



*A job to pass on*

*Marco Ciaramella*

## CAST:

**Piers:** Shoemaker

**Verity:** Piers' wife

**Virgil:** Piers and Verity's son

**Vince:** Gangster

**Farley:** Grocer

**Vera:** Greengrocer

**Emmanuel:** Friend of Virgil

**Jeremy:** Police constable

**Esmond:** Police constable

**Viola:** Travel agency owner

**Gus:** Gangster's henchman

**Leo:** Gangster's henchman

**Lord Howard:** Shoemaker's shop customer



## FIRST ACT

*The scene takes place in a shoemaker's shop.*

**Piers:** *(Sitting at his work table, he turns to his wife)* Can you glue the price tags I prepared under the soles of these shoes?

**Verity:** Are these ready?

**Piers:** Of course!

**Verity:** I often wonder why you preferred to work for many years in a factory and not devote yourself to this activity full time.

**Piers:** I first wanted to secure my old-age pension.

**Verity:** With the customers you have, you could also do it with this job. Anyway, now that they gave it to you, why do you spend all your time being a shoemaker? After all, we lack nothing.

**Piers:** A few extra bucks can be useful.

**Verity:** I know well that the reason is another. You have never given too much importance to money and your pension would be enough for our standard of living.

**Piers:** Are you done with the price tags?

**Verity:** Don't change the subject, I know why you do it.

**Piers:** So why are you asking me?

**Verity:** Because I want to convince you to stop working. It is useless for you to do it, he doesn't like this job.

**Piers:** Things could change.

**Verity:** Sooner or later you will have to wake up and realize that your dream will never come true.

**Piers:** I don't give up so easily, so I'm not going to close my shop for now, after all, how much does it cost me?

**Verity:** Maybe it costs you nothing, but not having you at home weighs a lot to me.

**Piers:** If you come here, like you did today, we can be together anyway.

**Verity:** But now we are old...

**Piers:** We're not decrepit. From the way you talk, it looks like we have one foot in the grave!

**Verity:** Please Piers, forget this shop! Life is short and it is only one, we aren't granted a return bonus.

**Piers:** You know that I come from generations of shoemakers and I would love to pass on the secrets of this craft to our son as my grandfather did with my father and he with me.

**Verity:** It will mean that tradition will stop with you. It does not seem to me that it is such a terrible thing!

**Piers:** If people all reasoned in this way, handicrafts would disappear completely. And also, the world is falling apart. Having a job opportunity like this could help him in the future.

**Verity:** It will mean that he will do something else.

**Piers:** It isn't like in our times! There aren't many job opportunities right now.

**Verity:** Wake up once and for all! Virgil is not completely normal and will never be able to do with those tools what you can do.

**Piers:** I refuse to listen to this nonsense. Don't you dare say that our son isn't...

**Verity:** It isn't a disgrace to have a son a little...

**Piers:** What do you mean?

**Verity:** Forget it! It is useless to talk about it since you refuse to face reality.

**Piers:** His school performance is good.

**Verity:** So why is everyone making fun of him?

**Piers:** Don't generalize! Only the usual bad boys do it, like those, who harassed the weakest boys in our time.

**Verity:** Do you see that I am right? Ever since the beginning of the world, these bullies' favorite targets are boys who are physically or psychologically more fragile.

**Piers:** The fact that he don't coordinate his hands perfectly is a problem that will sooner or later be solved.

**Verity:** We have consulted many doctors and tried many therapies but the result has always been unsuccessful.

**Piers:** But we haven't asked Tony Evans for help yet.

**Verity:** Do you really want to consult that faith healer? But who puts this nonsense in your head?

**Piers:** My mother spoke so highly of him! And then what do we have to lose?

*A customer enters the shop and the two spouses interrupt the discussion.*

**Vince:** Hello, are my shoes ready?

**Piers:** Good morning Mr. Ferrante! Of course they are ready, as promised.

**Vince:** Very well! I absolutely need them. I have to go on an important appointment and these are perfect with the suit I'm going to wear.

**Verity:** You are right, these shoes are very elegant. Mr. Williams, the undertaker, also recommends them to all his clients.

**Vince:** *(Annoyed)* Are you talking to me?

**Verity:** *(Realizing she made a gaffe)* Yes, but I didn't mean...

**Vince:** *(More and more annoyed)* I assure you that I understand perfectly well what you meant.

**Verity:** Maybe I expressed myself badly, sorry, it was just a way of saying that they are very beautiful shoes and recommended to everyone.

**Piers:** *(To play down)* Especially to customers who can't complain. Joking aside, these are the best shoes around.

**Verity:** I meant just like that.

**Vince:** Don't add anything else, you have already said enough!

**Verity:** Would you like a bag to take them away?

**Vince:** What a question! I can't walk around with shoes in my hand.

**Piers:** *(Intervenes with a joke)* Of course he wants it! I think that with two pairs of shoes on each foot he walks a little badly.

**Verity:** Seeing that he was holding another bag, I didn't know if he wanted to use that one.

**Piers:** *(Starting to get annoyed too)* Evidently he needs that one, so take another one and give the shoes to Mr. Ferrante. It seems to me that he is in a hurry, so don't waste him any more time!

**Verity:** Sure! In fact, I give him two, in case one breaks.

*The man takes only one bag and, ignoring the woman who is handing him the second one, turns to Piers to commission him to repair the pair of shoes that are in the bag Verity alluded to.*

**Vince:** Here's another pair of shoes, but I'd like it to be repaired in exactly a month.

**Piers:** Okay, no problem!

*Verity attempts to pull the shoes out of the bag to show her husband so he can see what work they need.*

**Vince:** Not right now! Otherwise they will get dusty. Only when he repairs them, you can pull them out, until then they have to stay inside the bag.

**Piers:** As you like! In fact, I'll put them in the locker, so we're even more sure they won't get dusty. But tell me what they need.

**Vince:** They have to be soled. In exactly one month and three days from today, I'll send someone to pick them up.

**Piers:** Can I at least put a reminder in the bag about what to do?

**Vince:** Yes, you can.

**Piers:** *(After taking note of the required work on a sheet of paper, he places it in the bag he hands to his wife)* Put them gently in the locker and make sure they are far from the others.

**Verity:** Don't worry! I will do as you say.

**Vince:** Very well! And now tell me how much I owe you for these. *(Pointing to the shoes repaired)*

**Piers:** You can pay me next time.

**Vince:** No, I like to pay my debts right away.

**Piers:** In this case it is twenty pounds for the soles and fifteen for the heels, for a total of thirty-five pounds.

**Vince:** *(Paying with two twenty-pound pieces)* Take these.

**Piers:** Verity, give Mr. Ferrante back his change.

**Vince:** Forget it, have a cup of coffee with the rest.

**Piers:** Thanks so much!

**Vince:** *(After taking the bag with the repaired shoes, turning to Piers)* Goodbye! And remember: one month and three days starting today.

**Verity:** Goodbye Mr. Ferrante! *(Who, not deigning an answer, he hurries out)*

**Piers:** Next time, you'd better to proceed with great caution with that man.

**Verity:** I would like to piss on those shoes!

**Piers:** I know you're angry, but we need to be patient with customers, even the slightly odd ones.

**Verity:** That's not odd, he's a fucking chauvinist.

**Piers:** Don't be upset about this nonsense!

**Verity:** I hate those who consider women inferior. Have you seen? He just wanted to talk to you.

**Piers:** Maybe just because he doesn't like you.

**Verity:** And do you know why? Because I'm a woman.

**Piers:** After all he is a good person, he even left us a tip.

**Verity:** Do you know for me where he could put his five pounds?

**Piers:** I can imagine!

**Verity:** *(Repeating, with sarcasm, the sentence pronounced by the customer)* In exactly one month and three days I'll send someone to pick them up. Do you know where I would have gladly sent him and without waiting so long?

