

AGENTS EXTRAORDINARY

1: LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE

By Nathan Alderman

PAGE ONE

1.1

DR. CELIA CHANCE is just waking from a deep sleep, nerd glasses askew on her nose, spiky blond hair ruffled. She's slumped over a wooden table in the library of the Senate House, University of London, downtown London. A laptop computer, open but in sleep mode, sits on the table next to her. A hand has gently grasped her shoulder to shake her awake.

VOICE (o/p): **Go home.**
CHANCE: Uh... whuzza?

1.2

CHANCE is trying to rub the sleep out of her eyes, more than a little sheepishly. She looks exhausted. There are thick bandages across her knuckles. The man who woke her-- DR. HIRAM LOWELL, her boss and mentor-- looks even more tired than she does, and not entirely well. But his smile is warm and genuine. It's night, and the library seems deserted.

CHANCE: ... **Doctor Lowell?** 'M sorry-- the presentation...
LOWELL: It's **fine**. Go home, **Celia**. And **sleep in** tomorrow.

1.3

CHANCE, rising from the table, folds up the laptop as she and LOWELL talk genially. She wears a black leather jacket, slightly shabby Stone Roses T-shirt, blue jeans, and (though we may not be able to see them here) her omnipresent British Army combat boots.

CHANCE: And miss breakfast with our **mysterious benefactor?**
LOWELL: He's just an **investor**.
CELIA: Aha! So it **is** a "he."

1.4

CHANCE and LOWELL walk out of the library, into one of the Senate House hallways. LOWELL's pointing to CHANCE's bandaged knuckles, which she holds up with a sort of warrior's pride. With his other hand, he's slipping something small but visible into CHANCE's jacket pocket without her noticing.

LOWELL: I don't recall you having this much **cheek** as an undergrad. The **bruised knuckles**, however...
CHANCE: Eh, there's **always** some **git** in the pub who won't take **up yours** for an answer.

1.5

As they wait for an elevator, LOWELL runs one hand over his face exhaustedly. He really doesn't look healthy. CHANCE notices this with concern.

CHANCE: I won't be the **only** one sleeping, right?

CHANCE: It's **bad form** to snore through one's own **press conference**.

LOWELL: Don't worry about me.

1.6

CHANCE is in the elevator, looking out at LOWELL, who wears a sad and weary smile on his face.

LOWELL: Just one more thing to do.

LOWELL: Then I can **rest**.

PAGE TWO

2.1

The towering Senate House building, late on a clear London night. A few lights still glow yellow in the windows, but they're mostly dark.

NO DIALOGUE

2.2

CHANCE pushes her way out the front door and down the steps, still carrying the laptop. She's digging in one of her pockets quizzically.

CHANCE (small): ... come on, where's that bloody **Oyster** card...

2.3

CHANCE has come out of her pockets with a small USB keychain flash drive. The way she's looking at it indicates it clearly doesn't belong to her.

CHANCE: ?

CHANCE: **Hello.**

2.4

Close on the flash drive as CHANCE examines it, so we can clearly see what it is.

CHANCE: This looks like the one I gave--

2.5

Chance looks up at something that's falling toward her, making a fluttering sound as it goes.

SFX: fluttafluttaflutta

CHANCE (small): **Dr. Lowell?**

PAGE THREE

3.1

LOWELL plunges out of the sky and hits the steps like a sack of cement about a meter and a half from a horrified CHANCE. She's instinctively leaping backwards. The laptop has flown from her hands, and is shattering on the steps.

NO DIALOGUE
TITLE AND CREDITS

3.2

In shock, CHANCE looks up in the direction from which LOWELL fell.

NO DIALOGUE

3.3

Far up the building, leaning out an open window, we see the silhouette of a human figure-- with two glowing, circular red eyes.

CAPTION: "I know what I saw."

