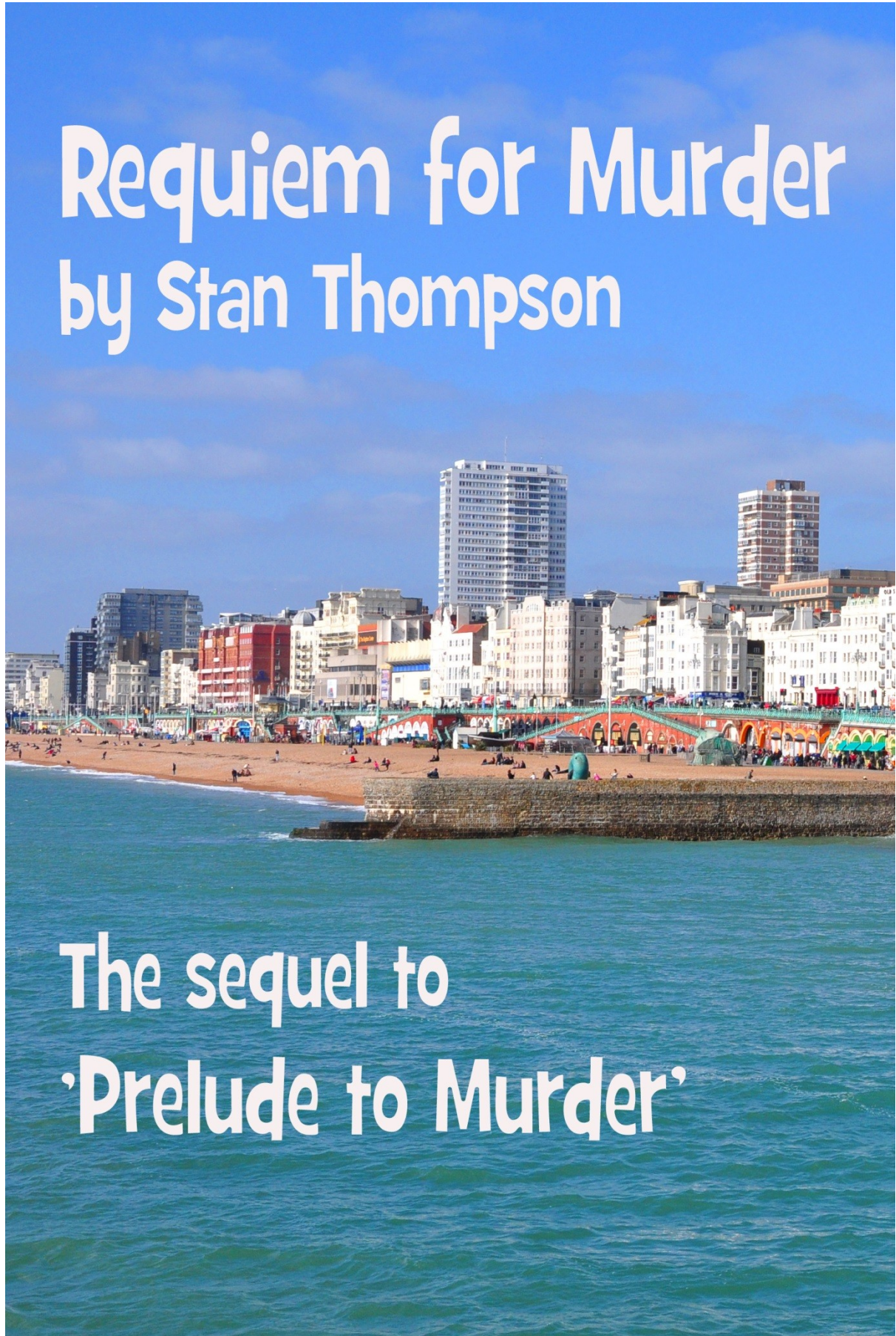


Requiem for Murder by Stan Thompson



The sequel to
'Prelude to Murder'

REQUIEM FOR MURDER

A new play in two acts, by Stan Thompson

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Cast

Oliver (Ollie) Brooks	Late-twenties - owner of the De Vere Art Gallery in Brighton, England
Sebastian (Seb) Mancini	Late-twenties - an artist at Ollie's gallery
Alex Kramer	Mid-twenties - the manager of Ollie's art gallery
Valerie Brooks	Early-sixties - Ollie's mother
Kyle Jacobs	Mid-twenties - a soldier and Ollie's friend
James Downing	Mid-twenties - formerly a second violinist in a UK symphony orchestra
Detective Inspector Gary Stanton	Late-forties - detective with Brighton and Hove Police
Detective Sergeant Lucy Fairfax	Late twenties - detective with Brighton and Hove Police
Male Prison Officer/Barman/Male Voice	Late-twenties

The characters and situations depicted in this play are fictitious.

Any similarity to actual persons, living or dead, or to actual situations is purely coincidental.

Final version, December 2018

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Welcome to my new play! It is the sequel to my earlier play: 'Prelude to Murder'.

This time, the action takes place in and around the seaside town of Brighton, East Sussex, England, during two weeks in April, present day.

It is some six months after the tragic events that took place in the Canary Islands.

Ollie is back home at Brighton, taking up the reins again of his art gallery, after a short spell in therapy to assist with his recovery from a mild breakdown. James has been transferred to nearby Lewis Prison, where he is serving a 15-year sentence for attempted murder/conspiracy to commit murder. Emma is serving a 20-year sentence in a Spanish

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prison for murder/conspiracy to commit murder. Ollie's mother, Valerie, has returned alone to the UK and is living with Ollie at his home in Hove.

This play is a lot 'darker' compared to the melodramatic nature of its predecessor. This time we begin to see Ollie in a different light; is he really just a nouveau riche flibbertigibbet, or has this persona been fooling us all along? Once again, whom can you trust or believe?

Technical note:

To facilitate prompt scene changes, this play relies heavily on very simple sets with minimal furnishings, supplemented with projected background images, and the use of atmospheric sound effects.

