

Octopussy Study Guide

Octopussy by Ian Fleming

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Contents

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Octopussy Study Guide..... | 1 |
| Contents..... | 2 |
| Plot Summary..... | 3 |
| Octopussy..... | 5 |
| The Property of a Lady..... | 12 |
| The Living Daylights..... | 16 |
| 007 in New York..... | 21 |
| Characters..... | 24 |
| Objects/Places..... | 28 |
| Themes..... | 33 |
| Style..... | 36 |
| Quotes..... | 38 |
| Topics for Discussion..... | 39 |



Plot Summary

Octopussy and the Living Daylights is a collection of four short stories by Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, agent "007". James Bond appears in all four stories and is the unifying thread in all four accounts.

Octopussy is a tale about the life of Major Dexter Smythe, who retired from the Royal Marines after World War II in Europe and went to live in Jamaica. When the story opens he is living in a small villa on the North Shore of Jamaica and continues to drink and smoke excessively, behavior that led to the accidental overdose and death of his wife Mary. His only interest in life is skin diving with the tropical fish that live on the reef just opposite the beach at his villa. He is fixated on the idea of making a pet of the octopus he has discovered in a hole in the coral reef. All his plans change when a man comes to visit him from Government House. The visitor is James Bond, and he questions Major Smythe about his activities in the Austrian Tyrol at the end of the war when he was with an intelligence group called the Miscellaneous Objectives Bureau. Bond's questioning leads to Smythe's recollection and finally to his admission of guilt in the matter of the murder of an Austrian guide called Hannes Oberhauser. In the course of Smythe's recollections, the reader also becomes aware of the source of the Major's personal wealth.

When Bond leaves the Major he points out that he will be arrested within the week to return to Britain to face a court martial. Dexter Smythe returns to the reef and his octopus, and to conduct an experiment to feed it a scorpion fish to the octopus and note its reaction. In the course of the afternoon, Major Smythe suffers a bizarre and gruesome end. The official verdict is that it was a death by drowning, but the reader knows that it was a combination of poisoning by the scorpion fish and drowning as a result of the deadly embrace of his "Octopussy".

The next two stories are in the familiar format of James Bond being sent on assignments to deal with problems that have arisen in the affairs of the Secret Service. The first involves the identification of the KGB's Resident Director and controller of a double agent within the Secret Service. The agent is to be rewarded for her work by being sent a Fabergé Emerald Sphere that she has supposedly inherited and that the KGB controller will be underbidding at its auction at Sotheby's in Bond Street. The narrative includes a masterful account of the world of fine art and the drama and pageantry of the auctions at Sotheby's.

The Living Daylights is set in Cold War Berlin. Bond is sent to neutralize a KGB marksman called "Trigger", who will try to gun down an escaping allied agent when he attempts to cross over to the West from East Berlin. In the course of the three day stakeout, James Bond becomes infatuated with a tall, blond girl who, as part of an all woman orchestra, carries a cello case in and out of the building where the KGB marksman is posted. The climax of the story is skillfully depicted. The agent successfully escapes, the true identity of the KGB marksman is revealed, and Bond, just for once, partially misses the shot for which he has so assiduously prepared.



The final piece, 007 in New York is, as the publisher's note explains, an attempt to counteract an article written by Ian Fleming that was very critical of New York. The writing is lighthearted, and comprises James Bond's description of his favorite restaurants and hotels in New York while he is on a twenty-four hour assignment in that city. The plot is minimal, to say the least, but it does add another piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the true personality of the man called James Bond.



Octopussy

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For two months Major Dexter Smythe has been trying to make friends with an octopus he had found in the coral as he made his daily rounds in what he thinks of as his underwater zoo. In his mind he calls the cephalopod "Pussy", and has been feeding it raw meat on the end of his underwater spear gun. Now he is going to find and spear a scorpion fish to feed "Pussy" and report the results to Professor Bengtry at the Institute. Dexter Smythe thinks that given another month he would be able to tame the octopus, but now he is not going to have a month.

Major Dexter Smythe, OBE, Royal Marines (Retd), at the age of fifty-four is still a fine figure of a man, but is beginning to feel the effects of his incessant smoking and drinking. Since his wife Mary, whom he still misses, died two years ago, he has had two coronary thromboses and is becoming a melancholic drunk. He does not like or respect the people with whom he associates on Jamaica's North Shore, and has not formed any close ties with his neighbors at the five-acre beachfront villa that he calls "Wavelets". In short, he is becoming the victim of tropical sloth and self-indulgence, and, with no purpose to his life, he has considered ending it all by taking an overdose of sleeping pills. Now his only interest is in swimming among the brilliant tropical fish along the reef off the beach on his property. He is determined to make a small mark in the records of the Institute of Marine Studies by studying the reaction of an octopus to the venomous scorpion fish.

His plans, though, are interrupted when he receives a visitor from Government House in Kingstown. The visitor is a tall man in a dark blue tropical suit who introduces himself as James Bond from the Ministry of Defense. Major Smythe's attempts at jocularities are unsuccessful, and he realizes that this is definitely unfriendly official business. He wonders, "Have they found out?" His worst premonitions are realized when Bond says he has come to discuss Major Smythe's work for the Miscellaneous Objectives Bureau at the end of the war. The stress is building up in Major Smythe, and he takes out and swallows a small white TNT pill for the angina pain he is feeling. The other man tenses, watching him carefully. Major Smythe intuitively realizes that Bond thinks the pill might have been a suicide pill, and jokingly refers to acidosis and a bender he had been on the previous night.

Bond continues to question Major Smythe about an operation in the Tyrol at a place called Ober Aurach. Smythe tries to act unconcerned. His record of service during the war was impeccable—he had served in both the Commandos and in the Marines, and he had been awarded the OBE. Then, just before the final German surrender and



collapse, he had been given the temporary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and was told to form a unit whose job was to clean up the Gestapo and Abwehr hideouts. The unit to which Major Smythe was appointed as second in command was to deal with the Tyrol. There, as he tells Bond, the unit had had a ball without a shot being fired, though deep inside himself he admits there had been two shots fired—by himself.

Despite the eighty-degree temperatures, Smythe shivers when Bond next asks whether the name Hannes Oberhauser rings a bell. Bond continues his relentless questions. He refreshes Smythe's memory for him by telling him how Smythe arrested Oberhauser and drove him away in his jeep. He then refers to a small blue notebook and asks Smythe about the service revolver with which he was issued and which he returned at the end of his service.

The expression "refresh your memory" brings back to Smythe his own techniques when he used to interrogate German prisoners. He reminds himself that he has been preparing for just this eventuality for years, and he continues to try and bluff his way out of the questioning. Eventually Bond tells Smythe that he might as well admit to knowing what the enquiry is all about. He offers, not unkindly, to give Smythe time to think it over, and he says he will wait for him in the garden. As he leaves, he casually mentions that he has been to see the Foo brothers in Kingston. On hearing this, Major Smythe realizes the game is up, and relief that the battle of wits is over engulfs him and he starts to make plans to enjoy what little is left of the rest of his life before the inevitable court martial catches up with him. If he cuts the interrogation short by admitting everything and can get rid of Bond in an hour, he will still have time to go out to the colorful world of his reef fish and the octopus.

Major Smythe, second in command of the 'A' Force, is excitedly examining a haul of records he has found in a bedroom in a house in Austria after the collapse of Germany and her allies. The main objectives of 'A' force are the documents marked "top secret" in red. There are not many and they are mostly confidential reports on German top brass and the location of secret dumps. At the bottom of the documents he finds a single envelope sealed in wax, marked "only to be opened in final emergency". In the envelope he finds a single sheet of paper detailing a cairn covering a cache of two gold bars. The location is near to a place called Franziskaner Halt that his topographic map shows to be about a five hour climb from where he is right now. He has no idea exactly how much the bars would be worth, but they would be a fortune. He does not hesitate, and before anyone comes into the room, he quickly burns the envelope and its contents flushing the ashes down the toilet.

Major Smythe, his head full of dreams of the wealth within his grasp, immediately executes a plan to secure the treasure for himself as he estimates he has only twenty-four hours before 'A' force will be moved to a new area. Before the war he had climbed in this area of Austria and decides he is going to need a guide. Therefore, at four in the morning, he goes to the chalet of a guide called Oberhauser and arrests him. Despite the pleas of the family, Smythe drives him away in his jeep, ostensibly to be interrogated in Munich.



Smythe drives the jeep along the road below the mountain where he knows the cairn is situated. As he had planned, when Oberhauser gets over the initial shock of his arrest, he and Smythe become more friendly, discussing climbing and skiing. Then, pretending to act on an impulse, Smythe pulls off the road and makes a proposition to Oberhauser. He, Smythe, will not take his prisoner to Munich. Instead, they will spend the day climbing, and at the end of it Oberhauser can return home with an official clearance from Major Smythe. Not unnaturally, Oberhauser agrees. They start climbing on a path through the trees that eventually, says the guide, will lead to a hut. Oberhauser tells Smythe that the hut is called Franziskaner Halt.

