Wimsey stalked out with some dignity.

Presently he was followed by the vicar and by Mr Frobisher-Pym.

'Mortimer's taking Haviland and his wife to the station,' said the magistrate. 'They're going back to town at once. You can send their traps off in the morning, Hancock. We'd better make ourselves scarce.'

Wimsey pressed the self-starter.

As he did so, a man ran hastily down the steps and came up to him. It was Martin.

'I say,' he muttered. 'You've done me a good turn—more than I deserve, I'm afraid. You must think I'm a damned swine. But I'll see the old man decently put away, and I'll share with Haviland. You mustn't judge him too hardly, either. That wife of his is an awful woman. Run him over head and ears in debt. Bust up his business. I'll see it's all squared up. See? Don't want you to think us too awful.'

'Oh, right-ho!' said Wimsey.

He slipped in the clutch, and faded away into the wet, white fog.

The Vindictive Story of the Footsteps that Ran

Mr Bunter withdrew his head from beneath the focusing cloth.

'I fancy that will be quite adequate, sir,' he said deferentially, 'unless there are any further patients, if I may call them so, which you would wish put on record.'

'Not to-day,' replied the doctor. He took the last stricken rat gently from the table, and replaced it in its cage with an air of satisfaction. 'Perhaps on Wednesday, if Lord Peter can kindly spare your services once again— '

'What's that?' murmured his lordship, withdrawing his long nose from the investigation of a number of unattractive-looking glass jars. 'Nice old dog,' he added vaguely. 'Wags his tail when you mention his name, what? Are these monkey-glands, Hartman, or a south-west elevation of Cleopatra's duodenum?'

'You don't know anything, do you?' said the young physician, laughing. 'No use playing your bally-fool-with-an-eyeglass tricks on me, Wimsey. I'm up to them. I was saying to Bunter that I'd be no end grateful if you'd let him turn up again three days hence to register the progress of the specimens—always supposing they do progress, that is.'

'Why ask, dear old thing?' said his lordship. 'Always a pleasure to assist a fellow-sleuth, don't you know. Trackin' down murderers—all in the same way of business and all that. All finished? Good egg! By the way, if you don't have that cage mended you'll lose one of your patients—Number 5. The last wire but one is workin' loose—assisted by the intelligent occupant. Jolly little beasts, ain't they? No need of dentists—wish I was a rat—wire much better for the nerves than that fizzlin' drill.'

Dr Hartman uttered a little exclamation.

'How in the world did you notice that, Wimsey? I didn't think you'd even looked at the cage.'

'Built noticin'—improved by practice,' said Lord Peter quietly. 'Anythin' wrong leaves a kind of impression on the eye; brain trots along afterwards with the warnin'. I saw that when we came in. Only just grasped it. Can't say my mind was glued on the matter. Shows the victim's improvin', anyhow. All serene, Bunter?'

'Everything perfectly satisfactory, I trust, my lord,' replied the manservant. He had packed up his camera and plates, and was quietly restoring order in the little laboratory, whose fittings—compact as those of an ocean liner—had been disarranged for the experiment.

'Well,' said the doctor, 'I am enormously obliged to you, Lord Peter, and to Bunter too. I am hoping for a great result from these experiments, and you cannot imagine how valuable an assistance it will be to me to have a really good series of photographs. I can't afford this sort of thing—yet,' he added, his rather haggard young face wistful as he looked at the great camera, 'and I can't do the work at the hospital. There's no time; I've got to be here. A struggling G.P. can't afford to let his practice go, even in Bloomsbury. There are times when even a half-crown visit makes all the difference between making both ends meet and having an ugly hiatus.'