Directors are recommended to consider plain backdrops with simple flats, which can be adjusted easily to suit large and small stages.

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

Day #1, 09:12: Ollie's office at the De Vere Art Gallery, Brighton

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

Day #1, 23:24: Ollie's kitchen at his house in Hove, near Brighton

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

Day #2, 08:14: Ollie's kitchen at his house in Hove, near Brighton

ACT ONE, SCENE FOUR

Day #2, 10:03: Visiting Hall, Lewes Prison, near Brighton

ACT ONE, SCENE FIVE

Day #2, 11:19: Beach café on Brighton's seafront

ACT ONE, SCENE SIX

Day #3, 16:32: Ollie's office at the De Vere Art Gallery, Brighton

I N T E R V A L

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

Day #3, 18:09: Ollie's kitchen at his house in Hove, near Brighton

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ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

Day #5, 10:15: Visiting Hall, Lewes Prison, near Brighton

ACT TWO, SCENE THREE

Day #5, 20:37: Hotel bar in Brighton

ACT TWO, SCENE FOUR

Day #8, 12:02: Ollie's office at the De Vere Art Gallery, Brighton

ACT TWO, SCENE FIVE

Day #8, 21:47: Ollie's kitchen at his house in Hove, near Brighton

ACT TWO, SCENE SIX

Day #8, 23:28: The 'haunted house' fairground attraction, Brighton Pier

ACT TWO, SCENE SEVEN

Day #14, 11:00: A church in Brighton

SCENE ONE

ACT ONE

Day #1, 09:12. At curtain rise, we are in OLLIE'S office at the De Vere Art Gallery, Brighton. The compact office set is situated, stage right. There is a desk bearing a laptop computer and a telephone. OLLIE and ALEX sit one side of the desk. There is a spare chair on the other side of the desk. A contemporary painting hangs on the wall behind the desk. The lighting is bright, but not harsh. Projected images of paintings hanging on the gallery's outer wall, stage left, should be considered; or otherwise leave this area in darkness. Both OLLIE and ALEX are wearing smart informal shirts and trousers. SEBASTIAN is dressed more casually in jeans and tee-shirt.

ALEX: *(looking at sales records on the laptop screen with OLLIE)* You can see that business hasn't been too bad while you've been away, boss. Christmas was particularly good - Mr Mancini's landscapes sold well. They always do.

OLLIE: I'm very grateful for everything you and the team have done to keep this place afloat, Alex. I'm so sorry that you were left in the lurch...

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SEBASTIAN: *(rushing into the office in a confused state)* Ollie, you're back here at last!
It's so good to see you. Are you OK, my friend?

OLLIE: *(hugging SEBASTIAN)* Talk of the devil! Hi Seb. So good to see you too.
Yeah, I'm fine, thanks.

ALEX: Hello, Mr Mancini. We were only just talking about you...

SEBASTIAN: *(laughing)* Well I hope it wasn't all good?

They all laugh.

OLLIE: *(looking at ALEX)* OK, Alex. Let's catch up later. I want to go over the figures
again and I need you to do a couple of things for me.

ALEX: OK, boss.

ALEX leaves the room.

SEBASTIAN: I couldn't believe all the horror stories I've been reading in the newspapers -
James pulling a gun on you like that, and Emma shooting Rupert in cold
blood! I never thought holidaying with friends in the Canaries could be so
dangerous!

OLLIE: I know. It still hasn't sunk in with me; it's all been a bit of a bad dream. I
truly loved James, you know? *(a moment)* He was like a brother to me...

SEBASTIAN: I know you did. *(a moment)* So where have you been for the past few
months? I've popped in several times, but nobody here seemed to know
where you were, or they weren't letting on.

OLLIE: I'm sorry you've been left in the dark - my guys here should have said
something. *(after a moment and slightly embarrassed)* Between you and
me, I've had a bit of a pathetic breakdown after everything that happened in
Lanzarote. What with Rupe's murder, my mother turning up out of the blue
and the police investigation; so I checked myself into a rehab clinic. But the
people there have sorted me out with some brilliant therapy, and now I'm
back on the rails, so to speak.

SEBASTIAN: So shouldn't you be at home resting? Do you really need to be here at a time
like this? I mean you've got an excellent team looking after this place.

OLLIE: I've done enough resting. I need to get on with the rest of my life. And now
my mother's come back after all these years, I need to start building bridges.
Although I'm not really sure if I want to...

SEBASTIAN: Is she staying with you, then?

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OLLIE: Yeah, at my house in Hove. It's a bit awkward. I don't know what to say to her half the time. I try to avoid her if I'm being honest.

SEBASTIAN: So what happened to the lover boy she ran off with? Did they get married?

OLLIE: No, they never married. And he died last year. A sudden stroke. And she's looking frail. I suspect her health's not that great.

SEBASTIAN: Were you able to make it to Rupert's funeral? I'm guessing the family brought his body back to the UK?

OLLIE: Yeah, his family are originally from up north, so the funeral was held at Newcastle, near to where Rupe was born and brought up. It was a very sad day, of course. His parents are lovely people. I was worried that they would blame me somehow for Rupe's murder, but they were very understanding.

SEBASTIAN: I don't see how they, or anyone, could hold you accountable for Emma murdering Rupert instead of you, seeing as the police absolved you of any responsibility. And James was on the verge of shooting you, too, if the police hadn't turned up in time....

OLLIE: Just as well James hadn't realised his gun wasn't loaded, I say...

SEBASTIAN: I read that James had been transferred to Lewes Prison. It must feel weird knowing that he's banged-up in the local jail?

OLLIE: Yeah, he was transferred from the Spanish prison on compassionate grounds: his mother's terminally ill. It makes it easier for her to visit him over here. She only lives locally. But Emma's still serving her sentence in Spain. The prison's a right hell-hole, I hear.

SEBASTIAN: No worse than she deserves for what she and James put you all through.

OLLIE: *(a moment)* Actually, I'm planning to visit James in prison; I've made an online visit request.