**Piers:** I remind you that the customer is always right!

**Verity:** Not these people's worth eating your heart out. Throw in the sponge and let's enjoy our old age.

*Farley enters the scene.*

**Piers:** *(Seeing Farley enter the shop with the air of someone who has just played a joke)* Speaking of weird people, here's another one.

*Farley, as soon as he enters, pokes his head out the door of the shop to check something. Then he turns to the two.*

**Farley:** Shut up, let's see what she does! *(Looking out again)*

**Verity:** Who are you referring to?

**Farley:** I refer to Vera. I hid her tomatoes and green beans and now she's going crazy to find them.

**Verity:** You are just incorrigible! You're always playing jokes on that poor woman.

**Farley:** I can't resist the temptation.

**Vera (off stage):** *(Screaming desperately)* Farley, where did you put them this time?

**Farley:** *(Laughing, turning to Piers)* Where can I hide? You will see that soon we see her appear.

**Vera (off stage):** You are a scoundrel! You'll make me lose all customers.

**Farley:** *(Laughing more and more heartily)* The other day I moved all the fruit cases around the corner, it seemed she had moved the shop to the middle of the street.

**Verity:** Your jokes seem a little exaggerated to me.

**Farley:** This is a trifle compared to the one last month when I put a padlock on her bathroom bolt. How fun it was! She jumped like a grasshopper.

**Piers:** And how did it end?

**Farley:** She wet herself clothes.

**Verity:** That was really nasty of you.

**Farley:** *(Suddenly becoming serious)* But don't you understand? That way I forced her to change her clothes. You don't know how many times I have repeated to her that in order to be in contact with the public she have to present yourself in a certain way and instead what does she do? She keeps wearing those dirty old aprons.

**Verity:** *(Who, in the meantime, is on the look-out at the door)* Oh my God, she's coming! What do we do now?

**Piers:** We go to the other room leaving him to face the consequences of his actions.

**Farley:** Where can I hide?

**Verity:** Where do you want. We don't want to know it. *(Then she leaves the scene with her husband)*

*Farley hides under Piers' work table. Vera enters the scene with a carpet beater in hand.*

**Vera:** Where are you coward? I know you're hiding here. Go out!

**Farley:** *(Taking a leap from under the table)* Bow-wow!

**Vera:** As soon as I catch you I make you feel this on your ass so many times that the desire to play stupid jokes will pass to you.

**Farley:** *(To avoid being caught by the woman, he walks around the table)* Come on, I was just playing!

**Vera:** Ugly son of a poisoned viper, what jokes are these?!

**Farley:** I would say it is an innocent joke.

**Vera:** But you're not, so I swear I'll kill you.

**Farley:** Take it easy! At your age it's dangerous, heart attacks are around the corner...

**Vera:** If you don't stop with your damn jokes, I'll lose all the customers.

**Farley:** You've been retired for years now, why don't you sell that hovel and enjoy old age?

**Vera:** This is my business.

**Farley:** I'm telling you for your own good. Leave everything and start a new life! You will realize that it is not so bad not to have the obligation to get up at five AM anymore.

**Vera:** Then what do I do all day?



**Farley:** Do the words: trips, leisure, travels, friendships mean anything to you?

**Vera:** I have never traveled in my life and, in your opinion, do I start now at this age?

**Farley:** Why not? Come on, take the plunge!

**Vera:** Where should I take the plunge? In the Thames?

**Farley:** Then you will have to continue to suffer.

**Vera:** If you get closer to my shop once more, I'll throw tomatoes in your head!

**Farley:** It will mean that I will wear the crash-helmet.

**Vera:** And I'll puncture the tires of your motorbike.

**Farley:** Come on, let's bury the hatchet! I promise you that I will leave you alone for a while.

**Vera:** How long?

**Farley:** Could a month be okay?

**Vera:** Let's do two.

**Farley:** A month and a half, I can't resist more.

**Vera:** How stupid you are! You have fun with just a little!

**Farley:** I hear voices coming from your shop, maybe you have customers. You should go and see!

**Vera:** I'm going. Anyway, I'll keep an eye on you. *(And she leaves the scene)*

**Farley:** *(After approaching the door to call Piers and Verity)* You can go inside, Vera just left.

*Piers and Verity enters the scene.*

**Verity:** We have heard everything, now leave her alone.

**Farley:** I promise! I'll start playing jokes on her again in a month.

**Piers:** *(Looking at his watch)* Virgil will return from school shortly and we still have to fix some things here before going home.

**Farley:** I too have to close the grocer's. See you later!

**Verity:** Bye!

*Virgil and Emmanuel enter the scene.*

**Virgil:** *(Worried)* Hi dad, hi mom!

**Verity:** *(Immediately noticing his son's upset)* Virgil, are you okay?

**Virgil:** *(Trying to change the subject)* Why are you still here? It is quite late.

**Piers:** We are waiting for a customer to deliver the shoes to him.

**Virgil:** We'll see to it, you go home.

**Verity:** Honey, aren't you coming to lunch?

**Virgil:** I ate a hamburger at McDonald's, so I'm full.

**Piers:** *(Handing him the client's shoes)* These are the shoes Lord Howard must come and pick up.

**Virgil:** And what is the cost of the repair?

**Piers:** You should know that the prices are attached under the soles. *(Slightly annoyed)*

**Virgil:** You're right dad! I'm sorry.

**Verity:** You don't have to apologize. Your father gets mad just to make you learn the craft.

**Virgil:** I don't want to be a shoemaker, I'm studying to do something else.

**Verity:** *(Turning to her husband)* Do you see that he isn't interested in doing this job?

**Piers:** Are you sure you don't want to take advantage of this opportunity?

**Virgil:** I'm absolutely sure!

**Piers:** Okay, maybe it's better if we set the subject aside for now and you introduce us your friend..

**Virgil:** I do it right away. He is Emmanuel.

**Emmanuel:** *(Holding out his hand to Piers and then to Verity)* Nice to meet you!

**Piers:** Would you like to learn how to repair shoes?

**Emmanuel:** You catch me unawares. I honestly never thought about it, but why are you asking me?

**Verity:** Now do you want to convince him to be a shoemaker?

**Piers:** Why not? He seems like a smart boy to me.

**Verity:** It is you who are not! You have to abandon all hope of pass on this job, and that's it!

**Piers:** Wait up! I have an idea.

**Verity:** Let's listen this brilliant idea!

**Piers:** You could carry on this business together. I would leave it to you for free.

**Verity:** It's not enough to just leave it, they must first learn the job.

**Piers:** I am available to teach them all the secrets.

**Virgil:** Dad would be nice to do this together, but you know I can't do a manual work. *(Showing hands)*

**Piers:** It is precisely for this reason that we must also involve him. You could divide the tasks. He would do those that require more manual skills. To begin with, I could give you the first little lesson. Lift your foot and let me see the soles of your shoes, so I tell you what there is to do. *(The boy shows the sole of the shoe but Verity intervenes at that moment)*

**Verity:** Get it over with! Don't you understand that their working life is directed elsewhere? Come on, you broke their balls enough. *(Then she takes him by the arm and drags him out)*

**Emmanuel:** I think your father really wants to entrust us his shop.

**Virgil:** I know. He suffers a lot to know that the family business will die with him, but if he only imagined how many problems I have, he would not insist on this story.

