

= Thunderball (novel) =

Thunderball is the ninth book in Ian Fleming 's James Bond series , and the eighth full @-@ length James Bond novel . It was first published in the UK by Jonathan Cape on 27 March 1961 , where the initial print run of 50 @,@ 938 copies quickly sold out . The first novelization of an unfilmed James Bond screenplay , it was born from a collaboration by five people : Ian Fleming , Kevin McClory , Jack Whittingham , Ivar Bryce and Ernest Cuneo , although the controversial shared credit of Fleming , McClory and Whittingham was the result of a courtroom decision .

The story centres on the theft of two atomic bombs by the crime syndicate SPECTRE and the subsequent attempted blackmail of the Western powers for their return . James Bond , Secret Service operative 007 , travels to the Bahamas to work with his friend Felix Leiter , seconded back into the CIA for the investigation . Thunderball also introduces SPECTRE 's leader Ernst Stavro Blofeld , in the first of three appearances in Bond novels , with On Her Majesty 's Secret Service and You Only Live Twice being the others .

Thunderball has been adapted three times , once in a comic strip format for the Daily Express newspaper and twice for the cinema . The Daily Express strip was cut short on the order of its owner , Lord Beaverbrook , after Ian Fleming signed an agreement with The Sunday Times to publish a short story . On screen , Thunderball was released in 1965 as the fourth film in the Eon Productions series , with Sean Connery as James Bond . The second adaptation , Never Say Never Again , was released as an independent production in 1983 also starring Connery as Bond and was produced by Kevin McClory .

= = Plot = =

Thunderball begins with a meeting between Bond and his superior , M , during which the agent is told that his latest physical assessment is poor because of excessive drinking and smoking (up to sixty cigarettes a day) . M sends Bond on a two @-@ week treatment at the Shrublands health clinic to improve his health . At the clinic Bond encounters Count Lippe , a member of the Red Lightning Tong criminal organisation from Macau . When Bond learns of the Tong connection , Lippe tries to kill him by tampering with a spinal traction machine . Bond , however , is saved by nurse Patricia Fearing and later retaliates against Lippe by trapping him in a steam bath , resulting in the Count 's second @-@ degree burns and a week 's stay in hospital .

The Prime Minister receives a communiqué from SPECTRE (S PECIAL Executive for Counter @-@ intelligence , Terrorism , Revenge and Extortion) explaining that the organisation has hijacked a Villiers Vindicator and seized its two nuclear bombs , which it will use to destroy two major cities unless a £ 100 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 ransom is paid . This is SPECTRE 's Plan Omega . SPECTRE is headed by criminal mastermind Ernst Stavro Blofeld . Count Lippe was dispatched to Shrublands to oversee Giuseppe Petacchi of the Italian Air Force , at the Boscombe Down Airfield , a bomber squadron base . Although Lippe was successful , Blofeld considered him unreliable , because of his childish clash with Bond and , as a consequence , Blofeld has Lippe killed .

Acting as a NATO observer of Royal Air Force procedure , Petacchi is in SPECTRE 's pay to hijack the bomber in mid @-@ flight by killing its crew and flying it to the Bahamas . Once there , Petacchi is killed and the plane , with bombs , are taken by Emilio Largo (aka SPECTRE Number One) on board the cruiser yacht Disco Volante .

The Americans and the British launch Operation Thunderball to foil SPECTRE and recover the two atomic bombs . On a hunch , M assigns Bond to the Bahamas to investigate . There , Bond meets Felix Leiter , seconded to the CIA from his usual role at Pinkertons because of the Thunderball crisis . While in Nassau , Bond meets Dominetta " Domino " Vitali , Largo 's mistress and the sister of the dead pilot Giuseppe Petacchi . She is living on board the Disco Volante and believes Largo is on a treasure hunt , although Largo makes her stay ashore while he and his partners hunt hidden treasure . After seducing her , Bond informs her that Largo killed her brother ; Bond then recruits her to spy on Largo . Domino re @-@ boards the Disco Volante with a Geiger counter to ascertain if the yacht is where the two nuclear bombs are hidden . However , she is discovered and Largo tortures

her for information .

