Chapter 5

Mr Parker was a bachelor, and occupied a Georgian but inconvenient flat at № 12A Great Ormond Street, for which he paid a pound a week. His exertions in the cause of civilization were rewarded, not by the gift of diamond rings from empresses or munificent cheques from grateful Prime Ministers, but by a modest, though sufficient, salary, drawn from the pockets of the British taxpayer. He awoke, after a long day of arduous and inconclusive labour, to the smell of burnt porridge. Through his bedroom window, hygienically open top and bottom, a raw fog was rolling slowly in, and the sight of a pair of winter pants, flung hastily over a chair the previous night, fretted him with a sense of the sordid absurdity of the human form. The telephone bell rang, and he crawled wretchedly out of bed and into the sitting-room, where Mrs Munns, who did for him by the day, was laying the table, sneezing as she went.

Mr Bunter was speaking.

'His lordship says he'd be very glad, sir, if you could make it convenient to step round to breakfast.'

If the odour of kidneys and bacon had been wafted along the wire, Mr Parker could not have experienced a more vivid sense of consolation.

'Tell his lordship I'll be with him in half an hour,' he said, thankfully, and plunging into the bathroom, which was also the kitchen, he informed Mrs Munns, who was just making tea from a kettle which had gone off the boil, that he should be out to breakfast.

'You can take the porridge home for the family,' he added, viciously, and flung off his dressing-gown with such determination that Mrs Munns could only scuttle away with a snort.

A 19 'bus deposited him in Piccadilly only fifteen minutes later than his rather sanguine impulse had prompted him to suggest, and Mr Bunter served him with glorious food, incomparable coffee, and the *Daily Mail* before a blazing fire of wood and coal. A distant voice singing the 'et iterum venturus est' from Bach's *Mass in B minor* proclaimed that for

the owner of the flat cleanliness and godliness met at least once a day, and presently Lord Peter roamed in, moist and verbena-scented, in a bath-robe cheerfully patterned with unnaturally variegated peacocks.

'Mornin', old dear,' said that gentleman. 'Beast of a day, ain't it? Very good of you to trundle out in it, but I had a letter I wanted you to see, and I hadn't the energy to come round to your place. Bunter and I've been makin' a night of it.'

'What's the letter?' asked Parker.

'Never talk business with your mouth full,' said Lord Peter, reprovingly; 'have some Oxford marmalade—and then I'll show you my Dante; they brought it round last night. What ought I to read this morning, Bunter?'

'Lord Erith's collection is going to be sold, my lord. There is a column about it in the *Morning Post*. I think your lordship should look at this review of Sir Julian Freke's new book on *The Physiological Bases of the Conscience* in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Then there is a very singular little burglary in the *Chronicle*, my lord, and an attack on titled families in the *Herald*—rather ill-written, if I may say so, but not without unconscious humour which your lordship will appreciate.'

'All right, give me that and the burglary,' said his lordship.

'I have looked over the other papers,' pursued Mr Bunter, indicating a formidable pile, 'and marked your lordship's after-breakfast reading.'

'Oh, pray don't allude to it,' said Lord Peter; 'you take my appetite away.'

There was silence, but for the crunching of toast and the crackling of paper.

'I see they adjourned the inquest,' said Parker presently.

'Nothing else to do,' said Lord Peter; 'but Lady Levy arrived last night, and will have to go and fail to identify the body this morning for Sugg's benefit.'

'Time, too,' said Mr Parker shortly.

Silence fell again.

'I don't think much of your burglary, Bunter,' said Lord Peter. 'Competent, of course, but no imagination. I want imagination in a criminal. Where's the *Morning Post*?'

Out of the tail of his eye, Lord Peter saw the redheaded secretary add up five columns of figures simultaneously and jot down the answer.

'Dyed his hair, did he?' said Mr Milligan.

'Dyed it red,' said Lord Peter. The secretary looked up. 'Odd thing is,' continued Wimsey, 'they can't lay hands on the bottle. Somethin' fishy there, don't you think, what?'

