. Big's men to watch the train stations and airports for Bond.

Chapter 8 - No Sensayuma; Chapter 9 - True or False ? Analysis

Chapter eight moves the story along and proves that Bond can outsmart Mr. Big. It also appears that Leiter was not hurt too badly as he has already left a message for Bond.

Bond and Solitaire are brought back together here. It is possible that Solitaire is part of a trap but considering how she acted towards Bond when they first met this seems unlikely. Bond is taking a risk in trusting her but he is a good judge of character. Mr. Big's extensive influence over the police and city government are also obvious as he is able to get the police to search for Bond, even though he is a known criminal.



Chapter 10 - The Silver Phantom

Chapter 10 - The Silver Phantom Summary

Bond sneaks out of the hotel without being seen by any of Mr. Big's men. However, he is spotted as he enters the train station and one of Mr. Big's men gets on to Bond's train working as a waiter. Bond finds Solitaire waiting for him in his cabin. He enters the room and locks the door behind him. Solitaire is relieved to see him; she takes his hand and kisses it thanking him. Right away she warns Bond that Mr. Big has many men looking for him. She heard him phone a man known as 'The Robber' in St. Petersburg, Florida and warned him to look out for Bond there as well. She then tells him the story of how she has been held captive for over a year. Mr. Big has kept her in an apartment under constant guard. Once a week she had a singing lesson which is the only time she is left alone. She managed to escape while she was supposed to be at the lesson, and she says Mr. Big will be missing her soon. She also tells Bond she really does have some sort of telepathic powers; she can often tell what is going to happen in the near future. The two settle down and are immediately comfortable with each other. As the train is rolling they get ready for bed.

In the morning a waiter brings Bond and Solitaire their lunch. The waiter seems nervous to see Bond. He quickly leaves the cabin and the attendant comes in to clean their cabin. Bond speaks to the man and learns the connecting cabin next to theirs is empty. The attendant's name is Baldwin and he warns Bond that there is trouble on the train, that Bond has an enemy aboard. Baldwin gives Bond two wedges to slide under the doors of his room to secure them and advises him to be very careful. Bond is surprised Mr. Big has caught up with him so quickly and decides not to trouble Solitaire with the information. While Bond and Solitaire eat their dinner the waiter is waiting for the next stop where he will get off and send a telegraph to Mr. Big.

Chapter 10 - The Silver Phantom Analysis

The fact that the connecting room is empty likely foreshadows its significance later in the story. Also Solitaires' telepathy will probably be helpful in the story. It is also shown that Mr. Big's network stretches even out of New York City; he has eyes everywhere. The fact that he has a man on the train with Bond is obviously very significant. Bond thought he would be safe on the train but he is obviously not.



Chapter 11 - Allumeuse

Chapter 11 - Allumeuse Summary

The train continues South through Washington and Virginia, and Bond and Solitaire wake up somewhere in North Carolina. Right away Bond calls for Baldwin, the attendant, and starts thinking of a plan to elude Mr. Big's men. He asks Baldwin if there is a subway platform in Jacksonville. Baldwin tells him there is, and the train will stop there at five o'clock in the morning. Bond arranges with Baldwin to have everything ready for them to get off the train as quickly as possible at the Jacksonville stop. Bond then tells Solitaire about the danger they are in and relates his plan to her. Solitaire is not surprised they have been spotted. She tells Bond Mr. Big controls many people and he can make them do anything he wants. Bond wants to know how he has so much power, and she struggles to explain to him the belief these people have in voodoo. She tells him most of the people truly believe he is the zombie of Baron Samedi, and that they are truly frightened of him for this reason.

Bond suddenly takes Solitaire in his arms and kisses her passionately. She is pleased by the kiss and says she wanted to kiss him the first time she met him. Bond reluctantly tells her they cannot make love because of his broken finger. The two prepare for bed and Bond kisses her goodnight. He stays awake watching the door to make sure no one enters. He is on the verge of sleep when he hears someone outside his door. He quickly but silently runs into the adjoining cabin and opens the door to the hallway. He sees a man trying to slip something under his door. The man gets away and Bond looks at the piece of paper, which seems to be a voodoo poem that is clearly a death threat. Bond puts the paper in his pocket and secures himself back in his cabin and waits for five o'clock when they will get off the train.

Chapter 11 - Allumeuse Analysis

This chapter offers more background on voodoo and Mr. Big's power. Fleming obviously assumes all African-Americans believe in voodoo. While today this is not the case in the 1950's this may have been a common belief, at least among Britons.

It seems that Bond may again just slip through Mr. Big's hands when he leaves the train early. However it is possible that Baldwin is working for Mr. Big as he seems to have control over all the train attendants.



Chapter 12 - The Everglades; Chapter 13 - Death of a Pelican

Chapter 12 - The Everglades; Chapter 13 - Death of a Pelican Summary

At five o'clock Bond and Solitaire quietly slip off the train and enter the subway, confident that they have not been spotted. They have to wait four hours until they can catch the next train to St. Petersburg where they are due to meet Leiter. They go to a diner for breakfast and Solitaire tells Bond what she knows about Florida. She says St. Petersburg is populated primarily with retirees, and Mr. Big has chosen the city because there is very little crime and thus features a very small police force. She also tells Bond Mr. Big has an agent in St. Petersburg called 'The Robber.' They continue to talk about Mr. Big but Bond does not learn anything new; he just reaffirms his opinion that Mr. Big is a very intelligent, organized and evil man. Finally the train comes in and they board it heading south toward St. Petersburg. They leave the train one stop early and take a taxi to the Clearwater hotel to meet Leiter.