The hut, when they reach it after a five-hour climb above the tree line, is on a shoulder above a small glacier lined with crevasses. Smythe makes an excuse to go outside, and counting his steps carefully, goes along the ledge. At exactly the right distance he finds the cairn. His mind full of dreams of what he will do with his treasure, he takes out his Webley and Scott revolver and checks it. Then he returns to the hut where Oberhauser is getting ready to prepare a snack. Smythe asks him to come outside and point out some of the sights in the view. As they approach the edge of the ledge, he is behind the guide. Without any hesitation he fires two bullets point blank into the back of Oberhauser's head. The murdered guide's body pitches forward and falls onto the glacier below.

Major Smythe hurries back along the shoulder to the cairn. Here, after a lot of frantic work, he uncovers the ammunition box and drags it back to the hut. Sitting on the hut's stone step he devours the sausage Oberhauser had left and looks at the ammunition box. The realization that he is now a murderer and a robber dawns on him, but there is no turning back.

The box weighs over ninety pounds and it is almost beyond his strength to lift it. He pitches it over the ledge on to the glacier and climbs down to where it has landed next to the dead guide's body. The sight of the remains of Oberhauser leaves him completely unmoved. He pushes the body into a crevasse and kicks snow and ice over it until it is completely covered. His heart pounding, he breaks open the box where it has been split by the fall, and sees, for the first time, the two gold bars which now represent all his dreams of wealth and happiness. Then he begins a very long and agonizingly painful scramble back down the mountainside, dragging the ammunition box with him. Back among the trees, he buries the ammunition box and then, nearer to the road where he left the jeep, hides the bars and their wrappings in among some rocks where he is sure they will be safe and where he will be able to find them again.

Smythe cleans himself up as best he can and drives back to his billet, carefully avoiding the Oberhauser chalet. Exhausted, he collapses into a dreamless sleep. The next day his unit moves off to a new location and within six months Major Smythe's war is over.

At the end of hostilities, Major Smythe, delays his mobilization long enough to use his temporary rank to get himself posted back to Munich. During the next six months he retrieves his gold bars and smuggles them back to London on weekend leaves, carrying them, one at a time, in a bulky briefcase.



Now that the gold is safely in an aunt's flat in Kensington, Dexter Smythe carries out the next phase of his plan. He resigns from the Royal Marines and marries Mary Parnell, a charming blonde with whom he had had an affair during the war. He arranges a passage for them both on a banana boat sailing from Avonmouth to Kingston, Jamaica. Before they leave England, he shows his new wife the gold bars, from which he has erased the German markings. Swearing her to secrecy, he tells her he has liquidated all his assets and bought the gold to avoid currency regulations

In Jamaica, Dexter and Mary Smythe take up residence in the Prince's Club in the foothills above Kingston, where they are a popular couple and live a life of endless parties, bridge, tennis, and golf. Looking for a means to realize the value of his hoard of gold, it takes Major Smythe a year of cautious inquiries before he finally settles on the Foo Brothers, the leading Chinese Exporters and Importers in Jamaica. The Foo Brothers insist on an assay of the unmarked gold bars. The assay indicates that the origin of the gold is the wartime Reichsbank and it is adulterated by the addition of ten per cent lead. They propose selling the gold at its actual value and ask for a transaction fee of ten per cent. When Smythe is told that his gold is worth about one hundred thousand dollars instead of the twenty thousand pounds he has been estimating, he quickly agrees. From then on, at every quarter, he goes to the office of the Foo Brothers with an old suitcase in which he puts five hundred Jamaican pound notes and the transaction slip showing how much gold was sold in Macao.

The years of easy living in a tropical paradise pass by without incident. Both Dexter and Mary put on weight and he has his first coronary. Unable to get him to stop his excessive drinking and smoking, Mary becomes a jailer figure to him and he increasingly tries to avoid her. She, herself, becomes a sleeping pill addict and their marriage deteriorates. Finally, during a flaming row in which they are both drunk, she takes an overdose of her sleeping pills just to show him. Unfortunately, the overdose proves lethal and, though the suicide is hushed up, the social consequences for Major Smythe are devastating. He returns to the North Shore area, three miles from the capital Kingston, where he now lives in a villa he calls "Wavelets".

Major Smythe is finished marshaling his thoughts and reminiscing about his past life and the events, which have led to his visitor in the garden. He pours himself another stiff brandy and goes out to where Bond is waiting for him.

Bond does not react to Major Smythe's confession. He simply says that was what he had deduced. He tells Smythe that he will return to London and file a report with his own service and then the case will be passed first to the Royal Marines and then to the Public Prosecutor.

Neither man displays any emotion, but Smythe asks Bond how his service had found out about what happened so many years ago. Bond tells him that, earlier in the spring when the snows melted, Oberhauser's remains had emerged from the glacier with all his papers intact. The family had claimed the body and then it was simply a question of working forwards from the night Smythe had arrested the guide. Identification of the bullets as coming from Smythe's revolver had been the final touch. Bond adds that his



personal involvement is due to the fact that he caught sight of the case papers in his normal course of work, and that Oberhauser had been a personal friend of his before the war, even to the extent of being a father figure when he taught Bond to ski. Because of that he had asked to be assigned to tracking the person who had killed the Austrian guide.

As he walks out of the garden, Bond tells Smythe that he has about a week before someone will come to take him to England.

A short while later Smythe is swimming in the lagoon among his beloved fish. His mind is racing with the consequences of Bond's final remarks. Is he being given the chance to save himself and the authorities embarrassment by taking the "honorable" way out by committing suicide? Could he claim extenuating circumstances at the inevitable court martial? He might become a cause celebre and write a book about it all. A surge of optimism takes hold of him and he decides to put off making any firm decision until after the normal round of his evening's social life is over.

Ten minutes later he sees what he has been looking for. It looks like a clump of seaweed-covered rock on the white sand, but it is not a rock—it is a scorpion fish. He tries to harpoon it but misses on the first attempt, and the fish escapes in a flurry of sand to a nearby rock where it relies on its camouflage to protect it from its predator. He tries again and this time it is impaled on his three-pronged harpoon. Panting from the exertion, Major Smythe swims to the beach and rests on a wooden bench for five minutes. It is only then that he notices the circular white patch on his abdomen and the three small punctures from which drops of blood are oozing. He remembers how close the fish had come when he had missed the first time and realizes that the scorpion fish has stung him.

Recalling what he has learned from studying books on the subject, he now knows he has, at the most, about fifteen minutes to live before the poison in his body would reduce him to convulsions and delirium in final agony. Even if Jimmy Greaves stocked the only known antidotes, which he doubted, the doctor would not be able to get to him in less than an hour. The onset of the pain from the poison provokes a last frenzy of action from the Major. He must take the scorpion fish to the octopus and see what the reaction is. He fights through the increasing waves of pain and manages to crawl into the water and make his way the fifty yards to the where the octopus is hiding. He is now screaming into his mask and biting his lips until they are bleeding. The octopus is stirring, and Smythe realizes that it is the descending tendrils of his own blood whose scent she has detected. He grasps the spear halfway down the shaft and pushes the scorpion fish down into the octopus's hole. In between bouts of unconsciousness, he is delighted to see the tentacles leap not towards the fish but towards his arm. He has shaken hands with Pussy. But then almost gently, but with relentless strength, the octopus begins to pull him down. With a sickening comprehension, Smythe tries to push the spear down on to the octopus but all that he succeeds in doing is to give more of his arm to the embracing tentacles. Smythe tears off his mask and tries to extricate himself, but there is one final burst of bubbles and then his head is pulled relentlessly beneath



the surface. Then there is nothing but the body being pushed by the small waves while below the surface the octopus's beak-like mouth starts to bite at the dead hands.

Later, two local boys in a fishing canoe find the body. They kill the octopus by turning it inside out and biting off its head, and take the human corpse to the police. After that they eat both the octopus and the scorpion fish for their dinner. The local newspaper correspondent turns in the story that Major Smythe has been killed by an octopus, but this is changed to "found drowned" to avoid frightening the tourists. In London, James Bond notes the "found drowned" verdict in the bulky file before closing it, though privately he believes it a case of suicide.

Only Dr. Greaves, who performs an autopsy, knows the details of the bizarre end to Major Smythe's life.

Octopussy Analysis

The point of view of this story is that of Major Smythe. The reader first encounters him skin diving on the coral reef as he addresses the octopus that he is trying to tame. The immediate details of Dexter Smythe's life are revealed to the reader as well as descriptions of the tropical fish he regularly feeds when he goes skin diving. His plan, to spear and feed a scorpion fish to the octopus and note its reaction, is introduced, as is his hope for a small memorial to his now futile life in the files of the Institute. This plan is going to have to be accelerated and there is a flashback to a few hours earlier when he is visited by a man from Government House.

The man is James Bond, and he interrogates Dexter Smythe about his activities in the Tyrol at the end of the war. The questions and answers both outline the fact that, at that time, Major Smythe was second-in-command of the 'A' section of the Miscellaneous Objectives Bureau. Their job was to track down Gestapo and other secret hideouts after the collapse of Germany. The reader is also acquainted with the fact that Major Smythe has been awarded the OBE and has a distinguished service record.

Bond continues his questioning, and Smythe by now realizes the game is up. Bond leaves him to think things over and there is now a second flashback, within the first, this time to the Tyrol. In Smythe's words, he recalls the events that have not only brought Bond to question him but also the course of events that brought him to Jamaica.

