

AN ALMOST ENTIRELY NEW MUSICAL BY

ALAN AYCKBOURN

AND

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

BASED ON THE JEEVES STORIES BY P. G. WODEHOUSE

BY JEEVES



SCRIPT

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BERTRAM WOOSTER

JEEVES, his manservant

HONORIA GLOSSOP, his ex-fiancée

BINGO LITTLE, his friend, in love with Honoria

GUSSIE FINK-NOTTLE, another friend, in love with Madeline

SIR WATKYN BASSETT, a magistrate

MADELINE BASSETT, his daughter

STIFFY BYNG, his ward

HAROLD "STINKER" PINKER, a clergyman, in love with Stiffy

CYRUS BUDGE III (Junior), an American guest

Scene: A church hall, later to represent a London flat and the house and grounds of Totleigh Towers

Time: This very evening

Note: Within the play within a play, the casting is as follows:

Bassett
Madeline
Stiffy
Bingo
Budge
Gussie
Honoria

Bernard (Bumpy) Bazely
Evadne Appley-Whitchurch
Carolyn Hentleshawe
Hugo Dyson
Ethan Crockett
Dennis (Crunchy) Crabtree
Elizabeth Binchly

ACT ONE

(A Stage. The "set" consists solely of a chair and a music stand. Already at the piano at the side of the stage and apparently the sole musical source for the evening is the somewhat dishevelled figure of OSWALD 'Ozzie' (or ISABEL 'Izzie') NUTLEDGE. The house lights dim. HAROLD 'Stinker' PINKER, a young, fresh-faced, very muscular clergyman enters.)

HAROLD

(nervously) Ladies and gentlemen... -er, distinguished guests and – and so on. Thank you for coming along to support in such – splendid numbers this highly, very extremely, wonderfully worthwhile cause. I don't think any of you – especially the churchgoers among you – and I can see at least five from here – none of you need reminding about the perilous state of our Little Wittam Church steeple. The sooner we can get this money raised for the repairs, the sooner they can get up there and get at it.

(He leads some brief applause.)

We're very grateful therefore to everyone concerned for this concert. And no more grateful are we to anyone, than to our guest tonight, Mr. Bertram Wooster.

(PINKER leads another round of applause. BERTIE appears and starts to acknowledge it but before he can do so, PINKER raises his hands for silence and continues. BERTIE steps back, rather put out, and lurks at the edge of the stage. PINKER, unaware that BERTIE has even appeared, continues.)

But before I introduce him to you, there are one or two people I do have to thank for making this evening possible. First of all, firstly, a man who needs no introduction, Mr. Bernard Bazely for allowing us the use of this splendid building – if he's here, could he stand up, please? Yes, there he is, Bumpy Bazely, ladies and gentlemen...

(BAZELY stands up in the audience. PINKER leads the applause.)

Secondly, the Misses Appley-Whitchurch and Hentleshawe for their mouth-watering contribution to this evening's early proceedings.

(The two ladies stand up. More applause.)

Mr. Dyson and Mr. Crockett for arranging the seating and for generally fetching and carrying...

(The two men stand up. More applause.)

Our loyal lighting expert, Mr. Crabtree...

BERTIE

(sotto) Oh, good grief...

(CRABTREE stands up. More applause.)

HAROLD

Thank you. And I hope, Dennis, you've managed to put the incident with the extending ladder well behind you – (he laughs) – if that isn't perhaps the wrong phrase to use in the unfortunate circumstances. (He laughs) And we mustn't forget our very special Miss Binchly who, of course, organised the ticket sales...

(MISS BINCHLY stands up and bows. More applause.
BERTIE looks at his watch impatiently.)

But enough from me. Just one more man to thank. Without whom none of this would have been possible...

(BERTIE prepares himself.)

Our producer, director, publicist, appeal organiser and tonight's stage manager – the person who has master minded this entire evening... Ladies and gentlemen – the man himself – Jeeves!

(More applause led by PINKER. JEEVES appears from the wings and bows briefly and modestly. He withdraws.
BERTIE looks put out.)

And all that remains now is to introduce you to our soloist. Here now, together with a song and a smile, ladies and gentlemen, Bertie Wooster.

(BERTIE comes forward at last. He acknowledges slightly more applause than he gets.)

BERTIE

Ladies and gentlemen, Harold 'Stinker' Pinker. And. No messing. Straight on with the show. Take it away, Ozzie.

(OZZIE starts the intro. to BANJO BOY.)

(singing)

WHO'S THE MAN YOU'VE ALL BEEN SITTING THERE ANTICIPATING?
WHO'S THE MAN –

(PINKER has reappeared. OZZIE breaks off playing.
BERTIE stops singing, rather irritated.)

Harold?

HAROLD

Sorry, Bertie. Just to say, someone I entirely forgot, ladies and gentlemen –

BERTIE

The car park attendant?

HAROLD

(laughing) No, no... Ladies and gentlemen, accompanying Bertie Wooster this evening on the piano, Mr. Oswald Nutledge.

(OZZIE bows.)

BERTIE

Yes, well, I think just about everyone's had a bow now – all the world's a stage they say – and this evening practically all of them have put in an appearance. Thank you, Ozzie.

(OZZIE starts the intro. again.)

SONG: BANJO BOY

WHO'S THE MAN YOU'VE ALL BEEN SITTING THERE ANTICIPATING?
WHO'S THE MAN WITH HIS INSTRUMENT READY, WILLING AND WAITING?
WHO'S THE MAN FOR WHOM YOUR BREATH HAS BEEN EAGERLY BAITING?

(BERTIE smoothly, with an air of great confidence and without looking is handed a frying pan which he commences to strum as he sings the rest.)

IF I HADN'T ALREADY CONFESSED IT,
YOU'D NO DOUBT ALREADY HAVE GUESSED IT -
BANJO BOY, BANJO BOY, PLAY A NUMBER FOR ME,
WON'T YOU PLAY THAT MELODY?
WHEN YOU START YOUR PLAYIN' – MAMA STARTS A-

(BERTIE becomes aware of what he is attempting to play.
He and OZZIE stop playing.)

Hold it! Hold it! (to us) Excuse me one moment. (He moves to the wings, in an undertone) Jeeves! Jeeves!

(JEEVES comes onstage.)

JEEVES

Sir...?

BERTIE

What precisely is this, Jeeves? (He holds up the frying pan)

JEEVES

That is a frying pan, sir.

BERTIE

What might be termed slightly less than adequate stage management, Jeeves.
Where the blazes is my banjo?

JEEVES

I fear it has been stolen, sir.

BERTIE

Stolen?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

My banjo?

JEEVES

Yes sir.

BERTIE

Who on earth would want to steal it?

JEEVES

A music lover, perhaps?

BERTIE

Eh?

JEEVES

One possibly jealous of your own abilities, sir.

BERTIE

Well, what on earth are we going to do? There are row upon row of eager banjo lovers here.

JEEVES

I took the liberty of sending out for a fresh instrument. The shop is despatching one immediately.

BERTIE

Splendid. How long will that take?

JEEVES

Oh, no more than two hours, sir.

BERTIE

Two hours?

JEEVES

The shop concerned is in Kent.

BERTIE

(shrilly) Kent?

JEEVES

Just this side, sir.

BERTIE is speechless.

BERTIE

(to the audience) Excuse me. (to JEEVES) What exactly do you suggest I do to entertain these - good people - for two hours?

JEEVES

Perhaps an anecdote or two, sir?

BERTIE

An anecdote or two? Jeeves, there's enough time for me to read them the entire works of Proust - (to the audience) - please excuse us - (to JEEVES) - that is not a solution.

JEEVES

May I suggest that whilst we deliberate, sir, we ask Mr. Nutledge to entertain with a little mood music.

BERTIE

Very well, Jeeves. Though I should warn you if Ozzie Nutledge is let loose on that piano for two hours, I am not going to be answerable for this audience's behaviour. These are music lovers, Jeeves, not massed masochists.

JEEVES

Very good, sir.

JEEVES nods to OZZIE who starts to play what will in due course become the introduction to THE CODE OF THE WOOSTERS.

(to us) Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr Bertram Wooster.

JEEVES leads more applause and simultaneously steps back to leave BERTIE alone on stage. CODE OF THE WOOSTERS starts gently under.

