Chapter 4

Lord Peter Leads a Club

'You are quite sure this suit is all right, Bunter?' said Lord Peter, anxiously. It was an easy lounge suit, tweedy in texture, and a trifle more pronounced in colour and pattern than Wimsey usually permitted himself. While not unsuitable for town wear, it yet diffused a faint suggestion of hills and the sea.

'I want to look approachable,' he went on, 'but on no account loud. I can't help wondering whether that stripe of invisible green wouldn't have looked better if it had been a remote purple.'

This suggestion seemed to disconcert Bunter. There was a pause while he visualized a remote purple stripe. At length, however, the palpitating balance of his mind seemed to settle definitely down.

'No, my lord,' he said firmly, 'I do *not* think purple would be an improvement. Interesting—yes; but, if I may so express myself, decidedly less affable.'

'Thank goodness,' said his lordship, 'I'm sure you're right. You always are. And it would have been a bore to get it changed now. You are sure you've removed all the newness, eh? Hate new clothes.'

'Positive, my lord. I assure your lordship that the garments have every appearance of being several months old.'

'Oh, all right. Well, give me the malacca with the foot-rule marked on it—and where's my lens?'

'Here, my lord,' Bunter produced an innocent-looking monocle, which was, in reality, a powerful magnifier. 'And the finger-print powder is in your lordship's right-hand coat-pocket.'

'Thanks. Well, I think that's all. I'll go on now, and I want you to follow on with the doings in about an hour's time.'

The Bellona Club is situated in Piccadilly, not many hundred yards west of Wimsey's own flat, which overlooks the Green Park. The commissionaire greeted him with a pleased smile.

'Mornin', Rogers, how are you?'

'Very well, my lord, I thank you.'

'D'you know if Major Fentiman is in the Club, by the way?'

'No, my lord. Major Fentiman is not residing with us at present. I believe he is occupying the late General Fentiman's flat, my lord.'

'Ah, yes—very sad business, that.'

'Very melancholy, my lord. Not a pleasant thing to happen in the Club. Very shocking, my lord.'

'Yes—still, he was a very old man. I suppose it had to be some day. Queer to think of 'em all sittin' round him there and never noticin', eh, what?'

'Yes, my lord. It gave Mrs Rogers quite a turn when I told her about it.'

'Seems almost unbelievable, don't it? Sittin' round all those hours—must have been several hours, I gather, from what the doctor says. I suppose the old boy came in at his usual time, eh?'

'Ah! regular as clock-work, the General was. Always on the stroke of ten. "Good morning, Rogers," he'd say, a bit stiff-like, but very friendly. And then, "Fine morning," he'd say, as like as not. And sometimes ask after Mrs Rogers and the family. A fine old gentleman, my lord. We shall all miss him.'

'Did you notice whether he seemed specially feeble or tired that morning at all?' inquired Wimsey, casually, tapping a cigarette on the back of his hand.

'Why, no, my lord. I beg your pardon, I fancied you knew. I wasn't on duty that day, my lord. I was kindly given permission to attend the ceremony at the Cenotaph. Very grand sight, it was, too, my lord. Mrs Rogers was greatly moved.'

'Oh, of course, Rogers—I was forgetting. Naturally, you would be there. So you didn't see the General to say good-bye, as it were. Still, it wouldn't have done to miss the Cenotaph. Matthews took your duty over, I suppose.'

'None to speak of. I would rather you undertook the whole investigation from the beginning.'

'Very well. I'll start to-morrow and let you know how it gets on.'

The lawyer thanked him and took his departure. Wimsey sat pondering for a short time—then rang the bell for his man-servant.

'A new notebook, please, Bunter. Head it "Fentiman" and be ready to come round with me to the Bellona Club to-morrow, complete with camera and the rest of the outfit.'

'Very good, my lord. I take it your lordship has a new inquiry in hand?'

'Yes, Bunter—quite new.'

'May I venture to ask if it is a promising case, my lord?'

'It has its points. So has a porcupine. No matter. Begone, dull care! Be at great pains, Bunter, to cultivate a detached outlook on life. Take example by the bloodhound, who will follow up with equal and impartial zest the trail of a parricide or of a bottle of aniseed.'

'I will bear it in mind, my lord.'

Wimsey moved slowly across to the little black baby grand that stood in the corner of the library.

