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*To Richard who understands  
how to make a play bubble like champagne  
and, even more importantly,  
how to get me to buckle down and write.*

## Cast of Characters

BERTRAM "BERTIE" WILBERFORCE WOOSTER, our hapless hero.  
Endowed with a handsome fortune and a limited brain.

JEEVES, Bertie's valet and, in Bertie's words, "one of the wonders of the world."

DAHLIA TRAVERS, Bertie's aunt, a fearless soul. She alone among Bertie's gaggle of aunts appears rather fond of Bertie, despite referring to him as "young blot" and "idiot nephew." She publishes *Milady's Boudoir*, a women's newspaper.

THOMAS PORTARLINGTON TRAVERS, Dahlia's husband. Tends to become apoplectic on the subject of taxes, but is kept in tranquil spirits by the superb meals dished up by his chef, Anatole.

AGUSTUS "GUSSIE" FINK-NOTTLE, a teetotaler bachelor pal of Bertie's with, says Bertie, "a face like a fish." Gussie wears horn-rimmed spectacles, and is a noted newt fancier.

MADLINE BASSET, a pretty girl, as Bertie says, "in a droopy, saucer-eyed way." Her conversation tends to revolve around elves, gnomes, flowers, and small furry creatures.

ANATOLE, highly skilled, highly temperamental French chef employed by Dahlia Travers. Often referred to as "God's gift to the gastric juices," he speaks limited English and threatens violence at the least hint of culinary criticism.

## Time

Late June, 1931.

## Place

The gardens of Brinkley Court, just outside Market Snodsbury in Worcestershire.

## Production Notes

Ideally, the pace should be brisk. The play is nonsense, albeit charmingly so. It needs to sparkle, and will quickly turn leaden if it begins to drag.

A note on the set: the play is written to be performed on a unit set of garden walls, arches, and a sitting area on a patio or terrace. The brief London prologue is just played in the area with the table and chairs. However, one production did have a section of the garden wall un-fold like a pop-up book to reveal a portion of Bertie's London flat. It was charming, but the play does not require this.

The vowel sound in "Wooster" is pronounced as in "wood," not as in "whoop"). Actually, the vowel sound in Wodehouse is pronounced the same way ("WOOD house").

To be clear, Jeeves is not Bertie's butler (although, as Bertie notes, Jeeves is perfectly able to "buddle with the best"). He is Bertie's valet: a "gentleman's gentleman." A valet is responsible for a gentleman's wardrobe and is a personal servant. Unlike a butler, a valet routinely travels with his employer. The word "valet" is correctly pronounced to rhyme with the word "pallet."

The town of Lincolnshire is pronounced "Lincoln-SHERR" (not Lincoln-SHIRE).

## Acknowledgments

*Jeeves in Bloom* was originally produced by Artists' Ensemble Theater in September, 2009. It was directed by Richard Raether and featured the following cast and crew:

JEEVES . . . . . Gary Wingert  
BERTIE WOOSTER . . . . . David A. Gingerich  
ANATOLE . . . . . Stephen F. Vrtol III  
DAHLIA TRAVERS . . . . . Linda Abronski  
MADELINE BASSET . . . . . Lydia Berger  
AUGUSTUS FINK-NOTTLE . . . . . Kyle Adams  
THOMAS TRAVERS . . . . . Stephen F. Vrtol III  
Set Designer . . . . . Noel Rennerfeldt  
Lighting Designer . . . . . Angelo O'Dierno  
Sound Designer . . . . . David Mauer  
Costume Designer . . . . . Carm Cavallaro Rongere  
Stage Manager . . . . . Elizabeth Drog

# JEEVES IN BLOOM

adapted by Margaret Raether

FROM THE STORIES OF P.G. WODEHOUSE

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*(A portion of the gardens at Brinkley Court, home of Tom and Dahlia. A garden wall is seen with an arched entry from the house. There is a seating area, a fountain, and a statue of a female figure. Paths lead to other portions of the grounds. It is midnight.)*

*(JEEVES enters, checks a pocket watch. On schedule we hear a cry for help.)*

**BERTIE.** JEEVES!

*(BERTIE runs on, wearing a dressing gown. ANATOLE, wielding a cleaver, is in hot pursuit, followed by AUNT DAHLIA, MADELINE, and GUSSIE. Following lines overlap as the runners circle past a serene JEEVES.)*

**ANATOLE.** Stand still, English dog!

**DAHLIA.** Anatole! Stop!

**MADLINE.** Bertie!

**GUSSIE.** Madeline!

*(JEEVES holds up a hand and the chase crashes to a confused halt.)*

**BERTIE.** Jeeves! If ever there was a moment when that lofty brain of yours was needed, it is now! Speak!

*(A brief pause as all wait to hear what JEEVES will say.)*

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. It is with sincere regret that I am forced to tender my resignation, effective immediately.

**BERTIE.** —What?!

**ANATOLE.** Bon dieu!

**DAHLIA.** Egad!

**BERTIE.** *(With an abrupt change of manner:)* ...No, no. Terribly sorry, everyone. This simply won't do. If you could, all of you, give us a moment. That's it... Off we go!

*(BERTIE shoos the confused group offstage. During the following JEEVES helps BERTIE off with his dressing gown. BERTIE confides in the audience:)*

**BERTIE.** Look, I don't know if this has ever happened to you, but the snag I always hit with a good story is the problem of where to begin.

*(JEEVES helps BERTIE into a suit jacket.)*

**JEEVES.** Arm.

**BERTIE.** Thank you, Jeeves. *(To audience:)* You see, if one fools about too long at the top, trying to establish the old...what's the word I want, Jeeves?

*(JEEVES has exited with dressing gown and returned with a tie for BERTIE.)*

**JEEVES.** Atmosphere, sir?

**BERTIE.** Just so. Too much time on that rot and half your audience is snoozing. However, plunge straight to the exciting bits, and everyone's quickly at sea.

*(JEEVES helps BERTIE put on his tie.)*

**JEEVES.** Your tie, sir.

**BERTIE.** Excellent, Jeeves. Where was I?

**JEEVES.** At sea, sir. Wondering if a compelling start justifies possible obfuscation.

**BERTIE.** Was I really?

**JEEVES.** You were.

**BERTIE.** Back up a bit, do you think?

**JEEVES.** I should certainly advise it, sir.

*(JEEVES exits.)*

**BERTIE.** Right. *(To audience:)* In the complex case of Gussie Fink-Nottle, an escaped newt and a deranged chef, let us hearken back in time. It was summer. I'd just returned to London...

*(JEEVES enters with a tea tray.)*

**BERTIE.** Look, for the nonce, just imagine my flat...

*(With a gesture, JEEVES changes the lights from midnight to morning.)*

**BERTIE.** Ah, tea! Well, here we are, eh what, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** Indeed we are, sir.

**BERTIE.** Seems ages since I left for the Riviera. Pity you didn't come, Jeeves.

(*JEEVES pours tea for BERTIE.*)

**JEEVES.** Alas, sir, I could not bring myself to miss Ascot.

**BERTIE.** Personally I prefer the seaside with good old Aunt Dahlia. Also, a very odd girl called Madeline Basset. Some sort of relation on Uncle Thomas' side.

**JEEVES.** Dear me. Not a matrimonial scheme, one hopes.

**BERTIE.** One may rest easy, Jeeves. My Aunt Dahlia is characterized by her general good-eggishness. The old girl doesn't give a fig whom I wed or if I wed at all.

**JEEVES.** You have relieved my apprehensions, sir.

**BERTIE.** Splendid. Well, Jeeves, any news?

**JEEVES.** A Mr. Fink-Nottle, sir, has been a frequent caller.

**BERTIE.** (*Dumbfounded.*) Fink-Nottle?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Not *Gussie* Fink-Nottle!

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Not in London!

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Well, I'm dashed. I'm positively dashed!

**JEEVES.** Indeed, sir?

**BERTIE.** What I am is dashed, Jeeves. And I shall tell you why.

**JEEVES.** I am all attention, sir.

**BERTIE.** Fink-Nottle, while a perfectly decent chap, is a freak of nature.

**JEEVES.** Dear me.

**BERTIE.** Fellow can't abide London. He's spent the past five years moldering away in Lincolnshire—by choice! Happy as a lark because—and here's the freakish bit, Jeeves—because *he has a pond in his garden where he can study newts!*

**JEEVES.** Sir?

**BERTIE.** Newts. Ghastly little lizard things. Fink-Nottle suffers from a newt complex. Newts, Jeeves.

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. Aquatic members of the family Salamandridae [*sal-a-MAN-drih-dee*] which constitute the genus Molge.

**BERTIE.** Gussie is addicted. Deeply. I remember, he kept them at school in a kind of glass-tank thing.

**JEEVES.** Schoolboys often do, sir.

**BERTIE.** And now you tell me the blighter has surfaced!

**JEEVES.** So it would seem, sir.

**BERTIE.** Horn-rimmed specs and a face like a fish?

**JEEVES.** The gentleman does indeed wear horn-rimmed spectacles, sir.

**BERTIE.** And the face?

**JEEVES.** A slight suggestion of the piscine, sir.

**BERTIE.** What the devil could have brought him to the city?

**JEEVES.** I believe a young lady to be the cause, sir.

**BERTIE.** Young lady? Gussie?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves! Do you mean to tell me that Gussie—Gussie Fink-Nottle, noted newt fancier, is in love?

**JEEVES.** So it appears.

**BERTIE.** With a mammal?

**JEEVES.** I believe so. Telegram for you, sir.

*(JEEVES presents a tray with telegram to BERTIE.)*

**BERTIE.** Odd... It's from Aunt Dahlia.

*(DAHLIA appears in a special and speaks aloud as BERTIE reads telegram.)*

**DAHLIA.** Bertie. Stop. Come at once! Stop. Travers.

**BERTIE.** What the deuce?

**JEEVES.** Sir?

*(BERTIE holds out telegram for JEEVES' perusal.)*

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, I am baffled. What can she mean?

**JEEVES.** It appears quite straightforward.

**BERTIE.** But, Jeeves! Aunt Dahlia and I parted at the station only yesterday.

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** After several weeks in my company, what any sane person generally feels is: enough is enough!

**JEEVES.** I take your point, sir.

**BERTIE.** Take this down, Jeeves: "Perplexed. Stop. Explain. Stop. Tootles. Bertie." Send that off straightaway.

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

*(JEEVES turns and holds as BERTIE addresses the audience.)*

**BERTIE.** I couldn't imagine why my favorite aunt was summoning me to the country. Time, as they say, passed.

*(JEEVES turns around again and produces a telegram.)*

**JEEVES.** A reply, sir.

**DAHLIA.** What on earth is there to be perplexed about, ass? Stop. Come at once. Stop. Travers.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, let us fire off a reply.

**JEEVES.** Sir.

**BERTIE.** *(Dictating:)* "How do you mean, 'Come at once?' Stop. Utterly mystified. Stop. Pip Pip. Bertie."

**JEEVES.** Send immediately?

**BERTIE.** Yes. Hold on. *(To audience:)* Time passed. Now look, I can't be stopping to say that every few moments. You'll just have to insert that bit yourselves, as needed. *(Back to JEEVES:)* Yes, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** *(Producing a telegram:)* Telegram, sir.

**BERTIE.** Of course.

**DAHLIA.** I mean come at once, you maddening half-wit! Stop. What did you think I meant? Stop. Come at once! Love. Travers.

**BERTIE.** I simply cannot fathom this, can you, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** Well—

**BERTIE.** Send a reply: When you say "Come" do you mean "Come to Brinkley Court"? Stop. And when you say "At once" do you mean "At once"? Stop. Absolutely fogged. Stop. At a loss. Stop. Tinkety-Tonk. Bertie.

**DAHLIA.** Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! Stop. It doesn't matter whether you understand or not. Stop. Just come at once! Stop. And cease this back-chat. Stop. Do you think I am made of money that I can send telegrams every ten minutes? Stop. Come immediately, you fathead! Love. Travers.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, can you make head or tail of this?

**JEEVES.** It would seem that Mrs. Travers desires you to come at once, sir.

**BERTIE.** Pop down to Brinkley Court, you mean?

**JEEVES.** Indeed, sir.

**BERTIE.** But I've only just returned to town!

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Take this down: Upon consulting engagement book find impossible come Brinkley Court. Stop. Deeply regret. Stop. Cheerio. Bertie.

**JEEVES.** She may not take this in good part, sir.

**BERTIE.** One must be firm, Jeeves. Sadly, I am forced to employ... *(Striking a firm, resolute pose:)* the Iron Hand.

**JEEVES.** *(Placidly:)* Oh, dear me. Not the Iron Hand, sir!

*(JEEVES exits to answer the door.)*

**BERTIE.** The pride of the Woosters is at stake. By Jove, when a Wooster put his hand to the plough, he does not readily sheathe the sword!

*(JEEVES returns, followed by GUSSIE, who speaks in a nasal whine.)*

**JEEVES.** Mr. Fink-Nottle to see you, sir.

**BERTIE.** Gussie, you old leper!

**GUSSIE.** Hullo, Bertie.

**BERTIE.** In town, are you?

**GUSSIE.** I suppose so.

**BERTIE.** Heard you're having a spot of romantic trouble.

**GUSSIE.** Where did you hear that?

**BERTIE.** Word gets round. Come to confide in a sympathetic man of experience, have you?

**GUSSIE.** Yes, I have. Jeeves, what should I do?

**BERTIE.** Jeeves! See here, you great lump, you don't want Jeeves in this particular instance.

**GUSSIE.** Yes I do.

**BERTIE.** No, you don't. What you require is a sort of elder-brotherly advice from a seasoned man of the world. Jeeves, you may leave this matter in my hands.

**JEEVES.** Very good, sir.

(*JEEVES exits.*)

**GUSSIE.** What? No!

**BERTIE.** Gussie, old bean, when it comes to affairs of the heart, the chappie you want to consult is that well known man-about-town and bon vivant, Bertie Wooster!