PAGE FOUR

4.1

CHANCE stands at the bottom of the steps, some time later. Her eyes are red from crying. She's hunched over, hugging herself from the chilly night air, and glaring at "us." Behind her, we see police officers swarming over LOWELL's sheet-draped body.

DETECTIVE (o/p): **Miss Chance--**

CHANCE: **Doctor** Chance. No. **Shut up.**

CHANCE: This is not a bloody **suicide.**

4.2

A DETECTIVE, mid-thirties, reasonably handsome and very tired-looking, has been talking to CHANCE. He now holds up a cracked plastic prescription bottle.

DETECTIVE: This was in Dr. Lowell's pocket. **Anti-nausea** medication.

DETECTIVE: I just rang his sister in Surrey. He... I'm assuming you didn't know. He'd got **cancer.**

4.3

CHANCE is horrified. The DETECTIVE, tired as he is, tries to show sympathy.

CHANCE: I-- what? No, that can't be right...

DETECTIVE: His **liver**, and into the **lymph nodes.** He had maybe a month.

4.4

CHANCE sits down hard on the steps, staring dazedly ahead at nothing in particular. The DETECTIVE stands by, somewhat awkwardly.

CHANCE: No, we'd just made a **breakthrough**, you see...

CHANCE: We came in from **Royal Holloway**... we've a **press conference**...

CHANCE: And I saw a **man**...

4.5

The DETECTIVE looks down at CHANCE, trying to put this as gently as he can.

DETECTIVE: With **glowing red eyes**, yes.

DETECTIVE: ... How much have you **slept** in the last few days?

4.6

CHANCE just glares at him, furious. The DETECTIVE backs off, hands raised, clearly exasperated.

DETECTIVE: Just-- just **go home** and rest. **Think** about it.

DETECTIVE: We'll, uh, we'll be in touch.

PAGE FIVE

5.1

CHANCE stands on the pavement down the block from the steps to Senate House. She has her mobile phone to her ear in one hand. The other holds the microdrive, which she's pondering, lost in thought. A voice is coming from off-panel.

VOICE (o/p): Am I **interrupting**?

5.2

CHANCE turns to see who's talking to her. She has instinctively closed her fist around the microdrive and tucked it close to her, where the other person cannot see. We see her over his shoulder-- the silhouette of a man in an old-fashioned bowler hat.

CHANCE: What? No, I... I can't think of who I was going to call...

CHANCE: Who are you?

5.3

PARRY LORD extends his hand for her to shake. The smile on his face is practiced, sympathetic, but not entirely insincere.

LORD: You're **Dr. Chance**, worked with **Dr. Lowell**?

CHANCE: I-- yes. What's this about?

LORD: I'm **Parry Lord**. I was **funding** your work.

5.4

CHANCE is caught off guard. She shakes hands with a very calm LORD with one hand, dropping her mobile and the microdrive into a pocket of her jacket with the other.

LORD: I'm truly sorry. He said a lot of kind things about you.

CHANCE: He never said **anything** about you.

5.5

CHANCE peers at LORD as if finally recognizing him.

LORD: Well, I asked him **not** to. I--

CHANCE: **Wait**. Parry Lord, as in **Lord Media Group**?

LORD: The **very same**.

5.6

CHANCE is incredulous. LORD looks more amused than insulted.

CHANCE: Wait, wait. Mr. **Round-The-World** in a **balloon**?

CHANCE: Mr. **Page-Four-Girls** in the **Clarion**?

LORD: I see my reputation **precedes** me.

PAGE SIX

6.1

CHANCE is clearly surprised by what LORD is breezily rattling off.

CHANCE: I'm sorry, I just-- you don't seem like the type to follow **cold fusion**.

LORD: **Heavy water**, a current between electrodes of **palladium** and **platinum**, supposed **nuclear reactions** between the **palladium** and the **deuterium** in the heavy water--

LORD: It's not as if I don't **read**.

6.2

CHANCE is saying something sarcastic. LORD is waving it off nonchalantly.

CHANCE: From the content of your **newspapers**, I'd think **otherwise**.

