

The Avengers

The Promoters of Death

Fan Fiction By

Ian Shimwell

**TV
Classics**

THE
AVENGERS

***THE
PROMOTERS
OF
DEATH***

SCRIPT

By

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ACT ONE

OPENING TITLES: THE AVENGERS

1. INTERIOR: NUCLEAR RESEARCH OFFICES

(In an ultra-modern and ridiculously stylish office block, a short 'wimpy' looking man – the type who wouldn't normally say 'boo to a goose' – knocks on the Chief Executive, MR. POWER's door.)

MR. POWER (OOV): Ah, Tremble, do come in.

(TREMBLE enters and nervously takes the offered seat.)

TREMBLE: You wanted to see me sir.

(MR. POWER, a large sturdily built man finally puts down the papers he's been looking at.)

MR. POWER: Tremble, your story should be an inspiration for everyone. For years you toiled away as a lowly clerk – yet suddenly, as recently as last month, through sheer brilliance, you've become a nuclear physicist, passing an instant degree with honours, and promoted to head of our Research Team. It's amazing, totally amazing.

TREMBLE: Why thank you sir. You see, I've always wanted to get on – you see.

MR. POWER: Well I do see now – and to reward such excellence I want you on the Board. Trevors has now taken early retirement – I want you to be the new Managing Director of Nuclear Research.

(TREMBLE suddenly sits bolt upright. His eyes becoming noticeably bloodshot.)

MR. POWER: Well man – what do you say? The job's yours. Don't tell me you've been headhunted by another company.

(TREMBLE stands up, jerkily, he walks towards MR. POWER in an almost robot-like fashion. He grabs hold of the enormous marble desk and throws it against the far wall with unbelievable strength. MR. POWER backs away.)

MR. POWER: Tremble what's come over you? What's wrong? I'm offering everything you've wanted.

(Cornering MR. POWER, TREMBLE's small hands reach up to grasp his victim's neck. TREMBLE's expression is as horrified as MR. POWER'S. TREMBLE then lifts his huge boss off the floor. He strangles all life out of him – and then discards him onto the floor like an old rag doll. TREMBLE looks at MR. POWER's body in disbelief. Then, quite suddenly, smoke starts to pour from inside his collar – which fills up the whole room. TREMBLE screams in incredible pain and falls over his mentor's body.)

CAPTION: ***THE PROMOTERS OF DEATH***

CAPTION: **STEED PULLS A FEW STRINGS
EMMA JOINS THE TYPING POOL**

2. INTERIOR: **MRS. PEEL'S APARTMENT**

(As EMMA walks around her apartment that is a kaleidoscope of colour, style and the strange – there's even an incongruous sculpture of something absurd slapped in the middle of it – she hears a steadily rising volume of an engine-type noise. She looks out of the window to see a small aeroplane flying eccentrically, leaving a long smokey trail reading: "Mrs. Peel – we're needed". She could just make out a bowler-hatted STEED piloting the damn thing and knowingly smiles.)

3. INTERIOR: **NUCLEAR RESEARCH OFFICES**

(An attractive looking secretary – MISS SOMMERS is talking to STEED.)

MISS SOMMERS: So we heard this awfully loud crash, then after receiving no response from knocking on the door—you see Mr. Power always insisted on knocking before entering – I don't think there was a worse crime in his book.

STEED: Apart from murder maybe.

MISS SOMMERS: Yes, as I was saying, I opened the door and a rush of billowing smoke escaped. And after it had cleared...

(MISS SOMMERS hides her head in her hands.)

STEED: Well never mind now – you sit down. I'm sure one of your colleagues will make you a nice cup of tea. Perhaps later we could have dinner – my treat – to take your mind off this awful business.

(The door to MR. POWER'S office opens to reveal EMMA'S head popping out.)

EMMA: I think you'd better take a look in here Steed.

STEED: Perfect timing as usual Mrs. Peel. “Take a look” – now why didn’t I think of that?

EMMA: So I would state the obvious and you would make a cutting reply.

STEED: Touché.

EMMA: There you are then.

STEED: Miss Sommers, I’d better go – she does become so impatient.

(STEED joins EMMA inside the office.)

EMMA: From the marks around his neck it would appear that Tremble...

STEED: The small gentleman.

EMMA: ...strangled Power.

STEED: The large gentleman.

EMMA: That’s the problem – a big or small one, depending which way you look at it.

STEED: Very odd – and in that case how did Tremble die?

(STEED uses the handle of his umbrella to loosen and pull away TREMBLE’S collar that reveals a wide black scorch mark around his neck.)

EMMA: Doubly very odd – and a white collar worker too...

4. INTERIOR: CIVIL SERVICE BUILDING

(Inside the Chief Civil Servants’ office – an oak paneled, traditionally designed room – two men are talking.)

