

AGENTS EXTRAORDINARY 4: PECKING ORDERS

By Nathan Alderman

PAGE ONE

1.1

Hyde Park, London, late on a snowy winter's night. A police-issue walkie talkie lies in the snow. A pigeon pecks idly at it. A voice comes through the walkie-talkie.

DISPATCH (electronic): **Constable MacIntyre**, this is **dispatch**, come back.

DISPATCH (electronic): Have you **run him off** yet, **Chris?**

PIGEON: coo. coo.

1.2

As we "track" across the scene, we see a constable's helmet lying upturned in the snow surrounded by a couple more pigeons. Red flecks now intrude upon the white of the snow. DISPATCH's electronic speech floats over the scene.

DISPATCH (electronic): Don't tell me you've gone **soft-hearted** again.

DISPATCH (electronic): We've **shelters** for **just this purpose**.

PIGEONS: coo. coo. coo.

1.3

A CONSTABLE's hand (gloved) and arm (in a wooly winter coat with silver buttons) lie in the snow, unmoving. The snow all around is wet with blood, steaming in the cold air. Dozens of pigeons mill about, pecking at the arm-- and the tiny bits of birdseed scattered around the body.

DISPATCH (electronic): He can't stay out there, besides.

DISPATCH (electronic): He'll **catch** his **death** tonight.

DISPATCH (electronic): ... Chris?

PIGEONS: (all kinds of cooing)

1.4

Pull back to reveal the body of the unfortunate CONSTABLE lying in the snow, literally covered with dozens of pecking pigeons, next to a park bench. If you can, try to show a red plastic REMEMBRANCE POPPY pinned to the lapel of his jacket.

A homeless-looking MAN (the FEEDER) swathed in layer upon layer of winter coats, his face concealed with a thick scarf and a shadowy hood, sits on the bench. With one hand, he calmly feeds the hungry pigeons with birdseed from a weird metal cannister in his lap. In his other hand he holds a device about the size of a PDA with a thick, rubberized antenna.

DISPATCH (electronic): ... **Constable?**

PIGEONS: (ridiculous amounts of cooing)

TITLE AND CREDITS

PAGE TWO

2.1

Meet BRIAN. BRIAN's had better mornings. Right now he's standing in the slightly grungy hallway of an apartment complex. He's wearing a hastily buttoned pair of bluejeans, some striking tattoos along his well-defined biceps, a metal ring through his lower lip, and a very confused expression on his face. He holds a jumble of clothing, including a pair of clunky shoes, precariously in his arms.

VOICE (o/p): Now look, **Brendan--**

BRIAN: It's **Brian--**

VOICE (o/p): **Whatever.** I can only **assume** we had a lovely evening, judging by all the **drinks** you apparently bought me.

2.2

The VOICE belongs to DR. CELIA CHANCE, who stands in the doorway of her loft, poised to slam the door. She wears a partially buttoned man's shirt, a pair of camouflage boyshorts, and not much else. She has a serious case of bedhead and a stern but practical expression on her face.

(It's important to note here that while CHANCE is generally fit and healthy, she's also a normally proportioned woman. She has hips, and a bit of a tummy, and a chest that will never, under any circumstances, be mistaken for a well-placed pair of water balloons.)

CHANCE: It's just that I have **no intention** of seeing you again. Or remembering your name.

BRIAN (o/p): But--

CHANCE: Nothing personal. **Ta!**

2.3

As the door begins to close, BRIAN stands in the hall and gathers his wits enough to say:

BRIAN: But--

BRIAN: But that's **my shirt...!**

2.4

Same angle. The shirt CHANCE was wearing is now draped across BRIAN's face as if flung there with considerable force. She's vigorously slamming the door.

SFX/DOOR: **SLAM!**

BRIAN (small): Thank you.

2.5

CHANCE, now wearing just the boyshorts (and, we see, a pair of fuzzy woolen socks) sits on a ratty secondhand couch with her feet up on a coffee table that seems to be made entirely of old copies of *Jane's* (the military magazine, not the girls' magazine) and *New Scientist*, watching television. Her modesty, such as it is, is preserved by the large open box of Frankenberry cereal she has hugged to her chest, from which she's eating with her hands.

Her apartment is a mess-- clothes and books everywhere, old rock posters on the walls, big windows (covered by vertical blinds) that would otherwise overlook the River Thames. She lives in a loft that's been converted from an old shipping warehouse on the East End docks.

CHANCE's head is turned, glowering. Someone is knocking on the door behind her.

