

James BOND



HAS RETURNED IN

The Queen's Pawn

MATT RAUBENHEIMER

About The Author

Matt Raubenheimer, born and raised in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa and was first introduced to James Bond at the age of 10. The Bond film; Moonraker. Now, at the age of 20 he is an avid fan of the Bond films, as well as the novels of Ian Fleming. As well as writing James Bond fan fiction, he is also a keen fan artist. The Queen's Pawn is his second fan fiction, and his first to be published on MI6.

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Based on Ian Fleming's

James Bond

007

The Queens Pawn

Matt Raubenheimer

001 – The Opening Gambit

The cool touch of a Martini glass kissed the lips of a black-haired, British man. The man, who none of the locals recognised, sat at a large marble table. Opposite him was a local man, one of the club's regulars. His hair was a dark brown, and his skin was very pale. His accent was a strange one. It was predominantly a Croatian accent, with a strange touch of Irish in it.

The British man looked slightly older than his opponent. His manner was very polite and he was everyone's idea of the ultimate gentleman. This was noticeable even though no one in the room had known him longer than an hour. His clothing was immaculate, a Saville Row tuxedo and dress shirt with a large black bow tie.

The centre of the room's attention was the chessboard that the two men stared at. Both players were more or less level. Both men had lost their bishops and their Queens. The Croatian man had two more pawns than his British opponent, and he had the only knight left on the board. The Englishman, however, had taken one of his opponent's rooks.

The game had begun about forty-five minutes earlier. The Croatian had been looking for an opponent for his daily chess match. He was well known locally as a great chess player. He had competed in international tournaments and had won many of them. His daily chess match was one of the club's main events. There were always people eager to take on the man, who was known only as Vladimir. The game always started promptly at nine. On this particular evening, however, by five past nine no one had stepped forward to take the man on. He was clearly getting irritated, and called for someone to accept his challenge. When it appeared that no one was going to take him on, the Englishman had appeared out of the small crowd that had gathered around the table.

“I'd be delighted to join you, Mr..”

“Vladimir.” The Croatian had replied curtly.

“And my name is Bond.” The Englishman had said. “James Bond.”

* * * * *

Twelve hours earlier, Bond had been sitting in a leather chair, facing M in her office. Behind her was a large wall screen. To Bond’s left had hung a portrait of Admiral Sir Miles Messervy, the previous head of the SIS. M had had that look on her face that showed she was very troubled. Bond had briefly seen a newspaper headline on his way to the SIS headquarters at Vauxhall Cross, which had read: “Two suicide bombings in Manchester.” Bond had suspected that this news had something to do with M’s mood.

“I take it that this is about the bombings.” Bond had said.

“Yes, Bond.” M had replied. “We’ve got to put a stop to it. The police are trying to control the situation, but they’ll need help.”

“Do we have any leads?” Bond had asked.

“Only one.” A familiar voice had reported. Bond turned around. It was M’s Chief of Staff, Bill Tanner. “We got a tip off from one of our men in Zagreb about an ex-IRA assassin, who now works for a Croatian businessman, Yuri Zivkovic. Manufacturer of textiles, leather goods and chemicals. The Irishman is Gary Connolly, known to have committed many extremely gruesome murders. He is particularly well known for a gruesome method known in the Irish underworld as the ‘tongue tie’. They slit the victim’s throat and leave him with his tongue hanging out through the slit.”

Bond pondered Tanners words. “Where is Connolly now? In Zagreb?”

“Yes, 007.” M had said. “You’re leaving on the next available flight.”

“How is Gary Connolly linked to the bombings, though?”

“I expect you to find that out.” M had said sternly.

The tension in the room was immense. Everyone in the Secret Intelligence Service had been shocked by the bombings. Suicide attacks were often reported in the news, taking place in the Middle East. For it to happen on their home soil was something else. While sitting in the chair, Bond reflected on a previous case, in the days of Sir Miles, when he had seen a film of a suicide bomber assassinating a British politician, Lord Mills. Since that day suicide bombers had disgusted Bond.

“Where can I meet Connolly?” Bond had asked.

“Well, according to our man in Croatia, Connolly plays chess every night at the Meštrović Club. You could meet him there.” Tanner had informed 007.

