

## **Synopsis for 'The Fourth Room'** **by Mark Allen**

### **Logline:**

Three strangers move into a hovel and despite the live-in landlord being imprisoned on their first night, poverty forces them to stay and advertise for someone else. This proves difficult however, as no prospective tenant can ignore the horrors of the fourth room in which they are expected to live. The housemates have to go to increasingly desperate lengths in order to earn the extra rent every week.

### **Series Outline:**

Phil, Quentin and Deggy individually answer an advertisement for tenants in a very cheap, shared house. When they meet the live-in landlord, Morris, they are slightly unnerved, but each of their situations force them to continue to live there, even after they read in the local paper that Morris has mysteriously been arrested on their second morning in the house.

The housemates decide to take it in turns each week to earn the extra rent from the fourth room, so that they can continue to send it to Morris's mother (who looks after the money) without raising her suspicions that Morris isn't around. Secretly however, Morris's mother is trying to break out of her old folk's home in Bournemouth, so she can surprise her son with a visit.

The three housemates place a new advertisement for an extra tenant, but despite initial interest from several people, they all run out screaming when they eventually look inside the fourth room.

One potential tenant does actually decide to live in the room after looking at it, but, to the housemates' mild annoyance, he is accidentally killed by Deggy less than two hours after moving in.

Each housemate is reduced to demeaning themselves to earn extra money. Phil tries a career in police line-ups, Deggy attempts to start his own petrol strike to sell the surplus he's been storing, and Quentin is caught giving out additional parking tickets to wheelchairs and dogs in order to earn extra commission from his job as a traffic warden.

Eventually, the housemates manage to convince someone to move into the fourth room, and when the new tenant survives a number of hours without being killed, things seem to be looking up.

However, none of the housemates had contacted Morris while he was in prison, as they are all too afraid or too lazy, so when he arrives back at the house at the same time as his mother turns up on the run from the old folks' home, they are given quite a shock. Phil, Deggy, Quentin and the new housemate are all forced to flee while Morris and his Mother put on some Ricky Martin and have a dance.

## Character Outlines:

**Phil** is a 21 year old budding stand up comedian who has just left University. Rather than go back to his parents' farm in Droitwich Spa, Phil has moved to London to seek his fortune. Unfortunately, this seems to involve him selling vacuum cleaners over the telephone from the front room, which he inhabits constantly, much to the annoyance of the other housemates, especially Deggy, who he keeps waking up with his stand up comedy practice routines.

**Quentin** is a 28 year old ex-public school boy who comes from a wealthy family. In a fit of independence, Quentin told his parents that he was going to make his own way in the world and didn't want a penny from them. He now deeply regrets this, as they refuse to take him back, despite his pleas. Quentin is a traffic warden, a job he decided upon after failing to be accepted into the police force. His job gives him an inflated sense of self-importance, which really annoys his housemates and anyone else that Quentin talks to.

**Deggy** is 31 and a typical Sun reader. He works the night shift at the local petrol station and likes the peace his job gives him (except for the visits from Ray, the local weirdo who turns up every night to speak to him). Deggy is often woken by Phil during the day, when he is sleeping, which doesn't go down well, as he only wants a quiet life. This is not possible with his girlfriend Stacey, however, whom he argues with almost constantly. Deggy is essentially a very angry man who is just after a bit of peace.

**Stacey** is Deggy's 18 year old girlfriend with a lot of attitude. She is constantly arguing with Deggy apart from when they are noisily having sex in the house. This does not endear her to the other housemates, who generally try to ignore her presence unless she is shouting at one of them. Stacey has a chip on her shoulder and is naturally very aggressive, so when she's genuinely being pleasant, people are suspicious of her.

**Morris** is in his early fifties and is very odd. He looks like he's never washed before and is socially very inept. Although he tries enthusiastically to get on with the others, this causes the other housemates to be very wary of him. Morris is only seen in the first and last episodes (due to him being arrested on the second day), but his influence on the house is constant because of the ominous fourth room, which mysteriously causes visitors to run from it screaming.

**Mrs Raven** is Morris's mother, who is in her late 70's and is slightly batty. She writes a letter to Morris every week, describing her latest attempt to break out of the old folk's home where she is living and requesting money to buy coconut macaroons with which to barter for favours inside the home. The housemates read the letters in Morris's absence, and because she is unaware that Morris is in prison, they send her the rent each week to avoid raising her suspicions.