'As Mr Micawber said,' replied Wimsey, '"Income twenty pounds, expenditure nineteen, nineteen, six—result: happiness; expenditure twenty pounds, ought, six—result: misery." Don't prostrate yourself in gratitude, old bean; nothin' Bunter loves like messin' round with pyro and hyposulphite. Keeps his hand in. All kinds of practice welcome. Finger-prints and process plates spell seventh what-you-may-call-it of bliss, but focal-plane work on scurvy-ridden rodents (good phrase!) acceptable if no crime forthcoming. Crimes have been rather short lately. Been eatin' our heads off, haven't we, Bunter? Don't know what's come over London. I've taken to prying into my neighbour's affairs to keep from goin' stale. Frightened the postman into a fit the other day by askin' him how his young lady at Croydon was. He's a married man, livin' in Great Ormond Street.'

'How did you know?'

'Well, I didn't really. But he lives just opposite to a friend of mine—Inspector Parker; and his wife—not Parker's; he's unmarried; the postman's, I mean—

'Yes. Well, you see, it's rather odd when you come to think of it. I mean, your late father must have hidden that will in the bookcase before he went abroad. That was—how long ago? Three years? Five years?'

'About four years.'

'Quite. And since then your bright caretaker has let the damp get into the library, hasn't she? No fires, and the window getting broken, and so on. Ruinous to the books. Very distressin' to anybody like myself, you know. Yes. Well, supposin' they asked that question about the will—and you said it had been there in the damp for four years. Wouldn't they think it a bit funny if I told 'em that there was a big damp stain like a grinning face on the end of the bookshelf, and a big, damp, grinning face on the jolly old *Nüremberg Chronicle* to correspond with it, and no stain on the will which had been sittin' for four years between the two?'

Mrs Haviland screamed suddenly. 'Haviland! You fool! You utter fool!'

'Shut up!'

Haviland snapped round at his wife with a cry of rage, and she collapsed into a chair, with her hand snatched to her mouth.

'Thank you, Winnie,' said Martin. 'No, Haviland—don't trouble to explain. Winnie's given the show away. So you knew—you *knew* about the will, and you deliberately hid it away and let the funeral go on. I'm immensely obliged to you—nearly as obliged as I am to the discreet Graham. Is it fraud or conspiracy or what, to conceal wills? Mr Frobisher-Pym will know.'

'Dear, dear!' said the magistrate. 'Are you certain of your facts, Wimsey?'

'Positive,' said Wimsey, producing the *Nüremberg Chronicle* from under his arm. 'Here's the stain—you can see it yourself. Forgive me for having borrowed your property, Mr Burdock. I was rather afraid Mr Haviland might think this little discrepancy over in the still watches of the night, and decide to sell the *Chronicle*, or give it away, or even think it looked better without its back pages and cover. Allow me to return it to you, Mr Martin—intact. You will perhaps excuse my saying that I don't very much admire any of the rôles in this melodrama. It throws, as Mr Pecksniff would say, a sad light on human nature. But I resent extremely the way in which I was wangled up to that bookshelf and made to be the bright little independent witness who found the will. I may be an ass, Mr Haviland Burdock, but I'm not a bloody ass. Good night. I will wait in the car till you are all ready.'

has said. They were unpardonable, as I am sure he will realise when he comes to his right mind. But you must remember that he has been greatly shocked and upset—as we all have been—by this very very painful business. And it is not fair to say that Haviland has tried to 'do you out' of anything. He knew nothing about this iniquitous will, and he naturally saw to it that the funeral arrangements were carried out in the usual way. You must settle the future amicably between you, just as you would have done had the will not been accidentally mislaid. Now, Martin—and Haviland too—think it over. My dear boys, this scene is simply appalling. It really must not happen. Surely the estate can be divided up in a friendly manner between you. It is horrible that an old man's body should be a bone of contention between his own sons, just over a matter of money.'

'I'm sorry,' said Martin. 'I forgot myself. You're quite right, sir. Look here, Haviland, forget it. I'll let you have half the money— '

'Half the money! But it's all mine. *You'll* let me have half? How damned generous! My own money!'