The second flashback ends when he rejoins Bond in the garden and repeats his story to his interrogator. Bond tells him the reason he asked for the assignment to track down Hannes Oberhauser's killer, and he then leaves him with the warning that he will be arrested within a week. The first flashback ends here and the reader is returned to the reef where Dexter Smythe is hunting for the scorpion fish and mentally going over his options now that Bond has obtained his confession and left for London.

Major Smythe's gruesome end on the reef is assumed to be a drowning accident by all except his friend, the doctor who performs the autopsy.



The flashback within the flashback does not impede the reader's comprehension of the story of Major Smythe's life. The story starts and ends with a knowledgeable account of skin diving on a tropical reef. In the course of the narrative, the reader is informed of an incident in Austria at the end of the war and is given a descriptive account of non-technical climbing in the Tyrolean Alps. The method and details of Smythe's disposal of the gold he has stolen is perhaps the most skillful part of the narrative and is obviously the result of thorough research on the subject. Finally, the story portrays, with masterly clarity, the inescapable boredom and futility of a life of self-indulgence in a tropical paradise.

In this story, James Bond plays a minor role, that of the investigator from London. The reader is perhaps puzzled by his lack of emotion when, after unmasking the murderer of his close prewar friend, his only reaction is to look the culprit squarely in the eyes. The account gives a fleeting notion that Bond feels sorry for the older man. Perhaps he will get his satisfaction at the inevitable court martial, but the reader is given no indication of what is going on in Bond's mind.

Throughout the story, the reader is given very little reason to feel any sympathy for Major Smythe. The Austrian guide, a decent man who is graciously offering to share with him his modest meal, he shoots in the head without any compunction. If he had been portrayed as a man hardened by his wartime experiences it would be easier to understand. His justification that the man is probably a "kraut or something like it", jars with the fact that Smythe's mother came from Heidelberg and he himself is a fluent German speaker. Major Smythe's marriage to his wife Mary was, by his own admission, not really based on love but more a marriage of convenience, part of his plan to escape with the gold. It was his self destructive drinking which was, probably, a major factor in her accidental overdose. So the reader is left with a man, recklessly continuing on his path to destruction, who is now anthropomorphizing an octopus as a seductive female. This makes it a lot easier to be objective about his bizarre and gruesome end when it is described with such clear and clinical precision at the end of the story.



The Property of a Lady

The Property of a Lady Summary

James Bond is having a very uneventful day at the Ministry of Defense headquarters when M, his boss, calls him in to his office to meet a Dr. Fanshawe. M explains that Fanshawe is an expert on antique jewelery and also an advisor to H.M. Customs and the CID on this subject.

Dr. Fanshawe now explains that H.M. Customs recently intercepted a parcel in the registered mail which contained a piece of Fabérgé jewelery with a declared value of £100,000. A Home Office warrant was obtained and the package clandestinely opened. Inside was the famous Emerald Sphere by Fabérgé and papers, in Russian and French, stating the provenance of the piece. The parcel was addressed to a Miss Maria Freudenstein, and according to the provenance, she has inherited the Sphere from her grandfather, who originally commissioned the piece, through her mother who had died last year in Paris. Dr. Fanshawe continues that he made discreet inquiries on behalf of the British Museum and interviewed the lady. She confirmed the unlikely story of the provenance and, in the course of the interview, indicated that she works as a junior clerk at the MOD. inquiries at MI5 led Dr. Fanshawe to James Bond's section.

When Dr. Fanshawe leaves the Commander's office, he and Bond go over Miss Freudenstein's file. They both know that, in fact, she is a double agent working for the KGB and also that she has been deliberately given access to the Purple Cipher so that she can transmit secret information directly to the KGB. Bond's section uses this arrangement to feed a mixture of facts and misinformation to the KGB. This operation has been going on for three years, but Headquarters has been puzzled by the fact that no one from the KGB has attempted to contact Maria Freudenstein and that she has been living well within the means of her modest MOD salary.

M and Bond agree that the Fabérgé Sphere most probably originated from the hidden treasures of the Kremlin, that its provenance has been faked, and that it is now being used to reward its double agent working inside Headquarters for her services. This pleases M in that it gives him proof of the KGB's acceptance of the Purple Cipher and he will now upgrade the misinformation being fed to Maria Freudenstein. James Bond suggests that the forthcoming auction of the Fabérgé Sphere at Sotheby's will give them an opportunity to uncover Freudenstein's KGB controller, who will probably attend the sale to ensure that a suitably high price will be reached for the piece. M agrees, but cautions Bond that he cannot bid during the auction.

As part of the preparations to unmask the KGB controller at the Sotheby auction, James Bond calls on the firm of Wartski in Regent Street. They are the greatest Fabérgé dealers in the world and would certainly be in the bidding for the Sphere. He asks for Kenneth Snowman, whom Dr. Fanshawe refers to as the definitive expert on Fabérgé jewelery. Offering his credentials, Bond introduces himself as being a on a sort of liaison



mission and mentions that the credentials can only be checked with Sir Roger Vallance. He also reassures Snowman by showing a detailed knowledge of the "Old Russia" establishment on Fifth Avenue. When they are alone, Bond says his business is about the Emerald Sphere, which is to be auctioned at Sotheby's next day. He quickly decides he can trust Snowman, and explains that his organization is only interested in identifying a possible bidder at the auction. He goes on to reveal that he is really from the Ministry of Defense, that everything he says comes under the Official Secrets Act, and that his organization is expecting a Soviet agent to be bidding in the auction for the Emerald Sphere. He understands that Wartski's will be the leader in the bidding. He says he would like to attend the auction himself and asks Snowman to help him in identifying the Soviet bidder.

Kenneth Snowman reassures Bond that his discretion is guaranteed and he will be delighted to help. However, it will not be all that easy, as Peter Wilson, the head of Sotheby's, will be the auctioneer, and he will have to maintain professional secrecy on the matter of who is bidding. If a bidder has previously arranged with Wilson for a specific signal to indicate his bid, then the only way to identify the bidder will be to see where the auctioneer is looking and to detect a sign when the bid is taken. Snowman himself will be leading the Wartski's bidding and he thanks Bond for the warning about the additional interest in the piece. He says that there will be other bidders and that Sotheby's has arranged for the auction to be a gala performance, with many aristocrats and wealthy people invited to attend. He then gives Bond his wife's entrance ticket to the event, which is next to his own seat, reassuring Bond that he will place his wife elsewhere in the auction room. Bond then leaves Wartski's and returns to headquarters to make additional arrangements to cover the Sotheby's event.

The next day, Bond can feel his excitement mounting at the thought of the impending operation. On the spur of the moment, he makes an excuse to visit the Communications Section, located next to his own. There he sees Maria Freudenstein in a small room with two other assistants, working at the cipher machines. He jokes with the other two girls, but Maria Freudenstein merely looks up and then returns to her work. He finds her a plain and unattractive woman and inwardly recoils at the thought that he is watching a KGB agent at work just yards from his own office. He speculates how she will change her lifestyle when she becomes a wealthy woman later on in the day. He knows, of course, that if for a moment, her handlers in Moscow catch any inkling of the deception being practiced by the MOD, her handlers will ruthlessly eliminate her. However, he reminds himself that it is none of his business and that the girl is willingly playing her role in the dirty business of espionage.

The entrance ticket tells Bond that the "Sale of a Casket Magnificent Jewels and a Unique Object of Vertu by Carl Fabérgé, the Property of a Lady", will begin at 9.30 pm. When he arrives at his assigned seat next to Kenneth Snowman, the bidding for Lot 41 is underway. The lofty room, lit by two central chandeliers and strip lighting along the walls, is packed with about a hundred dealers and spectators. The walls are decorated with many tapestries and oil paintings and the press photographers and television cameramen are placed on a platform jutting out from a large tapestry. The atmosphere in the room is tense with excitement. All eyes are on the slim young man dressed



immaculately in a dinner jacket with a red carnation in the buttonhole. This is Peter Wilson, head of Sotheby's, who is conducting the auction. He speaks in a quiet but authoritative voice, without a single unnecessary gesture, as he conducts the proceedings rather like the conductor of a large symphony orchestra. He glances at someone in the first row where the flick of a catalogue indicates another bid, and the litany of the auctioneers voice announces another rise in price. When the bids dry up, Wilson pointedly surveys the assembled throng for any last-minute offers, announces the final price, and lowers the hammer head down on to the dais, softly but with authority. He indicates the winning bidder and a sales clerk proceeds down the aisle to confirm the bidder's identity and his previously arranged payment particulars

An expectant hush sweeps over the crowd and an elderly porter, in a grey uniform with wine red sleeves and collar, removes Lot 42 from its case and places in on a black velvet support. Even the clerks and experts behind the rostrum, all of whom have seen many European Crown jewels, lean forward to get a better look at the Fabérgé Terrestrial Globe. It is a cricket ball sized emerald sphere whose scintillating green glow is offset by the incandescent glitter of the various jewels and the opalescent meridians on its surface. Peter Wilson surveys the room briefly and then begins the bidding on Lot 42, an object of vertu by Carl Fabérgé, at twenty thousand pounds. The bidding quickly rises to the value of one hundred thousand pounds. A young man on a raised platform to the left of the auctioneer speaks softly into a telephone and then nods to Peter Wilson. Snowman tells Bond that he is probably bidding for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in America, and adds that Bond is now on his own as he, Snowman will now enter the bidding.