SFX/DOOR: KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

CHANCE: (her word balloon is a thick black squiggly line-- the visual equivalent of a surly growl)

2.6

CHANCE, seen from behind, is marching toward the door, about to give whoever's behind it a piece of her mind.

SFX/DOOR: KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

CHANCE: **Sentimental**, are we?

CHANCE: Fine, go on...

PAGE THREE

3.1

Small panel. CHANCE, seen from about the collarbones up, opens the door and stops dead, equal parts surprised and mortified.

CHANCE: Have a last--

CHANCE (small): -- look?

3.2

Large panel. From the bowler hat, dark suit and gloved hands, we can tell that the man at the door is, in fact, PARRY LORD. In Magritte-like fashion, he's covering his face with a tabloid newspaper, folded in half. It's one of LORD's tabloids, the *London Clarion*, and in big, sensational type, its headline reads:

BIRDS GONE BATTY?

Hyde Park Bobby Meets a Fine Feathered End!

... along with an appropriately lurid photo of poor Constable MacIntyre's remains. Again, if you can work the remembrance poppy in here, great.

LORD's voice emerges from behind the newspaper. If we could see his face, he'd totally be grinning like a Cheshire cat.

LORD: You're lucky I've **good reflexes**, Dr. Chance.

LORD: We're **needed** at the office. Be advised it's rather **cold** out.

LORD: You may want to **put something on**.

PAGE FOUR

4.1

LORD and CHANCE ride down in the Branch's elevator. LORD is casual, teasing. CHANCE is bundled up in a long, lined leather coat, a green British army sweater that completely covers her neck, blue jeans, her boots, and a colorful knit cap with an incongruously girly pom-pom on top. She avoids eye contact with LORD as she drinks from a paper cup of coffee.

LORD: ... So. I trust you **enjoyed** your **week's holiday**?

CHANCE: **Not. One. Word.**

LORD: Do **cheer up**, Doctor. I'm taking you to your very first **autopsy**.

CHANCE (small): There's not **nearly** enough **whiskey** in this.

4.2

DOCTORS DANNY and DONNY MACDOUGAL wear nametags on their white lab coats. Which is helpful, because they're identical twins-- both a bit chubby, both with scraggly goatees and spiky hair, and both prone to wearing geeky science fiction T-shirts. (DANNY has a FRODO LIVES shirt, while DONNY sports a map of the Milky Way with a helpful "You are here" arrow.) They hail from Glasgow-- by way of China, from where they were adopted as orphans.

As they stand in the Branch's gleaming, white-tiled infirmary, DANNY is stripping off a pair of bloodstained latex gloves while DONNY taps with a finger at a particular spot on an X-ray.

DANNY: Cause o' death was a **massive coronary**. Wee li'l heart just **popped**.

DONNY: Although th' **weird metal dust** in 'is **brain** may've 'ad **somehin'** tae do wi' it.

4.3

Pull back to reveal that DANNY and DONNY's "patient" is a pigeon, partly dissected, lying on the steel examining table in front of them next to a metal tray scattered with scalpels and other tools. DANNY and DONNY look half amused, half apologetic. The shelves of the infirmary are crammed with all sorts of medical equipment-- and, in what little space remains, model robots, plastic sci-fi toys and other geek detritus.

DANNY: O'course, **most** of our **clients** are...

DONNY: ... a wee bit **bigger**, y'understand.

4.4

Reframe to show LORD and CHANCE standing on the opposite side of the table from the Doctors MacDougal. DONNY is handing LORD the X-ray sheet. CHANCE is peering down at the unfortunate pigeon.

LORD: You found this **metal dust** in **all** the birds?

DONNY: All the ones at th' scene, aye.

DANNY: Mostly in th' **blood vessels** 'round the centers for **feeding an' aggression**.

4.5

LORD is walking out of the infirmary, with CHANCE reluctantly trailing behind. The DOCTORS wave a cheery goodbye.

DONNY: Check wi' **Mal**-- he's got a sample of th' **dust** tae work 'is **mojo** on.

LORD: **Capital.** Thank you, **Doctors.**
CHANCE: Wait, **Mal** who?

PAGE FIVE

5.1

MALCOLM AMEBE, 17, is skinny, sweet-tempered and dressed unfashionably: corduroy slacks and outdated plaid sweater vests. The Branch's soft-spoken mechanical whiz kid, Mal is a refugee from the Dinka tribe in the Sudan. As such, however cheerful and humble his disposition, there's a sadness in his eyes even when he smiles. He holds out his hand as if to shake with someone.