**Emmanuel:** In my opinion, the time has come to tell him about it.

**Virgil:** He knows I'm being bullied, but he has no idea how bad the situation is.

**Emmanuel:** Why don't you tell him everything?

**Virgil:** I don't want to give him this pain too.

**Emmanuel:** I remind you that if we don't pay, that bastard from the threats will pass to the facts. If your father found out the truth from those photos, don't you think he would suffer more? You absolutely have to tell him.

**Virgil:** He thinks that the harassing behaviors towards me are due to my motor disability, he absolutely does not imagine that it is because of my sexual orientation.

**Emmanuel:** I told my parents, do it too!

**Virgil:** The time has not come yet, I'm sure they wouldn't stand the blow.

**Emmanuel:** So what do we do?

**Virgil:** We have to take advantage of the fact that he sees us as two sissies and act like real men.

**Emmanuel:** What would you like to do? Do you want punch him? I don't think you have a very powerful punch.

**Virgil:** It is true, but I still don't want to give in to his dirty blackmail.

**Emmanuel:** In words you are a force of nature, but with the facts I don't think you can be the same.

**Virgil:** Haven't you understood what I have in mind yet?

**Emmanuel:** The good one at school are you, so... explain yourself better.

**Virgil:** It's simple: we kill him.

**Emmanuel:** Are you crazy?

**Virgil:** We get rid of him before he can deliver those compromising photos to my parents.

**Emmanuel:** Maybe I heard wrong, but, if I'm not mistaken, you used the plural.

**Virgil:** (*Showing hands*) Don't you think I'd have a hard time stabbing him?

**Emmanuel:** So should I do it me?

**Virgil:** Do you love me or not?

**Emmanuel:** My love for you is certainly not in question, but I don't want to go to jail.

**Virgil:** I assure you this will not happen. I have a hard time moving my hands, but my brain is working properly.

**Emmanuel:** In summary, you're asking me to kill that thug so your parents don't find out the truth. And we should also wait a few years before we can say we are a couple.

**Virgil:** More or less yes.

**Emmanuel:** Then kill him yourself. I don't want to have this crime on my conscience and risk jail to hide something my parents already know.

**Virgil:** Are you telling me you want to end our relationship?

**Emmanuel:** This is a blackmail.

**Virgil:** Call it what you want! I can't let that scoundrel hurt my family.

**Emmanuel:** At least give me time to think about it.

**Virgil:** Unfortunately I can't give you much time, I remind you that the ultimatum expires in a few days.

**Emmanuel:** Basically, it just has to be done.

**Virgil:** Yes, today. Do you accept or not?

**Emmanuel:** I already know that I will regret it, but I will help you in this crazy plan.

**Virgil:** Don't be so scrupulous! There will be one less thug on the face of the earth. Come over there with me, so I'll explain what you'll have to do when we go to the appointment.

*Emmanuel and Virgil move into the back room, in the meantime Farley enters the scene with a stealthy air, holding a bag.*

**Farley:** There is nobody. Anyway, better hide here, when Vera realizes the joke I've done to her, she'll come in like a fury.

*Farley, unlike the previous time, in which he hid under Piers' work table, chooses a safer and less uncomfortable place. After a few minutes he hears someone enter the shop.*

**Lord Howard:** May I? I'm Lord Howard...

**Virgil (off stage):** We arrive immediately.

**Lord Howard:** Thanks, then I'll wait.

*Farley blows a raspberry from his hiding place and Lord Howard starts looking around.*

**Lord Howard:** Who did it?

*Virgil enters the scene.*

**Virgil:** Did you say something?

**Lord Howard:** I heard a strange noise and I asked who was responsible.

**Virgil:** Apart from us, there is nobody else in this room.

**Lord Howard:** Then I was wrong.

**Virgil:** These should be your shoes. Check yourself too.

**Lord Howard:** *(After looking at shoes)* They are mine. Your father is a true artist. I hope he never quits this business, it would be a real shame!

*Emmanuel enters the scene.*

**Emmanuel:** Sorry Virgil, I thought you were done.

*Farley, as Emmanuel closes the door, blows another raspberry.*

**Lord Howard:** Have you heard now too?

**Virgil:** Yes. *(Then approaching the door)* Maybe that noise is due to these old hinges, every time someone opens and closes the door.

**Lord Howard:** It is probable. So how much do I spend?

**Virgil:** Thirty pounds.

**Lord Howard:** *(After paying the requested money)* Don't forget to thank your father for the excellent job he has done.



**Virgil:** I will definitely do it.

*Vera comes running on the stage.*

**Vera:** (*Worried*) Lord Howard, aren't you coming to buy fruit today?

*As Vera closes the front door, Farley blows another raspberry.*

**Lord Howard:** I advise you that you lubricate the hinges of these doors.

**Virgil:** In fact they all started creaking.

**Vera:** If I hadn't seen him walk into his shop, I'd think it's Farley's fault. So Lord Howard, will you come?

**Lord Howard:** Don't be offended, but your prices are not competitive.

**Vera:** It isn't possible. I have the cheapest merchandise in the whole city.

**Lord Howard:** Some products are completely out of price.

**Vera:** Son of a mangy dog, he said he'd wait a month!

**Lord Howard:** How dare you? I am offended, no one has ever promised you anything and I remind you that I am free to go where and when I want to buy fruit.

**Vera:** I wasn't talking to you, I was talking about the person changed the price tags.

**Lord Howard:** And who would be responsible for this?

**Vera:** Someone who has little left to live! (*And the two leave the scene*)

**Virgil:** Now we can go. (*Virgil and Emmanuel leave the scene*)

*Farley comes out of hiding.*

**Farley:** This time she got very angry with me. It's better to change target. I'll play a joke on Piers. (*Seeing the bag in the locker, he open it*) These are perfect to hide in my shop. (*Then he takes Vince's shoes, fills the bag that contained them with something else so that Piers cannot immediately notice the removal and puts them in the bag he had with him when he arrived*)

*Piers enters the scene.*

**Piers:** Hi Farley! Are you hiding from Vera again?

**Farley:** Not just from her.

**Piers:** Aren't you tired of getting all the traders on this street angry with your pranks? Who are you running from now?

**Farley:** It would be complicated to explain.

**Piers:** Then forget it. Also because I don't like jokes.

**Farley:** Honestly I don't like them either. *(After a few seconds)* I'm kidding.

**Piers:** For you it is a real disease!

**Farley:** Is this true and do you know what the cure is?

**Piers:** Tell me, what is it?

**Farley:** To do many jokes to get rid of the desire.

**Piers:** How could I expect an intelligent answer from you?

**Farley:** Come on, forget it! Now I'm going to fix these things in my shop before the reopening. *(Thus justifying having that bag with him)* For any need you can find me there. Bye, bye!