BERTIE

(rushing after him) Jeeves!

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Where are you going? Don't leave me here. What am I going to do?

JEEVES

Entertain, sir.

BERTIE

Entertain? How?

JEEVES

As I implied, sir, I thought a little personal reminiscence.

BERTIE

Personal reminiscence? You think they'd buy that?

JEEVES

Given the - not uneventful nature of your life thus far -

BERTIE

I see.

JEEVES

The resolute nature of your character when confronted with crisis -

BERTIE

See what you mean.

JEEVES

Your unwavering purpose ...

BERTIE

Never a wobble ...

JEEVES

Your grit and determination ...

BERTIE

None grittier ...

JEEVES

Your calm in the heat of calamity ...

BERTIE

Middle name cucumber ...

JEEVES

Your chivalry towards the gentler sex ...

BERTIE

Show me a puddle I'll sling them a cloak ...

JEEVES

Shining example to young and old : ..

BERTIE

Trust your Uncle Bertie ...

JEEVES

Which need to be told.

BERTIE

The Wooster Code.

SONG: THE CODE OF THE WOOSTERS (Pt 1)

(speaking with the music) I obey
The Code of the Woosters
It's a simple
Philosophy.
When perhaps
A chap's in trouble
I respond with
Alacrity.

(singing) AND IF MY FELLOW MEN HAVE PROBLEMS
WHATEVER THEY MIGHT BE
THEY CALL ON ME
THE STERLING WOOSTER B.

FOR DESPITE
THIS EASY NATURE
COMES THE EVENING
WHEN BATTLE DAWNS
WHAT A SIGHT
TO SEE A WOOSTER
GRAB THE LIVESTOCK BY BOTH THE HORNS
FOR WHEN A WOOSTER'S MASK OF PLEASURE
BECOMES A STEELY STARE
YOU'LL KNOW HE'S THERE.
HE'LL NEVER TURN A HAIR.

WHAT WOULD A CHAP DO WITHOUT IT?
HOW WOULD HE GET THROUGH WITHOUT IT?
HOW COULD HE STAY TRUE WITHOUT THE CODE OF THE WOOSTERS?
IF YOU'RE AT SEA, I SHALL BE THERE
EVEN PUT OFF TEA TO BE THERE,
WOOSTERS HAVE SWUM OCEANS FOR THE CODE OF -
ALLEGIANCE DULY OWED FOR THE WOOSTER CODE -
WHAT A LOAD.

IF A GIRL
IS IN THE DOLDRUMS
NOT A PADDLE
TO HER NAME
I'LL BE THERE
THOUGH FRANKLY SPEAKING

WOMANISING'S NOT MY GAME
BUT IF SHE'S REALLY IN A LATHER,
WILD EYED AND HAT ASKEW
HE'LL SEE HER THROUGH,
OLD YOU KNOW WHO ...

JEEVES

On the particular date in question, Mr. Wooster awoke from a troubled sleep, doubtless caused by certain events that had occurred the previous day. The main attraction being his appearance before the Magistrates' bench, presiding magistrate Sir Watkyn Bassett.

[UNDERSCORE]

BERTIE

(alarmed) Watkyn Bassett. He's not here, is he?

JEEVES

The role of Sir Watkyn will be played on this occasion by Bernard Bazely.

BERTIE

What? Old Bumpy. Jolly good.

BAZELY has risen from the audience and assumes the role of WATKYN BASSETT. One he will play for the remainder of the evening like other assorted members of the 'audience'.

BAZELY

(as BASSETT) ... but let us for a moment examine in detail this appalling exhibition of lawless hooliganism displayed by the accused.

BERTIE

That's frightfully good, Bumpy.

BAZELY

Oh, thanks.

BERTIE

Got old Bassett off to a tee.

BASSETT

The constable in his evidence, tells us that you first of all snatched, or rather struck his helmet from his head, made off with it. and hurled his headgear into Trafalgar Square fountain. Is this possible?

BERTIE

I was testing it, M 'lord. (to us) I said something like that.

BASSETT

Testing it?

BERTIE

To see if it was waterproof.

BASSETT

Waterproof?

[END UNDERSCORE]

BERTIE

The helmet, M'lord. It suddenly came to me, like a blinding flash, that if the police are expected to saunter around the streets in all weathers rattling door handles, had anyone bothered to check whether their tiffers were waterproof ... ?

BASSETT

That is enough. I do not wish to hear another word from you. I shall now pass sentence and I warn you, I intend to sentence you to the most severe penalty that the law will allow. Augustus Fink-Nottle - a name, I may say, I am strongly inclined to think is assumed or fictitious - Augustus Fink-Nottle, I find you guilty of one of the most wretched examples of senseless vandalism it has ever been my misfortune -

BERTIE

(cutting him off) And so on and so on. Thanks, Bumpy.

[START INTRO]

BAZELY

Not at all, Bertie.

BERTIE

You get the drift, anyway.

SONG: THE CODE OF THE WOOSTERS (Pt 2)

WHENEVER IT CALLS, CAN'T IGNORE IT
EVEN GIVE UP ASCOT FOR IT
WOOSTERS HAVE DIED GLADLY FOR THE CODE OF -
FOR THAT RUGGED, HEAVY LOAD CALLED THE WOOSTER CODE -
WHAT A LOAD.
TAKE MY CARD
IN CASE YOU NEED ME, IF YOU'RE JOUSTING A LOSING CAUSE.
LIKE THE CHAP
WHO WINS THE DOUBLE
I CAN RATTLE
THE NATURAL LAWS -

SO IF YOU'RE EATEN UP WITH ANGUISH
I'LL SNATCH YOU FROM ITS JAWS
NO SECOND'S PAUSE
FROM ONE SINCERELY YOURS ...
IT'S ALRIGHT
HE'S ON CALL BOTH DAY AND NIGHT,
TURNING DARKNESS INTO LIGHT -
UBIQUE ILLUMINATUS
WOOSTER IS READY TO FIGHT
WOOSTER IS READY TO FIGHT

JEEVES appears pushing a chaise upon which is a dressing gown. He now helps BERTIE exchange this latter for his dinner jacket.

BERTIE

And so it was, that I awoke on this morning in question, fresh from dreams of maniacal magistrates and amphibious policemen and ten quid lighter in pocket ... What are you doing, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Attempting a little verisimilitude, sir.

BERTIE

What's this? Costumes as well?

JEEVES

A limited supply from the wardrobe store.

BERTIE

Splendid. They're certainly getting their money's worth. Whatever next? Scenery?

JEEVES

Mostly imagined or representational, sir.

BERTIE

Nonetheless, under the circumstances, good going.

JEEVES

Thank you, sir.

BERTIE

Despite the strong smell of moth balls. Anyway onwards, Jeeves. What first occurred on this sunny morning in question?

JEEVES

Sunny afternoon sir.

BERTIE

Already?

JEEVES

Two thirty pm.

BERTIE

Splendid.

JEEVES

First, I had to inform you that Miss Byng telephoned earlier, sir.

BERTIE

What, again? What did she want this time?

JEEVES

She did not confide in me, sir. She merely laughed and hung up.

BERTIE

Laughed? That does not bode well, Jeeves. Contrary to the old saying, when Stiffy laughs the rest of the world usually fails to see the funny side.

(Doorbell (of sorts) rings.)

What on earth was that, Jeeves?

JEEVES

An approximation of a doorbell, sir.

BERTIE

Who is it?

JEEVES

I believe at this point in the narrative Mr Fink-Nottle called.

BERTIE

Gussie? What did he want?

JEEVES

I will admit him, sir.

BERTIE

Good idea. Apparently, at this point enter Gussie, recluse and passionate student of pond life with particular regard to newts...

(CRABTREE, on JEEVES' signal, steps out from the audience.)

GUSSIE

(as played by CRABTREE) Hallo, Jeeves...

JEEVES

Good afternoon, Mr. Fink-Nottle.

BERTIE

What-ho, Gu – (seeing CRABTREE for the first time) Good Lord. I thought it was him for a minute. Wonderful, Crunchy. Absolutely spot on.

GUSSIE

Thanks.

BERTIE

They're all rallying round, aren't they, Jeeves? Gratifying, isn't it?