'No, old man. It's mine at the moment. The governor's not buried yet, you know. That's right, isn't it, Mr Frobisher-Pym?'

'Yes; the money is yours, legally, at this moment. You must see that, Haviland. But your brother offers you half, and— '

'Half! I'm damned if I'll take half. The man's tried to swindle me out of it. I'll send for the police, and have him put in gaol for robbing the Church. You see if I don't. Give me the telephone.'

'Excuse me,' said Wimsey. 'I don't want to butt in on your family affairs any more than I have already, but I really don't advise you to send for the police.'

'*You* don't, eh? What the hell's it got to do with you?'

'Well,' said Wimsey deprecatingly, 'if this will business comes into court, I shall probably have to give evidence, because I was the bird who found the thing, don't you see?'

'Well, then?'

'Well, then. They might ask how long the will was supposed to have been where I found it.'

Haviland appeared to swallow something which obstructed his speech.

'What about it, curse you!'

asked Parker the other day whether the flyin' shows at Croydon went on all night. Parker, bein' flummoxed, said "No," without thinkin'. Bit of a give-away, what? Thought I'd give the poor devil a word in season, don't you know. Uncommonly thoughtless of Parker.'

The doctor laughed. 'You'll stay to lunch, won't you?' he said. 'Only cold meat and salad, I'm afraid. My woman won't come Sundays. Have to answer my own door. Deuced unprofessional, I'm afraid, but it can't be helped.'

'Pleasure,' said Wimsey, as they emerged from the laboratory and entered the dark little flat by the back door. 'Did you build this place on?'

'No,' said Hartman; 'the last tenant did that. He was an artist. That's why I took the place. It comes in very useful, ramshackle as it is, though this glass roof is a bit sweltering on a hot day like this. Still, I had to have something on the ground-floor, cheap, and it'll do till times get better.'

'Till your vitamin experiments make you famous, eh?' said Peter cheerfully. 'You're goin' to be the comin' man, you know. Feel it in my bones. Uncommonly neat little kitchen you've got, anyhow.'

'It does,' said the doctor. 'The lab. makes it a bit gloomy, but the woman's only here in the daytime.'

He led the way into a narrow little dining-room, where the table was laid for a cold lunch. The one window at the end farthest from the kitchen looked out into Great James Street. The room was little more than a passage, and full of doors—the kitchen door, a door in the adjacent wall leading into the entrance-hall, and a third on the opposite side, through which his visitor caught a glimpse of a moderate-sized consulting-room.

Lord Peter Wimsey and his host sat down to table, and the doctor expressed a hope that Mr Bunter would sit down with them. That correct person, however, deprecated any such suggestion.

'If I might venture to indicate my own preference, sir,' he said, 'it would be to wait upon you and his lordship in the usual manner.'

'It's no use,' said Wimsey. 'Bunter likes me to know my place. Terrorisin' sort of man, Bunter. Can't call my soul my own. Carry on, Bunter; we wouldn't presume for the world.'

Mr Bunter handed the salad, and poured out the water with a grave decency appropriate to a crusted old tawny port.

It was a Sunday afternoon in that halcyon summer of 1921. The sordid little street was almost empty. The ice-cream man alone seemed thriving and active. He leaned luxuriously on the green post at the corner, in the intervals of driving a busy trade. Bloomsbury's swarm of able-bodied and able-voiced infants was still presumably within-doors, eating steamy Sunday dinners inappropriate to the tropical weather. The only disturbing sounds came from the flat above, where heavy footsteps passed rapidly to and fro.

'Who's the merry-and-bright bloke above?' enquired Lord Peter presently. 'Not an early riser, I take it. Not that anybody is on a Sunday mornin'. Why an inscrutable Providence ever inflicted such a ghastly day on people livin' in town I can't imagine. I ought to be in the country, but I've got to meet a friend at Victoria this afternoon. Such a day to choose.... Who's the lady? Wife or accomplished friend? Gather she takes a properly submissive view of woman's duties in the home, either way. That's the bedroom overhead, I take it.'