LORD: Ah, but we have some **highly** educational cable channels.

6.3

CHANCE rubs her eyes, tired. LORD appears concerned and sympathetic.

CHANCE: That was **rude** of me. It's-- I'm sorry, I've not slept and, and Professor Lowell...

LORD: It's all right, really. He was a brilliant man.

6.4

CHANCE, eyes still shut, runs her fingers back through her hair as if to clear her head. There's something increasingly sly about LORD's expression.

LORD: You were testing various **alloys** for the electrodes, right?

CHANCE: Right. We found a few that seemed to produce **reactions**.

CHANCE: Faint, mind you, but **statistically significant**.

6.5

LORD looks intrigued, as if this doesn't match with what he already knows.

LORD: Did Dr. Lowell keep any of his research on computer files?

CHANCE (o/p): I don't know-- I'd have to check...

6.6

CHANCE's eyes snap open. The mention of the word "microdrive" has made her suspicious.

LORD (o/p): Burned on a disc... or perhaps on some sort of **microdrive**?

PAGE SEVEN

7.1

CHANCE has one hand in her pocket, clutching what we know is the microdrive. She's turned her whole body so that the microdrive's as far away from LORD as possible. LORD seems increasingly sinister here.

CHANCE: ... No, I don't believe so.

LORD: Strange. That's not what he told **me**.

LORD: And I'd **very much** like to know that my **investment's** secure.

7.2

LORD is extending a hand toward CHANCE with a courteous-- and possibly phony-- smile on his face. CHANCE is shying away defiantly, trying to keep up an appearance of politeness.

LORD: You must be very tired. Let me give you a lift home-- give you time to **collect** your **thoughts**.

CHANCE: That's... quite all right, thank you. I'll take the **tube**.

7.3

LORD has gently taken hold of CHANCE's forearm now. There's nothing overtly menacing about this, but CHANCE isn't reacting well to it.

LORD: At this hour? **Alone**? I don't believe that's entirely--

7.4.

CHANCE swiftly and efficiently grabs LORD's offending hand and twists it forcefully behind his back, immobilizing him. LORD grimaces slightly, but seems more amused than anything.

LORD (small): -- **safe**.

CHANCE: I think I'll manage.

LORD (small): **Quite**.

7.5

CHANCE releases LORD's arm and backs away. LORD flexes his freed arm to work out the pain, and presents CHANCE a business card with the other hand.

LORD: This may not be the **best** time for a discussion.

CHANCE: How **perceptive**.

LORD: Should you feel **talkative**, do please give me a ring. My private number.

7.6

CHANCE walks away, quickly and warily, clutching the business card in her hand. LORD is as calm and unruffled as ever, watching her go.

CHANCE: Better yet--

CHANCE: I'll write you a **letter to the editor**.

PAGE EIGHT

8.1

LORD rubs the arm that CHANCE grabbed. With his free hand, he's dialing a small, sleek flip-top cellphone (with a camera, LCD screen... the works.) He's looking at the direction in which CHANCE has left with a certain rueful admiration.

LORD: **Hell of a grip**, I say.

SFX (phone): Deetdootdeedeetdoodoodoodeet.

8.2

LORD has the phone to his ear, his eyes shadowed under his bowler hat. There seems to be an edge of intensity to his usual good humor as he speaks.

PHONE: You've **found her**?

LORD: I've a feeling she'll be rather **difficult**.

PHONE: No **excuses**, Mr. Lord. You know what to do.

8.3

CHANCE walks along the nearly deserted streets of central London at 3 a.m. There's a taxicab passing, and an obviously drunk couple weaving their way home, but overall the streets are eerily empty. CHANCE is looking around cautiously, hands jammed deeply in her pockets. She's approaching the entrance to the Holborn underground station, where she'll take the Central line east.

NO DIALOGUE

8.4

Low angle, looking up past CHANCE's tense, watchful face to the rooftops of the surrounding buildings-- where a cluster of glowing red eyes peer at her...