Bond and Leiter alert the Thunderball war room of their suspicions of Largo and join the crew of the American nuclear submarine Manta as the ransom deadline nears . The Manta chases the Disco Volante to capture it and recover the bombs en route to the first target . An undersea battle ensues between the crews , while Bond fights Largo . Bond , now very weak from his efforts to disable the bombs , tries to get away , but Largo corners him in an underwater cave and easily overpowers him . Before Largo can finish Bond off Domino shoots him with a spear gun . The bombs are recovered and Bond is sent to hospital with Domino .

= = Characters and themes = =

According to continuation Bond author Raymond Benson , there was further development of the Bond character in Thunderball , with glimpses of both his sense of humour and his own sense of mortality being shown . Felix Leiter had his largest role to date in a Bond story and much of his humour came though , whilst his incapacity , suffered in Live and Let Die , had not led to bitterness or to him being unable to join in with the underwater fight scene towards the end of the novel .

Academic Christoph Linder sees Thunderball as part of the second wave of Bond villains : the first wave consisted of SMERSH , the second of Blofeld and SPECTRE , undertaken because of the thawing of relations between East and West , although the cold war heated up again shortly afterwards , with the Bay of Pigs Invasion , the construction of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban Missile Crisis all occurring in an eighteen @-@ month period from April 1961 ? November 1962 . The introduction of SPECTRE and its use over a number of books gives a measure of continuity to the remaining stories in the series , according to academic Jeremy Black . Black argues that SPECTRE represents " evil unconstrained by ideology " and it partly came about because the decline of the British Empire led to a lack of certainty in Fleming 's mind . This is reflected in Bond using US equipment and personnel in the novel , such as the Geiger counter and nuclear submarine .

= = Background = =

As with the previous novels in the series , aspects of Thunderball come from Fleming 's own experiences : the visit to the health clinic was inspired by his own 1955 trip to the Enton Hall health farm and Bond 's medical record , as read out to him by M , is a slightly modified version of Fleming 's own . The name of the health farm , Shrublands , was taken from that of a house owned by the parents of his wife 's friend , Peter Quennell . Fleming dedicates a quarter of the novel to the Shrublands setting and the naturalist cure Bond undergoes .

Bond 's examination of the hull of the Disco Volante was inspired by the ill @-@ fated mission undertaken on 19 April 1956 by the ex @-@ Royal Navy frogman " Buster " Crabb on behalf of MI6 , as he examined the hull of the Soviet cruiser Ordzhonikidze that had brought Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin on a diplomatic mission to Britain . Crabb disappeared in Portsmouth Harbour and was never seen again . As well as having Buster Crabb in mind , Fleming would also recall the information about the 10th Light Flotilla , an elite unit of Italian navy frogmen who used wrecked ships in Gibraltar to launch attacks on Allied shipping . The specifications for the Disco Volante herself had been obtained by Fleming from the Italian ship designer , Leopold Rodriguez .

As often happened in Fleming 's novels , a number of names were taken from people of whom he had known . Ernst Stavro Blofeld 's name partially comes from Tom Blofeld , a Norfolk farmer and a fellow member of Fleming 's club Boodle 's , who was a contemporary of Fleming 's at Eton . Tom Blofeld 's son is Henry Blofeld , a sports journalist , best known as a cricket commentator for Test Match Special on BBC Radio . Additionally , when Largo rents his beachside villa , it is from " an Englishman named Bryce " , whose name was taken from Old Etonian Ivar Bryce , Fleming 's friend , who had a beachside property in Jamaica called Xanadu .

Other names used by Fleming included a colleague at The Sunday Times , Robert Harling , who was transformed into Commissioner of Police Harling , whilst an ex @-@ colleague from his stock broking days , Hugo Pitman , became Chief of Immigration Pitman and Fleming 's golfing friend ,

Bunny Roddick , became Deputy Governor Roddick . The title Thunderball came from a conversation Fleming had about a US atomic test .

