

it? I'll learn you a lesson you'll never forget as long as you live. You bastard! You BLOODY BASTARD!!!"

With a vicious sudden movement, knife clenched in his fist, Curly lunged forward. Mr. Crawford saw the momentary flash of the blade flick out its gleaming tongue. His face turned ashen. Curly's fist thrust against him and a cry of pain rang out over the Cathedral close, threading its way among the empty crates and boxes, and on into the dark recesses of the arches.

Curly felt the blade resist the toughness of Crawford's coat and then slide smoothly into the fleshy paunch. One! Two!! Three!!! Curly couldn't stop. He just went on stabbing the blade into the crumpled, seemingly lifeless body of Andrew Crawford. In a flash, Curly snatched a wad of notes from the petty-cash box and deftly slipping his hand into Crawford's inside pocket, pulled out a wallet, fat with the day's takings. Then he scooted off, up into the shadows of the tunnel and out of sight, leaving behind him Crawford's limp body, lying in the damp warmth of its own blood.



44. Faces in the Mirror

The night had been hot and muggy. Millie had awoken with a troubled mind and the memory of having to get up and take a blanket off the bed. She remembered feeling stifled and how she stood by the window slowly breathing in the night air. In the comfort of darkness, she had experienced a sensation of indescribable loneliness and futility. It had been as if she were sailing silently through space with no human being for millions of miles around. She might have been one of those Russian space-dogs gliding round and round the earth, with a fate as man-made as a tin-opener and with less point to it. She felt that dog had about as much idea of where it was heading as she had then — there at the window by herself, desperate and alone in the dark. That Mabel was sleeping the untroubled sleep of angels agonised Millie, made her aware of the countless forces at work in her own mind and body, bringing up from deep down inside her a strange sense of bewilderment which sent swirling movements round and round in her head until her eyes were swimming. Then, she felt herself falling....falling....falling.....

When she came to, she was cold and shivery. She was lying spreadeagled on the floor of her bedroom. Only a faint breeze ruffled