CHAMBERS: I still can't believe it Jakes. For untold years you have loyally served us as our unremarkable but dependable caretaker, and now, after rapid promotion, I'm offering you the privileged position of...

(His speech is cut short as a red-eyed JAKES, with amazing strength and speed, leaps towards him in a robot-like fashion, and effortlessly strangles CHAMBERS.)

JAKES: No – this isn't what I planned.

(As CHAMBERS slumps to the floor, the room starts to become very smoky.)

5. INTERIOR: CHIEF CIVIL SERVANTS OFFICE

(STEED examines the soot-like mark around JAKES' neck.)

STEED: What was that they say about lightning never striking twice?

EMMA: It is in a different place.

STEED: Same circumstance.

EMMA: What is it that they say – about history repeating itself?

(STEED looks at the tip of his umbrella after he removes it from JAKES' neck – to see it blackened with soot – that he promptly blows off.)

STEED: I take your point – but what details are repeating apart from the obvious?

EMMA: Apart from the fact that an employee has strangled an employer – and then gone up in smoke?

STEED: Yes Mrs. Peel.

EMMA: Both employees have demonstrated abnormal strength and...

(EMMA is studying JAKES' personnel file.)

EMMA: ...both, after a long and unspectacular career in a lowly position, have received instant and exceptional promotion.

6. INTERIOR: THE PIONEERING PERSONAL PROMOTION PARLOUR

(In a garishly decorated pyramid-shaped room, two men are gathered by a monitor screen and controls. Another man enters who turns round to see a diminutive old lady and her tea trolley.)

ETHEL: Would you care for a cup of tea, young man?

(The tall imposing man with unruly jet-black hair answers instead.)

MR REVERE: No he would not, Tea-lady Ethel – would he Assistant Stone?

STONE: Not just at the moment, Master Revere.

CHIVERS: Thanks anyway Ethel.

MR. REVERE: Now to business Chivers, it is now time to sign over your modest little house to us.

CHIVERS: Are you sure that is fair? It belonged to my late Daddy and his Daddy before that – and it's worth over half-a-million pounds.

MR. REVERE: Chivers remember when you could not sell it. Remember your position as a low-grade pen pusher in Weaponry Defense.

CHIVERS: Well I...

MR. REVERE: Remember struggling to afford to run Daddy's house. Remember seeing us and having the Treatment. Now you have been recently promoted beyond your wildest dreams. Your income will soon more than make up for losing your house. Remember the Agreement.

CHIVERS: I suppose you're right. Who shall I sign over the deeds to?

MR. REVERE: The Pioneering Personal Promotion Parlour.

(CHIVERS signs the documents and hands them over to MR. REVERE.)

MR. REVERE: And now very soon Chivers you will receive the ultimate promotion from your boss Oakwood – is that right Assistant Stone?

STONE: Oh yes Master Revere, don't you agree Tea-lady Ethel?

(ETHEL just looks at them disapprovingly. MR. REVERE and STONE begin to laugh maniacally. Worried, CHIVERS looks at the monitor screen and sees a view from his own vision. The monitor shows a monitor and so on. It stretches back into infinity. MR. REVERE switches it off.)

7. EXTERIOR: COUNTRY ROADS

(STEED is driving the Bentley and chatting to EMMA.)

STEED: So Mrs. Peel, why does one strangle one's boss after receiving the rewards of promotion?

EMMA: Why indeed? Boyish enthusiasm maybe?

(STEED treats EMMA to one of his mock-startled looks.)

STEED: Possibly. Any more golden nuggets of information?

EMMA: There is one other thing that may provide a rich vein of knowledge. Both Tremble and Jakes signed over their houses, using a solicitor, before dying. Not only a solicitor, the same solicitor: - Todge-Hugheskinson, Frodshaw, Frodshaw and Frodshaw Ltd.

STEED: The same solicitor's firm how coincidental, but which one will you see?

EMMA: Mr. Todge-Hugheskinson of course.

STEED: Of course. Call me silly but I think I'll drop in on my old friend Charles Maskfield, the MOD himself.

EMMA: You're silly.

(STEED drops EMMA off, who jumps into her own car. They both wave their good-byes.)

8. INTERIOR: THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE COUNTRY RESIDENCE

(STEED approaches the luscious leafy mansion. He rings the doorbell. The door opens to reveal a Pierio Clown greeting him. On closer inspection the figure has string attached to his arms, legs and head. A man sized puppet in fact.)

STEED: Charlie boy?

(STEED enquires with puzzlement.)

CHARLES (OOV): Yes old chap. How do you like my new look?

STEED: Colourful, to say the least. But perhaps you're stringing me along, eh Charles.