Hartman looked at Lord Peter in some surprise.

''Scuse my beastly inquisitiveness, old thing,' said Wimsey. 'Bad habit. Not my business.'

'How did you— '

'Guesswork,' said Lord Peter, with disarming frankness. 'I heard the squawk of an iron bedstead on the ceiling and a heavy fellow get out with a bump, but it may quite well be a couch or something. Anyway, he's been potterin' about in his stocking feet over these few feet of floor for the last half-hour, while the woman has been clatterin' to and fro, in and out of the kitchen and away into the sittin'-room, with her high heels on, ever since we've been here. Hence deduction as to domestic habits of the first-floor tenants.'

'I thought,' said the doctor, with an aggrieved expression, 'you'd been listening to my valuable exposition of the beneficial effects of Vitamin B, and Lind's treatment of scurvy with fresh lemons in 1755.'

'I was listenin'' agreed Lord Peter hastily, 'but I heard the footsteps as well. Fellow's toddled into the kitchen—only wanted the matches, though; he's gone off into the sittin'-room and left her to carry on the good work. What was I sayin'? Oh, yes! You see, as I was sayin' before, one hears a thing or sees it without knowin' or thinkin' about it. Then afterwards one starts meditatin', and it all comes back, and one sorts out one's impressions. Like those plates of Bunter's. Picture's all there, l—la—what's the word I want, Bunter?'

'What!' gasped Haviland. 'Do you mean to say you imagine I'm going to let my father stay unburied, simply because of your disgusting greed about money?'

'My dear chap, do you think I'm going to let you put him underground, simply to enable you to grab my property?'

'I'm the executor of his will, and I say he shall be buried, whether you like it or not!'

'And *I'm* an executor too—and I say he shan't be buried. He can be kept absolutely decently above ground, and he shall be.'

'But hear me,' said the vicar, distracted between these two disagreeable and angry young men.

'I'll see what Graham says about you,' bawled Haviland.

'Oh, yes—the honest lawyer, Graham,' sneered Martin. '*He* knew what was in the will, didn't he? I suppose he didn't mention it to *you*, by any chance?'

'He did not,' retorted Haviland. 'He knew too well the sort of skunk *you* were to say anything about it. Not content with disgracing us with your miserable, blackmailing marriage— '

'Mr Burdock, Mr Burdock— '

'Take care, Haviland!'

'You have no more decency— '

'Stop it!'

'Than to steal your father's body and my money so that you and your damned wife can carry on your loose-living, beastly ways with a parcel of film-actors and chorus-girls— '

'Now then, Haviland. Keep your tongue off my wife and my friends. How about your own? Somebody told me Winnie'd been going the pace pretty well—next door to bankruptcy, aren't you, with the gees and the tables and God knows what! No wonder you want to do your brother out of his money. I never thought much of you, Haviland, but by God— '

'One moment!'

Mr Frobisher-Pym at last succeeded in asserting himself, partly through the habit of authority, and partly because the brothers had shouted themselves breathless.

'One moment, Martin. I will call you so, because I have known you a long time, and your father too. I understand your anger at the things Haviland

'Oh, Lord!' said Martin. 'I say, Mortimer, you didn't know you were up against Lord Peter Wimsey, did you? No wonder the cat got out of the bag. The man's known to be a perfect Sherlock. However, I seem to have got home at the crucial moment, so there's no harm done. Diana, this is Lord Peter Wimsey—my wife.'

A young and pretty woman in a black evening dress greeted Wimsey with a shy smile, and turned deprecatingly to her brother-in-law.

'Haviland, we want to explain— '

He paid no attention to her.

'Now then, Martin, the game's up.'

'I think it is, Haviland. But why make all this racket?'