JEEVES

Indeed, sir.

BERTIE

A friend in need is a friend in – er...

JEEVES

Indeed, sir.

BERTIE

Indeed he is. Crunchy Crabtree, everyone.

GUSSIE

(to the audience) Hallo!

BERTIE

Carry on, Crunchy.

GUSSIE

Right. Oh, hallo, Bertie. I just wanted – the fact is I need a favour.

BERTIE

Anything at all. You know me, Crunchy – Gussie. Come and sit down.

GUSSIE

Thank you.

BERTIE

Thank you, Jeeves.

(JEEVES goes out. GUSSIE sits.)

BERTIE

(to GUSSIE) Now, Gussie, what can I do for you? Tell your uncle Bertie.

GUSSIE

I'll be blunt, Bertie – I'm in love.

(Underscore)

BERTIE

Oh, I am sorry.

GUSSIE

I've never been in love like this before, Bertie...

BERTIE

You'll get over it...

GUSSIE

You've no idea how it feels...

BERTIE

No, on the whole I've been very lucky...

GUSSIE

She's just so...so...

BERTIE

BEAUTIFUL?

GUSSIE

Yes.

BERTIE

INDESCRIBABLE?

GUSSIE

Yes...

BERTIE

LOVING AND TENDER?

GUSSIE

Yes, yes...

BERTIE

TOO GOOD FOR THIS WORLD?

GUSSIE

That's her.

BERTIE

I know the sort.

GUSSIE

IF YOU'D MET MADELINE, IF YOU'D MET MADELINE...

BERTIE

Yes, of course.

GUSSIE

Trying to describe Madeline is like...like...

BERTIE

Hang on a tick. Madeline who?

GUSSIE

Madeline – angel – Bassett...

BERTIE

Bassett?

GUSSIE

Madeline Bassett...

(Underscore stops abruptly.)

BERTIE

Madeline Bassett?

GUSSIE

Madeline Bassett... It's like music, isn't it?

BERTIE

It's like chalk on a blackboard. Madeline, daughter of Sir Watkyn Bassett?
That Bassett? Magistrate of no fixed sentence?

(BASSETT appears and we are momentarily in the court room. GUSSIE lies down behind the sofa.)

BASSETT

The police constable, in his evidence, tells us that you first of all snatched, or rather struck his helmet from his head, made off with it and hurled his headgear into Trafalgar Square fountain. Is this possible?

BERTIE

Good heavens. It's Bumpy Bazely. Jolly good impression, Bumpy. Got the chap off to a tee. Even got his –

BASSETT

(fiercely) That is enough. I do not wish to hear another word from you. I shall now pass sentence and I warn you, I intend to sentence you to the most severe penalty that the law will allow. Augustus Fink-Nottle – a name, I may say, I am

strongly inclined to think is assumed or fictitious – Augustus Fink-Nottle, I find you guilty of one of the most wretched examples of senseless vandalism it has ever been my misfortune to meet. Fined ten pounds with costs! Court adjourned!

(BASSETT goes. JEEVES has appeared unobtrusively.)

BERTIE

What on earth was that, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Merely an informative flashback, sir.

BERTIE

Well, enough is enough! Flash forward immediately.

JEEVES

Certainly, sir.

BERTIE

No more of these flashes.

(The flat is restored. GUSSIE comes out of hiding.
JEEVES goes.)

(to GUSSIE) Let's get this clear. You are in love with that man's daughter?
Sir Watkyn Bassett?

GUSSIE

Yes. (Frowning) The same one you gave my name to when you –

BERTIE

Yes. I've apologised for that. Yours was the first name that came into my head. I've said. I'm very sorry. Now come along. Good grief. Madeline Bassett. Sit down. This is serious.

GUSSIE

Of course it's serious. I want to marry her.

BERTIE

(to us) I staggered back appalled. (He does so) Gussie, you can't be serious?

GUSSIE

I love her, Bertie. There's no need to sneer and stagger about. Not everyone's like you.

BERTIE

No, but they can strive to be...

GUSSIE

My problem, you see...is...well...it's me... I'm my own worst problem. I'm a coward. I'm terrified to ask her. I can't even get the words out.

BERTIE

A ray of hope.

GUSSIE

And when they do come out they're in the wrong order. It's the same with her father, Sir Watkyn Bassett.

BERTIE

Ah, well. Hardly surprising, that.

GUSSIE

But you see the thing is I'm going to Totleigh Towers this weekend. Madeline has invited me there. It's this weekend or never, Bertie. If I don't ask her and tackle Sir Watkyn I'll lose her for ever. So. This is the plan. As soon as old Bassett arrives, I want you to pretend that I'm...

BERTIE

As soon as old who arrives?

GUSSIE

Bassett. That's who we're talking about, aren't we?

BERTIE

(alarmed) Arrives where? Here? What on earth made him want to come here?

GUSSIE

I asked him.

BERTIE

To my flat?

GUSSIE

I'm afraid so. Only he doesn't know it's your flat, of course.

BERTIE

Well, whose flat does he think it is?

GUSSIE

Mine.

BERTIE

Yours?

GUSSIE

Well, I had to tell him somewhere. He said he'd pick me up in his car and run me down to Totleigh. I mean, I couldn't very well tell him I haven't got a London address – except the Drones Club, care of. And this is a very nice address...

BERTIE

It was. The tone of the neighbourhood is dropping minute by minute. Anyway my name's on the doorbell. How are you going to explain that?

GUSSIE

No, my name's on the doorbell.

BERTIE

Your name?

GUSSIE

I told him I was Bertram Wooster.

BERTIE

That you were – you were – (to us) – my knees all but gave way beneath me – (to GUSSIE) I cannot believe I am hearing this.

GUSSIE

Oh, do get up, Bertie. Be reasonable. You gave him my name in court. I can't use that any more, thanks to you. He's bound to remember the name if not the face. Madeline says he's got a memory like an oyster. No, fair's fair. You pinched my name. I've pinched yours. Temporarily.

BERTIE

I am flabbergasted. Axed, as by a pole.

GUSSIE

He's merely going to pick me up here and off we'll go. It'll only be for a few days. It's a perfect, foolproof scheme. Madeline thought of it.

BERTIE

Madeline? Whose last original idea was that every time a fairy blows its nose a baby's born?

GUSSIE

The point is that once he sees what a decent sort I am, I'll reveal myself as the real Augustus Fink-Nottle.

BERTIE

And who will I be when he arrives?

GUSSIE

Who he thinks you are. Augustus Fink-Nottle.

BERTIE

I'm sorry, I refuse to be someone else in my own house.

GUSSIE

Alright then, hide. You don't mind hiding, do you?

BERTIE

I certainly do.

GUSSIE

(angrily) Suit yourself. It's too late to do anything now. He's coming. And he thinks I'm you, so there.

(JEEVES has reappeared.)

BERTIE

Are you hearing all this, Jeeves?

JEEVES

I gathered the gist, sir. Might I suggest that, if we are to proceed with the deception that the flat belongs to Mr. Fink-Nottle, we might achieve greater verisimilitude were he to remove his hat and coat.

GUSSIE

(springing up) Good thinking.

BERTIE

Look, I have not yet agreed –

GUSSIE

Oh, come on, Bertie, it isn't much to ask...

BERTIE

I shall have to consider. Jeeves...

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Hold everything while the Young Master Considers.

JEEVES

Very good, sir.

(A ring on the doorbell. They freeze.)

BERTIE

Who can that be?

JEEVES

Sir Watkyn Bassett, I believe, sir.

BERTIE

Oh, good grief. Right. Yes.

GUSSIE

Let him in, Jeeves...

JEEVES

Very good, sir... (He heads for the front door)

BERTIE

No. Wait. Hang on a tick.

GUSSIE

What do I do with this? (He holds out his hat and coat)

BERTIE

Oh – give it here.

(Doorbell)

GUSSIE

Let him in, Jeeves, for heaven's sake.

BERTIE

Well, give me a chance to get out of the...

(JEEVES opens the front door and reveals BASSETT (BAZELY).)

BASSETT

Ah!

BERTIE

Oh, Lord...

