

= Moonraker (novel) =

Moonraker is the third novel by the British author Ian Fleming to feature his fictional British Secret Service agent James Bond . It was published by Jonathan Cape on 5 April 1955 and featured a cover design conceived by Fleming . The plot is derived from a Fleming screenplay that was too short for a full novel so he added the bridge passage between Bond and the industrialist Hugo Drax . In the latter half of the novel , the premise of Bond seconded to Drax 's staff as the businessman builds the Moonraker , a prototype missile designed to defend England . Unknown to Bond , Drax is German , an ex @-@ Nazi now working for the Soviets ; his plan is to build the rocket , arm it with a nuclear warhead , and fire it at London . Uniquely for a Bond novel , Moonraker is set entirely in Britain , which raised comments from some readers , complaining about the lack of exotic locations .

Moonraker , like Fleming 's previous novels , was well received by critics . Moonraker plays on a number of 1950s fears , including attack by rockets (following the V @-@ 2 strikes of the Second World War) , Soviet communism , the re @-@ emergence of Nazism and the " threat from within " posed by both ideologies . Fleming examines Englishness , and the novel shows the virtues and strength of England . Adaptations include a broadcast on South African radio in 1956 starring Bob Holness and a 1958 Daily Express comic strip . The novel 's name was used in 1979 for the eleventh official film in the Eon Productions Bond series and the fourth to star Roger Moore as Bond ; the plot was significantly changed from the novel to include excursions into space .

= = Plot = =

The British Secret Service agent James Bond is asked by his superior , M , to join him at M 's club , Blades . A club member , the multi @-@ millionaire businessman Sir Hugo Drax , is winning considerable money playing bridge , seemingly against the odds . M suspects Drax is cheating , and while claiming indifference , is concerned as to why a multi @-@ millionaire and national hero would cheat . Bond confirms Drax 's deception and manages to turn the tables ? aided by a pack of stacked cards ? and wins £ 15 @,@ 000 .

Drax is the product of a mysterious background , purportedly unknown even to himself . Presumed to have been a British Army soldier during the Second World War , he was badly injured and stricken with amnesia in the explosion of a bomb planted by a German saboteur at a British field headquarters . After extensive rehabilitation in an army hospital , he returned home to become a wealthy industrialist . After building his fortune and establishing himself in business and society , Drax started building the " Moonraker " , Britain 's first nuclear missile project , intended to defend Britain against its Cold War enemies . The Moonraker rocket was to be an upgraded V @-@ 2 rocket using liquid hydrogen and fluorine as propellants ; to withstand the ultra @-@ high combustion temperatures of its engine , it used columbite , in which Drax had a monopoly . Because the rocket 's engine could withstand high heat , the Moonraker was able to use these powerful fuels , greatly expanding its effective range .

After a Ministry of Supply security officer working at the project is shot dead , M assigns Bond to replace him and also to investigate what has been going on at the missile @-@ building base , located between Dover and Deal on the south coast of England . All the rocket scientists working on the project are German . At his post on the complex , Bond meets Gala Brand , a beautiful police Special Branch officer working undercover as Drax 's personal assistant . Bond also uncovers clues concerning his predecessor 's death , concluding that the man may have been killed for witnessing a submarine off the coast .

Drax 's henchman Krebs is caught by Bond snooping through his room . Later , an attempted assassination by triggering a landslide nearly kills Bond and Brand , as they swim beneath the Dover cliffs . Drax takes Brand to London , where she discovers the truth about the Moonraker by comparing her own launch trajectory figures with those in a notebook picked from Drax 's pocket . She is captured by Krebs , and finds herself captive in a secret radio homing station ? intended to serve as a beacon for the missile 's guidance system ? in the heart of London . While she is being

taken back to the Moonraker facility by Drax , Bond gives chase , but is also captured by Drax and Krebs .

Drax tells Bond that he was never a British soldier and has never suffered from amnesia : he was Graf Hugo von der Drache , the German commander of a Skorzeny commando unit . He was the saboteur whose team had placed the car bomb at the army field headquarters , only to be injured himself in the detonation . The amnesia story was simply a cover he used while recovering in hospital , in order to avoid Allied retribution , although it would lead to a whole new British identity . Drax remains a dedicated Nazi , bent on revenge against England for the wartime defeat of his Fatherland and his prior history of social slights suffered as a youth growing up in an English boarding school before the war . He explains that he now means to destroy London with the missile he had constructed , by means of a Soviet @-@ supplied nuclear warhead that has been secretly fitted to the Moonraker . He also plans to play the stock market the day before to make a huge profit from the imminent disaster .