'Not Bach this evening,' he murmured to himself. 'Bach for to-morrow when the gray matter begins to revolve.' A melody of Parry's formed itself crooningly under his fingers. 'For man worketh in a vain shadow…he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them.' He laughed suddenly, and plunged into an odd, noisy, and painfully inharmonious study by a modern composer in the key of seven sharps.

Wimsey's fingers tapped out an intricate fugal passage on the arm of his chair.

'If I were you, Murbles, I'd try again to get a settlement.'

'Do you mean,' asked Mr Murbles, 'that you think my clients have a losing case?'

'No—I can't say that. By the way, Murbles, who is your client—Robert or George?'

'Well, the Fentiman family in general. I know, naturally, that Robert's gain is George's loss. But none of the parties wishes anything but that the actual facts of the case should be determined.'

'I see. You'll put up with anything I happen to dig out?'

'Of course.'

'However favourable or unfavourable it may be?'

'I should not lend myself to any other course,' said Mr Murbles, rather stiffly.

'I know that, sir. But—well!—I only mean that—Look here, sir! when you were a boy, did you ever go about pokin' sticks and things into peaceful, mysterious lookin' ponds, just to see what was at the bottom?'

'Frequently,' replied Mr Murbles. 'I was extremely fond of natural history and had a quite remarkable collection (if I may say so at this distance of time) of pond fauna.'

'Did you ever happen to stir up a deuce of a stink in the course of your researches?'

'My dear Lord Peter—you are making me positively uneasy.'

'Oh, I don't know that you need be. I am only giving you a general warning, you know. Of course, if you wish it, I'll investigate this business like a shot.'

'It's very good of you,' said Mr Murbles.

'Not at all. *I* shall enjoy it all right. If anything odd comes of it, that's your funeral. You never know, you know.'

'If you decide that no satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at,' said Mr Murbles, 'we can always fall back on the settlement. I am sure all parties wish to avoid litigation.'

'In case the estate vanishes in costs? Very wise. I hope it may be feasible. Have you made any preliminary inquiries?'

'No, my lord. Matthews is laid up with 'flu, I am sorry to say. It was Weston was at the door all morning, my lord.'

'Weston? Who's he?'

'He's new, my lord. Took the place of Briggs. You recollect Briggs—his uncle died and left him a fish-shop.'

'Of course he did; just so. When does Weston come on parade? I must make his acquaintance.'

'He'll be here at one o'clock, when I go to my lunch, my lord.'

'Oh, right! I'll probably be about then. Hallo, Penberthy! You're just the man I want to see. Had your morning's inspiration? Or come in to look for it?'

'Just tracking it to its lair. Have it with me.'

'Right you are, old chap—half a mo' while I deposit my outer husk. I'll follow you.'

He glanced irresolutely at the hall-porter's desk, but seeing the man already engaged with two or three inquiries, plunged abruptly into the cloak-room, where the attendant, a bright cockney with a Sam Weller face and an artificial leg, was ready enough to talk about General Fentiman.

'Well, now, my lord, that's funny you should ask me that,' he said, when Wimsey had dexterously worked in an inquiry as to the time of the General's arrival at the Bellona. 'Dr Penberthy was askin' the same question. It's a fair puzzle, that is. I could count on the fingers of one 'and the mornings I've missed seein' the General come in. Wonderful regular, the General was, and him being such a very old gentleman, I'd make a point of being 'andy, to 'elp him off with his overcoat and such. But there! He must a' come in a bit late, that morning, for I never see him, and I thought at lunch-time, "The General must be ill," I thinks. And I goes round, and there I see his coat and 'at 'ung up on his usual peg. So I must 'a missed him. There was a lot of gentlemen in and out that morning, my lord, bein' Armistice Day. A number of members come up from the country and wanting their 'ats and boots attended to, my lord, so that's how I come not to notice, I suppose.'

'Possibly. Well, he was in before lunch, at any rate.'

'Oh, yes, my lord. 'Alf-past twelve I goes off, and his hat and coat were on the peg then, because I see 'em.'

'That gives us a terminus ad quem at any rate,' said Wimsey, half to himself.

'I beg your lordship's pardon?'

'I was saying, that shows he came in before half-past twelve—and later than ten o'clock, you think.'

'Yes, my lord. I couldn't say to a fraction, but I'm sure if 'e'd arrived before a quarter-past ten I should have seen 'em. But after that, I recollect I was very busy, and he must 'a slipped in without me noticing him.'