SEBASTIAN: *(astonished)* What! Are you mad!? Whatever for?

OLLIE: I want to give him the opportunity to redeem himself in some small way.

SEBASTIAN: Redeem? How? What do you mean?

OLLIE: Well, this might sound bizarre but, as you know, James is a musician. A gifted one at that. And he's already written some great stuff - a violin concerto and several orchestral pieces.

SEBASTIAN: OK. But I'm not sure I understand?

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OLLIE: Let me finish - I want him to compose something special to celebrate Rupe's life - the life that he and Emma destroyed so mercilessly. I was thinking along the lines of a short requiem - nothing too grand. Rupe was a Catholic, after all. And I will pay for it to be performed in public - hopefully at Brighton's Royal Pavilion, if I could arrange it.

SEBASTIAN: Bizarre? It's downright farcical! Compose a short requiem mass!? Are you serious? Do you really think he's up to it? Mozart never lived long enough to complete his requiem. And what if James isn't interested? I can't see him agreeing.

OLLIE: *(laughing)* I'm not talking about something as grandiose as Mozart's Requiem. No way - just one movement, maybe. James has plenty of time on his hands and I'm pretty sure he'll want to do it, as it will be a paid commission. I'm prepared to offer him a fair price, which will help tide him over for when he eventually gets released.

SEBASTIAN: *(perplexed)* That's if he agrees to let you visit him for starters. But I think you're clutching at straws, if you want my advice. I don't think you appreciate what you'll be asking of him. A requiem mass.... *(shaking his head and after a moment)* Well, don't hesitate to ask if I can be of any help. But I'm not very accomplished when it comes to composing requiem masses...

OLLIE: *(laughing)* Just keep producing those great paintings of yours. Mancini landscapes always sell well. Actually, I've been thinking of organising another exhibition of your work? I need to take back the reins of this place. I've neglected the gallery for far too long.

SEBASTIAN: As it happens, I've been focussing on seascapes while you've been away. I'll pop in tomorrow with some completed works. See what you think?

OLLIE: That sounds like a plan to me. I can't wait to see them.

SEBASTIAN: *(cheerfully)* Well we could always discuss the exhibition over dinner tonight? My treat. The Metropole? Take your mind off things.

OLLIE: That's really sweet of you, Seb. But maybe another time? I could really do with an early night.

SEBASTIAN: Well you know where I am. *(a moment)* Anyway, I'll be back tomorrow around noon with some of my new paintings, if that's convenient with you?

OLLIE: Yeah, that's fine by me. And, now I've a million and one things to catch up with - I've got to book my car in for a service and, more importantly, make

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an urgent appointment with my solicitors. I need to make a fresh will to remove James as sole beneficiary.

The lights slowly fade to a black-out.

END OF SCENE ONE, ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

ACT ONE

Day #1, 23:24. When the lights come up, we are in OLLIE'S kitchen at his house in Hove. The compact kitchen set is situated, stage left. There is a kitchen table bearing cups and saucers. Four chairs are located at each side of the table. In the background are kitchen units with counters below. The front panels of a washing machine and dishwasher can also be seen. A telephone rests on one of the counters, together with other kitchen items. The lighting is soft to suggest the late hour. The spare area, stage right, is in darkness. OLLIE is wearing the same informal shirt and trousers. VALERIE wears a plain black dress and cardigan.

VALERIE is alone. She is talking on the telephone.

[CUE SOUND EFFECT] The roar of OLLIE'S high performance car can be heard offstage, as he pulls up outside.

VALERIE: *(talking on the phone)* No. He he's not back yet.....He should have been home by now.....I'm going to tell him tonight.....Yes, tonight.....No, don't come over, leave everything to me..... I think I just heard his car.

[CUE SOUND EFFECT] The front door slams.

(hearing the front door close) He's back.....

VALERIE puts down the phone quickly, as OLLIE makes a sudden entrance from stage left.

OLLIE: *(surprised to see VALERIE)* Mother. You're still up? It's late. I thought you'd be in bed by now? Have you mislaid your sleeping pills again?

VALERIE: I've been waiting for you to come home, Oliver. I was expecting you back earlier.

OLLIE: I got detained at the gallery. *(a moment)* Who were you talking to on the phone, just now? Are you planning to run off again? I live in hope...

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- VALERIE:** *(hesitant)* It was a wrong number. They thought they were calling Cineworld.
- OLLIE:** Cineworld at this time of night? Do they still have midnight matinees? Anyway, it's been a long day and I really need to get to bed.
- VALERIE:** I'm beginning to think that you're deliberately avoiding me, Oliver?
- OLLIE:** *(irritated)* Avoiding you? Why would you think that? I don't understand. *(a moment)* Look, do you mind if we continue this discussion in the morning? That's if you've anything new and relevant to say? I've a hell of a headache.
- VALERIE:** *(angrily)* We do need to talk, Oliver.
- OLLIE:** Talk? Let me guess? You want to talk about why Aunt Daphne left everything to me in her will? Yes? We've been over this a million times, mother. There's really nothing left to say. I see no point in discussing this ad nauseam. Now, if you don't mind, I'm going to bed.
- VALERIE:** *(confident)* I've taken legal advice - I'm thinking of contesting the provisions of Daphne's will. The solicitor thinks I've a strong case.
- OLLIE:** *(shocked)* Contest Aunt Daphne's will! Whatever for?
- VALERIE:** For my rightful share of her estate, that's what for. It was a travesty that you inherited everything! I know what you did, Oliver!
- OLLIE:** Travesty? Your solicitor's given you false hopes, mother. And I suppose I'll be paying for his ludicrous advice? *(a moment and with conviction)* Look, let me spell it out again, once and for all - Aunt Daphne's will was perfectly in order - she made me her sole beneficiary - she had no other family - you, her only other relative, had buggered off abroad with some greasy cruise ship captain. You abandoned us and dumped me on Aunt Daphne's doorstep, practically. She brought me up and cared for me. She loved me like her own. She was more of a mother to me than you ever were or could ever be. And did you ever keep in regular touch to ask how we were? No. All we got from you were a few cheap post cards crowing about where you were and name-dropping every Z-list celebrity you were mixing with. And the post cards dried up years ago. So we naturally thought you were dead. And now you turn up - the greasy cruise ship captain's snuffed it - leaving you virtually penniless and you expect to overturn Aunt Daphne's will. Because you think you're entitled? **I don't think so 'mother'!**
- VALERIE:** *(seething)* Oh, how self-righteous you sound, Oliver. But I know for a fact that I was the joint-beneficiary, with you, under Daphne's original will - the