(BERTIE steps back sharply behind the front door and covers himself with GUSSIE's hat and coat, thus giving a passable impression of a coat stand.)

JEEVES

Good afternoon, sir.

BASSETT

Good afternoon. Is - ? Ah, Mr. Wooster...

GUSSIE

(at once nervous) Ah. Sir Watkyn. In come do.

BASSETT

Thank you.

(JEEVES helps him off with his coat.)

What a delightful flat.

GUSSIE

Thank you.

BASSETT

I had no idea... No idea. Delightful.

GUSSIE

Ah, well. You know. Homeble but hum.

BASSETT

I beg your pardon?

(BASSETT moves into the room. JEEVES hangs
BASSETT'S coat on BERTIE.)

JEEVES

(softly, as he does this) I trust you are not too uncomfortable, sir.

BERTIE

(muffled) I am extremely uncomfortable, Jeeves. Kindly get rid of them.

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

(GUSSIE and BASSETT have sat.)

BASSETT

Have you lived here long, Mr. Wooster?

GUSSIE

No, I have bigger moved previously away here. Elsewhere. Before. Much.
Only with circumstances after all it made no sense whatsoever. None at all.

BASSETT

I'm sorry?

GUSSIE

Not at – not at – not at – not at – not at – not at – not at – not at –

JEEVES

(cutting in) Would it be in order for me to serve some refreshment, sir?

GUSSIE

Oh, rather, yes.

BASSETT

No, no, no, my man. Not for me. I shall be driving.

JEEVES

(to GUSSIE) Sir?

GUSSIE

No, I shall be passengering.

BASSETT

You don't drink, Mr. Wooster?

GUSSIE

Never in life at all.

BASSETT

Admirable. Admirable.

BERTIE

Jeeves!

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

(muffled) Bassett or no Bassett, I am about to narrate myself out of this position before I suffocate...

JEEVES

(sotto) I believe the opportunity for you to do so will arise shortly, sir.

BERTIE

It had better, Jeeves. A human hat stand is no role for our hero.

(JEEVES goes off.)

BASSETT

What was your man doing there? He appeared to be conversing with that coat stand...

GUSSIE

Ah, he's psychical. Slightly.

BASSETT

Just a minute, aren't those feet?

GUSSIE

Feet?

BASSETT

There, at the bottom of the coat stand. Look. Quite clearly.

GUSSIE

Ah. Shoes. Those are.

BASSETT

Shoes, yes. But they have feet in them. Quite distinct feet. Whose feet are they?

GUSSIE

Not mine.

BASSETT

Come out. Come out of there. You in the coat stand. We can see you. Come out at once.

(BERTIE peers out through the coats.)

BERTIE

Ah! Hallo, there...

BASSETT

Good heavens.

BERTIE

How do you do?

BASSETT

What are you doing under those coats? Explain yourself at once...

BERTIE

Well, that's interesting...

BASSETT

You were trying to steal them, weren't you?

BERTIE

Certainly not.

BASSETT

Do you know this man, Wooster...?

BERTIE

Yes, he does.

BASSETT

Who is he? What is he doing here?

GUSSIE

He – he – he...

BERTIE

I'm – I'm...

BASSETT

Just a moment. I've seen your face before...

BERTIE

No, no, no...

BASSETT

Very recently. Yes, you've been up before me at the bench, surely...? I'm almost certain... Bag snatching. That was it...

BERTIE

Bag snatching?

BASSETT

Called yourself Ink-Bottle? Fink-Bottle?

GUSSIE

Nottle.

BASSETT

Nottle, yes. Augustus Fink-Nottle.

BERTIE

No, no. Wrong chap. Jeeves!

BASSETT

A small step from bag snatching to coat stealing... Somebody call the police... Call the police, Mr. Wooster.

BERTIE

No, that's quite alright. Don't bother... Jeeves! It's quite alright, I'll just toddle along, don't mind me... Jeeves!

(JEEVES appears.)

JEEVES

Ah! Mr. Fink-Nottle, sir. I had no idea you were still here. I thought you'd left.

BERTIE

Well, I was – I was hardly here. I was just – looking for my coat. Yes, here we are.

(BERTIE starts to put on BASSETT'S coat.)

BASSETT

That's my coat. What are you doing putting on my coat?

BERTIE

Oh, I'm sorry. Slip of the tongue. Here. Here you are. (He holds out BASSETT'S coat)

BASSETT

(snatching his coat back) Give that to me, at once.

BERTIE

Frightfully sorry. My mistake. Sorry must dash.

(BERTIE rushes off.)

BASSETT

You must be more careful, Mr. Wooster. This is obviously some new racket. Posing as a coat stand and then making off with innocent people's clothing. Be very careful whom you admit in the future, my man.

JEEVES

I can assure you, sir, he is a regular visitor of Mr. Wooster's. Harmless if a trifle eccentric.

BASSETT

Really?

GUSSIE

Oh, yes. Not even harm he wouldn't flies. No.

BASSETT

Well, I'll take your word for it. I should warn you he does have a criminal record. Personally I'd lock up my silver straightaway.

JEEVES

(As the others prepare to leave) If you will permit me for a moment to resume the narration. Having resolved the matter more or less satisfactorily, I prepared to see them out.

BASSETT

Are you ready, Wooster?

GUSSIE

(putting on his coat) Oh, yes.

BASSETT

Then we'll away to Tottleigh, shall we?

GUSSIE

Right.

BASSETT

Madeline, I know, is anxious to see you...

GUSSIE

She is?

(BASSETT goes out.)

(following him, ecstatically) How very marvellously.

(GUSSIE goes.)

JEEVES

At this point, I proceeded with my routine domestic duties...

(BERTIE appears peering through the window.)

BERTIE

(muffled) Jeeves... Jeeves...

(JEEVES produces a copy of The Times from his pocket which he smooths and places on the chaise.)

JEEVES

My daily routine was an ordered one...

BERTIE

Jeeves...

JEEVES

(to us) Excuse me...

(JEEVES re-admits BERTIE)

Welcome back, sir.

BERTIE

I don't believe any of this happened, Jeeves. Someone has been tampering with the fabric of this tale, if you ask me.

JEEVES

Surely not, sir. Mr. Wooster commenced reading the morning paper.

contd over...../

JEEVES

It was some fifteen minutes later that his attention was drawn to an item under the heading, Forthcoming Marriages.

(BERTIE reads silently as JEEVES continues.)

I quote: The Engagement is announced between Bertram Wilberforce Wooster of Berkeley Mansions, W.1. and Stephanie, daughter of the late Sir George and Mary Byng of Brightham Hall...

BERTIE

(springing off the chaise) Jeeves!

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Read that. I cannot believe what I am reading. Read that.

(BERTIE hands him the paper. JEEVES reads the item incredibly quickly.)

Can this be true?

JEEVES

That is what is stated here, sir...

BERTIE

Not only was the news a shock to me but Stiffy was the ward of our old friend Watkyn Bassett. You can imagine the reception that this announcement would get from that quarter. Or from other quarters. Honoria Glossop to name but several...but more of her anon. This announcement seemed at first the warped work of Bingo Little...

JEEVES

I think we would do better to suspect that it is the work of Miss Byng herself, sir.

BERTIE

You think so?

JEEVES

I suspect so. She may be trying to attract your attention.

BERTIE

In that she has succeeded. Well, there's nothing for it, Jeeves...

JEEVES

To Totleigh Towers, sir?

BERTIE

I fear so, Jeeves. A flying visit for all of ten seconds...

JEEVES

In which case sir, may I suggest...

BERTIE

By all means. Suggest away.

JEEVES

May I suggest that if you intend visiting Totleigh Towers you would do well to assume the nom de plume Augustus Fink-Nottle.

BERTIE

Ah. Good point. Mr. Wooster being –

JEEVES

Being already on his way there in the company of Sir Watkyn.

BERTIE

I'm beginning not to like the sound of this plot, Jeeves. I will be gone but a trice, speaking to no one but Stiffy. Wait here. Hold the fort. Don't move and go and fetch the car immediately.

JEEVES

Certainly, sir.

BERTIE

Ah! Car. Is that a problem, Jeeves? Are the stage management up to the challenge?

JEEVES

Indeed they are, sir.

(A makeshift car is pushed on. BERTIE stares at it critically.)