**GUSSIE.** But—

**BERTIE.** No need to thank me.

**GUSSIE.** I wasn't going to.

**BERTIE.** Just tell me about the female in question. How is the old courtship proceeding?

**GUSSIE.** It's not. I can't seem to—I have the most awful time—I can't think of what to say. So I don't.

**BERTIE.** Don't what?

**GUSSIE.** Say anything. At all.

**BERTIE.** I see.

**GUSSIE.** It would be different if I were a newt.

**BERTIE.** I suppose it would.

**GUSSIE.** During the courting season the male newt is brilliantly colored. It helps him overcome his shyness.

**BERTIE.** But you aren't a male newt.

**GUSSIE.** But if I were! Do you know how a male newt proposes, Bertie?

**BERTIE.** Not the foggiest.

**GUSSIE.** (*Demonstrating:*) He stands in front of the female newt vibrating his tail and bending his body in a semi-circle. I could do that! You wouldn't find me grousing if I were a male newt.

**BERTIE.** But if you were a male newt, this girl wouldn't look at you. Not with the eye of love, at any rate.

**GUSSIE.** She would, if she were a female newt.

**BERTIE.** But she's not a female newt.

**GUSSIE.** No, but suppose she was.

**BERTIE.** If she was, you wouldn't be in love with her.

**GUSSIE.** I would, if I were a male newt.

**BERTIE.** Look, you dolt, leave off about vibrating tails. You've got to find a way to speak to this girl.

**GUSSIE.** Too late! She was due back in London, but I've just now learned she's off to visit friends in the country. I popped round to ask Jeeves what to do.

**BERTIE.** There's not the slightest need to ask Jeeves anything. This girl is visiting friends? Clearly, you need to go there and surround her.

**GUSSIE.** I can't plant myself on a lot of perfect strangers.

**BERTIE.** Don't you know these people?

**GUSSIE.** Of course I don't. I don't know anybody.

**BERTIE.** Right. That is a bit sticky.

**GUSSIE.** All I know is she's gone off to some place called Brinkley Court to stay with some people named Travers.

**BERTIE.** Gussie, old bean, this is fate. That's what this is. Fate!

*(JEEVES enters with a telegram.)*

**JEEVES.** Telegram, sir.

**DAHLIA.** Am taking legal advice to ascertain whether strangling idiot nephew counts as murder. Stop. "Deeply regret?" Stop. Consider your conduct the absolute frozen limit. Stop. Deeply regret Brinkley Court is one hundred miles from London, as unable hit you with a brick. Stop. Get down here immediately or I shall personally come up to London and run you over with double-decker bus. Love. Travers

**BERTIE.** Dear me, Aunt Dahlia is all atwitter. Clearly, my place is by her side, Jeeves.

**JEEVES.** Indeed, sir.

**BERTIE.** Pack my things.

**JEEVES.** I have already done so, sir.

**BERTIE.** Good. You'd better order the car sent round.

**JEEVES.** It is waiting at the door, sir.

**BERTIE.** Then we're off! We'll stop by Gussie's hotel on the way.

**GUSSIE.** Are you dropping me off?

**BERTIE.** No, we're fetching your bags.

**GUSSIE.** Am I going somewhere?

**BERTIE.** To the country to visit people named Travers where you, old prune, will capture the heart of your female newt!

## Scene 2

*(Afternoon at Brinkley Court. THOMAS PORTARLINGTON TRAVERS strolls on with his niece, MADELINE BASSET. AUNT DAHLIA follows.)*

**TOM.** And then along this path is the rose garden. We're very proud of our gardens here at Brinkley Court.

**MADELINE.** Oh, it's just like a little fairyland, isn't it? I imagine, if one were to venture out during the full moon, one would be sure to see dear little fairies dancing in a ring.

**TOM.** Eh, what? Oh, yes, to be sure.

**DAHLIA.** I doubt you'd see much beyond a rabbit or two.

**MADELINE.** Oh, I should adore seeing a furry little bunny nibbling amongst the roses.

**TOM.** Rabbits! By, Jove, if those blighters have got into my prize roses—

**DAHLIA.** Don't be ridiculous, Tom. Madeline was just being fanciful. She does that.

**MADELINE.** I'm afraid I do. I expect you think me terribly silly.

**TOM.** Eh? Nonsense, m'dear. We think you perfectly charming, don't we, Dahlia?

**DAHLIA.** Hmmmm...

**MADELINE.** It's lovely of you to show me about, Uncle. I feel so inspired by all this nature in its natural setting. I write poetry, you know. My innermost thoughts laid out in verse. I could recite some, if you like.

**DAHLIA.** Perhaps later. After dinner. Speaking of which, I think I'll just have a word with the staff. Tom, why don't you show Madeline your roses? She'd enjoy that.

(DAHLIA has spotted new arrivals and hustles TOM and MADELINE off.)

**MADELINE.** Indeed I should, if it isn't too much trouble.

**TOM.** No trouble at all. This way, m'dear...

(TOM and MADELINE exit as BERTIE, GUSSIE, and JEEVES enter.)

**BERTIE.** What, ho, Aunt!

**DAHLIA.** Bertie, you ass, how dare you keep me waiting when I tell you to come at once? What kind of ninny fails to comprehend the meaning of the words "at once"? Give me a kiss, you blot.

(BERTIE plants a dutiful kiss on DAHLIA's cheek.)

**BERTIE.** Now, now. Here I am, reporting for duty as ordered.

**DAHLIA.** (*Glaring at GUSSIE.*) Who's that?

**BERTIE.** Aunt Dahlia, may I present an old school chum of mine, Augustus Fink-Nottle. Gussie, this is your hostess, Mrs. Travers. Hope it's no problem, me bringing an extra guest. Of course, I knew you wouldn't mind.

**DAHLIA.** Oh you knew that, did you?

**BERTIE.** Now, now. Bertram is here. How may I be of service?

**DAHLIA.** Not you. Jeeves! You find us in the midst of a domestic crisis!

**JEEVES.** I am grieved to hear it, madam.

**DAHLIA.** Our butler, Seppings, has sprained his ankle or his knee or some such thing—all I know is he's hopping about on one foot and insisting he can manage perfectly well when it's perfectly clear that he can't!

**BERTIE.** Do you mean that, after peppering me with telegrams, what you really require is Jeeves?

**DAHLIA.** Certainly not! I shall speak to *you* privately. (*Glaring at GUSSIE.*) In the meanwhile, Jeeves, could you—?

**BERTIE.** Of course he could. Jeeves can buttle with the best!

**JEEVES.** I should be honored to be of assistance, Mrs. Travers.

**DAHLIA.** Jeeves, you're heaven sent. Come find me after you've settled the boys. Bertie's in his usual room. As for you, Mr. Spink-Bottle, I suppose you'd better have the blue room. Jeeves will show you the way.

**GUSSIE.** Actually, it's F—

**DAHLIA.** Run along now. I need a word with my nephew.

**JEEVES.** This way, Mr. Fink-Nottle.

(*JEEVES leads GUSSIE to the house. DAHLIA turns and wallops BERTIE.*)

**DAHLIA.** What do you mean by planting your loathsome friends on me like this? I like your nerve using my house as a summer resort. Who is this Spink-Bottle creature?

**BERTIE.** Not Bottle. Nottle. And not Spink. Fink.

**DAHLIA.** Do you imagine I care? The fellow's a pop-eyed bleater, like all your other subhuman friends.

**BERTIE.** He happens to be a world famous expert on newts.

**DAHLIA.** On what?

**BERTIE.** Newts. Little lizard things.

**DAHLIA.** I have no idea what you're on about and I don't suppose you do either. Listen. Bertie. I need your help on a very dicey matter.

**BERTIE.** I'm your man!

**DAHLIA.** God help me, I'm afraid you are. Tell me, do you recall *Milady's Boudoir*?

**BERTIE.** That women's magazine you publish?

**DAHLIA.** Yes. Do you further recall, when we were at Cannes, me losing all that money at baccarat?

**BERTIE.** What of it?

**DAHLIA.** Just listen. I arrived home to find a crisis. It seems I've got to pay the beastly printer immediately, or it's straight down the drain for *Milady's Boudoir*. And just when it was finally about to turn the corner!

**BERTIE.** You told me it was about to turn the corner two years ago.

**DAHLIA.** It was. It still is. Bertie, until you've had charge of a women's weekly, you don't know what corners are!

**BERTIE.** Very well. I take it that Uncle Thomas foots the bills for the *Boudoir*?

**DAHLIA.** He does.

**BERTIE.** Why not ask him for funds to pay the printer?

**DAHLIA.** I did. Just before we left for France.

**BERTIE.** Didn't he come across with the brass?

**DAHLIA.** He coughed up handsomely. *That* was the money I lost at baccarat.

**BERTIE.** Ah. Tut. Tut.

**DAHLIA.** What did you just say to me?

**BERTIE.** ...Tut Tut?

**DAHLIA.** One more tut, and I'll biff you where you stand. I tell you, Bertie, I'm in the suds. And that horrid printer has left me no time to maneuver.

**BERTIE.** You know, Aunt, I'd be happy to advance you—

**DAHLIA.** Do you think I'd sponge off my own nephew? Out of the question.

**BERTIE.** So, back to Uncle?

**DAHLIA.** Precisely. I've done all I can to put him in a good mood. Invited that niece of his, that Bassett girl, down to stay. She's a perfect fool, but he's ridiculously fond of her—

**BERTIE.** Yes, about the Bassett girl—

**DAHLIA.** And I've got our chef, Anatole, whipping up all of Tom's favourite dishes for dinner.

**BERTIE.** Topping! Nothing Uncle relishes more than Anatole's cooking. That'll soften up the old skinflint.

**DAHLIA.** At any other time, perhaps. But while we were away, Tom received a demand from the income-tax people for an additional fifty-eight pounds, one and threepence.

**BERTIE.** That's not so—

**DAHLIA.** Oh, do you know Tom at all? The very mention of taxes puts him in a towering rage.

**BERTIE.** Bad timing to administer the old squeeze?

**DAHLIA.** I won't be able to coax a farthing out of Tom in his present mood.

**BERTIE.** I see. Or, rather, I don't see. Why all those telegrams to me? Where do I come in?

**DAHLIA.** Burglary.

**BERTIE.** Beg pardon?

**DAHLIA.** You and I are going to burgle the Travers Diamonds.

**BERTIE.** Are you pulling my leg?

**DAHLIA.** Nothing would induce me to touch your beastly leg. Come now, Bertie, it's not as if it were a real crime. I have every right to that hideous necklace. It was bequeathed to me by Tom's horrid Great Aunt Bertha.

**BERTIE.** Then sell them! There's no need for you to burgle them! And please note, I say "you" burgle them. Because I shan't go near them!

**DAHLIA.** Don't be absurd, of course you shall.

**BERTIE.** I won't!

**DAHLIA.** You will.

**BERTIE.** Won't!

(*DAHLIA grips BERTIE painfully by the ear.*)

**DAHLIA.** No more nonsense, if you please. I cannot possibly sell those diamonds. Tom would go off like a rocket. But if they were stolen, he'd never dream it was us.

**BERTIE.** There is no "us." There is only you.

**DAHLIA.** The whole scheme is childishly simple. Procure the diamonds, pawn the diamonds, pay the printer. Then later, once *Milady's Boudoir* is profitable—

**BERTIE.** (*With irony:*) After it turns the corner, you mean?

**DAHLIA.** Exactly—I can redeem the jewels and tell Tom they were recovered by the police or some such. As a matter of fact, it was Tom's nonsensical obsession with theft that inspired the scheme.

**BERTIE.** Yes, do let's chat about Uncle's quirky little notions. The fellow's convinced that every shifty-eyed bloke in England is skulking about on the grounds of Brinkley Court, waiting the chance to rob him!

**DAHLIA.** Your point?

**BERTIE.** He patrols the grounds with a loaded gun! Did you consider *that* while dreaming up this mad plot?

**DAHLIA.** Of course, I did. Look, it couldn't be simpler. The diamonds are in the safe in Tom's study.

**BERTIE.** On the second floor?

**DAHLIA.** Yes. I know Tom's patrol schedule. There's plenty of time between rounds to manage the thing. All you have to do—

**BERTIE.** Stop! Not a word! Under no circumstances are you to tell me this plan!

(BERTIE *plugs his ears and determinedly hums "Rule Britannia."*)

**DAHLIA.** Very well. We'll say no more. Just meet me here in the garden at midnight. Wear a mask.

**BERTIE.** Aunt Dahlia, I am exceedingly fond of you but I'm dashed if I play a part in this demented farce.

**DAHLIA.** You most certainly will!

**BERTIE.** Won't! Dreadfully sorry, but you leave me no choice. I, Bertram Wilberforce Wooster, must employ... (*Pose.*) the Iron Hand.

(*Pause. DAHLIA explodes into laughter.*)

**DAHLIA.** Isn't that just like you? (*Affectionately:*) Just when I'm ready to throttle you for being more than usually thick, you do some fool thing that sends me into whoops. (*Laughs.*) Bless you, Bertie, I needed that.