The secretary's interest seemed to have evaporated. He inserted a fresh sheet into his looseleaf ledger, and carried forward a row of digits from the preceding page.

'I daresay there's nothin' in it,' said Lord Peter, rising to go. 'Well, it's uncommonly good of you to be bothered with me like this, Mr Milligan—my mother'll be no end pleased. She'll write you about the date.'

'I'm charmed,' said Mr Milligan. 'Very pleased to have met you.'

Mr Scoot rose silently to open the door, uncoiling as he did so a portentous length of thin leg, hitherto hidden by the desk. With a mental sigh Lord Peter estimated him at six-foot-four.

'It's a pity I can't put Scoot's head on Milligan's shoulders,' said Lord Peter, emerging into the swirl of the city. 'And what *will* my mother say?'

a charitable object, has something about it unpalatable to any but the hardened Secret Service agent. Lord Peter temporized.

'That's awfully decent of you,' he said. 'I'm sure they'd be no end grateful. But you'd better not give it to me, you know. I might spend it, or lose it. I'm not very reliable, I'm afraid. The vicar's the right person—the Rev. Constantine Throgmorton, St John-before-the-Latin-Gate Vicarage, Duke's Denver, if you like to send it there.'

'I will,' said Mr Milligan. 'Will you write it out now for a thousand pounds, Scoot, in case it slips my mind later?'

The secretary, a sandy-haired young man with a long chin and no eyebrows, silently did as he was requested. Lord Peter looked from the bald head of Mr Milligan to the red head of the secretary, hardened his heart and tried again.

'Well, I'm no end grateful to you, Mr Milligan, and so'll my mother be when I tell her. I'll let you know the date of the bazaar—it's not quite settled yet, and I've got to see some other business men, don't you know. I thought of askin' someone from one of the big newspaper combines to represent British advertisin' talent, what?—and a friend of mine promises me a leadin' German financier—very interestin' if there ain't too much feelin' against it down in the country, and I'll have to find somebody or other to do the Hebrew point of view. I thought of askin' Levy, y'know, only he's floated off in this inconvenient way.'

'Yes,' said Mr Milligan, 'that's a very curious thing, though I don't mind saying, Lord Peter, that it's a convenience to me. He had a cinch on my railroad combine, but I'd nothing against him personally, and if he turns up after I've brought off a little deal I've got on, I'll be happy to give him the right hand of welcome.'

A vision passed through Lord Peter's mind of Sir Reuben kept somewhere in custody till a financial crisis was over. This was exceedingly possible, and far more agreeable than his earlier conjecture; it also agreed better with the impression he was forming of Mr Milligan.

'Well, it's a rum go,' said Lord Peter, 'but I daresay he had his reasons. Much better not inquire into people's reasons, y'know, what? Specially as a police friend of mine who's connected with the case says the old johnnie dyed his hair before he went.'

After a further silence, Lord Peter said: 'You might send for the catalogue, Bunter, that Apollonios Rhodios[1] might be worth looking at. No, I'm damned if I'm going to stodge through that review, but you can stick the book on the library list if you like. His book on crime was entertainin' enough as far as it went, but the fellow's got a bee in his bonnet. Thinks God's a secretion of the liver—all right once in a way, but there's no need to keep on about it. There's nothing you can't prove if your outlook is only sufficiently limited. Look at Sugg.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Parker; 'I wasn't attending. Argentines are steadying a little, I see.'

'Milligan,' said Lord Peter.

'Oil's in a bad way. Levy's made a difference there. That funny little boom in Peruvians that came on just before he disappeared has died away again. I wonder if he was concerned in it. D'you know at all?'

'I'll find out,' said Lord Peter. 'What was it?'

'Oh, an absolutely dud enterprise that hadn't been heard of for years. It suddenly took a little lease of life last week. I happened to notice it because my mother got let in for a couple of hundred shares a long time ago. It never paid a dividend. Now it's petered out again.'

Wimsey pushed his plate aside and lit a pipe.

'Having finished, I don't mind doing some work,' he said. 'How did you get on yesterday?'