NO DIALOGUE

8.5

High angle now, looking down from the rooftops as CHANCE enters the station. The strange, red-eyed figures, with odd pronglike protrusions from the top of their heads, watch her closely. The figures make weird, distorted sounds: "kht kht kht..."

PAGE NINE

9.1

CHANCE rides a very long escalator down to the station, past adverts on the walls for West End musicals, "Cellunext" mobile phone service and fast-food restaurants. She looks exhausted and nervous, and keeps her hands jammed in her pockets.

NO DIALOGUE

9.2

The platform is bright and deserted-- CHANCE is the only passenger. She stands at the edge of the tracks, leaning over slightly, trying to peer into the darkness of the tunnel in hopes of seeing an oncoming train.

CHANCE (small): Come on, come on...

9.3

In foreground, we see a rubbish bin near the wall of the platform tip over, its lid clattering off onto the ground loudly. CHANCE, alone in the background, has whirled toward the source of the noise.

SFX: KLANG!

SFX: KLATTA KLATTA

9.4

From over CHANCE's shoulder, we see her peering across the deserted platform toward the overturned can.

CHANCE: Hello?

CHANCE: Anyone there?

9.5

Very close on CHANCE's face as she regains her composure, chiding herself for being so nervous. Her eyes are shut, and she's running a hand back through her hair.

CHANCE (small): Steady on, girl...

CHANCE (small): What would **Daddy** say, honestly?

PAGE TEN

10.1

Pull back, in a large, shocking panel, to reveal that there are now three bizarrely suited men standing directly behind CHANCE-- the BUNNYMEN. CHANCE has just noticed them, and is spinning around in shock and fright.

Their sleek white bodysuits seem to have the sort of modular padding/armor found in motorcycle jackets. Their heads are completely covered by thick white plastic masks that look vaguely like the head of a rabbit: two pronglike "ears" coming up from the top of the mask, a slight protrusion near the nose and mouth, and two circular red lenses for the eyes-- the glowing eyes CHANCE saw earlier. On each of their chests, the BUNNYMEN have what looks like a fully functioning analog clock, with each set of hands telling the same time (somewhere around 3:20 in the morning.) The crackly electronic VOICE that's speaking comes from the lead BUNNYMAN-- but from his *neck*, not his *mouth*.

VOICE: **Good evening**, my dear.

10.2

Close on the lead BUNNYMAN's eerie red eyes. We see CHANCE reflected in them, backing away in alarm.

VOICE: I'm afraid you're going to **miss your train**.

PAGE ELEVEN

11.1

CHANCE, baffled and frightened but still brave, has backed away from the three BUNNYMEN and dropped into a slight crouch. Her hands are clenched as fists. The three BUNNYMEN stand stock-still.

CHANCE: What-- who--

VOICE: **Come come**, my dear, you're a **Ph.D.** Surely you can manage **complete sentences**.

CHANCE: Who are you?

11.2

The BUNNYMEN slowly begin to advance on CHANCE. The VOICE begins to shift from one BUNNYMAN to the next, always emerging from their necks.

VOICE: **Unimportant**. You have

VOICE: **something I want**, something Doctor

VOICE: **Lowell** wouldn't **give me**.

11.3

CHANCE is horrified and angry, backing away as the BUNNYMEN continue to advance.

CHANCE: You-- **you** were the ones--

VOICE: Oh, don't look so **appalled**. I **tried** to be **civilized**.

VOICE: I offered him a great deal of **money**. And then a great deal **more**.

11.4

The BUNNYMEN have now surrounded CHANCE, who's trying to figure out her options.

VOICE: His **refusal** made me very **cross**.

VOICE: I know you have it, girl. The **microdrive**.

VOICE: I'd ask you to **hand it over**, but--

11.5

The BUNNYMAN behind CHANCE grabs her in a half nelson, locking her arms while she struggles. The other two BUNNYMEN reach for CHANCE.