As Bond and Solitaire drive in the taxi a black taxi driver in another taxi sees Solitaire and can't believe his eyes. He knows she is Mr. Big's woman and he immediately goes to a pay phone and calls The Robber, reporting what he has seen. Right away The Robber calls Mr. Big to inform him of both Bond and Solitaire. The Robber gets clear instructions from Mr. Big, and in turn calls a bar in Tampa to get two men to assist him.

At the hotel Leiter is shocked to see Bond. He quickly takes Bond and Solitaire to a rented cabana and sits them down. Bond introduces Solitaire to Leiter and then Leiter tells that their train was stopped soon after it left Jacksonville and their cabin was shot up by machine guns. Baldwin was the only one killed, and the FBI did not know what happened to them, fearing they were dead. They agree to get Solitaire out of town, flying her to Jamaica to keep her safe.

Leiter gives Bond the details of the train shooting. Mr. Big's men used dynamite to halt the train then pulled up along side Bond's cabin and began shooting. Bond is astonished at the organization and power of Mr. Big's organization. Leiter and Bond talk more about Mr. Big, trying to figure out his operation and how his yacht the Secatur fits in. Leiter says the ship always stops at the same worm and bait store when it comes into town, a place called Ourobourus. Bond decides this has to be where they unload the gold, and it must be the base of The Robber as well. They decide to go down and look at the store. Bond tells Solitaire they will be leaving and she is to wait in the hotel, she does not want to be left alone, she has a feeling something bad will happen. Bond reassures her that everything will be all right and she reluctantly agrees.

Bond rides along in Leiter's car as they drive to the bait and tackle store. They park the car close to the store and walk around trying to get a feel for the place. They come to



one door and it is locked. They walk down the adjoining dock and see a man sitting in front of the store cleaning a shotgun. Bond and Leiter walk past the man to the end of the dock, out of earshot they stop and decide that man must be The Robber. They walk back to the man and speak to him. Leiter says he is interested in docking his boat here but the man says it is impossible. The man with the shotgun is very rude and slowly points his shotgun at both men. He says they are not welcome and demands that they leave. After more harsh words are exchanged The Robber gets up and goes inside, telling Bond and Leiter as he leaves them that he knows they are cops.

Bond and Leiter leave the store making plans to come back another time to investigate further. When they get back to the hotel they are greeted by the hotel manager. She tells them they had a delivery while they were gone, a very large box delivered by some black men. Bond and Leiter are both surprised, as they were not expecting a delivery.

Chapter 12 - The Everglades; Chapter 13 - Death of a Pelican Analysis

Bond escapes death yet again. Managing to thwart Mr. Big. Bond is proving to be both lucky and smart.

When Solitaire feels scared this is probably foreshadowing. As she reportedly can see the future, she is probably in danger and something will happen to her. The black men delivering the large box to the hotel is more than likely means she has been kidnapped. Such a large box could fit a person in it and she is probably removed this way. One of the themes of the novel is race, and it seems every time a black person is seen in the story they are working for Mr. Big.



Chapter 14 - 'He Disagreed with Something that Ate Him'; Chapter 15 - Midnight Among the Worms

Chapter 14 - 'He Disagreed with Something that Ate Him'; Chapter 15 - Midnight Among the Worms Summary

Solitaire is gone, Bond and Leiter see tire marks outside and they know she was forced into the large case and taken. They search the rooms but find nothing useful, so they just sit and have a drink. They decide to go after The Robber in the morning and track down Solitaire. Bond goes to bed and leaves Leiter on the couch still drinking whiskey. When Bond wakes in the morning Leiter is gone, but Bond finds a note from him saying he has gone down to The Robber's store to look for Solitaire. Bond prepares to follow Leiter but as he is leaving the cottage the phone rings. On the other end is a nurse from the hospital saying Leiter has been in a car accident, and asking Bond to come to the hospital at once. Bond gets to the hospital as fast as he can, and when he enters he talks to the receptionist and finds there is no one named Leiter at the hospital; the doctor's name he has been given is fake. Bond suspects something is wrong and rushes back to the hotel.

As soon as he gets back to the hotel the manager meets him again and informs him Leiter had been brought back to their cottage. Two men carried him in on a stretcher, his body and face covered in bandages. Bond runs back to the cottage and bursts into Leiter's room, finding him lying on the bed motionless, covered in blood soaked bandages. Bond calls the police and they say they will get a doctor out right away. Bond then looks at a note pinned to Leiter, it says 'He disagreed with something that ate him.' Bond knows it is from Mr. Big's men. He puts down the note and examines Leiter further: the man is just barley breathing, and he is wet with sea water. The police and the doctor arrive and as the doctor examines Leiter Bond tells the police everything he knows. When the doctor comes back out he says Leiter will probably live, but he is missing one arm and half his left leg. The doctor says something had been eating at him.

Leiter is taken to the hospital for surgery. The police search The Robber's store but find nothing, although Leiter's car is parked near by. Bond gets orders to move onto Jamaica. He also learns that Mr. Big has left for Cuba where they assume he will sail his boat to Jamaica. Before he packs, Bond calls a local fish expert and learns the only private business to own a shark is The Robber's bait shop. When Bond gets this information he cleans his gun and waits for nightfall.



That night Bond pays the bill at the hotel and leaves in Leiter's car. He makes a stop at a hardware store and buys some supplies before moving onto the The Robber's store. When he gets to the store it appears to be deserted and Bond quickly goes to work. He silently uses the tools he purchased to cut a hole in the window of the store. He enters the large store full of fish tanks and begins searching. He finds a tank with a poisonous fish inside, uses a knife to kill the fish and then puts his hand into the tank, searching the bottom. Under the sand at the bottom of the tank Bond finds the gold coins. He assumes all the tanks marked with poisonous fish must be full of the gold coins, for the customs officers would not take the time to search them. As Bond takes his hand out of the tank the overhead lights turn off and he hears a voice tell him not to move.