Brand and Bond are imprisoned where the blast from the Moonraker 's engines will incinerate them , to leave no trace of them once the Moonraker is launched . Before the firing , the couple escape . Brand gives Bond the proper coordinates to redirect the gyros and send the Moonraker into the sea . Having been in collaboration with Soviet Intelligence all along , Drax and his henchman attempt to escape by Russian submarine ? only to be killed as the vessel flees through the waters onto which the Moonraker has been retargeted . After their debriefing at headquarters , Bond meets up with Brand , expecting her company ? but they part ways after she reveals that she is engaged to a fellow Special Branch officer .

= = Background and writing history = =

In early 1953 the film producer Alexander Korda read a proof copy of *Live and Let Die* , and informed its author , Ian Fleming , that he was excited by the book , but that it would not make a good basis for a film . Fleming told the producer that his next book was to be an expansion of an idea for a screenplay , set in London and Kent , adding that the location would allow " for some wonderful film settings in the old metropolis idiom " .

Fleming undertook a significant amount of background research in preparation for writing *Moonraker* ; he asked his fellow correspondent on *The Sunday Times* , Anthony Terry , for information on the Second World War German resistance force ? the Werewolves ? and German V @-@ 2 rockets . The latter was a subject on which he wrote to the science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke and the British Interplanetary Society . Fleming also visited the Wimpole Street psychiatrist Eric Strauss to discuss the traits of megalomaniacs ; Strauss lent him the book *Men of Genius* , which provided the link between megalomania and childhood thumb @-@ sucking . Fleming used this information to give Drax diastema , a common result of thumb @-@ sucking . According to his biographer Andrew Lycett , Fleming " wanted to make *Moonraker* his most ambitious and personal novel yet . " Fleming , a keen card player , was fascinated by the background to the 1890 royal baccarat scandal , and when in 1953 he met a woman who had been present at the game , he questioned her so intently that she burst into tears .

In January 1954 Fleming and his wife , Ann , travelled to their Goldeneye estate in Jamaica for their annual two @-@ month holiday . He had already written two Bond novels , *Casino Royale* , which had been published in April 1953 , and *Live and Let Die* , whose publication was imminent . He began writing *Moonraker* on his arrival in the Caribbean . He later wrote an article for *Books and Bookmen* magazine describing his approach to writing , in which he said : " I write for about three hours in the morning ... and I do another hour 's work between six and seven in the evening . I never correct anything and I never go back to see what I have written ... By following my formula , you write 2 @,@ 000 words a day . " By 24 February he had written over 30 @,@ 000 words , although he wrote to a friend that he felt like he was already parodying the two earlier Bond novels . Fleming 's own copy bears the following inscription , " This was written in January and February 1954 and published a year later . It is based on a film script I have had in my mind for many years . " He later said that the idea for the film had been too short for a full novel , and that he " had to more or less

graft the first half of the book onto my film idea in order to bring it up to the necessary length " .

Fleming considered a number of titles for the story ; his first choice had been *The Moonraker* , until Noël Coward reminded him of a novel of the same name by F. Tennyson Jesse . Fleming then considered *The Moonraker Secret* , *The Moonraker Plot* , *The Inhuman Element* , *Wide of the Mark* , *The Infernal Machine* , *Mondays are Hell* and *Out of the Clear Sky* . George Wren Howard of Jonathan Cape suggested *Bond & the Moonraker* , *The Moonraker Scare* and *The Moonraker Plan* , while his friend , the writer William Plomer , suggested *Hell is Here* ; the final choice of *Moonraker* was a suggestion by Wren Howard .

Although Fleming provided no dates within his novels , two writers have identified different timelines based on events and situations within the novel series as a whole . John Griswold and Henry Chancellor ? both of whom have written books on behalf of Ian Fleming Publications ? put the events of *Moonraker* in 1953 ; Griswold is more precise , and considers the story to have taken place in May of that year .