BERTIE

Is that it?

JEEVES

Yes, sir. Under the circumstances...

BERTIE

No expense spared, eh?

JEEVES

Needs must when the devil drives, sir.

BERTIE

Possibly, Jeeves. Though I doubt if even he'd fancy his chances in this thing.

(He steps in gingerly and sits on the plank. JEEVES hands him a steering wheel.)

JEEVES

Sir.

BERTIE

(taking the wheel) Ah.

(He sits rather unconvincingly in his box holding the wheel.)

(awkwardly) Well. This doesn't look silly at all, does it?

JEEVES

(impassive) Oh no, sir.

BERTIE

It just doesn't feel – quite convincing.

JEEVES

Perhaps an engine noise would help, sir.

BERTIE

Oh yes, an engine noise, that'd do the trick, splendid. Have we got one?

JEEVES

I thought it might come from you, sir.

BERTIE

From me?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

An engine noise from me?

JEEVES

Precisely.

BERTIE

(having a go) Sort of brrmmm! Brrmmm! Brrrrmmm! That sort of thing?

JEEVES

Excellent, sir.

BERTIE

Brrrrmmm! Brrrrmmmm! (anxiously) It doesn't sound silly, does it?

JEEVES

I can assure you, sir, were I to turn my back and close my eyes...

BERTIE

Ah, well. I'll be guided by you, Jeeves. This once. To continue our narrative. I started up the motor and set off in a generally westerly direction.

(JEEVES clears his throat.)

Jeeves?

JEEVES

The engine, sir. Don't forget the engine noise.

BERTIE

Oh, no, right. Thank you, Jeeves... Brrrrmmm! Brrrrmmmmmm! And I set off in the general direction of – brrmmm! brrmmmm! – Tottleigh Towers – brrmmmm! – taking the A 2 – brrmmmm! No, hang on, hang on, this isn't working at all, Jeeves. A chap can't be expected to do his own sound effects as well as bearing the brunt of the narrative. It's just not on.

JEEVES

In that case, sir, may I suggest that whilst you provide the admirable engine sounds, I continue with the narration?

BERTIE

That would be a lot simpler, I must say.

JEEVES

Very good, sir. To continue.

(Whilst JEEVES continues the narrative, BERTIE makes engine noises)

BERTIE

Brrrrmmmm! Brrrrmmmm!

JEEVES

(over him) Mr. Wooster made excellent time and had soon left the London suburbs behind him and was on the main Dorset road by three-thirty pm.

BERTIE

(meanwhile) Brrmmmm! Brrmmmm!

JEEVES

The weather was seasonally pleasant and Mr. Wooster felt a lightness of spirit as he passed through some glorious countryside...

BERTIE

Just a minute. This is no earthly good, either.

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

From leading man I've now been recast as a full supporting sound effect, Jeeves. And I can assure you these good people did not turn out in their thousands, hundreds – in their tens – to have yours truly cast in the role of second piston. Now enough is enough!

JEEVES

I apologise, sir.

BERTIE

We will imagine the car engine, Jeeves. Ozzie, please. Some music if you will. Suitable for a motoring narrative.

(OZZIE plays under.)

SONG: TRAVEL HOPEFULLY

Thank you. That's much better... Brrrrmmm!

I'VE INVARIABLY FOUND
THAT FEET KEPT ON THE GROUND
ALLOW THE GRASS TO GROW

(speaking) Oh this is rather splendid, Jeeves, once you get the hang of it.

CHECK YOUR MIRRORS FRONT AND REAR
SLIP SMOOTHLY INTO GEAR
THEN HIT THE ROAD AND GO

(speaking) Brrrrmm! Brrrrmmm!

FEEL THE PISTONS STEADY BEAT,
THE CAMSHAFT 'NEATH YOUR FEET,
THAT BIG END START TO FLY...

JEEVES

May I advise a modicum of caution, sir...

BERTIE

(unheeding) HE WHO HESITATES IS LOST,
BURN BRIDGES ONCE THEY'RE CROSSED,
DON'T STOP TO SAY GOODBYE.

JEEVES

There is a blind corner approaching, sir...

BERTIE

MY PHILOSOPHY'S TO TRAVEL HOPEFULLY,
AND MAKING EACH DAY THAT I SURVIVE
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE COMPANY
THAT WELCOMES ME WHEN I ARRIVE.

HARK THE MISTLE-THRUSH'S CRY,
THE HEDGEROWS RUSHING BY,
THE CURLEW ON THE WING

JEEVES

That is a crow, sir.

BERTIE

LIST! SOME DISTANT CHURCH'S BELLS,
'MIDST BRACING COUNTRY SMELLS,
THOSE FIELDS OF GOLDEN - THING...

JEEVES

Corn, sir.

(At this point, animated grass verges rush by.)

BERTIE

MY PHILOSOPHY'S TO TRAVEL HOPEFULLY,
AND MAKING EACH DAY THAT I SURVIVE
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE COMPANY
THAT WELCOMES ME WHEN I ARRIVE.

TRAVEL'S BROADENED OUT MY MIND
UNTIL TODAY YOU'LL FIND...

JEEVES

THE WIDEST HEAD I KNOW...

BERTIE

Thank you, Jeeves. You did say wisest, didn't you?

JEEVES

Oh yes, sir...

BERTIE

EVERY TRAVELLER I MEET,
I'LL ALWAYS STOP TO GREET

JEEVES

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU GO, SIR...

(At this point a tree passes.)

BERTIE

MY PHILOSOPHY'S TO TRAVEL HOPEFULLY,
AND MAKING EACH DAY THAT I SURVIVE
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE COMPANY
THAT WELCOMES ME WHEN I ARRIVE.

(During the next, BINGO appears in shorts, carrying a
rucksack and thumbing a lift)

JEEVES

(interrupting the song) So intent was Mr. Wooster upon savouring the delights
of the journey...

BERTIE

TRAVEL HOPEFULLY WITH ME
AND I WILL GUARANTEE,
THERE'LL BE NO PAUSE FOR DOUBT.

JEEVES

...that he failed to notice a solitary hitch hiker...

BERTIE

HIT THE NEAREST COUNTRY TRACK,
NO TIME FOR LOOKING BACK
LOOK ONWARDS AND – LOOK OUT!!!!

(BERTIE'S song ends in a yell as he sees BINGO too late.
A scream of brakes and a cry from BINGO who falls in
front of the car. Silence.)

BERTIE

(shaken) Good Lord!

(BINGO, still on the ground, groans. A cow appears and
watches proceedings.)

Jeeves! Have I hit something?

JEEVES

I fear so, sir.

BERTIE

(hopefully) A sheep?

JEEVES

No, sir.

BERTIE

A duck?

JEEVES

A person, sir.

BERTIE

Oh. One of those. Oh, Lord. Better have a look. (He gets out of the car) I don't remember this bit.

JEEVES

I understand that the third party does, sir.

BERTIE

Ah. (bending over BINGO) I say. Hallo. Are you alright?

BINGO

(groaning) Ah! My legs. They've gone.

BERTIE

No, no. They're both still there.

BINGO

I think they're – broken...

BERTIE

Oh, really? That's a bit awkward. I am sorry.

BINGO

Perhaps you could – lift me – into your car.

BERTIE

(doubtfully) Yes. Right ho.

(BERTIE tries, with some difficulty, to turn BINGO over on to his back. The rucksack doesn't help.)

(struggling) Here – let me...

JEEVES

As Mr. Wooster turned the stranger over on to his back he let out a gasp of surprise.

(BERTIE does this.)

BERTIE

(then, immediately to JEEVES) Why did I do that, Jeeves?

JEEVES

The stranger turned out to be none other than one of Mr. Wooster's oldest friends –

BINGO

(joyously) Bertie Wooster!

BERTIE

(joyously) Hallo, oldest friend! (to JEEVES) Who is he?

JEEVES

Mr. Bingo Little, sir.

BERTIE

Bingo!

BINGO

(springing to his feet) I thought I recognised that voice. How are you? What are you doing here?

BERTIE

I'm on my way to - You can walk?

BINGO

Not if I can help it. Not a step further. Give us a lift, there's a good chap.

BERTIE

Hop in. I thought I'd run you over. What on earth are you doing, pacing the open road?