Bond dives under one of the tanks and hears a gunshot ring out. Bond sees The Robber pointing a rifle at him. Bond manages to avoid being shot as The Robber continues to shoot in his direction. Bond takes out his gun and returns fire, glass crashing around him as the fish tanks shatter. Eventually Bond finds himself trapped and fears he will be forced to give up. But then he notices a trapdoor in the floor and conceives a plan. He tells The Robber he is giving up and lures the man out into the open. Bond is facing the man and drops his weapon, as The Robber moves forward he hits a switch on the floor and the trap door opens. When Bond sees this he drops one of the gold coins he has taken from the fish tank. As The Robber's attention is momentarily distracted by the coin Bond jumps at him. The men struggle and Bond finally forces the man into the trap in the floor. The Robber falls into a tank barley managing to hold himself up on the rim.

The Robber screams in terror, pleading with Bond for help. Bond can hear something stirring in the large tank, and knows it must be the shark, the same one that ate Leiter. The Robber is still pleading, admitting he is the one that trapped Leiter. He tells Bond he will do anything he wants if he will spare his life. Bond asks about Solitaire and The Robber tells him she is safe; they took her but did not hurt her. Bond is enraged at the mans confession and kicks out at him, knocking him into the tank. There is a great commotion in the water and Bond hears the sounds of the shark feasting on The Robber's body. Bond closes the trap door and leaves the building.

Chapter 14 - 'He Disagreed with Something that Ate Him'; Chapter 15 - Midnight Among the Worms Analysis

Leiter's luck runs out as he is nearly killed by the shark. Bond is so concerned for him not only because he is his close friend but also because he knows that could have just as easily been him. Bond knows he has been very lucky, and one day he knows his luck will run out. Leiter has nearly been killed this time but next time it could be him.

As The Robber's bait shop is the only private store with a shark it is obvious that he is the one responsible for the attack on Leiter. The end of the chapter sets up the next



chapter in which Bond will try and seek revenge for Leiter and Solitaire. Now Bond is on his own, as the other two main characters have been taken out by Mr. Big.

Bond succeeds in getting revenge for Leiter and finds out what has happened to Solitaire. Bond proves to be merciless as he kills The Robber and ignores his pleas for help and his confession.



Chapter 16 - The Jamaica Version

Chapter 16 - The Jamaica Version Summary

Bond leaves the bait store and drives to a motel to get some sleep. When he wakes up the next day he writes a report to the FBI telling them about what happened with The Robber. He calls the hospital to check on Leiter but the man is still unconscious. Bond is worried about his friend and instructs the hospital to call him in Jamaica with any news. He then drives to the airport and catches his flight to Jamaica. When Bond lands he is met by the chief Secret Service agent for the Caribbean, Strangways. Strangways tells Bond background information. It has always been rumored that the pirate Bloody Morgan hid his treasure on the Isle of Surprise several hundred years ago, but it was never found. Six months ago two strange things happened, Strangways explains. First a young fisherman disappeared and was never heard from again. Next an anonymous New York syndicate purchased the Isle of Surprise.

The following week Mr. Big's yacht docks at the island and men begin work on an unknown job, but they are seen cutting a large stairwell into the rock face. The men claim to be there to catch rare tropical fish. When they are heard doing loud blasting work they claim to be constructing a large fish tank. No one has been able to get close to the island as it is always guarded. One fisherman tried to enter the island and his body was found eaten by sharks the next day. Around the time he should have reached the island the whole area heard a loud drumming noise coming from the island. Strangways then explains how he sent two of his best divers to try and reach the island underwater. The same thing happened when their bodies were discovered torn apart by sharks and barracudas, and the drumming came from the island. Strangways says it is suspicious as the fish here are not typically violent.

Strangways says Mr. Big's yacht will be coming from Cuba in a week and when it does he wants Bond to try and reach the island to investigate. He has a week to train with a man named Quarrel. Quarrel is from the Cayman Islands and is an excellent swimmer and fisherman who will teach Bond everything he needs to know. Bond asks for some supplies to be sent from London and he looks forward to the week of rest and training on the beautiful island.

Chapter 16 - The Jamaica Version Analysis

Bond is relieved that Leier will be alright and is again reminded of his own mortality. As he embarks on a dangerous mission he knows it could be his turn to die or be seriously injured. This is the job that both Bond and Leiter choose for their life, fighting the small battles of the cold war. Going after Mr. Big is just a small part of a much larger battle, the clashing of ideology between the Western countries and the Soviet Union.

Another significant part of this chapter is the mention of the blood, that sharks and barracudas are normally tame unless there is blood in the water. This is obvious foreshadowing that somehow there will be blood in the water when Bond approaches the Mr. Big's island.



Chapter 17 - The Undertaker's Wind; Chapter 18 - Beau Desert

Chapter 17 - The Undertaker's Wind; Chapter 18 - Beau Desert Summary

Bond and Quarrel spend the week at a remote beach house swimming in the ocean and training. Bond rests and gains strength for his coming mission; he does not drink any alcohol and cuts down on the number of cigarettes he smokes in a day. He also reads books on the tropics, particularly about the fish. He wants to learn as much as he can about what he might find on his dive to Mr. Big's island. Bond guesses that Mr. Big somehow harnesses the power of the sea to protect the island. He cannot risk using traditional weapons and being caught by the authorities.

As Bond swims in the water he gets cut by coral and stung by fish but keeps working. Quarrel teaches him as much as he can about how to deal with the barracudas. At one point a barracuda attacks them and they have to fight it off, teaching Bond the fierceness of the fish first hand. Quarrel tells him barracudas are the only fish that will attack people unprovoked. Bond also practices using the harpoon gun, spear and knife. On the last day before the mission Strangways visits Bond at the beach house and tells Bond he has heard from Leiter and he is going to be all right, despite an amputated leg and arm. Leiter sends Bond his luck and wishes him well. Mr. Big's yacht is expected the following day and they have word that Solitaire is on board. Bond is anxious to start the mission. There is so much at stake: the defeat of Mr. Big, the hindrance to SMERSH and saving Solitaire.