'I didn't,' replied Parker. 'I sleuthed up and down those flats in my own bodily shape and two different disguises. I was a gas-meter man and a collector for a Home for Lost Doggies, and I didn't get a thing to go on, except a servant in the top flat at the Battersea Bridge Road end of the row who said she thought she heard a bump on the roof one night. Asked which night, she couldn't rightly say. Asked if it was Monday night, she thought it very likely. Asked if it mightn't have been in that high wind on Saturday night that blew my chimney-pot off, she couldn't say but what it might have been. Asked if she was sure it was on the roof and not inside the flat, said to be sure they did find a picture tumbled down

[1]Apollonios Rhodios. Lorenzobodi Alopa. Firenze. 1496. (4to.) The excitement attendant on the solution of the Battersea Mystery did not prevent Lord Peter from securing this rare work before his departure for Corsica.

next morning. Very suggestible girl. I saw your friends, Mr and Mrs Appledore, who received me coldly, but could make no definite complaint about Thipps except that his mother dropped her h's, and that he once called on them uninvited, armed with a pamphlet about anti-vivisection. The Indian Colonel on the first floor was loud, but unexpectedly friendly. He gave me Indian curry for supper and some very good whisky, but he's a sort of hermit, and all *he* could tell me was that he couldn't stand Mrs Appledore.'

'Did you get nothing at the house?'

'Only Levy's private diary. I brought it away with me. Here it is. It doesn't tell one much, though. It's full of entries like: "Tom and Annie to dinner"; and "My dear wife's birthday; gave her an old opal ring"; "Mr Arbuthnot dropped in to tea; he wants to marry Rachel, but I should like someone steadier for my treasure." Still, I thought it would show who came to the house and so on. He evidently wrote it up at night. There's no entry for Monday.'

'I expect it'll be useful,' said Lord Peter, turning over the pages. 'Poor old buffer. I say, I'm not so certain now he was done away with.'

He detailed to Mr Parker his day's work.

'Arbuthnot?' said Parker. 'Is that the Arbuthnot of the diary?'

'I suppose so. I hunted him up because I knew he was fond of fooling round the Stock Exchange. As for Milligan, he *looks* all right, but I believe he's pretty ruthless in business and you never can tell. Then there's the red-haired secretary—lightnin' calculator man with a face like a fish, keeps on sayin' nuthin'—got the Tarbaby in his family tree, I should think. Milligan's got a jolly good motive for, at any rate, suspendin' Levy for a few days. Then there's the new man.'

'What new man?'

'Ah, that's the letter I mentioned to you. Where did I put it? Here we are. Good parchment paper, printed address of solicitor's office in Salisbury, and postmark to correspond. Very precisely written with a fine nib by an elderly business man of old-fashioned habits.'

Parker took the letter and read:

to pieces, rain pourin' in and so on—vicar catchin' rheumatism at early service, owin' to the draught blowin' in over the altar—you know the sort of thing. They've got a man down startin' on it—little beggar called Thipps—lives with an aged mother in Battersea—vulgar little beast, but quite good on angel roofs and things, I'm told.'

At this point, Lord Peter watched his interlocutor narrowly, but finding that this rigmarole produced in him no reaction more startling than polite interest tinged with faint bewilderment, he abandoned this line of investigation, and proceeded:

'I say, I beg your pardon, frightfully—I'm afraid I'm bein' beastly long-winded. Fact is, my mother is gettin' up this bazaar, and she thought it'd be an awfully interestin' side-show to have some lectures—sort of little talks, y'know—by eminent business men of all nations. "How I Did It" kind of touch, y'know—"A Drop of Oil with a Kerosene King"—"Cash Conscience and Cocoa" and so on. It would interest people down there no end. You see, all my mother's friends will be there, and we've none of us any money—not what you'd call money, I mean—I expect our incomes wouldn't pay your telephone calls, would they?—but we like awfully to hear about the people who can make money. Gives us a sort of uplifted feelin', don't you know. Well, anyway, I mean, my mother'd be frightfully pleased and grateful to you, Mr Milligan, if you'd come down and give us a few words as a representative American. It needn't take more than ten minutes or so, y'know, because the local people can't understand much beyond shootin' and huntin', and my mother's crowd can't keep their minds on anythin' more than ten minutes together, but we'd really appreciate it very much if you'd come and stay a day or two and just give us a little breezy word on the almighty dollar.'