VOICE: I haven't the **time** to be subtle.

CHANCE: In that case--

PAGE TWELVE

12.1

CHANCE rears back and kicks out with both feet, smashing her boots into both of the advancing BUNNYMEN's faces! The BUNNYMAN behind her seems surprised by her sudden action, and his grip is loosening

CHANCE: **Neither do I!**

12.2

CHANCE plants her feet, ducks forward, and tosses the third BUNNYMAN over her shoulders, into the other two.

CHANCE: **Piss off!**

12.3

As the BUNNYMEN get to their feet, CHANCE scrambles past them, running for the exit...

NO DIALOGUE

12.4

CHANCE is almost there-- but a BUNNYMAN has LEAPED inhumanly far into the air, the boots of his suit hissing with pneumatic gas, preparing to come down right on top of her--

SFX (boots): PCHOONK

12.5

CRUNCH. The BUNNYMAN lands squarely on CHANCE's back, slamming her painfully to the floor!

SFX: WHUD!

CHANCE: Aaah!

12.6

The BUNNYMAN's hand grips CHANCE's skull, shoving her face painfully against the concrete floor. Her lip is bleeding. From ATOP her, the BUNNYMAN has bent his face down, tilting his head to one side to get a close look at CHANCE with one eye in particular (as rabbits often do.) Very creepy.

VOICE: You're upsetting my **timetable**, Dr. Chance.

VOICE: It's **highly** inconsiderate.

PAGE THIRTEEN

13.1

The BUNNYMEN have dragged CHANCE to her feet, one on each side holding her up. She's in too much pain to struggle too hard. The third BUNNYMAN has taken the microdrive out of her jacket pocket, and is examining it. The VOICE comes from him.

VOICE: **There** now. Was that **so difficult?**

CHANCE: I don't understand... we were holding a **press conference...**

CHANCE: Our data would have been **public knowledge...**

13.2

The lead BUNNYMAN tilts its head at her in an eerie fashion. Behind it, down the tube tunnel, we see the lights and hear the rumble of an approaching train.

VOICE: **Public** knowledge, my dear, is of **no use** to me.

SFX: Rmmmm...

VOICE: The 3:24 express. Marvelously **punctual.**

13.3

With the third BUNNYMAN leading the way, still holding the microdrive, the other two drag CHANCE, doing her best to resist, to the edge of the platform. The rumbling of the approaching train has grown louder.

SFX: RMMMMMMM....

VOICE: **Shame** to do this, really.

VOICE: You're rather **easy on the eyes.**

CHANCE: I-- wait, what are you doing?

13.4

Close on CHANCE's horrified face.

VOICE (o/p): I said you'd **miss your train**, Dr. Chance. I never said that **it** would miss **you.**

VOICE (o/p): **Count of three**, lads...

SFX: **RMMMM...**

13.5

CHANCE struggles, furious, as the two BUNNYMEN prepare to toss her in the path of the train. The VOICE now emerges, in turn, from the necks of each of the BUNNYMEN holding CHANCE.

SFX: **RMMMMMMMMMM**

CHANCE: **NO!**

VOICE: One...

VOICE: Two...

PAGE FOURTEEN

14.1

The pointed tip of an UMBRELLA taps the shoulder of one of the BUNNYMEN holding CHANCE. All three of the BUNNYMEN and CHANCE are turning, surprised, towards the voice coming from off panel. Behind them, the train blurs past.

SFX: **RMMMMMMMM**

LORD (o/p, shouting over the noise of the train): **NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF MY BUSINESS...**

14.2

LORD stands behind them, grinning cheerfully, umbrella at the ready. The train has passed, and its noise is dying away...

LORD: ... but I **hardly** think this constitutes “**minding the gap.**”

SFX: **RMMMMmmmmmmmmmm....**

14.3

And with a single slash of his umbrella, LORD decks the two BUNNYMEN who were holding CHANCE captive! CHANCE is ducking under the swing. LORD's fighting style is based on the Indian martial art of Kalaripayattu (<http://www.kalaripayattu.org/>), but his stances are a little more practical, and a little less exaggerated and dancelike.

