It’s the day of the Jackal’s departure...

THE JACKAL has left the pack. Andrew Wylie, the feisty literary agent responsible for securing a £500,000 advance for Martin Amis’s last novel, has broken away from his distinguished partner, Gillon Atken and Brian Stone. It’s a severe blow to the firm of Atken, Stone & Wylie - which, as one London’s top literary agencies, represents all the greats from W.H. Auden to the late Agatha Christie. "As of today, we are Atken & Stone," says a source. "I cannot comment any further..."

Gillon Atken, chairman of the firm, will now be responsible for comment. But the timing is curious. Could it have anything to do with the recent American literary feud between Martin Amis and Eric Jacobs, biographer of his father? The two, you’ll recall, fell out over the recent publication of Jacoby’s diaries in the Sunday Times, which portrayed the dying Sir Kindle Amis as a snob and cruel man. Martin - a reviewer for the Sunday Times - is army with the newspaper. And even angrier with the agent who represented Jacobs. SF deit Gillon Atken.

"You can consider it a divorce between Atken and Wylie," says one source. "I think Martin was a contributing factor in the separation. It turned quite nasty." It’s likely to start many of the authors involved, including Salman Rushdie - who is looked after by Wylie but counts Atken as a good friend.

Jacoby is philosophical about the break-up. "That’s the way the cookie crumbles."

The shoe must go on

HELLIATH no fury like a feminist sister scorned. Suzanne Moore - The Guardian columnist accused of "creative writing," by Caroline Gray, sported bird’s nest hair, bare toes, and too much lipstick - clearly has been looking at the extravagant looks of the catwalk shows about to swing back into fashion. Theanzi’s rekindled enthusiasm of her writing, "Head Over Heels," to be published by Viking in October, will include her full response to Gray’s attack. Marks: Marking the chick, the piece opens with the words: "I was out buying this pair of shoes..."

The usually manly Gray is keeping quiet for once. Just a momentous bout of tact, I’m sure.

Beef-brained

MAD OWNS of Britain, do not despair. You have a voice. Shakespeare’s most romantic heroine, Juliet, has been recreated by the cast of movie star, Tremis, in a startling beer film. Tremis and Juliet, the shock-building version, is "cathartic. Beaten along the times of the original," producer Lloyd Kaufman assures me. "The script is written entirely by Jews living in pensaments."

The only difference is this: Juliet must dispute a kiss cow in the last act and after taking a bite from a juicy steak, not a pretty series of lovers shows. "It meant to be a special for the current," the current, "and.....

And what part of Australia do you come from?

Hollywood obsession with cow comes at a high price, tells me. "I could not have

GMANN, clearly a woman of principles. "I’m not going to pay those reserves," she cries. As smart ideas, with copies of the book. I’m sure even Shirley Prits would have reached for her purse.

Stage fright

NEW LABOUR. New faces. Take the suit-and-tie last night at the Almeida Theatre in Highbury, where the impresario of the new London powder held the packed heads of Peter Mandelson discussing his book The Blair Revolution - Can New Labour Deliver? alongside author Roger Liddle. Thanks to an amusing little scuffle involving six nayay demonstrators confronting the Prince of Darkness (one of whom Mandelson succeeded in falling on stage), it felt the audience entertained royally. But I’m in the minority. Mandelson was half an hour late - thanks to a bomb scare at King’s Cross - and not only 35 minutes to talk. They should have offered us our money back. It was a scandal," one audience member tells me.

"We have had a couple of calls about refunds this morning," Almeida Theatre staff admit. "But Mandelson didn’t want to face the money."

HEARING news from Westminster of a politician behaving badly, I hear that William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, is being a true gent over the beef crisis. He’s announced he will not help set up compensation levels for stricken farmers, should the Government decide to introduce such a scheme. The reason? His interest in a tenant dairy farm on his family’s Somerset estate. Good to see someone’s learned a lesson from the Scott Report.

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