From his reading Bond learns that the danger to underwater divers is far less than to swimmers above water. He decides that the only way he will be attacked by a shark or a barracuda is if there is blood in the water. He and Quarrel leave their beach house and head to the other side of the island to the house being used by Strangways just across the bay from Mr. Big's island. When he arrives Bond goes over all the gear that has been sent from London. There is a tight black wet suit, underwater breathing equipment with enough air to last two hours, harpoon gun, dagger, and underwater mines. Unfortunately the shark repellent he has requested has not arrived yet. That afternoon Bond gets word that Mr. Big has cleared customs and will be docking at his island in ten minutes.

The three men watch the Secatur dock at the island across the bay. Right away three men run down the dock to meet the ship. Mr. Big disembarks and they watch him climb the stairs to the house. Next, two crew members carry a stretcher off the ship and through binoculars Bond can see it is Solitaire. Bond is startled to see the men loading the ship right away, preparing to leave. Bond calculates that at the rate they are preceding they will be ready to leave first thing in the morning. This means Bond will have to leave for his mission at sundown. Bond prepares himself for the mission, going



over everything in his mind and double checking the equipment. At ten o'clock he quietly slips into the water alone. Watched by Quarrel and Strangways, he submerges and begins his underwater swim to the island.

Chapter 17 - The Undertaker's Wind; Chapter 18 - Beau Desert Analysis

Bond assumes that Mr. Big is somehow harnessing the power of the sea. It is obvious that he uses sharks and barracudas as protection, so it should be obvious that perhaps he is the one putting blood into the water to enrage the fish. This would be in line with Mr. Big's other actions as it is clever. Using sharks and fish as weapons is not illegal and yet very effective. If he was using guns or explosives he would risk prosecution by the authorities, but by using sharks and barracudas he takes no such risk. Somehow Bond fails to completely connect these facts and does not realize this is what Mr. Big is doing.

Chapter eighteen is just setting up the next chapter which will start the culmination of the story. Bond will finally confront Mr. Big and try and defeat him.



Chapter 19 - Valley of Shadows; Chapter 20 - Bloody Morgan's Cave

Chapter 19 - Valley of Shadows; Chapter 20 - Bloody Morgan's Cave Summary

The heavy mine Bond is carrying sinks him quickly to the bottom, and he begins a fast crawl across the sandy ocean floor. He is happy to find his breathing and movement easy. As he swims he watches the many fish, watching carefully for sharks and barracudas. Then suddenly his ankle is caught; he looks down and sees an octopus wrapping his tentacles around his leg. He struggles with the octopus but it quickly takes a hold of Bond. He is afraid it will overpower him. He stabs at it with his knife but to no avail. Then Bond remembers the harpoon gun and blindly shoots in the octopus' direction. As he shoots a large cloud of black ink emerges from the octopus and Bond is able to free himself. He swims quickly away and heads again towards the island. As he approaches the island he sees many sharks and barracudas about but they do not seem violent. Bond swims up to Mr. Big's yacht and attaches the mine to the haul of the ship, setting the seven-hour fuse ensuring the mine will explode at six o'clock in the morning.

As Bond turns his attention away from the mine he sees a terrible commotion above him. The barracudas have begun to go mad, quickly joined by the sharks. Bond is caught in the hysterics and is frightened his suit will be ripped and his body torn apart. Bond swims behind the ship and manages to hide behind it, then sees why the fish have gone crazy: someone is spraying the water with blood and fish guts.

Bond immediately understands how Mr. Big has protected his island so well. He has harnessed the power of the sea as Bond suspected. He is spraying the blood in the water to enrage the fish and sharks, ensuring no person can swim in the water surrounding the island. Bond is afraid he will be eaten alive and suddenly a barracuda swims at him and bites his shoulder. His suit is torn and his shoulder stings with pain. Bond is ready to give up and succumb to the fish when he sees a small cave underwater. He swims towards it and finds shelter behind a large boulder. Inside the cave Bond turns on his underwater torch and sees the cave is safe from the fish and sharks. He realizes this cave must have been where Bloody Morgan hid his treasure, some diver previously moving the boulder aside and finding it.

Bond hears the drums begin to beat and he knows he has been spotted by Mr. Big. Bond realizes he will probably die but takes solace in the fact that at least Mr. Big will not get away, since his ship will soon be destroyed by the mine. Bond is only afraid for Solitaire and must prevent her from boarding the ship. Bond decides to move on into the cave and the drums grow louder. As he moves closer to the end of the cave he sees lights shining. Then Bond emerges into a small room and two men jump into the water and pull Bond out. Bond is thrown down in front of Mr. Big. The big man looks and Bond



and tells him he has been waiting for him. He orders the drums to stop and tells his men to continue loading the gold. He orders one of his men to take Bond up and Mr. Big and Bond begin a long climb up the stairs carved in the rock.

Chapter 19 - Valley of Shadows; Chapter 20 - Bloody Morgan's Cave Analysis

The mine that Bond puts on the yacht with a timed fuse is obviously very significant. This time, six o'clock will more than likely be the end of Mr. Big. What is not yet clear is where Bond and Solitaire will be. Bond is risking losing Solitaire. If he is not able to get to her she will probably be on the ship when it explodes.

Bond stuck as previous foreshadowing proves true, Mr. Big's men are putting blood in the water to enrage the sharks and barracudas. Bond is at the point where the other men who approached the island must have died. This ingenious defense may be the end of Bond. At the end of these chapters Bond and Mr. Big meet again and the plots is coming to the end. The next chapters will show us who will be the winner.