When the young man on the telephone declines to bid further than one hundred and thirty thousand pounds, Peter Wilson looks away from him and apparently receives a bid for one hundred and forty thousand pounds from somewhere in the back of the room. The crowd applauds but Bond cannot see where Wilson is looking and he leaves his seat and goes and stands amongst a group of reporters to the left of the auctioneer's rostrum. Wilson is now looking at Snowman, who seemingly hesitates for what seems an eternity before he raises five fingers to indicate he is raising the bid by five thousand pounds. Bond recognizes that Snowman, by delaying his bid, is putting pressure on the remaining counter bidder. After another piercing glance to the back of the room Wilson raises the bid to one hundred and fifty thousand and Bond realizes that some signal has been exchanged but that he cannot see it nor where it is coming from.

Snowman's bids are becoming more and more delayed and Bond knows that the auction is winding down and he has got absolutely nowhere. Then with a shock of excitement he sees the signal. A thickset man at the back of the room has discreetly reached upwards and taken off his glasses. Simultaneously there is no counter bid to Snowman's last one and the auctioneer, with one last fall of the hammer, tells Snowman his bid is the winning bid. In a flash of intuition, Bond realizes that the prearranged signal to the auctioneer is the removal of the glasses, indicating that this bidder is withdrawing—if the bidder's glasses stay on, he is bidding in increments of ten thousand pounds.



While the crowd applauds the successful end of the auction, Bond manages to slip to the back of the room and positions himself behind the mystery bidder. As he follows the man he remembers who he is. It is Piotr Malinowski, officially an Agricultural Attaché at the Russian Embassy. Bond also notes that the MI5 cameraman, under the cover of a Sunday Times reporter, has recorded the face of Malinowski. He follows the quarry outside and picks up his official vehicle, a taxi with the meter down, waiting for him outside in Bond Street. He tells his driver to follow the man who picks up his own taxi. They follow him to Kensington Palace Gardens where the first building on the left is the massive Soviet Embassy. If he turns in there Bond knows he has clinched the identification. The man does, and his entrance is also noted by the policemen on guard who are specially placed there for that purpose.

Bond tells his driver to take him to Headquarters. There is now enough evidence to warrant the Foreign Office's declaration of Piotr Malinowski as being a *persona non grata* because of espionage activities. In the grim chess game of international espionage, the Soviets have lost a major player.

The Property of a Lady Analysis

The Property of a Lady is told entirely from the point of view of James Bond. The plot of the story is quite simple. Bond is to attend the auction sale of a piece of Fabergé jewelry whose provenance has been faked by the KGB in the Kremlin to allow them to reward a double agent operating within the Secret Service Headquarters in Whitehall. The attraction of the story is in the depiction of the world of precious antique jewelry in London and the drama and pageantry of the auction sales at Sotheby's. From the details of the fake provenance outlining the lives of white Russian émigrés in Paris to the ornate prose describing valuable pieces of antique jewelry, the reader is able to experience the world in which such treasures circulate. The device of quoting directly from the Sotheby's catalogue is very successful in defining the atmosphere and setting of the sales.

The character of Kenneth Snowman is essential for the exposition of the methods and techniques of bidding and also as an expert guide to the conduct of an auction. The drama of the bidding for the Fabergé Emerald Sphere is masterfully presented; so much so that the successful identification of the KGB Resident Director is almost an anticlimax.



The Living Daylights

The Living Daylights Summary

James Bond is on the famous Centaury Firing Range at Bisley, where he is testing a rifle with an infrared scope. The rifle he is using is an American made .308 caliber International Experimental Target rifle. A five shot magazine that should not produce any fade at five hundred yards has replaced the usual single bolt action. The Chief Range Officer is pleased with the results, as Bond is consistently getting bullseyes even in the fading light. When he is finished, Corporal Menzies comes from the Pavilion of the Gun Club and dismantles the rifle and its stand. Bond tells him to tell the armourer that it is a very fine weapon, and when the Corporal says he is finding his own way back to London, he wishes him goodnight. The Range Officer hands Bond a record of his shoot, two sighting shots and then ten rounds at each one hundred yards up to the maximum of five hundred yards. He compliments Bond on his fine shooting, particularly in the poor light.

The Range Officer is curious about this man Bond, this man who has suddenly appeared after a flurry of signals from the Ministry of Defense and has scored so well after the range has been closed because of bad light. When they are at Bond's car, he comments on the specially modified Continental Sports Saloon. Bond tells him he had it modified for him personally. Bond starts his car, and with the exhaust booming, drives off in the direction of the London Road. The Range Officer turns back to try and find out more about Bond at the Gun Club. He assumes Bond is off on a rendezvous with a woman, as he thinks to himself that Bond would be the sort who could have any girl he wanted.

However, James Bond is not off on a romantic assignment: he is going to the airport to catch a plane to Berlin where he will try and see a man and shoot him dead.

Bond recalls the meeting he had had with M. He had sensed trouble by M's demeanor. One of their agents, known only as 272, will try to cross over from East Berlin within three nights starting tomorrow. He has signaled where he will cross but the coded message has been intercepted by the KGB who now know all the details of the crossing attempt and have arranged for one of their men, called "Trigger" to shoot 272 as he tries to escape. The Chief of Staff, Tanqueray, is convinced that Bond, with his double 0 designation, is the only man to take out the KGB sniper. As a result, Bond had gone to Bisley to practice with the weapon he will use in light conditions close to those that will be prevalent during the three nights of the scheduled escape attempt.

When he gets to Berlin, Bond follows his instructions and takes a taxi to a building at the corner of Kochstrasse and Williamstrasse. There, on the fourth floor, he is met by Captain Paul Sender, Number 2 of the Secret Service Station WB. He shows Bond the layout of the apartment and the preparations for the executioner's firing point. Sender switches off the lights and shows Bond the window and the bed pushed up against it



that will be the firing position. By getting on the bed and looking out of the window through the partially drawn curtains, Bond sees the thickly weeded, bombed out ground which stretches the one hundred and fifty yards to the brightly lit Zimmerstrasse. This street is the border and beyond it is more bombed out and weeded ground that will give cover to the escaping agent. Agent 272, however, has no cover for the thirty odd yards of the Zimmerstrasse, and Sender tells Bond that he thinks the KGB sniper will use this open ground as the place he will be able to target the escaping agent.

To Bond's left, on the Soviet side of the frontier, Sender points out the new ten-story brick building which he says is the Haus der Ministerien, an important center for East Berlin. Most of the windows in this building are lit day and night, but there is a block of four on the corner above the street intersection that are dark. From one of these four windows they can anticipate the KGB sniper will be taking aim as the fleeing agent attempts to cross the street. Sender has all the ranges and positions to give to Bond. He tells him that during the period from six to seven in the evening there is very little pedestrian traffic, mostly civil service people entering and leaving the building.

Later, after Sender has gone to sleep, Bond remains awake, thinking about the unpleasant task ahead. He will have not more than five seconds to spot the KGB sniper, and will then have to kill him with one shot. Unable to relax, he finally goes to the bathroom and selects two Tuinal sleeping pills from the array of medicines in the cabinet. The effect is immediate and he sleeps undisturbed until midday the next day.

Bond spends the day at the Zoo and wandering around Berlin, which he finds a rather cold and depressing place. When he returns to the apartment, he finds a young man in the street outside tinkering with an Opel automobile. It backfires frequently. Sender tells Bond that the young man is one of theirs and the backfire from the engine will cover the sounds of Bond's rifle. They kill time, with Bond reading a lurid novel, until five-thirty, when Bond takes up his position. Sender confirms that there has been no change of plan from Headquarters and Bond scans the four darkened windows that they agree on will be Trigger's position. He cannot see into the darkened interiors, but there is no sign of movement.

Below in the street outside that part of the Ministry Building that is a Ministry of Culture, twenty girls from a woman's orchestra form a laughing noisy procession as they carry their instruments, violins, wind instruments, and four drums along the street. Bond's Sniperscope briefly picks up the image of a girl carrying a cello case. She is taller than the others and her long fair hair shines like gold under the streetlights as she laughs gaily with her companions who flank her. As she enters the building, Bond catches a glimpse of a beautiful pale profile. The image of this girl momentarily disconcerts Bond. He feels a stab of passion the like of which he hasn't experienced since he was much younger, and he has to make a mental effort to turn his mind to concentrate on the task at hand.

From inside the Ministry come the sounds of the orchestra as they begin to play, but then all else is forgotten as Bond and Sender detect movement in the lower right hand aperture of the four darkened windows. Bond makes a small adjustment to the



Snipersope and he sees a thick black object slide out from the interior. It moves deliberately from side to side to cover the stretch of the Zimmerstrasse between the two areas of wasteland. Then it remains still. Bond can just make out the flash eliminator on the muzzle, the telescopic sight, and the thick protruding magazine. He recognizes it as a Kalashnikov submachine gun, and tells Sender that the KGB will be using saturation firing. Sender must look out for their agent 272 and he will have to remain glued to sight on the window from which the submachine gun is pointing. He knows the operator will have spotters in the other windows, but he also knows that the gunman will have to show himself to fire his weapon.