= = Development = =

= = = Plot inspirations = = =

The locations draw from Fleming 's personal experiences . *Moonraker* is the only Bond novel that takes place solely in Britain , which gave Fleming the chance to write about the England he cherished , such as the Kent countryside , including the White Cliffs of Dover , and London clubland . Fleming owned a cottage in St Margaret 's at Cliffe , near Dover , and he went to great lengths to get the details of the area right , including lending his car to his stepson to time the journey from London to Deal for the car chase passage . Fleming used his experiences of London clubs for the background of the *Blades* scenes . As a clubman , he enjoyed membership of *Boodle 's* , *White 's* and the *Portland Club* , and a combination of *Boodles* and the *Portland Club* is thought to be the model for *Blades* ; the author Michael Dibdin found the scene in the club to be " surely one of the finest things that Ian Fleming ever did . "

The early chapters of the novel centre on Bond 's private life , with Fleming using his own lifestyle as a basis for Bond 's . Fleming used further aspects of his private life , such as his friends , as he had done in his previous novels : Hugo Drax was named after his brother @-@ in @-@ law Hugo Charteris and a navy acquaintance Admiral Sir Reginald Aylmer Ranfurly Plunkett @-@ Ernle @-@ Erle @-@ Drax , while Fleming 's friend Duff Sutherland (described as " a scruffy looking chap ") was one of the bridge players at *Blades* . The name of the Scotland Yard superintendent , Ronnie Vallance , was made up from those of Ronald Howe , the actual assistant commissioner at the Yard , and of Vallance Lodge & Co . , Fleming 's accountants . Other elements of the plot came from Fleming 's knowledge of wartime operations carried out by T @-@ Force , a secret British Army unit formed to continue the work of the Fleming @-@ established 30 Assault Unit .

= = = Characters = = =

According to the author Raymond Benson , *Moonraker* is a deeper and more introspective book than Fleming 's previous work , which allows the author to develop the characters further . As such , Bond " becomes something more than ... [the] cardboard figure " that he had been in the previous two novels . The start of the book concentrates on Bond at home and his daily routines , which Fleming describes as " Elastic office hours from around ten until six , ... evenings spent playing cards in the company of a few close friends , ... or making love , with rather cold passion , to one of three similarly disposed married women . " This lifestyle was largely modelled on Fleming 's own , which the journalist and writer Matthew Parker sees as showing " a sourness " in the author 's character . According to Chancellor , two of Bond 's other vices were also displayed in the book : his fondness for gambling ? illegal except in private members clubs in 1955 ? and excessive drink and drug taking , neither of which were frowned upon in post @-@ war upper class circles . In

preparation for beating Drax at cards , Bond consumes a vodka martini , a carafe of vodka shared with M , two bottles of champagne and a brandy ; he also mixes a quantity of Benzedrine , an amphetamine , into a glass of the champagne . According to The Times journalist and historian Ben Macintyre , to Fleming the alcohol consumption " meant relaxation , ritual and reliability " . Benzedrine was regularly taken by troops during the war to remain awake and alert , and Fleming was an occasional consumer .

Drax is physically abnormal , as are many of Bond 's later adversaries . He has very broad shoulders , a large head and protruding teeth with diastema ; his face is badly scarred from a wartime explosion . According to the writers Kingsley Amis and Benson ? both of whom subsequently wrote Bond novels ? Drax is the most successful villain in the Bond canon . Amis considers this to be " because the most imagination and energy has gone into his portrayal . He lives in the real world ... [and] his physical presence fills Moonraker . The view is shared by Chancellor , who considers Drax " perhaps the most believable " of all Fleming 's villains . The cultural historian Jeremy Black writes that as with Le Chiffre and Mr Big ? the villains of the first two Bond novels ? Drax 's origins and war history are vital to an understanding of the character . Like several other antagonists in the Bond canon , Drax was German , reminding readers of a familiar threat in 1950s Britain . Because Drax is without a girlfriend or wife he is , according to the norms of Fleming and his works , abnormal in Bond 's world .

Benson considers Brand to be one of the weakest female roles in the Bond canon and " a throwback to the rather stiff characterization of Vesper Lynd " from Casino Royale . Brand 's lack of interest in Bond removes sexual tension from the novel ; she is unique in the canon for being the one woman that Bond does not seduce . The cultural historians Janet Woollacott and Tony Bennett write that the perceived reserve shown by Brand to Bond was not due to frigidity , but to her engagement to a fellow police officer .