“Fine.” Bond had said. “Thanks, Bill.”

M had handed Bond a photograph of a shorthaired man, with a very light skin, and thick eyebrows. “This is the only photograph that we have of him. It was taken when he was caught during an SAS raid a few years back. He was imprisoned, but he and several other IRA assassins escaped in a very embarrassing moment for the police.”

“Exactly what was the lead that we got on Connolly?” Bond had asked.

“It’s not much, but GCHQ intercepted a phone call from his house in Zagreb to a number in Manchester. They spoke mainly in what we expect is code-talk, but they were discussing two places in Manchester.” M had paused. “The two places where the bombs were detonated.”

“And what about his boss, Zivkovic?” Bond had asked.

“Well, we don’t have anything on him.” Tanner had said. “He has no criminal record and our contacts in Croatia seem to know little about his background. He first came to public attention during the collapse of communism in Russia. Soon after Croatia gained her independence in 1991, he emerged as one of the country’s leading industrialists. I checked with registry and our information on him goes back only as far as 1987, before then he is nowhere to be seen.”

“Sounds like he was living a secret life before then.” Bond had said.

“Yes, it seems a little suspicious. I think that he might have a somewhat shady past.” M had said. “Perhaps you could try and cast some light on it for us, 007.”

“With pleasure!” Bond had said.

“It’s probably only a matter of time before another attack. You need to move quickly, 007.” Tanner warned. “If this is an IRA operation you can bet that they won’t stop until they have achieved their goal, whatever it may be. There’ll probably soon be attacks all over the country, including here.”

“It could just be to spread terror throughout England. And we can’t let that happen. Seventy five funerals are going to take place in the next few days, so we have to do something about it, Bond.” M said. “Go find the men responsible for this, and stop it.”

* * * * *

The British man named Bond reached into the pocket of his tuxedo, and withdrew a gunmetal cigarette case. He pulled out one of his Morlands cigarettes, and placed it between his lips. He then produced his battered Ronson lighter. Once the cigarette was ignited, he moved his bishop once space, diagonal upward and to the left. This threatened Vladimir’s knight, and with an unhappy grunt he retreated. Bond advanced a pawn a single square, and then settled back in his chair, taking a satisfying draw from his

cigarette. Vladimir's king was in a corner of the board, and he moved it one square horizontally, which put it next to his remaining rook.

The concentration, as well as the fireplaces and the body heat in the room started to get to Bond. He retrieved the white linen handkerchief from his pocket and wiped some of the sweat from his forehead. He sat for a while, thinking about his next move. Vladimir was starting to look more and more agitated. He was obviously not in a good mood. Bond's rooks were both on the back row, closest to him, virtually unmoved in the entire game. Lacking a queen, Bond realised that they would be the tools with which to defeat the man who sat opposite him, sweating profusely. He advanced one of the rooks all the way across the board to one row away from Vladimir's back line, where the Croatian's rook and king resided.

From its current position, Vladimir's rook could do nothing to challenge Bond's one. His mood deteriorated further, and the beads of sweat on his forehead grew. He moved his rook one square forward, so that it was directly next to Bond's one. If Bond took the rook, Vladimir's king would be able to capture his. However, if Bond left his rook where it was, Vladimir's could capture it. In order to stop this from happening, Bond used his second rook to cover the first. He kept it on the back row, but lined it up so that it was guarding the other.

Vladimir's response to Bond's move was to move his king another square across the back row, so that it was threatening Bond's rook. Although both players were well aware that the king would be unable to take the rook, because it would be moving into check by Bond's second rook, it meant that if Vladimir took Bond's first rook, and the second retaliated, the king would be able to capture the last remaining rook on the board, making both players more or less equally placed.

Bond's rook retreated one space. Bond was not fond of retreats, as they wasted moves. Of course, he hated to run away from an enemy, but he also had the wisdom to know when it was necessary. He liked to think that this applied in his actual life as much as it did in his chess.

The white rook now threatened Vladimir's black knight, so he moved his own rook two blocks horizontally to protect it. He knew very well that if he lost both his rook and his knight, his game was well and truly over.