Chapter 21 - 'Good Night to You Both'; Chapter 22 - Terror by Sea

Chapter 21 - 'Good Night to You Both'; Chapter 22 - Terror by Sea Summary

Bond is focused only on staying alive and getting to Solitaire. Mr. Big stops and opens a locked door, leading Bond into a small room. There they see Solitaire who awakes from a sleep and sees Bond. She runs at him and hugs him. Mr. Big immediately orders both of them to be tied up with rope. The guard binds both of them and then leaves the room for Mr. Big to speak to both of his captives. The big man tells Bond and Solitaire that they will die together, at six o'clock, when the Secatur leaves. Mr. Big says he is the first of the great black criminals. He then tells the two captives how they will die. He will tie them to a long rope and drag them behind the ship. In the harbor the ship will go slowly, it will not be until they get out to sea that they will go fast, where their bodies will be torn apart and eaten by sharks. Mr. Big says this will please his voodoo followers as the gods will have human sacrifices. Solitaire is visibly frightened, but Bond only tells Mr. Big he himself will die soon.

When Mr. Big leaves Bond and Solitaire alone Bond begins to calculate. He determines that if everything works out perfectly they will survive; if not they will die. He hopes the mine will destroy the ship while they are still in the harbor. If it explodes too soon they will be on board the ship; if too late they will be out at sea and dead from the sharks.

Hours later the guards come for Bond and Solitaire. Bond had previously told Solitaire of the mine and their chances of survival. If the ship sails at exactly six o'clock Bond determines they will survive. As they are led down to the dock Bond's mind is full of terrible thoughts. He is afraid he will die, and he will lose Solitaire. As they stand on the dock the ship's engines start up. Bond wonders if Quarrel and Strangways are watching them with the binoculars. Bond and Solitaire's bodies are tied together and they are attached to the ship with a long rope. Bond sneaks a look at Mr. Big's watch and sees it is five minutes to six; the schedule is on time. Next the ship begins to move away from the dock, and as the rope slowly gets tighter Bond and Solitaire are eventually pulled into the water.

They manage to stay in control as their bodies are pulled behind the ship. They control their breathing as they slowly move along through the water. Bond watches their progress and determines they might make it, if the mine does not fail. The ship gets faster and faster as they approach the reef and head out to sea. Then Bond hears a large explosion. The next thing he knows the Secatur is gone and there is a large black cloud in the sky. When he regains his senses he looks around and sees Mr. Big struggling in the water, his body torn apart. Then he sees a school of sharks approach Mr. Big, and he knows the big man is out of luck as his body disappears for the last time underwater. Bond and Solitaire are still tied together and they manage to swim to a reef



for safety. They are bleeding and need to get away from the sharks. Then Bond looks behind him and sees Quarrel coming towards them in a canoe. At the site Bond cries for the first time since he was a child.

Chapter 21 - 'Good Night to You Both'; Chapter 22 - Terror by Sea Analysis

These chapters end the action and main storyline of the book. Bond has won everything, having defeated Mr. Big and SMERSH and saved Solitaire. The storylines all neatly come to a conclusion with Bond, typically, having saved the day. Everything worked out perfectly for Bond including his luck. Bond did everything that he could, but one minor theme of all Bond novels is luck, and Bond has a lot of it. It is his good luck that worked out the timing of the explosion perfectly. If it had been different by just a few minutes or seconds it could have been disastrous. It is luck that saves Bond.



Chapter 23 - Passionate Leave

Chapter 23 - Passionate Leave Summary

The final chapter opens with Bond and Solitaire alone at a beach house. They are enjoying a drink and Bond tells her she is the most beautiful women in Shark Bay.

When Quarrel had brought them ashore Bond had cleaned Solitaire's body, which was covered in cuts from the coral. They then went to the hospital to have their wounds treated. Strangways had police search the Isle of Surprise to secure any remaining gold. The wreck of the Secatur is being guarded by Customs officials, there were no survivors from the explosion. Divers are on their way to search the wreck to recover the gold. Mr. Big's associates in Harlem and St. Petersburg are being rounded up by the police.

Bond has filed a claim for the gold as have several others, including M, on behalf of the Secret Service. Strangways says it will be tricky and it will take a long time to determine who will receive possession of the gold. The British and American governments are also expected to file claims for the gold. But Bond does not care; he is just happy to sit on the beach with Solitaire in his arms. They will go on a holiday together, and they look forward to finally making love.

Chapter 23 - Passionate Leave Analysis

This chapter is a simple conclusion. It explains exactly what happened, which could have been assumed from the previous chapter. Bond and Solitaire finally have a chance to start their relationship. Mr. Big is dead and Bond has won, getting the girl, defeating Mr. Big and besting SMERSH. He has now won some well deserved rest which he gets permission to do from M. The fact that he is making a claim for the gold is interesting, but will almost certainly not succeed, as Britain or the United States are so much stronger. In the mean time Bond is happy with his real prize, Solitaire.



Characters

James Bond

James Bond is a British Secret Agent, code named 007. He is a bachelor and lover of the finer things in life. He is an avid smoker and drinker of martinis. He lives in London but works around the world. He was a commander in the army during World War II, where he spent time in America. Bond enjoys the finer things in life, especially the company of women. He often takes huge risks to complete his missions and escapes death many times.

Bond harbors an intense hatred of the Soviet Union, especially their spy agency SMERSH. His dealing with SMERSH in the past has put him on a personal mission to destroy the organization. This is one of his main reasons for wanting to defeat Mr. Big. During the story he also falls in love with Solitaire. When Mr. Big captures her this becomes his second motivation for crushing the big man.