'Why, yes,' said Mr Milligan, 'I'd like to, Lord Peter. It's kind of the Duchess to suggest it. It's a very sad thing when these fine old antiques begin to wear out. I'll come with great pleasure. And perhaps you'd be kind enough to accept a little donation to the Restoration Fund.'

This unexpected development nearly brought Lord Peter up all standing. To pump, by means of an ingenious lie, a hospitable gentleman whom you are inclined to suspect of a peculiarly malicious murder, and to accept from him in the course of the proceedings a large cheque for

comin' to the point. My brother never would let me stand for the county, y'know—said I wandered on so nobody'd know what I was talkin' about.'

'Pleased to meet you, Lord Wimsey,' said Mr Milligan. 'Won't you take a seat?'

'Thanks,' said Lord Peter, 'but I'm not a peer, you know—that's my brother Denver. My name's Peter. It's a silly name, I always think, so old-world and full of homely virtue and that sort of thing, but my godfathers and godmothers in my baptism are responsible for that, I suppose, officially—which is rather hard on them, you know, as they didn't actually choose it. But we always have a Peter, after the third duke, who betrayed five kings somewhere about the Wars of the Roses, though come to think of it, it ain't anything to be proud of. Still, one has to make the best of it.'

Mr Milligan, thus ingeniously placed at that disadvantage which attends ignorance, manoeuvred for position, and offered his interrupter a Corona Corona.

'Thanks, awfully,' said Lord Peter, 'though you really mustn't tempt me to stay here burblin' all afternoon. By Jove, Mr Milligan, if you offer people such comfortable chairs and cigars like these, I wonder they don't come an' live in your office.' He added mentally: 'I wish to goodness I could get those long-toed boots off you. How's a man to know the size of your feet? And a head like a potato. It's enough to make one swear.'

'Say now, Lord Peter,' said Mr Milligan, 'can I do anything for you?'

'Well, d'you know,' said Lord Peter, 'I'm wonderin' if you would. It's damned cheek to ask you, but fact is, it's my mother, you know. Wonderful woman, but don't realize what it means, demands on the time of a busy man like you. We don't understand hustle over here, you know, Mr Milligan.'

'Now don't you mention that,' said Mr Milligan; 'I'd be surely charmed to do anything to oblige the Duchess.'

He felt a momentary qualm as to whether a duke's mother were also a duchess, but breathed more freely as Lord Peter went on:

'Thanks—that's uncommonly good of you. Well, now, it's like this. My mother—most energetic, self-sacrificin' woman, don't you see, is thinkin' of gettin' up a sort of a charity bazaar down at Denver this winter, in aid of the church roof, y'know. Very sad case, Mr Milligan—fine old antique—early English windows and decorated angel roof, and all that—all tumblin'

Crimplesham and Wicks,
Solicitors,
Milford Hill, Salisbury,
17 November, 192—.

Sir,

With reference to your advertisement today in the personal column of *The Times*, I am disposed to believe that the eyeglasses and chain in question may be those I lost on the L. B. & S. C. Electric Railway while visiting London last Monday. I left Victoria by the 5.45 train, and did not notice my loss till I arrived at Balham. This indication and the optician's specification of the glasses, which I enclose, should suffice at once as an identification and a guarantee of my bona fides. If the glasses should prove to be mine, I should be greatly obliged to you if you would kindly forward them to me by registered post, as the chain was a present from my daughter, and is one of my dearest possessions.

Thanking you in advance for this kindness, and regretting the trouble to which I shall be putting you, I am,

Yours very truly,
Thos. Crimplesham

Lord Peter Wimsey,
110, Piccadilly, W.
(Encl.)

'Dear me,' said Parker, 'this is what you might call unexpected.'