Bond delicately adjusts the cross hairs in his scope so that he is aiming at the darkness behind the submachine gun butt. It will be a body shot; he will not attempt to aim at the head of the man called Trigger. Frozen in his position beneath the dark hood he is wearing, Bond concentrates on keeping his trigger finger free from sweat. He can still hear the orchestra playing and his thoughts turn to the girl. He wonders how old she would be and what she would look like playing the cello with instrument between her thighs. He and Sender wait until the submachine gun is gently withdrawn into its enfolding darkness and the window sashes of the four windows are lowered. The deadly game is over, but there are two more nights to go.

The next day and next night watch are repetitions of the first day, but now tension is building between Sender and Bond. At five o'clock, Bond pours himself a large whiskey before donning his camouflage hood and Sender objects, even threatening to call the Head of Station. Bond heatedly points out that it is he that is going to have to kill a man and that he really does not care what Sender thinks or does after it is over. As on the previous watch, Bond sees the beautiful blonde cello player and watches her disappear down Williamstrasse after the orchestra finishes playing. He wonders where she lives and in what kind of apartment.

By the third night, knowing that the escape attempt is certain to take place, the tension in the apartment is like a fog. At five minutes past six Sender excitedly reports movement among the weeds that then stops. Then their man is visible, his face is blackened, and he is going to have to go over a broken wall to make his last sprint. Bond tells Sender to have the Opel begin backfiring in the street below. Bond can now definitely see movement in the sniper's window. A black covered arm and hand reaches below the submachine gun stock. From his position Sender exclaims that their man is going to jump the wall and then behind the cross hairs in his scope Bond sees the face of Trigger! The same pale profile and gold hair that has obsessed him for the last three nights are perfectly etched on the stock of the Kalishnikov. She is dead, he thinks, but then before the submachine gun starts to spew its deadly fire, he instantaneously thumbs the adjustment on his weapon and squeezes the trigger.

His bullet hits her on the hand, and tears the submachine gun off its stand and smashes it against the side of the window frame. Sender calls out that 272 is over and safe. Bond throws himself sideways as a searchlight in one of the darkened windows switches on and a burst of automatic fire sends bullets crashing into the apartment. The Opel can be heard racing off down the street and behind the zips and zings of flying bullets comes



the faint sound of an orchestra. The image of Trigger surfaces into Bond's mind. Had she carried her weapon to and fro in the cello case each day? Were all the members of the orchestra KGB members? How badly had she been injured? There is no way he can see if she leaves with the orchestra, his observation point is still under fire. He will never see her again.

Sender cannot understand why Bond deliberately missed his shot and did not kill the KGB sniper. He reports the fact on his radio and says Bond will turn in his own report. Bond does not attempt to hide the fact that he pulled his shot. He tells Sender that Trigger was the blonde girl with the cello to whom he had taken a fancy. Sender still insists he should have killed the sniper no matter who it was.

Bond suddenly feels remorse for the enemy agent with whom he has had this long range, one-sided romance. She had been doing the same job as he and now she would probably be in worse trouble than he was. She would probably be kicked out of the KGB and court-martialled. As for himself, he welcomes the probable loss of the Double O classification, but as he will tell the Head of Station, that girl will not do anymore shooting—she probably lost her left hand and certainly had the living daylights scared out of her.

The Living Daylights Analysis

The story is told from the point of view of James Bond. It opens with Bond evaluating and practicing with a special rifle at the Bisley firing range. He does extremely well. The Range Officer is very curious as to his identity but finds out nothing except that he is envious of Bond's sports car and his perceived social advantages. As Bond drives away, instead of to a glamorous rendezvous he is in fact going to the airport to catch a flight to Berlin.

A flashback follows to earlier in the day when he is called into M's office and the assignment and its background is explained to him. He is to shoot a KGB sniper who will be trying to prevent an escaping agent from crossing over to West Berlin.

Then the action reverts back to real time, with Bond holed up at his vantage point for three days and nights waiting for the crossing attempt. The tension between Bond and Sender, the man from the West Berlin station appointed to help him, is an opportunity for Bond to express his reluctance to kill his opposite number, who has been detected in the building on the other side of the frontier. Unfortunately, the tone of the protestations does not ring true and gives the impression that Bond is being sanctimonious. Though there are many assumptions in the Bond stories, it is perhaps a little presumptuous for the author to assume that the general public will know that a Wykehamist is a former student of a respectable English public school and not a member of some obscure religious sect.

As the third night approaches, the build-up of tension is very successfully engineered, and Bond's preoccupation with the tall golden haired cello player makes the



invulnerable man about town more human than in other stories. The climax, when 272 escapes and the true identity of Trigger is revealed, is successfully depicted with Sender calling out the progress of the escape from his observation position as a counterpoint to Bond's thoughts and reactions. One technical detail is lost in the telling: how does Sender see Bond make the instantaneous adjustment to his sight to change his aim so slightly if he is monitoring the action from a different point of view? He only has Bond's word for the fact that Bond's shot did not kill the KGB sniper. This is a minor detail because the crossing was successful and Bond does not bother to deny he deliberately pulled his shot. As it is, a lasting impression from the story is Bond's vulnerability to mundane attractions and the poignant yet vivid description of the cello player.



007 in New York

007 in New York Summary

James Bond, traveling as David Barlow, is going through customs and immigration at New York's Idlewild airport. He has flown in on BAOC's Monarch flight from London and estimates that the FBI or the CIA will not detect him in the twenty-four hours he will be spending in New York. His mission is to warn a young woman, who used to be a first class staff officer for the Secret Service, that the American authorities are getting close to finding out that she is cohabiting with a KGB agent. The agent is attached to the UN and M is sending Bond to tell her that the CIA is close to identifying her. Of course it would be very embarrassing if the CIA were to find out about Bond and his mission. Bond's rendezvous with the woman is scheduled for three o'clock outside the Reptile House at the Central Park Zoo.

Bond uses the services of Commander Carey's chauffeur-driven Cadillac to take him to the Astor Hotel in the Times Square area. It is a part of New York that he likes. As he is being driven through the traffic, he reminisces about the other hotels he has enjoyed when staying at in New York: the Washington Square, the Battery in Harlem, the Ritz Carlton, the St. Regis, and the Carlyle. They are all gone now except the Carlyle. He begins to make plans for the time from when he arrives at the hotel to when he has to be at the Central Park Zoo.

He will go on a short shopping trip to get some of the very few items that can only be obtained in New York, like the incomparable Owens tooth brushes, the Gillette type razors which are so much better than the actual Gillette products, and some of those Izod golf socks from Tripler's. Finally, he will go to Abercrombie's to look over the latest gadgets on their shelves and to make a dinner date with Solange who works in the Indoor Games Department.

For his lunch he will go to the '21' for old times sake and have a couple of dry martinis at the bar, and then he will pass up the chance for what he considers the best meal in New York, oyster stew with cream crackers and a Miller High Life at the Oyster Bar at the Grand Central. Instead he will take a table in The Edwardian Room at the Plaza and order smoked salmon and the particular scrambled eggs he once instructed them how to make.

As the Cadillac continues on its way to Manhattan, Bond idly wonders whether America is getting too obsessed with hygiene, especially with regard to food. Even Solange would retire to the bathroom after they had made love and gargle with TCP when they should have been relaxing in each other's arms. Bond smiles at the thought of her and wonders what they will do after their dinner at Lutece. Perhaps they will go looking for that bar that Felix Leiter has told him about which is a rendezvous for sadists and masochists of both sexes. Or again, they might just go to The Embers for some of Solange's favorite jazz.



The Cadillac is now soaring over the Triborough Bridge before entering Manhattan. Bond smiles, he enjoys planning for his pleasures. If things go wrong he will simply make some changes; after all, New York has everything.

In fact, after his scrambled eggs everything does go wrong for Bond. Instead of the perfectly planned evening he has to get on the phone to Head Quarters in London. It is only by the most amazing luck that he is able to meet the English girl beside the skating rink at the Rockefeller and then she bursts into tears and threatens suicide. He feels that it is all the fault of the city of New York because, believe it or not, there is no Reptile House at the Central Park Zoo.

007 in New York Analysis

As noted in the preface to this story, it was included in this book to counterbalance an article written by Ian Fleming that was very critical of New York.

The point of view is that of James Bond as he travels (incognito) to New York on a one-day trip to warn an Englishwoman that her friendship with a KGB agent is about to be uncovered by the CIA. The whole piece is a series of reflections, starting with the uncomfortable monotony of being processed through immigration and customs formalities at a large airport. As he is driven from the airport to his hotel in downtown New York, Bond mentally reviews his plans for his enjoyment of his impending twenty-four hours in New York. He reminisces about the places and pleasures of the city where he once had a small apartment.

The tone of the piece (it can hardly be called a story) is that of a travelogue in a gourmet travel magazine. It is complete with a recipe for "Scrambled Eggs 'James Bond'" and instructions on how to serve and present it. The litany of great hotels that no longer exist lends a rather melancholy air to the account.

The writing is lighthearted, with Bond inventing robbery schemes based on people he sees in the airport line, then considering the idea of a missing colonial shipment of toast racks and, in his mind, composing a letter to the Herald Tribune about the possible use of automobile wrecks to counter coastal erosion.