When he saw the move, a faint smile crept across Bond's face. He didn't make it obvious that he was delighted with the way the game was going, but if anyone had looked carefully at Bond's face, it would have been visible. He moved his rook across, placing the black king in check. Vladimir's face turned almost purple as Bond calmly said, "Check."

The Croatian's bottom lip started to shake as he saw that all was now lost. His king could only retreat into a corner of the board, which would let Bond close in for a clean kill. He knocked his own king over, signalling his surrender. Bond extended his hand to shake Vladimir's. Bond's angry opponent didn't respond. Instead he sat in his chair, the veins in his neck bulging out in anger. He picked up one of the ceramic chess pieces in his hand, and tightened his grip on it. His hand went red as he crushed the piece, a bishop, in his fist. Bond heard the delicately crafted piece cracking in Vladimir's hand. The hand slammed down on the table, depositing a pile of dust on the marble. His bloodshot eyes stared angrily at Bond's. The tension was visible to all around. Eventually, Vladimir stood up and briskly left the club, swearing in Serbo-Croat.

002 – The Hunter And The Hunted

As soon as James Bond walked out of the door of the Meštrović Club, the cold January air tore into his flesh like knives. The artificial warmth created inside the club was in sharp contrast to the reality of the environment outside. The club was situated on a narrow road lined with old-fashioned buildings. The road itself was a cobblestone affair and dew has frozen in the gaps between the cobbles.

About thirty yards down the road, Bond saw the infuriated Vladimir climb into a white Rolls Royce, and begin to accelerate down the road. Bond walked briskly to his own car, his favourite silver birch Aston Martin DB5. He quickly climbed into the drivers seat and got the engine running. It was a little sluggish due to the sub-zero temperature, but he was moving before Vladimir's car made its first turn off the cobblestone road.

Bond took a quick glance at his Omega Speedmaster watch. It was now past eleven o'clock. The chess match had gone on for just over two hours, and he was quite tired from the concentration involved. He followed the Rolls off the cobblestone and onto an even narrower tar road through a dimly lit row of houses. He was worried that he would lose track of Vladimir in the gloom of this dark neighbourhood, but his lights reflected off the rear window of the Rolls as it made another right turn. Bond once again followed suit, maintaining quite a considerable following distance in order to avoid looking suspicious to the driver of the car. Bond thought of Vladimir and his childish show of temper in the club. He laughed a little at the man who he knew to be ex-IRA assassin Gary Connolly.

As the Aston Martin hit a hump in the road, Bond felt the pistol in his shoulder holster against the side of his body. Concealed under the tuxedo was a Berns-Martin Triple Draw holster, containing Bond's standard issue Walther P99 handgun.

The road continued on for several miles, until they reached the outskirts of Zagreb. Bond now found himself in a grimy looking suburb. A rubbish bin lay on its side, and everything had a dark sooty feel to it, especially on

this dull winter night. In the distance, the red braking lights of the Rolls were visible. Bond estimated that they were about a hundred and fifty yards down the road. They were completely still, which suggested that the car had stopped. He slowed down, to avoid getting too near to Vladimir. A few seconds later, the braking lights went out, and the taillights vibrated, as the car had started moving again. Bond slowly edged forward in the Aston Martin, crawling along the road at less than a walking pace. Suddenly the red lights disappeared, which he assumed meant that the car's engine had been turned off. He allowed about a minute for everyone to disembark from the car, and go inside wherever they had stopped. In the darkness, with his lights dimmed, Bond couldn't see whether they had stopped outside a house or not.

After having waited impatiently for a few minutes, Bond drove down the road to where the car would be. As he drove, he became increasingly aware of a hedge that began to appear across the road in front of him. He looked around for Vladimir's Rolls Royce, but saw no sign of it. He parked the Aston Martin a little distance away from where he had thought the Rolls had been, and got out. He drew the Walther from his shoulder holster, and slowly walked across to the hedge. The verge between the road and the hedge had tyre marks in the grass. He knelt on the ground, and felt the muddy tracks, which were wet. This meant only one thing: The Rolls had driven off the road and through the hedge.