'Either it is some extraordinary misunderstanding,' said Lord Peter, 'or Mr Crimplesham is a very bold and cunning villain. Or possibly, of course, they are the wrong glasses. We may as well get a ruling on that point at once. I suppose the glasses are at the Yard. I wish you'd just ring 'em up and ask 'em to send round an optician's description of them at once—and you might ask at the same time whether it's a very common prescription.'

'Right you are,' said Parker, and took the receiver off its hook.

'And now,' said his friend, when the message was delivered, 'just come into the library for a minute.'

On the library table, Lord Peter had spread out a series of bromide prints, some dry, some damp, and some but half-washed.

'These little ones are the originals of the photos we've been taking,' said Lord Peter, 'and these big ones are enlargements all made to precisely the same scale. This one here is the footmark on the linoleum; we'll put that by itself at present. Now these finger-prints can be divided into five lots. I've numbered 'em on the prints—see?—and made a list:

A. The finger-prints of Levy himself, off his little bedside book and his hair-brush—this and this—you can't mistake the little scar on the thumb.

B. The smudges made by the gloved fingers of the man who slept in Levy's room on Monday night. They show clearly on the water-bottle and on the boots—superimposed on Levy's. They are very distinct on the boots—surprisingly so for gloved hands, and I deduce that the gloves were rubber ones and had recently been in water.

Here's another interestin' point. Levy walked in the rain on Monday night, as we know, and these dark marks are mud-splashes. You see they lie *over* Levy's finger-prints in every case. Now see: on this left boot we find the stranger's thumb-mark *over* the mud on the leather above the heel. That's a funny place to find a thumb-mark on a boot, isn't it? That is, if Levy took off his own boots. But it's the place where you'd expect to see it if somebody forcibly removed his boots for him. Again, most of the stranger's finger-marks come *over* the mud-marks, but here is one splash of mud which comes on top of them again. Which makes me infer that the stranger came back to Park Lane, wearing Levy's boots, in a cab, carriage or car, but that at some point or other he walked a little way—just enough to tread in a puddle and get a splash on the boots. What do you say?'

'Very pretty,' said Parker. 'A bit intricate, though, and the marks are not all that I could wish a finger-print to be.'

'Well, I won't lay too much stress on it. But it fits in with our previous ideas. Now let's turn to:

C. The prints obligingly left by my own particular villain on the further edge of Thipps's bath, where you spotted them, and I ought to be scourged for not having spotted them. The left hand, you notice, the base of the palm and the fingers, but not the tips, looking as though he had steadied himself on the edge of the bath while leaning down to adjust something at

'Well,' said Lord Peter, 'you might do worse. Money's money, ain't it? And Lady Levy is quite a redeemin' point. At least, my mother knew her people.'

'Oh, *she's* all right,' said the Honourable Freddy, 'and the old man's nothing to be ashamed of nowadays. He's self-made, of course, but he don't pretend to be anything else. No side. Toddles off to business on a 96 'bus every morning. "Can't make up my mind to taxis, my boy," he says. "I had to look at every halfpenny when I was a young man, and I can't get out of the way of it now." Though, if he's takin' his family out, nothing's too good. Rachel—that's the girl—always laughs at the old man's little economies.'

'I suppose they've sent for Lady Levy,' said Lord Peter.

'I suppose so,' agreed the other. 'I'd better pop round and express sympathy or somethin', what? Wouldn't look well not to, d'you think? But it's deuced awkward. What am I to say?'

'I don't think it matters much what you say,' said Lord Peter, helpfully. 'I should ask if you can do anything.'

'Thanks,' said the lover, 'I will. Energetic young man. Count on me. Always at your service. Ring me up any time of the day or night. That's the line to take, don't you think?'

'That's the idea,' said Lord Peter.

Mr John P. Milligan, the London representative of the great Milligan railroad and shipping company, was dictating code cables to his secretary in an office in Lombard Street, when a card was brought up to him, bearing the simple legend:

LORD PETER WIMSEY
Marlborough Club

Mr Milligan was annoyed at the interruption, but, like many of his nation, if he had a weak point, it was the British aristocracy. He postponed for a few minutes the elimination from the map of a modest but promising farm, and directed that the visitor should be shown up.