= = = Writing and copyright = = =

= = = = Chronology = = = =

In the summer of 1958 Fleming and his friend , Ivar Bryce , began talking about the possibility of a Bond film ; in the autumn of 1958 Bryce introduced Fleming to a young Irish writer and director , Kevin McClory , and the three of them , together with Fleming and Bryce 's friend Ernest Cuneo , formed the partnership Xanadu Productions , named after Bryce 's Bahamian home , but which was never actually formed into a company . In May 1959 Fleming , Bryce , Cuneo and McClory met first at Bryce 's Essex house and then in McClory 's London home as they came up with a story outline which was based on an aeroplane full of celebrities and a female lead called Fatima Blush . McClory was fascinated by the underwater world and wanted to make a film that included it . Over the next few months , as the story changed , there were ten outlines , treatments and scripts . Numerous titles were proposed for these works , including SPECTRE , James Bond of the Secret Service and Longitude 78 West .

Much of the attraction Fleming felt working alongside McClory was based on McClory 's film , The Boy and the Bridge , which was the official British entry to the 1959 Venice Film Festival . However , when the film was released in July 1959 , it was poorly received , and did not do well at the box office ; Fleming became disenchanted with McClory 's ability as a result . In October 1959 , with Fleming spending less time on the project , McClory introduced experienced screenwriter Jack Whittingham to the writing process . In November 1959 Fleming left to travel around the world on behalf of The Sunday Times , material for which Fleming also used for his non @-@ fiction travel book , Thrilling Cities . On his travels ? through Japan , Hong Kong and into the US ? Fleming met with McClory and Ivar Bryce in New York and McClory told Fleming that Whittingham had completed a full outline , which was ready to shoot . Back in Britain in December 1959 , Fleming met with McClory and Whittingham for a script conference ; shortly afterwards McClory and Whittingham sent Fleming a script , Longitude 78 West , which Fleming considered to be good , although he changed the title to Thunderball .

In January 1960 McClory visited Fleming 's Jamaican home Goldeneye , where Fleming explained his intention of delivering the screenplay to MCA , with a recommendation from him and Bryce that McClory act as producer . Additionally , Fleming told McClory that if MCA rejected the film because of McClory 's involvement , then McClory should either sell himself to MCA , back out of the deal , or file suit in court .

Fleming then wrote the novel Thunderball at Goldeneye over the period January to March 1960 , based on the screenplay written by himself , Whittingham and McClory . In March 1961 McClory read an advance copy of the book and he and Whittingham immediately petitioned the High Court in London for an injunction to stop publication . The plagiarism case was heard on 24 March 1961 and allowed the book to be published , although the door was left open for McClory to pursue further action at a later date . He did so and on 19 November 1963 , the case of McClory v Fleming was heard at the Chancery Division of the High Court . The case lasted three weeks , during which time Fleming was unwell ? including having a heart attack during the case itself ? and , under advice from his friend Ivar Bryce , they offered a deal to McClory , settling out of court . McClory gained the literary and film rights for the screenplay , while Fleming was given the rights to the novel , although it had to be recognised as being " based on a screen treatment by Kevin McClory , Jack Whittingham and the Author " . On settlement , " Fleming ultimately admitted ' [t] hat the novel reproduces a substantial part of the copyright material in the film scripts ' ; ' [t] hat the novel makes use of a substantial number of the incidents and material in the film scripts ' ; and ' [t] hat there is a general similarity of the story of the novel and the story as set out in the said film scripts ' . " On 12 August 1964 , nine months after the conclusion of the trial , Fleming suffered a further heart attack

and died at the age of 56 . The plagiarism case and its aftermath were documented in detail in the 2008 book , *The Battle for Bond* , by Robert Sellers .

