

Text 1: Stormbreaker - Chapter 10 - Death in the Long Grass

Alex was woken up by an indignant Nadia Vole, knocking at his door. He had overslept. "This morning it is your last opportunity to experience the Stormbreaker," she said.

"Right," Alex replied. "This afternoon we begin to send the computers out to the schools. Herr Sayle has suggested that you take the afternoon for leisure. A walk perhaps into Port Tallon? There is a footpath that goes through the fields and then by the sea. You will do that, yes?"

"Yes, I'd like that." "Good. And now I leave you to put on some clothing. I will come back for you in ... zehn minuten." Alex splashed cold water on his face before getting dressed.

It had been four o'clock by the time he had gotten back to his room and he was still tired. His night expedition hadn't been quite the success he'd hoped. He had seen so much—the submarine, the silver boxes, the death of the guard who had dared to drop one—and yet in the end he still hadn't learned much of anything.

Yassen Gregorovich was working for Herod Sayle. That much was certain. But what about the boxes? They could have contained packed lunches for the staff of Sayle Enterprises for all he knew. Except that you don't kill a man for dropping a packed lunch.

Today was March 31. As Vole had said, the computers were on their way out. There was only one day to go until the ceremony at the Science Museum. But Alex had nothing to report, and the one piece of information that he had sent—Ian Rider's diagram—had also drawn a blank. There had been a reply waiting for him on the screen of his Game Boy when he turned it on before going to bed.

UNABLE TO RECOGNIZE DIAGRAM OR LETTERS/NUMBERS.

POSSIBLE MAP REFERENCE BUT UNABLE TO SOURCE MAP.

PLEASE TRANSMIT FURTHER OBSERVATIONS.

Alex had thought of transmitting the fact that he had actually sighted Yassen Gregorovich. But he had decided against it.

If Yassen was there, Mrs. Jones had promised to pull him out. And suddenly Alex wanted to see this through to the end. Something was going on at Sayle Enterprises. He'd never forgive himself if he didn't find out what it was.

Text 2: James Bond - 'Live and Let Die'

There came a knock on the door and a waiter came in with breakfast. Bond was glad to put the dreadful tale aside and re-enter the world of normality. But it took him minutes to forget the atmosphere, heavy with terror and the occult, that had surrounded him as he read.

With breakfast came another parcel, about a foot square, expensive looking, which Bond told the waiter to put on the sideboard. He ate his breakfast with enjoyment. Between mouthfuls he looked out of the wide window and reflected on what he had just read.

It was only when he had swallowed his last mouthful of coffee and had lit his first cigarette of the day that he suddenly became aware of the tiny noise in the room behind him.

It was a soft, muffled ticking, unhurried, metallic. And it came from the direction of the sideboard.

'Tick-tock . . . tick-tock . . . tick-tock.'

Without a moment's hesitation, without caring that he looked a fool, he dived to the floor behind his armchair and crouched, all his senses focused on the noise from the square parcel. 'Steady,' he said to himself. 'Don't be an idiot. It's just a clock.' But why a clock? Why should he be given a clock? Who by?

'Tick-tock . . . tick-tock . . . tick-tock.' It had become a huge noise against the silence of the room. It seemed to be keeping time with the thumping of Bond's heart. 'Don't be ridiculous. That Voodoo stuff of Leigh Fermor's has put your nerves on edge. Those drums . . .'

'Tick-tock . . . tick-tock . . . Tick—' And then, suddenly, the alarm went off with a deep, melodious, urgent summons.

'Tongtongtongtongtong . . .'

Bond's muscles relaxed. His cigarette was burning a hole in the carpet. He picked it up and put it in his mouth. Bombs in alarm clocks go off when the hammer first comes down on the alarm. The hammer hits a pin in a detonator, the detonator fires the explosive and WHAM . . .

Bond raised his head above the back of the chair and watched the parcel.

'Tongtongtongtongtong . . .'

The muffled gonging went on for half a minute, then it started to slow down.

'tong . . . tong . . . tong . . . tong . . . tong . . .

'C-R-A-C-K . . .'

It was not louder than a 12-bore cartridge, but in the confined space it was an impressive explosion.

The parcel, in tatters, had fallen to the ground. The glasses and bottles on the sideboard were smashed and there was a black smudge of smoke on the grey wall behind them. Some pieces of glass tinkled on to the floor. There was a strong smell of gunpowder in the room.