'Ah, yes—poor old boy! Still, no doubt he'd have liked to pass out quietly like that. Not a bad way to go home, Williamson.'

'Very good way, my lord. We've seen worse than that. And what's it all come to, after all? They're all sayin' as it's an unpleasant thing for the Club, but *I* say, where's the odds? There ain't many 'ouses what somebody ain't died in, some time or another. We don't think any the worse of the 'ouses, so why think the worse of the Club?'

'You're a philosopher, Williamson.' Wimsey climbed the short flight of marble steps and turned into the bar. 'It's narrowin' down,' he muttered to himself. 'Between ten-fifteen and twelve-thirty. Looks as if it was goin' to be a close run for the Dormer stakes. But—dash it all! Let's hear what Penberthy has to say.'

The doctor was already standing at the bar with a whisky-and-soda before him. Wimsey demanded a Worthington and dived into his subject without more ado.

'Look here,' he said, 'I just wanted a word with you about old Fentiman. Frightfully confidential, and all that. But it seems the exact time of the poor old blighter's departure has become an important item. Question of succession. Get me? They don't want a row made. Asked me, as friend of the family and all that, don't y' know, to barge round and ask questions. Obviously, you're the first man to come to. What's your opinion? Medical opinion, apart from anything else?'

Penberthy raised his eyebrows.

'Oh? there's a question, is there? Thought there might be. That lawyer-fellow, what's-his-name, was here the other day, trying to pin me down. Seemed to think one can say to a minute when a man died by looking at his back teeth. I told him it wasn't possible. Once give these birds an

his arrival, or at any time up to 10:36, then Miss Dorland is an important heiress, and my clients the Fentimans get only seven thousand pounds or so apiece. If, on the other hand, his death occurred even a few seconds after 10:37, Miss Dorland receives only twelve thousand pounds, George Fentiman is left with the small pittance bequeathed to him under his father's will—while Robert Fentiman, the residuary legatee, inherits a very considerable fortune of well over half a million.'

'And what,' said Wimsey, 'do you want me to do about it?'

'Why,' replied the lawyer, with a slight cough, 'it occurred to me that you, with your—if I may say so—remarkable powers of deduction and analysis might be able to solve the extremely difficult and delicate problem of the precise moment of General Fentiman's decease. You were in the Club when the death was discovered, you saw the body, you know the places and the persons involved, and you are, by your standing and personal character, exceptionally well fitted to carry out the necessary investigations without creating any—ahem!—public agitation or—er—scandal, or, in fact, notoriety, which would, I need hardly say, be extremely painful to all concerned.'

'It's awkward,' said Wimsey, 'uncommonly awkward.'

'It is indeed,' said the lawyer with some warmth, 'for as we are now situated, it is impossible to execute either will or—or in short do anything at all. It is most unfortunate that the circumstances were not fully understood at the time, when the—um—the body of General Fentiman was available for inspection. Naturally, Mr Pritchard was quite unaware of the anomalous situation, and as I knew nothing about Lady Dormer's will, I had no idea that anything beyond Dr Penberthy's certificate was, or ever could become, necessary.'

'Couldn't you get the parties to come to some agreement?' suggested Wimsey.

'If we are unable to reach any satisfactory conclusion about the time of the death, that will probably be the only way out of the difficulty. But at the moment there are certain obstacles— '

'Somebody's being greedy, eh?—You'd rather not say more definitely, I suppose? No? H'm, well! From a purely detached point of view it's a very pleasin' and pretty little problem, you know.'

'You will undertake to solve it for us then, Lord Peter?'

'The shock,' said Mr Murbles, 'was inflicted on me, personally, last Friday by Lady Dormer's man of business—Mr Pritchard of Lincoln's Inn. He wrote to me, asking if I could inform him of the exact hour and minute of General Fentiman's decease. I replied, of course, that, owing to the peculiar circumstances under which the event took place, I was unable to answer his question as precisely as I could have wished, but that I understood Dr Penberthy to have given it as his opinion that the General had died some time in the forenoon of November 11th. Mr Pritchard then asked if he might wait upon me without delay, as the matter he had to discuss was of the most urgent importance. Accordingly I appointed a time for the interview on Monday afternoon, and when Mr Pritchard arrived he informed me of the following particulars.