SFX: SWAK!

14.4

CHANCE turns and slams a most unladylike punch directly into the neck of the third BUNNYMAN, who staggers backwards.

SFX: CRUNCH!

VOICE (static crackle): khhhhhhhhk!

PAGE FIFTEEN

15.1

In the background, LORD is delivering a flying kick to one BUNNYMAN while smacking down another with his umbrella. In foreground, CHANCE is stomping on the lead BUNNYMAN's head with grim satisfaction while wresting the microdrive back out of its upward-stretched hand.

SFX: THWACK!

CHANCE: I'll take **that**, thank you.

CHANCE: **Pervert.**

15.2

LORD follows as CHANCE sprints for the exit. The BUNNYMEN are already beginning to get up behind them. CHANCE clutches the microdrive tightly in one hand.

LORD: Are you all right, Dr. Chance?

CHANCE: **Define** "all right."

15.3

CHANCE, followed by LORD, dashes through the circular white-tiled tunnel, past adverts posted on the walls, toward the escalators back up to the street.

CHANCE: This is **not** my typical **Thursday night.**

LORD: May I propose **running now**, and **explanations later?**

15.4

LORD and CHANCE run up the "up" escalator, looking over their shoulders and not liking what they see.

CHANCE: I'm afraid "**later**" may be a trifle **optimistic.**

15.5

The BUNNYMEN have caught up with LORD and CHANCE, bounding unnaturally off the walls and up onto the middle rail of the escalator. They hunch over like animals, and everything about their posture says "bad news." LORD is trying to push CHANCE behind him, raising his umbrella to strike. The VOICE alternates between the BUNNYMEN.

VOICE: Now you've

VOICE: made me

VOICE: rather **cross.**

PAGE SIXTEEN

16.1

With another leap, the BUNNYMEN are upon LORD and CHANCE. Two BUNNYMEN pin LORD's arms and proceed to pummel him with their fists. A third is leaping towards CHANCE.

SFX: THWACK!

SFX: THWACK!

16.2

The THIRD lands on CHANCE, knocking her back against the steps of the escalator. Its hands close around her throat, throttling her. CHANCE claws frantically at the BUNNYMAN's mask, hands beginning to grip the two antennae/ears at the top.

VOICE: I'll make you **wish** you'd taken the **train**.

CHANCE: hggk-- ggk--

16.3

CHANCE's hands close around the antennae at the top of the BUNNYMAN's mask--

CHANCE (o/p): ggk...

16.4

And with adrenalin-fueled strength, she snaps them off! Sparks and wires hiss and fizz from the broken ends of the antennae.

SFX: SNAP!

SFX: fzzt! zzzt!

PAGE SEVENTEEN

17.1

With a start, the BUNNYMAN releases CHANCE, who gasps for breath. The BUNNYMAN looks at its own hands, as if waking from a dream.

CHANCE: Ghhhuuuuuh! *koff koff koff*

BUNNYMAN: ...

17.2

With one hand, the BUNNYMAN moves the hands of the clock on its chest to midnight. The clock begins ticking faintly.

SFX: clik

SFX: tik tik tik

17.3

The BUNNYMAN looks up at a baffled CHANCE and speaks to her. The voice comes from its mouth this time, not its neck.

BUNNYMAN (weak, creepy): Thhhhh.... Thhhh...

BUNNYMAN (weak, creepy): Thhhank... yyyou...

17.4

Much to CHANCE's surprise, the BUNNYMAN turns and leaps down the escalator, knocking its two comrades off a battered LORD! The VOICE speaks from the two BUNNYMEN attacking LORD, not from the one with the broken antenna. The third BUNNYMAN's ticking is growing louder.

SFX: tik Tik Tik Tik Tik

VOICE: Wait! What

VOICE: are you doing?

