

DeadCentre

Two 00 agents are dead and one missing. Around the world, amidst unprecedented political and social unrest, politicians, scientists and business leaders have gone missing only to be found dead...or gone mad.

Bond's investigation leads him to Islamabad where he discovers what happened to his friend and colleague Steve Birlington and where he meets the beautiful Hajira Zubair. Steve's uncle and aunt are killed in their hill station colonial bungalow and Bond kills the murderer, destroying his helicopter and barely escaping the ensuing avalanche.

Bond and Hajira are lead to Hong Kong where inventor George Cheng is murdered and Bond has a vertiginous battle in the primary coloured apartment blocks of the Shek Kip Mei Estate. Bond discovers that Hajira has betrayed him - someone is extracting information and no-one, including her, seems to be able to resist. Bond also comes across a name - DeadCentre.

Bond meets up with his boss, M, with Q and Moneypenny. They have information that DeadCentre is in the Karakoram Mountains in the Pakistan administered Himalayas. To find it he must join an international caving expedition with his fellow 00 agent, the fiercely competitive and heavily tattooed Phoenix. The expedition through the incredible previously unexplored cave system is dangerous enough without an attempt on their lives and ensuing fight to the death. They find the temporary HQ of DeadCentre and round up those who might be the torturer but they can only take two people back in the helicopter.

Back at MI6 they find their choice was wrong but from the photos of all those they couldn't take, one turns out to be Keila Guerre - known as Eris after the Greek goddess of discord, chaos and strife, a brilliant sharpshooter and the world's most skilled and knowledgeable torturer.

The only way to get to Eris is to let her kidnap him and for that he must make sure he can withstand whatever she may have in store. He and M recruit Dr Heddi Laakkonen, an academic expert on political torture who has developed a training programme to help kidnap victims survive their ordeal. In Copenhagen, rather than put Bond through the training regime's usual physical and mental rigours, she uses regression to re-enact some of his experiences with his old adversaries: Blofeld, Le Chiffre, Elektra King, Dr No. He endures the regression but Heddi is still worried for him.

After one failed attempt to kidnap him, Bond is eventually taken to DeadCentre - Eris's elaborate headquarters in the Himalayan mountains. Here she has recruited a small army of young and clever fanatics from all over the world, devoted to Eris and her twisted ideology of a New World Order through conflict and bloodshed.

Bond has been implanted with a two-way neurotransmitter which can, in theory, stimulate his natural electrolytes to increase the production of beneficial chemicals as well as detect any unusual chemical activity. Bond experiences a series of physical and mental situations which, unknown to him, are designed by Eris to wear him down through repeated failure. Back at MI6, Q, M and Money Penny see the chemical evidence of this and call in Heddi to see if she can interpret the results. She recognises what Eris is doing and they attempt to use the neurotransmitter to help Bond but not before the effects have left him physically weakened and mentally demoralised.

Phoenix meanwhile has recruited members of the Pakistan Army Special Forces to mount a raid on DeadCentre but to do so they must get in, deal with Eris and her followers, and get Bond out before the whole mountain is destroyed by cruise missiles.

Bond realises what Eris has done to him and with the help of Q's neurotransmitter, regains sufficient mental strength to take part in the raid. Eris tries to kill him using her exceptional shooting skills but he survives and Eris escapes. Bond then uses a state-of-the-art military sniper rifle to shoot Eris at a distance of 2km.

Bond and Phoenix can't escape before the missiles hit. Their only hope is to get further into the cave. When the missiles arrive Bond and Phoenix can only just manage to keep ahead of the destruction - the vertical layers of rock formed over millions of years are slipping from beneath their feet as they run further into the cave and the mountain is being evaporated behind them. Eventually, when there is no further that they can go, the rocks stabilise - they are safe.