MAL: **Malcolm Amebe.**

MAL: It is **very nice** to meet you, and also, please **do not touch** that.

5.2

MAL's office is a tinkerer's paradise. A long workbench runs along one wall, crammed with half-built gadgets and a dizzying array of mechanical tools. There's a suitably massive rig of tricked-out computers in one corner, and another wall devoted entirely to shelves full of plastic bins of various components. In what little wall space remains, Mal has pinned up a signed jersey from his favorite football team, Tottenham Hotspur, and has pictures of various players stuck up on the walls that he's cut from fan magazines.

As LORD looks on and tries to suppress a smirk, CHANCE has paused in mid-poke, her outstretched finger hovering above a particularly complicated, half-built device.

CHANCE: Why?

CHANCE: Does it **blow us all up?**

5.3

MAL gently moves the device away from CHANCE, explaining.

MAL: It releases **quick-hardening foam** to **immobilize intruders.**

MAL: I was also thinking we should upgrade the **body scanners** in the elevator, and add **infrared** to the **cameras**, and...

5.4

LORD, with a crisp smile that does not entirely cover his concern, puts a hand congenially on MAL's shoulder, snapping him out of his litany. LORD has an almost big-brotherly relationship with MAL, and this should come through in their body language.

LORD: Mal. **Mal.**

LORD: One crisis at a time. What about this **metal dust?**

MAL: Oh. Right.

5.5

MAL moves to his computer and begins tapping on the keys. In BG, CHANCE has turned excitedly to LORD, her eyes suddenly lit up.

MAL: I put a sample under the **electron microscope--**

CHANCE (whisper): We have an **electron microscope?**

MAL: -- and found that it is **not dust.**

5.6

MAL is turned away from the screen, keenly interested, to look back at LORD and CHANCE. On the screen, in a window marked MAGNIFICATION X 1K, we see an

extreme close-up image of what appear to be very tiny, very simple machines.

MAL: It is **machines**.

MAL: **Thousands and thousands** of tiny machines.

PAGE SIX

6.1

MAL, LORD and CHANCE cluster around the screen, fascinated.

CHANCE: The **pigeons** have **nanotechnology**?

LORD: So it would appear. Any idea what they **do**, Mal?

MAL: I have never even **seen** anything this **small**.

6.2

MAL taps on the keyboard again, calling up an entry from SID-- the Branch's Scientist Information Database, their records of the areas of study of every scientist in the UK. The screen shows the entry for Dr. MARTIN FINCH, middle-aged, bespectacled, with thinning straw-colored hair and a strong chin.

MAL: There is a **Dr. Martin Finch** at **Oxford** who was working with the very latest **fabrication** technology.

MAL: But... you may find it **difficult** to **question** him.

6.3

LORD and CHANCE are intrigued by MAL's news.

CHANCE (mock-suspicious): Did the pigeons get **him**, too?

MAL: He **died** last month. A **terrible wreck** on the **A40**.

CHANCE: They're **organizing!**

6.4

MAL taps away at the keyboard. In BG, CHANCE heads for the door; LORD lingers behind.

MAL: One of his **colleagues** is in London for a conference, though.

LORD: Text us her information, would you?

CHANCE: We should stock up on **birdseed**. **Umbrellas**, probably.

6.5

LORD shares a quiet, sympathetic moment with MAL on his way out.

LORD: You **do** know **Mr. Queen** will be **fine**, don't you?

LORD: **Portia** will be fine.

LORD: Take it from an **expert**-- there was **nothing you could do**.

6.6

MAL sits forlornly in front of his computer. He's looking inward, not at LORD or anything else. The device from page 5 is visible in BG on his workbench.

MAL (small): Yes. I know.

PAGE SEVEN

7.1

LORD and CHANCE, bundled up for cold weather, are walking along a snowy path that leads from the car park near Park Lane into Hyde Park proper. Their breath steams in the air. LORD, using his customary umbrella like a walking stick, has spotted someone not too far ahead of him.

CHANCE: Seriously-- who drives a **convertible** in **winter**?

CHANCE: In **London**?

LORD: What can I say? I'm **disgustingly rich**.

LORD: Ah-- there she is.

7.2

DR. ROBIN LARK is tall, storklike, middle-aged, with frizzy hair and a gently melancholy aspect. She's also bundled up for the cold, with a long scarf wound around her neck, and her hands jammed in her pockets. She looks like she's been waiting here at this intersection of the paths for some time, and she's slightly annoyed to see LORD and CHANCE approach.

