

The New Avengers

Written by Anne Maughan

Opening scene:

One man is seen taking photographs of a woman, the lens is out of focus. Until we get to see the back of her. Several clicks of the camera are heard. The screen shot shows the man seated at a café in London, taxi's are driving passed. Next frame, the man is in a darkroom developing the photographs, the red and black shadows cover the man's face. There he is hanging the photos. The next frame we see the photos, but never revealing who they are of. The man picks up a brown envelope from the desk he is sitting at, he slides the photos into the envelope. He turns over the envelope to reveal the person he is sending it to:

John Steed esq.
Greylands estate,
Surrey,
SU2 3AL

The opening title sequence is played

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"Coffee?" Steed asks Purdey.

Steed pours Purdey coffee into the cup nearest her, she is sitting on the sofa.

"Well if I were you I'd talk to Fryers about it, he is linked to the Myers case after all, there's nothing to worry about there Purdey." Steed replies to Purdey to what they were discussing.

Gambit walks into the living room, carrying a brown envelope.

"Gambit, coffee?" Steed asks as he walks into the room.

"No thank you Steed. Oh this came, it was at your door." Gambit said handing Steed the envelope.

“Thank you Gambit, any other brown paper envelopes out there for me, its probably the list of the security precautions for the minister’s visit next week, strange I didn’t think they’d post it.” Steed said as he took the envelope from Gambit.

Steed walked over to his desk, he picked up the silver letter opener that lay on the patterned leather cover, and dragged the blade along the edge of the envelope.

He placed his hand inside, pulling out the contents, he looked at the photos that appeared, and froze.

The shock on his face was read by both Gambit and Purdey.

“Steed?” Gambit and Purdey said in unison.

“Steed is there something wrong? Steed?” Gambit said.

“Mrs Peel!” Steed managed to breathe quietly through his shock. He started to look further through the photos.

Gambit looked squarely at Purdey who rose towards Steed.

Gambit walked towards Steed, and took some of the photos from him.

Gambit looked through them, not really knowing that this woman he was looking at was indeed Mrs Peel. She had shorter hair, not the same as in the files. These looked recent, judging by the fashions by some of the others in the photographs. There was one large shot of Mrs Peel’s face, amongst the photos, it was from a side view, her features were most striking. Gambit knew that this was indeed the same woman, that also had her photograph framed and was proudly put on display in Steed’s living room.

Gambit also knew by judging from the reaction from Steed that this delivery of photographs was not simply so he could just admire them, but was more of a threat in some way. That someone knew that Steed and Mrs Peel were once partners, and that they were back for revenge of some kind.

Purdey also took some photos from a shocked Steed, looking through them she knew that this woman was Mrs Peel. She’d seen the files, the look in Steed’s eyes was enough to know that something about this was not quite right. Even though Purdey was nerved by even hearing about this woman, she was jealous of her and Steed’s relationship. She’d read the reports, they’d been working happily solving numerous cases together, for three years until her test pilot husband returned from the jungle. Now which jungle was it, oh yes the Amazon. Well, the reports didn’t say that they’d been lovers, not at all on form. But it wasn’t as if everyone at the ministry didn’t know about their relationship.

Mother had said that “Steed just wasn’t himself after she left. Didn’t have that sparkle about him.”

Purdey knew that Steed had been different in the Sixties, she also knew from gossip in the corridors, that he still wasn’t his usual self. People who’d been working for the ministry for years, like Tyler, said to her only a few weeks ago.

“I was at one of Steed’s parties the other week Purdey, he didn’t seem right to me. Not as you know? ...Cheerful that’s it, not his cheery old self at all. Not like back in the good old days. He and his woman, you know who I mean Mrs, Mrs, oh, erm Peel that’s it. Mrs Peel. Steed and I would have a grand ol’ get together, as long as she was there mind you. They seemed so, contented, like if she wasn’t in the room, or in view he would be agitated, his mind would drift, and as soon as he saw her it spoke volumes, you know. Not his ol’ self at all now. Not since the day she left. You know he nearly killed a fellow about a week after. With his own bare hands Purdey. Just because he was lying in a case! You know, not his ol’ self at all.” Tyler, Jeffery, the same Tyler who had been to nearly every ministry party Purdey had gone to.

Purdey knew then that this was to some thing that couldn’t simply be left alone. She and Gambit knew better than anyone not to mention Mrs Peel in front of Steed. Now she knew why, just the look she saw in his eyes was enough reason why Mrs Emma Peel was not a topic they were to discuss around Steed.

Steed rose from the sofa, he had managed to find and sink into as the shock had still been running through his veins. Steed’s face showed that of both worry and aching. Something Purdey had not seen in him before. She had seen Steed worried before, worried but with an ounce of wit as well. But not as worried as to see him not actually speak. His face has transformed into a new picture, his features were pale in colour. His hands looked like they were trembling, with fear, Purdey thought. With fear, this was John Steed, who never showed any sign of fear. But now she was witnessing it.

Shocked a little herself seeing Steed in this state.

Purdey said, “Steed, who would. How. Why?”

Steed actually looked up, his eyes, another feared look reflected in them.

“I don’t know, I just don’t know. I can’t think. I need a drink!” Steed rose from the sofa, and strode over towards the glass decanters. Poured a substantial amount of Brandy into a glass, and drank it down just as effectively as if it was a glass of cool water that he needed to recover from a hot day.

Steed brought his hand up to his forehead, stretched his fingers over his brow and took a long deep breath in and out.

“Gambit I want you to go to Mrs Peel’s house, tell her to pack up her things and... and” Steed said, and paused in thought.

“And?” Gambit replied.

“Purdey you go with him and...” Steed said, again paused in thought. Steed was holding up the large photograph of Mrs Peel, one that showed off her high cheekbones, and beautiful hair.

“No.” he paused, “I’ll see Mrs Peel. Purdey... you and Gambit try to figure out where, and when these were taken.” Steed said both nervously and orderly.

Steed walked out of the living room, quickly. Turning towards the door to the garage, he picked up his bowler and umbrella on his way out of the door. The light went on as the garage was lit, showing the three cars that were parked neatly in a row. Steed walked towards the jaguar, opening the door with his keys, he climbed into the drivers seat. He sat for a few seconds, thoughts rolling around in his head. Someone was after Mrs Peel, and he was the one who would get them. But Mrs Peel had been part of that past that he had tried so desperately to forget. Simple you would think, but not when someone means so much to you, that even if you wanted to rub their memory away for ever it was always impossible, especially if that person was someone you still loved.

First of all Steed had to find her current address, yes he knew her telephone number, and yes he could recite her previous address with a click of his fingers but he did not know her current address. She had been divorced from Peter Peel for over four months now, suitably she would have already moved into her own apartment. He started the engine, allowed the garage doors to slide open, electronics, the latest thing. He put the car into drive, and was already marginally out of the door before it had opened fully.