

ACTION / SUSPENSE SAMPLES

Extracts from SHELL GAME and THURSDAYS CHILD

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## SHELL GAME

**An assassin must choose who to trust and who to kill when her lover sends her to kill her best friend.**

EXT. CITY OF LISBON - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The city climbs in steep hills, stepping haphazardly up from the blue curve of the harbour.

EXT. PALÁCIO HOTEL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Seen from a high angle, the Palácio is an expensive hotel, with neoclassical columns framing the entrance. Two women in red tracksuits come out the door and walk down the street. A liveried DOORMAN closes the passenger door of a limousine and the car glides off. The Doorman steps back into position beside the elaborate topiary in huge urns flanking the door.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO FOURTH FLOOR ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

An ornate desk has been pushed under the open window. Sigma is bent low over a high precision rifle, eye to the scope, the barrel just lifting the lace curtain. Beside her is Lambda, also with a rifle nudging the curtain. Both are dressed in black jumpsuits and have their hair pinned up under black baseball caps turned backwards.

LAMBA

You want left or right?

SIGMA

Left. On my mark.

INT. PALÁCIO HOTEL LOBBY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Two middle-aged MEN approach the door, flanked by three bodyguards. The FIRST BODYGUARD puts a protective arm out and they stop. The SECOND BODYGUARD advances to the doors and peers out. He knocks on the glass and signals to the Doorman, who in turn raises a finger for their limousine. The limousine pulls up and the First Bodyguard steps back to allow the two men to go through the doors.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO FOURTH FLOOR ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma and Lambda squint down their rifle sights.

SIGMA

After four... Four.

They both fire simultaneously.

EXT. PALÁCIO HOTEL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The two men go down like sacks of potatoes, near identical red holes in their foreheads. The Doorman dives for cover. The bodyguards immediately look around for the source of the shots but the Second Bodyguard has already identified the hotel opposite as the source. And he sees the only open window.

SECOND BODYGUARD  
(in German, subtitled)  
That window up there!

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO FOURTH FLOOR ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma and Lambda are up. They dismantle their rifles and put them in double-width tennis racket cases that have been specially adapted. They turn their baseball caps around and we see they both say "POLÍCIA". We now see that their jumpsuits also have POLÍCIA on the back.

EXT. PALÁCIO HOTEL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The First Bodyguard bends over the bodies of his charges as the Second and Third Bodyguards race towards the Hotel da Cicado. The Doorman points two POLICEMEN to the window across the road. The Policemen race over, shouting into their walkie-talkies.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma and Lambda walk out of the room at an even, unrushed pace to the Housekeeping storeroom at the end of the corridor.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO FOURTH FLOOR HOUSEKEEPING STOREROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Shelves are stacked with towels and linens, leaving barely enough room for a narrow window. Sigma passes Lambda her racket case and keeps watch as Lambda pushes both of them out the window.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Lambda and Sigma walk at the same pace from the Storeroom along the corridor to the lifts. They look at the displays - both lifts are coming up, but the left-hand one is just

reaching their floor. They calmly press themselves back against the doors of the other one. The left-hand lift pings and the doors open. Armed Policemen, all dressed in black jumpsuits with POLÍCIA on the back flood out.

Sigma and Lambda step away from the other lift doors and join the pack as they surge down the corridor to the shooter room and fan out at both sides of the door.

Pressed against the wall, Lambda pulls out a walkie-talkie and listens.

LAMBDA

OK.

She taps Sigma on the arm.

LAMBDA

(in Portuguese, subtitled)

They want the two of us on the roof.

They both turn and stride to the stairwell door.

A YOUNG POLICEMAN at the door watches them go, frowning. He turns to a SECOND POLICEMAN.

YOUNG POLICEMAN

(in Portuguese, subtitled)

Do you know them?

The Second Policeman shrugs and turns his attention back to his CHIEF. The Chief signals. A THIRD POLICEMAN kicks down the door. They peer in and find the room empty except for two shell casings to prove it's the right room. The Young Policeman swallows nervously.

YOUNG POLICEMAN

(in Portuguese, subtitled)

Sir.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO STAIRWELL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma and Lambda speed down the stairs. The door at the bottom of the stairwell clangs open and more police swarm up the stairs. A door above them clangs open too, the police from the shooting room. The pair don't miss a beat, but turn and go back up a half flight of stairs to the Third Floor door and go through it.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADO THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma leads Lambda at an unhurried pace.

SIGMA

Different layout on this floor.

They hear a walkie-talkie crackle, and turn a corner to see a LONE POLICEMAN listening to--

CHIEF

(on walkie-talkie, in Portuguese,  
subtitled)

...wearing police uniforms.