**BERTIE.** But... I'm serious!

**DAHLIA.** No more jokes. It's settled. Midnight. Here. Bring a ladder.

### Scene 3

(*Later. GUSSIE enters searching frantically for an escaped newt. He drops to all fours, peering under a bench. MADELINE enters with a basket of flowers, to be confronted by GUSSIE's hindquarters.*)

**MADLINE.** ...Excuse me?

(*GUSSIE starts violently, banging his head, and sees MADELINE.*)

**GUSSIE.** Oh!

**MADLINE.** You!

**GUSSIE.** You!

**MADLINE.** Yes!

**GUSSIE.** Ah...

**MADLINE.** Yes?

**GUSSIE.** Nothing.

**MADLINE.** What... What brings you to Brinkley Court?

**GUSSIE.** ...Bertie.

**MADLINE.** Mr. Wooster?

**GUSSIE.** Yes. ...He... We... (*Words fail utterly. In desperation, GUSSIE makes engine sounds and mimes steering.*)

**MADELINE.** You... motored down?

**GUSSIE.** Yes.

**MADELINE.** Then, you're both guests of the Travers?

*(GUSSIE tries to speak. Then nods.)*

**MADELINE.** ...And the two of you are—

**GUSSIE.** Schoolmates.

**MADELINE.** Ah.

**GUSSIE.** Yes.

**MADELINE.** *(Realizing that BERTIE has followed her in lovelorn pursuit:)* Of course.

**GUSSIE.** Yes?

**MADELINE.** Sorry. *(Encouragingly:)* You were saying?

**GUSSIE.** Me?

**MADELINE.** Yes.

**GUSSIE.** No.

**MADELINE.** *(Disappointed:)* Oh...

*(DAHLIA and JEEVES enter from the house, seeking Anatole.)*

**DAHLIA.** Awfully decent of you to rally round like this, Jeeves. Oh. Madeline. Mr. Spink-Bottle.

**MADELINE.** Excuse me, won't you? I must put these in water.

*(MADELINE runs off with her flowers.)*

**GUSSIE.** Don't—Ah... Oh. *(Violently to himself:)* Stupid, stammering, useless tongue-tied prat!

**DAHLIA.** Are you quite well, Spink-Bottle?

**GUSSIE.** *(Desperately:)* Quite! Thanks. Must be off. Sorry!

*(GUSSIE runs off in the opposite direction from MADELINE.)*

**DAHLIA.** Peculiar creature. Like all Bertie's friends. As I was saying, Jeeves, I do appreciate you pitching in.

**JEEVES.** One is gratified to be of assistance, madame.

**DAHLIA.** You're acquainted with the staff, I know, however I don't think you've been down since we hired Anatole.

**JEEVES.** No. I know him by reputation, of course.

**DAHLIA.** Frightful temperament, but cooks like an angel. I'm afraid that, while Seppings is indisposed, you'll have to cope with Anatole. Who should, according to the housekeeper, be about somewhere, shrieking at the gardener. Ah, the fellow himself.

(ANATOLE enters, carrying a basket of produce.)

**ANATOLE.** Madame Travers! I, Anatole, demand that you instantly bestow upon zee gardener, zee bag!

**DAHLIA.** The—oh, give him the sack, do you mean?

**ANATOLE.** Mais oui! Zee sack. Look what he delivers up to me! Me! Anatole!

(ANATOLE wildly brandishes a bunch of carrots in DAHLIA's face.)

**DAHLIA.** Yes, very nice. You needn't thrust them in my face, Anatole.

**ANATOLE.** Zhey are not nice! Zhey are rubbish! 'Ow can I cook when he gives to me zis rubbish? Me, I am an artiste! I must have only zee best!

**DAHLIA.** I'll have a word. Anatole, this is Jeeves. He will be acting butler until Seppings is back on both feet.

**ANATOLE.** What is zis?! 'Ow is it I am told nothing of zis? Am I nobody? No! I am Anatole!

**JEEVES.** Can it be that I am in the presence of the great Monsieur Anatole himself? I had no idea that I should be privileged to oversee meals prepared by God's own gift to the gastric juices.

**ANATOLE.** (*Judiciously to DAHLIA:*) 'im, I like. (*To JEEVES:*) Mais oui! It is I, Anatole! You have per'aps heard of me?

**JEEVES.** I have indeed, Monsieur.

**DAHLIA.** I can see you two are going to get along splendidly. I'll leave you to it then. Must see to my guests.

(DAHLIA exits, mouthing a fervent "Thank you!" to JEEVES.)

**ANATOLE.** So...you are zee new butler, eh?

**JEEVES.** Temporarily.

**ANATOLE.** I warn you. Zhere is to be no interference with zee kitchen. None!

**JEEVES.** Would one interfere with Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel, to suggest a livelier shade of blue? One would not.

**ANATOLE.** Ha! Zis is true, what you say! You are a good fellow, for an English dog. I will confide in you, a great secret.

**JEEVES.** I am honored, monsieur.

**ANATOLE.** Soon, all zee world will know zee name "Anatole." Me, I have written a cook book. Anatole, zee great chef, is soon to be Anatole, zee great author.

**JEEVES.** May I be permitted to offer my congratulations, Monsieur?

**ANATOLE.** Oui. I will permit. It is not yet published, you understand. But very soon. I have zee... 'ow you say... zee pages.

**JEEVES.** The manuscript?

**ANATOLE.** Oui! Zee manuscript. I keep it 'idden in a secret place. Not in zee 'ouse, no, no, no! Zhere are many who wish to steal Anatole's secret recipes for zhere own!

**JEEVES.** Shocking. I shall look forward to the publication of your book with the greatest anticipation.

**ANATOLE.** Ah, mon ami. You perceive zee truth. You stand in zee presence of greatness. Come, I will show you my kitchen where I, Anatole, perform miracles!

*(BERTIE is heard from off.)*

**BERTIE.** Jeeves? Blast it, where are you?

**JEEVES.** Alas, duty calls.

**ANATOLE.** A great pity, Monsieur Jeeves. Anozzer time, perhaps?

**JEEVES.** Au revoir, Monsieur Anatole.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves!

*(BERTIE enters as ANATOLE is leaving. They come face to face.)*

**ANATOLE.** Zut! Stop shouting, English dog! *(To JEEVES:)* Ah, Monsieur Jeeves, 'ow I pity you. Anatole! He goes!

*(ANATOLE sweeps off.)*

**BERTIE.** Who the devil—! *(Light dawns.)* I say, was that—

**JEEVES.** The infamous Anatole.

**BERTIE.** Rummy bloke. Look, Jeeves, Aunt Dahlia has hatched the most devilish—

*(GUSSIE runs on.)*

**GUSSIE.** Jeeves! Bertie! She's here! We spoke!

**BERTIE.** And?

**GUSSIE.** I made a complete ass of myself!

**BERTIE.** Of course. We'll get on that presently. First, I'd like a word with Jeeves, if you don't mind.

**GUSSIE.** Well, I do mind! I want a word with Jeeves myself.

**BERTIE.** Not in the least necessary. *I* am charge of your problem, if you'll recall.

**GUSSIE.** You *say* that, but you don't *do* anything! Furthermore, I've an entirely new and most urgent problem. I've misplaced Madeline!

**BERTIE.** How do you mean, misplaced her?

**GUSSIE.** She got loose somehow!

**BERTIE.** Loose?

**GUSSIE.** Exactly. I was trying to persuade her to eat a bit of worm—

**BERTIE.** What the blazes?

**GUSSIE.** —and the footman knocked. When I turned back around, she'd scarpered off!

**BERTIE.** I should jolly well think so! How dare you feed worms to—

**GUSSIE.** Oh, I know that I spoil her, but she is my very favorite! What am I going to do?

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, can you make anything of this?

**JEEVES.** One thought occurs. Is perhaps the Madeline in question amphibian, rather than mammalian?

**GUSSIE.** Yes, of course! And now she's lost and very likely terrified!

**BERTIE.** Gussie, you ass, are you bleating about one of your dashed lizards?

**GUSSIE.** Newt. My personal favourite! Named in honour of Miss Bassett. I went in pursuit. And ran smack into *her!*

**BERTIE.** Who?

**GUSSIE.** Madeline!

**BERTIE.** The lizard.

**GUSSIE.** The girl!

**BERTIE.** Go on.

**GUSSIE.** It was ghastly, Bertie. I spoke entirely in words of one syllable.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, Gussie here has smuggled a blinking newt into my Aunt Dahlia's home! Where it is, no doubt, scuttling about causing wholesale panic! Do you think you might—?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. I shall do my utmost to locate the elusive salamander.

**BERTIE.** Thank you, Jeeves. Good luck with your newt hunt. I shall advise Gussie.

**JEEVES.** Very good, sir. (*Doubtfully:*) If you think that would be best.

(*JEEVES bows and exits.*)

**BERTIE.** Now, Gussie, don't give another thought to that blasted newt.

**GUSSIE.** Oh, I shan't, now that Jeeves has taken up the search. He inspires complete confidence, doesn't he?

**BERTIE.** (*Rather irked:*) I suppose.

**GUSSIE.** Bit of luck, this Travers woman turning out to be your aunt.

**BERTIE.** I don't know what you mean, "turning out to be my aunt." She has been my aunt all along.

**GUSSIE.** And you met Miss Basset at Cannes?

**BERTIE.** I did. What beats me is how the two of you met. I thought you were living a hermit's life in Lincolnshire.

**GUSSIE.** I was. Miss Bassett was visiting nearby. One day, she was out walking her little dog and the dog got a thorn in its paw. So, of course, I had to rally round.

**BERTIE.** You extracted the thorn?

**GUSSIE.** Yes.

**BERTIE.** Love at first sight?

**GUSSIE.** Yes!

**BERTIE.** And?

**GUSSIE.** What?

**BERTIE.** I presume actual words were spoken?

**GUSSIE.** Well, she said "Thanks, ever so," and I said "Not at all."

**BERTIE.** And?

**GUSSIE.** We exchanged names. Then she said she was off to London, and that I should look her up some time.

**BERTIE.** With a set-up like that, why didn't you cash in?

**GUSSIE.** Hadn't the nerve.

**BERTIE.** Lucky for you that you've Bertie Wooster in your corner.

**GUSSIE.** And Jeeves. That's the main thing.

**BERTIE.** (*Irked again:*) If you must.

**GUSSIE.** So, now that we—Miss Basset and I—are both, you know, here, what next?

**BERTIE.** You slip her the old banana oil.

**GUSSIE.** The what?

**BERTIE.** The honeyed words, the tender—I don't know—the oil!

**GUSSIE.** I don't follow.

**BERTIE.** Gussie, look about you! This garden is simply dripping with atmosphere. I myself have gotten engaged three times here at Brinkley Court. Thankfully, I managed to elude actual matrimony each time.

**GUSSIE.** Really, Bertie?

**BERTIE.** And each time I hadn't the foggiest intention of proposing. Yet there I was, slapping my soul down in front of some girl or other. Something in the air, I think...

**GUSSIE.** But... how?

**BERTIE.** How what?

**GUSSIE.** How does one slap down one's soul? I can't think what to say...

**BERTIE.** Dash it, Gussie, there are a hundreds things you can say. Talk about the sunset.

**GUSSIE.** What could I say about the sunset?

**BERTIE.** I don't know! You admire the last, faint glimmering rays of light and that sort of rot.

*(GUSSIE produces a notebook and begins taking notes.)*

**GUSSIE.** "faint, glimmering rays..."

*(BERTIE demonstrates, using a convenient statue as the girl.)*

**BERTIE.** Then you say, "It's a funny thing, but twilight always makes me sad."

**GUSSIE.** But it d—

**BERTIE.** Of course it doesn't, but you tell *her* that it does. Do you see?

**GUSSIE.** No. Why should twilight make me feel sad?

**BERTIE.** Ah! That's what she will ask! (*Sadly, to statue:*) "Because mine is a rather lonely life." Then you describe your typical evening—how you pace the meadows with a heavy tread.

**GUSSIE.** I sit indoors and listen to the wireless.

**BERTIE.** (*Grimly:*) No, you don't. Write: "I pace the meadows with a heavy tread, wishing vainly that I had someone to love." And then you speak of the day when she came into your life.

**GUSSIE.** Like a fairy princess!

**BERTIE.** Exactly!

**GUSSIE.** And then?

(*BERTIE kneels to the statue. GUSSIE kneels in careful imitation.*)

**BERTIE.** You say, "There is something I'm longing to ask you." And Bob's your uncle! You pop the question here in the garden. What do you say, old prune? Are you up to it?

**GUSSIE.** I'll do it!

**MADELINE.** (*From offstage:*) Mr. Wooster, is that you?

(*GUSSIE bolts into hiding as MADELINE enters.*)

**BERTIE.** (*Hissing to GUSSIE:*) Get out here!

**MADELINE.** What?

**BERTIE.** Miss Bassett! What ho, what ho!

**MADELINE.** (*Soulfully:*) Oh, Mr. Wooster.

**BERTIE.** Right. Here I am. Hullo again. Lovely afternoon. Late afternoon. Rather twilight-ish, I suppose.

**MADELINE.** Lovely... Oh, look at that sweet little star up there all by itself, just peeping out in the early evening sky.

**BERTIE.** Where?

**MADELINE.** Poor little thing... I wonder if it's feeling lonely.

**BERTIE.** (*Doubtfully:*) I shouldn't think so.

**MADELINE.** A fairy must have been weeping.

**BERTIE.** What?

**MADELINE.** Every time a fairy sheds a tear, a wee star is born in the Milky Way. You must have heard that, Mr. Wooster?

**BERTIE.** Never.

**MADELINE.** Don't you love this time of the evening, Mr. Wooster, when the sun is just toddling off to bed and all the bunnies come out to have their little suppers? When I was a child, I used to think that rabbits were gnomes, and that if I held my breath and stayed quite still, I should be sure to see the fairy queen.

**BERTIE.** (*Muttered to himself:*) That's the sort of loony thing you would think.

**MADELINE.** What?

**BERTIE.** Nothing.

**MADELINE.** (*Tragically:*) Life is rather sad, isn't it?

**BERTIE.** Is it? I mean, I suppose it is. For some.

**MADELINE.** Oh, Mr. Wooster! Please don't say any more.

**BERTIE.** Wasn't going to.

**MADELINE.** I won't be so silly as to pretend not to know why you're here.

**BERTIE.** Why I'm—

**MADELINE.** I suspected this at Cannes, when you used to stare at me without speaking a word, but with whole volumes in your eyes.