LORD: **Dr. Robin Lark**, I presume?

LARK: Are you the **government** people? Look, what's this **about**?

7.3

LORD flashes entirely bogus identification at LARK. CHANCE, not having been briefed on this part of the procedure, looks at him quizzically.

LARK: I was right in the middle of a **lecture**...

LORD: **Terribly** sorry. I'm **Mr. Forrest**, and this is **Miss Hunter**-- Royal **Parks** Department.

LORD: We understand you've been studying **pigeons**.

7.4

LARK, LORD and CHANCE begin to stroll along the path, past joggers, parents with their children, and the occasional homeless person sitting on a bench. LORD seems caught off guard, but CHANCE is making a shrewd guess in her response to LARK's question.

LARK: Wait... is this about-- has the **military** spoken with you?

LORD: The **military**...?

CHANCE: Yes, **absolutely**. About that... **research** of yours.

7.5

LARK looks down at the path, preoccupied-- maybe even a little sad. LORD and CHANCE listen with interest.

LARK: How much have they **told** you?

LORD: Not **nearly** enough. If you'd be so kind...

LARK: It was... it was all going **rather well**, you see...

PAGE EIGHT

8.1

We're going into flashbacks here-- DR. LARK's memories of her work. Panel 1 looks like someone's dropped a photograph onto the page-- a candid snapshot at an office party. From left to right, we recognize the late DR. FINCH, then LARK, and then a Chinese man roughly similar in height and build to FINCH-- DR. YI NO LONG. Yi, in his late 30s, has close-cropped black hair, glasses, and a friendly expression. All three scientists are hoisting drinks in a toast to the camera.

CAPTION/LARK: **Dr. Yi** and I were studying the **cognitive basis** for **avian navigation**.

CAPTION/LARK: **Pigeons** have this sort of **compass** in their brains-- expose them to a **magnetic field** and they're just **lost**.

CAPTION/LARK: The **military**, actually, matched us up with **Dr. Finch. Martin**.

8.2

Back to the present for a panel. LARK is smiling ruefully, even a bit sadly. LORD and CHANCE are both taking note of this.

LARK: I think they had some notion of next-generation **carrier pigeons**.

LARK: Martin invented these **nanomagnets**-- he was **brilliant**, you know. And he could be so **funny**...

8.3

Back into flashback. LARK's eye and part of her face are seen peering through a crack between a doorjamb and an open laboratory door. Clearly, she's seeing some private moment she wasn't meant to see.

CAPTION/LARK: At some point Martin and Dr. Yi... they...

CAPTION/LARK: They became **close**. But it didn't **last**.

8.4

LARK is physically separating YI and FINCH, trying to cool down the two men's furious, screaming argument.

CAPTION/LARK: Dr. Yi thought Martin was taking too much **credit**.

CAPTION/LARK: These things **happen** sometimes-- I thought it would **blow over**.

8.5

LARK stands in the middle of a ransacked lab-- papers strewn everywhere, equipment missing. She looks shellshocked, and has a mobile phone to her ear.

CAPTION/LARK: About a month ago Dr. Yi just **vanished**. No warning-- he took every **note**, every **disk**, every **sample**.

CAPTION/LARK: **Martin** was driving in from **London** when I called. He said something about **birds**...

8.6

Another photograph, this one apparently taken from police files. The flaming, twisted, almost unrecognizable remains of FINCH's two-seater sports car are smashed into the crumpled-up grille of a large Volvo semi truck in the middle of a motorway. Whatever survived this wreck would be very difficult to identify. A few dead birds lie messily on the

asphalt around the wreckage.

CAPTION/LARK: There was this horrible **screeching...**

CAPTION/LARK: I was on the phone with him and I-- I never...

PAGE NINE

9.1

Back to the present. LARK is worrying at her scarf with her fingers, absentmindedly. LORD and CHANCE look on with sympathy.

LARK: I'm sorry-- here you want **science**, and I'm giving you **gossip**.

LORD: Nonsense, Doctor. I'm sorry for your loss.

LORD: Can you tell us any more?

9.2

As LORD and LARK walk onward, CHANCE is distracted by a voice coming from off-panel.

LARK (small): It's silly, but-- have I **seen** you before?

LORD (small): You know, I get that **all the time**...

VOICE (muffled): Beg pardon, Miss.

