

IAN FLEMING

**DIAMONDS
ARE
FOREVER**

VINTAGE

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About the Book

The Spangled Mob are no ordinary American gangsters. They prey on the addictions of the wealthy and treat the poor as collateral. Their ruthless desire for power and fierce brotherly loyalty make them deadly and invincible.

Now James Bond must go deep undercover in his urgent new assignment: to destroy their millionaire masterminds, Jack and Seraffimo Spang.

But the Spangs' cruel influence is everywhere, from dusty African diamond mines to the frenzied heat of the Vegas desert. Can Bond find his men before his cover is blown?

About the Author

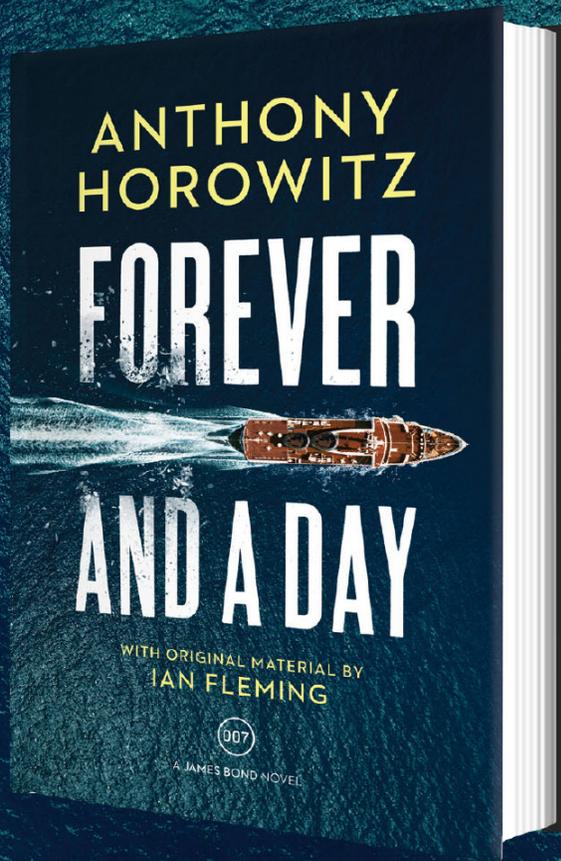
Ian Lancaster Fleming was born in London in 1908. His first job was at Reuters news agency after which he worked briefly as a stockbroker before working in Naval Intelligence during the Second World War. His first novel, *Casino Royale*, was published in 1953 and was an instant success. Fleming went on to write thirteen other Bond books as well as two works of non-fiction and the children's classic *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. The Bond books have sold over sixty million copies and earned praise from figures such as Raymond Chandler who called Fleming 'the most forceful and driving writer of thrillers in England' and President Kennedy who named *From Russia with Love* as one of his favourite books. The books inspired a hugely successful series of film adaptations which began in 1962 with the release of *Dr No*, starring Sean Connery as 007. Fleming was married to Anne Rothermere with whom he had a son, Caspar. He died in 1964.

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A SPY IS DEAD
A LEGEND IS BORN

**THIS IS HOW IT
ALL BEGAN**

007



Diamonds are Forever

Ian Fleming

VINTAGE BOOKS
London



IAN FLEMING PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

THE PIPELINE OPENS

WITH ITS TWO fighting claws held forward like a wrestler's arms the big *pandinus* scorpion emerged with a dry rustle from the finger-sized hole under the rock.

There was a small patch of hard flat earth outside the hole and the scorpion stood in the centre of this on the tips of its four pairs of legs, its nerves and muscles braced for a quick retreat and its senses questing for the minute vibrations which would decide its next move.

The moonlight, glittering down through the great thorn bush, threw sapphire highlights off the hard, black polish of the six-inch body and glinted palely on the moist white sting which protruded from the last segment of the tail, now curved over parallel with the scorpion's flat back.

Slowly the sting slid home into its sheath and the nerves in the poison sac at its base relaxed. The scorpion had decided. Greed had won over fear.

Twelve inches away, at the bottom of a sharp slope of sand, the small beetle was concerned only with trudging on towards better pastures than he had found under the thorn bush, and the swift rush of the scorpion down the slope gave him no time to open his wings.