== Script elements ==

When the script was first drafted in May 1959 , with the storyline of an aeroplane of celebrities in the Atlantic , it included elements from Fleming 's friend Ernie Cuneo , who included ships with underwater trapdoors in their hulls and an underwater battle scene . The Russians were originally the villains , then the Sicilian Mafia , but this was later changed again to the internationally operating criminal organisation , SPECTRE . Both McClory and Fleming claim to have come up with the concept of SPECTRE ; Fleming biographer Andrew Lycett and John Cork both note Fleming as the originator of the group , Lycett saying that " [Fleming] proposed that Bond should confront not the Russians but SPECTRE ... " whilst Cork produced a memorandum in which Fleming called for the change to SPECTRE :

Cork also noted that Fleming used the word " spectre " previously : in the fourth novel , *Diamonds Are Forever* , for a town near Las Vegas called " Spectreville " , and for " spektor " , the cryptograph decoder in *From Russia , with Love* . Others , such as continuation Bond author Raymond Benson , disagree , saying that McClory came up with the SPECTRE concept .

Those elements which Fleming used which can be put down to McClory and Whittingham (either separately or together) include the airborne theft of a nuclear bomb , " Jo " Petachi and his sister Sophie , and Jo 's death at the hands of Sophie 's boss . The remainder of the screenplay was a two @-@ year collaboration among Fleming , Whittingham , McClory , Bryce and Cuneo .

== Release and reception ==

Thunderball was published on 27 March 1961 in the UK as a hardcover edition by publishers Jonathan Cape ; it was 253 pages long and cost 15 shillings . 50 @,@ 938 copies were printed and quickly sold out . *Thunderball* was published in the US by Viking Press and sold better than any of the previous Bond books . Publishers Jonathan Cape spent £ 2 @,@ 000 (£ 40 @,@ 149 in 2016 pounds) on advance publicity . Cape sent out 130 review copies to critics and others and 32 @,@ 000 copies of the novel had been sent to 864 UK booksellers and 603 outside the UK .

Artist Richard Chopping once again provided the cover art for the novel . On 20 July 1960 Fleming wrote to Chopping to ask if he could undertake the art for the next book , agreeing on a fee of 200 guineas , saying that " I will ask [Jonathan Cape] to produce an elegant skeleton hand and an elegant Queen of Hearts . As to the dagger , I really have no strong views . I had thought of the ordinary flick knife as used by teenagers on people like you and me , but if you have a nice dagger in mind please let us use it . The title of the book will be *Thunderball* . It is immensely long , immensely dull and only your jacket can save it ! "

== Reviews ==

Thunderball was generally well received by the critics ; Francis Iles , writing in *The Guardian* wrote that it " is a good , tough , straightforward thriller on perfectly conventional lines . " Referring to the negative publicity that surrounded Dr. No ? in particular the article by Paul Johnson in the *New Statesman* entitled , " Sex , Snobbery and Sadism " ? Iles was left " wondering what all the fuss is about " , noting that " there is no more sadism nor sex than is expected of the author of this kind of thriller " . Peter Duval Smith , writing in *Financial Times* , also took the opportunity to defend Fleming 's work against negative criticism , also specifically naming Paul Johnson and his review : " one should not make a cult of Fleming 's novels : a day @-@ dream is a day @-@ dream ; but nor should one make the mistake of supposing he does not know what he is doing . " Duval Smith thought that *Thunderball* was " an exciting story is skilfully told " , with " a romantic sub @-@ plot ... and the denouement involves great events " He also considered it " the best written since *Diamonds Are Forever* , four books back . It has pace and humour and style . The violence is not so

unrelenting as usual : an improvement , I think . " He also expressed concern for the central character , saying " I was glad to see him [Bond] in such good form . Earlier he seemed to be softening up . He was having bad hangovers on half @-@ a @-@ bottle of whisky a day , which I don 't call a lot , unless he wasn 't eating properly . "