9.3

Uh oh. It's the FEEDER, sitting on his bench, pigeons gathered around his feet. He has a small cardboard box full of plastic veteran's poppies, labeled with a 1-pound symbol in crude magic marker, sitting next to him on the bench. With one gloved hand, he's holding out a single red poppy to CHANCE. His hood and scarf and layers of coats continue to disguise his features. Because of all that stuff, the FEEDER's voice is continually muffled and a bit spooky.

FEEDER: Saw your **boots** there.

FEEDER: Buy a **poppy** for the **veterans**?

9.4

Something the FEEDER says strikes a chord in CHANCE.

CHANCE: It's a bit **late** for **Remembrance Week**, isn't it?

FEEDER: **Never** too late for **remembrance**, Miss.

CHANCE: ... **no**, I suppose it's not.

9.5.

CHANCE fishes a crumpled pound note out of her jeans pocket. With her other hand, she points to the pigeons pecking around her feet.

CHANCE: Were you in the park around 1 this morning, by chance?

FEEDER: Park closes at **midnight**.

CHANCE: Right. Word to the wise-- I'd stay on their **good** side, if I were you.

9.6

In FG, CHANCE walks away, fixing the poppy to the lapel of her coat thoughtfully. It seems to remind her of something. In BG, the FEEDER watches her depart.

NO DIALOGUE

PAGE TEN

10.1

The Hyde Park car park. LORD and CHANCE are climbing into LORD's sleek black BMW Z9 convertible (with the canvas top up, of course) as they trade genial remarks.

CHANCE: "**Mr. Forrest**" and "**Miss Hunter?**" *Honestly.*

LORD: The whole **point** of working for a **secret organization** is that you don't **tell** anyone about it.

10.2

As they drive out of the park, LORD is saying something that upsets CHANCE. Our heroes are prudently wearing their safety belts.

LORD: That was a fine bit of **quick thinking** you did, by the way.

LORD: You must have gotten up on the right side of **someone's** bed.

CHANCE: What's **that** supposed to mean?

10.3

CHANCE icily replies to LORD as they drive through the streets of Central London. LORD is as unflappable as ever.

LORD: I happened to pass a **disheveled** young lad on the stairs to your **flat**...

CHANCE: What I do **outside** of work is **absolutely none** of your **bloody business**.

CHANCE: How **clear** do I need to **make** this?

10.4

CHANCE happens to look in the passenger-side rear-view mirror-- and what she sees horrifies her. LORD is keeping his eyes on the road, of course.

LORD: Now, **Dr. Chance**, if we're to **work together**, we've got to establish some level of **mutual trust**--

CHANCE: **Shut up.**

LORD: And **decorum**, now that you mention it--

CHANCE: No. **Shut up** and **look**.

PAGE ELEVEN

11.1

Huge panel. In the sky over the streets of London, a huge swarm of birds-- pigeons-- is pouring out from rooftops and funneling down, like a tornado, toward LORD's black convertible. It's a creepy sight.

NO DIALOGUE

11.2

CHANCE is looking back over her shoulder now; LORD has gripped the wheel determinedly.

CHANCE: Does this car **shoot rockets** or **make smokescreens** or something?

LORD: It goes **very, very fast**.

CHANCE (small): Make it do **that**, then.

PAGE TWELVE

12.1

The convertible veers through traffic, swerving up onto the sidewalk. The birds swarm upon it, some clinging tenaciously to the canvas roof and pecking fiercely. If you can work in a shopfront whose sign reads HITCHCOCK'S HAND-CRAFTED MACGUFFINS in the background, well, that'd be awesome.

NO DIALOGUE

12.2

Inside the car, CHANCE is ducking as dozens of pigeon beaks and talons begin to tear through the flimsy top of the car. LORD's eyes are narrowed in concentration, but he almost seems to be enjoying himself.

CHANCE: You couldn't have gone for a **hardtop?**

LORD: I've always been partial to **canvas.**

12.3

Through the front windshield, we see ANOTHER cloud of birds swooping down the street toward the front of the car.

CHANCE: **Sod me!** They're **flanking** us!

LORD: You know, I've been wanting to try this...

12.4

From above, we're with the second cloud of birds as they zoom toward LORD's CONVERTIBLE, which seems partially consumed by the first cloud at this point.

NO DIALOGUE

12.5

LORD has popped the handbrake, and as other motorists swerve to avoid it, the CONVERTIBLE's pulling a 180-degree skid in the middle of the street! The trailing birds are overshooting the car and colliding into the oncoming birds.