The beetle's legs waved in protest as the sharp claw snapped round his body, and then the sting lanced into him from over the scorpion's head and immediately he was dead.

After it had killed the beetle the scorpion stood motionless for nearly five minutes. During this time it identified the nature of its prey and again tested the ground and the air for hostile vibrations. Reassured, its fighting claw withdrew from the half-severed beetle and its two small feeding pincers reached out and into the beetle's flesh. Then for an hour, and with extreme fastidiousness, the scorpion ate its victim.

The great thorn bush under which the scorpion killed the beetle was quite a landmark in the wide expanse of rolling veld some forty miles south of Kissidougou in the southwestern corner of French Guinea. On all horizons there were hills and jungle, but here, over twenty square miles, there was flat rocky ground which was almost desert and amongst the tropical scrub only this one thorn bush, perhaps because there was water deep beneath its roots, had grown to the height of a house and could be picked out from many miles away.

The bush grew more or less at the junction of three African states. It was in French Guinea but only about ten miles north of the northernmost tip of Liberia and five miles east of the frontier of Sierra Leone. Across this frontier are the great diamond mines around Sefadu. These are the property of Sierra International, which is part of the powerful mining empire of Afric International, which in turn is a rich capital asset of the British Commonwealth.

An hour earlier in its hole among the roots of the great thorn bush the scorpion had been alerted by two sets of vibrations. First there had been the tiny scraping of the beetle's movements, and these belonged to the vibrations which the scorpion immediately recognized and diagnosed. Then there had been a series of incomprehensible thuds round the bush followed by a final heavy quake which had caved in part of the scorpion's hole. These were followed by a soft rhythmic trembling of the ground which was so regular that it soon became a background vibration of no

urgency. After a pause the tiny scraping of the beetle had continued, and it was greed for the beetle that, after a day of sheltering from its deadliest enemy, the sun, finally got the upper hand against the scorpion's memory of the other noises and impelled it out of its lair into the filtering moonlight.

And now, as it slowly sucked the morsels of beetle-flesh off its feeding pincers, the signal for the scorpion's own death sounded from far away on the eastern horizon, audible to a human, but made up of vibrations which were far outside the range of the scorpion's sensory system.

And, a few feet away, a heavy, blunt hand, with bitten finger nails, softly raised a jagged piece of rock.

There was no noise, but the scorpion felt a tiny movement in the air above it. At once its fighting claws were up and groping and its sting was erect in the rigid tail, its near-sighted eyes staring up for a sight of the enemy.

The heavy stone came down.

'Black bastard.'

The man watched as the broken insect whipped in its death agony.

The man yawned. He got to his knees in the sandy depression against the trunk of the bush where he had been sitting for nearly two hours and, his arms bent protectingly over his head, scrambled out into the open.

The noise of the engine which the man had been waiting for, and which had signed the scorpion's death warrant, was louder. As the man stood and stared up the path of the moon, he could just see a clumsy black shape coming fast towards him out of the east and for a moment the moonlight glinted on whirling rotor blades.

The man rubbed his hands down the sides of his dirty khaki shorts and moved quickly round the bush to where the rear wheel of a battered motor-cycle protruded from its hiding place. Below the pillion, on either side, there were leather toolboxes. From one of these he extracted a small

heavy package which he stowed inside his open shirt against the skin. From the other he took four cheap electric torches and went off with them to where, fifty yards from the big thorn bush, there was a clear patch of flat ground about the size of a tennis court. At three corners of the landing ground he screwed the butt end of a torch into the ground and switched it on. Then, the last torch alight in his hand, he took up his position at the fourth corner and waited.

The helicopter was moving slowly towards him, not more than a hundred feet from the ground, the big rotor blades idling. It looked like a huge, badly-constructed insect. To the man on the ground it seemed, as usual, to be making too much noise.

The helicopter paused, pitching slightly, directly over his head. An arm came out of the cockpit and a torch flashed at him. It flashed dot-dash, the morse for A.