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solicitor confirmed that to me - he was the very solicitor who had drawn it up previously. But he was very concerned when Daphne instructed him to prepare a new will leaving everything to you. He challenged Daphne several times on her decision. He felt strongly that she was acting under duress. He told me she was agitated and confused. He wasn't sure if she was in the right state of mind to give him instructions. But she was adamant. And I know that you pressured her relentlessly to make a new will in your favour! I have proof!

OLLIE: *(incredulous)* Proof? What proof? Have you been at the sherry again, mother?

VALERIE: I have irrefutable physical proof. Don't underestimate my conviction, Oliver. You would be foolish to. *(a moment)* But I'm sure we can resolve this imbalance in a civilised way without resorting to unpleasant legal remedies. Just give me what I'm due and I'll be out of your life forever.

OLLIE: *(exploding)* "Imbalance", my arse! You can fuck off out of my life right now by packing your miserable belongings and leaving my house. I'll be more than happy to pay your cab fare to the railway station!

VALERIE: *(sinister)* Be very careful what you contemplate next, Oliver. *(smiling)* But let me pick up on something you mentioned earlier - you thought that Daphne had no other living relatives, apart from you and me? Can you be so very sure of that?

The lights slowly fade to a black-out.

END OF SCENE TWO, ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

ACT ONE

Day #2, 08:14. When the lights come up, we are still in OLLIE'S kitchen at his house in Hove. The lighting is brighter, but soft. The spare area, stage right, is in darkness. OLLIE is wearing a smart shirts and trousers. VALERIE wears a dressing gown over her nightdress. She is sitting at the kitchen table, drinking tea. OLLIE enters from stage left.

OLLIE: *(surprised to see his mother)* You're still here, then? I thought I'd told you to pack your bags? *(sarcastic)* Why don't you go and stay with our mystery relative? I'm so looking forward to meeting him or her...

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VALERIE: *(unshaken)* I'm not going anywhere, for the moment, Oliver. I have some unfinished business to take care of.

OLLIE: Well don't expect me to pick up any more of your ridiculous legal bills.

VALERIE: I'm not talking about going back to see the solicitor.

OLLIE: So what are you talking about, that's if anybody's remotely interested?

VALERIE: I'm going to the police...

OLLIE: *(alarmed)* The police! Whatever for? *(he sits at the table, opposite her)*

VALERIE: *(stoical)* I think you know why, Oliver. And I think you should be very worried...

OLLIE: *(agitated)* Worried? Me worried? Why on earth should I be worried?

VALERIE: I want them to look into the cause of Daphne's death...

OLLIE: *(astonished)* You want them to do what!? Look into Aunt Daphne's death? She died of natural causes - heart failure, for fuck's sake! That's what it says on her death certificate. *(he gets up and paces the room)*

VALERIE: "Natural causes" with a little help from you...

OLLIE: What the hell are you talking about? You reckon I had something to do with her death? You are deluding yourself!

VALERIE: Well I do know what a hypoglycaemic reaction is. And I think you do, too?

OLLIE: *(exasperated)* I'm sorry, mother but I think you've lost the plot...

VALERIE: So her death wasn't hastened by an insulin overdose that brought on a hypoglycaemic reaction? From an insulin injection administered by you?

OLLIE: *(leaning over her)* "Hypoglycaemic reaction hastened by an insulin overdose injection"? Is that what you really believe, or is it what you've found on the internet? Or maybe I wired-up her shower to the electricity supply? Or maybe I employed that serial killer, Dr Death, to bump her off? Oh, but wait a minute - it couldn't have been him - he's been dead for ages!

VALERIE: You can scoff all you like, Oliver. But we both know that you murdered her and the reason why...

OLLIE: *(angry and thumping the table)* **What!** You're now suggesting that I pumped Aunt Daphne full of insulin in order to murder her for her money? And that's after you allege that I forced her into changing her will! Is that what you're

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implying, mother? Where are you getting all this nonsense from? You were never here! You don't know what medication, if any, Aunt Daphne was taking.

VALERIE: *(standing up)* I wouldn't be so sure of that if I were you. *(looking at OLIVER in the eyes)* But you were responsible for ensuring that Daphne took her insulin to control her diabetes? Weren't you, Oliver?

OLLIE: *(laborious)* I kept an eye on her health and welfare, yes. But I didn't inject her with any insulin. She took care of that. I can't stand needles - you would have known that if you'd been here. So why all this third degree nonsense? *(a moment)* Just who's been filling your head with all this claptrap? I think you've been watching too much Agatha Christie, mother. Are you hoping to be the next 'Miss Marple'?

VALERIE: I may not have been around, Oliver. And I shall never forgive myself for my foolish and prolonged absence, but I did stay in regular contact with Daphne, which may come as a great surprise to you, Oliver.

OLLIE: *(mocking)* A few tawdry postcards - is that what you call "staying in regular contact", mother?

VALERIE: No, I'm talking about our frequent correspondence - letters I exchanged with Daphne, care of the gallery - she was certain that you were intercepting her mail here and destroying anything from me before she had a chance to read it.

OLLIE: *(stunned)* You were writing to each other care of the gallery? Without me knowing?

VALERIE: Yes, for several years. And I have kept her letters - letters in which she raises concern about the way you were intimidating and antagonising her. And how you would threaten her with violence. She was afraid of you, Oliver. Scared stiff when you kept insisting on administering her insulin. *(with disgust)* So much for your glib admission of "keeping an eye on her health and welfare". I know that you coerced her into making a new will in your absolute favour - it's all there in black and white in her letters, and I'm going to show them to the police. And then they'll be exhuming Daphne's body if I have anything to do with it. *(a moment)* So, shall we start discussing what I'm entitled to before I cancel my cab to Brighton Police Station?