SFX/tires: SKREEEEEEEECH!

PAGE THIRTEEN

13.1

The convertible shoots down the street in the opposite direction, momentarily outdistancing the newly merged cloud of angry pigeons.

SFX/car: VROOOOM!

13.2

CHANCE is looking through the back window as LORD drives.

CHANCE: No good-- they're **gaining** again.

CHANCE: And there are **more** of them.

LORD: I was **afraid** of that. On a **positive note**, though...

13.3

Terrified pedestrians duck and cover as the cloud of birds surges down the street like a storm, once more catching up to the rear of the speeding convertible. LORD's voice comes from inside the car.

LORD: I imagine I'll sell a **lot** of **tabloids** off this.

13.4

The convertible swerves into a traffic circle, narrowly dodging a double-decker bus, the birds swarming all over it.

NO DIALOGUE

13.5

Inside the car, CHANCE is using her hat to swat at the pigeons as they continue to tear through the roof. They're pecking at her hands and arm. She's glancing over at LORD, who is also swatting away pigeons with one hand-- and has an unsettling grin on his face.

CHANCE: Where are you going now?

LORD: The **river**. I've an **idea**.

CHANCE: ... oh, **no**.

PAGE FOURTEEN

14.1

High, pulled-back view of the car as it pulls onto a bridge over the RIVER THAMES, swerving toward the edge of the bridge, pedestrians scattering. LORD can once more be heard inside the car.

LORD: Oh, **yes**.

14.2

The convertible hits the low railing of the bridge at angle and goes over the edge! The birds are following it all the way down...

SFX: KRASH!

14.3

With a tremendous splash, the car hits the river and begins to sink. The birds are scattering in the wake of the splash.

SFX: SPLOOSH!

14.4

Under the river, LORD and CHANCE swim for the surface as the car sinks into the gloom. LORD has his hat in hand.

NO DIALOGUE

14.5

LORD and CHANCE surface, sopping wet and freezing cold, to see the last remnants of the birds flapping away. If we can see the bridge, there's a crowd of police vehicles and gawkers looking down at them.

LORD: ... y-you know, I'd h-had my eye on a **red** one anyway...

CHANCE: H-have I mentioned **j-just** how much I **h-hate** you?

PAGE FIFTEEN

15.1

The BRANCH's conference room. LORD and CHANCE sit on opposite sides of the table, dressed in dry hospital scrubs (LORD's are long-sleeved, and he's kept his gloves on) and wrapped in blankets. CHANCE pores over blown-up photos of the original crime scene and gingerly rubbing her sore neck (from the crash). Her poppy sits on the table next to the photos. LORD is chatting blithely on his phone.

LORD: ... next week? **Marvelous.**

LORD: Oh. Tell the **accountants** that those **Grand Prix** lessons I took are now most **definitely** a **business expense.**

15.2

MRS. KING, smartly dressed as ever, strides into the room with a dossier in her hand and a stern, exasperated expression on her face.

KING: I'd lecture you on **property damage**, Parry, but I'm sure you know it **verbatim** by now.

KING: In future, **Dr. Chance**, you may want to **insist** on **taking the Tube.**

15.3

LORD thumbs through the dossier as MRS. KING stands by, arms folded.

KING: Mal did some **digging** on **Dr. Yi No Long.**

LORD: **Chinese dissident...** fled the country right after **Tianamen Square.**

KING: And Five just sent over some **chatter...**

15.4

CHANCE is still studying the photos. LORD looks up from the dossier at KING.

KING: Have you heard of the **Path of Flowers?**

CHANCE: Renegade **florists?**

KING: Chinese **radicals. Democracy by any means necessary.** Nearly got hold of a shipment of **VX** last year.

15.5

CHANCE has picked up the poppy and seems to be taking it apart. LORD and KING talk concernedly-- LORD seems to be forming a theory.

CHANCE (small): Flowers...

KING: They're in London, in a **buying mood.**

LORD: And someone's **selling pigeons.** The constable's death... I know a **publicity stunt** when I see it.

15.6

CHANCE holds out the disassembled poppy. Underneath its plastic shell is a small microtransmitter. On the table in front of her, we can now clearly see a close-up of the poppy in the constable's lapel in one of the crime scene photos.

CHANCE: The perfect **assassination** tool. Nearly **untraceable.**

CHANCE: Unless you know where to **look.**

PAGE SIXTEEN

16.1

Hyde Park, again. Dusk is falling. LORD and CHANCE, back in their cleaned and dried winter clothes, lurk in a stand of particularly thick trees. LORD peers around the edge of a tree. CHANCE, her coat buttoned all the way up (and looking somewhat bulkier) cracks her knuckles, as if in anticipation of a fight.