BINGO

I'm on this ghastly charity jaunt. Hiking for Hedgehogs.

BERTIE

I beg your pardon?

BINGO

Well, apparently these wretched hedgehogs insist on crossing the roads to breed and they're getting mown down in their thousands. So these people are raising money to build them a tunnel.

BERTIE

Good heavens. Is that your new passion, then?

BINGO

No, no, no. I'm doing it for someone who does give a damn.

BERTIE

Who?

BINGO

Honoria.

HONORIA? HONORIA?

BERTIE

Keep saying it. Honoria...

BINGO

HONORIA GLOSSOP?

BERTIE

Do you know her?

BINGO

There can't possibly be two.

BERTIE

You know Honoria?

BINGO

Yes. Formerly. We were – we were both... You know.

BERTIE

You were both what?

BINGO

Engaged.

BERTIE

Engaged?

BINGO

Years ago. Not any more. She chucked me over. I'm delighted to say. Terrific woman, mind you – bags of – what it takes – but not my type.

BERTIE

Are you sure?

BINGO

Oh, yes. Absolutely positive. She's all yours, Bingo.

BERTIE

I wish I could say she was.

BINGO

Not running smoothly?

BERTIE

It's – well, she thinks I'm – I think she thinks I'm a bit hopeless.

BINGO

BERTIE

She never struck me as that shrewd –

BINGO

She chucked you over, she can't be that stupid. No, she – you know Honoria. She's so – physically magnificent, isn't she?

BERTIE

Oh, rather. Looks good at the weigh-in.

BINGO

Whereas I'm not so – not so physically –

BERTIE

Magnificent.

BINGO

If you want to put it like that. So I've been trying to impress her.

BERTIE

By walking for hedgehogs?

BINGO

We set out together – me, Honoria, the whole field of about two hundred walkers, only –

BERTIE

Two hundred? Where are the others?

BINGO

Somewhere along the road there. About five miles ahead by now.

BERTIE

And where's Honoria?

BINGO

About ten miles ahead, probably. I couldn't take it, Bertie. I got this ghastly stitch about five hundred yards after we started. I pretended to have something in my shoe. Carry on, I said. I'll catch you up. Now look at me.

BERTIE

Well, don't worry, I'll give you a lift. We'll catch them up in no time.

BINGO

But what if she sees me? I can't accept lifts. She'll know I've cheated.

BERTIE

We'll avoid her. I know every highway and byway round here, every nook and lay-by, like the back of my hand. We'll cut round ahead of them and then you can hide till they catch you up.

BINGO

OK. If you're sure.

BERTIE

Trust Wooster. Hop in and enjoy the ride. Brrmmmmm.

(BERTIE re-starts the car. OZZIE recommences playing.)

BINGO

Sounds sweet.

BERTIE

Goes like a bird. Hold on to your hat.

BINGO

(as they get underway) Hey, this is more like it...

BOTH

MY PHILOSOPHY'S TO TRAVEL HOPEFULLY,
AND MAKING EACH DAY THAT I SURVIVE
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE THE COMPANY
THAT WELCOMES ME WHEN I ARRIVE.

(BINGO lies back, enjoying the ride. BERTIE becomes increasingly alarmed as he realises they are lost.)

BINGO

TRAVEL HOPEFULLY WITH ME
LET ALL YOUR THOUGHTS RUN FREE

BERTIE

(puzzled) WE CAN'T HAVE COME THIS FAR...

BINGO

What's that?

BERTIE

Nothing.

BINGO

TILL WITH ANY LUCK YOU'LL FEEL
YOUR INNER VOICE REVEAL

BERTIE

JUST WHERE THE HELL WE ARE...

BOTH

HOPEFUL TRAVELLERS ME AND YOU...

(The song finishes. BERTIE stops the car.)

BINGO

Every highway and byway, eh?

BERTIE

Yes.

BINGO

Every nook and lay-by?

BERTIE

We can't be far away.

BINGO

Far away from what?

BERTIE

Somewhere.

BINGO

What are you talking about? We're miles from anywhere. (suddenly seeing someone ahead) Oh, no!

BERTIE

What?

BINGO

It's her. Honoria. Up ahead there. It's Honoria. What am I going to do?

BERTIE

Alright, alright. Don't panic. She hasn't seen you yet.

BINGO

She's coming this way.

HONORIA

(off) Hoy! I say!

BERTIE

Get in the back. Quick. Crouch down in the back. Ah, look. Conveniently, a rug. Crouch down, I'll cover you up.

BINGO

(doing so) But what if she - ?

BERTIE

She won't. Trust Wooster. (calling) Hallo!

HONORIA

(closer) Hallo!

BERTIE

Hallo!

HONORIA

(entering) Hallo!

(HONORIA GLOSSOP enters. She is an impressive, super-fit figure, tall and well proportioned. She carries a very big rucksack several sizes bigger than BINGO'S. She is limping, carrying one boot.)

I wonder if you could possibly give me a – Why, Bertram! Bertram Wooster!

BERTIE

Honoria! Heavens!

HONORIA

What a nice surprise. What are you doing here?

BERTIE

Oh, just on my way to Totleigh.

HONORIA

Totleigh? That's where I'm staying. Just been there, did you say?

BERTIE

No, I'm just going there.

HONORIA

Well, you're pointing the wrong way, you chump. (She laughs)

BERTIE

Really? Ha! Fancy.

HONORIA

Mind if I cadge a lift?

BERTIE

No, please do. Let me help you with your... (he tries to help her with her rucksack but fails to lift it) Ah!

HONORIA

Hang on, old weedy, let me. Sling it in the back, shall I?

BERTIE

Absolutely. (second thoughts) Ah, no –

(HONORIA has already heaved the rucksack on top of BINGO. A muffled squawk.)

HONORIA

What on earth was that?

BERTIE

Suspension. Old cars, you know.

HONORIA

Sounded like a chicken. (She laughs) Shouldn't be doing this. Cheating, really. I should be walking. We're doing this Hedgehog Walk. Wonderful cause. Have you heard about it?

BERTIE

Oh, yes. Famous.

HONORIA

Only I've lost my partner. I think he may have turned out a bit of a weed. He was some way back so I thought I'd wait for him. Took off my boots to rest my feet, swish the toes in the long grass.

BERTIE

Sounds a joy.

HONORIA

And guess what. I went and trod on a hedgehog. (She laughs)

BERTIE

Oh dear, poor little thing.

HONORIA

(suddenly moved) Oh, Bertram, that's sweet of you to care. I'm alright really. Just a few spines. Better get it checked, I suppose. (Clambering into the car) Tell you what, can you drop me off at the cottage hospital? It's on your way. Turn her round and I'll direct you. You always were hopeless, weren't you, Bertram? I think that's why I fell in love with you.

BERTIE

Hah!

HONORIA

It's also the reason you finally drove me utterly bonkers. But it is good to see you again. It's as if fate had meant it.

BERTIE

Yes, it probably did. Knowing fate. Brrrrmmm! Brrrrmmmm!

(BERTIE starts to drive again. HONORIA gazes at him affectionately. BINGO remains concealed.)

HONORIA

(seeing something as they drive) Oh, look!

BERTIE

(looking back) Where?

(They swerve a bit)

Whoops.

HONORIA

(gently admonishing) Keep your eyes on the road, Bertie.

BERTIE

Sorry. These boxes. Not awfully good on road holding...

SONG: THAT WAS NEARLY US

HONORIA

DID YOU SEE THAT COUPLE THERE?

BERTIE

(speaking) Can't say I did...

HONORIA

STANDING BY THE TREE?

BERTIE

(speaking) Really? Was it raining?

HONORIA

THAT WAS NEARLY US BACK THERE,

BERTIE

(speaking, apprehensively) Don't quite follow...

HONORIA

NEARLY YOU AND ME.

BERTIE

(speaking, nervously) Oh yes, I see. Brrmm!

HONORIA

BERTIE, YOU'VE BEEN BADLY NEGLECTED
YOU NEED A WIFE WHO'LL CORRECT IT.
THE SECRET WITH MEN, OF COURSE, IS
TO TREAT THEM A BIT LIKE HORSES...
DID YOU SEE THOSE LOVERS THERE?