The only redeeming interest is the introduction of a woman called Solange, who works at the Indoor Games Department at Abercrombie's, and with whom Bond is expecting to have a date that evening. The Indoor Games Department is presumably a tongue-in-cheek joke on the author's part and the name has French connotations. The remark that James has been unable to trace the location where one can view pornographic films in sound and color reminds the reader that the setting is in a bygone era before hard core television pornography became available at the touch of a button.

The narrative abruptly ends in a single paragraph, almost as if the author has suddenly become bored with it. The location of the rendezvous, the Reptile House at the Central Park Zoo, does not exist, and Bond has to scramble frantically to recover and complete the assignment. He does, but blames the non-existent rendezvous place on New York.

Of course the reader knows that Bond once lived in New York and is conversant with all the hotels and eating places in the City and he, himself, was the person who had made the arrangement.



Characters

James Bond

James Bond, or Commander Bond, is a member of the Double O section at the Secret Service Headquarters. He is introduced as Commander Bond of the Research Department by M, who always addresses Bond as "007". His boss M frequently sends James Bond on assignments, like a projectile, to anywhere in the world there is a problem in the affairs of the Secret Service. The assignments are varied and in many different parts of the world. In this book, he goes to Jamaica to interrogate a major retired from the Royal Marines, he attends an auction at Sotheby's to unmask the London Resident Director of the KGB, he goes to West Berlin to engage in a sniper duel with the KGB trigger man during an attempted escape by an allied agent, and he goes to New York City.

Always traveling in first class, staying at nothing but the best hotels, and eating at the world's finest restaurants, James Bond has developed sophisticated and fastidious tastes. The "007 in New York" story is a catalogue of his personal tastes and preferences. What little the reader is told about Bond's private life indicates his fastidious tastes continue away from the job. His car is a custom modified Bentley Continental Sports car, he smokes Morland Specials, and his martini has to be shaken, not stirred.

Bond is apparently a bachelor and is characterized by men who meet him as being the sort of fellow who gets all the girls he wants. However, on assignment in Berlin, he eschews a visit to the well-known establishment on Clausewitzstrasse, and kills time by reading a German pornographic novel. In New York he has a very sophisticated lady friend, but he is a little put off by her attention to oral hygiene and her tendency to take lots of pills.

In the James Bond stories, there is very little systematic description of him. His physical description and the details of his personal life are inferred, rather than revealed, by sporadic exposition during the stories. One might conclude that his role is to be an avatar for the reader, who can assume the mantle of his identity without being distracted by concrete details.

Major Dexter Smythe (Octopussy)

After a lifetime of self-indulgence and tropical sloth, Major Dexter Smythe, OBE, Royal Marines (Retd), has become a shadow of his former self. He used to be a handsome military officer who made easy sexual conquests with the servicewoman with whom he came into contact, but now, after suffering from two coronary thrombosis incidents, he is in final stages of dipsomania. In 1941 he had volunteered to be seconded from the Royal Marines to Combined Operations Headquarters under Mountbatten. He was an



excellent German speaker, as his mother had come from Heidelberg. Because of this, he became an advance interrogator on Cross Channel operations. Surviving two years of this life, he was awarded the Military OBE and was selected to lead the "A" section of the Miscellaneous Objects Bureau, a combined unit under the Secret Service and Combined Operations. The "A" force was allotted to work in the Tyrol.

At the end of the war Major Smythe retired from the Royal Marines, married Mary Parnell whom he had known during the war, and went to live in Jamaica. After several years in this tropical paradise, his wife Mary died of an overdose of sleeping pills, and he has moved into a small villa on the North Shore of Jamaica where he lives alone.

He misses his wife Mary now that she is gone, although he knows he was never really deeply in love with her. He has not found anyone to replace her, and spends his life smoking and drinking himself to an early grave. His only interest is in skin diving on the reef beyond the beach at his villa.

Maria Freudenstein (The Property of a Lady)

Maria Freudenstein is a junior clerk in the Communications Section at the Secret Service Headquarters. She is also a known KGB double agent who is being fed misinformation for transmission to Moscow. This operation "Purple Cipher" has been going on for three years. Maria was born in Paris in 1935 and helped her mother run the Tulip Escape Route during the war. After the war, while employed as an interpreter at the Naval Attaché's office, she was compromised by her mother's old Resistance friends and recruited to work for the NKVD. She is now a British citizen and works as an agent for the KGB inside the Secret Service, who know all about her activities and are using her as a conduit for misinformation to the KGB. Bond finds her unattractive and notes that her pale, pimply skin gives her an unwashed appearance. She has become the inheritor of the Fabergé Emerald Sphere.

The Cello Player (The Living Daylights)

The cello player is one of the members of an all woman's orchestra which goes in and out of the Ministry of Culture while Bond is waiting to cover the escaping agent's crossing of the no man's land between East and West Berlin. A tall girl, she has long straight blond hair and her pale profile shows gaiety and happiness as she chats with her fellow musicians.

Solange (007 in New York)

Solange (the reader only knows her first name) is James Bond's date for the evening. She works at the Indoor Games Department at Abercrombie's. The reader knows nothing about her except that Bond is confident he will get a date with her. From the intimate details his reminiscences divulge, a long-term relationship is implied. He recalls that every time she and he have made love she retires to the bathroom for a long



quarter of an hour after which he can not kiss her because she has gargled with TCP. Bond thinks she is slightly hypochondriac but it could be that his smoking gives him bad breath, or, this could be a discreet admission that they have been indulging in oral sex. Solange likes going to the Embers where her favorite jazz is played.

Hannes Oberhauser (Octopussy)

Hannes Oberhauser is the best mountain guide in Kitzbuhel. He has a limp and speaks some English as he used to be a ski instructor before the war. He becomes friendly with Major Smythe when he is promised exoneration from being a Gestapo sympathizer. One of his prewar ski pupils was James Bond.

Mary Smythe neé Parnell (Octopussy)

Mary Smythe is the ex-girlfriend from wartime MOB headquarters whom Major Smythe married when he resigned from the Royal Marines. From a solid middle-class family, she has no idea of the ramifications of the currency laws or the origin of Major Smythe's gold. When she is unable to prevent his heavy drinking, she becomes an addict to sleeping pills and takes an overdose in a fit of anger after a drunken row. The overdose is lethal.

The Foo Brothers (Octopussy)

The Foo brothers are the principals of a leading Chinese Export and Import business in Kingston. They agree to sell Major Smythe's gold bars and have an arrangement to give him the cash from the monthly sale of portions of the gold.

Dr. Jimmy Greaves

Dr. Greaves is the doctor in Kingston who has treated Major Smythe after his two coronary thromboses and who performs the autopsy on Major Smythe's corpse.

Mr. Kenneth Snowman (The Property of a Lady)

Mr. Kenneth Snowman is the world's leading expert on Fabergé art objects. He is the chief expert at Wartski's and he agrees to help Bond at the Sotheby's auction, where he is also the main bidder for the Fabergé Emerald Sphere.

Captain Paul Sender (The Living Daylights)

Captain Paul Sender helps James Bond in his assigned sniper location. Late of the Welsh Guards and an ex-Wykehamist, he is second in command to Tanqueray. A sober



and careful career officer, he is in charge of chaperoning James Bond on the assignment.

Tanqueray (The Living Daylights)

Tanqueray is the name of the Chief of Station in West Berlin.

Trigger (The Living Daylights)

The KGB code name for the marksman who will try and gun down the escaping allied agent is "Trigger".

Chief Range Officer (The Living Daylights)

Overseeing Bond's shooting at the Bisley Firing range is the Chief Range officer. He has the rank of Major and tries, unsuccessfully, to find out details about Bond.

The English Girl (007 in New York)

Bond's assignment is to meet a nice English girl who used to work for M as a staff officer and who now lives in New York. Bond has come to New York to warn her that the CIA will soon discover her liaison with a man known to be a KGB agent.



Objects/Places

Wavelets (Octopussy)

Wavelets is the name of the small villa on Jamaica's North Shore to which Major Smythe has moved after the death of his wife.

Kingston, Jamaica (Octopussy)

Kingston is the capital of the island of Jamaica, in the Caribbean, where the Smythes settle after they leave England after the end of World War II.

Octopus (Octopussy)

The Octopus is a reef dwelling cephalopod. Major Smythe has located one hiding among the rocks just off his beach and he has been feeding it fish scraps in an effort to tame it and make it a pet. He refers to it as "Octopussy" or "My Pussy" and imagines it to be female.

Scorpion Fish (Octopussy)

The scorpion fish (*Scorpaena Plumini*) is a dangerous and venomous reef fish. It disguises itself as seaweed encrusted rock and carries its poison in spines along its back.

Reef Fish (Octopussy)

On the reef beyond the beach at the villa, Major Smythe enjoys swimming among the tropical fish that abound in the area. Dexter Smythe has come to regard them as his people; he thinks they reciprocate his love for them. His special favorites are a dark-blue demoiselle he calls Beau Gregory, a jewelfish that resembles a perfume bottle, a butterfly fish, and an indigo parrotfish he names Blue Boy.

Miscellaneous Objectives Bureau (MOB) (Octopussy)

The Miscellaneous Objectives Bureau is a wartime group formed jointly by the British Secret Service and Combined Operations. Major Smythe is given a temporary rank of Lieutenant Colonel and is put in charge of "A" group. Their task is to clean up Gestapo and Abwehr hideouts when Germany collapses.