LORD: There's our man. Are you all right with that lot?

CHANCE: Provided I don't **fall over**, yes. Mal says I've got **two minutes**, max.

CHANCE: He's **reasonably sure** it won't kill me.

LORD: Glad to hear it.

16.2

The FEEDER sits on a bench, waiting. Behind him, small children play on a playground. Flocks of pigeons dot the ground all around him. He's got a duffel bag sitting next to him on the bench. No box of poppies, though...

LORD (o/p): Waiting for your **buyers?**

16.3

The FEEDER looks up to see a determined LORD and CHANCE standing opposite him. LORD has a firm grip on his umbrella.

LORD: They've been... **unavoidably detained**

CHANCE: You saw us talking to your old friend, **Dr. Lark**, didn't you? Clever you.

CHANCE: Where's your box of **poppies?**

16.4

The FEEDER calmly indicates the playground behind him. At least a dozen children, bundled up for snowy weather, climb all over the monkeybars as parents watch from the periphery.

FEEDER: I gave them all away. To the children.

FEEDER: I've been feeding birds **all over** the city, you know.

16.5

LORD and CHANCE look on in horror as the FEEDER takes the PDA-like device we saw on Page One out of his duffel bag and hits the activation switch.

FEEDER: And it's truly **amazing** what sort of **range** this has.

SFX: beep.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

17.1

The birds dotting the snow-covered greens rise en masse and begin to converge on the playground.

NO DIALOGUE

17.2

CHANCE takes off sprinting toward the playground. LORD, grim-faced, squares off against the FEEDER as he rises from his bench.

LORD: **Go.**

CHANCE: **Well** ahead of you.

17.3

The children and parents alike react with horror as the birds begin to swarm over the playground. In the background, we see CHANCE approaching, unbuttoning her coat.

CHILDREN: EEEEEEE!

17.4

CHANCE has completely flung off her coat, leaving it in the snow behind her, to reveal that her entire torso has been wrapped hundreds of times in rubber-insulated copper wire. Heavy nine-volt batteries ring her waist like a utility belt, trailing leads into the wire. There's an activation switch on her belt. She's basically become a one-woman, jumbo-sized electromagnet. She's obviously slowed down a bit by this load.

CHANCE (small): *huff* Let's hope-- *huff*

17.5

Quick flashback to MAL's workshop. CHANCE is helping MAL wrap the insulated cable around her chest. We can see the copper wires fraying out of one end of the cable. MAL is cheerfully explaining something; CHANCE regards him skeptically.

MAL: The **cold air** should help keep you from **overheating**.

MAL: And there is **no proven link** between **electromagnetic fields** and cancer.

CHANCE: **Comforting.**

17.6

Back to the present. Close on the switch on CHANCE's belt as she thumbs it on. A red light on the box begins to glow.

CHANCE: -- that **Mal** was **right**.

SFX: click.

PAGE EIGHTEEN

18.1

LORD is striking out with his umbrella, but the FEEDER deflects it with a forearm and comes back with a counterpunch. Clearly, this guy knows his martial arts.

NO DIALOGUE

18.2

LORD hooks the FEEDER's arm with the handle of his umbrella and spins him around, getting a firm grip on the thick lapel of the FEEDER's winter coat.

LORD: Got you!

18.3

The FEEDER neatly slips out of his coat, leaving LORD holding an empty garment. The FEEDER has more layers on underneath.

LORD: Or... not.

18.4

The FEEDER kicks LORD hard in the chest, sending him sprawling back into the snow.

SFX: THWUD!

LORD: Ungh!

18.5

LORD does a backward roll and comes up into a kneel. The FEEDER is running away from him.

LORD: **No you don't.**

PAGE NINETEEN

19.1

On the playground, CHANCE's arrival is sending the birds scattering from the terrified children.

CHANCE: **Shoo! Off!** Horrid things.

CHANCE (small): Thank heaven for **magnetic fields**.

19.2

The children are crying, hysterical. We can see that some of them have poppies in their lapels. CHANCE is kneeling down, trying to comfort them, as the parents rush over. The birds continue to hover, confused, overhead. The children's zippers, and any necklaces or jewelry they're wearing, should all be pointing toward CHANCE (due to the magnetic field.)

CHANCE: Is everyone all right? Everyone OK?