**BERTIE.** Not volumes. Not even paragraphs.

**MADELINE.** All those days by the shore, I could see what you were really trying to say. A girl always knows.

**BERTIE.** Not always.

*(GUSSIE peeks out from his hiding place and listens in growing horror.)*

**MADELINE.** And then, when I learned that you had followed me down here...

*(GUSSIE makes a sound. BERTIE leaps to his feet.)*

**BERTIE.** I did not! Well, I did. But not— Look, this is—so wrong.

**MADELINE.** And here you are, stammering out those shy, halting words. No, this does not come as a surprise.

**BERTIE.** Ah...

**MADELINE.** And I am so very sorry to dash your hopes, but I'm afraid it is...impossible.

*(GUSSIE falls backwards. BERTIE makes a miraculous recovery.)*

**BERTIE.** Impossible? Really? Oh, right ho.

**MADELINE.** I hope we can still be...friends.

**BERTIE.** Rather!

**MADELINE.** I wish I could...feel towards you as you would like me to feel.

**BERTIE.** Ah...

**MADELINE.** But I can't. I'm so dreadfully sorry.

**BERTIE.** Perfectly understandable. Dare say it's my fault.

**MADELINE.** I am fond of you, Mr.— No, I think I really must call you Bertie. May I?

**BERTIE.** Absolutely.

**MADELINE.** And you must call me Madeline. Oh, I do like you, Bertie. And, if things were different—

**BERTIE.** But they're not. Sadly. Not.

**MADELINE.** Life is such a muddle, isn't it?

**BERTIE.** By any chance, Is there—and, please, be brutally honest—is there someone else?

**MADELINE.** Yes...there is... Another.

**BERTIE.** Fancy some other bloke, do you? I see. And you two have some sort of understanding?

**MADELINE.** I fear he does not care for me in that way. But he is so gallant. You see, I have this dear little doggie—

**BERTIE.** Smashing!

**MADELINE.** I beg your pardon?

**BERTIE.** For you. My heart's broken, naturally. So, a white knight galloped up and saved your little doggie, eh?

**MADELINE.** However did you guess?

*(BERTIE tries to tug GUSSIE from his hiding place. They struggle.)*

**BERTIE.** Sort of thing that's bound to happen. Damsel in distress, or rather, dog in distress. Ah, if only that white knight were here right now...

*(GUSSIE escapes and vanishes as MADELINE turns to face BERTIE.)*

**MADELINE.** Oh, I shouldn't like you to come to blows over me, Bertie.

**BERTIE.** Are you mad? Er— No, of course not. Did I mention, I brought a chum down with me?

**MADELINE.** Mr. Fink-Nottle. Oh, dear... *(Close to tears.)* Bertie, if you don't mind, I must go in and dress for dinner...

**BERTIE.** You may as well. Since my pal is nowhere to be found...

**MADELINE.** Farewell, Bertie, dear. For my sake, try not to be bitter.

**BERTIE.** About what? Oh, right. Yes, well, we Woosters are made of stern stuff. Lots of stuff that is...sternish.

**MADELINE.** Adieu...

*(MADELINE exits sadly toward the house.)*

**BERTIE.** Come out here at once, you contemptible coward.

*(GUSSIE comes out of hiding. He picks up BERTIE and twirls him around.)*

**GUSSIE.** *(Ecstatically:)* Oh, Bertie! Did you hear?

**BERTIE.** Did you? What do mean, leaving me flopping about like a fish on a hook?

**GUSSIE.** She loves me! Oh, Bertie, I could die happy right now.

**BERTIE.** I could jolly well help you on your way! Why didn't you show yourself?

**GUSSIE.** And have her know I was listening? I couldn't! Besides, what would I say?

**BERTIE.** You could have said "hullo" and won the day.

*(JEEVES enters silently.)*

**GUSSIE.** I was paralyzed. What am I going to do, Bertie? She thinks I don't care!

**JEEVES.** One hesitates to intrude, sir.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves! Just in time. I am advising Gussie on his love life.

**JEEVES.** Indeed, sir. I am all attention.

**BERTIE.** To begin. You, Gussie, are a poop. Don't you agree, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** A sensitive plant would, perhaps, be a kinder expression, sir.

**BERTIE.** In short, a poop. Gussie, you will never summon the courage to propose. And do you know why?

**GUSSIE.** I'm a poop?

**BERTIE.** Exactly. You lack courage. Or, more specifically, liquid courage. Which is what I prescribe.

**GUSSIE.** Sorry?

**BERTIE.** The tragic truth is that you, Gussie Fink-Nottle, world class poop, are a teetotaler. Am I right?

**GUSSIE.** Yes. You see, I promised Mother—

**BERTIE.** Silence, poop. Look at him, Jeeves. A wabbling, shrinking, diffident rabbit in human shape.

**JEEVES.** Yet, not, I think, hopeless, sir.

**BERTIE.** I disagree, Jeeves. Without the added oomph of liquid courage, Gussie, here, is doomed. If he manages to squeeze out a single syllable, it will be turn out to be about syncopated newts!

**JEEVES & GUSSIE.** Palmated.

**BERTIE.** Syncopated or palmated, no girl wants to hear it! Gussie, old bean, I prescribe gin. Gallons of it.

**GUSSIE.** I won't! Jeeves, I want your advice. Please?

**JEEVES.** Of course, I should not care to intrude on Mr. Wooster's masterful handling of your affairs of the heart.

**GUSSIE.** Oh, please intrude, Jeeves! Bertie, tell him!

**BERTIE.** Oh, very well. The fact is, Jeeves, we do find ourselves in a bit of a—we're caught on the pointy end of the—dash it, Jeeves, what's that thing one is always finding oneself on the horns of?

**JEEVES.** A dilemma, sir?

**BERTIE.** That's it! The plan calls for words of molten passion, but the Newt King here, is unable to utter a peep!

**JEEVES.** One is irresistibly reminded of Mr. Bergerac, sir.

**GUSSIE.** Who?

**BERTIE.** Hush, Gussie. Look at Jeeves. I know that look. He's about to spring a corker! Time for mere mortals to focus on the fellow with the bulging brain. Go on, Jeeves.

**JEEVES.** I was referring to Mr. Cyrano de Bergerac, sir.

**BERTIE.** ...Chap with the nose?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Go on.

**JEEVES.** In Mr. Rostand's play, Mr. Bergerac comes to the aid of a friend who is rendered inarticulate by the presence of his lady love.

**GUSSIE.** Ooh, that's a bit like us, isn't it?

**BERTIE.** Quiet, you newt-nuzzling blister! Push on, Jeeves. What does the big nose chap do?

**JEEVES.** Under cover of night, Mr. Bergerac speaks from shadow. The lady sees only his friend and believes it is his voice that she hears.

(BERTIE and GUSSIE stare dumbly for a beat. Then both grasp the plot.)

**GUSSIE.** Wait! Are you saying that Bertie would talk—

**BERTIE.** —and Madeline will believe it's Gussie? Oh, Jeeves, you've outdone yourself. Gussie, after tonight, Madeline will see you in an entirely new light!

**GUSSIE.** Will she?

**BERTIE.** Certainly! She is acquainted with Fink-Nottle, friend of newts and chiropodist to dogs. But Fink-Nottle, the dashing lover?

**JEEVES.** Of course, it might be deemed advisable—

**BERTIE.** Jeeves. Brilliant plan. Got it. I shall take it from here. Following dinner tonight, you, Jeeves, will find a discreet moment to deliver a note to Miss Bassett.

**JEEVES.** Very good, sir.

**GUSSIE.** (*Agog*.) Who's the note from?

**BERTIE.** You. We'll pop up to my room right now and write it out.

**GUSSIE.** What will it say?

**BERTIE.** It will beg Madeline to meet you here after dinner, in the moonlight. She'll like that. Then you show up here where I shall be cunningly concealed. Keep your face hidden and I'll take it from there!

**GUSSIE.** Oh, Bertie!

**BERTIE.** It's like one of those poetical johnnies says, you've got to gather the something of love while...something something something... Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** "Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time," sir. The late Mr. Edmund Spenser.

**BERTIE.** Knew it was one of the romantic coves. Gussie, you old newt fancier, your troubles are all but over!

#### Scene 4

(*That evening, after dinner. DAHLIA and TOM stroll on.*)

**TOM.** That, m'dear, is what I call a tip top meal!

**DAHLIA.** Yes, indeed. Anatole was in rare form tonight.

**TOM.** Nothing like an excellent dinner to perk up one's spirits, eh?

**DAHLIA.** As it happens, my spirits are a trifle low at present. You see, Tom—

**TOM.** Thought as much. No need to say a word. I've a pretty shrewd notion as to the trouble.

**DAHLIA.** Have you?

**TOM.** That blasted nephew of yours and his pal, Fitz-Wattle.

**DAHLIA.** Spink-Bottle.

**TOM.** Fellow's nicked in the nob. Did you hear him spouting at dinner?

**DAHLIA.** I certainly heard the bit about how "newts, during breeding season, dine on worms and insect larvae."

**TOM.** Felt sorry for Madeline, stuck between that pair. Charming girl. Lovely to have a fresh, young girl like her about the place to keep us old folks from mouldering away.

**DAHLIA.** I for one, am not mouldering away. What do you mean by a remark like that, I should like to know?

**TOM.** Now, now—

**DAHLIA.** Don't "Now, now" me. I scarcely think that a woman in charge of one of England's leading publications for ladies could accurately be described as "mouldering away."

**TOM.** Quite right, old girl. No need to get your back up over *Madame's Nightshirt*.

**DAHLIA.** *Milady's Boudoir!* See here, Tom, three years I've run that magazine and you still get the name wrong!

**TOM.** Well, there's no need to get miffy.

**DAHLIA.** (*Miffily*.) Who's miffy? You're the one who's been perfectly beastly over a paltry tax bill—

**TOM.** Paltry! Well, I like that. Paltry! Easy for you to say! *You've* no financial worries!

**DAHLIA.** Oh, haven't I?

**TOM.** No, you haven't!

**DAHLIA.** To think that I was about to ask your advice! Ha!

**TOM.** As if you'd be likely to take it! Ha!

**DAHLIA.** For someone who claims to revel in peace and quiet, you make the most frightful row!

**TOM.** I shall leave you to your peace and quiet, madam. I am going to make my rounds.

**DAHLIA.** Do as you please! You always do!

**TOM.** Have it your own way! You always do!

**DAHLIA.** Good night!

*(TOM stomps off as BERTIE enters and greets DAHLIA.)*

**BERTIE.** What ho, Aunt! Just the person I want to see!

**DAHLIA.** I warn you! You'd better not have second thoughts about tonight.

**BERTIE.** No, no. Well, yes. My second thoughts are pretty much the same as my first. To whit: hadn't you better give Uncle another go? You know he adores you.

**DAHLIA.** I wouldn't give that old goat the time of day. I shall see you, Bertie, at midnight!

*(DAHLIA exits as JEEVES enters.)*

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, you know how chaps say that country life is ever so restful?

**JEEVES.** As Mr. Keats observed: "Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

**BERTIE.** Piffle. And you may tell that Keats chappie I said so. To the matter at hand. You delivered Gussie's note?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. I believe we may anticipate the young lady's imminent arrival.

**BERTIE.** And thus, into hiding for Bertie.

**JEEVES.** Very good, sir.

**BERTIE.** Hold on. Where's the newt king?

*(GUSSIE enters, breathlessly.)*

**GUSSIE.** She's coming!!

**BERTIE.** Right. Gussie, you stay in shadow. Even you ought to be able to manage that.

**GUSSIE.** I shall give it my all. Oh, Jeeves, any word on my lost newt?

**JEEVES.** Sadly, still at large. Although I have received reports of a salamander sighting in the conservatory.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, you may give Gussie the latest newt report at a later date. Gentlemen, take your positions!

(BERTIE goes to his hiding place, still in view of the audience. GUSSIE stands in a shadow. JEEVES withdraws discreetly. MADELINE enters.)

**MADLINE.** Mr. Fink-Nottle?

(BERTIE imitates GUSSIE's nasal whine. GUSSIE mimics every gesture by BERTIE. He holds a handkerchief to his mouth to mask his unmoving lips.)

**BERTIE.** Miss Bassett. You're looking quite spiffy in the old moonlight.

**MADLINE.** Thank you, Mr. Fink-Nottle. I must say, I was a bit surprised by your note. You've barely spoken to me.

**BERTIE.** By day, I am mute. It requires the magic of moonlight to converse with a fairy princess.

**MADLINE.** Oh! Oh, my! You sound very different this evening.

(MADLINE starts to approach GUSSIE, who coughs violently.)

**BERTIE.** Sorry. Bit of a cold. You'd best keep your distance.

**MADLINE.** I couldn't help notice at dinner... You certainly know a great deal about newts.

**BERTIE.** Let us not speak of newts. I have wasted my life on newts!

**GUSSIE.** (*Indignantly.*) What?!

(BERTIE chimes in simultaneously on the word "what.")

**BERTIE.** WHAT a fool I've been! I realized that the moment I first clapped eyes on you.

**MADLINE.** Oh, Mr. Fink-Nottle!

**BERTIE.** Oh, Miss Bassett! Do call me Gussie.

**MADLINE.** Surely, your given name must be Augustus?

**BERTIE.** (*A discovery.*) I suppose it must.

**MADLINE.** Oh, Augustus, dear, you may call me Madeline.

**BERTIE.** Madeline, darling! There's a quaint old saying: whenever a fairy sheds a tear, a new star appears!

**MADLINE.** Oh, yes, Augustus yes! And every time a fairy blows its nose a baby is born!

**BERTIE.** —Really? I mean, yes! Oh, Madeline, my angel, dare I ask?

**MADLINE.** Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, Sir Knight!

(BERTIE kneels and so does GUSSIE.)

**BERTIE.** Madeline, do you, can you, believe in love at first sight?

**MADELINE.** Oh, Augustus! I do! I can!

*(TOM bounds into the scene with his shotgun at the ready.)*

**TOM.** AH HA! Got you! Hands up!

*(MADELINE screams and cowers. GUSSIE wails and curls into a ball.)*

**MADELINE.** Uncle!

**TOM.** Madeline?

**MADELINE.** Don't shoot!

**TOM.** What?

*(JEEVES judges it time to re-enter the fray.)*

**JEEVES.** May I be of assistance, Mr. Travers?

*(TOM turns, gun swinging wildly. JEEVES deftly catches the barrel.)*

**TOM.** Jeeves! I heard voices. Prowlers!

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. However, the voices in question would seem to be those of your guests.

