

MACMILLAN READERS

UPPER LEVEL

IAN FLEMING

The Man with the Golden Gun

Retold by Helen Holwill



MACMILLAN

'Can I Help You?'

Everyone thought that Commander James Bond, one of the best agents in the British Secret Intelligence Service, was dead. A year ago the Head of the Secret Service, who was a man known only by the initial 'M', had chosen Bond to go to Japan on a highly important mission. His task had been to gather secret information from the Japanese about the Soviet Union. But the job had gone badly wrong and Bond had become involved in a dangerous battle with a known criminal called Blofeld. It was thought that Bond had killed Blofeld, but no one knew what had happened to Bond himself after the fight. He had simply disappeared. Those who knew him at the Secret Service had now given up any hope that he could still be alive.

However, Bond was not dead; he had been captured by the Russians. They had taken him to a secret medical institute in Leningrad, where the KGB began trying to brainwash⁸ him. After many months of torture⁹, Bond had grown weaker and weaker and could take no more. The KGB had finally won their battle to control his mind.

A man called 'Colonel Boris' had then spent several more months carefully preparing Bond for his return to England. He had told Bond exactly how to behave, what to wear and even which hotel to stay in. He had also told him who to contact at the Secret Service Headquarters and precisely how to answer their many questions.

James Bond was sitting on his bed in The Ritz Hotel in London, holding the telephone to his ear. There was a moment of silence and then he heard a man's voice. 'This is Captain Walker speaking. Can I help you?'

Bond spoke slowly and clearly. 'This is Commander James Bond, agent number 007. Please would you put me through to M, or his secretary, Miss Moneypenny?'

Captain Walker was very surprised to hear what sounded like Bond's voice. He quickly pressed two buttons on the side of his phone. The first button started a machine which would record the conversation. The second sent a message to the Special Branch of the police, who would listen to the conversation, trace the call¹⁰ and immediately arrange for the caller to be followed. Then Walker said, 'I'm afraid I don't know those two names. Who exactly are these people?'

'M is Admiral Sir Miles Messervy,' James Bond answered calmly. 'His office is on the eighth floor. He used to have a secretary called Miss Moneypenny. I want to see him.'

'No, I'm sorry,' Walker responded apologetically. 'I don't know either of them. Can you give me any more information?'

'Well, let's see what else I can tell you then ...' said Bond, frowning. 'It's Wednesday today. That means meat pie will be the main dish on the menu in the canteen.' Due to the brainwashing Bond could not remember all these things himself. He was using the detailed information that Colonel Boris had given him over the last few months.

Captain Walker thought for a moment. Could this man really be James Bond? There was always something strange about 007's death. They had never found a body. There was no solid evidence for his death. Perhaps he *had* escaped alive ... Walker decided to send him to the Security section of the Secret Service for further questioning.

'I'm afraid I can't help you myself,' he told Bond. 'But try Major Townsend. His office is at 44 Kensington Cloisters. I'll call and make an appointment for you to see him today.'

A short while later James Bond left his hotel room, stepped out into a cold, clear November morning and got into a taxi. His

every move was now being carefully watched by Special Branch police officers and a black car followed close behind his taxi.

'I'm here to see Major Townsend,' Bond announced when he arrived at Kensington Cloisters.

'Yes, he's expecting you, sir,' confirmed the man who had opened the door. 'Please come in. Shall I take your raincoat?'

The doorman put the coat on a hook near the entrance. As soon as he was inside Major Townsend's office, Bond's raincoat would be taken quickly upstairs to a laboratory¹¹. There someone would test the material to find out where the coat had come from and if it really belonged to James Bond.

And now, as Bond followed the man down a long corridor, a hidden X-ray camera secretly took a picture of Bond and what he was carrying in his pockets. The man knocked on a door, opened it and asked Bond to go inside. It was a pleasant, very light room with expensive furniture.