CHANCE: I need you all to **do** something for me...

19.3

The FEEDER runs as LORD, pursuing, hurls his umbrella handle-first at the backs of his knees.

NO DIALOGUE

19.4

The umbrella catches the FEEDER in the back of the knees, tripping him up. Behind him, LORD has leapt into the air to deliver a flying kick.

NO DIALOGUE

19.5

The FEEDER rolls as LORD's foot comes down in the snow where he'd been lying moments before.

NO DIALOGUE

PAGE TWENTY

20.1

CHANCE is running back along the snow now, still carrying all her gear, trailed at a safe distance by the flock of pigeons. She's holding something bundled up in her knit pom-pom hat.

CHANCE: *huff* *huff*

20.2

The FEEDER, rising to his feet, blocks another kick by LORD and comes back with a counterpunch.

NO DIALOGUE

20.3

LORD and the FEEDER have managed to block each other's blows, locked together for a moment. The FEEDER still has the trigger device in his hand.

FEEDER: I can do this **all evening**.

FEEDER: How long do you suppose the **children** have?

20.4

LORD backs away from the FEEDER as CHANCE scatters the CHILDREN's poppies, which she was carrying in her hat, all over the FEEDER.

CHANCE: The children are **fine**, thank you.

CHANCE: Here's for **remembrance**.

20.5

Small panel. CHANCE clicks the switch in her belt. The light goes off.

SFX: Click.

20.6

LORD and CHANCE back off as the pigeons swarm all over the FEEDER, who's flailing his arms to try to keep them off.

FEEDER: AAAAAH!

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

21.1

The FEEDER stabs at the button on the triggering device, shutting it down, as the birds swarm all over him.

FEEDER: Aaah! Aaaah!
SFX/device: beep.

21.2

A moment's quiet. The birds disperse. The FEEDER stays still, arms still hunched over his head as if to defend himself.

FEEDER: Phew.

21.3

And then LORD kicks him in the head, with CHANCE neatly poised to catch the device as it pops out of his hands.

LORD: That's **quite enough** from you, I think.

21.4

LORD and CHANCE catch their breath and their wits. CHANCE holds the device.

LORD: You all right?

CHANCE: I almost got **stuck** to the **jungle gym**. Can I lie down now?

LORD: Just a moment.

21.5

Looking down on the FEEDER, lying in the snow. He's taken off his hood, his scarf has unwound, and... it's DR. MARTIN FINCH. He's bleeding from his lip, not looking at either of them-- seemingly lost in his own regrets and resignation. The poppies lie scattered in the snow all around him.

LORD (o/p): It was **Dr. Yi's body** in that **crash** -- wasn't it, **Dr. Finch?**

FINCH: We should have done it **together**. Just... got away clean.

FINCH (small): He should have said **yes**.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

22.1

Night has fallen in Hyde Park. CHANCE sits on a bench by the frozen pond, with a bundle of copper wire and spent batteries dumped on the ground off to one side. She's got her coat back on, and is warily regarding a pair of pigeons idly bobbing around on the ground in front of her. LORD is approaching from behind the bench with two steaming paper cups.

LORD: **Hot chocolate** for the **human electromagnet**.

CHANCE: **Finch** is all wrapped up?

LORD: **Five's** only **too happy** to see to him.

22.2

LORD sits down next to CHANCE and hands her a cup.

CHANCE: The **military** didn't want **carrier pigeons**, did they?

LORD: In the **fifties**, they talked of pigeons carrying **explosives**. Or **anthrax**.

CHANCE: I suppose they'll be **well chuffed** to have their **pet project** back.

22.3

LORD grins, and CHANCE looks over at him with surprise and a certain amount of grudging respect.

LORD: Unless **someone** leaks **word** of it to, say, **Lord Cable News** tonight. In which case...

CHANCE: **Please** tell me you're not about to employ the phrase "**egg on their faces**."

22.4

LORD looks at the ground, contrite.

LORD: How about "**I apologize**"?

LORD: I was... **rude**, earlier. Your life is your business.

LORD: I'd just think that you deserve **better**.

22.5

CHANCE looks away from LORD, stern but not angry.

CHANCE: You've **no idea** what I deserve.

CHANCE: ... but **thank you**.

22.6

The two agents sit side by side on the bench, drinking hot chocolate.

LORD: **So...** will you be making a **habit** of these **last-minute rescues**?

CHANCE: Only if **you** keep **requiring them**.

LORD: Fair enough.