The lights slowly fade to a black-out.

END OF SCENE THREE, ACT ONE

SCENE FOUR

ACT ONE

Day #2, 10:03. When the lights come up, we are inside the visiting hall at Lewes Prison. This simple set is situated stage right and occupies half the stage area; the remaining stage area should be left in darkness. The set comprises a wide table, with two chairs facing each other across its length. A 'NO SMOKING' sign is attached to the rear wall. A florescent lighting trough hangs above the table. The lighting is harsh.

[CUE SOUND EFFECT] The hubbub of prisoners' and visitors' voices echoing around the institutional walls.

OLLIE is wearing his smart shirt and trousers. JAMES is dressed in prison jogging bottoms, sweat shirt and high-visibility tabard, bearing the legend: 'PRISONER' on its back. The PRISON OFFICER is in uniform. OLLIE is sitting at the table, waiting for JAMES to arrive.

JAMES: *(speaking to OLLIE as he is led to JAMES'S table by the PRISON OFFICER)*
Well, look what the cat's dragged in. You couldn't keep away, then?

The PRISON OFFICER remains in the background observing..

OLLIE: *(looking up at JAMES)* I'm surprised you agreed to my visit, James.

JAMES: *(sitting down immediately opposite OLLIE)* I was curious. What do you want, Ollie? Have you come here especially to gloat?

OLLIE: No. I was hoping for an explanation.

JAMES: *(angrily)* Explanation! No chance of that "bro". I said all I had to say back in Lanzarote. *(standing up to leave)* Well, if that's all you've come for, you're wasting your time. So don't bother ever coming back. You mean nothing to me.

The PRISON OFFICER looks at them intently.

OLLIE: *(confused)* I don't understand how you've become so cold and callous. You helped Emma murder Rupe. And you were on the verge of killing me, too. What was it that changed you, James? What made you so evil?

JAMES: *(mocking)* Been studying books on psychiatry, have we, while you were away undergoing your rehab? You wanna be my shrink? Only crazy people need shrinks. *Piss off, Ollie! (JAMES stands up)*

OLLIE: Wait. I have a proposition for you...

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JAMES: *(laughing)* A proposition for me? While I'm banged-up in here? Do me a favour...

OLLIE: I would be in a way - a great one...

JAMES: *(sitting down again)* What **are** you talking about, Ollie? Are you proposing to organise my immediate release?

OLLIE: No. I'm being serious - what I have to say could prove rather lucrative for you, for when you eventually get out. That's if you agree, of course.

JAMES: *(puzzled)* Lucrative? Agree to what?

OLLIE: You're brilliant at writing music - I do know that - so I want to offer you ten grand to compose something special - a kind of short requiem - to celebrate the life of Rupe - my dearest friend, whom you and Emma wantonly murdered. Look at it as a small act of redemption. It's the very least you can do.

JAMES: *(staggered)* Compose a "Requiem for Rupert"? You **are** joking!?

OLLIE: No. I'm absolutely serious. You're a gifted musician and I know that you've composed some amazing pieces in the past. So I know you can do it. I'll arrange for music manuscript paper to be provided and I'll get a keyboard sent in, if there's no piano here. I can't see that it would be a problem with the prison authorities. But I'll check with them on the way out. I know the prison governor, as it happens - I gave him a good deal on a water colour last week.

JAMES: *(bewildered)* Ten grand, you say, for composing a requiem mass?

OLLIE: Yes, but nothing so elaborate as a full requiem - just the one movement, perhaps. And, yes, ten grand paid into a bank or building society account of your choice. Think of the interest that will accrue by the time you get released. If you agree, I'll bring in the account documents with me next time for you to sign.

JAMES: *(shaking his head)* Compose a requiem mass? I'm not sure I'm really up to it - they are so complex and then there are the choral arrangements to figure out.

OLLIE: I know you can do it. Just keep it short and simple - I'm not suggesting a full-blown oratorio fit for the Royal Albert Hall, for fuck's sake...

JAMES: That's a relief as Mozart died before he got round to completing his requiem.

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OLLIE: *(preoccupied)* Is that a fact...

JAMES: Well it's gonna take me a while. That's if I can figure out the structure. I don't think you appreciate what you're asking me to do?

OLLIE: Well, you've got loads of time. Complete it for me and I'll chuck in an extra grand on top, as a bonus. And I'll be more than happy to take care of your mother's funeral arrangements, if and when the time comes. I'm sorry to hear she's terminally ill. Getting yourself banged-up hasn't done her health much good, I don't suppose? At least she can come and visit you, now you've been transferred here.

JAMES: *(angrily)* Must you be so insensitive? Just leave my mother out of this! I can take care of her - even while I'm in here.

OLLIE: If you say so. *(getting up to leave)* I'll arrange another visit soon, then?

JAMES: If you must. And don't forget to bring the documents for the money. *(a moment)* Why are you being so good to me, Ollie? After all the hell Emm and I put you through in Lanzarote? I'm not sure I understand.

OLLIE: *(earnest)* I'm doing this for Rupe - you're just a means to an end. It's the very least you can do.

JAMES: *(sneering)* So what do you propose doing with this requiem if I ever get to finish it?

OLLIE: I'm gonna pay to have it performed in public, in Rupe's memory.

JAMES: Performed? Who by?

OLLIE: Your old orchestra, during one of their concerts at the Royal Pavilion, if they'll agree to it.

The lights slowly fade to a black-out.

END OF SCENE FOUR, ACT ONE

SCENE FIVE

ACT ONE

Day #2, 11:19. When the lights come up, we are on the terrace of a beach café close to OLLIE'S art gallery. This compact set is situated stage left and occupies half the stage area; the remaining stage area should be left in darkness. The set comprises a metal table with four chairs. A menu and condiment set sit atop the table. A floor-standing easel-type sign,

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with a menu display, stands adjacent to the table. Chrome pillars with hanging ropes cordon-off the area. A projected background image of a café fascia should be considered. The lighting is bright, but not overly-harsh.