**TOM.** Eh? What? But I heard—

**JEEVES.** Miss Bassett and Mr. Fink-Nottle. Quite right, sir.

**TOM.** Fitz-Wattle, eh? That him on the ground?

*(MADELINE runs to where GUSSIE has fallen.)*

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**TOM.** No robbers?

**JEEVES.** Not at present.

**TOM.** I see.

**JEEVES.** Perhaps, sir, you would care for a brandy?

**TOM.** Yes, I would, by Jove! First sensible words I've heard tonight. Jeeves, your talents are wasted on that ninny who employs you. Any time you'd like to make a change, just you say the word...

**JEEVES.** A very flattering offer, sir...

*(JEEVES herds TOM off. MADELINE and GUSSIE are face to face.)*

**MADELINE.** Augustus, beloved, speak to me! Are you injured?

**BERTIE.** Yes! My heart is pierced through and through by Cupid's arrow!

(MADELINE is dumbfounded to realize that a third party is speaking.)

**MADELINE.** ...what?

(MADELINE rises and follows the sound of BERTIE's voice.)

**BERTIE.** Oh, Madeline, my adored one! I must speak. Can't you—won't you say that you'll be mine?

**GUSSIE.** (*Managing to utter one strangled word.*) Noooooo!

(BERTIE peeks out and comes face to face with MADELINE.)

**MADELINE.** Bertie!

**BERTIE.** Madeline!

**MADELINE.** It was you. All along. Saying those beautiful words.

**BERTIE.** I—I—I—

**MADELINE.** Using darkness to pour out the secrets of your heart. (*She turns on GUSSIE.*) And you, Mr. Fink-Nottle, have cruelly deceived me. How could you practice this wicked deception on an innocent young girl?

**GUSSIE.** I—You—He—!

**MADELINE.** What have you to say for yourself? Speak!

(*With a truly Herculean effort, GUSSIE desperately speaks.*)

**GUSSIE.** The British Crested Newt is distinguished by its wart-encrusted skin!

## Scene 5

(*Midnight. DAHLIA enters. She is wearing black with a half mask.*)

**DAHLIA.** (*Peering about by the light of her flashlight.*) ...Bertie?

(*JEEVES enters silently with a coiled length of rope.*)

**JEEVES.** Beg pardon, madame.

**DAHLIA.** Ahh! Jeeves, you frightened the life out of me! In future, be so kind as to cough or stamp your feet.

**JEEVES.** Madame, silence is a hallmark of my training. However, I shall endeavor to give warning of my presence.

**DAHLIA.** Do so. Ah, rope! Excellent. *(She takes rope.)* Thank you, Jeeves. That will be all.

**JEEVES.** My best wishes for your success.

*(JEEVES carefully stomps off as BERTIE enters, carrying a ladder. He wears a dressing gown over his shirt and trousers, as at the top of the show.)*

**DAHLIA.** What *are* you wearing? Is that your idea of proper attire to commit burglary?

**BERTIE.** I didn't realize there was a dress code.

**DAHLIA.** How do you plan to ascend to a second story window in your dressing gown?

**BERTIE.** My plan, when we are inevitably caught in this mad scheme of yours, is to pretend to be sleepwalking!

*(DAHLIA and BERTIE begin to bicker in furious whispers.)*

**DAHLIA.** Of all the idiotic notions—

**BERTIE.** You're a fine one to talk of idiotic notions—

**DAHLIA.** You really are a perfect pinhead—

**BERTIE.** I've a good mind to take my ladder and go home—

*(TOM shouts from off, freezing BERTIE and DAHLIA in mid-bicker.)*

**TOM.** What the devil is going on out there? Who's that in the garden?

*(BERTIE and DAHLIA break and hide, abandoning the ladder. TOM enters, in his dressing gown over trousers, shotgun at the ready.)*

**TOM.** Thought you'd rob me, eh? Where are you? Out with you... Hands up! Show yourself!

*(GUSSIE enters, still in his tux, but very disheveled and massively drunk.)*

**GUSSIE.** Don't shoot!

**TOM.** Who the blazes—

**GUSSIE.** Only me. Only the poor poop who loved and lost!

**TOM.** You're... I know you. You're that lizard bloke. Fitz Wattle!

**GUSSIE.** Fink-Nottle!

**TOM.** What do you mean, skulking about at this hour? Hullo, have you been drinking?

**GUSSIE.** Hullo, I have been drinking. As advised by my pal, Bertie. (*Shouting:*) Beeerrrttiee! I took your adviiiiice!

**TOM.** Spirits, eh?

**GUSSIE.** Liquid courage straight from the bottle. Awful stuff. I don't know you can mop it up the way you do, Tom Travers.

**TOM.** Why should you need liquid courage?

**GUSSIE.** Because I am a poop, Tom Travers!

**TOM.** No argument there.

**GUSSIE.** And Bertie was right. I'm a new man! Why, I could bite a tiger!

**TOM.** Could you.

**GUSSIE.** I could chew holes in a steel door! I could—I could talk to a girl! I could, Tom Travers!

**TOM.** A girl? Oh, ho... So that's what you're up to, eh? A rendez-vous, by Jove. You sly young dog!

**GUSSIE.** Sly young dog. That is me. Yes.

**TOM.** One of the maids, I'll venture. Where is she?

(*GUSSIE staggers, knocks over the ladder. DAHLIA squeals.*)

**TOM.** Oh, ho ho! Game's up, my girl. Out you come!

(*TOM pursues, but DAHLIA hides behind a bewildered GUSSIE.*)

**DAHLIA.** (*French accent:*) Ooh! Monsieur Travers! You will 'ave mercy on Yvette, no? Say zat you will!

**TOM.** Yvette, eh? Well, well. Very pretty behavior, I must say.

**DAHLIA.** Oui, eet is true! I am, 'ow you say, zee naughty little puss.

**TOM.** I'll just bet you are, you saucy minx—

**GUSSIE.** (*Utterly bewildered:*) Who are you talking to?

**TOM.** As if you didn't know. Eh? Eh?

(*DAHLIA shoves GUSSIE into TOM, then seizes a plant and uses it to hide her face, fending off TOM with one hand. GUSSIE stumbles to the ground.*)

**DAHLIA.** Monsieur Travers, you will be kind to Yvette, no? You will not tell Madame?

**TOM.** No fear of that, my little coquette. The old girl is safely tucked in bed. She'll never suspect a thing!

**DAHLIA.** Ah Monsieur Travers, you are so kind. So gallant...

*(TOM kisses DAHLIA's hand. Face hidden, she scowls at him.)*

**TOM.** Mademoiselle, this escapade will be our little secret!

*(During the following, DAHLIA and BERTIE emerge and have a furious, but silent argument over who should conceal the ladder and rope.)*

**GUSSIE.** Secret? Oooh! I have a secret, Tom Travers! I do! I lost one Madeline tonight, but I found another!

**TOM.** Not Madeline, you fool. Yvette!

**GUSSIE.** I know her name! *(Whispers:)* ...I've got her, safe and sound, right here in my pocket.

**TOM.** Don't talk nonsense, you drunken fool. See here, Fitz Wattle, we're all men here, eh? I shan't utter a word about your little rendez-vous in the garden.

**GUSSIE.** My what?

**TOM.** And in turn, I'd rather my wife knew nothing about me, er—

**GUSSIE.** You, er, what?

**TOM.** Fact is, the old girl takes a dim view of me threatening guests at gunpoint. I need you to keep mum.

*(DAHLIA exits with ladder. BERTIE ducks into her previous hiding place.)*

**GUSSIE.** Mum! Poor old Mum. I promised her I'd never touch the stuff. *(Weeping:)* I'm a bad son. I'm a poop!

**TOM.** Stop that. Chin up! Now. I'll just leave you and Yvette to, ah... and so forth. Good night, Fink-Nottle.

**GUSSIE.** Fitz-Wattle.

**TOM.** Right. As for you Mademoiselle...

*(Trapped, BERTIE extends a hand and answers in falsetto.)*

**BERTIE.** Oui?

**TOM.** *(Gallantly kissing BERTIE's hand:)* Au revoir.

*(TOM marches off to patrol the grounds. BERTIE bursts from hiding.)*

**BERTIE.** Gussie, you ass! What do you mean by reeling about, fried to the gills, at midnight?

**GUSSIE.** But you said! "Liquid courage!" Must speak to Madeline!  
(*Peering fondly into pocket:*) Hulllooo, Madeline!

**BERTIE.** You picked a fine time to start vibrating your tail like one of your blasted newts. Upsy-daisy.

(*BERTIE attempts to get an unsteady GUSSIE on his feet.*)

**GUSSIE.** It's not that I'm not grateful, Bertie—

**BERTIE.** My dear chap, don't mention it.

**GUSSIE.** What's the good of saying, 'Don't mention it'? I have mentioned it.

**BERTIE.** I mean, don't mention it any more. Time to toddle off to bed—

**GUSSIE.** Wait...wait... (*Suddenly suspicious:*) What are you doing out here at this hour?

**BERTIE.** ...Air. Getting some. Nothing like country air, they say. Can't imagine why they say it, but they do.

**GUSSIE.** You... You're meeting Madeline!

**BERTIE.** Are you off your onion?

(*DAHLIA enters abruptly.*)

**DAHLIA.** Shut up, Shut up!

**GUSSIE.** ...Yvette?

**DAHLIA.** Someone's coming!

(*Panic. DAHLIA and BERTIE end up hidden behind a highly confused GUSSIE, who decides to hide behind his hands. Pause. JEEVES enters.*)

**JEEVES.** Ahem... I am now approaching. Noisily.

**DAHLIA.** Yes, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** If I might offer a suggestion, madame, a postponement of tonight's planned activity would be prudent.

**GUSSIE.** What activity?

**BERTIE.** Nothing. Splendid notion! Let's all turn in.

**DAHLIA.** Stay where you are. Go on, Jeeves.

**JEEVES.** It is merely that I cannot help but observe a remarkable degree of nocturnal activity.

**GUSSIE.** Just like newts!

**BERTIE & DAHLIA.** Quiet!

**JEEVES.** Including, I regret to say, Mr. Travers, who seems to be armed.

**BERTIE & DAHLIA.** We know.

**JEEVES.** Also, I must point out, Miss Basset is, at this moment, strolling in the rose garden.

**GUSSIE.** What? She is?

**DAHLIA.** At this hour?

**BERTIE.** But why?

**GUSSIE.** (*His worst suspicions confirmed:*) Oh, treachery, thy name is Bertie!

(*GUSSIE tackles BERTIE. DAHLIA wallops both boys.*)

**DAHLIA.** Stop it, both of you, this instant! Jeeves, do something!

**JEEVES.** Hark!

**BERTIE.** Let go of me, you fathead!

**JEEVES.** Again... Hark!

**BERTIE.** (*Still grappling with GUSSIE:*) What?

**DAHLIA.** Good Lord, someone's coming!

(*BERTIE and DAHLIA drag GUSSIE into hiding.*)

**JEEVES.** Thus, the exclamation... Hark. Ah.

(*ANATOLE enters, carrying a cleaver. JEEVES waits serenely.*)

**ANATOLE.** 'Oo is zhere! Show yourself! Ah, Monsieur Jeeves!

**JEEVES.** Bon nuit, Monsieur Anatole. What brings you out at this late hour?

**ANATOLE.** Monsieur Travers 'as said to Anatole zat there are thieves who are—'ow you say, like zee pussycat...

(*ANATOLE nimbly demonstrates sneaking and lurking.*)

**JEEVES.** ...Prowling?

**ANATOLE.** Mais oui! Thieves prowl zee grounds, lurking... And can you guess what zese fiends wish to steal?

**JEEVES.** Money? Jewels?

**ANATOLE.** Recipes! My cookbook, you see?

**JEEVES.** I see. Then, your manuscript is hidden...

**ANATOLE.** Oui, in zee garden! Shhhhh!

(ANATOLE *silently indicates for JEEVES to turn his back. ANATOLE removes manuscript, kisses it, then coughs to signal all clear. JEEVES turns and dutifully admires manuscript. ANATOLE hides his manuscript again.*)

I tell you, mon ami, zee world of zee culinary artiste— It is like zee slash across zee neck!

JEEVES. ...Cutthroat?

ANATOLE. Oui! But, is a puzzlement. Anatole does not comprehend why you also are in zee garden at zis hour?

JEEVES. Alas, Mr. Wooster suffers from an unfortunate malady.

ANATOLE. Ah! Wiz zee rash and zee itching?

JEEVES. No. Mr. Wooster walks in his sleep.

ANATOLE. Quelle horreur!

JEEVES. Indeed. Ah, here he is. This way, sir.

(BERTIE *emerges, sleepwalking. DAHLIA emerges, minus her mask.*)

DAHLIA. Oh, well done, Jeeves! You've found him!

ANATOLE. Madame Travers!

DAHLIA. Good evening, Anatole. As you can see, we've been attempting to locate my poor afflicted nephew. Oh, Mr. Spink-Bottle! We found Bertie! He was in the garden!

(GUSSIE *lurches forth, still utterly confused.*)

GUSSIE. What is Bertie—

DAHLIA. We were dreadfully worried.

ANATOLE. What is zis?

DAHLIA. Hush, Anatole! Remember, one must never awaken a sleepwalker!

JEEVES. No indeed. Very dangerous.

DAHLIA. He might turn violent It's sad, really.

JEEVES. Harmless by day.

DAHLIA. But a fiend at night!

(BERTIE *drifts toward ANATOLE, who backs away in terror.*)

ANATOLE. Madness!

