

The Villa

Bond could not see the Citroën when he came round the corner. He saw the crossroads ahead and started to slow down. But he was too late. Suddenly there was a 'carpet' of metal spikes³³ under his wheels. They tore the Bentley's tyres.

Bond could not control the heavy car. It hit the wall at the side of the road and turned over. Bond was thrown onto the floor of the car. There was the sound of breaking glass and metal on concrete. Then the Bentley stopped moving.

Le Chiffre and his two gunmen ran towards the car.

'Put your guns away and get him out,' said Le Chiffre. 'Be careful, I don't want a dead man. And hurry!'

The two men pulled Bond from the car. He was not conscious³⁴.

'Tie his arms,' said Le Chiffre. 'Put him in the car. Take everything from his pockets and give me his gun.'

Le Chiffre took Bond's gun. Then he walked back to the Citroën.

Bond was conscious now. Every part of his body hurt, but there were no bones broken. The two gunmen pushed him into the back seat of the Citroën.

Bond felt sick and weak. No one knew where he was. No one would miss him until the morning. They would find the Bentley. But they would not know the car was Bond's until later.

Then there was Vesper. He looked past the thin man.

'Vesper,' he said quietly.

She did not answer. Bond was suddenly afraid that she was dead. But then she moved under the sack.

At the same time, the thin man hit Bond twice.



Suddenly there was a 'carpet' of metal spikes under Bond's wheels.

‘Silence,’ the man said.

Bond lay back against the seat with his eyes closed. He blamed himself for his situation. He hadn’t been careful enough. Instead, he had sat in the *Roi Galant* drinking champagne with Vesper.

All this time, Le Chiffre had said nothing. The third man shut the boot of the car. The man got in and sat beside him.

The Citroën raced along the coast road. Bond guessed that it was about five o’clock in the morning. He also guessed that they were only two or three kilometres away from Le Chiffre’s villa.

Bond knew why the men had taken Vesper. They had known that Bond would try to rescue her. For the first time since the car crash, he began to feel afraid.

Ten minutes later, the Citroën turned left into a small side road. It went through some open gates and stopped outside the front door of Le Chiffre’s villa.

Le Chiffre opened the door of the house with a key. Then the thin man pushed Bond out of the car. Le Chiffre went inside the house and the thin man pushed Vesper in after him. Bond followed her. He heard the third gunman lock the door behind him.

Le Chiffre was standing near the open door of a room. He waved to Bond. He was telling Bond to come to the room. The third gunman was taking Vesper away to the back of the house.

Suddenly, Bond kicked the thin man hard on the legs. The man cried out in pain and Bond ran after Vesper. His hands were tied but his feet were free.

The third gunman heard Bond coming. The man turned quickly. Bond kicked him hard in the stomach, and the man fell back against the wall. Bond tried to kick him again but the gunman caught his shoe. He twisted Bond’s foot and Bond crashed to the ground.

For a moment, Bond lay still. Then the thin man came and pulled him up against the wall. He had a gun in his hand. He used it to hit Bond hard across the legs. Bond cried out with pain and fell onto his knees.

A door banged shut. Vesper and the third gunman had disappeared. Bond turned his head to the right and saw Le Chiffre.

‘Come here, my dear friend,’ said Le Chiffre. He spoke calmly in English. ‘Let’s not waste any more time.’

Bond walked towards him. There was nothing more that he could do.