'Racket! I like that. You take your own father's body out of its coffin— '

'No, no, Haviland. I knew nothing about it. I swear that. I only got the news of his death a few days ago. We were right out in the wilds, filming a show in the Pyrenees, and I came straight back as soon as I could get away. Mortimer here, with Rawlinson and Hubbard, staged the whole show by themselves. I never heard a word about it till yesterday morning in Paris, when I found his letter waiting at my old digs. Honestly, Haviland, I had nothing to do with it. Why should I? I didn't need to.'

'What do you mean?'

'Well, if I'd been here, I should only have had to speak to stop the funeral altogether. Why on earth should I have gone to the trouble of stealing the body? Quite apart from the irreverence and all that. As it is, when Mortimer told me about it, I must say I was a bit revolted at the idea, though I appreciated the kindness and the trouble they'd been to on my account. I think Mr Hancock has most cause for wrath, really. But Mortimer has been as careful as possible, sir—really he has. He has placed the old governor quite reverently and decently in what used to be the chapel, and put flowers round him and so on. You will be quite satisfied, I'm sure.'

'Yes, yes,' said Mortimer. 'No disrespect intended, don't you know. Come and see him.'

'This is dreadful,' said the vicar helplessly.

'They had to do the best they could, don't you see, in my absence,' said Martin. 'As soon as I can, I'll make proper arrangements for a suitable tomb—above ground, of course. Or possibly cremation would fit the case.'

'Latent, my lord.'

'That's it. My right-hand man, Bunter; couldn't do a thing without him. The picture's latent till you put the developer on. Same with the brain. No mystery. Little grey books all my respected grandmother! Little grey matter's all you want to remember things with. As a matter of curiosity, was I right about those people above?'

'Perfectly. The man's a gas-company's inspector. A bit surly, but devoted (after his own fashion) to his wife. I mean, he doesn't mind hulking in bed on a Sunday morning and letting her do the chores, but he spends all the money he can spare on giving her pretty hats and fur coats and what not. They've only been married about six months. I was called in to her when she had a touch of 'flu in the spring, and he was almost off his head with anxiety. She's a lovely little woman, I must say—Italian. He picked her up in some eating-place in Soho, I believe. Glorious dark hair and eyes; Venus sort of figure; proper contours in all the right places; good skin—all that sort of thing. She was a bit of a draw to that restaurant while she was there, I fancy. Lively. She had an old admirer round here one day—awkward little Italian fellow, with a knife—active as a monkey. Might have been unpleasant, but I happened to be on the spot, and her husband came along. People are always laying one another out in these streets. Good for business, of course, but one gets tired of tying up broken heads and slits in the jugular. Still, I suppose the girl can't help being attractive, though I don't say she's what you might call stand-offish in her manner. She's sincerely fond of Brotherton, I think, though—that's his name.'

Wimsey nodded inattentively. 'I suppose life is a bit monotonous here,' he said.

'Professionally, yes. Births and drunks and wife-beatings are pretty common. And all the usual ailments, of course. Just at present I'm living on infant diarrhœa chiefly—bound to, this hot weather, you know. With the autumn, 'flu and bronchitis set in. I may get an occasional pneumonia. Legs, of course, and varicose veins—God!' cried the doctor explosively, 'if only I could get away, and do my experiments!'

'Ah!' said Peter, 'where's that eccentric old millionaire with a mysterious disease, who always figures in the novels? A lightning diagnosis—a miracu-

lous cure—"God bless you, doctor; here are five thousand pounds"—Harley Street— '

'That sort doesn't live in Bloomsbury,' said the doctor.

'It must be fascinatin', diagnosin' things,' said Peter thoughtfully. 'How d'you do it? I mean, is there a regular set of symptoms for each disease, like callin' a club to show you want your partner to go no trumps? You don't just say: "This fellow's got a pimple on his nose, therefore he has fatty degeneration of the heart— "'

'I hope not,' said the doctor drily.