Mr. Big

A Haitian-born gangster now living in Harlem in New York City, Mr. Big is a large African American, forty-five-year-old man, half Haitian and half French. He runs a crime outfit in New York. His real name is Buonaparte Ingace Gallia (initials B.I.G.). He is a follower of Voodoo and is believed by many to be the Zombie of Baron Samedi, the Prince of Darkness. During World War II he worked for the Office of Secret Services. He is a known SMERSH agent, working with the Soviets.

Mr. Big is very powerful and before meeting Bond has never been defeated. He says he is at the very pinnacle of his profession and now only looks for fun. Bond considers him brilliant and he runs an excellent organization. He uses his followers' belief in voodoo to control them. He owns a string of night clubs in Harlem. He uses the African-Americans around the city as a surveillance system that is nearly unbreakable. He is very wealthy and seems to have unlimited funds. He sails his yacht, The Secatur, between Cuba, Jamaica and St. Petersburg, Florida.

Solitaire

A beautiful Haitian born woman. Mr. Big says he is going to marry her. He believes she has telepathic abilities. She is a minor character in the story as she is held captive by Mr. Big throughout most of the story. However, when she shares a train cabin with Bond between New York and Florida the two fall in love and Bond considers saving her as one of his primary goals in defeating Mr. Big.

She had been held captive by Mr. Big for over a year. She was kept in a hotel under constant guard. Mr. Big uses her telepathic abilities to determine if people are lying.



When he does this with Bond, Solitaire looks into Bond's eyes and sees he is a good man, so she erroneously tells Mr. Big that Bond is telling the truth. The two have an instant connection and Solitaire soon reaches out to Bond for help, which he provides. She is recaptured in Florida and Bond saves her again in Jamaica. At the end of the novel they finally have a chance to start their romantic relationship.

Felix Leiter

An American CIA agent. He has worked with Bond in the past at the Casino Royale job. They get along well and are partners again in this novel. While in Florida Leiter goes after The Robber and is put into a shark tank. The shark nearly kills him and he loses one arm and one leg. His face is also seriously injured. At the end of the novel it is revealed that Leiter will live.

Quarrel

A Cayman Islander hired to help Bond train for his assault on The Isle of Surprise. He is an expert swimmer and fisherman and is a great help to Bond. Quarrel pulls Bond and Solitaire from the sea at the end of the novel following the destruction of Mr. Big's yacht.

The Robber

Mr. Big's chief contact in St. Petersburg. He runs the bait and tackle shop where Mr. Big unloads his fish tanks from Jamaica. The Robber kidnaps Solitaire and nearly kills Leiter. Bond finally kills him when he traps him in the shark tank.

Strangways

The chief of the British Secret Service in the Caribbean. He is a former Lieutenant-Commander in the Special Branch of the Royal Navy.

The Whisper

One of Mr. Big's men, he works at a telephone switchboard and passes on information to a team of men around the city.

Captain Dexter

An FBI Agent working with Bond in New York City.

M

The head of the British Secret Service, Bond's boss.



Objects/Places

Harlem

A section of Manhattan in New York City, home to a large African-American community. It is the base of Mr. Big's operation in the story.

Jamaica

An island nation in the Caribbean. During the time the story takes place it is still part of the British Empire, under British jurisdiction. For this reason Bond is called in when Mr. Big is believed to be smuggling the gold from here.

Kingston

The capital city of Jamaica.

St. Petersburg

A city in west central Florida on the Gulf of Mexico. In the novel it is the location of The Robber's store, where Mr. Big first smuggles gold coins into the United States. Mr. Big chooses the city for its large elderly population, which means the town has a low crime rate and a small police force.

The Secatur

The name of Mr. Big's yacht, which he takes between Jamaica, Cuba and Florida.

The Silver Phantom

The name of the train that Bond and Solitaire take from New York to Florida.

Barracuda

A large fearsome fish with very sharp teeth used by Mr. Big as protection to his island and attack Bond and other. They are very fierce and capable of killing a man.

Beretta

The Italian-made handgun preferred by Bond.



Harpoon Gun

A spear gun used against sharks and large fish. It shoots a large spear and can be used underwater. Bond uses it as a defensive weapon when he is swimming underwater towards Mr. Big's island.

Voodoo

A religion practiced largely by Africans and inhabitants of some Caribbean island nations. Mr. Big uses this belief system to influence his followers.

Zombie

A zombie is believed to be a human body with no soul. Many believe Mr. Big is a zombie being controlled by the evil man Baron Samedi.

Limey

An epithet used to refer to English people.

SMERSH

The Soviet spy agency that is the Russian counterpart to the CIA or the British Secret Service. SMERSH is portrayed as the ultimate evil organization, and they are controlling Mr. Big. SMERSH is Russian for Death to Spies.

Themes

Race

Race is the most prominent theme of the novel. Fleming is a Briton and the novel reflects his views towards race and his view of America in the 1950s. The characters constantly use epithets that today are considered demeaning, racist and unacceptable. African-American characters are always referred to as 'negroes' while white characters are just men or women. The terms 'nigger,' 'chinamen,' and 'jap' are also used. The use of negro is meant largely to help make the story clear but also reflects the inherent racism of the day. The 1950s are a time of racial unrest in America as African Americans begin to demand equal rights. This feeling is also portrayed in the story. Mr. Big says there have already been successful African-Americans in other fields and he is the first great 'negro criminal.' The use of this racial language is often uncomfortable and makes the novel seem very antiquated and racist. The characters, however, are not meant to be racist but just typical individuals.