**Piers:** Fortunately, I'm never the target of his jokes! Because that wag is as shrewd as the devil.

## SECOND ACT

*Same scenography as the first act.*

*On stage there is Piers intent on working. The shop door opens and Viola enters.*

**Viola:** Hello Piers! Where is Verity?

**Piers:** She will come in moments. Why did you want her?

**Viola:** Women's things.

*In that moment Verity enters the scene.*

**Verity:** Hi Viola! Were you waiting for me?

**Viola:** Yes.

**Piers:** *(Realizing from the attitude of the two women that he is one too in many)* I go to the bar to have a coffee.

**Viola:** Bye.

**Verity:** What did you find for me?

**Viola:** How about a nice tour in Mexico and Guatemala?

**Verity:** I like it!

**Viola:** You will surely like the tour, the price, perhaps, a little less. *(Showing her the cost estimate)*

**Verity:** That's a bunch of the money!

**Viola:** I know it's not very cheap...

**Verity:** You recommend it to me?

**Viola:** I am the owner of the travel agency, so what should I answer you, in your opinion?

**Verity:** It is true, but you are also my best friend.

**Viola:** Let's put it this way: would spending this amount reduce you to poverty?

**Verity:** Absolutely not.

**Viola:** So if you don't want the coffin with the pockets, you've answered yourself.

**Verity:** I know that once we die, we don't carry money with us. But I have a son who can inherit it.

**Viola:** And do you think that figure could change his future?

**Verity:** Message received. Go for a Portuguese update.

**Viola:** In those places they speak Spanish.

**Verity:** That's okay too.

**Viola:** So is it decided?

**Verity:** Yes, book this tour. If I think about it too much, I could change my mind. I don't deny that the only concern is air travel. Sometimes the planes crash and in that case there is little hope of survival.

**Viola:** I think our fate is already written. So when the time comes to say goodbye to everyone even if we are at home we will not be able to escape death.

**Verity:** You're right, think about that poor boy!

**Viola:** Are you referring to the one who was stabbed?

**Verity:** Exactly!

**Viola:** I've heard about it.

**Verity:** I read the news in the newspaper, it seems that fifty-five stab wounds were inflicted on that boy.

**Viola:** The killer probably wanted to make sure his victim died.

**Verity:** But how is it possible to be so cruel?

**Viola:** There are still no people suspected of the murder and it is not yet known what the motive was, although that type of ferocity is often attributable to a crime of passion. If I'm not mistaken, the boy was attending your son's school, what does he think?

**Verity:** I didn't talk to him about that, when he left the house this morning I didn't know the news yet. Do you think he knew him?

**Viola:** At school, more or less, they all know each other, so I think so.

**Verity:** As soon as he comes back I'll ask him.

**Viola:** The crime seems to have taken place on the outskirts of the city.

**Verity:** And nobody saw anything?

**Viola:** The area where the crime took place is a rather isolated.

**Verity:** Luckily you only heard something, you know more than the TV reporter!

**Viola:** With my work I meet many people and I hear a lot of rumors.

**Verity:** Dying at that age and in such a bloody way is really sad!

**Viola:** The murder seems to have taken place around midnight.

**Verity:** But was it you who wrote the article I read?

**Viola:** What are you saying?! I only heard backstairs gossip.

**Verity:** From how many details you know about the affair, if I didn't know you, I would say that you killed that poor fellow!

**Viola:** Stop teasing me! And tell me when I can come and give you the documents to sign.

**Verity:** Come when you want. If I'm not here at the shop, tell Piers to call me and I'll join you right away. I recommend, however, not to tell him about the tour, because I want to make him a surprise.

**Viola:** I will be as silent as a grave!

**Verity:** Thank you, you are a friend... a little expensive (*Alluding to the price of the tour*), but still a friend!

**Viola:** In fact, I gave you the discount, otherwise you would have had to leave me the keys to the shop directly to pay the bill! (*Leaving the scene laughing*)

**Verity:** *(Left alone)* How long does Piers take to drink this coffee? Let's go and see if he went straight to Brazil to drink it. *(And she leaves the scene)*

*Virgil and Emmanuel enters the scene.*

**Virgil:** Stop crying and dry your eyes! Fortunately, there is no one, otherwise what excuse would we have invented to justify your behavior? You do things first and then regret it, it's not a man's behavior.

**Emmanuel:** I remind you that I risk many years' imprisonment for what I did.

**Virgil:** You aren't the only culprit, so we will divide the blame equally.

**Emmanuel:** It will mean that we will ask the judge to inflict half the sentence each.

**Virgil:** If I take some of the blame, your crime will extenuate.

**Emmanuel:** Maybe you forget that I gave him fifty-five stabs, even if you take on some of the responsibility you won't be able to change my position.

**Virgil:** Anyway, don't you think you have been a bit exaggerated? Luckily you didn't want to kill him, otherwise what would you have done?

**Emmanuel:** I didn't know how many stabs I had to give him.

**Virgil:** So, for the avoidance of doubt...

**Emmanuel:** I had never killed a single chicken in my life, so to be sure of the result...

**Virgil:** In any case, I can say that I am the instigator of the murder and that I witnessed the crime.

**Emmanuel:** At school, everyone is aware of our relationship and sooner or later someone will talk. The investigators will understand that it was us and that we also premeditated the crime.

**Virgil:** We can say that it was a reaction to the provocations received.

**Emmanuel:** With all those stabs we can't appeal to a reaction or a possible legitimate defense.

**Virgil:** In fact, even the place and time are certainly not to our advantage.

**Emmanuel:** Whichever way you look at it we are screwed! Unless we're talking about blackmail. This would improve our position.

**Virgil:** Absolutely not! We killed a person just to protect our secret and you want to tell the truth? That would be really absurd. Furthermore, the police may not necessarily find out the identity of the killer.

**Emmanuel:** It will surely find out. Look at my shoes! I tried to remove the blood stains but I couldn't. When will my parents see them, what do I invent? I already went through an interrogation for coming home late two nights ago. If they also saw the bloodstained shoes...



**Virgil:** And why did you wear them again today?

**Emmanuel:** This morning I dressed in a hurry to get out of the house before my parents got up and I inadvertently wore these.

**Virgil:** Do you think anyone noticed those blood stains?

**Emmanuel:** I did somersaults to avoid it. But I fear that sooner or later someone might notice them.

**Virgil:** Then we need to get rid of your shoes.

**Emmanuel:** It's impossible. My parents bought me them a few days ago and they cost a lot of money. I certainly can't tell them that I threw them away because I didn't like them anymore or because they were worn out.

**Virgil:** So for the moment we hide them at the bottom of this container, under the shoes that my father has to dispose of.

**Emmanuel:** And then what do we do?

**Virgil:** As soon as possible, we change the color. On the black the blood stains will no longer be seen.

**Emmanuel:** In fact I could tell my parents that I regretted the color I chose and that I left them here to change it. But we can't ask your father to do that without giving him an explanation.

**Virgil:** He doesn't have to do it, but you.

**Emmanuel:** I have no idea how to do it.

**Virgil:** Don't worry for that. If we tell my father that you have decided to accept his proposal and that you want to learn the craft of the shoemaker, he will be happy to teach you everything related to this job. Clearly he will have to start by teaching you the simpler things like how you can change the color of shoes.

**Emmanuel:** I think it's a good idea.

**Virgil:** Once you understand the way, you will take advantage of the moment when he is absent from the shop to do what you have to do on your shoes.

**Emmanuel:** It might work! But how do I get home, barefoot?

**Virgil:** For that, you could take the flip-flops of the greengrocer, here in front. She always keeps a pair out of the shop for when she refreshes the vegetables. Taking them away will be child's play.