Ober Aurach (Kitzbuhl) (Octopussy)

Ober Aurach is a town near Kitzbuhl, Austria where Major Smythe's "A" group is searching for Gestapo fugitives and their hideouts.

Franziskaner Halt (Octopussy)

Franziskaner Halt is the name of the mountaineer's refuge on a saddle below the Kaiser Mountains to the north of Kitzbuhl. It is also the location of the cairn marking the location of buried the German gold.

Webley & Scott Revolver (Octopussy)

The Webley & Scott revolver is issued to Major Smythe in Europe during the war. It is a .45 caliber firearm with the serial number 8967/362.

Reichsbank Gold & Mint Marks (Octopussy)

The two gold bars Major Smythe uncovers are issued by the Reichsbank. They are stamped with a swastika in a circle below an eagle and dated 1943. The Reichsbank routinely adulterated its gold with five percent lead.

Sotheby & Co.(The Property of a Lady)

Sotheby & Co are well known dealers and auctioneers of fine art objects. Their establishment is on Bond Street.

Fabergé Emerald Sphere (The Property of a Lady)

The Fabergé Emerald Sphere is a terrestrial globe designed in 1917 by Carl Fabergé for a Russian gentleman. It is made from a large matrix of Siberian emeralds of approximately one thousand and three hundred carats. The globe is ornamented with diamonds and gold collets.

Wartski's (The Property of a Lady)

The world's greatest experts and dealers in Fabergé objects is a company called Wartski; their office is on Regent Street.



Purple Cipher (The Property of a Lady)

The Purple Cipher is created especially for the operation of feeding false information to the KGB. It is used to encode and decode classified information by Maria Freudenstein for transmission to the CIA.

Double O section (The Property of a Lady)

The Double O section is that section of the Secret Service in which James Bond is stationed. Other sections are Section 100, responsible for running double agents, the Communications Section, where Maria Freudenstein works, and the Scientific Research Section.

Century Firing Range, Bisley. (The Living Daylights)

Bond tests and demonstrates the rifle he will use in Berlin at the Century Range at Bisley, the famous site of International and Commonwealth shooting competitions.

Bond's Rifle (The Living Daylights)

The firearm that Bond is issued for his assignment is a modified .308 caliber International Experimental Target Rifle built by Winchester. It is equipped with an infrared Sniperscope.

Trigger's Weapon (The Living Daylights)

The KGB sniper, Trigger, is equipped with a gas operated Kalashnikov submachine gun. Its magazine holds thirty rounds of 7.62 millimeter ordinance and it is equipped with a telescopic sight.

The Crossing Point (The Living Daylights)

The place where the agent will attempt to cross is the wasteland between the intersection of three streets, Kochstrasse, Williamstrasse, and Zimmerstrasse. The actual border between East and West Berlin is formed by the Zimmerstrasse. This location, a year later, would be called Checkpoint Charlie; it is in the American zone. Bond is stationed on the fourth floor of a six-storied apartment at the corner of Koch and William streets.



Haus der Ministerien (The Living Daylights)

The Haus der Ministerien is a new ten-story block on the East Berlin side of the border. Its windows are usually brightly lit both day and night, but there are a block of four windows that are always dark and they will be the location of the KGB sniper and his spotters. Part of this building houses the Ministry of Culture, where an orchestra rehearses.

Bond's Car (The Living Daylights)

The personal car that Bond uses to get to and from Bisley and London Airport is a specially modified Bentley Continental Sports Saloon. It arouses envy in the Chief Range Officer.

Astor Hotel (007 in New York)

Bond's choice of hotel to stay at in New York is the Astor Hotel. He likes the atmosphere of the Times Square area.

Bond's Shopping Itinerary (007 in New York)

Bond's planned shopping itinerary includes Hoffritz on Madison Avenue for Gillette-type razor, Triplers for Izod golf socks, Scribner's Book Store where there is a salesman with a good nose for thrillers, and Abercrombie's for their new range of gadgets.

Scrambled Eggs

Scrambled eggs "James Bond" is the egg dish that Bond taught the headwaiter at the Edwardian Room to make. The accoutrements, also specified, might cause difficulty for the average housewife, as they include namely Taittinger Pink Champagne and copper dishes for service. Given the wide range of breads available, it is strange that Bond does not specify a particular bread to be used for the hot buttered toast.

The Edwardian Room (007 in New York)

The Edwardian Room is the restaurant at the Plaza Hotel where Bond has lunch.



The Reptile Room at the Central Park Zoo (007 in New York)

The Reptile Room at Central Park Zoo is the non-existent location initially chosen by Bond for the rendezvous. It is, therefore, the exception that proves the rule that New York has everything.



Themes

Women

All the characters in the four stories in this book, whose thoughts and emotions are described directly to the reader, are men. In the first story the primary character is Major Smythe, while in the remaining three pieces it is James Bond himself. In at least a couple of instances the whole male/female relationship topic is dismissed with remarks such as, " he made easy sexual conquests all his life", or, "Sort of fellow who got all the girls he wanted".

In the "Octopussy" story Dexter Smythe marries Mary Parnell, one of his wartime sexual conquests. As he admits in the narrative, he never really did love her, but seems to have chosen the lady to be his wife as part of his plan to escape to Jamaica. In one of the few scenes in these Bond stories where a woman's reaction is actually described, her sight of the gold bars seems to affect her conclusion that Major Smythe is a clever, handsome, and brave man. In later years his obsessive behavior and her inability to stop his destructive excesses in smoking and drinking drive her to accidental suicide. The reader must feel sympathy for her demonstrated concern for her husband. In a soliloquy, Smythe states that he misses her love for him and her "gay, untidy, chiding and often irritating presence". This minute thumbnail sketch of Mary is all the reader is given, but it leaves a concrete image of a very pleasant lady while reinforcing distaste for the self-centered Major.

The description of Symthe's attitude to the octopus, which he calls "My Pussy", is bizarrely intriguing. Without explicitly saying so, it is as if the author is describing a man whose personality and psyche is disintegrating just as is his abused body. Certainly the connotation of "Pussy" indicates that Smythe thinks of the cephalopod as a female figure. Is the story on the threshold of a descent into abnormal sexual fantasies?

The biographical details of Maria Freudenstein's life in "The Property of a Lady" is the most complete account of a woman in all the stories. The fact that Maria helped her mother in running the Tulip Escape Route in occupied France during the war is noted, but the fact that this was a brave and dangerous role elicits no sympathy from M or Bond. As a double agent working inside the Secret Service, she again demonstrates her cool courage and stamina, but when Bond makes a point of visiting her place of work, his "skin crawled minutely at this proximity to treachery and at the black and deadly secret locked up beneath the frilly white blouse". The black and deadly secret is, of course, partially the invention of the Secret Service, and Bond goes on to ascribe many negative attributes to this young woman, purely on the basis of his own prejudices and assumptions. Unlike Bond and M, the reader might bear a little more sympathy for Maria Freudenstein, now that they intend to increase the chances that her inadvertent betrayal of her KGB masters will be detected.



The cello player in "The Living Daylights" is described in a masterfully understated way. The effect on both Bond and the reader is surprisingly powerful. Bond admits that his attraction to this young woman is an emotion that reminds him of his youth. As he knows absolutely nothing about her, he can only speculate about the details of her life. In the final denouement, when she is recognized as "Trigger", he deliberately avoids killing her and pugnaciously admits this fact, not caring about the consequences to his own career. This chivalrous attitude contrasts vividly with his attitude toward Maria Freudenstein in the previous story. The reader cannot help wondering how much a role Bond's own prejudices play in his different attitudes towards the two KGB adversaries.

Bond's visit to New York is described in a lighthearted way in the final piece in the book. During the course of the exposition on his preferences for various places and people in New York, the reader is introduced to Solange. No description is provided, and the reader is left to fill in the blanks, as it were. The surprisingly intimate details about her pharmaceutical habits and her apparently immediate availability for a date, with no forewarning phone call, gives the reader an impression of a rather self-controlled, maybe even mercenary person. There is no indication of any affection in the relationship and the description is of a clinical encounter rather than an emotional one.

The roles that are played by woman in the four Bond stories in this book are quite varied, but their descriptions are either sparse or unsympathetic. When left to his own devices, Bond is more likely to indulge in escapism in the form of a pornographic novel. Certainly there is no description of him engaging in any active sex in Berlin or in New York, though the different locales and their repertoire of pleasures are known and available to him. The reader is left with the impression of a stereotypical and unemotional attitude towards woman by a man who has no intention of becoming emotionally engaged with members of the opposite sex.

The Secret World of Whitehall

Throughout the Bond stories the exposition of various facets of the world of the so-called Secret Service are revealed in a sporadic and haphazard way. If the reader tries consciously to build a picture of the Double O section and the organization of which it is a part, the picture can scarcely even qualify as a sketch. For a start, there is no mention of any other members of Bond's section. The fact that it is a section, with a lady, Mary Goodnight, as some sort of secretary or administrator is described in "The Property of a Lady". But why is Bond "007"—what happened to the individuals who were agents "001" to "006"? In the stories Bond appears to be exclusively at the behest of M. Any teamwork is provided by either members of MI5, as in "The Property of a Lady", or members of another station, as in the person of Spender in "The Living Daylights".