Fleming also assumes that all African-Americans have a strong belief in voodoo. To a reader today this seems rather preposterous and again racist. It is unclear whether this is merely a necessary tool to advance the plot or a true belief of the author. Blacks in the novel are treated almost as non-humans, or a lower class. Fleming uses the characters to explain how their race is now advancing to compete with other races. These thoughts today are considered largely false and socially unacceptable. Fleming seems to be explaining how the African-Americans are now equal to other races, but in doing so he assumes that they once were not. This is the inherent racism, in giving a complement he is also giving a back handed insult. Mr. Big is always considered a 'negro' criminal, while in other Bond stories the criminal is just a criminal, not a 'white criminal' or a 'French criminal.'

Fleming more than likely does not view himself as racist, and probably has no ill will towards other races. He is not using the terms out of hate, but his causal treatment of language and feelings towards other races is indicative of the environment of the day.

The Cold War

The Cold War, starting in the 1950s and lasting until the 1990s, is the ideological struggle between the Democratic Capitals countries of Western Europe and North America against the Communist Soviet Union. The Cold War is marked by a massive build up of weapons on both sides, although there is never a break out of real violence. This is the world that Bond works in, trying to defeat the Soviets in small battles. While there is never an outbreak of war, the Cold War is fought through small fights over ideas and indirect struggles. This book represents one of these small battles. It is fought by just a few people and will never be known by the public. Bond is trying to stop Mr. Big from funding SMERSH. On its face this seems small and not very important, but it is



part of a much larger struggle. These are the battles that Bond and Leiter will spend their careers fighting. It is unglamorous work that they receive little credit for, but they are working for their country and for ideals. Mr. Big is one small part of a much larger picture.

Presumably the Soviet side has men doing the same thing. However, Mr. Big is portrayed as working purely out of selfish greed. He is working for SMERSH but seems to be doing so more out of selfishness and his ego than out of a true belief in Communism. This is a theme of the book as well, as Fleming obviously believes that Bond is the good guy and Mr. Big is the bad guy, that the British side is good and the Soviet bad. The Cold War is a unique period of history and the Bond novels chronicle the way it was for many people.

Bond's life is no doubt much more glamorous and exciting than that of a real spy, but the ideas are real. Bond is a man who gives up a normal life to fight for his country and his way of life. He will never receive public credit for what he does, as most of his actions are top secret. He is not paid well and there is a high probability that he will die young, but he still chooses to fight. This is the true cost of the Cold War for Bond.

American and British Cooperation

The 1950s ushered in the decline of the British Empire and the rise of The United States as a dominant world power. As this happens both countries create a special relationship that is reflected in the cooperation between Bond and Leiter. There is a rivalry there but primarily they work very well together and see themselves as having the same end goals. At this time especially they are fighting a common enemy in the Soviet Union represented by SMERSH.

At this time The British still have much of their empire intact, including Jamaica as we see in the story. Once the sun never set on the British Empire and they had a lot of work to keep it all safe. As Britain is eventually forced to give up her colonies she loses much of her power and influence in the world. This corresponds with America's rise in influence following their dominance in World War II. As it works out the two countries have a lot in common and share a largely similar way of life. Instead of fighting, England and America work together on many fronts, combining their skills. Bond and Leiter are prime examples of this.

Bond and Leiter are largely the same person, but from different countries. Bond often considers himself more refined but is not above his America friend, he appreciates the delicacies and customs of America, and vice-a-versa. This special relationship between America and England will last for many years and is seen even today as they are the two leading powers fighting terrorism. This is a lasting and important relationship in world affairs, and Bond and Leiter are just one small example of this.



Style

Point of View

The point of view is third person. The narrator knows all details of the story as well as the characters inner thoughts and feelings. The point of view changes between characters so the reader often knows things that the characters do not.

Setting

The novel starts in New York City. Mr. Big operates out of Harlem, a district of Manhattan that is inhabited primarily by African Americans. The second section of the novel takes place in Florida. The author spends a lot of time describing the city of New York, especially Harlem, as well as St. Petersburg, Florida. As the novel was originally written for a British audience these places would be very unfamiliar to them.

The final section of the movie takes place in Jamaica. Jamaica is also described in detail, but not as much as the American cities. The novel take place in the 1950s in an era very different from today. This time in America was an era of great change especially toward the acceptance of different races. The attitude is reflected in the novel as the author always refers to black people as negroes.

The 1950s is also a time of change after World War II and the rise of the Cold War, facing off Western countries like England and America against Soviet Russia.

Language and Meaning

The most striking thing about the language of this novel is its overt racism. Written in the 1950s, Fleming uses words that today would be considered totally unacceptable. The word 'negro' and 'negroid' are used throughout the novel, as are 'nigger,' 'jap' and 'chinamen'. These words are not used out of racist attitudes but can make the novel grating to read.

Other than the language about race, Fleming writes in a very clear and simple way. He often avoids detail of sexual encounters, only alluding to them, allowing the reader to use his or her imagination. The novel is written using British English which is slightly different than American English, and combined with the dated language it can be antiquated.

Structure

The story follows a very simple story arch, culminating in the final pages of the book. It contains very clear foreshadowing that rarely proves false. There is minor suspect but



the story is largely predictable. The chapters are generally less than fifteen pages and the title of each chapter suggests what will happen in the coming pages. The pace of the novel is consistent with most chapters ending in a cliffhanger encouraging the reader to read on. There are few low points in the story.

Quotes

"I don't think I've ever heard of a great negro criminal before,' said Bond, 'Chinamen, of course, the men behind the opium trade. There've been some big-time Japs, mostly in pearls and drugs. Plenty of negroes mixed up in diamonds and gold in Africa, but always in a small way. They don't seem to take to big business. Pretty law-abiding chaps I should have thought except when they've drunk too much.'" Chapter 2, p. 20

"What a brilliant set-up for dealing with the smaller fry of the negro underworld and for keeping a coloured information network well up to the mark! - the fear of Voodoo and the supernatural, still deeply, primevally ingrained in the negro subconscious! And what genius to have, as a beginning, the whole transport system of America under surveillance, the trains, the porters, the truck drivers, the stevedores! To have at his disposal a host of key men who would have no idea that the questions they answered had been asked by Russia." Chapter 2, p. 25.