**Emmanuel:** So should I go home in flip-flops?

**Virgil:** If your parents see you when you come home, you will say that we lent you them after you left your shoes here to change the color.

**Emmanuel:** But they are women's flip-flops!

**Virgil:** Didn't you say you revealed your real sexual orientation to them? Then this too will be plausible.

**Emmanuel:** You are a genius! You convinced me, go get them!

**Virgil:** I do it in a second. *(And he leaves the scene)*

**Emmanuel:** *(Taking off her shoes)* It's an absurd plan, but it might also work.

**Virgil:** *(With a pair of flip-flops in hand)* Here they are. Now go straight away home! With any luck, you will be able to get home before your parents.

**Emmanuel:** Okay. Maybe, if we stay calm, we can really solve everything.

**Virgil:** That's what I'm telling you from the start!

**Emmanuel:** Then I'm going. Bye! *(And he leaves the scene)*

**Virgil:** *(After hiding the bloodstained shoes under all the others)* That should be fine, they don't show. It's better get away now, before anyone comes back. *(And he leaves the scene)*

*Vera enters the scene.*

**Vera:** *(Screaming)* Farley, where are you hiding? Piece of stinky clod I know you are here, come out!

*At that moment Farley arrives.*

**Farley:** Were you looking for me?

**Vera:** *(Taking the first shoe within reach, she immediately throws it at him)* Yes, I was looking for you to throw this at you.

**Farley:** *(After managing to dodge the blow)* Are you crazy?!

**Vera:** Get out my flip-flops! I need them now, I have to wet vegetables.

**Farley:** Do you ask me for your flip-flops?

**Vera:** Tell me where you hid them, great son of a Siberian baboon!

**Farley:** I assure you that this time I am not responsible for this joke.

**Vera:** I don't believe you. *(Hurling him another shoe which he catches)*

**Farley:** That's enough! I don't want to be a goalkeeper, we need to talk about something serious.

**Vera:** Sure! We need to talk about your funeral.

**Farley:** Vera, listen to me! I swear to you on my family that I didn't take your flip-flops.

**Vera:** So someone stole them?

**Farley:** I have no idea, maybe later I'll help you look for them, but first you absolutely have to see these. *(Handing her some photos)*

**Vera:** *(After looking at them)* Why are you showing me photos of half-naked boys? I'm too old to appreciate this kind of thing.

**Farley:** I don't know whether to tell you.

**Vera:** Haven't you crossed over to the other side?

**Farley:** They're not mine! I found them hidden inside a pair of shoes that I had taken away from here to play a joke on Piers.

**Vera:** So don't you play jokes only on me?! However, I still don't understand what the problem is. What do you care about these photos if they are not yours?

**Farley:** Don't tell me you didn't recognize those two boys! Look carefully. They are Virgil and his friend Emmanuel.

**Vera:** And with this?

**Farley:** What do you advise me to do?

**Vera:** Put them back where you found them, none of your business.

**Farley:** Are you referring to photos or shoes?

**Vera:** I refer to both.

**Farley:** I'm afraid of making mistakes and inadvertently hurting the boys or Piers.

**Vera:** Surely when our shoemaker finds out the truth about his son he will suffer, but then he will get over it. After all, there are a lot of homosexuals nowadays.

**Farley:** But what do you think about that note?

**Vera:** Which?

**Farley:** *(Taking in the middle of the photos a sheet of paper and showing it to her)* This.

**Vera:** *(After taking a quick look)* Old age is an ugly beast! Without glasses I just can't read it.

*Farley takes it and starts reading.*

**Farley:** "If you are reading this, it means that you have repaired my shoes before the agreed term. So now you will be suffering for what you have found out ". Do you know who wrote it?

**Vera:** Maybe a customer of the shoemaker.

**Farley:** Exactly, but look at who is. The name of the client is written on this note from Piers.  
*(Showing her the paper written by the shoemaker)*

**Vera:** I already told you I can't see without glasses.

**Farley:** The customer's name is Vince Ferrante.

**Vera:** And who is he?

**Farley:** Don't you read the newspapers?

**Vera:** I have a shop to manage. I don't have time to waste like you!

**Farley:** But if a customer enters in your shop once in a blue moon!

**Vera:** This is not true! However, since you are so well informed, please update me.

**Farley:** That man is the father of the boy who was killed two night ago.

**Vera:** Oh my God! But I still don't understand why those photos were inside a pair of shoes.

**Farley:** In my opinion there was a blackmail in progress. I think that Mr. Ferrante ordered that the repair of the shoes be carried out after a month to allow the blackmailed person to pay without Piers being able to find out the hidden content in them.

**Vera:** And what's the problem?

**Farley:** What if Piers had a look at the shoes before I took them away? He could have done a madness.

**Vera:** That man wouldn't be able to kill even a fly.

**Farley:** But the blackmailed person may have done so.

**Vera:** You're confusing me. What do you mean?

**Farley:** If Piers wasn't the blackmailed person, who else could it be? If math is not an opinion...

**Vera:** Mah! I raise the white flag.

**Farley:** What slow on the uptake you are! In my opinion, Mr. Ferrante's son was blackmailing Virgil. And in case of non-payment within the term written on this note, Piers would have automatically seen the photos. In all likelihood, that thug must also have threatened to spread the photos on the Internet.

**Vera:** So it was the dead boy who brought the shoes here?

**Farley:** No, it was the father. I am sure of this, I saw him enter the shop myself, while his son I don't think has ever set foot there.

**Vera:** Why, did you know him?

**Farley:** No, but I saw the photo in the newspaper and I'm sure he never crossed that threshold. *(Pointing to the front door of the shop)* You know, to play my jokes, I have to keep an eye on everything and everyone.

**Vera:** However hiding those photos where Virgil could find them doesn't seem like a very smart choice to me.

**Farley:** You are wrong about this. Surely those criminals will have made copies. So even if he found those hidden in the shoes, it wouldn't matter. And then what better hiding place than right under the nose of the blackmailed, where he would never have looked for them?

**Vera:** But if Piers saw them, they could no longer blackmail Virgil.

**Farley:** If you make this observation it means that you have not been careful. As I told you, I think the dead boy must have threatened to get the photos out on the net, so even if Piers had seen them, there would still have been a reason to put pressure on Virgil.

**Vera:** Now what does tennis have to do with this story?

**Farley:** I was referring to the computer network, not the tennis court net! Dear Vera, I know that for you the computer is still an alien tool, so I'll be clearer: you need to know that to make a voice spread like wildfire, nothing beats the Internet.

**Vera:** I've always said that computers ruin people's brains!

**Farley:** This is not true, it can be of great help.

**Vera:** With the advent of computers, kids stopped playing outdoors.

**Farley:** Don't be so melodramatic! You also have to consider that it is a great tool, it is an open window to the world.

**Vera:** Maybe! But there are people who don't greet each other on the street and then they are friends on fesbuc.

**Farley:** So aren't you so ignorant on the subject? Do you know Facebook?

**Vera:** Forget it! I have another question for you: if Virgil had paid, how could they have prevented Piers from seeing those photos?

**Farley:** It would have been enough for Vince to go back to pick up the shoes before the term saying he changed his mind and didn't want to repair them anymore.