The man on the ground flashed back a B and a C. He stuck the fourth torch into the ground and moved away, shielding his eyes against the coming whirl of dust. Above him the pitch of the rotor blades flattened imperceptibly and the helicopter settled smoothly into the space between the four torches. The clatter of the engine stopped with a final cough, the tail rotor spun briefly in neutral, and the main rotor blades completed a few awkward revolutions and then drooped to a halt.

In the echoing silence, a cricket started to zing in the thorn bush, and somewhere near at hand there was the anxious chirrup of a nightbird.

After a pause to let the dust settle, the pilot banged open the door of the cockpit, pushed out a small aluminium ladder and climbed stiffly to the ground. He waited beside his machine while the other man walked round the four corners of the landing ground picking up and dowsing the torches. The pilot was half an hour late at the rendezvous and he was bored at the prospect of listening to the other

man's inevitable complaint. He despised all Afrikaners. This one in particular. To a Reichsdeutscher and to a Luftwaffe pilot who had fought under Galland in defence of the Reich they were a bastard race, sly, stupid and ill-bred. Of course this brute had a tricky job, but it was nothing to navigating a helicopter five hundred miles over the jungle in the middle of the night, and then taking it back again.

As the other man came up, the pilot half raised his hand in greeting. 'Everything all right?'

'I hope so. But you're late again. I shall only just make it through the frontier by first light.'

'Magneto trouble. We all have our worries. Thank God there are only thirteen full moons a year. Well, if you've got the stuff let's have it and we'll tank her up and I'll be off.'

Without speaking, the man from the diamond mines reached into his shirt and handed over the neat, heavy packet.

The pilot took it. It was damp with the sweat from the smuggler's ribs. The pilot dropped it into a side pocket of his trim bush-shirt. He put his hand behind him and wiped his fingers on the seat of his shorts.

'Good,' he said. He turned towards his machine.

'Just a moment,' said the diamond smuggler. There was a sullen note in his voice.

The pilot turned back and faced him. He thought: it's the voice of a servant who has screwed himself up to complain about his food. 'Ja. What is it?'

'Things are getting too hot. At the mines. I don't like it at all. There's been a big intelligence man down from London. You've read about him. This man Sillitoe. They say he's been hired by the Diamond Corporation. There've been a lot of new regulations and all punishments have been doubled. It's frightened out some of my smaller men. I had to be ruthless and, well, one of them somehow fell into the crusher. That tightened things up a bit. But I've had to pay more. An extra ten per cent. And they're still not satisfied.'

One of these days those security people are going to get one of my middlemen. And you know these black swine. They can't stand a real beating.' He looked swiftly into the pilot's eyes and then away again. 'For the matter of that I doubt if anyone could stand the sjambok. Not even me.'

'So?' said the pilot. He paused. 'Do you want me to pass this threat back to A B C?'

'I'm not threatening anyone,' said the other man hastily. 'I just want them to know that it's getting tough. They must know it themselves. They must know about this man Sillitoe. And look what the Chairman said in our annual report. He said that our mines were losing more than two million pounds a year through smuggling and I.D.B. and that it was up to the government to stop it. And what does that mean? It means "stop me"!'.

'And me,' said the pilot mildly. 'So what do you want? More money?'

'Yes,' said the other man stubbornly. 'I want a bigger cut. Twenty per cent more or I'll have to quit.' He tried to read some sympathy in the pilot's face.

'All right,' said the pilot indifferently. 'I'll pass the message on to Dakar, and if they're interested I expect they'll send it on to London. But it's nothing to do with me, and if I were you,' the pilot unbent for the first time, 'I wouldn't put too much pressure on these people. They can be much tougher than this Sillitoe, or the Company, or any government I've ever heard of. On just this end of the pipeline, three men have died in the last twelve months. One for being yellow. Two for stealing from the packet. And you know it. That was a nasty accident your predecessor had, wasn't it? Funny place to keep gelignite. Under his bed. Unlike him. He was always so careful about everything.'

For a moment they stood and looked at each other in the moonlight. The diamond smuggler shrugged his shoulders. 'All right,' he said. 'Just tell them I'm hard up and need more money to pass down the line. They'll understand that, and if

they've got any sense they'll add another ten per cent on for me. If not ...' He left the sentence unfinished and moved towards the helicopter. 'Come on. I'll give you a hand with the gas.'