BERTIE

(speaking) No, I think they were pheasants, actually...

HONORIA

EVEN YOU COULD SEE

BERTIE

(speaking) Oh, lovers! I thought you said plovers, sorry.

HONORIA

OH, SO NEARLY US BACK THERE,

BERTIE

(speaking) Was it? Nearly ran over them, then... (he laughs)

HONORIA

NEARLY YOU AND ME.

BERTIE

(speaking) Appear to be running out of cardboard...

HONORIA

COULD IT BE WE TOOK SOME WRONG TURNING?
IS THIS A LESSON WORTH LEARNING?
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT COUPLE THERE
COULD WELL HAVE BEEN YOU AND ME?

BERTIE

(speaking, bouncing up and down) Hump back bridge!

HONORIA

(snuggling up to BERTIE) THAT WAS NEARLY US BACK THERE

(speaking) Mmmm! Mmmm!

WOULDN'T YOU CONCUR?

BERTIE

(speaking, screeching of tyres) Hairpin bend, hang on...

HONORIA

HE WAS SO LIKE YOU BACK THERE
I COULD HAVE BEEN HER.

BERTIE

(speaking) No, I think they were both very much shorter.

HONORIA

HERE YOU ARE, SO VITAL, ATTRACTIVE –
WOULD THAT YOUR BRAIN WAS AS ACTIVE –
YOU'RE NOBODY'S INTELLECTUAL
YOU HOT-BLOODED HET'ROSEXUAL

BERTIE

Oh, now simmer down.

HONORIA

WAS IT MERELY LUCKY CHANCE
BROUGHT US HERE TODAY?
VICTIMS BOTH OF CIRCUMSTANCE,
MEETING YOU THIS WAY.

BERTIE

(revving furiously) Brrrrmmm! Brrrrmmm!

HONORIA

IT'S AS THOUGH OUR LIVES HAD BEEN FROZEN
BACK ON THE PATHS WE'D BOTH CHOSEN,
GIVING US A FLEETING GLIMPSE
OF ALL THAT WAS MEANT TO BE.

THAT WAS SURELY US BACK THERE
IT'S AS CLEAR AS DAY,
IF WE'D BOTH KEPT FAITH BACK THERE
HADN'T LOST OUR WAY.

BERTIE

(speaking) Nearly there... Here's the village.

HONORIA

WHAT IF WE DEFIED DULL CONVENTION?
(standing up in the car) STOOD UP TO SHOUT OUR INTENTION?

BERTIE

(speaking) Steady!

HONORIA

IF WE'D FOLLOWED OUR HEART'S VOLITION,
AND SHED OUR LAST INHIBITION?

(BERTIE stops the car with a screech)

BERTIE

(speaking) Here we are! At last!

(HONORIA climbs out of the car rather reluctantly during the next, taking her rucksack.)

HONORIA

THAT'S OUR FUTURE LIFE BACK THERE.

BERTIE

(speaking) Cheerio then!

HONORIA

BERTIE, CAN'T YOU SEE?

BERTIE

(speaking) You'd better hop in there smartish...

HONORIA

THAT WAS MEANT FOR US BACK THERE,

BERTIE

(speaking) You don't want to get gangrene...

HONORIA

ALL WE'RE MEANT TO BE.
TIME WE TOOK THE PLAIN FACTS AND FACED THEM,
TURNED IN OUR TRACKS AND RETRACED THEM,
BACK TO WHEN THAT COUPLE THERE
SO CLEARLY WERE YOU AND ME...

(HONORIA blows him a kiss and limps away to the cottage hospital.)

BERTIE

(appalled at this last exchange) Oh, Lord.

(BINGO emerges angrily from under the blanket.)

BINGO

You – swine, Bertie.

BERTIE

Sorry?

BINGO

You complete and utter – words fail me. Have you no feelings? None?

BERTIE

I'm not quite with you.

BINGO

That was the woman I love. There you were openly flirting with her. Seducing her – If I hadn't had that wretched rucksack on my head I'd have –

BERTIE

(outraged) Seducing her?

BINGO

- knocked you down then and there. When you knew I was in the back there. God, you're a cold man, Wooster...

BERTIE

What are you talking about? Seducing her? I barely said a word to the woman.

BINGO

(more subdued) Is Honoria still in love with you, do you think?

BERTIE

I hope not. For both our sakes.

BINGO

(with a cry of anguish) I knew it! I knew it!

BERTIE

Oh, come on...don't start crying...

BINGO

...the only woman I ever loved... I'll never forgive you, Bertie. Never!

(BINGO rushes off distraught. BERTIE stares after him. JEEVES has re-emerged. Under the next the car is removed.)

BERTIE

A nightmare journey, Jeeves.

JEEVES

I imagine it was, sir. I was still in London, of course.

BERTIE

And where was I? Oh yes. Parking the car at the bottom of the drive – screech – I stole through a gap in the hedge and entered the grounds of Totleigh Towers.

(A burst of birdsong.)

Good lord.

JEEVES

A gramophone record, sir.

BERTIE

Splendid. I can smell the lawn. Gathering my bearings, the very first thing I did was to – was to... What was the very first thing I did, Jeeves?

JEEVES

The very first thing you did, sir, was narrowly to avoid Miss Bassett.

BERTIE

Madeline? She was here?

JEEVES

Heading this way, sir.

BERTIE

And I hid?

JEEVES

You did, sir.

BERTIE

(looking round, in a dither) Where? Where? There's nowhere to hide. Props! Quickly! Props!

JEEVES

It's immaterial, sir, since Miss Bassett was –

(He is interrupted as Madeline rushes past them weeping loudly and disappears again.)

- somewhat overcome.

BERTIE

This is all starting to come back to me, Jeeves. And I don't like it one little bit. If I'm not mistaken, the second thing that happened...

JEEVES

The second thing that happened, sir, was that you ran into Mr. Budge.

BERTIE

Cyrus Budge?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

Junior?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

The third?

JEEVES

The self same, sir. (Rather dramatically) And behold, here he comes.

BERTIE

Oh surely, we can leave him –

(But it is too late. CYRUS BUDGE III Jnr. enters. He is a young, usually amiable until roused, American. He is built to the scale of The Grand Canyon. He is dressed for tennis, JEEVES withdraws.)

BUDGE

(calling after MADELINE) What did I say? What did I say, Maddy? Hey, Maddy! (seeing BERTIE) Oh. Hi!

BERTIE

Ah!

BUDGE

Cyrus Budge. Hi!

BERTIE

Hallo. Bertram Wooster. No, sorry, rather I'm not Bertram Wooster, I'm-

BUDGE

You're Bertram Wooster?

BERTIE

Er...sometimes.

BUDGE

Cyrus Budge. I'm happy to meet you, Mr. Wooster. Say, is that Wooster as in Woostershire sauce?

BERTIE

No, more like Wooster as in chicken.

BUDGE

(uncertainly) Chicken? Yeah. I heard you were staying here. You drove down with Pop Bassett, right?

BERTIE

Er...yes. So I did. One of me did.

BUDGE

He told me he was bringing you down. I would have been here to greet you only I've been taking part in this run.

BERTIE

Run?

BUDGE

Yes. The Hedgehog Run. You hear about that?

BERTIE

Oh, yes. I thought it was a walk.

BUDGE

A walk?

BERTIE

So I understood. A twenty mile walk.

BUDGE

Heck! I ran it. Isn't that typical! I couldn't figure why there was no one else in the race. Nobody at the finish line so I came on home. Just going to play some tennis. You want to join us?

BERTIE

Er – no. I'm afraid I've got one or two things I...

BUDGE

Sure. Good to meet you, Wooster. (More confidentially) Say, isn't she something? Madeline? The girl who just ran by? Isn't she sensational? I saw her for the first time this morning, I fell in love straightaway. How about that? She's just so...so...

BERTIE

BEAUTIFUL?

BUDGE

Yes.

BERTIE

INDESCRIBABLE?

BUDGE

Yes...

BERTIE

LOVING AND TENDER?

BUDGE
Yes, all of that...

BERTIE
TOO GOOD FOR THIS WORLD?

BUDGE
That's her. You know her, then?

BERTIE
Very, very barely.