**Vera:** So father and son were in agreement?

**Farley:** I could swear it! Also because Mr. Ferrante is a shady fellow. Rumors have been circulating about him. Looks like he's a mob boss.

**Vera:** In that case it would not be surprising if the son had followed in his father's footsteps. But, basically, who do you think killed that thug?



**Farley:** I think it was Virgil.

**Vera:** And how would he kill him? Spitting on him?

**Farley:** In fact, the murderer inflicted fifty-five stab wounds on the victim and he, with those hands, would never have succeeded, but he may have hired a hitman.

**Vera:** What do you mean?

**Farley:** I mean he may have hired a person who kills for a fee.

**Vera:** But wasn't it better to pay the blackmailer?

**Farley:** No, because the blackmailer could have made other requests even at a later time. While in this way Virgil would have paid only once. So, in the light of these facts, we must try to protect Piers and Virgil. I am sure that the Boss, if he ascertains the involvement of one of them in the murder of his son, will come to take revenge.

**Vera:** However, in this way, we risk protecting a murderer.

**Farley:** I'm sure Virgil is a good boy and was driven by desperation to commit that extreme deed. If my theory is correct, the real guilty isn't whoever committed the murder, but the victim himself.

**Vera:** You are right!

**Farley:** So now we need to shield Piers from potential revenge. For this I would already have something in mind.

**Vera:** I remind you we have to shield Virgil too. He also takes the same risk.

**Farley:** I don't have a solution to everything.

**Vera:** I'm sure you will find the way. I see you're better than Inspector Derrick at solving cases!

**Farley:** To implement my plan, I only need the right person. As soon as I found it I'll explain everything.

**Vera:** I'm going to the shop now. If you need me, you can find me there.

*Vera leaves the scene and Viola enters.*

**Viola:** Hi Farley, is Verity here?

**Farley:** No. She went to the bank with Piers.

**Viola:** I came to her because she has to sign a document.

**Farley:** I guess it's about booking a journey.

**Viola:** Yes, it is a very nice tour in Mexico.

**Farley:** Verity and Piers can't afford that expense.

**Viola:** She told me otherwise.

**Farley:** Only because I, until now, have continued to give her credit, but now I'm going to cash out.

**Viola:** What a pity! I am very sorry for them and obviously a little bit for myself.

**Farley:** However if you were willing to give me a little help...

**Viola:** In that case, would you not claim payment?

**Farley:** Not that, I'm going to cash out right away.

**Viola:** Even if I help you what would I gain from it?

**Farley:** They would make the journey.

**Viola:** What should I do?

**Farley:** You should simply commit a theft.

**Viola:** Would you call this a little help?

**Farley:** I'm not asking you to rob a bank! You should steal in this shop.

**Viola:** Why should I do such a stupid thing?

**Farley:** If I tell you: insurance, indemnity for damages...

**Viola:** Why don't you do it directly?

**Farley:** Because I don't own a van like you to load up the stolen goods and then, once theft has taken place, I don't know where to put them.

**Viola:** In fact, I have a van and in the cellar of the country house there would certainly be no problem hiding everything. So should I steal soles, heels and putty away?

**Farley:** You will only have to steal all the shoes.

**Viola:** What kind of indemnity for damages could a theft like this get?

**Farley:** They also insured jewelry and cash. You must know that in the small safe at the back, they keep not only their daily takings, but also all their precious goods. So, if we agree, to make things easier for you, I'll pick the lock on the back door so you find it already broken. To make the theft truer, I'll have a journalist friend of mine publish an article about it.

**Viola:** Basically, I should simply park in the back, enter without effort, and take away only some shoes.

**Farley:** Exactly!

**Viola:** What if they catch me in the very act?

**Farley:** I'll keep a good watch, so it's not going to happen.

**Viola:** Do you really think that this will help Piers and Verity?

**Farley:** Of course! With the money that the insurance will pay they will be able to pay off their debt with me and also go to Mexico.

**Viola:** Okay I accept! When do we do it?

**Farley:** Midnight tonight.

**Viola:** Then I'll be on time. *(Then raising his hands to heaven)* God help us!

### THIRD ACT

*Same scenography of the two previous acts.*

*Verity and Piers enter the scene and find the shop all upside down.*

**Piers:** What happened?

**Verity:** Oh my God, the thieves got in!

**Piers:** A theft in a shoemaker's shop seems absurd to me.

**Verity:** Maybe they thought we left the daily taking in the shop.

**Piers:** How much did they think they would scrape together? I don't put gold soles on customers' shoes! Which foolish person would risk going to jail to steal a meager sum?

**Verity:** Some fool looking for cash, maybe to buy drugs. Damn! All the shoes are gone, including those of the grumpy man. They left only those to be disposed of. Now who tells that to him when he gets back?

**Piers:** We will tell him that we will indemnify him for the damage. And like him, all the others.

**Verity:** I told you it was time to stop, but you are stubborn as a donkey!

**Piers:** You are right! I was a fool not to listen to you.

*Virgil and Emmanuel enter the scene.*

**Virgil:** What a mess!

**Emmanuel:** If you wish, we can help you tidy up.

**Piers:** Don't worry about it! It is useless to waste time to do that. I have decided to close the business!

**Emmanuel:** Why? I would be willing to learn the craft of the shoemaker.

**Verity:** Virgil, your friend will surely have a lot of skills, but not the timing!

**Virgil:** Is the damage we have suffered very large?

**Piers:** It isn't a huge damage, but it is certainly a bitter pill to swallow.

**Emmanuel:** If you prefer to be alone, we will come back later.

**Verity:** Wait a minute! I wanted to ask you if you knew that boy who was stabbed.

**Virgil:** *(After looking at his friend with fear)* Why are you asking me?

**Verity:** I'm just curious and a little worried.

**Emmanuel:** Why are you worried?

**Verity:** The killer could strike again. I fear for your safety.

**Virgil:** Then you can rest assured. It looks like that boy was murdered by a criminal. We don't know with that kind of people.

**Verity:** Do you want to tell me you never even talked to him?

**Emmanuel:** No, he was a taciturn boy, even if he knew what he wanted and made others understand it well.

**Piers:** Wasn't that the bully making fun of Virgil?

**Virgil:** Absolutely not, that's another boy I'm sure you don't know.

**Piers:** But this wretch is deriding you too?

**Emmanuel:** No, he only mocks Virgil because of his small disability.

**Virgil:** Why would he have to mock him too?

**Piers:** Usually even the bosom friend is made fun of.

**Virgil:** I would not call him a bosom friend, let's not exaggerate! We're just friends.

**Emmanuel:** It is true, we are just friends.

**Verity:** Why are you so keen to point this out, have you argued?

**Virgil:** *(Worried about where the conversation's going)* In fact, we had a fight and we have not yet reconciled.

**Piers:** Then it's time to do it. You shouldn't sulk for too long. Now put your arms around each other and be agreed.

*Seeing the hesitation of his son...*

**Piers:** Hurry up! These things must not be postponed.

*Virgil approaches his friend, hugs him for a micro second giving him a pat on the back.*

**Piers:** Come on, hug him properly!

*Emmanuel tenderly embraces Virgil.*

**Verity:** It wasn't that hard! There is no need to be ashamed.

**Emmanuel:** If you say so!

**Piers:** I say so too. Affection is beautiful in all its forms.

**Virgil:** Just in all forms?

**Piers:** Why, do you have any doubts?

**Virgil:** In this case I should make this confession to you. You must know that I am...

*Virgil is interrupted by Vince's arrival.*

**Vince:** I see the whole family reunited!

**Piers:** Good morning Mr. Ferrante! As you can see, I suffered a theft. And unfortunately I have to tell you that your shoes have also been stolen.