A tall man with a friendly face stood up from a comfortable-looking chair, smiled and walked towards Bond. 'Come in and sit down,' he said warmly. 'Would you like a cigarette? I'm sorry, these aren't the ones I remember you prefer.' The man watched Bond carefully and noted his reaction.

Bond took a cigarette with a blank expression on his face and said nothing. Then both men sat down. Major Townsend crossed his legs comfortably. Bond sat up straight.

'Well, now. How can I help you?' enquired Townsend.

Bond looked at Major Townsend. Colonel Boris's description was very good – the big, friendly face, the brown eyes, the military moustache and the smart suit. But he had not mentioned how very cold and intelligent the eyes were.

'It's really quite simple,' Bond explained steadily. 'I am who I say I am. And I want to speak to M.'

'Yes,' replied Townsend, 'but you haven't been in contact with us for nearly a year. We all thought you were dead, so you'll understand that we must make sure that you really are 007.'

Major Townsend asked him several questions, which Bond answered fully and calmly. Then Townsend said, 'Now, please tell me where you've come from and where you've been all these months.'

'I'm sorry,' Bond apologized, 'but I can only tell that to M himself.'

'I see,' replied Major Townsend. He thought for a few seconds and then went on. 'Well, I'll make a telephone call and see what I can do. I'll only be a few minutes.' He stood up and picked up a newspaper from a nearby table. 'Would you like to see today's *Times*?' he asked, and held out the paper. Bond took it from him. His fingerprints were now on the specially treated newspaper, which would be carefully examined later.

Major Townsend went to the next room, closed the door, quickly telephoned the laboratory and then telephoned Bill Tanner, the Chief of Staff at the Secret Service Headquarters. 'Yes, sir,' he said a few moments later, 'I think it must be 007. He's wearing the same type of clothes he usually wears, although everything looks very new. The laboratory report says that his coat was bought yesterday in London. He answered all the questions correctly, but he's insisting that he'll only talk to M about what's happened. But I don't like it – he has a strange look in his eyes. I apologized for not being able to offer him his favourite type of cigarette, but he didn't know what I was talking about. And the X-ray camera showed that he's carrying a gun – a strange sort of weapon we haven't seen before. Personally, I don't think M should see him alone, although I think that's the only way we'll get him to talk to us.'

When Major Townsend went back into the other room a few minutes later, Bond was still sitting stiffly in the same chair. He was holding the newspaper but he had not opened it. Major Townsend smiled.

'Well, I've arranged everything,' he announced cheerfully. 'M is extremely pleased to hear that you are all right, and he'll be free

to see you in about half an hour. A car should be here to collect you in about ten minutes and drive you there.'

James Bond smiled for the first time. But it was a thin smile, which did not light up his eyes.

2

The Attack

Bill Tanner, the Chief of Staff at the Secret Service, stood in front of M's desk. 'I really don't think you should see him on your own, sir,' he repeated firmly. 'There's no doubt that it's James – we've matched the fingerprints. But I don't like the feel of this at all. Why has he got new clothes? And why did he check into The Ritz and phone our main reception desk? He could have just phoned me on my personal number or come straight here to see you. It seems like a typical KGB brainwashing job to me.'

M looked up at Bill Tanner's tired, worried face and smiled. 'Thank you,' he said quietly, 'but I need to talk to 007 myself. When I sent him to Japan I had no idea that what should have been a peaceful job was going to end so badly. Or that 007 would go missing for a year. He's quite right. It was I who sent him on the mission and he has every right to report back to me personally. I'll see him, but I want you to wait in the next room and listen in to the conversation. And don't worry about his gun – I can use the new safety device¹².' M pointed up at a thin line on the ceiling. 'Are you sure that the glass wall will come down quickly enough when I press the button?' he asked.

'Yes, sir,' said the Chief of Staff nervously. 'We've tested it and it works all right. But ...'

A light started to flash on M's intercom¹³. 'That must mean Bond is here,' said M. 'Tell him to come straight in, please.'