[CUE SOUND EFFECT] The sound of laughter, voices, gulls, the sea and café music.

OLLIE is sitting alone at the table enjoying a cup of coffee. He looks pensive. He is wearing smart shirt and trousers. KYLE arrives wearing khaki shorts and a tee-shirt.

KYLE: *(approaching OLLIE from behind and tapping him on the shoulder)* Hello stranger...

OLLIE: *(turning round in surprise)* Kyle! Hi. What are you doing here?

KYLE: *(pulling up a chair next to OLLIE)* Well, you said to look you up if ever I was in Brighton. And I was on my way to your art gallery, when I saw you sitting out here.

OLLIE: *(hugging KYLE)* Hey, it's so good to see you, buddy. What a great surprise. Are you here on holiday?

KYLE: Yeah. Got a couple of weeks' leave, so I thought I'd come and explore your neck of the woods. See if Brighton lives up to all the hype.

OLLIE: So does it, then?

KYLE: What?

OLLIE: Live up to all the hype?

KYLE: Yeah, it's pretty cool, so far. Found some great bars. Had some fun.

OLLIE: Obviously you're still in the army, then?

KYLE: Yeah, still a square-basher.

OLLIE: So what do you actually do in the army? You seen active service yet?

KYLE: Nah, they wouldn't trust me with a gun in case I shot one of our own!

They both laugh.

I don't get to play soldiers much - I'm just a grease monkey in the motor pool. I get to fix and service all the regiment's vehicles.

OLLIE: Handy with a spanner then? My Zenith needs a service. You reckon you could do that for me?

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

KYLE: *(impressed)* You've got a fucking Zenith now!? Wow that's some tasty motor. What happened to the Ferrari?

OLLIE: *(smug)* It's a Zenith Z8 - I've always wanted one. There's only three of them in the UK. Ferraris are so common, especially around here!

KYLE: I'd love to get under the hood of a Zenith, but I dunno what my C.O. back at the barracks would say if he saw it!

They both laugh again.

OLLIE: You like being in the Army then?

KYLE: I used to, but my ambition is to open up my own garage once I'm back in civvy street. I've done more than my four years' contracted service, so I'm saving up to buy myself out.

OLLIE: I bet that don't come cheap?

KYLE: Nah, tell me about it.

OLLIE: I take it you and Charlene are no longer an item?

KYLE: Nah, I dumped her back in Lanzarote, before it all kicked off with you and your posh mate.

OLLIE: I heard that you'd flown back to the UK with some bloke you'd met over there?

KYLE: Yeah, that's about the size of it. Not exactly proud of it, but I met this lad, Dominic, didn't I?

OLLIE: Are you and this Dominic still together?

KYLE: Nah, he was a right tosser - I found out he was a druggie - so I dumped him too.

OLLIE: *(a moment)* Sorry, can I get you a coffee or something?

KYLE: I was really hoping for something a bit stronger - a beer or two, maybe?

OLLIE: *(looking at his watch)* I have a meeting in half an hour, but I could catch up with you in the bar at the Amsterdam - around two, if you like?

KYLE: Yeah, cool. It's close to where I'm staying. *(a moment)* So, how have you been? I was gutted to read about what happened to you in Lanzarote. That posh mate of yours, James, was a right bastard. I couldn't fucking believe it!

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

OLLIE: Yeah, I still can't believe it myself. *(a moment of reflection)* I had a bit of a breakdown after all that happened to me over there. So I booked myself into a rehab place for some much-needed therapy. It's worked wonders...

KYLE: *(sincerely)* Well, as long as you're OK now?

OLLIE: Yeah, and I'm trying hard to put everything behind me. *(a moment)* I take it you're staying down here by yourself?

KYLE: Yeah, on my tod. Just pleasing myself.

OLLIE: Well, you're more than welcome to come and stay at my place - I've got plenty of room. My mother's living with me at the moment, but she's doing my head in - she takes every opportunity to have a pop at me about how well I'm doing compared to her so-called bad luck.

KYLE: Yeah, OK, cheers. I'll take you up on that. One look at my ugly mug and she'll stay out of our way, I reckon.

OLLIE: *(laughing)* That's great. I'll come and pick you up, then. Where are you staying?

KYLE: The Legends Hotel. You know it?

OLLIE: Yeah, I know where it is. Change of plan then - I'll pick you up there around two before we go for that drink at the Amsterdam.

KYLE: Cool. Does that mean I get to ride in your Zenith?

OLLIE: You sure do.

The lights slowly fade to a black-out.

END OF SCENE FIVE, ACT ONE

SCENE SIX

ACT ONE

Day #3, 16:32. When the lights come up, we are back in OLLIE'S office at the De Vere Art Gallery, Brighton. The set, stage right, is exactly the same as we left it at the end of Scene One. The lighting is softer. SEBASTIAN is dressed in jeans and tee-shirt, once more. He sits alone at the desk looking at sketches, when STANTON and FAIRFAX arrive. STANTON wears a navy blue suit, white shirt and blue tie. FAIRFAX is wearing a blue trouser-suit with a cream blouse.

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

SEBASTIAN: *(Looking up as STANTON and FAIRFAX arrive)* Hello. Can I help you?

STANTON: Good afternoon, Sir. We're looking for a Mr Oliver Brooks. We called at his home, but no one answered. But a neighbour told us that he worked here?

SEBASTIAN: Yes, he does, but he isn't here right now. Can I be of any help?

STANTON: Possibly. And you are?

SEBASTIAN: Sebastian Mancini. I am one of the commissioning artists here. Can you tell me what this is all about?

STANTON *(producing ID from his jacket pocket)* I am Detective Inspector Gary Stanton and this is Detective Sergeant Lucy Fairfax. We're from Brighton and Hove Police. I do apologise for not introducing ourselves earlier. Do you know where we might locate Mr Brooks, or when he might return?