**Vince:** Are you really sure?

**Verity:** Yes, I am. Do you remember I put them in this locker? *(Pointing at it)* As you can see, there aren't.

**Vince:** *(Putting a hand in his pocket to get the gun)* I see it. Now answer me honestly, because for you it is of vital importance, did you already repair them?

**Piers:** What does it matter? Anyway you don't have to pay for the repair because I am in your debt.

**Verity:** We assure you that you will be fully refunded.

**Vince:** It's not money I'm worried about!

**Piers:** Anyway I can confirm that I hadn't repaired them yet. We had agreed...

**Vince:** *(Interrupting him and taking his hand out of his pocket)* I believe you, you seem sincere. For the moment I don't want to add anything else, I no longer have the proof, but rest assured that when I find my shoes you will see me again!

**Piers:** You can also come back to bring more shoes to be repaired, I don't think those thieves will come back.

**Verity:** *(Glaring at her husband)* Maybe it is better that you refrain from coming back, since my husband has decided to close the business.

**Piers:** *(Lowering his head, sad and resigned)* My wife is right! From now on you will have to find another shoemaker.

**Vince:** I'm going, but if I find out something, be sure you'll see me again! *(And he leaves the scene without saying goodbye)*

**Verity:** What a bad temper!

**Piers:** Not only. Sometimes I don't even understand what he means. He makes a lot of nonsense speeches.

**Verity:** However, he took the theft of his shoes quite well.

**Piers:** I'm going to the back room now to put in order that mess. *(And he leaves the scene)*

**Emmanuel:** *(Turning to Virgil)* If you have to tell your father that thing, I better go. *(And he leaves the scene)*

**Verity:** I want to go to the agency. I don't understand why Viola hasn't brought the documents to sign yet. *(And she leaves the scene too)*

**Virgil:** *(Left alone)* I'm not safe yet. That bastard had informed his father. But Vince said he no longer has proof and this heartened me. This means that there are no copies around other than the ones we took when we killed him. Among other things, it will not even be possible to make others, after having destroyed the laptop in which Matthias had saved the file. But why did that man say he would talk again if he found his shoes? Oh my God! Matthias had hidden a copy of those damned photographs there. This would also explain why his father said not to repair them right away. What scoundrels, they had put the photos right under my nose!

*Farley enters the scene.*

**Farley:** Hi Virgil, how are you?

**Virgil:** I am fine thanks! So Farley what do you need?

**Farley:** I don't need anything, but maybe you need these. *(Showing him the photos)*

**Virgil:** How is it possible that you have these photos?

**Farley:** Forget it and just tell me if you want them!

**Virgil:** Of course! Did you show them to anyone else?

**Farley:** Absolutely not, but now I want to know your side of the story.

**Virgil:** Why?

**Farley:** Because I have a great affection for your family. Who do you think staged the theft?

**Virgil:** Are you responsible for the theft?

**Farley:** Sure, that was necessary to save Piers' ass. It was the only way to keep him from becoming a target of those criminals. Now you tell me everything, otherwise I'll show these to your father.

**Virgil:** Emmanuel and I are responsible for that boy's death.

**Farley:** I imagined so! Now we need to make sure that Vince doesn't find out the truth and blames some of the characters in the mala for the murder.

**Virgil:** How can we do?

**Farley:** I don't know, I have to think about it. For the moment I keep these photos, but don't get any strange ideas, I'm on your side.

**Virgil:** Did you take me for a hardened killer?

**Farley:** Of course not. I also know that you didn't materially commit the deed.

**Virgil:** I just came up with the plan.

**Farley:** As I thought! Now I'm going, as soon as I've managed to concoct something, I'll contact you.

**Virgil:** Thanks, you are a friend!

**Farley:** Bye!

*Farley leaves the scene and two police constables enter.*

**Gus:** We're here for the breaking in. Are you the owner?

**Virgil:** No, he's in the back room, I'm going to tell him you're here right away.

*Virgil leaves the scene to re-enter with Piers.*

**Piers:** Are you here for the theft?

**Leo:** Exactly! We need to investigate the case.



**Piers:** Very well!

**Gus:** Where did the thugs come in from?

**Piers:** They forced the lock on the back door. Come and see.

**Gus:** Show me the way.

*Gus and Piers leave the scene.*

**Leo:** Did they take away something expensive?

**Virgil:** Not that I know of.

**Leo:** Do you have a hidden safe?

**Virgil:** No, we don't need it, our takings are limited. I remind you that is a shoemaker's shop, not a goldsmith's.

**Leo:** So is that why you don't have an alarm system?

*Piers and Gus enter the scene.*

**Gus:** This theft is somewhat unusual.

*Vera enters the scene.*

**Verity:** Why are there the police in our shop?

**Piers:** Why are you so surprised? They came because of the theft.

**Verity:** But we didn't report the crime.

**Virgil:** What does it matter?

**Gus:** Stop wasting our time and cooperate!

**Verity:** I believe it is my right to understand who you really are.

**Leo:** Do you have doubts about us?

**Verity:** Actually more than one.

**Virgil:** Mom, stop making a fuss! They just came to do their duty.

**Verity:** I have my reasons. Those uniforms are fake, even a blind man would notice.

**Virgil:** How do you know?

**Verity:** I remind you that my cousin is a police constable and I know the individual details of that uniform.

**Leo:** You are wrong!

**Verity:** I don't think so. So if you don't find a convincing explanation...

*At that point Leo and Gus Piers attack Verity and Piers. The two spouses are immobilized on the ground. Seeing what is happening, Virgil runs away.*

**Leo:** That's enough!

**Piers:** What do you want?

**Gus:** If you don't tell the truth we will kill you.

**Verity:** What truth are you talking about? We have suffered a theft and that's it.

**Leo:** In a shop where there are no valuables? It's hard to believe that.

**Gus:** Now we have to find out who we have to kill. We don't like to make mistakes.

**Leo:** *(Taking Piers by the hair)* So, have you seen those photos or not?

**Piers:** What are you talking about?

**Verity:** Leave him! I saw them myself.

**Gus:** With the right ways you always get everything! So it was you who killed Mr. Ferrante's son, did you want to shut his mouth so he wouldn't divulge them?

**Verity:** Wait up! I thought you were referring to the photos of Mexico.

**Piers:** What does Mexico have to do with it now?

**Verity:** *(Turning to Piers)* It was a surprise. I wanted to take a romantic tour there you and me alone.

**Piers:** And why should they be interested in photos of Mexico?

**Verity:** I thought they wanted to steal the large down payment I have in my pocket to give to the travel agency where I saw that catalog with the photos.