A good many years before her death, Lady Dormer—who, as I said before, was an eminently generous-minded woman—made a will. Her husband and her daughter were then dead. Henry Dormer had few relations, and all of them were fairly wealthy people. By his own will he had sufficiently provided for these persons, and had left the remainder of his property, amounting to something like seven hundred thousand pounds, to his wife, with the express stipulation that she was to consider it as her own, to do what she liked with, without any restriction whatsoever. Accordingly, Lady Dormer's will divided this very handsome fortune—apart from certain charitable and personal bequests with which I need not trouble you—between the people who, for one reason and another, had the greatest claims on her affection. Twelve thousand pounds were to go to Miss Ann Dorland. The whole of the remainder was to pass to her brother, General Fentiman, if he was still living at her death. If, on the other hand, he should pre-decease her, the conditions were reversed. In that case, the bulk of the money came to Miss Dorland, and fifteen thousand pounds were to be equally divided between Major Robert Fentiman and his brother George.'

Wimsey whistled softly.

'I quite agree with you,' said Mr Murbles. 'It is a most awkward situation. Lady Dormer died at precisely 10:37 A.M. on November 11th. General Fentiman died that same morning at some time, presumably after 10 o'clock, which was his usual hour for arriving at the Club, and certainly before 7 P.M. when his death was discovered. If he died immediately on

opinion, and the next thing is, you find yourself in a witness-box, swearing to it.'

'I know. But one gets a general idea.'

'Oh, yes. Only you have to check up your ideas by other things—facts, and so on. You can't just theorize.'

'Very dangerous things, theories. F'r instance—take this case—I've seen one or two stiff 'uns in my short life, and, if I'd started theorizin' about this business, just from the look of the body, d'you know what I'd have said?'

'God knows what a layman would say about a medical question,' retorted the doctor, with a sour little grin.

'Hear, hear!—Well, I should have said he'd been dead a long time.'

'That's pretty vague.'

'You said yourself that rigour was well advanced. Give it, say, six hours to set in and—when did it pass off?'

'It was passing off then—I remarked upon it at the time.'

'So you did. I thought rigour usually lasted twenty-four hours or so.'

'It does, sometimes. Sometimes it goes off quickly. Quick come, quick go, as a rule. Still, I agree with you, that in the absence of other evidence, I should have put the death rather earlier than ten o'clock.'

'You admit that?'

'I do. But we know he came in not earlier than a quarter-past ten.'

'You've seen Williamson, then?'

'Oh, yes. I thought it better to check up on the thing as far as possible. So I can only suppose that, what with the death being sudden, and what with the warmth of the room—he was very close to the fire, you know—the whole thing came on and worked itself off very quickly.'

'H'm! Of course, you knew the old boy's constitution very well.'

'Oh, rather. He was very frail. Heart gets a bit worn-out when you're over the four-score and ten, you know. I should never have been surprised at his dropping down anywhere. And then, he'd had a bit of a shock, you see.'

'What was that?'

'Seeing his sister the afternoon before. They told you about that, I imagine, since you seem to know all about the business. He came along to Harley Street afterwards and saw me. I told him to go to bed and keep

quiet. Arteries very strained, and pulse erratic. He was excited—naturally. He ought to have taken a complete rest. As I see it, he must have insisted on getting up, in spite of feeling groggy, walked here—he would do it—and collapsed straight away.'

'That's all right, Penberthy, but when—just when—did it happen?'

'Lord knows. I don't. Have another?'

'No, thanks; not for the moment. I say, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied about it all?'

'Satisfied?' The doctor stared at him. 'Yes, of course. If you mean, satisfied as to what he died of—of course I'm satisfied. I shouldn't have given a certificate if I hadn't been satisfied.'

'Nothing about the body struck you as queer?'

'What sort of thing?'

'You know what I mean as well as I do,' said Wimsey, suddenly turning and looking the other straight in the face. The change in him was almost startling—it was as if a steel blade had whipped suddenly out of its velvet scabbard. Penberthy met his eye, and nodded slowly.

'Yes, I do know what you mean. But not here. We'd better go up to the Library. There won't be anybody there.'

as you know, he died at the Bellona Club at some time—not yet clearly ascertained—on the same day, the eleventh of November.

Now then, at last—and you have been very patient with my tedious way of explaining all this—we come to the point at which we want your help.'

Mr Murbles refreshed himself with a sip of port, and, looking a little anxiously at Wimsey, who had closed his eyes and appeared to be nearly asleep, he resumed.