Sigma and Lambda keep walking towards him at the same pace. He raises his gun.

LONE POLICEMAN

(in Portuguese, subtitled)

What station are you--

But Lambda is on him, hand fastened around his gun wrist, she elbows him in the jaw. The Policeman drops his walkie-talkie and Sigma kicks it clear. Lambda bangs the Policeman's arm against the wall until he drops that too. Again, Sigma kicks it clear.

Lambda goes to elbow him in the jaw again but the Policeman reaches up to grab her wrist before she can and suddenly there is a handcuff on Lambda's wrist.

Lambda stares at her wrist as the Policeman punches her in the stomach. Lambda doubles over and the Policeman swiftly locks the other end of the handcuffs to his own wrist, just as Sigma presses the man's own gun barrel pressed to his head.

LONE POLICEMAN

(in Portuguese, subtitled)

Dead or alive, you'll have to take me  
with you.

Lambda, realising she is caught, looks at Sigma.

LAMBDA

Just go.

The walkie-talkie on the ground crackles again.

CHIEF  
 (in Portuguese, subtitled)  
 First floor clear. All units report.

Sigma slams the Policeman against the wall by the throat.

SIGMA  
 If I shoot you through the hand your  
 bones will shatter, and I can squeeze  
 the pulverised remains through this  
 handcuff in seconds. It'll hurt. A  
 lot.

The Policeman pales. Sigma puts the muzzle of the gun against  
 the man's hand and immediately--

LONE POLICEMAN  
 Okay! Okay!

With his free hand he pulls a key out of his top pocket.  
 Sigma takes the key and clubs him on the side of the head. He  
 goes down and Lambda holds up his wrist while she unlocks  
 him.

LAMBDA  
 Thanks.

SIGMA  
 Rule number one.

They drag the Policeman into the Housekeeper's Store on this  
 floor and shut the door.

LAMBDA  
 I thought that was rule number two.

SIGMA  
 Not in my rulebook.

They stride down the corridor and turn another corner. Coming  
 towards them are two MEN in blue tracksuits, with US  
 flags on the breast.

SIGMA  
 (to the two men)  
 Everything's under control Sirs,  
 please return to your room.

The two men nod and hurry on. As soon as they have gone  
 around the corner, Sigma and Lambda, still walking, rip off  
 their caps and boiler suits - the seams are velcro - to

reveal matching red tracksuits, with the EU flag on the breast.

They pause at a laundry chute to push down the uniforms, walkie-talkie and gun, then continue at the same pace. A CHAMBERMAID, coming out of an open room, looks at them suspiciously.

Ahead of them, the lift doors open and four Policemen rush out, eyes darting to take in the scene. They run right past them and Sigma and Lambda continue to the open lift.

The Chambermaid stops one of the Policeman and points to the lift, our pair now inside, the doors just closing.

FOURTH POLICEMAN  
(in Portuguese, subtitled)  
Stop! Stop now!

He and the other Policemen all run towards the lift, raising their guns.

Sigma and Lambda press themselves against the sides of the lift and the doors close just as the Policemen get to it.

INT. LIFT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma and Lambda immediately strip off their red tracksuits and turn them inside out to transform them into blue tracksuits with US insignia on the breast. They put them back on and both un-pin their hair so it cascades down, just as the lift doors open.

INT. HOTEL DA CIDADAO LOBBY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The doors open to reveal Sigma and Lambda, looking cool and relaxed. They step out into a throng of people in tennis whites, blue US and red EU tracksuits. A banner strung over the lifts proclaims "WELCOME AMERICAN-EUROPEAN TENNIS LEAGUE".

Policeman run into the lobby and look around helplessly, as a second lift opens and more policemen stream out, equally flummoxed by the sheer number of red tracksuits.

Sigma and Lambda calmly walk across the lobby and out of the hotel.

EXT. HOTEL DA CIDADAO - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The two come out the revolving doors, ignoring the ambulance

and police cars. They turn down the side of the hotel.

EXT. STREET AT SIDE OF HOTEL DA CICADO - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The pair walk calmly down the street, which is lined with open dumpsters. Barely pausing, they reach into one and pull out the racket cases they dumped out the window earlier. They loop them over their shoulders and keep walking.

EXT. LISBON STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

This street has fewer people in tracksuits, but there are still a lot of them. Sigma and Lambda walk into the stream of pedestrians and blend right in.

A tram is idling at a stop and the pair step on.

INT. LISBON TRAM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sigma and Lambda strap-hang as the tram moves off, watching out the window as two Policemen stop a couple in red tracksuits. The tram leaves them behind.