Ten minutes later the pilot climbed up into the cockpit and pulled the ladder in after him. Before he shut the door he raised a hand. 'So long,' he said. 'See you in a month.'

The man on the ground suddenly felt lonely. 'Totsiens,' he said with a wave of the hand that was almost the wave of a lover. 'Alles van die beste.' He stood back and held a hand up to his eyes against the dust.

The pilot settled into his seat and fastened the seat-belt, feeling for the rudder pedals with his feet. He made sure that the wheel brakes were on, pushed the pitch control lever right down, turned on the fuel and pressed the starter. Satisfied with the beat of the engine, he released the rotor brake and softly twisted the throttle on the pitch control. Outside the cabin windows the long rotor blades slowly swung by and the pilot glanced astern at the whirring tail rotor. He settled himself back and watched the rotor speed indicator creep up to 200 revolutions a minute. When the needle was just over the 200, he released the wheel brakes and pulled up slowly and firmly on the pitch lever. Above him the blades of the rotor tilted and bit deeper into the air. More throttle, and the machine slowly rose clattering towards the sky until, at about 100 feet, the pilot simultaneously gave it left rudder and pushed forward the joystick between his knees.

The helicopter swung towards the east and, gathering height and speed, roared away back up the path of the moon.

The man on the ground watched it go, and with it the £100,000 worth of diamonds his men had filched from the diggings during the past month and had casually held out on their pink tongues as he stood beside the dentist's chair and brusquely inquired where it hurt.

Still talking about their teeth, he would pick the stones out of their mouths and hold them up to the dentist's spotlight, and then softly he would say 50, 75, 100; and they always nodded and took the notes and hid them in their clothes and went out of the surgery with a couple of aspirins in a twist of paper as an alibi. They had to accept his price. There was no hope of a native getting diamonds out. When the miners did get out, perhaps once a year to visit their tribe or to bury a relative, there was a whole routine of X-rays and castor oil to be gone through, and a grim future if they were caught. It was so easy to go to the dental surgery and pick the day when 'Him' was on duty. And paper-money didn't show up on X-rays.

The man wheeled his motor-cycle over the rough ground on to the narrow trail and started off towards the frontier hills of Sierra Leone. They were more distinct now. He would only just have time to get to Susie's hut before dawn. He grimaced at the thought of having to make love to her at the end of an exhausting night. But it would have to be done. Money was not enough to pay for the alibi she gave him. It was his white body she wanted. And then another ten miles to the club for breakfast and the coarse jokes of his friends.

'Do a nice bit of inlay, Doc?' 'I hear she has the best set of frontals in the Province.' 'Say Doc, what is it the full moon does to you?'

But each £100,000 worth meant £1000 for him in a London safe deposit. Nice crisp fivers. It was worth it. By God it was. But not for much longer. No sir! At £20,000 he would definitely quit. And then ...?

His mind full of lush dreams, the man on the motor-cycle bumped his way as fast as he could across the plain - away from the great thorn bush where the pipeline for the richest smuggling operation in the world started its devious route to where it would finally gush out on to soft bosoms, five thousand miles away.

GEM QUALITY

'DON'T PUSH IT in. Screw it in,' said M. impatiently.

James Bond, making a mental note to pass M.'s dictum on to the Chief of Staff, again picked up the jeweller's glass from the desk where it had fallen and this time managed to fix it securely into the socket of his right eye.

Although it was late July and the room was bright with sunshine, M. had switched on his desk light and tilted it so that it shone straight at Bond. Bond picked the brilliant-cut stone up and held it to the light. As he turned it between his fingers, all the colours of the rainbow flashed back at him from its mesh of facets until his eye was tired with the dazzle.

He took out the jeweller's glass and tried to think of something appropriate to say.

M. looked at him quizzically. 'Fine stone?'

'Wonderful,' said Bond. 'It must be worth a lot of money.'

'A few pounds for the cutting,' said M. dryly. 'It's a bit of quartz. Now then, let's try again.' He consulted a list on the desk in front of him and selected a fold of tissue paper, verified the number written on it, unfolded it and pushed it across to Bond.

Bond put the piece of quartz back into its own wrapping and picked up the second sample.