**Piers:** If that's what you want, take the money and leave, but don't hurt us.

**Leo:** These two are innocent, it is impossible making up such a big whopper immediately.

**Gus:** Either they are good actors, or they really don't know anything.

**Leo:** Let's go! We have enough proof to report to the boss.

**Verity:** So do you believe us?

**Gus:** Yes, that's why we won't hurt you.

**Piers:** But who sent you to intimidate us?

**Leo:** It is much better for you not to know! *(And they both leave the scene)*

**Piers:** Did you understand what they wanted?

**Verity:** They weren't thieves, since when I said about the money I had in my pocket, they didn't try to take it.

**Piers:** So what could they be interested in?

*Farley enters the scene and finds the two still lying on the floor.*

**Farley:** I heard screams. What happened? Why are you lying on the ground?

**Verity:** We were attacked, but we don't know by whom or why.

**Farley:** At this point, it is right that I tell you everything.

**Piers:** Don't tell me that you are behind all this? You scared us to death. They are not jokes to play.

**Farley:** I assure you that I am not responsible for what is happening. And I've never been more serious than now.

**Verity:** *(Crying)* What's happening in this shop?

**Farley:** This is not where the drama happened, but elsewhere.

**Verity:** What drama are you talking about?

*Virgil and Emmanuel enter the scene.*

**Virgil:** How are you? Luckily those thugs are gone, however the real police constables will be here soon.

**Farley:** Come on Virgil! The time has come for you to say everything. The situation is slipped out of your hand, you can't yet jeopardize the safety of your parents.

**Virgil:** You are right! I don't want my fault to fall on them.

**Verity:** Honey, what are you hiding from us?

**Virgil:** Something very serious that I am ashamed of. I am the instigator of the murder of Mr. Ferrante's son. Not being able to personally commit the deed, I forced Emmanuel to do it. I had no idea that the father was in league with the son and that he would have suspected the truth.

**Piers:** But why kill that boy?

**Virgil:** Because he was blackmailing us. He was threatening to spread compromising photos of the two of us.

**Verity:** You two? Do you mean with him? *(Pointing to Emmanuel)*

**Virgil:** Yes, we are more than just friends. I don't know if you understand!?

**Piers:** And have you come this far just for this reason?

**Virgil:** *(Crying)* I was afraid of your judgment dad. I never made you proud of me and I didn't want to give you this pain too.

**Piers:** If this is what you believe, the real culprit here is me, who has not been able to make you understand how proud I have always been of you. What hurts me most is not that you have a different sexual orientation, but that you haven't felt free to tell your family about it. You have judged us to be old bigots and not two people who only want their child's happiness.

*Real police constables break in.*

**Jeremy:** Your son told us you were attacked.

**Verity:** It's true.

**Jeremy:** Then tell us everything in detail!

*Vera enters the scene.*

**Vera:** Calling the police for a pair of flip-flops seems excessive to me!

**Esmond:** So the fight broke out over a pair of flip-flops?

**Farley:** If anything, for a pair of shoes.

**Jeremy:** Flip-flops or shoes?

**Verity:** None of the two.

**Piers:** We think that the attack was only due to a big misunderstanding.

**Esmond:** Then we begin to take the general information for the report. Who are you...?

**Piers:** My name is Piers Jackson, I'm the owner of the shop and she is my wife.

**Esmond:** And you are the two people who were attacked.

**Vera:** Exactly!

**Esmond:** *(Turning to Vera)* Who are you?

**Vera:** I sell fruit in the shop opposite.

**Jeremy:** Barefoot?

**Vera:** I'm barefoot just because I was wetting the vegetables. I usually do it wearing flip-flops, but someone made them disappear.

**Jeremy:** *(Turning to Farley)* You, what are you here for?

**Farley:** My name is Farley Brown and I have a grocery store next door. I ran when I heard the screams.

**Esmond:** And you?

**Virgil:** My name is Virgil Jackson, I am their son and I am the one who called you.

**Emmanuel:** My name is Emmanuel Robinson and I am a friend of his. *(Pointing to Virgil)*

**Esmond:** So, start telling your side of the story.

**Verity:** Two men came in dressed as police constables who wanted ...

**Piers:** *(Interrupting her)* They wanted to rob us, when they realized that there was nothing of value...

**Verity:** I immediately understood that they weren't real constables, because they wore fake uniforms, not like yours.

**Jeremy:** So they didn't take anything away?

**Vera:** My flip-flops.

**Farley:** Stop talking about those damn flip-flops!

**Jeremy:** Could you give a description of those thugs?

**Piers:** We were so scared that we tried to look at them as little as possible. Then, since in the end they did not steal anything, I would also avoid filing a report.

*While Jeremy listen the two, Esmond goes to the back room. When he comes back...*

**Esmond:** The back door was forced open.

**Piers:** We suffered a small theft previously, not much to it.

**Esmond:** Suffering from theft and assault after a short time is rather suspicious.

**Jeremy:** We need to do a more thorough inspection.

**Esmond:** I don't think there's anything else to check apart from this big container. *(Then opens it)* There is nothing, just old shoes. *(He pulls out a few until one in particular catches his attention)* But this is interesting...!

**Jeremy:** Have you found anything?

**Esmond:** There is blood on this shoe.

**Jeremy:** Let me see! It's true and look under the soles. Someone tried to clean them, but there are certainly other blood traces.

**Esmond:** Doesn't this type of shoe remind you of something?

**Jeremy:** I'll be damned! Forensics said that the footprint found at the murder scene of the stabbed boy was certainly attributable to a shoe of this brand.

**Esmond:** This is a strange coincidence!

**Jeremy:** Now I begin to understand why there is so much commotion in this shop. In my opinion you are not as innocent as you want us to believe!

**Esmond:** Anyone want to tell something? Why is such a new shoe among those to be thrown away? Furthermore, it doesn't even look like a shoe to be resoled. When these are old, and this is not our case, they are thrown directly. So it has to be yours.

**Jeremy:** You don't even seem surprised at the possibility that this is the shoe worn by a killer. Maybe someone can give us an explanation?

**Virgil:** Responsible for everything...

**Piers:** *(Interrupting him)* The shoes are mine.

**Esmond:** With this you want to tell us that...

**Piers:** The boy's murderer is me.

**Jeremy:** Are you confessing?

**Piers:** Exactly!

**Esmond:** In this case, he has to follow us to the station.

**Piers:** Come on, I'll release a full-blown deposition.

**Verity:** Piers, it's not fair that you...

**Piers:** Isn't it fair that I confessed? Is this what you meant?

**Verity:** *(Who has understood that her husband wants to put the blame on himself to save his son)* Yes, that's what I meant... So our journey together...

**Piers:** I love you my wife, one day if God wills we will do it.

**Esmond:** But you will have to wait a long time! *(Cuffing him)*

**Jeremy:** *(With proof of the crime in hand)* We also take these away. We advise you to seek a good lawyer right away.

**Verity:** Piers, please don't...

**Piers:** *(Shaking her head to stop her from saying anything else)* Hi love!

*The two police constables leave the scene, taking Piers away.*

**Verity:** *(Turning to the two boys)* He took the blame to save you.

**Vera:** I'm going away, I can't stay here, it's too sad. *(And she leaves the scene)*

**Farley:** Even if I don't agree with his choice, I respect it. *(And he leaves the scene too)*

**Virgil:** It's not fair mom! We will confess and exonerate him.

**Emmanuel:** Let's go, before he releases the deposition.

**Verity:** Wait up! If he has chosen that, we must respect his will.

**Virgil:** But he will go to jail.

**Verity:** The real prison for him would be to see you imprisoned.

**Emmanuel:** So what can we do?

**Verity:** The only thing that would make him truly happy.

**Virgil:** And what would it be?

**Verity:** Carry out this business, so as to pass on to posterity.

**Virgil:** I can swear to you on my life, dear mom. Dad's sacrifice will not have been in vain!

**THE END**