Writing in The Times Literary Supplement , Phillip Stead thought that Fleming " continues uninhibitedly to deploy his story @-@ telling talents within the limits of the Commander Bond formula . " Stead saw that the hijacking of the two bombs " gives Bond some anxiety but , needless to say , does not prevent him from having a good deal of fun in luxury surroundings " , whilst " the usual beatings @-@ up , modern style , are ingeniously administered to lady and gentleman like " . As to why the novels were so appealing , Stead considered that " Mr. Fleming 's special magic lies in his power to impart sophistication to his mighty nonsense ; his fantasies connect with up @-@ to @-@ date and lively knowledge of places and of the general sphere of crime and espionage . " Overall , in Stead 's opinion , with Thunderball " the mixture , exotic as ever , generates an extravagant and exhilarating tale and Bond connoisseurs will be glad to have it . " The critic for The Times wrote that Thunderball " relies for its kicks far less than did Dr. No or Goldfinger on sadism and a slightly condescending sophistication . " The upshot , in the critic 's opinion , was that " the mixture ? of good living , sex and violent action ? is as before , but this is a highly polished performance , with an ingenious plot well documented and plenty of excitement . "

Writing in The Washington Post , Harold Kneeland noted that Thunderball was " Not top Fleming , but still well ahead of the pack " , whilst Charles Poore , writing in The New York Times considered the Bond novels to be " post @-@ Dostoevskian ventures in crime and punishment " . Thunderball he found to be " a mystery story , a thriller , a chiller and a pleasure to read . " Poore identified aspects of the author 's technique to be part of the success , saying " the suspense and the surprises that animate the novel arise from the conceits with which Mr. Fleming decorates his tapestry of thieving and deceiving " .

The critic from The Sunday Times considered Fleming to have " a sensational imagination , but informed by style , zest and ? above all ? knowledge " . Anthony Boucher wrote that " As usual , Ian Fleming has less story to tell in 90 @,@ 000 words than Buchan managed in 40 @,@ 000 ; but Thunderball is still an extravagant adventure " . The critic for the Daily Herald implored " Hey ! ? that man is taking his clothes off again . So is the girl ... Can anybody stop this ? Unfortunately not . Not this side of the best @-@ seller lists . I don 't envy Mr Bond 's wealthy creator , Ian Fleming . I wish I could pity him " , whilst L.G. Offord considered Thunderball to be " just about as wild as ever , with a walloping climax . "

= = Adaptations = =

Comic strip (1961 ? 1962)

A comic strip adaptation was published daily in the Daily Express newspaper and syndicated worldwide , beginning on 11 December 1961 . However , the owner of the Daily Express , Lord Beaverbrook , cancelled the strip on 10 February 1962 after Fleming signed an agreement with The Sunday Times for them to publish the short story " The Living Daylights " . Thunderball was reprinted in 2005 by Titan Books as part of the Dr. No anthology that also includes Diamonds Are Forever and From Russia , with Love .

Thunderball (1965)

In 1965 , the film Thunderball was released , starring Sean Connery as James Bond . The film was produced as the fourth Eon Productions film and , as well as listing Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Saltzman as producers , Kevin McClory was also included in the production team : Broccoli and Saltzman made a deal with McClory , to undertake a joint production of Thunderball , which stopped McClory from making any further version of the novel for a period of ten years following the release of the Eon @-@ produced version . Thunderball premiered in Tokyo on 9 December 1965 , grossing \$ 141 @.@ 2 million at the global box office .

Never Say Never Again (1983)

In 1983 Kevin McClory produced a version of the Thunderball story , again with Sean Connery as

Bond . The film premiered in New York on 7 October 1983 , grossing \$ 9 @. @ 72 million (\$ 23 million in 2016 dollars) on its first weekend , which was reported to be " the best opening record of any James Bond film " up to that point .

Warhead (1990s)

In the 1990s , McClory announced plans to make another adaption of the Thunderball story , Warhead 2000 AD , with Timothy Dalton or Liam Neeson in the lead role , but this was eventually dropped .