The section of the hedge that now stood in front of Bond didn't look at all suspicious. The tyre tracks however had given everything away. Bond looked in the hedge for any sign of disturbance. Some of the leaves had clearly been pulled out of the way, and some of the branches of the plants in the hedge had been snapped, and the leaves were bent. Bond stuck his hand inside the disturbed area and felt the cool touch of metal. Bond ran his hand over the metal shape. It felt like some sort of handle, judging by the way it was curved to fit comfortably in Bond's hand. He turned the handle, which made a squeaking noise as the badly lubricated handle turned. He slowed down the turning, and when the handle could not turn any more, he pushed on it. More rusty metal squeaked as the hedge began to open. The hedge was obviously hiding a gate, which he was now

pushing open. Even going very slowly didn't stop the gate from making a noise. He opened it inch by inch until it was open just wide enough for him to squeeze through.

As soon as he was through the hedge gate, Bond stood with his Walther at the ready. Quickly he glanced over the small lawn. The garden was very poorly kept, showing that someone who cared very little about it lived here. Judging from his encounter at the club, he felt that Vladimir fell squarely into this category. He could not imagine someone who was as brutal and impatient as Vladimir to be interested in a pastime such as gardening.

Bond slowly made his way towards the house. It was a shabby looking building. Some windows were cracked, and streaks of grime lead from the roof, down the walls all the way to the ground. Frost had formed on the ground and he could hear it crunching under his shiny black shoes.

Around the back of the house, several lights were on, and there were faint voices coming from one of them. Slowly Bond crept nearer, with his Walther held up in front of his face, ready to shoot anyone who came around the corner. The pistol was equipped with a long and heavy silencer. This eliminated almost all the noise made by the pistol, but made it much more difficult to carry, especially if it was holstered. Despite it being slightly awkward, it was a worthy compromise because if he was forced to shoot someone, he was unwilling to take the risk of someone hearing the shot. He had no idea who was in the house, and how many people there were.

There was a great deal of noise coming from the room in which all the lights were on. Bond recognised the voice as Vladimir's. He clearly had not got over his defeat, but he was speaking in Serbo-Croat, so Bond was unable to understand. He was, however able to discern the word 'Bond' in Vladimir's hurried and angry speech. Another, deeper and far more calm voice spoke back to Vladimir. Bond sat listening for a few minutes. Vladimir began to calm down, and even started to sound excited. Bond heard a sadistic laugh, and a thud that sounding like a fist hitting a table.

He was unable to curb his curiosity and he edged towards the window to try and get a brief glimpse of the man who Vladimir was speaking with. A large windowsill stuck out below the window, which he used to hold onto and lift himself up. As soon as he began to hang on it, he realised that it was loose. It was too late, however, and Bond fell backwards onto the lawn.

Even as Bond fell, his eyes tracked the windowsill slab as it fell to the ground. When it fell, it hit the concrete pavement and broke into several pieces. The contact with the ground made an enormous crashing sound, and as soon as it hit, the talking inside the house stopped. "Stupid fool!" Bond said to himself, as he began to back away from the window.

The sound of a growl made Bond feel as if his heart had stopped beating. The growl was followed by a series of loud barks. There was certainly more than one dog, probably five or six. He began to run. As he did so he looked behind him. A head peered out of the window that Bond had tried to look through. It was not Vladimir, so there was a chance that he wouldn't be recognised. Less than a second later, Bond saw a Pit Bull come bounding around the corner the house, spraying saliva as it ran. He quickly aimed and fired the P99. It made very little sound, but the dog was knocked right off its feet by the bullet. Bond ran even faster now towards the hedge gate. The distance had not seemed very far when he had come in, but now the gate could not come quickly enough. He looked up at the house as he ran, lights were turning on in just about every room. He swore under his breath, as there were obviously many people inside the building. Bond looked back towards the gate, but as he did so he felt his foot make contact with a hard object.