'I have not mentioned, I think, how I come to be involved in this matter myself. My father was the Fentimans' family solicitor, a position to which I naturally succeeded when I took over the business at his death. General Fentiman, though he had little enough to leave, was not the sort of disorderly person who dies without making a proper testamentary disposition. His retired pension, of course, died with him, but his small private estate was properly disposed by will. There was a small legacy—fifty pounds—to his man-servant (a very attached and superior fellow); then one or two trifling bequests to old military friends and the servants at the Bellona Club (rings, medals, weapons and small sums of a few pounds each). Then came the bulk of his estate, about £2,000, invested in sound securities, and bringing in an income of slightly over £100 per annum. These securities, specifically named and enumerated, were left to Captain George Fentiman, the younger grandson, in a very proper clause, which stated that the testator intended no slight in thus passing over the elder one, Major Robert, but that, as George stood in the greater need of monetary help, being disabled, married, and so forth, whereas his brother had his profession and was without ties, George's greater necessity gave him the better claim to such money as there was. Robert was finally named as executor and residuary legatee, thus succeeding to all such personal effects and monies as were not specifically devised elsewhere. Is that clear?'

'Clear as a bell. Was Robert satisfied with that arrangement?'

'Oh dear, yes; perfectly. He knew all about the will beforehand and had agreed that it was quite fair and right.'

'Nevertheless,' said Wimsey, 'it appears to be such a small matter, on the face of it, that you must be concealing something perfectly devastating up your sleeve. Out with it, man, out with it! Whatever the shock may be, I am braced to bear it.'

'Possibly. Or there may have been some kind of quarrel. I don't know. Anyway, those are the facts. I hope I am not boring you, by the way?'

'I am bearing up,' said Wimsey, 'waiting for the point where the Money comes in. There's a steely legal glitter in your eye, sir, which suggests that the thrill is not far off.'

'Quite correct,' said Mr Murbles. 'I now come—thank you, well, yes—I will take just one more glass. I thank Providence I am not of a gouty constitution. Yes. Ah!—We now come to the melancholy event of November 11th last, and I must ask you to follow me with the closest attention.'

'By all means,' said Wimsey, politely.

'Lady Dormer,' pursued Mr Murbles, leaning earnestly forward, and punctuating every sentence with sharp little jabs of his gold-mounted eye-glasses, held in his right finger and thumb, 'was an old woman, and had been ailing for a very long time. However, she was still the same head-strong and vivacious personality that she had been as a girl, and on the fifth of November she was suddenly seized with a fancy to go out at night and see a display of fireworks at the Crystal Palace or some such place—it may have been Hampstead Heath or the White City—I forget, and it is of no consequence. The important thing is, that it was a raw, cold evening. She insisted on undertaking her little expedition nevertheless, enjoyed the entertainment as heartily as the youngest child, imprudently exposed herself to the night air and caught a severe cold which, in two days' time, turned to pneumonia. On November 10th she was sinking fast, and scarcely expected to live out the night. Accordingly, the young lady who lived with her as her ward—a distant relative, Miss Ann Dorland—sent a message to General Fentiman that if he wished to see his sister alive, he should come immediately. For the sake of our common human nature, I am happy to say that this news broke down the barrier of pride and obstinacy that had kept the old gentleman away so long. He came, found Lady Dormer just conscious, though very feeble, stayed with her about half an hour and departed, still stiff as a ramrod, but visibly softened. This was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Shortly afterwards, Lady Dormer became unconscious, and, indeed, never moved or spoke again, passing peacefully away in her sleep at half-past ten the following morning.

Presumably the shock and nervous strain of the interview with his long-estranged sister had been too much for the old General's feeble system, for,

Chapter 5

—And Finds the Club Suit Blocked

THERE never was anybody in the library at the Bellona. It was a large, quiet, pleasant room, with the bookshelves arranged in bays; each of which contained a writing-table and three or four chairs. Occasionally some one would wander in to consult the *Times Atlas*, or a work on Strategy and Tactics, or to hunt up an ancient Army list, but for the most part it was deserted. Sitting in the farthest bay, immured by books and silence, confidential conversation could be carried on with all the privacy of the confessional.

'Well, now,' said Wimsey, 'what about it?'

'About—?' prompted the doctor, with professional caution.

'About that leg?'

'I wonder if anybody else noticed that?' said Penberthy.