PAGE EIGHTEEN

18.1

CHANCE helps to haul a bruised but still alert LORD up the remaining steps of the escalator. For the rest of the story, LORD has several small cuts on his face from the BUNNYMEN's fists.

CHANCE: Oof-- come on, **dead weight**, come on!

LORD: What happened?

18.2

At the bottom of the escalator, the third BUNNYMAN grapples with its two comrades. In the background, we see LORD and CHANCE reaching the top of the escalator above. The ticking from the third BUNNYMAN's chest is now very, very loud...

CHANCE: I'm not sure...

SFX: TIK TIK TIK TIK

18.3

Small panel, close on the clock hands, set at midnight, on the third BUNNYMAN's chest.

CAPTION: "But I don't think we want to stick around."

SFX: TIK TIK TIK--*

18.4

Now in the aboveground portion of the station, CHANCE and LORD are sent sprawling for cover as a massive EXPLOSION boils up through the escalator passage!

SFX: WHOOOM!

18.5

CHANCE and LORD are sprawled on the floor next to each other, their clothes and hair scattered with bits of debris and tattered paper. The station is a mess. LORD's hat has been blown off, and lies upside-down on the ground in front of him.

CHANCE: *koff*

CHANCE: Now...

LORD: Yes?

CHANCE: About those **explanations**...

PAGE NINETEEN

19.1

LORD and CHANCE sit on a public bench, down the block from the entrance to the Holborn tube station. Police cars and firetrucks surround the entrance, along with a small throng of curious onlookers. LORD and CHANCE both look exhausted, but in surprisingly good spirits.

LORD: ... And that's when Dr. Lowell told me about the **threats** he'd been getting.
LORD: I asked him to be **careful**, but he just **laughed**. Said no one **reasonable** would threaten a **physicist**.

19.2

CHANCE turns the microdrive over in her hands, looking at it forlornly. LORD looks on with concern and sympathy.

CHANCE: Why didn't he tell **me** this?
LORD: I don't think he wanted to **worry** you.
LORD: Before you ask... no. I didn't know he was **sick**.

19.3

LORD holds up his cellphone, grinning.

CHANCE (o/p): How did you even **find** me?
LORD: My **business card**. It's got an **RFID** chip on, with **GPS tracking** via my **mobile**.
LORD: Nicked the idea from **Wal-Mart**.

19.4

CHANCE looks at LORD with something between admiration and keen suspicion. LORD just smiles harmlessly.

CHANCE: For a humble **media baron**, Mr. Lord, you seem to know an **awful lot** of things you **shouldn't**.
LORD: I know **exactly** as much as I **need to**, Dr. Chance.

PAGE TWENTY

20.1

CHANCE holds up the microdrive as LORD pulls a PDA out of his jacket pocket.

CHANCE: I suppose you know what's on **this**, then?

LORD: I've an **educated guess**. Care to have a look?

20.2

The microdrive is plugged into a port on the side of LORD's PDA. CHANCE leans over to see the glowing screen. What she sees amazes her.

CHANCE: It looks like-- wait, I've not seen this set of **results** before.

CHANCE: The **power output's** way beyond any of the previous runs...

20.3

LORD and CHANCE huddle around the glow of the screen. CHANCE face has lit up with a thrill of discovery. LORD is looking not at the screen, but at her-- he's clearly charmed by her enthusiasm for the discovery.

CHANCE: **Bloody hell.**

CHANCE: We have to **publish this.**

CHANCE: We have to publish this **right now.**

20.4

LORD just grins and pretends to be thinking very hard.

LORD: Hmm.