'Or is it more like gettin' a clue to a crime?' went on Peter. 'You see somethin'—a room, or a body, say, all knocked about anyhow, and there's a damn sight of symptoms of somethin' wrong, and you've got just to pick out the ones which tell the story?'

'That's more like it,' said Dr Hartman. 'Some symptoms are significant in themselves—like the condition of the gums in scurvy, let us say—others in conjunction with— '

He broke off, and both sprang to their feet as a shrill scream sounded suddenly from the flat above, followed by a heavy thud. A man's voice cried out lamentably; feet ran violently to and fro; then, as the doctor and his guests stood frozen in consternation, came the man himself—falling down the stairs in his haste, hammering at Hartman's door.

'Help! Help! Let me in! My wife! He's murdered her!'

They ran hastily to the door and let him in. He was a big, fair man, in his shirt-sleeves and stockings. His hair stood up, and his face was set in bewildered misery.

'She is dead—dead. He was her lover,' he groaned. 'Come and look—take her away—Doctor! I have lost my wife! My Maddalena— ' He paused, looked wildly for a moment, and then said hoarsely, 'Someone's been in—somehow—stabbed her—murdered her. I'll have the law on him, doctor. Come quickly—she was cooking the chicken for my dinner. Ah-h-h!'

He gave a long, hysterical shriek, which ended in a hiccupping laugh. The doctor took him roughly by the arm and shook him. 'Pull yourself together, Mr Brotherton,' he said sharply. 'Perhaps she is only hurt. Stand out of the way!'

'Frobisher-Pym! By Jove! how decent of you to come over! We've got some old friends of yours here. Oh!' (in a slightly altered tone) 'Burdock! Well, well— '

'Damn you!' said Haviland Burdock, thrusting furiously past the magistrate, who was trying to hold him back. 'Damn you, you swine! Chuck this bloody farce. What have you done with the body?'

'The body, eh?' said Mr Mortimer, retreating in some confusion.

'Yes, curse you! Your friend Hubbard's split. It's no good denying it. What the devil do you mean by it? You've got the body here somewhere. Where is it? Hand it over!'

He strode threateningly round the screen into the lamplight. A tall, thin man rose up unexpectedly from the depths of an arm-chair and confronted him.

'Hold hard, old man!'

'Good God!' said Haviland, stepping heavily back on Wimsey's toes. 'Martin!'

'Sure,' said the other. 'Here I am. Come back like a bad half-penny. How are you?'

'So *you're* at the bottom of this!' stormed Haviland. 'I might have known it. You damned, dirty hound! I suppose you think it's decent to drag your father out of his coffin and tote him about the country like a circus. It's degrading. It's disgusting. It's abominable. You must be perfectly dead to all decent feeling. You don't deny it, I suppose?'

'I say, Burdock!' expostulated Mortimer.

'Shut up, curse you!' said Haviland. 'I'll deal with you in a minute. Now, look here, Martin, I'm not going to stand any more of this disgraceful behaviour. You'll give up that body, and— '

'Just a moment, just a moment,' said Martin. He stood, smiling a little, his hands thrust into the pockets of his dinner-jacket. 'This *éclaircissement* seems to be rather public. Who are all these people? Oh, it's the vicar, I see. I'm afraid we owe you a little explanation, vicar. And, er— '

'This is Lord Peter Wimsey,' put in Mr Frobisher-Pym, 'who discovered your—I'm afraid, Burdock, I must agree with your brother in calling it your disgraceful plot.'

Burdocks. How about you, Wimsey? You were right, after all, and I think Burdock owes you an apology.'

'Oh, I'll keep out of it,' said Wimsey. 'I shan't be exactly *persona grata*, don't you know. It's going to mean a deuce of a big financial loss to the Haviland Burdocks.'

'So it is. Most unpleasant. Well, perhaps you're right. Come along, vicar.'

Wimsey and his hostess sat discussing the matter by the fire for half an hour or so, when Mr Frobisher-Pym suddenly put his head in and said:

'I say, Wimsey—we're all going over to Mortimer's. I wish you'd come and drive the car. Merridew always has the day off on Sunday, and I don't care about driving at night, particularly in this fog.'