- "Our [the FBI's] policy with Mr. Big is 'live and let live.'"

- Bond looked quizzically at Captain Dexter. "In my job,' he said, 'when I come up against a man like this one, I have another motto. It's 'live and let die.'" Chapter 4, p. 41.

"Harlem's a bit of a jungle these days. People don't go up there any more like they used to. Before the war, at the end of an evening, one used to go to Harlem just as one goes to Montmarte in Paris. They were glad to take one's money. One used to go to the Savoy Ballroom and watch the dancing. Perhaps pick up a high-yaller and risk the doctor's bills afterwards. Now that's all changed. Harlem don't like being stared at any more. Most of the places have closed and you go to the others strictly on sufferance. Often you get tossed out on you ear, simply because you're white." Chapter 4, pp. 45-46.

"Harlem's the capital of the negro world. In any half a million people of any race you'll get plenty of stinkeroos. The trouble with our friend Mr. Big is that he's a hell of a good technician, thanks to his OSS and Moscow training." Chapter 4, pp. 46-47.

"I'm beginning to get the hang of Mr. Big. One just doesn't catch the smell of all this in a country like England. We're a superstitious lot there of course - particularly the Celts - but here one can almost hear the drums." Chapter 5, p. 56.

"A five-foot white wooden cross stood on a raised white pedestal. The arms of the cross were thrust into the sleeves of a dusty black frock-coat whose tails hung down behind the table towards the floor. Above the neck of the coat a battered bowler hat gaped at him, its crown pierced by the vertical bar of the cross, resting on the cross-bar, was a deep starched clergyman's collar. At the base of the white pedestal, on the table, lay an old pair of lemon-colored gloves. A short Malacca stick with a gold knob, its ferrule resting beside the gloves, rose against the left shoulder of the effigy. Also on the table was a battered black top hat. This evil scarecrow gazed out across the room - God of



the Cemeteries and Chief of the Legion of the Dead - Baron Samedi. Even to Bond it seemed to carry a dreadful gaping message." Chapter 7, pp. 73-74.

[Solitaire] faced the knave of hearts. Then the queen of spades. She held the two halves of the pack in her lap so that the two court cards looked at each other. She brought the two halves of the pack together until they kissed...Bond felt a glow of excitement and a quickening of the pulse. He had a friend in the enemy's camp." Chapter 8, p. 80.

"Mister Bond, I [Mr. Big] suffer from boredom. I am a prey to what the early Christians called 'accidie', the deadly lethargy that envelopes those who are sated, those who have no more desires. I am absolutely pre-eminent in my chosen profession, trusted by those who occasionally employ my talents, feared and instantly obeyed by those whom I myself employ. I have, literally, no more worlds to conquer within my chosen orbit." Chapter 8, p. 85.

"How can one explain to someone who hasn't lived close to the secret heart of the tropics, at the mercy of their anger and stealth and poison; who hasn't experienced the mystery of the drums, seen the quick working of magic and the mortal dread it inspires? What can he know of catalepsy, and the thought-transference and the sixth sense of fish, of birds, of negroes; the deadly meaning of a white chicken's feather, a crossed stick in the road, a little leather bag of bones and herbs? What of Mialism, of shadow-taking, of the death by swelling and death by wasting?" Chapter 11, pp. 121-122.

"They believe The Big Man is the Zombie of Baron Samedi. Zombies are bad enough by themselves. They're animated corpses that have been made to rise from the dead and obey the commands of the person who controls them. Baron Samedi is the most dreadful spirit in the whole of Voodooism. He is the spirit of darkness and death." Chapter 11, p. 123.

"Never before in his life had there been so much to play for. The secret of the treasure, the defeat of a great criminal, the smashing of a Communist spy ring, and the destruction of a tentacle of SMERSH, the cruel machine that was [Bond's] own private target. And now Solitaire, the ultimate personal prize." Chapter 18, p. 217.

"In the history of negro emancipation,' Mr. Big continued in an easy conversational tone, 'there have already appeared great athletes, great musicians, great writers, great doctors and scientists. In due course, as in the developing history of other races, there will appear negroes great and famous in every other walk of life.' He paused. 'It is unfortunate for you, Mister Bond, and for this girl, that you have encountered the first of the great negro criminals.'" Chapter 21, pp. 255-256.

"You will die beyond the reef and there will be no evidence. I shall tow the remains of your bodies until there is nothing left. That is part of the dexterity of my intentions. You may also know that shark and barracuda play a role in Voodooism. They will have their sacrifice and Baron Samedi will be appeased. That will satisfy my followers." Chapter 21, pp. 258-259.

"Now it was over and he sat in the sunshine among the flowers with the price at his feet and his hand in her long black hair. He clasped the moment to him and thought of the fourteen tomorrows that would be theirs between them." Chapter 23, p. 280.



Topics for Discussion

How does the time period and settings of the novel shape the story?

Does Mr. Big really believe in voodoo or does he just use it to control his followers?

In reality does voodoo have such a strong pull in the African-American community, or is this played up for the novel? Do you think Fleming genuinely believes in this strong connection to voodoo or is he simply using it for dramatic effect in the novel?

Do you think Bond will get possession of the gold? Do you think he has a right to it?

How is Mr. Big's organization similar to intelligence organizations like the CIA or the British Secret Service? How are they different?

Is this a racist book? Are the characters racist?

The use of language changes over time. The most striking thing about this novel is the use of racial terms now considered to be very derogatory. Reading these terms in modern times, do their use overshadow the story?