LORD: If only you knew someone who owned a **newspaper.**

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

21.1

A newspaper lies on a desk in a well-lit office, next to a sleek computer, a combination phone and intercom, and numerous dossiers and reports-- some stamped CLASSIFIED, all bearing a strange circular seal that looks like a tree coming up out of the ground. A man's hand rests lightly on the newspaper, as if skimming it with his fingers. The paper's masthead reads

THE LONDON EXAMINER

and smaller, below: A LORD MEDIA GROUP NEWSPAPER

The lead headline:

COLD FUSION WORKS

New experiment "a hundredfold stronger" than previous efforts
Discovery paves way for future clean energy

Other headlines on the front page:

FUSION RESEARCHER KILLED

Police suspect foul play

GAS EXPLOSION AT HOLBORN TUBE (accompanied by a photo of the station surrounded by police and fire vehicles)

None hurt in freak accident

INTERCOM: **Mr. Queen?**

VOICE (o/p): Yes, **Portia?**

INTERCOM: **Mr. Lord** for you, sir.

VOICE (o/p): Send him in.

21.2

From the POV of the man sitting behind the desk, we see the office door open. It's a large enough office that we know it belongs to someone important. Two of the four walls are all glass, covered by closed venetian blinds. The door is blind-covered glass as well. There are two chairs in front of the desk; behind them, the door, and a British flag on a stand next to the door.

LORD, looking disheveled but in good spirits, is walking through the door. He's got his umbrella tucked under one arm, and his bowler hat politely in his hand. A few small bruises are starting to join the cuts on his face.

VOICE (o/p): Well, Mr. Lord.

21.3

DESMOND QUEEN remains handsome and powerfully built, even in his early sixties. He's black, dressed in a neat conservative suit, with intense eyes reminiscent of Sidney Poitier. He holds up the newspaper for LORD to see-- and if he's amused, he's hiding it well. He's clearly The Boss. One of them, anyway...

Behind him, on the wall, we see a larger version of the circular tree seal we saw on the files. There's also a glass case holding, oddly enough, a pair of jewel-studded brass knuckles.

QUEEN: It seems you've had **quite an evening**.

(continued)

21.4

LORD sits down casually in one of the chairs in front of QUEEN's desk. He respects QUEEN, but isn't cowed by him.

LORD: **Above average**, I'd say.

LORD: Is that the **morning edition**? I really must talk to the **pressmen**...

21.5

QUEEN puts the paper back on his desk, glowering. LORD replies calmly, toying with his hat.

QUEEN: I've read your **report**. I asked for **discreet**, Mr. Lord.

LORD: You asked for **results** first.

LORD: I believe **discreet** came **second**.

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22.1

QUEEN rolls his eyes, exasperated but unable to deny LORD's logic.

QUEEN: And what of **Dr. Chance?** How much did you **tell her?**

LORD: **Enough.** I rather think she was **too tired** to consider it much.

QUEEN: Then you were **lucky.**

22.2

QUEEN leans forward across his desk, looking at LORD with a sudden, surprising weariness.

QUEEN: You could have called in a whole squad from **Five** for backup tonight, you know.

LORD: That would hardly have been more **discreet**, sir.

QUEEN: Nor would it have been **reckless.**

22.3

Close on QUEEN's face as he thumbs through files on his desk. There's a certain sadness in his eyes.

QUEEN: I keep thinking **Colin's** still around to **rein you in.** He...

QUEEN: We can't **afford** to lose you as well.

22.4

LORD now looks equally grave. QUEEN's words are hitting a nerve with him.

QUEEN (o/p): This business is not about **you**, Mr. Lord. It's not about your **mum and dad.** It's not about **Chaaya.**

LORD: I **know.** I'll... exercise more **caution** from now, sir.

22.5

QUEEN and LORD. QUEEN has picked up a particular file on his desk. LORD looks surprised, for a change.

QUEEN: **Not good enough.** You need someone to watch your **back.**

LORD: ... And just who did you have in mind?

22.6

QUEEN holds up a dossier on CHANCE, DR. CELIA. What looks like a blown-up drivers' licence photo of CHANCE is paperclipped to the folder.

QUEEN: Actually, Mr. Lord...

QUEEN: I believe **you** know her better than I...