Bond fell face first into the frosty grass. Dirt covered his face, and the tumultuous sound of hungry dogs grew from behind him. He turned over onto his back, slightly dazed. He saw another pit bull running towards him, so he reached for his P99, which he had dropped as he fell. His eyes were fixed on the drooling, bounding dog as it close in on him. After what had seemed like ages of fumbling for the pistol, he felt the handgrip in the palm of his hand. As he began to pick up the Walther, the dog jumped on

him and bared its teeth. Slobbering in delight it opened its mouth wide to take a chunk out of Bond's neck. In a lightning fast reaction, Bond put the pistol up by his chest, up against the flesh of the dog. Due to the size of the silencer, he couldn't get the gun to the place where he wanted it. The dog's teeth struck and Bond quickly rolled over. The dog was surprised by Bond's sudden movement and only managed to rip a great hole in his tuxedo. Before he could bite again, Bond had the tip of the silenced Walther up against the dog's skin. He squeezed the trigger, and the force of the shot threw the dog off him. Bond jumped up and ran the last few yards to the hedge and leaped over. As he came down he broke his fall using a judo breakfall that he had been taught in his martial arts training.

Bond rolled over and went towards the Aston Martin. A shot came from the house, but he heard the bullet whistle past him and smack into the road a few feet behind him. He jumped into the car, and started the engine. It took an irritatingly long time to get started. As soon as the engine was running, He put the car in reverse, and roared backwards down the road. He performed a handbrake turn to spin the car around and then sped off back towards central Zagreb and his hotel.

Bond was certain that some of Vladimir's men had seen the number plate on the Aston Martin. Luckily the DB5 was still equipped with the revolving number plates that Major Boothroyd had fitted many years back. He switched the number plate, but he knew that it was not enough. He doubted that there was another DB5 in Zagreb, let alone a silver birch one.

Bond drove back to the hotel very irritated at his mess up. He had likely jeopardised the mission, and that never went down well with M.

003 – Bad Loser

When Bond got back into his hotel suite, his pulse was still going in overdrive, and the adrenaline had not yet drained from his body. He looked at his expensive tuxedo in the bathroom mirror. The left shoulder of the jacket was shredded, and the trousers had been torn when he had leapt over the hedge onto the pavement.

He took off the jacket, and then took the chamois leather straps of the holster off his shoulders. He sat down in the suite's most comfortable armchair, and poured himself a large measure of vodka. The cold liquid felt like an anaesthetic rushing over his body. After several glasses of vodka and a cigarette, he headed for the bath. The hot water soothed his sore muscles, and calmed him down. The vicious attack by the dogs had taken him completely by surprise, but even if he had been expecting it, he wondered if he would have been prepared. Vladimir obviously meant business by keeping that pack of dogs in his yard. He was definitely protecting something that he wanted to remain hidden.

By half past twelve Bond got to sleep. It had been a really packed day. The morning briefing at Vauxhall Cross, the rush to Heathrow airport, finding his way around Zagreb, meeting with an agent of the Croatian National Security Office, then the chess match, followed by the encounter at Vladimir's house. Almost as soon as he had slid his pistol under the pillow, and laid his head down he had dropped off.

Forty minutes later Bond woke up with a start, instinctively placing his right hand around the butt of the Walther hidden under his pillow. He listened carefully for any noise, while at the same time looking at the hotel's bedside alarm clock. It was twenty past one, and Bond cursed whatever had made him wake up. He was very tired, and he didn't want to be continually waking up. He placed the pistol back under the pillow, this time keeping his hand wrapped firmly around the handgrip.

Bond had been asleep for only a few minutes when he woke up again. This time he saw a shadow coming from the bathroom into the suites bedroom. He couldn't hear any footsteps thanks to the thick carpets in the room. He lay in the bed completely still, waiting to let the man get close. His eyes were half shut, and he could just see the dark shadowlike body creeping towards him. All his muscles tensed up as he began to be able to hear the intruder's breathing.

A small silver beam of moonlight was coming through a gap in the curtains. It now illuminated the intruder's face, and the stainless steel blade that was being brought closer to him. He lay absolutely still, and stopped breathing. The intruder was obviously taking pleasure in this deed. For Bond, it was agony, and he hadn't even been stabbed yet.

The man moved at an extraordinarily slow speed. Bond needed him to get closer before he acted. He was still holding his breath, and in his mind he was urging the man to hurry up.

Once he was close enough, the intruder raised his knife high in the air, as if he was performing a ritual sacrifice. The man had lifted the knife as high as he could when 007 threw his legs into the air, kicking the knife out of the man's hands. The man, who was shocked and surprised offered little resistance to Bond who kicked him in the chest, and then in the solar plexus. The blow from Bond's bare foot winded the intruder, but it was not enough. The man jumped down on Bond, who punched him with his left fist. The punch did little to deter the intruder, who began to strangle Bond.