SEBASTIAN: Why are you asking after Ollie? Is he in any trouble? Is it to do with that awful business back in the Canaries?

STANTON: No, it's nothing to do with that, but we are aware of what happened over there, of course. But I must ask you again if you know where he is? It is very important, Sir.

SEBASTIAN: I think he said something about taking his car for an urgent service.

FAIRFAX: When did he say that to you, Sir?

SEBASTIAN: Early yesterday evening, just before we closed for the day.

FAIRFAX: And was that the last time you spoke with him?

SEBASTIAN: Yes, as we were leaving he said that he would be late arriving in the morning, as he was going to the garage.

STANTON: Do you know the name of that garage? Or where it's situated?

SEBASTIAN: I believe it's at Burgess Hill. But Alex here will probably know. He looks after Ollie's diary. But Alex isn't in the gallery right now, either. I expect he's at lunch. I've only just got here myself.

STANTON: Alex? And who would he be?

SEBASTIAN: Alex Kramer - he's the gallery manager here.

STANTON: But Mr Brooks owns the gallery?

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

SEBASTIAN: Yes, Ollie's the proprietor.

FAIRFAX: Do you know which make of car Mr Brooks drives, Sir?

SEBASTIAN stands up and sits on the edge of the desk.

SEBASTIAN: Yes. He drives a Zenith. A beast of a thing. Are you here about the car? Has it been stolen or something? It is very valuable.

STANTON looks directly at FAIRFAX.

FAIRFAX: Would you happen to know the Zenith's colour and registration, Sir?

SEBASTIAN: *(agitated)* It's red, but I don't know the registration. Look, what's this all about, Inspector?

STANTON: *(calmly)* I'm very sorry to tell you, Sir, that a red Zenith, registered to Mr Oliver Brooks, was involved in an accident this morning when it spun off the road outside Brighton.

SEBASTIAN: *(shocked)* Good God! An accident? Is Ollie OK? Is he in hospital?

STANTON: I'm afraid we can't be entirely sure whether Mr Brooks was actually driving the Zenith at the time - eye witnesses say that the driver appeared to lose control on the tight bend that skirts the valley below, known as Devil's Dyke. The vehicle then careered down the valley slopes, overturned, exploded and burst into flames at the bottom of the ravine.

SEBASTIAN: *(devastated)* But Ollie managed to get out in time!? Please tell me that he's OK!? Please!?

STANTON: All we can say with any certainty, at the moment, is that it was a young man behind the wheel at the time of the accident. But he did not survive. The ferocity of the explosion makes a facial identification impossible. But we must prepare ourselves for the tragic possibility that it was Oliver driving the vehicle. *(a moment)* We shall, of course, be asking Oliver's mother to provide a DNA sample to assist with the formal identification. I should be grateful if you would not mention any of this to Oliver's mother until such time as we have had the opportunity to inform her officially.

SEBASTIAN: *(stunned)* Yes, of course, Inspector. *(a moment)* I just don't know what to think - Ollie narrowly escapes being murdered two thousand miles away, only to be killed in a freak car accident on his doorstep! How can that be, Inspector?

The curtain falls.

END OF SCENE SIX, ACT ONE

INTERVAL - 20 MINUTES

SCENE ONE

ACT TWO

Day #3, 18:09. At curtain rise we are back in OLLIE'S kitchen at his home in Hove. The set, stage left, is almost as we left it from the previous act. Tea cups and a tea pot sit atop the table. The lighting is softer. The police have arrived to break the dreadful news to VALERIE regarding the accident involving OLLIE'S car. VALERIE wears her plain black dress and cardigan, once again. STANTON and FAIRFAX wear the same clothes, as in the previous scene. KYLE is present, too; he is dressed in jogging bottoms and polo shirt.

FAIRFAX sits at the kitchen table with VALERIE and comforts her.

STANTON: *(standing)* I'm sorry to have to ask you these questions at a time like this, Mrs Brooks.

VALERIE: *(dispassionate)* You have your job to do, Inspector.

STANTON: Can you tell us when you last saw Oliver, your son?

VALERIE: *(softly)* This morning. After breakfast. About seven-thirty. Oliver said something about getting his car serviced.

STANTON: Did he mention the name of the garage?

VALERIE: No he didn't, Inspector. But I didn't think it was that local.

FAIRFAX: And did you see him drive off in it? In the Zenith, I mean?

VALERIE: No, but I heard it from my bedroom. It's a noisy contrivance.

STANTON: *(addressing KYLE)* And you, Sir, are you a member of Mr Brooks' family?

VALERIE: *(angrily)* He is most certainly not!

KYLE: *(cheerfully)* Nah, I'm Kyle Jacobs - just a friend - staying here on holiday.

STANTON: I see. And when did you last see and talk with Mr Brooks?

KYLE: It must have been last night. Yeah, I was watching TV when he went up to bed.

FAIRFAX: *(puzzled)* And you didn't see him this morning?

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

KYLE: Nah. I went out for a run along the prom before Ollie was up. But his Zenith was still on the drive when I left.

FAIRFAX: And what time would that have been?

KYLE: What, when I went for my run?

FAIRFAX: *(impatient)* Yes.

KYLE: I dunno precisely. About seven I reckon.

STANTON: Did Mr Brooks tell you, too, that he was taking his car for a service?

KYLE: Nah, not exactly. He told me it needed a service. He even asked me if I could do it.

FAIRFAX: *(puzzled)* And why would he have asked you to service it? I don't understand?

KYLE: He was only joking - because I'm a mechanic in the Army - I get to look after the regiment's vehicles.

STANTON: I see. So how long have you known Mr Brooks, Sir?

KYLE: Not that long. About six months. I met him on holiday in the Canaries.

STANTON: *(surprised)* So you must be aware of all that unpleasant business that happened to Mr Brooks and his friend, while they were over there last year?

KYLE: Yeah, but it had all kicked off after I'd flown home. I only found out from the telly and the papers what had really happened. *(a moment)* You reckon it might be connected to Ollie's car accident?