'It's easy for you, Sir,' he smiled at M. 'You've got the crib.' He screwed the glass back into his eye and held the

stone, if it was a stone, up to the light.

This time, he thought, there could be no doubt about it. This stone also had the thirty-two facets above and the twenty-four below of the brilliant-cut, and it was also about twenty carats, but what he now held had a heart of blue-white flame, and the infinite colours reflected and refracted from its depths lanced into his eye like needles. With his left hand he picked up the quartz dummy and held it beside the diamond in front of his glass. It was a lifeless chunk of matter, almost opaque beside the dazzling translucence of the diamond, and the rainbow colours he had seen a few minutes before were now coarse and muddy.

Bond put down the piece of quartz and gazed again into the heart of the diamond. Now he could understand the passion that diamonds had inspired through the centuries, the almost sexual love they aroused among those who handled them and cut them and traded in them. It was domination by a beauty so pure that it held a kind of truth, a divine authority before which all other material things turned, like the bit of quartz, to clay. In these few minutes Bond understood the myth of diamonds, and he knew that he would never forget what he had suddenly seen inside the heart of this stone.

He put the diamond down on its slip of paper and dropped the jeweller's glass into the palm of his hand. He looked across into M.'s watchful eyes. 'Yes,' he said. 'I see.'

M. sat back in his chair. 'That's what Jacoby meant when I had lunch with him the other day at the Diamond Corporation,' he said. 'He said that if I was going to get involved in the diamond business I ought to try and understand what was really at the bottom of it all. Not just the billions of money involved, or the value of diamonds as a hedge against inflation, or the sentimental fashions in diamonds for engagement rings and so forth. He said one must understand the passion for diamonds. So he just showed me what I'm showing you. And,' M. smiled thinly at

Bond, 'if it will give you any satisfaction, I was just as taken in by that bit of quartz as you were.'

Bond sat still and said nothing.

'And now let's run through the rest,' said M. He gestured towards the pile of paper packets in front of him. 'I said I'd like to borrow some samples. They didn't seem to mind. Sent this lot round to my house this morning.' M. consulted his list, opened a packet and pushed it across to Bond. 'What you were looking at just now was the best - a "Fine Blue-white".' He gestured towards the big diamond in front of Bond. 'Now this is a "Top Crystal", ten carats, baguette-cut. Very fine stone, but worth about half a "Blue-white". You'll see there's the faintest trace of yellow in it. The "Cape" I'm going to show you next has a slight brownish tinge, according to Jacoby, but I'm damned if I can see it. I doubt if anyone can except the experts.'

Bond obediently picked up the 'Top Crystal' and for the next quarter of an hour M. led him through the whole range of diamonds down to a wonderful series of coloured stones, ruby red, blue, pink, yellow, green and violet. Finally, M. pushed over a packet of smaller stones, all flawed or marked or of poor colour. 'Industrial diamonds. Not what they call "gem quality". Used in machine tools and so forth. But don't despise them. America bought £5,000,000 worth of them last year, and that's only one of the markets. Bronsteen told me it was stones like these that were used for cutting the St Gothard tunnel. At the other end of the scale, dentists use them for drilling your teeth. They're the hardest substance in the world. Last forever.'

M. pulled out his pipe and started to fill it. 'And now you know as much about diamonds as I do.'

Bond sat back in his chair and gazed vaguely at the bits of tissue paper and glittering stones that lay scattered across the red leather surface of M.'s desk. He wondered what it was all about.

There was the rasp of a match against a box and Bond watched M. tamp the burning tobacco down in the bowl of his pipe and then put the matchbox back in his pocket and tilt his chair in M.'s favourite attitude for reflection.

Bond glanced down at his watch. It was 11.30. Bond thought with pleasure of the in-tray piled with Top Secret dockets he had gladly abandoned when the red telephone had summoned him an hour before. He felt fairly confident that now he wouldn't have to deal with them. 'I guess it's a job,' the Chief of Staff had said in answer to Bond's inquiry. 'The Chief says he won't take any more calls before lunch and he's made an appointment for you at the Yard for two o'clock. Step on it.' And Bond had reached for his coat and had gone into the outer office where he was pleased to see his secretary registering in another bulky file with a 'Most Immediate' tab.