Bond delivered another left punch to the man's head, but it did nothing. The intruder's enormous hands were still wrapped around his neck like a vice. Bond still had the Walther P99 in his hand, so he removed it from under the pillow, and quickly cracked the man's skull with the butt. The vice-like grip on Bond's neck vanished, and he let out a big breath. He jumped out of bed, and stood above the intruder, who lay unconscious on the hotel suite's floor. Bond's entire body was covered in a cold sweat, and

his hands were shaking slightly as he reached for his mobile phone, constantly keeping an eye on his fallen assailant.

He quickly dialed a number on his phone, and was answered by a rather grumpy reply, “*Da!*” The voice on the other side of the phone shouted.

“Hello, Vladek!” Bond said. “Sorry to wake you, but I’ve got something in my hotel suite that you should see!”

“What?” the tired man replied.

“Wait and see!” Bond laughed. “I’ll expect you in ten minutes.”

As he waited, Bond lit a cigarette, and continued to watch the unconscious man. Exactly ten minutes later, a loud knock on the door echoed through the suite.

“Come in!” Bond said.

When the door opened a very irritated looking Vladek Tesla, a descendant of the famous Croatian-born American electrical engineer stood silhouetted in the frame. Bond turned the light on and the UNS agent’s features could be seen. He had black hair and a thick moustache. His skin was very pale and he looked very skinny and frail, but he held a Star 30M pistol in his right hand. When he saw Bond he said angrily, “What the hell is it, 007?”

“That.” Bond said, pointing with his pistol towards the limp, unconscious body that lay on the floor.

Vladek ran across to the body, and looked at the man’s face. “Good god, James! You nailed Dmitri!”

“What, is he a friend of yours?”

“No, he is one of the most wanted criminals in Zagreb. He is a freelance assassin, a favourite of our friend Vladimir.”

“Good grief, I never realised he was such a bad loser!” Bond chuckled.

“What do you mean?” Vladek asked.

“I beat him at chess, now he sends this gorilla to punish me as he can’t do it for himself!”

“Are you sure you didn’t aggravate him, Bond?”

“Well, I paid a visit to his house a little earlier, and killed two of his dogs.”

“What?” Vladek asked sounding distressed.

“Well, I tried to get a look at what he was up to, and unfortunately I attracted the attention of his dogs and they attacked me. I had to defend myself.”

“You do realise that this could seriously jeopardise this mission, and that I’ll have to report it to M?”

The conversation was interrupted by a few groans from the flattened intruder. There was a thin trail of blood from the spot where he had been hit, which ran down his cheeks like red tears. He rolled over, clearly still dazed. “Turn around very slowly,” Bond said, “and put your hands behind your head.”

“Please don’t shoot.” The man pleaded. “I am just doing a job!”

“Oh yes, as since I seem to be at the centre of this business proposal I’d like some information before I sign the deal.” The man groaned again, as Vladek put handcuffs on him. Bond kept the silenced pistol aimed at the man’s head, should he lash out at his partner. “Now,” Bond began, “Why does he want me dead?”

“Who?” The man known as Dmitri asked, not sounding at all convincing to Bond, who was used to these games that people played when they knew that they had been caught, but still tried to wriggle their way out of it.

“No games, just answers.” Bond said sternly.

“I don’t have any damn answers for you, I was merely hired to kill you.”

“By Vladimir?”

“Yes, but I have no idea what for.”

“I’m not convinced.” Bond said angrily, punching the man in the stomach as hard as he could. The assassin coughed and choked, but got up again.

“I’m telling the truth.” He said. “Vladimir said nothing, except that you are very dangerous.”

“He said nothing about suicide bombings?”

“No, nothing.” Dmitri said, with sweat and blood running down his face.

“Vladek, take this man to the police, and hand him over. Tomorrow we’re going to have another look at Vladimir’s house.”

The Croatian agent kicked Dmitri hard in the side and told him to get up. Once he was up, he pressed the business end of his pistol against the thug’s back and told him to walk out of the door. Bond stood in the hallway and watched the two get into the elevator, before going back into his suite to try and get a bit more shut-eye.