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Return to the Valley sample
NOT FOR SALE

RETURN TO THE VALLEY

Level 4 - B1/B2 Intermediate (2) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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Return to the Valley
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Chapter One

Neil was sleeping when a loud noise woke him up. *What's that? I didn't go to bed until 2:00am. I want to sleep!*

The noise continued. Someone was banging on the door of his apartment.

He rolled over and looked at his mobile phone. *7:30am! Who's banging on my door?*

He got out of bed, and pulled on his jeans. He went to the door and opened it.

A policeman was standing at the door. "Are you Mr Neil Warthrop?"

"Yes. I'm Neil Warthrop. What do you want?"

"I'm Sergeant Charles McKay from the North Sydney police. Can I come in please, Sir?"

"Uh. OK." Neil stood back from the door and the policeman walked into his living room.

Neil didn't understand. *Did someone steal my car? Is there some trouble at my office?* He sat down on the sofa and stared at the policeman. The policeman sat in an armchair.

"Are you the brother of Angus Warthrop from Cecilton in the South Island of New Zealand?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I have some bad news," said the policeman. "I am very sorry, Mr Warthrop. Your brother Angus was found dead late yesterday."

"No!" Neil couldn't believe it. "It must be a mistake! How do you know it was Angus?"

Charles McKay, the policeman, looked at Neil. *I hate this part of my job*, he thought. "I'm sorry," he said. "The local police are sure it is your brother. The body was found in his workshop. The neighbours knew him. When the police came, one of the policemen also identified the body. They played in the same rugby team."

"How did he die? Was it a heart attack?"

Charles McKay took out his telephone. "Excuse me, Sir. I have some notes here." He looked at the screen.

"It seems it was an accident. The police, and the police doctor are working to get the whole story. Your brother died in Cecilton, but there's no police station there."

"No, it's a very small place," said Neil.

"The nearest police station is in Margaretville. Your brother's body has been moved to the hospital in that town. Sergeant Donovan is in charge of the investigation. She called us very early this morning, and asked us to find your address and phone number. She asked if someone from our police station could come and tell you face to face. She

didn't want you to hear the bad news on the telephone. I've written down the phone number, so you can call her." Sergeant McKay held out a piece of paper.

Neil took the paper.

Sergeant McKay stood up. "I'm sure you have many things to do. I'll go now. I'm very sorry," he said again.

Neil walked to the door and opened it for the policeman. "Thank you," he said. "It was very kind of you to come."

Just as Sergeant McKay was walking away, Neil said, "How did they know I was living in North Sydney?"

Sergeant McKay looked surprised. "I don't know. You must ask the police in Margaretville."

Neil's mouth was dry. He felt very bad. He closed the door and went to the kitchen for a glass of water.

I must call this Sergeant Donovan. I must find out what happened.

He hurried back to his bedroom to get his phone. He started punching in the number Sergeant McKay had given him. Then he stopped. *No, wait. I must go to Margaretville. I'll book flights first. Then, when I call, I can tell the police when I will arrive.*

He turned on his laptop and started searching. *I can get a flight at 12:30pm. I must be at the airport ninety minutes before that. I can drive to the airport – it will take me maybe one hour. I can do it, but I must hurry. I have to pack. I have to call my office, but no one will be there until nine am.*

He booked a flight online.

I'll need a rental car.

He found a rental company with offices at the airport. He stared at his computer screen. *How long do I want the car for? I don't know. I'll book it for a week.* He confirmed the car.

Now I can call the police in Margaretville and tell them when I'm coming. When will I arrive? The time difference between Sydney and New Zealand is two hours. It will take me maybe three hours to drive from the airport to Margaretville. I won't get there until after eight pm. That's very late. But I can't get there any quicker.

Neil called the police station in Margaretville. He asked to speak to Sergeant Donovan. "I'm afraid she's not here," said the woman on the phone. "I think she will be back in about three hours."

"Uh. I'll be on a plane then," said Neil.

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He explained to the woman who he was, and why he wanted to talk to Sergeant Donovan. "I'm coming from Sydney. I won't arrive in Margaretville until eight pm or later. I guess there will be no one there."

"Don't worry. I'll give Sergeant Donovan your message. I'm sure she will wait until you arrive. Please don't hurry. Have a safe trip."

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