A beat.

LAMBDA

I want to get some cheese while I'm here.

SIGMA

You can get it at the airport.

LAMBDA

Yeah, you're right.

On the street a police car screams past, siren wailing.

END OF FLASHBACK

**THURSDAY'S CHILD**

**A teacher is forced into an uneasy alliance with a drug company to find a cure for a deadly global plague, by following a series of cryptic clues left by her estranged father from beyond the grave.**

EXT. OUTSIDE ROSE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The outside of the building is stained, graffitied and run down. Large bins are overflowing and messily arranged, with various large items like broken chairs and warped bicycle frames dumped beside them.

Rose, sorting through her post, gets to Brendan's letter and stops dead at the sight of his handwriting. She stares at it for a second. Then she strides over and stuffs it in the overflowing green bin. She turns and goes on her way.

Conor appears as if from nowhere, now dressed more approachably in jeans and a jacket.

CONOR

Ms Fitzpatrick! Rose. We spoke yesterday.

ROSE

Yeah. I remember. Funnily enough I did get a letter from him. And I carefully filed it, like I said I would.

She takes the few steps back, pulls the letter from the bin and hands it to him.

ROSE

It's your lucky day.

She goes to walk on but he blocks her.

CONOR

Aren't you going to open it?

ROSE

Nope.

CONOR

There could be money in it.

ROSE

Give it to charity.

She tries to walk around him.

CONOR

Wait. I believe this letter contains the whereabouts of a cure your father created for Moa.

Rose is momentarily impressed.

ROSE

A cure for Moa? Wow. Well, good for you.

CONOR

But the letter's addressed to you.

He pushes it into her hand.

ROSE

I have no interest in anything he has to say.

She thrusts it back to him, but he doesn't take it.

CONOR

Why don't you just--

At this moment FRANK O'DOWD (35), appears, be-suited and album-cover handsome.

FRANK

Rose Fitzpatrick?

ROSE

Yes.

FRANK

I'd like to talk to you about a letter your father sent to you.

ROSE

Oh why do men only ever want me for my correspondence.

CONOR

Rose, let's talk about this privately.

FRANK

I'm afraid I'll have to insist she talks to me first.

ROSE  
Excuse me, insist?

Frank grasps her wrist, tight. She is shocked.

ROSE  
Hey!

CONOR  
Hey!

Conor pushes Frank away and Frank immediately punches him in the face. Rose gasps as Conor falls against the bins.

FRANK  
Strongly insist.

ROSE  
Let go of me!

Rose pulls away but he has her wrist clamped tightly.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a broken chair whacks Frank across the head - it's Conor. Frank goes down, letting go of Rose's wrist.

CONOR  
C'mon!

Together they race to and out the apartment pedestrian gate. Conor clangs it shut behind them. At the bins, Frank is on his feet, he races after them.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Conor and Rose run across the road, dodging cars as horns blare, and Conor pulls her to run along to the left.

CONOR  
My car's this way!

Behind them the gate clangs open. Frank sees them on the other side of the road and takes off after them. More car horns blare at Frank, weaving fast across the road.

Rose and Conor sprint past an Undertakers to the corner and take it fast. Frank hurtles around the corner after them.

Frank is gaining now, as Rose and Conor reach the next corner and disappear from view.

Frank rounds the corner at speed - and they've disappeared. Rose's bag is on the ground, its contents spewing out. Frank looks around carefully. Cars and a blue van wait for the lights to change.

On the opposite side of the blue van, Conor and Rose breathlessly press themselves flat against it.

Frank, breathing heavily, picks up the bag and stalks along the road. At the corner of a side-street he pauses, looking for them there.

Conor and Rose try to quiet their breathing, listening.

Frank looks around, uncertain. Suddenly the traffic lights change and the traffic lurches into motion.

Panicked, Rose and Conor shuffle along, keeping the van as cover as it picks up speed. Suddenly it turns left and roars off, leaving them totally exposed. They take off in the opposite direction as Frank sees them and ditches Rose's bag, racing after them. More car horns blare.

Conor and Rose race down the road as Conor fumbles in his pocket for his key fob and beeps open the doors of a black jeep about 20m away.

Frank is seriously gaining again as they throw themselves towards the jeep. Conor is in the driver's side as Rose throws open the passenger door. Conor revs the engine but Frank is there, wresting open Rose's door as she kicks at him and climbs into the back seat to get away.

Frank is half-inside the car, his hand closing around Rose's ankle as Conor reverses hard, crushing Frank between the door and a lamppost. Frank lets go of Rose and falls out of the jeep as Conor roars off down the road. Behind them Frank rolls on the ground and moans.