'Good-afternoon,' said that nobleman, ambling genially in, 'it's most uncommonly good of you to let me come round wastin' your time like this. I'll try not to be too long about it, though I'm not awfully good at

you say? Argentines? Gone all to hell. Old Levy bunkin' off like that's knocked the bottom out of the market.'

'You don't say so,' said Lord Peter. 'What d'you suppose has happened to the old man?'

'Cursed if I know,' said the Honourable Freddy; 'knocked on the head by the bears, I should think.'

'P'r'aps he's gone off on his own,' suggested Lord Peter. 'Double life, you know. Giddy old blighters, some of these City men.'

'Oh, no,' said the Honourable Freddy, faintly roused; 'no, hang it all, Wimsey, I wouldn't care to say that. He's a decent old domestic bird, and his daughter's a charmin' girl. Besides, he's straight enough—he'd *do* you down fast enough, but he wouldn't *let* you down. Old Anderson is badly cut up about it.'

'Who's Anderson?'

'Chap with property out there. He belongs here. He was goin' to meet Levy on Tuesday. He's afraid those railway people will get in now, and then it'll be all U. P.'

'Who's runnin' the railway people over here?' inquired Lord Peter.

'Yankee blighter, John P. Milligan. He's got an option, or says he has. You can't trust these brutes.'

'Can't Anderson hold on?'

'Anderson isn't Levy. Hasn't got the shekels. Besides, he's only one. Levy covers the ground—he could boycott Milligan's beastly railway if he liked. That's where he's got the pull, you see.'

'B'lieve I met the Milligan man somewhere,' said Lord Peter, thoughtfully. 'Ain't he a hulking brute with black hair and a beard?'

'You're thinkin' of somebody else,' said the Honourable Freddy. 'Milligan don't stand any higher than I do, unless you call five-feet-ten hulking—and he's bald, anyway.'

Lord Peter considered this over the Gorgonzola. Then he said: 'Didn't know Levy had a charmin' daughter.'

'Oh, yes,' said the Honourable Freddy, with an elaborate detachment. 'Met her and Mamma last year abroad. That's how I got to know the old man. He's been very decent. Let me into this Argentine business on the ground floor, don't you know?'

the bottom, the pince-nez perhaps. Gloved, you see, but showing no ridge or seam of any kind—I say rubber, you say rubber. That's that. Now see here:

D and E come off a visiting-card of mine. There's this thing at the corner, marked F, but that you can disregard; in the original document it's a sticky mark left by the thumb of the youth who took it from me, after first removing a piece of chewing-gum from his teeth with his finger to tell me that Mr Milligan might or might not be disengaged. D and E are the thumb-marks of Mr Milligan and his red-haired secretary. I'm not clear which is which, but I saw the youth with the chewing-gum hand the card to the secretary, and when I got into the inner shrine I saw John P. Milligan standing with it in his hand, so it's one or the other, and for the moment it's immaterial to our purpose which is which. I boned the card from the table when I left.'

'Well, now, Parker, here's what's been keeping Bunter and me up till the small hours. I've measured and measured every way backwards and forwards till my head's spinnin', and I've stared till I'm nearly blind, but I'm hanged if I can make my mind up. Question 1. Is C identical with B? Question 2. Is D or E identical with B? There's nothing to go on but the size and shape, of course, and the marks are so faint—what do you think?'

Parker shook his head doubtfully.

'I think E might almost be put out of the question,' he said; 'it seems such an excessively long and narrow thumb. But I think there is a decided resemblance between the span of B on the water-bottle and C on the bath. And I don't see any reason why D shouldn't be the same as B, only there's so little to judge from.'

'Your untutored judgment and my measurements have brought us both to the same conclusion—if you can call it a conclusion,' said Lord Peter, bitterly.

'Another thing,' said Parker. 'Why on earth should we try to connect B with C? The fact that you and I happen to be friends doesn't make it necessary to conclude that the two cases we happen to be interested in have any organic connection with one another. Why should they? The only person who thinks they have is Sugg, and he's nothing to go by. It would be different if there were any truth in the suggestion that the man

in the bath was Levy, but we know for a certainty he wasn't. It's ridiculous to suppose that the same man was employed in committing two totally distinct crimes on the same night, one in Battersea and the other in Park Lane.'