M is another character who is more fully realised than in the previous novels , and for the first time in the series he is shown outside a work setting at the Blades club . It is never explained how he received or could afford his membership of the club , which had a restricted membership of only 200 gentlemen , all of whom had to show £ 100 @, @ 000 in cash or gilt @-@ edged securities . Amis , in his study The James Bond Dossier , considers that on M 's salary his membership of the club would have been puzzling ; Amis points out that in the 1963 book On Her Majesty 's Secret Service it is revealed that M 's pay as head of the Secret Service is £ 6 @, @ 500 a year .

= = Style = =

Benson analysed Fleming 's writing style and identified what he described as the " Fleming Sweep " : a stylistic technique that sweeps the reader from one chapter to another using ' hooks ' at the end of each chapter to heighten tension and pull the reader into the next : Benson feels that the sweep in Moonraker was not as pronounced as Fleming 's previous works , largely due to the lack of action sequences in the novel .

According to the literary analyst LeRoy L. Panek , in his examination of 20th @-@ century British spy novels , in Moonraker Fleming uses a technique closer to the detective story than to the thriller genre . This manifests itself in Fleming placing clues to the plot line throughout the story , and leaving Drax 's unveiling of his plan until the later chapters . Black sees that the pace of the novel is set by the launch of the rocket (there are four days between Bond 's briefing by M and the launch) while Amis considers that the story to have a " rather hurried " ending .

Moonraker uses a literary device Fleming employs elsewhere , that of having a seemingly trivial incident between the main characters ? the card game ? that leads to the uncovering of a greater incident ? the main plot involving the rocket . Dibdin sees gambling as the common link , thus the card game acts as an " introduction to the ensuing encounter ... for even higher stakes " . Savoye sees this concept of competition between Bond and villain as a " notion of game and the eternal fight between Order and Disorder " , common throughout the Bond stories .

= = Themes = =

Parker describes the novel as " a hymn to England " , and highlights Fleming 's description of the white cliffs of Dover and the heart of London as evidence . Even the German Krebs is moved by the sight of the Kent countryside in a country he hates . The novel places England ? and particularly London and Kent ? in the front line of the cold war , and the threat to the location further emphasises its importance . Bennett and Woollacott consider that Moonraker defines the strengths and virtues of England and Englishness as being the " quiet and orderly background of English institutions " , which are threatened by the disturbance Drax brings .

The literary critic Meir Sternberg considers the theme of English identity can be seen in the confrontation between Drax and Bond . Drax ? whose real name Drache is German for dragon ? is in opposition to Bond , who takes the role of Saint George in the conflict .

As with Casino Royale and Live and Let Die , Moonraker involves the idea of the " traitor within " . Drax , real name Graf Hugo von der Drache , is a " megalomaniac German Nazi who masquerades as an English gentleman " , while Krebs bears the same name as Hitler 's last Chief of Staff . Black sees that , in using a German as the novel 's main enemy , " Fleming ... exploits another British cultural antipathy of the 1950s . Germans , in the wake of the Second World War , made another easy and obvious target for bad press . " Moonraker uses two of the foes feared by Fleming , the Nazis and the Soviets , with Drax being German and working for the Soviets ; in Moonraker the Soviets were hostile and provided not just the atomic bomb , but support and logistics to Drax . Moonraker played on fears of the audiences of the 1950s of rocket attacks from overseas , fears grounded in the use of the V @-@ 2 rocket by the Nazis during the Second World War . The story takes the threat one stage further , with a rocket based on English soil , aimed at London and " the end of British invulnerability " .

= = Publication and reception = =

= = = Publication history = = =

Moonraker was published in the UK by Jonathan Cape in hardback format on 5 April 1955 with a cover designed by Kenneth Lewis , following Fleming 's suggestions of using a stylised flame motif ; the first impression was of 9 @,@ 900 copies . The US publication was by Macmillan on 20 September that year . In October 1956 Pan Books published a paperback version of the novel in the UK , which sold 43 @,@ 000 copies before the end of the year . In December that year the US paperback was published under the title Too Hot to Handle by Permabooks . This edition was rewritten to Americanise the British idioms used , and Fleming provided a number of explanatory footnotes such as the value of English currency against the dollar . Since its initial publication the book has been issued in numerous hardback and paperback editions , translated into several languages and has never been out of print .