'Right you are,' said Wimsey. He ran upstairs, and came down in a few moments wearing a heavy leather flying-coat, and with a parcel under his arm. He greeted the Burdocks briefly, climbed into the driving-seat, and was soon steering cautiously through the mist along the Herriotting Road.

He smiled a little grimly to himself as they came up under the trees to the spot where the phantom coach had passed him. As they passed the gate through which the ingenious apparition had vanished, he indulged himself by pointing it out, and was rewarded by hearing a snarl from Haviland. At the well-remembered fork, he took the right-hand turning into Frimpton and drove steadily for six miles or so, till a warning shout from Mr Frobisher-Pym summoned him to look out for the turning up to Mortimer's.

Mr Mortimer's house, with its extensive stabling and farm buildings, stood about two miles back from the main road. In the darkness Wimsey could see little of it; but he noticed that the ground-floor windows were all lit up, and, when the door opened to the magistrate's imperative ring, a loud burst of laughter from the interior gave evidence that Mr Mortimer was not taking his misdoings too seriously.

'Is Mr Mortimer at home?' demanded Mr Frobisher-Pym, in the tone of a man not to be trifled with.

'Yes, sir. Will you come in, please?'

They stepped into a large, old-fashioned hall, brilliantly lit, and made cosy with a heavy oak screen across the door. As Wimsey advanced, blinking, from the darkness, he saw a large, thick-set man, with a ruddy face, advancing with hand outstretched in welcome.

'Only hurt?' said the man, sitting heavily down on the nearest chair. 'No—no—she is dead—little Maddalena—Oh, my God!'

Dr Hartman snatched a roll of bandages and a few surgical appliances from the consulting-room, and he ran upstairs, followed closely by Lord Peter. Bunter remained for a few moments to combat hysterics with cold water. Then he stepped across to the dining-room window and shouted.

'Well, wot is it?' cried a voice from the street.

'Would you be so kind as to step in here a minute, officer?' said Mr Bunter. 'There's been murder done.'

When Brotherton and Bunter arrived upstairs with the constable, they found Dr Hartman and Lord Peter in the little kitchen. The doctor was kneeling beside the woman's body. At their entrance he looked up, and shook his head.

'Death instantaneous,' he said. 'Clean through the heart. Poor child. She cannot have suffered at all. Oh, constable, it is very fortunate you are here. Murder appears to have been done—though I'm afraid the man has escaped. Probably Mr Brotherton can give us some help. He was in the flat at the time.'

The man had sunk down on a chair, and was gazing at the body with a face from which all meaning seemed to have been struck out. The policeman produced a notebook.

'Now, sir,' he said, 'don't let's waste any time. Sooner we can get to work the more likely we are to catch our man. Now, you was 'ere at the time, was you?'

Brotherton stared a moment, then, making a violent effort, he answered steadily:

'I was in the sitting-room, smoking and reading the paper. My—*she*—was getting the dinner ready in here. I heard her give a scream, and I rushed in and found her lying on the floor. She didn't have time to say anything. When I found she was dead, I rushed to the window, and saw the fellow scrambling away over the glass roof there. I yelled at him, but he disappeared. Then I ran down— '

''Arf a mo',' said the policeman. 'Now, see 'ere, sir, didn't you think to go after 'im at once?'

'My first thought was for her,' said the man. 'I thought maybe she wasn't dead. I tried to bring her round— ' His speech ended in a groan.

'You say he came in through the window,' said the policeman.

'I beg your pardon, officer,' interrupted Lord Peter, who had been apparently making a mental inventory of the contents of the kitchen. 'Mr Brotherton suggested that the man went *out* through the window. It's better to be accurate.'