STANTON: It's a possibility. But we have to consider everything.

KYLE: *(pensive)* So you reckon it might not have been a terrible accident, after all?

[CUE SOUND EFFECT] Front door closing.

The group look towards stage right as OLLIE makes a miraculous appearance. There are collective gasps, followed by stunned silence. All eyes are locked on OLLIE.

OLLIE: *(taken aback)* Why is everybody staring at me? *(looking at the POLICE)* And who are these people?

KYLE: *(shocked)* Ollie! What the f...!

VALERIE: *(trembling)* Oliver! Where have you been? The police are here....

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

- STANTON:** *(bewildered)* Mr Brooks? Are you Oliver Brooks?
- KYLE:** *(grabbing him)* Ollie mate, we thought you was fucking dead!
- OLLIE:** *(angry)* **Dead!** Will someone please tell me what's going on!?
- VALERIE:** Oliver, *(attempting to hug him)* the police said you'd been killed...
- OLLIE:** *(pushing her away)* Killed? You wish. What nonsense are you spouting now, mother?
- STANTON:** *(with authority)* Mr Brooks, I am Detective Inspector Gary Stanton from Brighton and Hove Police. *(pointing at FAIRFAX)* And this is my colleague, Detective Sergeant Lucy Fairfax.
- OLLIE:** *(not impressed)* So? Why are you here filling my mother's head with false hopes about my death? Will somebody please tell me what's going on?
- STANTON:** *(confused)* Mr Brooks, this will come as a terrible shock to you - a red Zenith car, registered to you, was involved in a dreadful accident at Devil's Dyke, outside Brighton this morning...
- OLLIE:** *(stunned)* My Zenith? At Devil's Dyke? The beauty spot? I don't understand...
- STANTON:** *(patiently)* Yes, it seems that the driver lost control of the vehicle, which spun off the road and burst into flames at the bottom of the ravine.
- FAIRFAX:** And we assumed that you were behind the wheel at the time?
- STANTON:** We were led to believe that you were taking the car for its service?
- OLLIE:** *(shaking his head in disbelief)* Service? Yes. Alex. Is Alex OK? Please tell me he got out the car. He did, didn't he?
- STANTON:** *(puzzled)* Alex?
- OLLIE:** *(impatiently)* Yes. Alex. Alex Kramer. My manager at the gallery. I'd asked him to take the Zenith back to the dealership for its service!
- FAIRFAX:** *(alarmed)* And why was that, Sir?
- OLLIE:** *(dazed)* It was a last minute decision - I had an appointment in London this morning with my lawyer, which I'd almost forgotten about. So I phoned Alex last night and asked him if he wouldn't mind taking my Zenith for its service instead. *(softly)* He's always wanted to drive it...
- STANTON:** And I presume Mr Kramer picked up the Zenith from here this morning?

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

- OLLIE:** *(recollecting)* Yes, at about eight-fifteen. He had a cup of coffee, we swapped cars and then he left. I've been driving his Audi today. *(worried)* But you still haven't told me how Alex is? Is he in hospital? Can I go and see him?
- STANTON:** *(with dignity)* I'm afraid Mr Kramer died in the accident, Sir. The car burst into flames and we had been unable to identify who was driving it, until you explained Mr Kramer's involvement.
- OLLIE:** *(dumbstruck)* Oh my God! *(a moment)* That explains why I've been unable to contact Alex all day - he's not been returning my calls. *(a moment)* What am I gonna say to his parents? What do I tell them?
- STANTON:** *(comforting)* We shall, of course, be breaking the tragic news to them. And we shall be offering them counselling. We have trained specialists to give them all the support they require. And we offer this service to you, too - it has been a traumatic experience for you, after all.
- OLLIE:** *(nodding in agreement)* It sure has...
- KYLE:** *(hugging OLLIE)* Don't you worry yourself, buddy. I'll look out for you...
- VALERIE:** *(with disgust)* I bet you will....
- OLLIE:** *(glaring at VALERIE)* Haven't you got any bags to pack, mother?
- VALERIE leaves the room in a huff, muttering under her breath incoherently.*
- There is an awkward momentary silence.*
- FAIRFAX:** *(addressing OLLIE)* Would you mind confirming exactly who knew about your intention to take your car for its service today?
- OLLIE:** Well, Alex, of course, my mother, and Sebastian.
- STANTON:** Sebastian Mancini at your gallery? *(OLLIE nods in agreement)* Yes, he was aware. We spoke to him earlier.
- FAIRFAX:** *(looking at KYLE)* And was Mr Jacobs aware of it, too?
- KYLE:** *(angrily and moving towards FAIRFAX)* What are you fucking suggesting? That I had something to do with the accident....
- OLLIE:** *(restraining KYLE)* No. I never had an opportunity to mention it to Kyle. He'd gone out for his run before I'd come down for breakfast.

REQUIEM FOR MURDER by Stan Thompson

STANTON: Well, I think that's everything for the time being. We shall require you all to make formal statements. Perhaps you could call into the police station tomorrow? Say around noon?

OLLIE: Yes, of course. *(a moment)* Have your people had a chance to examine what's left of my Zenith, inspector? Were there any mechanical problems with it, I wonder?

STANTON: It's too early to say. We haven't yet been able to recover the wreckage from the ravine. It will be a while before our SOCO boys come up with any forensic evidence. But we shall keep you informed - I'm sure your insurance company will be wanting our formal report.

OLLIE: Thank you, Inspector. *(a moment)* May I ask you about Alex? You said you couldn't identify the driver? Was he badly.....

STANTON: *(interrupting)* He didn't perish completely, but enough to make a facial identification impossible. And we have yet to find any ID or mobile phone at the crash site.

There is an another awkward momentary silence.

(trying to lighten the mood) Have you ever wondered, Sir, how much like the proverbial cat with nine lives you're becoming?

OLLIE: Tell me about it - and I've lost two of them already!

The lights slowly fade to a black-out.

END OF SCENE ONE, ACT TWO