'M.,' said Bond as she looked up. 'And Bill says it looks like a job. So don't think you're going to have the pleasure of shovelling that lot into my In-tray. You can post it off to the *Daily Express* for all I care.' He grinned at her. 'Isn't that chap Sefton Delmer a boy friend of yours, Lil? Just the stuff for him, I expect.'

She looked at him appraisingly. 'Your tie's crooked,' she said coldly. 'And anyway I hardly know him.' She bent over her registry and Bond went out and along the corridor and thought how lucky he was to have a beautiful secretary.

There was a creak from M.'s chair and Bond looked across the table at the man who held a great deal of his affection and all his loyalty and obedience.

The grey eyes looked back at him thoughtfully. M took the pipe out of his mouth. 'How long have you been back from that holiday in France?'

'Two weeks, Sir.'

'Have a good time?'

'Not bad, Sir. Got a bit bored towards the end.'

M. made no comment. 'I've been looking at your record-sheet. Small-arms marks seem to be keeping well up in the top bracket. Unarmed combat's satisfactory and your last medical shows you're in pretty good shape.' M. paused. 'The point is,' he went on unemotionally, 'I've got rather a tough assignment for you. Wanted to make sure you'd be able to take care of yourself.'

'Of course, Sir.' Bond was slightly nettled.

'Don't make any mistake about this job, 007,' said M. sharply. 'When I say it may be tough, I'm not being melodramatic. There are plenty of tricky people you haven't met yet, and there may be some of them mixed up in this business. And some of the most efficient. So don't be tetchy when I think twice before getting you involved in it.'

'Sorry, Sir.'

'All right then,' M. put his pipe down and leant forward with his arms crossed on the desk. 'I'll tell you the story and then you can decide whether you want to take it on.'

'A week ago,' said M., 'one of the high-ups in the Treasury came to see me. Brought with him the Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade. It had to do with diamonds. Seems that most of what they call "gem" diamonds in the world are mined on British territory and that ninety per cent of all diamond sales are carried out in London. By the Diamond Corporation.' M. shrugged his shoulders. 'Don't ask me why. The British got hold of the business at the beginning of the century and we've managed to hang on to it. Now it's a huge trade. Fifty million pounds a year. The biggest dollar-earner we've got. So when something goes wrong with it, the Government gets worried. And that's what's happened.' M. looked mildly across at Bond. 'At least two million pounds' worth of diamonds are being smuggled out of Africa every year.'

'That's a lot of money,' said Bond. 'Where are they going to?'

'They say America,' said M. 'And I agree with them. It's by far the biggest diamond market. And those gangs of theirs are the only people who could run an operation on this scale.'

'Why don't the mining companies stop it?'

'They've done everything they can,' said M. 'You probably saw in the papers that De Beers took on our friend Sillitoe when he left M.I.5., and he's out there now, working in with the South African security people. I gather he's put in a pretty drastic report and come up with plenty of bright ideas for tightening things up, but the Treasury and the Board of Trade aren't very impressed. They think the thing's too big to be handled by a lot of separate mining companies, however efficient they are. And they've got one very good reason for wanting to take official action on their own.'

'What's that. Sir?'

'There's a big packet of smuggled stones in London at this very moment,' said M., and his eyes glittered across the desk at Bond. 'Waiting to go to America. And the Special Branch know who the carrier is to be. And they know who's to go out with him to keep an eye on him. As soon as Ronnie Vallance came across the story - it was leaked to one of his narks in Soho, to one of his "Ghost Squad" as he chooses to call it - he went straight off to the Treasury. The Treasury talked to the Board of Trade and then both their Ministers formed up to the P.M. And the P.M. gave them authority to use the Service.'

'Why not let the Special Branch or M.I.5 handle it, Sir?' asked Bond, reflecting that M. seemed to be going through a bad phase of mixing in other people's business.

'Of course they could arrest the carriers as soon as they took delivery and tried to get out of the country,' said M. impatiently. 'But that won't stop the traffic. These people aren't the sort that talk. Anyway the carriers are only small fry. They probably just get the stuff from a man in a park and hand it over to another man in a park when they get to