'It's the same thing,' said the doctor. 'It's the only way he could have come in. These flats are all alike. The staircase door leads into the sitting-room, and Mr Brotherton was there, so the man couldn't have come that way.'

'And,' said Peter, 'he didn't get in through the bedroom window, or we should have seen him. We were in the room below. Unless, indeed, he let himself down from the roof. Was the door between the bedroom and the sitting-room open?' he asked suddenly, turning to Brotherton.

The man hesitated a moment. 'Yes,' he said finally. 'Yes, I'm sure it was.'

'Could you have seen the man if he had come through the bedroom window?'

'I couldn't have helped seeing him.'

'Come, come, sir,' said the policeman, with some irritation, 'better let *me* ask the questions. Stands to reason the fellow wouldn't get in through the bedroom window in full view of the street.'

'How clever of you to think of that,' said Wimsey. 'Of course not. Never occurred to me. Then it must have been this window, as you say.'

'And, what's more, here's his marks on the window-sill,' said the constable triumphantly, pointing to some blurred traces among the London soot. 'That's right. Down he goes by that drain-pipe, over the glass roof down there—what's that the roof of?'

'My laboratory,' said the doctor. 'Heavens! to think that while we were there at dinner this murdering villain— '

'Quite so, sir,' agreed the constable. 'Well, he'd get away over the wall into the court be'ind. 'E'll 'ave been seen there, no fear; you needn't anticipate much trouble in layin' 'ands on 'im, sir. I'll go round there in 'arf a tick. Now then, sir'—turning to Brotherton—''ave you any idea wot this party might have looked like?'

Brotherton lifted a wild face, and the doctor interposed.

'I think you ought to know, constable,' he said, 'that there was—well, not a murderous attack, but what might have been one, made on this woman

the funeral, Mr Frobisher-Pym, and exhibited every sign of grief and respect. Even now he hardly seems to realise the sinfulness of his conduct. I feel it very much, as a priest and as a pastor—very much indeed.'

'Oh, well, Hancock,' said Mr Frobisher-Pym, 'you must make allowances, you know. Hubbard's not a bad fellow, but you can't expect refinement of feeling from a man of his class. The point is, what are we to do about it? Mr Burdock must be told, of course. It's a most awkward situation. Dear me! Hubbard confessed the whole conspiracy, you say? How did he come to do that?'

'I taxed him with it,' said the parson. 'When I came to think over Lord Peter Wimsey's remarks, I was troubled in my mind. It seemed to me—I cannot say why—that there might be some truth in the story, wild as it appeared. I was so worried about it that I swept the floor of the Lady-chapel myself last night, and I found quite a quantity of sawdust among the sweepings. That led me to search for the key of the furnace-house, and I discovered it in some bushes at a little distance—in fact, within a stone's throw—of the furnace-house window. I sought guidance in prayer—and from my wife, whose judgment I greatly respect—and I made up my mind to speak to Hubbard after Mass. It was a great relief to me that he did not present himself at Early Celebration. Feeling as I did, I should have had scruples.'

'Just so, just so,' said the magistrate, a little impatiently. 'Well, you taxed him with it, and he confessed?'

'He did. I am sorry to say he showed no remorse at all. He even laughed. It was a most painful interview.'

'I am sure it must have been,' said Mrs Frobisher-Pym sympathetically.

'We must go and see Mr Burdock,' said the magistrate, rising. 'Whatever old Burdock may or may not have intended by that iniquitous will of his, it's quite evident that Hubbard and Mortimer and Rawlinson were entirely in the wrong. Upon my word, I've no idea whether it's an indictable offence to steal a body. I must look it up. But I should say it was. If there is any property in a corpse, it must belong to the family or the executors. And in any case, it's sacrilege, to say nothing of the scandal in the parish. I must say, Hancock, it won't do us any good in the eyes of the Nonconformists. However, no doubt you realise that. Well, it's an unpleasant job, and the sooner we tackle it the better. I'll run over to the vicarage with you and help you to break it to the