

# A Matter of Chance

David A. Hill

## Before reading

1. Look at the front cover and the back cover blurb. What sort of story do you think this will be?
2. Read the contents page. Imagine what might happen in the story.
3. Look at the list of characters on page 5. What do you think they look like?
4. If you have the cassette, listen to Chapter 1.

## Check your reading

### CHAPTER 1

1. Who is telling the story?
2. Which character is 'my wife'?

### CHAPTER 2

1. True or false?
  - a Paul often looks at his wife's photographs.
  - b Paul and Jacky met at work in Manchester.
  - c Paul and Jacky were engaged for two years.
  - d Jacky could speak excellent Italian.
  - e Paul and Jacky's friends thought it was a good idea to go to Italy.

### CHAPTER 3

1. Put the events in the right order.
  - a Paul realised he needed a change in his life.
  - b Paul's work became his life.
  - c Paul thought about a relationship with Sandra.
  - d After Jacky's death, Paul stayed in Como.
  - e Sandra surprised Paul by kissing him.

### CHAPTER 4

1. Match the beginnings and endings.
 

1 Sandra invited Paul to stay	a how expensive Sandra's car was.
2 Paul felt both guilty and excited	b for a weekend at her family's old house.
3 Paul didn't really notice	c would also be at the house.
4 Paul didn't think anything	d about the mysterious locked door.
5 Paul thought Sandra's parents	e and imagined a new life was beginning.

### CHAPTER 5

1. Who do you think the mystery man in the square was?
2. What do you think was in the package?

### CHAPTER 6

1. Complete the summary.

Sandra invited Paul to stay at the family house in ..... . Paul was ..... that her family would be there. Sandra had become very ..... to Paul since Jacky's death but there were still things he didn't ..... about her. At the house, Sandra arrived with the man who Paul had seen in ..... . His name was ..... and he did some ..... with Sandra's father.

### CHAPTER 7

1. Look at the words in italics. Who is *them*, *she*, *you* etc.?

- a I thanked *them* for inviting me to stay.
- b '*She* has told us how helpful *you* have been with her business studies.'
- c 'So what's going on? Shall *we* talk about this?'
- d '*He* obviously doesn't know anything.'
- e '*He* didn't realise *you* were a guest of the family.'

### CHAPTER 8

1. Match the beginnings and endings.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Paul saw one of the bodyguards            | a something illegal like selling drugs.     |
| 2 Paul thought the family business could be | b when she answered his questions.          |
| 3 When Sandra suggested visiting England    | c Paul was doubtful at first.               |
| 4 Paul thought Sandra was being truthful    | d Paul couldn't imagine she was a criminal. |
| 5 Sandra was so beautiful that              | e doing something near his car.             |

### CHAPTER 9

1. What made Paul suspicious? Put the events in the right order.

- a Sandra received three phone calls but said little.
- b Sandra chewed her lip and looked nervous.
- c Paul thought they were being followed by a yellow Fiat.
- d Paul saw a silver Mercedes like Andrea's.
- e Sandra relaxed after they crossed the border.

### CHAPTER 10

1. True or false?

- a Paul saw the Fiat when they arrived in Issoire.
- b Paul didn't understand what was happening.
- c Sandra was relaxed in the morning.
- d Paul saw the Mercedes leaving the square.
- e Paul knew he had to find out the truth soon.
- f Paul told Sandra that he'd thrown away her phone.

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## CHAPTER 11

1. Match the questions and answers.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 'Sandra, what's the matter?'                              | a 'I don't know. Probably paintings that they want to get out of the country.' |
| 2 'He's a lot older than you, isn't he?'                    | b 'Leave me alone. You've caused nothing but problems all along.'              |
| 3 'But why didn't your father report Andrea to the police?' | c 'They want to make sure that the operation is successful.'                   |
| 4 'Why are they following us now?'                          | d 'He couldn't. Don't you see that my father and his partners were in it too?' |
| 5 'What have they put in my car?'                           | e 'Yes, Paul, he is ... but we started a relationship.'                        |

## CHAPTER 12

1. Put the events in the right order.

- Paul was pleased that Sandra had told him the truth.
- Early the next morning, they were found by Andrea.
- Paul realised he really loved Sandra.
- Paul and Sandra decided to return to Italy.
- Andrea told them to get ready to leave.

## CHAPTER 13

1. Complete the summary.

Paul drove his car to ..... between the Mercedes and the Fiat. They finished their journey at a ..... near the sea. Paul and Sandra were locked up in ..... rooms. Paul couldn't open the ..... of his room. He tried ..... on the wall, and had an answer from Sandra, but she couldn't hear his ..... . Paul noticed a door in the ..... . He climbed on the table and looked into the ..... . He had to get down when he heard the ..... coming.

## CHAPTER 14

1. True or false?

- At around one o'clock, Paul heard footsteps coming upstairs.
- The back door was locked.
- Out in the hall Paul turned the light on and listened.
- Paul and Sandra decided to push the car down the road.
- None of the shots hit the car.

## CHAPTER 15

1. Match the beginnings and endings.

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Sandra had saved them some time     | a only stopping for food and petrol.       |
| 2 They drove south through the night, | b Andrea had been delayed.                 |
| 3 Sandra phoned her father            | c that they had slept too long.            |
| 4 Paul suddenly woke up and realised  | d by cutting the tyres of both cars.       |
| 5 Sandra wasn't worried because       | e and they arranged to meet at the border. |

## CHAPTER 16

1. What does Paul or Sandra say in each situation?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 There was the silver Mercedes overtaking a big lorry.                | a Paul: 'No. This is OK. They're following.'                    |
| 2 The car obviously didn't like this very much.                        | b Sandra: 'Careful, Paul. Look ahead!'                          |
| 3 Both cars had moved out to follow us ...                             | c Sandra: 'And there's Andrea, too! Look!'                      |
| 4 I flashed my headlights several times ...                            | d Sandra: 'I don't think you'd better go any faster.'           |
| 5 In the far distance I could see a large lorry in the emergency lane. | e Sandra: 'And look! There's a police car on the bridge ahead.' |

## CHAPTER 17

1. Who ...

- only had a few injuries?
- stayed a long time in hospital?
- died immediately?
- went to prison for ten years?
- was warned to drive carefully?
- was allowed to return to his business?

Paul Sandra Andrea the guard Mr Rovello

## After reading

Choose some of these activities.

- After reading *A Matter of Chance*, how important do you think chance has been in your life?
- Would you like to live and work in a foreign country, like Paul and Jacky? Why or why not?
- Which chapter from *A Matter of Chance* can you remember most clearly? Why?
- Who are your favourite and least favourite characters in the story?
- Paul gradually became suspicious of Sandra. Make a list of everything he noticed.
- On page 69, Sandra phoned her father to tell him what had happened. Write the telephone conversation.
- Make your own activities for other students to do. e.g. Write some True/False questions.

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ISBN 0-521-96721-X



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