

# Amalfi

by Mark Thomas

The painted houses clinging to the hillside glare orange with the late-afternoon sun. It is almost impossible to look across the harbour without shielding your eyes. A single yacht tugs at its moorings and slowly, silently twists to meet the returning tide.

The man leans forward, elbows on knees and presses his manicured fingers together; he makes a steeple. He considers the shape for a few moments before looking to his right.

'It is good to see you again my friend.' He says. 'How many years is it?'

'You know exactly how many.'

The finger architect nods and agrees.

'Indeed' He says. 'I am paid to.'

He reaches towards the single, tall glass on the table between them and picks it up; ice cubes chatter merrily. He takes a sip and smiles.

'I could retire here.'

'I almost did.' Said the other man and then jolts twice before looking quizzically at the assassin, who is busily pocketing a silenced pistol.

The limoncello goes back to the mosaic table with a click; condensation pools round the bottom of the glass.

The killer stands.

He walks over and places a hat on the head of the dead man, tilting it over his questioning face; the man is now merely sleeping off an afternoon drink.

Overhead a gull cries murder and wheels away up the Amalfi coast.