'I doubt it. I did, of course. But then, I make that kind of thing my hobby. Not a popular one, perhaps—an ill-favoured thing, but mine own. In fact, I've got rather a turn for corpses. But not knowin' quite what it meant, and seein' you didn't seem to want to call attention to it, I didn't put myself forward.'

'No—I wanted to think it over. You see, it suggested, at the first blush, something rather— '

'Unpleasant,' said Wimsey. 'If you knew how often I'd heard that word in the last two days! Well, let's face it. Let's admit, straight away, that, once rigour sets in, it stays in till it starts to pass off, and that, when it *does* start to go it usually begins with the face and jaw, and not suddenly in

one knee-joint. Now Fentiman's jaw and neck were as rigid as wood—I felt 'em. But the left leg swung loose from the knee. Now how do you explain that?'

'It is extremely puzzling. As no doubt you are aware, the obvious explanation would be that the joint had been forcibly loosened by somebody or something, after rigour had set in. In that case of course, it wouldn't stiffen up again. It would remain loose until the whole body relaxed. But how it happened— '

'That's just it. Dead people don't go about jamming their legs into things and forcing their own joints. And surely, if anybody had found the body like that he would have mentioned it. I mean, can you imagine one of the waiter-johnnies, for instance, finding an old gentleman stiff as a poker in the best arm-chair and then just givin' him a dose of knee-jerks and leavin' him there?'

'The only thing I could think of,' said Penberthy, 'was that a waiter or somebody had found him, and tried to move him—and then got frightened and barged off without saying anything. It sounds absurd. But people do do odd things, especially if they're scared.'

'But what was there to be scared of?'

'It might seem alarming to a man in a very nervous state. We have one or two shell-shock cases here that I wouldn't answer for in an emergency. It would be worth considering, perhaps, if any one had shown special signs of agitation or shock that day.'

'That's an idea,' said Wimsey, slowly. 'Suppose—suppose, for instance, there was somebody connected in some way with the General, who was in an unnerved state of mind—and suppose he came suddenly on this stiff corpse. You think he might—possibly—lose his head?'

'It's certainly possible. I can imagine that he might behave hysterically, or even violently, and force the knee-joint back with some unbalanced idea of straightening the body out and making it look more seemly. And then, you know he might just run away from the thing and pretend it hadn't happened. Mind you, I'm not saying it was so, but I can easily see it happening. And that being so, I thought it better to say nothing about it. It would be a very unpl—distressing thing to bring to people's notice. And it might do untold harm to the nervous case to question him about it. I'd rather let sleeping dogs lie. There was nothing wrong about the

'Yes, I needn't go into that. Their father is dead, of course, and up till ten days ago there were just two surviving Fentimans of the earlier generation. The old General lived on the small fixed income which came to him through his wife and his retired pension. He had a solitary little flat in Dover Street and an elderly man-servant, and he practically lived at the Bellona Club. And there was his sister, Felicity.'

'How did she come to be Lady Dormer?'

'Why, that's where we come to the interesting part of the story. Henry Dormer— '

'The button-maker?'

'The button-maker. He became an exceedingly rich man indeed—so rich, in fact, that he was able to offer financial assistance to certain exalted persons who need not be mentioned and so, in time, and in consideration of valuable services to the nation not very clearly specified in the Honours List, he became Sir Henry Dormer, Bart. His only child—a girl—had died, and there was no prospect of any further family, so there was, of course, no reason why he should not be made a baronet for his trouble.'

'Acid man you are,' said Wimsey. 'No reverence, no simple faith or anything of that kind. Do lawyers ever go to heaven?'

'I have no information on that point,' said Mr Murbles, dryly. 'Lady Dormer— '

'Did the marriage turn out well otherwise?' inquired Wimsey.

'I believe it was perfectly happy,' replied the lawyer, 'an unfortunate circumstance in one way, since it entirely precluded the possibility of any reconciliation with her relatives. Lady Dormer, who was a fine, generous-hearted woman, frequently made overtures of peace, but the General held sternly aloof. So did his son—partly out of respect for the old boy's wishes, but chiefly, I fancy, because he belonged to an Indian regiment and spent most of his time abroad. Robert Fentiman, however, showed the old lady a certain amount of attention, paying occasional visits and so forth, and so did George at one time. Of course they never let the General know a word about it, or he would have had a fit. After the War, George rather dropped his great-aunt—I don't know why.'

'I can guess,' said Wimsey. 'No job—no money, y' know. Didn't want to look pointed. That sort of thing, what?'