(The puppet makes an elaborate welcoming gesture.)

CHARLES (OOV): Do come in Steed.

(The puppet moves aside to allow STEED to enter. He immediately sees an incredible array of puppets – all shapes and sizes – all styles and colours. He looks up to see CHARLES on a balcony above the doorway operating the puppet. Knowing the games up he discards the puppet, which slumps to the floor, and walks down to STEED.)

CHARLES: It's been a long time Steed.

STEED: Yes, since those days of rigorous training at the Ministry.

CHARLES: And rigorous mischief as I remember.

(They shake hands warmly. CHARLES removes the puppets away from the armchairs by the roaring open fire. He brings two Brandy's as they sit down.)

CHARLES: As much as I'm pleased to see an old friend at my humble abode, what brings you here Steed?

STEED: Why the puppets of course – fascinating, absolutely fascinating, like Pinocchio over there. They must require great manipulation.

(CHARLES looks at STEED strangely; a flicker of worry is noticeable. STEED picks up a puppet, and pulls some strings to imitate walking. A puppet that, curiously, looks like himself. Smiling, he puts it down.)

STEED: Actually it's business old boy. Power and Chambers have recently been murdered – from Nuclear Research and the Civil Service respectfully. This may be silly of me, but could there be a Ministry connection and if so – would you know anything about it?

CHARLES: Well the whispers are extremely silly, Steed. SILLY as in Secret Instillation of Latent Lethal Yields.

STEED: Tear on.

CHARLES: Unfortunately the SILLY project is so secret even I don't know anything about it.

(STEED glances around at the many puppets.)

STEED: Could you perhaps pull a few strings?

CHARLES: I'm afraid not Steed, but I could tell you the identity of the men assigned to the project.

STEED: Please do.

(CHARLES produces an electronic device with a display screen attached to it, from underneath his chair. He punches in some information and then glances at STEED with mounting concern.)

CHARLES: I don't believe this – you were right Steed.

STEED: I was?

CHARLES: It goes without saying that this information is top secret, you understand.

STEED: Then don't say it.

CHARLES: I won't, but there is – or was three SILLY men: Power, Chambers and Oakwood who's from Weaponry Defense.

STEED: Oakwood! I must warn him right away.

(STEED dashes towards the exit but then turns round.)

STEED: One more thing – a favour for an old friend. Would you put me on the SILLY list?

CHARLES: As you wish. Damn dangerous thing to do though – possibly, but then again this is the silly season after all.

9. INTERIOR: SOLICITOR'S OFFICE

MR. TODGE-HUGHESKINSON:

So Mrs. Peel, that's all the information I shouldn't have offered you.

(The telephone rings, MR. TODGE-HUGHESKINSON answers it and then passes it to EMMA.)

EMMA: Yes Steed, I understand – I'm nearer so I'll go there forthwith.

10. EXTERIOR: TOWN ROADS

(EMMA runs past a red telephone box and jumps into her open-top sports car. The tyres screech as she roars away.)

11. INTERIOR: THE PIONEERING PERSONAL PROMOTION PARLOUR

(MR. REVERE and STONE are gathered by a monitor screen – surrounded by a complex series of levers and controls. ETHEL watches on, from the corner, with her trusty tea trolley. They are watching the monitor screen that appears to show a view from someone's eyes.)

STONE: All appears to be ready Master Revere, shall I turn the device on?

MR. REVERE: Not just yet, Assistant Stone.

OAKWOOD (ON SCREEN):

Well Chivers you are now Chief Weaponry Advisor. Shall we celebrate?

MR. REVERE: Now Assistant Stone.

(STONE presses a button and the whole control panel lights up. MR REVERE moves a lever, the monitor view moves upwards and left. He presses a button. Two arms can be seen moving, threateningly, towards OAKWOOD.)

CHIVERS (OOV): I don't want to do this. Why am I doing this?

(MR. REVERE speaks into the microphone.)

MR. REVERE: Now my friends kill Oakwood. Kill him!

(MR. REVERE rubs his hands in anticipation. They all watch CHIVERS' hands grasp a struggling OAKWOOD and strangle him to death. The screen then fills up with smoke. A sickening scream of pain is heard.)

12. EXTERIOR: OUTSIDE WEAPONRY DEFENSE LTD.

(EMMA'S car screeches to a halt. She jumps out and runs into the building.)

13. INTERIOR: OAKWOOD'S OFFICE

(Having ran up the stairs, EMMA bursts into OAKWOOD'S office to be confronted by dense smoke. She coughs. The smoke gradually clears. She can see two dead bodies. As more smoke clears, EMMA strains her eyes even more. A minute metallic man appears to be walking towards her.)

CAPTION: THE AVENGERS

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