**JEEVES.** Indeed. You'd much better leave Mr. Wooster to us while he is in this state.

**ANATOLE.** Anatole, he—

**JEEVES, DAHLIA.** Shhhhhhhh...

*(ANATOLE nods, places a finger to his lips, and tiptoes off. All relax.)*

**DAHLIA.** That was close.

**MADELINE.** *(From off:)* Hullo? Is someone in the garden?

*(All snap back into their act. BERTIE is in his trance as MADELINE enters, carrying a manuscript of her poetry.)*

**DAHLIA.** Madeline, dear. How late you're out.

**MADELINE.** I've been writing poetry. Moonlight, I find, is so— Whatever is wrong with—

**DAHLIA.** Bertie? Sleepwalking. No need for alarm. He's merely dreaming.

**MADELINE.** Of me! How romantic...

*(GUSSIE picks this moment to screw up his courage.)*

**GUSSIE.** Madeline!

**MADELINE.** *(Coldly:)* Oh. Mr. Fink-Nottle. It's you.

**JEEVES.** Perhaps we should escort Mr. Wooster back inside.

**DAHLIA.** You take one arm and I'll take the other.

**GUSSIE.** Madeline! Must speak to you!

**MADELINE.** Kindly address me as Miss Basset.

**GUSSIE.** Miss Basset, I love you!

**MADELINE.** What?

*(DAHLIA, JEEVES, and BERTIE stop in their tracks at this revelation.)*

**GUSSIE.** Love you, love you. Oh yes. I'm a poop. But I love you. There. I've said it. You're like a...a...

*(GUSSIE begins to vibrate his tail and bend in a semi-circle. MADELINE, DAHLIA, and BERTIE bend with him, as if hypnotized.)*

Beautiful, exotic...newt. Like a newborn newt, with three pairs of long, plume-like, external gills...

**MADLINE.** (*Faintly:*) I remind you of a...newt?

**GUSSIE.** Yes! Glorious creatures! I have one here in my pocket.

*(GUSSIE produces his newt. MADLINE screams, throws her manuscript in the air. BERTIE catches it. ANATOLE barrels on, brandishing cleaver.)*

**ANATOLE.** Mon dieu! My cookbook! Now, you die!

*(ANATOLE waves cleaver at BERTIE, who promptly drops the manuscript in the fountain and bolts, along with DAHLIA, MADLINE, and GUSSIE.)*

**ANATOLE.** Stand still, English dog!

**DAHLIA.** Anatole! Stop!

**MADLINE.** Bertie!

**GUSSIE.** Madeline!

*(JEEVES holds up a hand and the chase crashes to a halt.)*

**BERTIE.** Jeeves! If ever there was a moment when that lofty brain of yours was needed, it is now! Speak!

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. It is with sincere regret that I am forced to tender my resignation, effective immediately.

**BERTIE.** —What?!

**ANATOLE.** Bon dieu!

**DAHLIA.** Egad!

*(A thunderous gunshot erupts offstage.)*

**DAHLIA.** It's Tom. He's got the elephant gun!

*(All bolt. Even JEEVES exits in a dignified hurry.)*

*End of Act I*

## ACT II

### Scene 1

*(Next morning. JEEVES enters from the house bearing a tennis racket. BERTIE follows in travel suit, hat, and cane, nearly hidden from view behind a stack of luggage. JEEVES adds the tennis racket to the load.)*

**BERTIE.** *(In shock:)* Banished! Exiled! Banned for life from Brinkley Court.

**JEEVES.** Most distressing, sir.

**BERTIE.** Because of a bleeding cook!

**JEEVES.** Monsieur Anatole's resignation has caused quite the uproar. Sadly, the blame has fallen on you, sir.

**BERTIE.** Fancy that. I say, Jeeves, er, touching on the subject of resignation, I must say that yours, last night, was an exceeding clever charade.

**JEEVES.** Charade, sir?

**BERTIE.** *(Hopefully:)* Of course, it didn't fool me. No doubt, part of some deep-laid scheme. Am I right?

**JEEVES.** If you care to wait in the garden, sir, while your car is brought round.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, you wouldn't really send me away, all on my own?

**JEEVES.** Dear me, sir. You are quite pale. As Master Shakespeare put it, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

**BERTIE.** I am feeling liverish. Not that my well-being should influence you in any way.

**JEEVES.** One does hope that your health has not been adversely affected by your stay in the country.

**BERTIE.** If go into a decline you mustn't feel responsible, Jeeves. Not entirely.

**JEEVES.** *(Relenting:)* Upon our return to town, I shall prepare a strengthening broth to fortify you.

**BERTIE.** *Our* return, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** Indeed, sir, as you so cleverly deduced, my resignation was part of a plot.

**BERTIE.** Of course it was! I dare say you deceived all the rest! Of course, a Wooster is not easily hoodwinked.

**JEEVES.** No, sir. Divining that you might well be asked to leave, it seemed essential that I remain close at hand in order to sort out matters to our mutual satisfaction.

**BERTIE.** As I suspected! And now to the next step in our cunning plan—

*(DAHLIA's voice is heard. BERTIE and his luggage are hastily concealed as DAHLIA and TOM enter.)*

**DAHLIA.** Lovely morning. I thought we'd finish up out here. Ah, Jeeves! We'll have coffee in the garden.

**JEEVES.** At once, madam.

*(JEEVES exits.)*

**DAHLIA.** Much better than that stuffy dining room. Perhaps a bit of sunshine will coax you from your sulk.

**TOM.** *(With awful indignation:)* Sulk? Sulk, madam?

**DAHLIA.** You needn't growl. Many people are grumpy before their morning coffee.

**TOM.** *(Furiously:)* I am not in the least grumpy!

**DAHLIA.** So I observe.

*(JEEVES returns with a silver coffee service on a tray and serves.)*

**TOM.** If I *am* a trifle out of sorts—which I utterly deny, mind you—it is *entirely* due to last night's uproar.

**DAHLIA.** Well, it was your elephant gun— Oh, you mean... Anatole.

**TOM.** *(Voice of doom:)* Gone. Vanished! With no notice.

**DAHLIA.** Shocking. I blame the French temperament.

**TOM.** I blame your blasted nephew.

**DAHLIA.** Decidedly grumpy.

**TOM.** I am not grumpy! I am dyspeptic! Who, I'd like to know, was responsible for that ghastly meal just now?

**DAHLIA.** It was rather grim. On the bright side, we may have lost Anatole but we have acquired Jeeves!

**TOM.** Jeeves, can you tell me what Borgia concocted that, for lack of a better word, breakfast?

**JEEVES.** I believe it was Agnes, sir. The second housemaid.

**TOM.** If I die, I want her brought up on charges.

**JEEVES.** I fear that the kitchen staff is still in something of a muddle in the wake of Cook's abrupt departure.

**DAHLIA.** And Agnes volunteered?

**JEEVES.** She drew the short straw.

**DAHLIA.** I'm sure she did her best.

**TOM.** Jeeves, be so kind as to fetch me some bicarbonate.

**JEEVES.** At once, sir.

*(JEEVES exits.)*

**DAHLIA.** Oh dear. Tummy trouble?

**TOM.** I don't believe you care a jot what I suffer!

**DAHLIA.** Of course I do. Particularly when you make everyone around you suffer when you're upset!

**TOM.** Of all the unfeeling—!

**DAHLIA.** Oh, don't let's quarrel!

**TOM.** I am a martyr to unspeakable digestive affliction and you don't care a pin.

**DAHLIA.** Rubbish! I have been unfailingly sympathetic to your endless stomach ailments for the past thirty years!

**TOM.** Oh I see! I see it all now! How thoughtless of me to annoy you with my intestinal torment!

**DAHLIA.** O, don't play the martyr!

**TOM.** Not I, madam! Henceforth, I shall suffer in agonized silence!

**DAHLIA.** If only you would! But you won't! What's more, it's my belief that it's all in your head!

*(TOM and DAHLIA are on their feet now, facing off. JEEVES returns with a small tray bearing a concoction.)*

**TOM.** In my—! Have you gone barking mad?

**DAHLIA.** Not yet, but the day is young!

**JEEVES.** Dear me. I hope I do not intrude.

*(TOM and DAHLIA freeze, then sit, pretending a civility neither is feeling.)*

**DAHLIA.** Not in the least. What is it, Jeeves?

**TOM.** Ah, the bicarb.

**JEEVES.** No, sir.

**TOM.** No?

**JEEVES.** I have taken the liberty of concocting a small preparation of my own, sir. Very efficacious in cases of gastroesophageal distress.

**TOM.** Is it? Well... Bottoms up! (*He drinks. A pause.*) ...by Jove.

**DAHLIA.** What?

**TOM.** I'd never have believed it.

**DAHLIA.** ...Better?

**TOM.** I'm cured!

**DAHLIA.** Oh, well done, Jeeves. You're a treasure.

**TOM.** You're a bloody Godsend!

**JEEVES.** One is gratified to be of assistance, sir.

**DAHLIA.** Thank you, Jeeves. That will be all.

*(JEEVES exits with tray and glass. TOM and DAHLIA mend fences.)*

**TOM.** Extraordinary fellow... So. Any plans for the day?

**DAHLIA.** (*Gloomily:*) I must pop by the printer. There's something of a hitch with the next issue of the magazine.

**TOM.** Oh? So, how is the publishing game, these days? Still going great guns with *Madame's Nightshirt*?

**DAHLIA.** *Milady's Boudoir!*

**TOM.** That's the one.

**DAHLIA.** (*Bitterly:*) Oh, it's coming along swimmingly.

**TOM.** Good show.

**DAHLIA.** Although, it's odd you should mention it—

**TOM.** Mention what?

**DAHLIA.** *Milady's Boudoir.* Because I am having this tiny difficulty concerning the printer...

**TOM.** (*Heartily:*) Well, I expect you'll put it to rights. Very resourceful woman.

**DAHLIA.** Thank you, Tom. Ordinarily, I would. However, in this case—

*(MADELINE enters from the house.)*

**TOM.** Ah, here's our little Madeline to brighten the morning. Excellent!

**DAHLIA.** (*Dryly:*) Jolly.

**TOM.** Here we are, m'dear! Come and join us!

**MADLINE.** Oh, Uncle, how can you sit there drinking coffee as if nothing had occurred!

**TOM.** Er... Oh, you mean Anatole's departure? Yes. Dark days.

**MADLINE.** Who?

**TOM.** The cook.

**MADLINE.** No! Bertie!

**TOM.** Wooster? What about him?

**MADLINE.** Gone!

**TOM.** Too right! Should have given him the boot years ago.

**MADLINE.** Dearest Uncle, won't you relent and permit Bertie to return? For my sake?

**TOM.** I will not! Wooster cost me the best cook in England. Never did make out precisely what happened because Anatole was gabbling in French half the time. Something about a crock pot or crook back—

**DAHLIA.** Cookbook.

**TOM.** The point is, Wooster was at fault! See here, Madeline, I know you feel sorry for the bloke—

**MADLINE.** Oh, cruel Capulet! Surely you would not thus part two star-crossed lovers!

**TOM.** Eh? What lovers? What did you call me?

**DAHLIA.** Good Lord. She fancies herself Juliet and Bertie—Bertie!—as Romeo.

*(DAHLIA presses a napkin to her lips as she struggles not to give way.)*

**TOM.** See here, has that bounder made advances to you?

**MADLINE.** He adores me! Madly! Passionately!

**TOM.** I forbid it!

**MADLINE.** And I have pledged my love to him!

*(DAHLIA is now laughing uncontrollably.)*

**TOM.** (*To DAHLIA:*) Madam, this is no laughing matter.

**MADLINE.** Perhaps once, in my girlish folly, I dreamed of... Another. But it was Not To Be. And now, Bertie holds my heart. And one day, when he and I are bound by sacred marriage vows—

**TOM.** Egad!

**MADLINE.** Don't you see, Uncle? Bertie will be your nephew by marriage!

**DAHLIA.** As it happens, Bertie is already Tom's nephew by marriage.

**TOM.** (*Growling:*) Your side of the family!

**DAHLIA.** (*Dangerously:*) Why, yes. Do you care to comment?

**TOM.** Er... Best not, I think.

**MADLINE.** Uncle, I beg of you. Say that you will relent.

**TOM.** You will learn, Madeline, that I am a man of my word. So long as Anatole is gone, so, then, is Wooster. That blighter has seen his last day at Brinkley Court!

**MADLINE.** Then, let day in and let life out!

**TOM.** What?

**DAHLIA.** Juliet, again. I expect she'll go on like this for days.

(*JEEVES enters silently, with Tom's hat and walking stick at the ready.*)

**TOM.** That's torn it. Jeeves! Fetch my— Ah, thank you, Jeeves.

**DAHLIA.** Where are you going?

**TOM.** The village. I shall take luncheon at the pub and leave you to the mercy of second housemaid Agnes.

Ladies, good day!

(*TOM storms off.*)

**MADLINE.** Alas. Uncle is very hard, to ruthlessly part two lovers so. And parting is such—

**DAHLIA.** Sweet sorrow. Got it.

**JEEVES.** Might I suggest, Miss Basset, that you might do well to seek solace in a sonnet?

**MADLINE.** The very thing! I shall pour out the anguish of my soul in verse!

**JEEVES.** Perhaps beneath a willow tree?

**MADLINE.** Yes! (*To DAHLIA:*) Do pray excuse me. I must fly!

**DAHLIA.** Of course you must. Off you go.

(*MADELINE exits.*)

**DAHLIA.** ...Well done, Jeeves.

**JEEVES.** Thank you, madame. If one may venture a further remark...

**DAHLIA.** One may.

**JEEVES.** One cannot help but observe that the weather is very fine. A bit cloudy early on, but much clearer now.

**DAHLIA.** Is there something in particular you want to say, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** Merely that one might go so far as to say (*Genteel cough.*) the coast is entirely clear.