The outlines of a surrounding organization are given in the Sotheby's story when Bond is given permission by M to go to the auction but he has to square things with a Chief of Staff while M coordinates with "Five", presumably MI5. This same Chief of Staff appears again when Bond is detailed to go to Berlin.



After his visit to Watski's to set up the auction scenario, Bond goes off to spend the day in drab offices around Whitehall, planning the minute details of the operation. This is the only indication the reader has as to the location of Bond's headquarters. Readers who are conversant with the British environment will know that there really is an MI5 in the British government and that there is also an MI6, whose leader's identity is shrouded in secrecy. The technique of only revealing details of the supposedly fictional Secret Service when they are necessary for the story is very effective, firstly, because it insulates the author and publisher from any issues with the Official Secret's Act and, secondly, because it accurately portrays a world in which everything is shrouded in secrecy.

Bond the Bon Vivreur

A consistent trait in the Bond character is his exemplification of what only be described as a fastidious attention to details of gourmet food and a luxury lifestyle.

Sartorial elegance is hinted at in the sparse narrative brush strokes in the narratives. In the opening story "Octopussy", Major Smythe sees a tall man in a dark blue tropical suit. In another story, he is concerned about keeping his coat immaculate and the creases tidy, and when in Berlin he dresses in the drab, anonymous, middle-European clothes he has brought over for that purpose. The implication is that his ordinary clothes would stand out among the crowds in Berlin. The fact that Bond effortlessly commands attention in the finest restaurants in New York and blends immediately among the wealthy patrons at Sotheby's in London gives the reader the image of a tall, immaculately dressed individual.

The only reference to his personal possessions is when, at the Bisley shooting range, it emerges that he drives a Bentley Sports Saloon that has been specially modified by Mulliner's. It is a big car with a booming exhaust and excess power to spray gravel when it starts. This, combined with the fact that Bond smokes an exclusive brand of cigarettes, Morland Specials, and, only in extremis, switches to king-sized Chesterfields, are convincing details in the portrayal of a lifestyle a little above that of the ordinary man in the street. His shopping list in New York also serves to portray a man of fastidious and exclusive tastes.

It is Bond's description of his meals and the restaurants he frequents that are the main ingredient in the depiction of a high living gourmet. Even in drab Berlin he is able to enjoy a "high tea" of matjes herrings smothered in cream and onion rings and two double schnapps washed down with draught Lowenbrau. In New York, the exhaustive list of fine eating places and the special dishes to be found in each establishment is capped by the inclusion of a full-length recipe for "Scrambled Eggs 'James Bond'". The insistence that this cannot be properly served without Taittinger's Pink Champagne and on copper dishes is a nice touch in establishing James Bond as a distinguished member of the class of person characterized as a "Bon Vivreur".

Style

Point of View

The point of view for all the stories is the third person with the narrator recounting the events that take place and describing the thoughts and emotions of the characters involved. In the "Octopussy" story the character whose thoughts and emotions are made known to the reader are exclusively those of the main character Major Smythe. This story is different from the others in the collection in that James Bond appears only in a relatively minor role. His thoughts and emotions are only made known to the reader from his spoken words.

In the remaining three stories the main character is James Bond, and the narrative unfolds with a description of his thoughts and emotions interspersed with descriptions of action and dialogues with other characters. One small exception to this format occurs at the beginning of "The Living Daylights", when, in the opening scene at the Bisley shooting range, the thoughts of the Range Officer are described to the reader. In this case, and only in this case, does this device occur, and it serves as a means to register the effect that the main character, James Bond, has on unfamiliar third parties. Otherwise, all actions and events are seen exclusively through the eyes of James Bond. The reader is aware that all the events taking place are described and interpreted through the persona of James Bond, but part of the appeal of the writing is that the reader identifies with the hero and can, vicariously, assume his identity.

Setting

An attractive feature of the narrative is that, using the device of James Bond on assignment, the settings of the different stories vary widely. Inevitably, the description of each locale is presented in a knowledgeable and expert way, whether it is underwater tropical reefs in Jamaica, the foothills of the Tyrolean Alps, a fine art auction in London, or the boundary between East and West Berlin. Each setting is an integral part of the corresponding story. One feature, common to all stories, is the quintessential British flavor of both the hero, James Bond, and the environment at his headquarters. Typically, the rationale for each adventure is described in the form of instructions from M at the Secret Service Headquarters, located in the British Government complex called Whitehall in Central London.

Language and Meaning

The language in the dialogue and in the expression of internal thoughts embodies the grammar and vocabulary of upper middle class England. The text is studded with British acronyms and terms, such as HM Customs and Excise, Scotland Yard, and the inevitable references to bonnets and lorries. No attempt is made to explain these terms to the reader, who is assumed to be familiar with them. The intended audience is British,



or at least Commonwealth, as the Range Officer in "The Living Daylights", would have said.

The significance of the Double O designation of the section in which James Bond is a member, and as far as the reader is informed, the only member, is not specifically explained as being "licensed to kill." The reader is assumed to be cognizant of the general knowledge imbued in previously published James Bond novels, and the fact that this assumption has been made is not acknowledged by the author or the publisher. Usually, in this sort of situation, the author will include references to the previous accounts in the form of exposition in the story, or, the publisher will do so in a preface.

Structure

Each of the four stories in the book is a standalone narrative. However, each story has a common element in James Bond and the framework of organization surrounding his Double O section. The author, Ian Fleming, makes use of the flashback device in both the "Octopussy" and "The Living Daylights" stories. In the "Octopussy" story there is a flashback within a flashback when Major Smythe recalls his wartime experiences. These flashbacks are successful in the unfolding of the plots and do not impede the reader's comprehension of the story. In the case of "Octopussy", however, the very sparse exposition of the switch in context relies on dedicated concentration on the part of the reader—a section heading in the text or, at least a line of asterisks, would have been helpful.



Quotes

"Oberhauser, come out and show me some of the sights. Wonderful view up here."
Octopussy, p. 22

"Oh well, il faut souffrir pour être millionnaire!" Octopussy, p. 26

"He was a wonderful man. He was something of a father to me at a time when I happened to need one." Octopussy, p. 35

"Oh, Pussy, my Pussy, this is the last meal you'll get." Octopussy, p. 40

"You've heard of Fabergé no doubt, Famous Russian jeweler." The Property of a Lady, p. 51

"Sotheby's announced they would auction the piece, described as 'the property of a lady,' in a week from today." The Property of a Lady, p. 53

"Lot 42 - an object of Vertu by Carl Fabergé, Twenty thousand pounds I am bid." The Property of a Lady, p. 72

"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." The Living Daylights, p. 82

"Polovtsian Dances from Prince Igor. Anyway, six o'clock coming up, Hey! Right-hand bottom of the four windows! Watch out!" The Living Daylights, p. 99

"Just going to have another look. I've rather taken to that tall blonde with the 'cello." The Living Daylights, p. 101

"Look my friend, I've got to commit a murder tonight. Not you. Me. So be a good chap and stuff it, would you?" The Living Daylights, p. 103

"We don't stock 'em, mister. People think they're dirty." 007 in New York, p. 117

Topics for Discussion

Given the fact that Major Smythe regularly went skin diving off the beach at his villa in Jamaica, and that he had studied the effects of scorpion fish venom, what common sense precautions could he have taken to avoid being fatally poisoned? Would he have been able to extricate himself from the deadly embrace of Octopussy if he had not been stung by the scorpion fish? Discuss these possible scenarios.

James Bond specifically asks for the assignment to track down the murderer of his friend the Austrian guide Hannes Oberhauser. He flies all the way to Jamaica from London. When Major Smythe admits to the crime, James Bond betrays almost no emotion. What could be the reason for this?

There are very few details in the short stories in this book where the clothing worn by James Bond is described. On the other hand, there is a detailed description of the outfit worn by Dr. Fanshawe in "The Property of a Lady" and a description of the "uniform of his profession" when describing Captain Paul Sender in Berlin. Discuss what the reader is told about James Bond's attitude towards his clothes and what he would most likely be wearing in his office.

James Bond's supervisor M plans to arrange for the expulsion of the KGB's resident director after he has bid on the Fabergé Sphere. He also intends to up the grade of the misinformation being fed to the KGB via Maria Freudenstein. Are these actions wise? Do they not unnecessarily jeopardize the continued success of his own counter espionage operation? Discuss alternative courses of action available to M and his staff, including the all-important one of doing nothing.

Captain Paul Sender, who is appointed to be Bond's assistant in the Berlin operation, is disliked, and almost despised by James Bond. Is this something to do with him being a "Wykehamist"? What do we know about James Bond's educational background?

During the climax of the agent's escape from East to West Berlin, Sender is giving Bond a blow-by-blow account of the escapee's progress as he watches through his binoculars. After Bond fires his shot, Sender is supposed to have seen Bond's minute adjustment of his Sniperscope sight. Is this a small but significant technical error on the part of the author? Describe an alternative scenario for Bond's admission as to why he missed.

James Bond is something of a gourmet when it comes to food and drink. In the Berlin story there is a description of his "high tea", in the New York story there are descriptions of several meals, including a recipe, and his opinions about certain restaurants. Discuss Bond's tastes in food and drink and his philosophy in choosing restaurants.