= = = Reception = = =

Fleming 's friend ? and neighbour in Jamaica ? Noël Coward considered Moonraker to be the best thing Fleming had written to that point : " although as usual too far @-@ fetched , not quite so much so as the last two ... His observation is extraordinary and his talent for description vivid . " Fleming received numerous letters from readers complaining about the lack of exotic locations ; one of which protested " We want taking out of ourselves , not sitting on the beach in Dover . "

Julian Symons , writing in The Times Literary Supplement , found Moonraker " a disappointment " , and considered that " Fleming 's tendency ... to parody the form of the thriller , has taken charge in the second half of this story . " Maurice Richardson , in his review for The Observer , was more welcoming : " Do not miss this " , he urged , saying that " Mr. Fleming continues to be irresistibly readable , however incredible " . Hilary Corke , writing in The Listener , thought that " Fleming is one of the most accomplished of thriller @-@ writers " , and considered that Moonraker " is as

mercilessly readable as all the rest " . Corke warned Fleming away from being over @-@ dramatic , declaring that " Mr Fleming is evidently far too accomplished to need to lean upon these blood @-@ and @-@ thunder devices : he could keep our hair on end for three hundred pages without spilling more blood than was allowed to Shylock . " The reviewer in The Scotsman considered that Fleming " administers stimuli with no mean hand ... ' Astonish me ! ' the addict may challenge : Mr Fleming can knock him sideways . "

John Metcalf for The Spectator thought the book " utterly disgraceful ? and highly enjoyable ... without [Moonraker] no forthcoming railway journey should be undertaken " , although he also considered that it was " not one of Mr. Fleming 's best " . Anthony Boucher , writing in The New York Times , was equivocal , saying " I don 't know anyone who writes about gambling more vividly than Fleming and I only wish the other parts of his books lived up to their gambling sequences " . Richard Lister in the New Statesman thought that " Mr. Fleming is splendid ; he stops at nothing . " Writing for The Washington Post , Al Manola believed that the " British tradition of rich mystery writing , copious description and sturdy heroism all blend nicely " in Moonraker , providing what he considered was " probably the best action novel of the month " .

= = Adaptations = =

The actor John Payne attempted to take up the option on the film rights to the book in 1955 , but nothing came of the attempt . The Rank Organisation also came to an agreement to make a film , but this likewise fell through . The novel was not one of Fleming 's stories acquired by Eon Productions in 1961 ; in 1969 the company acquired the rights and commissioned Gerry Anderson to produce and co @-@ write a screenplay . Anderson and Tony Barwick prepared a 70 @-@ page treatment that was never filmed , but some elements were similar to the final screenplay of The Spy Who Loved Me .

The first adaptation of Moonraker was for South African radio in 1956 , with Bob Holness providing the voice of Bond . According to The Independent , " listeners across the Union thrilled to Bob 's cultured tones as he defeated evil master criminals in search of world domination " . The novel was adapted as a comic strip that was published in the Daily Express newspaper and syndicated worldwide . The adaptation was written by Henry Gammidge and illustrated by John McLusky , and ran daily from 30 March to 8 August 1959 . Titan Books reprinted the strip in 2005 along with Casino Royale and Live and Let Die as a part of the Casino Royale anthology .

" Moonraker " was used as the title for the eleventh James Bond film , produced by Eon Productions and released in 1979 . Directed by Lewis Gilbert and produced by Albert R. Broccoli , the film features Roger Moore in his fourth appearance as Bond . The Nazi @-@ inspired element of Drax 's motivation in the novel was indirectly preserved with the " master race " theme of the film 's plot . Since the screenplay was original , Eon Productions and Glidrose Publications authorised the film 's writer , Christopher Wood , to produce his second novelization based on a film ; this was entitled James Bond and Moonraker . Elements of Moonraker were also used in the 2002 film Die Another Day , with a scene set in the Blades club . The actress Rosamund Pike , who plays Miranda Frost in the film , later said that her character was originally to have been named Gala Brand .