(*BERTIE pops out from hiding.*)

**BERTIE.** What ho, what ho!

(*JEEVES pulls out a chair for BERTIE and pours his coffee.*)

**DAHLIA.** Still here.

**BERTIE.** Did you think I'd abandon my favourite aunt in her time of trouble?

**DAHLIA.** Bertie, you really are rather amazing. To look at you, one would think you an amiable idiot. Bit of a wanker, but essentially harmless.

(*JEEVES starts to tactfully withdraw.*)

**DAHLIA.** Don't go, Jeeves.

**BERTIE.** Don't you dare go, Jeeves.

**DAHLIA.** Kindly do not give orders to *my* butler. Where was I?

**JEEVES.** "Amiable idiot."

**DAHLIA.** Ah, yes. But, in reality, you are a scourge worse than the Black Death. First, you foist Spink-Bottle on me, an inebriated newt fancier who gets blotto and accosts Miss Bassett—well, I enjoyed that bit.

**BERTIE.** It was rather—

**DAHLIA.** Then, not only do you fail utterly to burgle the Travers diamonds, you drive my cook into a frenzy, so that he quits on the spot! Poor Tom is, thanks to you, doomed to die of dyspepsia!

**BERTIE.** I don't see how you can blame me—

**DAHLIA.** Blame you! I'm on the verge of throttling you! Where, I should like to know, did you find time in your crowded schedule of havoc to turn the shockingly empty head of that Bassett girl?

**BERTIE.** I never!

**DAHLIA.** She's writing sonnets about star-crossed lovers this very minute.

**BERTIE.** (*Alarmed:*) Where?

**JEEVES.** Miss Basset is, at present, safely ensconced in the gazebo.

**DAHLIA.** How—?

**BERTIE.** Jeeves knows everything. (*Rising:*) Perhaps, I'll just toddle back inside—

**DAHLIA.** Don't you dare! I'm not done hectoring.

**BERTIE.** Now, Aunt Dahlia, you're taking too dark a view. I agree that things are not looking too oojah-cum-spiff at the moment, but be of good cheer. A Wooster is seldom baffled for long.

**DAHLIA.** I see. I expect you'll come up with a scheme of some sort?

**BERTIE.** Any minute now.

**DAHLIA.** It needed but this. I don't see how things could possibly be worse than they are, but you will no doubt find a way to plunge my formerly happy home into an even darker abyss of hell!

**BERTIE.** (*Concerned:*) Aunt Dahlia. Is something amiss? You seem pipped.

**DAHLIA.** Pipped!?

**BERTIE.** Noticeably pipped.

**JEEVES.** If one may interject.

**DAHLIA.** Yes?

**JEEVES.** There appears to be someone approaching.

(*Galvanized, DAHLIA and BERTIE leap to their feet.*)

**DAHLIA.** Tom!

**BERTIE.** If he spots me still on the grounds—

**DAHLIA.** He'll shoot you on sight!

**BERTIE.** I've got to hide!

(*BERTIE and DAHLIA jostle one another as they attempt to hide.*)

**DAHLIA.** Not there! That's my spot!

**BERTIE.** Why are *you* hiding?

**DAHLIA.** Do you think I want my husband to catch me having a cheery morning chat with you!

**BERTIE.** Well, if that's your idea of a cheery morning chat—

**DAHLIA.** Shove over!

*(They hide. A pause. GUSSIE, hungover, staggers on.)*

**JEEVES.** Good morning, Mr. Fink-Nottle. Coffee?

*(GUSSIE lurches to a chair and collapses, face down on the table.)*

**GUSSIE.** Dying...

**JEEVES.** One sincerely hopes not, sir.

*(BERTIE and DAHLIA emerge from hiding.)*

**DAHLIA.** Oh, for pity's—it's Spink-Bottle.

**BERTIE.** Hullo, Gussie. Feeling a bit rough?

**GUSSIE.** Go away!

**DAHLIA.** For once, your loathsome friend is right. Go away, Bertie. You don't seem to have grasped the fact that you've been banned. Booted. Invited to exit. Yet, here you still are.

**BERTIE.** What, leave my friend and my aunt in the lurch? Do you imagine me to be without any finer feeling?

**DAHLIA & GUSSIE.** Yes.

**BERTIE.** I am deeply wounded. Did you hear that, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir.

**BERTIE.** Come on, Gussie! What about taking another whack at Madeline Bassett?

**GUSSIE.** No! I've dished myself there completely.

**BERTIE.** Not at all. You'll swing the voting in the next try.

**GUSSIE.** No!

**BERTIE.** What do you mean?

**DAHLIA.** What do you mean, what does he mean? It's perfectly evident what he means.

**GUSSIE.** I mean it's no good. Madeline Basset may have loved me once—

**DAHLIA.** *(Doubtfully, to BERTIE:)* Really?

**BERTIE.** *(Raising a hand:)* Word of a Wooster.

**GUSSIE.** –but last night killed all that.

**BERTIE.** Nonsense.

**GUSSIE.** It's no good, Bertie. Fate made me the sort of chap who can't say "boo" to a goose.

**BERTIE.** It's not a question of saying "boo" to a goose.

**DAHLIA.** I have to side with Bertie on this. Really, the point doesn't arise at all.

**BERTIE.** (To DAHLIA:) Stop helping. Gussie, listen. It is simply a matter of—

**GUSSIE.** No! I came face to face with the girl I love and found myself babbling about the plume-like external gills of the newly-born newt... That's not a thing I can go through twice. It's over!

**BERTIE.** It's not! Chin up! Nothing's amiss that can't be put right.

**DAHLIA.** Here it comes.

**BERTIE.** What we need is a plan! To wit: A) Rid me of any entanglement with the Basset Disaster by means of B) Foisting her off on Gussie, here, while at the same time—

**DAHLIA.** C) Concocting a fiendishly clever scheme to abscond with the Travers Diamonds—

**BERTIE.** No. That's out.

**DAHLIA.** It's in.

**BERTIE.** Out.

**DAHLIA.** In.

**BERTIE.** Out! Look, I'm sorry, but in this instance I am a rock. I am Gibraltar. In short, I am forced to employ...

**DAHLIA, GUSSIE, JEEVES.** The Iron Hand.

**BERTIE.** Exactly. Where was I?

**JEEVES.** You were about to enlighten us as to the nature of "C" sir.

**BERTIE.** Ah, yes. C) We lure Anatole back to his old job at Brinkley Court, thereby D) Sweetening Uncle's tender tummy, not to mention his temper, which will, in turn, E) Loosen his grip on the old purse strings, so that Aunt Dahlia can save *Milady's Boudoir* without resorting to a life of crime.

**GUSSIE.** You're left out F) The rescue and restoration of Madeline the Newt to the loving arms of her owner.

**DAHLIA.** "Madeline the Newt"?

**BERTIE.** Don't ask. At which point, G) All shall be sunshine and twittering birds.

**DAHLIA.** In short, what we require is a wickedly ingenious, earth-shatteringly brilliant plan.

**BERTIE.** Exactly.

*(All brighten, then scowl, then turn expectantly to JEEVES.)*

## Scene 2

*(MADELINE is hard at work on a sonnet.)*

**MADELINE.** Alone, the swan warbles its mournful song,  
I, too, bewEEP my disconsolate state,  
Uncaring heaven, bear witness to my wrong  
As my true love is torn from me by... *(Ponders:)* Fate!

*(BERTIE enters.)*

**BERTIE.** Do swans warble? Surely not.

*(MADELINE runs to BERTIE with open arms.)*

**MADELINE.** Oh, Bertie, my beloved!

*(BERTIE deftly eludes MADELINE's embrace.)*

**BERTIE.** What ho—

**MADELINE.** How mad you are to pursue me like this, my sweet, foolish, courageous boy!

**BERTIE.** Oh—

**MADELINE.** To think of you risking your life, sneaking back onto the grounds merely for a final glimpse of me!

**BERTIE.** Ah, well, you know. A Wooster laughs at danger. Ha ha! Besides, I wanted to speak to you.

**MADELINE.** Of course you did, my poor lovesick swain.

**BERTIE.** Ah...yes. The thing is, you're clearly a... Whereas I, am... not. If you see what I mean. That is to say, deeply sensible of the honour, and so forth—but—Well, dash it!

**MADELINE.** I think I know what you are trying to say, Bertie, dear.

**BERTIE.** You do?

**MADELINE.** I have taken you by surprise.

**BERTIE.** That's it.

**MADELINE.** You are thinking of—

**BERTIE.** Yes.

**MADELINE.** —Mr. Fink-Nottle.

**BERTIE.** The very man.

**MADELINE.** You find the change in my feelings hard to understand.

**BERTIE.** A bit.

**MADELINE.** And yet it is quite simple, really.

**BERTIE.** Is it?

**MADELINE.** I want to make you happy.

**BERTIE.** Ah. Very decent of you.

**MADELINE.** It is the least I can do to reward your unswerving devotion. But—may I be quite frank with you, Bertie?

**BERTIE.** Oh, rather.

**MADELINE.** I am fond of you. I will marry you. And I will do my best to make you a good wife.

**BERTIE.** Very sporting.

**MADELINE.** But my affection for you can never be that same flame-like passion I once felt for...Augustus.

**BERTIE.** And there's the snag. I have a notion. Why not chuck the whole idea of hitching up with me? Just wash it out altogether. I mean, if you truly love old Gussie—

**MADELINE.** No longer.

**BERTIE.** Oh, come now.

**MADELINE.** No! The events of last night have killed my love. A smear of ugliness has been drawn across a thing of beauty, and I can never feel towards him as I did.

**BERTIE.** It was the newt in his pocket, wasn't it? Thing is, Gussie wasn't entirely himself last night.

**MADELINE.** It is noble of you to defend him, Bertie. I respect you for it.

**BERTIE.** Oh, no.

**MADELINE.** You have a splendid, chivalrous soul.

**BERTIE.** I really don't.

**MADELINE.** You do! But, Bertie dear, it is no use. There are things which kill love. I can never forget Augustus, but that first, trembling bloom of true love has withered. And died. (*Bravely:*) I shall wed you.

**BERTIE.** (*Bleakly:*) Then there's no hope.

**MADELINE.** What?

**BERTIE.** No hope that some little thing that I say or do might change your mind about Gussie? Anything at all?

**MADELINE.** Have no fear, dearest. I am entirely yours.

(*JEEVES enters bearing a manuscript.*)

**JEEVES.** I beg your pardon, Miss Bassett.

**MADELINE.** Yes, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** I have endeavored to do what I can, with the aid of an iron, to restore the pages of your manuscript.

(*A delighted MADELINE seizes the pages and happily scans them.*)

**MADELINE.** My poems! Oh, Jeeves, you angel!

**BERTIE.** (*Urgently:*) Jeeves, old man, Miss Bassett is determined to make me a happy man. Nothing I can say or do will change her mind.

**JEEVES.** Allow me to offer my felicitations, sir.

**BERTIE.** Jeeves, I don't think you've entirely grasped the salient point. (*Whispers:*) I'm scuppered at point A.

**JEEVES.** Indeed you are, sir. My very best wishes to you both.

**MADELINE.** Thank you, Jeeves. And thank you for restoring my manuscript. The poems within are the merest fancies, the dreams and impressions of a sensitive young girl, laid out in verse. But they mean all the world to me.

**JEEVES.** As Mr. Thomas Gray observed, Miss, "Poetry is thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

**MADELINE.** So true.

**BERTIE.** "Thoughts that breathe?" Piffle.

**MADELINE.** You mustn't joke, Bertie, dear. People might imagine you to be...insensitive.

**JEEVES.** I wonder, Miss, would it be very impertinent to beg you to favour us with a reading?

(BERTIE *shakes his head in horror at JEEVES. JEEVES nods firmly.*)

**MADELINE.** Oh, no, I couldn't... Really?

**BERTIE.** (*Catching the command in JEEVES' eye:*) Topping notion. Do give it a go!

**MADELINE.** Let me see. What shall it be? A rondeau? A sestina? Oh, I know the very thing! A villanelle!

**BERTIE.** Sounds a bit sinister.

**MADELINE.** Oh, no, Bertie... But of course, you're joking.

**JEEVES.** You may recall, sir, a villanelle is a French poetic form composed of five triplets and a closing quatrain.

**BERTIE.** Ah, yes. A villanette!

**JEEVES.** Villanelle.

**BERTIE.** Smashing! Let's have it, then.

(MADELINE *strikes a pose and recites, with elaborate gestures.*)

**MADELINE.** Adrift upon a crystal moonbeam sea  
Imagination hoists a silken sail  
And whisks me on a voyage filled with glee!

I sail to far, enchanted realms, you see,  
At each new port, adventure without fail.  
Then home again on tippy toe to thee.

My ship was built by magical decree  
The fairy king, himself, stands at the rail  
He promises to grant me wishes three.  
O what a—Sorry, the ink has smeared a bit here—O what—

**BERTIE.** (*Standing and declaiming:*) O what a fool hath whisky made of me! ...No? ...Does rhyme, though. Did you notice?

**MADELINE.** (*Faintly:*) I did.

**BERTIE.** Of course, I'm not a poetical Johnny. But I do recall the odd bit of verse from my school days. There was one rather catchy little rhyme... How did it go? Ah!

(BERTIE *strikes a pose and recites.*)

I once had the vicar to tea;  
It was just as I knew it would be:  
His rumblings abdominal  
Were simply phenomenal,  
And everyone thought it was me.

*(There is a moment of stunned silence.)*

**JEEVES.** Well, this has been most illuminating, but alas, tempus fugit. Mr. Wooster, your car awaits.

**BERTIE.** Of course. Madeline, till we meet again, let me say what is in my heart... toodle-oo, old thing! *(BERTIE gently knocks his fist on MADELINE's chin.)* Hi ho, Jeeves. Best of luck in your new position.

**JEEVES.** Thank you, sir.

*(BERTIE waves cheerily and exits. JEEVES exits.)*

**MADELINE.** *(Shell-shocked:)* "His rumblings abdominal...?" O what have I done?

*(GUSSIE enters, hot on the trail of Madeline the Newt.)*

**GUSSIE.** *(Calling back to JEEVES:)* Out here, Jeeves? Oh, thank you! I'll have a look immediately... Madeline? Maaaadeline... Where are you, you little tease?

