

**Requiem for a Friend**

The body lay against the dressing table where it had fallen, head hanging at an unnatural angle. I knelt and went through his pockets; they told me nothing. I bent and grabbed the collar with my good arm, gritted and heaved and wedged the dead weight inside the wardrobe, locking the door. I leant back chest heaving, face clammy, greedy for air, then stumbled into the bathroom and dry retched, again and again. It's the same every time. When the finger squeezes death at two hundred yards it's one thing; when you feel that sickly snap as the neck gives in your hands and you smell his breath and taste his fear, you die a little with him. Berlin had gone wrong and I had left Jimmy Daniels hanging on the wire, and they had come for me in London. I gulped water straight from the tap, and doused my face and hands. They had stopped shaking, but the mirror haunted me with images from the past; ghosts that I couldn't run from anymore. I pulled on the Crombie and hung the "Do Not Disturb" request and went downstairs. The receptionist was thumbing a magazine, glancing at the clock from time to time. She pushed it aside when I approached.

"Have they cut the meters?"

"I... I, don't understand."

I pointed.

"Your coat?"

"Oh, I see what you mean. I'm due off but Julia..she's- you know- never on time, and my boyfriend will begin to wonder...."

"He'll wait. "

"Do you think so?"

"He will if he's got any sense."

She flushed, and smiled like the girl I used to know next door; like the one I'd left behind.

"Oh ...Mr. Lennox, did your visitor find you? "

“Yes, it was quite a surprise.”

“He said he was an old friend of yours, said he didn’t mind waiting so I sent him up.”

I returned her smile.

“We had quite a re-union. He’ll be staying the night, but he won’t need room service.”

I blew her a kiss and left and briefly felt human again.

I needed somewhere to think so I hailed a taxi and it dropped me at an all-night cafe on the corner of the Commercial Road. It exuded a steamy welcome and I took a corner seat.

### WEASEL WORDS REMOVED

The body lay against the dressing table ~~where it had fallen~~, head ~~hanging~~ at an unnatural angle. I knelt ~~and~~ went through his pockets; ~~they told me~~ nothing. ~~I bent and grabbed the collar~~ With my good arm, ~~gritted and~~ I heaved and wedged the dead weight inside the wardrobe, ~~locking~~ ed the door and ~~I leant back chest heaving, face clammy~~, greedy for air, ~~then~~ stumbled into the bathroom and ~~dry~~ retched, again and again. It’s the same every time. ~~When~~ the finger squeezes death at two hundred yards ~~it’s is one thing; but~~ when you feel that sickly snap as the neck gives in your hands and you smell his breath and taste his fear, you die a little with him. Berlin had gone wrong and I had left Jimmy Daniels hanging on the wire, and they had come for me in London.

### WEASEL WORDS REMOVED + SHORT SENTENCES REORDERING FOR MORE POWER AND TO KEEP EMOTION HIGH

The body lay against the dressing table head at an unnatural angle. I knelt, went through his pockets; nothing. With my good arm, I heaved and wedged the dead weight inside the wardrobe, locked the door and, greedy for air, stumbled into the bathroom and retched, again and again. It’s the same every time. The finger squeezes death at two hundred yards; but when ~~you feel that sickly snap as~~ the neck gives in your hands and you smell ~~his breath and taste~~ his fear, you die a little with him.

### PARA MAKES THE POINT HANG

Berlin had gone wrong ~~and~~ I had left Jimmy Daniels hanging on the wire, and they had come for me in London. I gulped water straight from the tap, and doused my face ~~and~~ ~~hands~~. ~~The hands~~ had stopped shaking, but ~~in~~ the mirror ghosts of dead men ~~that~~ I

couldn't run from anymore- haunted me .~~with images from the past~~. (REORDERING FOR MORE POWERFUL IMAGERY)

I pulled on the Crombie ~~and~~ hung the "Do Not Disturb" request and went downstairs. (LAWS OF THREE EXAMPLE). As I passed the receptionist, she was thumbing a magazine, ~~glancing at the clock from time to time~~. (NOT NECESSARY TO THE ACTION INTERRUPTS LINK between magazine and next sentence) She pushed it aside when I approached.

I asked, "Have they cut the meters?" (Must use I said etc so we know immediately who is talking)

She said, "I... I, don't understand."

I pointed to her coat

~~"Your coat?"~~ (This interrupts the flow as the reader tries to work out what the writer is trying to say)

She said, "Oh, I see what you mean. I'm due off but my relief (again without this addition we stop reading trying to work out what the writer is on about) Julia, she's you know never on time, and my boyfriend will begin to wonder...."

"He'll wait. "

"Do you think so?"

"He will if he's got any sense."

She flushed, and smiled like the girl I used to know next door; like the one I'd left behind.

She caught her breath (reminding us who is speaking and setting up the next action), "Oh ...Mr. Lennox, did your visitor find you? "

"Yes, it was quite a surprise."

"He said he was an old friend of yours, said he didn't mind waiting so I sent him up."

I returned her smile.

"We had quite a re-union. He'll be staying the night, but he won't need room service."

I blew her a kiss and left and ~~briefly~~ ( no emotion in this word better try =)for a moment

I felt human again.