'I know,' said Wimsey, 'though of course we mustn't forget that Levy *was* in Battersea at the time, and now we know he didn't return home at twelve as was supposed, we've no reason to think he ever left Battersea at all.'

'True. But there are other places in Battersea besides Thipps's bathroom. And he *wasn't* in Thipps's bathroom. In fact, come to think of it, that's the one place in the universe where we know definitely that he wasn't. So what's Thipps's bath got to do with it?'

'I don't know,' said Lord Peter. 'Well, perhaps we shall get something better to go on today.'

He leaned back in his chair and smoked thoughtfully for some time over the papers which Bunter had marked for him.

'They've got you out in the limelight,' he said. 'Thank Heaven, Sugg hates me too much to give me any publicity. What a dull Agony Column! "Darling Pipsey—Come back soon to your distracted Popsey"—and the usual young man in need of financial assistance, and the usual injunction to "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Hullo! there's the bell. Oh, it's our answer from Scotland Yard.'

The note from Scotland Yard enclosed an optician's specification identical with that sent by Mr Crimplesham, and added that it was an unusual one, owing to the peculiar strength of the lenses and the marked difference between the sight of the two eyes.

'That's good enough,' said Parker.

'Yes,' said Wimsey. 'Then Possibility № 3 is knocked on the head. There remain Possibility № 1: Accident or Misunderstanding, and № 2: Deliberate Villainy, of a remarkably bold and calculating kind—of a kind, in fact, characteristic of the author or authors of our two problems. Following the methods inculcated at that University of which I have the honour to be a member, we will now examine severally the various suggestions afforded by Possibility № 2. This Possibility may be again subdivided into two or more Hypotheses. On Hypothesis 1 (strongly advocated by my distinguished colleague Professor Snupshed), the criminal, whom we

He whistled his way downstairs.

The conscientious Mr Parker, with a groan, settled down to a systematic search through Sir Reuben Levy's papers, with the assistance of a plate of ham sandwiches and a bottle of Bass.

Lord Peter and the Honourable Freddy Arbuthnot, looking together like an advertisement for gents' trouserings, strolled into the dining-room at Wyndham's.

'Haven't seen you for an age,' said the Honourable Freddy. 'What have you been doin' with yourself?'

'Oh, foolin' about,' said Lord Peter, languidly.

'Thick or clear, sir?' inquired the waiter of the Honourable Freddy.

'Which'll you have, Wimsey?' said that gentleman, transferring the burden of selection to his guest. 'They're both equally poisonous.'

'Well, clear's less trouble to lick out of the spoon,' said Lord Peter.

'Clear,' said the Honourable Freddy.

'Consommé Polonais,' agreed the waiter. 'Very nice, sir.'

Conversation languished until the Honourable Freddy found a bone in the filleted sole, and sent for the head waiter to explain its presence. When this matter had been adjusted Lord Peter found energy to say:

'Sorry to hear about your gov'nor, old man.'

'Yes, poor old buffer,' said the Honourable Freddy; 'they say he can't last long now. What? Oh! the Montrachet '08. There's nothing fit to drink in this place,' he added gloomily.

After this deliberate insult to a noble vintage there was a further pause, till Lord Peter said: 'How's 'Change?'

'Rotten,' said the Honourable Freddy.

He helped himself gloomily to salmis of game.

'Can I do anything?' asked Lord Peter.

'Oh, no, thanks—very decent of you, but it'll pan out all right in time.'

'This isn't a bad salmis,' said Lord Peter.

'I've eaten worse,' admitted his friend.

'What about those Argentines?' inquired Lord Peter. 'Here, waiter, there's a bit of cork in my glass.'

'Cork?' cried the Honourable Freddy, with something approaching animation; 'you'll hear about this, waiter. It's an amazing thing a fellow who's paid to do the job can't manage to take a cork out of a bottle. What