**MADELINE.** Mr. Fink-Nottle!

**GUSSIE.** Miss Bassett!

**MADELINE.** Were you...looking for me?

*(BERTIE appears, unseen by MADELINE, to coach GUSSIE.)*

**GUSSIE.** No!

*(BERTIE nods emphatically.)*

**GUSSIE.** Yes!

**MADELINE.** Here I am.

**GUSSIE.** I—I—

*(GUSSIE starts to bolt, but is blocked by BERTIE, who uses the Iron Hand.)*

**MADELINE.** *(Hopefully:)* Perhaps you have some explanation to offer with regards to your behavior last night?

**GUSSIE.** ...No.

**MADELINE.** Any explanation at all? Anything?

**GUSSIE.** ...Sorry.

**MADELINE.** Oh... I see.

**GUSSIE.** Ah...

**MADELINE.** Rather funny, that we should meet like this. At this particular moment... Almost as if it were meant.

**GUSSIE.** Er—

**MADELINE.** Such a lovely garden, don't you think? So green and fragrant and, oh...rather romantic.

**GUSSIE.** ...Hmmm.

**MADELINE.** Oh, well. Perhaps not.

*(MADELINE sits, dejected, facing away from GUSSIE. JEEVES enters.)*

**GUSSIE.** *(In appeal:)* Jeeves!

**JEEVES.** Ah, Mr. Fink-Nottle, I am pleased to report that I have succeeded in locating your lost possession.

*(JEEVES hands GUSSIE a rectangular matchbox containing air holes.)*

**GUSSIE.** You don't mean—?

**JEEVES.** Yes, sir. Allow me to restore it to you. If you will excuse me...

*(JEEVES makes a discreet exit, taking BERTIE with him. GUSSIE slides open the box and speaks to his newt, while an enchanted MADELINE gazes elsewhere, listening.)*

**GUSSIE.** Oh, Madeline, my beloved, my own! I thought I'd lost you forever. I can't tell you the anguish I've felt. There are no words. Look at you, you darling. I'd nearly forgotten how extraordinarily lovely you are.

**MADELINE.** *(Faintly:)* Oh! You mustn't—

**GUSSIE.** *(Carelessly to the real MADELINE:)* I beg your pardon, but if you only knew what I've suffered, you'd forgive this outpouring of unbridled passion...

*(Back to the newt:)* Oh darling, how I've longed to hold you... But what's this? Let me look at you... Are you perfectly well, sweet-heart? You've got a sort of stricken look in your eyes. And, if I'm not mistaken, your tail is drooping!

**MADELINE.** —Sorry?

**GUSSIE.** Oh, Madeline, my treasure. I've treated you shamefully. But if only you'll give me another chance, I vow that you will never again suffer a moment's sorrow. Oh, precious, let us vow never to be parted again.

*(MADELINE turns and flings herself into an astonished GUSSIE's arms.)*

**MADELINE.** Never, O my beloved Augustus!

**Scene 3**

*(Late afternoon. DAHLIA enters, checks that the coast is clear, then beckons.)*

**DAHLIA.** There's no one about. Come out.

**BERTIE.** I won't!

**DAHLIA.** Get out here this minute!

*(BERTIE enters, wearing a chef's coat and hat, and a bushy false mustache.)*

**BERTIE.** I feel ridiculous.

**DAHLIA.** Will you stop fussing? Your own mother wouldn't know you. The disguise is merely a precaution in case Tom should return from the village.

**BERTIE.** He's bound to pop up. He's been gone for hours.

**DAHLIA.** In which case, he won't spot the exiled Bertie Wooster, but will instead be thrilled to learn that we've hired a new cook.

**BERTIE.** No one who knows better than I that Jeeves moves in mysterious ways, but I fail to see how this get up is going to help lure Anatole back to Brinkley Court.

**DAHLIA.** What do you mean?

**BERTIE.** Part C of the plan.

**DAHLIA.** Yes?

**BERTIE.** We've made tremendous strides on points A and B. Madeline has become disenchanted with me—

**DAHLIA.** Fancy.

**BERTIE.** —And is once more enamoured of the Newt King.

**DAHLIA.** Extraordinary.

**BERTIE.** Thus, we progress to point C.

**DAHLIA.** Exactly.

**BERTIE.** Anatole.

**DAHLIA.** Diamonds.

**BERTIE.** What? No!

**DAHLIA.** Of course!

**BERTIE.** But, the Iron Hand!

**DAHLIA.** Don't be absurd.

**BERTIE.** But we have to get Anatole back!

**DAHLIA.** Certainly. I understand Jeeves has a scheme of some sort under way as we speak.

**BERTIE.** Are you telling me that this masquerade is *not* part of Jeeves' plan?

**DAHLIA.** I prefer to think of it as a slight *embellishment* of Jeeves' plan. Now listen, Bertie, our big mistake previously was making our attempt in the middle of the night.

**BERTIE.** My big mistake was leaving London.

**DAHLIA.** Stop whining. Now this time we, and by we, of course I mean you—

**BERTIE.** You always do.

**DAHLIA.** This time, we shall obtain the diamonds in broad daylight. Or, twilight, I suppose, at this hour. If anyone should see you near the study, you're the new cook, and you got turned around in this strange house.

**BERTIE.** Because this is, without doubt, the very strangest house in England.

**DAHLIA.** You nip into Tom's study, pinch the diamonds, and nip out again. Voila!

**BERTIE.** There's something unnatural about an Aunt forcing her nephew into felonious crime.

**DAHLIA.** Don't be a worm.

**BERTIE.** No, no, no!

(ANATOLE *enters.*)

**ANATOLE.** Sacre Bleu!

**DAHLIA.** Anatole!

**ANATOLE.** What is zis? Who is zis—zis—imposter?

**DAHLIA.** What are you doing here?

**ANATOLE.** What am I doing here? What eez 'ee doing here?

**DAHLIA.** Oh. Ah.

**ANATOLE.** Madame Travers, who is zis?

**DAHLIA.** Of course. You haven't met. Well, Anatole... Clearly... this is our new cook—

**BERTIE.** Maurice.

**DAHLIA.** Francois.

**DAHLIA.** Francois Maurice. From Paris.

**BERTIE.** Oui! From Paree. Where I am, 'ow you say, a chef of zee most famous!

**ANATOLE.** Madame, 'ow is zis possible? You 'ave replaced—replaced!—zee great Anatole?

**BERTIE.** Oh ho ho! So, zis is zee former cook?

**ANATOLE.** Me, I am Anatole!

**BERTIE.** Me, I am Pierre!

(DAHLIA *whacks* BERTIE.)

**BERTIE.** Pierre Francois Maurice. From Paree!

**DAHLIA.** After all, Anatole, you did rather leave us in a pickle—

**ANATOLE.** Me, I know nothing of zis peeckle. I am wounded, Madame, zat you replace Anatole with zis poseur!

**BERTIE.** Bah! Do not listen, Madame. Zis Anatole—pooh, pooh to 'im!

**ANATOLE.** Pooh, pooh to me?

**BERTIE.** Mais oui! Très jolie! Pooh, pooh to you! Adieu! (*Note: "you" should be pronounced to rhyme with "adieu."*)

**ANATOLE.** Connard!

(ANATOLE *lunges* for BERTIE who hides behind DAHLIA, who finds herself wedged between them as they slap ineffectually at each other.)

**DAHLIA.** Stop it this instant, both of you! Help!

(JEEVES *makes a timely entrance.*)

**JEEVES.** Ah, Monsieur Anatole, you have arrived.

**BERTIE & ANATOLE.** Jeeves!

**DAHLIA.** (*Breathlessly.*) Jeeves, you knew Anatole was coming?

**JEEVES.** Indeed, Mrs. Travers. I sent for him.

**ANATOLE.** Monsieur Jeeves! Your message to me, it eez true, what you say?

**JEEVES.** Most assuredly.

**BERTIE.** What message?

**ANATOLE.** (*To JEEVES.*) Excusez moi, I must instantly kill zees im-bécile!

(ANATOLE *makes another run at BERTIE who nimbly dodges.*)

**DAHLIA.** Stop, Anatole! Bear with me, I'm trying to sort this out. Why have you returned? *Have* you returned?

**ANATOLE.** Oh, Madame. Zee scene last night. Zee pages in zee fountain. I was desolate, you understand? My life's work, pouf! She is gone. (*Growling:*) Zat Wooster! But, zen—

**DAHLIA.** Yes? Zen?

**ANATOLE.** My friend, Monsieur Jeeves, sends word to me zat it is not so! And voila! Once more, my 'eart, she sings!

**DAHLIA.** She does?

**JEEVES.** Do permit me to make your happiness complete, Monsieur.

(*JEEVES produces ANATOLE's precious manuscript from its hiding place.*)

**ANATOLE.** (*Kissing his book:*) Mon chérie! You 'ave return to Anatole! (*To JEEVES:*) 'Ow can I ever thank you, Jeeves?

**JEEVES.** One would be more than sufficiently thanked if you, monsieur, would return to Brinkley Court.

**ANATOLE.** Alas, Anatole, 'ee is no longer wanted.

**DAHLIA.** Oh, but you are!

**ANATOLE.** No, no!

**DAHLIA.** Oui, oui!

**ANATOLE.** It eez clear zat you prefer zis...swine in a chef's hat.

**JEEVES.** (*To DAHLIA:*) Carpe diem, madam.

**DAHLIA.** Quite right. You, there! Pierre Maurice Francois.

**BERTIE.** Call me Jacques.

**DAHLIA.** You're through.

**BERTIE.** What?

(*DAHLIA advances menacingly on BERTIE, who backs away.*)

**DAHLIA.** Out. Finished. Dismissed. Discharged. Sacked. I'm afraid your services are no longer required. Get out!

**BERTIE.** But—

**ANATOLE.** Ha ha! Adieu to you!

**BERTIE.** Listen, you—

**DAHLIA.** Jeeves, escort this fellow off the grounds. At once.

**JEEVES.** With the greatest pleasure.

**BERTIE.** But—ow!

(JEEVES *seizes BERTIE by the collar and forcibly marches him off.*)

**JEEVES.** Come along, you!

**ANATOLE.** Ha! Madame Travers, you 'ave make of Anatole an 'appy man!

**DAHLIA.** I'm so glad. Tell me, Anatole, might your good nature extend so far as to forgive my nephew Bertie?

**ANATOLE.** (*Growling:*) Wooster... (*With an abrupt change of heart:*) But of course! It was all a merry mix-up, no?

(ANATOLE *laughs merrily.* DAHLIA *joins in a bit hysterically.*)

**DAHLIA.** You're very good.

**ANATOLE.** (*Simply:*) But of course! I am Anatole! And Anatole's cookbook, she is safe. (*He kisses the manuscript.*) And now, Anatole, he goes!

**DAHLIA.** No! Don't go!

**ANATOLE.** Ha ha ha, Madame Travers. It is to laugh. No, no, no. Anatole, 'ee goes to zee kitchen. And zere, for you and Monsieur Travers, 'ee prepares a feast that is (*He kisses his fingers.*) magnifique! You will see!

(ANATOLE *exits, clutching his manuscript.* DAHLIA *collapses as JEEVES enters with drinks on a tray.*)

**DAHLIA.** I find myself in urgent and immediate need of a *very* strong—ah, thank you, Jeeves.

**JEEVES.** Not at all.

**DAHLIA.** Not just for the drink. Jeeves, you may well have saved my marriage.

**JEEVES.** One does endeavor to give satisfaction.

(GUSSIE *and* MADELINE *enter.*)

**MADELINE.** Are we having cocktails in the garden? Lovely!

**DAHLIA.** Still here, Spink-Bottle?

**GUSSIE.** Ahh...if—I mean—

(MADELINE *takes hold of GUSSIE's chin and gazes into his eyes.*)

**MADELINE.** Deep breath, darling...

**GUSSIE.** (*Bravely to DAHLIA:*) Yes. I am. We are. Both of us. Thank you for asking.

**DAHLIA.** (*Amused:*) Not at all.

**MADELINE.** (*To GUSSIE:*) Shall I tell her, or will you?

**GUSSIE.** Oh, no. I mean, yes. Tell her. But not me. You, I think. Don't you? You'll say it better.

**DAHLIA.** She could hardly say it worse. What is it, Madeline? But break it to me gently. I've had...a day.

**MADELINE.** Augustus and I are engaged to be married.

**DAHLIA.** Are you. I had the distinct impression that you were engaged to marry Bertie.

**GUSSIE.** ...What?

**MADELINE.** Oh no! That is, not precisely.

**GUSSIE.** Madeline!

**MADELINE.** Don't be cross, dear. I forgot.

**GUSSIE.** Forgot!

**MADELINE.** Poor Bertie. He will be devastated.

**DAHLIA.** I dare say it's very old-fashioned of me, but two fiancés seems excessive.

**GUSSIE.** But... Bertie never seemed to care for you at all!

**MADELINE.** Darling Augustus, you couldn't be more wrong. Bertie has adored me for simply ages.

**GUSSIE.** (*Boiling:*) Oh he has, has he?

**MADELINE.** Madly. Passionately. I fear that when he learns you have won my heart, he may do himself an injury.

**GUSSIE.** He may very well have help.

**MADELINE.** Alas, poor Bertie, all alone in a cold, uncaring city by now. Pining away in his empty flat...

(*BERTIE bounds on, in his own clothes. JEEVES has a cocktail waiting.*)

**BERTIE.** What ho, what ho! Cocktails, eh? Excellent!

**MADELINE.** Bertie!

**GUSSIE.** You two-faced treacherous hound! I'm going to kick your spine up through the top of your head!

(*GUSSIE rushes BERTIE who dodges nimbly.*)

**THIS PLAY IS  
NOT OVER!**

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