BUDGE
Trouble is, she's in love with this other guy. Fink-Nottle. You know him?

BERTIE
No, no...

BUDGE
I just said to Maddy if I ever meet him, I'd break his neck. Kind of upset her...

BERTIE
Ah, well, these English girls, very sensitive.

BUDGE
And that's why we love them, eh? What line are you in?

BERTIE
Line? Ah, well...

BUDGE
Buying and selling?

BERTIE
No. More coming and going, really.

BUDGE
Me, I'm in jelly.

BERTIE
Jelly?

BUDGE
My old man, he owns the largest jelly plant in the whole United States.

BERTIE
Gosh...

BUDGE

That's why I'm over here. I'm here to push jelly, Wooster. I hear the British are big jelly consumers. Is that right?

BERTIE

Oh yes, you bet. Spot of cream or cold custard...

BUDGE

Custard? Oh, no. My mistake. Correction. That's jello. I'm talking about - what do you call them here - preserves? Jam...that's it.

BERTIE

Jam. Ah, well. Now you're talking.

BUDGE

You fond of jam, Wooster?

BERTIE

Oh, yes. Come tea time. Stands the church clock at ten to three? And is there - er - jam - and so on...for tea.

BUDGE

You know how many jars we sell each year?

BERTIE

Couldn't hazard a guess.

BUDGE

Twenty seven million.

BERTIE

Wow!

BUDGE

Jars.

BERTIE

Woo!

BUDGE

And the biggest selling flavour? Care to guess at that?

BERTIE

Prune?

BUDGE

Prune? We don't even make prune.

BERTIE

Ah well, can't help you, I'm afraid.

BUDGE

Would it be a clue if I told you it wasn't strawberry?

BERTIE

Ah, now look – I've just seen the time. I'm sorry, I'd love to hang around and natter jam with you all day but I just have to –

BUDGE

Oh, sure. Get me going on jelly... See you at tea time?

BERTIE

Absolutely.

(BUDGE sprints off.)

I made a mental note to warn Gussie when next I saw him, that another item now looming on his troubled horizon was a potential rival in the shape of one jelly magnate Cyrus Budge. Junior or Senior, if it came to trial by brute force, I had no doubt where I was putting my money.

(During this STIFFY enters and watches him. JEEVES also hovers.)

STIFFY

Oh, there you are. At last.

(BERTIE looks puzzled.)

JEEVES

Miss Byng, sir.

BERTIE

Stiffy? The very person. I want a word with you.

STIFFY

At last. What does one have to do to get you down here?

BERTIE

I want a strong word.

STIFFY

Come on. Follow me.

BERTIE

Where are we going?

STIFFY

Somewhere that isn't quite such a public highway. Through here.

BERTIE

What's this?

STIFFY

The maze. Nobody ever comes in here. Follow on.

BERTIE

Do you know your way round it?

STIFFY

Yes, of course. Used to spend hours in here when I was a kid. Only sure way to get away from Madeline. She never followed me in here, she was far too scared.

BERTIE

Yes. Alright. This is deep enough. Now, listen. What I have to say to you, Stiffy, can be said very briefly. I do not take kindly to having our engagement announced in The Times. I have never proposed to you and I don't intend to...

STIFFY

Save your breath. There's someone else, anyway.

BERTIE

Who?

STIFFY

Harold Pinker.

BERTIE

Stinker?

STIFFY

Don't call him that, his name is Harold.

BERTIE

Then if you're engaged to Stinker why announce you're engaged to me?

STIFFY

I'm not engaged to Harold. But I want to be. I have to be. Only Uncle Watkyn...he doesn't think Harold's suitable.

BERTIE

What's old Bassett got against Stinker?

STIFFY

I don't know. He says Harold's got no money and he breaks everything.

BERTIE

Well, he's absolutely right, of course. Stinker's a one man tornado.

STIFFY

He's not – he's just shy. And when he gets shy he gets...

BERTIE

Destructive.

STIFFY

Accidentally destructive. And if I can't marry him something else will get broken, only this time it will be my heart. (She looks tearful)

BERTIE

(sighing) Oh, Lord...

STIFFY

He's just so...so...

BERTIE

BEAUTIFUL, INDESCRIBABLE, LOVING AND TENDER, TOO GOOD FOR THIS WORLD?

Well, I'm awfully happy for you both, Stiffy, I really am. I wish you the best of luck and kindly leave me out of it.

STIFFY

We need your help, Harold and I. We have a plan...

BERTIE

Then you should have asked me properly. Instead of announcing our engagement, for heaven sake...

STIFFY

How else was I to get you here? You've ignored all my phone calls and telegrams...

BERTIE

Because I know you only too well, Stiffy. Well, enough to give you a very wide berth when you're hatching stupid plans. I'm sorry. I'm going. Goodbye, he said firmly.

STIFFY

You'll be sorry if you do, Bertie.

BERTIE

Not half as sorry as if I stick around here.

STIFFY

(sweetly) You know me, Bertie. I can be so grateful. Really, really grateful. A good friend for ever. Wouldn't that be nice?

BERTIE

I'm not too sure.

STIFFY

(still sweet) You don't want me to be an enemy, surely, Bertie? I could be such an awful enemy, I don't think you'd want that. Not really. Would you? Would you?

SONG: LOVE'S MAZE

DEEP IN LOVE'S MAZE,
THERE MY HEART STRAYS,
CAUGHT IN A FLURRY OF WORRY AND DOUBT.

DOWN LOVE'S PATHWAYS,
THERE MY HEART PLAYS
WHISPERING SECRETS IT'S LONGING TO SHOUT.

ALL I NEED'S A SYMPATHETIC FRIEND
TO HELP ME FIND A WAY TO LEAVE –

LOVE'S MAZE IS A MAGICAL LABYRINTH,
CLOSE PATHS HIDDEN FAR FROM GAZE.
LOVE'S MAZE IS FOR LOVERS IN JEOPARDY,
LOST THERE IN A RAINBOW HAZE.

WON'T YOU SAVE ME?
PLEASE ASSIST ME,
HELP ME DECIPHER ITS INTRICATE WAYS?
LOVE HAS TOUCHED ME,
LOVE HAS KISSED ME,
HOLDING ME PRISONER DEEP IN THIS MAZE.

BERTIE

WELL, YOU CAN'T BLAME ME. CUPID NEVER PAYS –
YOU'LL SAUNTER ROUND FOR DAYS INSIDE LOVE'S –

STIFFY

LOVE'S MAZE IS A MYSTICAL WONDERLAND,
CONCEALS WHAT THE HEART CONVEYS.
LOVE'S MAZE IS A PUZZLE IN PARADISE,
MISLEADS ALL THE EYE SURVEYS.

BERTIE

I DID WARN YOU.
 I HAVE SWORN TO
 STEER A WIDE BERTH, FOR I KNOW TO MY COST
 IT'S PREDICTED,
 SELF INFLICTED,
 PEOPLE IN MAZES DO TEND TO GET LOST.

STIFFY

ALL I NEED'S A VERY SPECIAL FRIEND
 TO RESCUE ME FROM HERE INSIDE –

(Some MAIDS have appeared. They join in with STIFFY.)

STIFFY & MAIDS

LOVE'S MAZE IS A CRAZY KALEIDOSCOPE,
 ALL ROADS LEADING DIFF'RENT WAYS.
 LOVE'S MAZE, LIKE A SWAYING CALLIOPE,
 ONE DANCE WHERE THE PIPER PAYS.

LOVE'S MAZE IS A HATTER'S MAD PARTY TIME,
 ONE FEAST LASTING NIGHTS AND DAYS.
 LOVE'S MAZE IS A FIREWORK SPECTACULAR,
 BRIGHT SKIES AS THE BONFIRES BLAZE.

ALL PRAISE AS WE DANCE IN ITS CORRIDORS,
 ALL PART OF THESE GRAND DISPLAYS.
 BEHOLD EVERY LOVER WHO'S EVER BORN,
 ALL LOST IN THEIR OWN LOVE'S MAZE...

STIFFY

ALL I NEED'S A LITTLE HELP FROM YOU...

BERTIE

YOU'LL NEVER DRAG ME THERE INSIDE –

(Several GARDENERS have appeared, apparently
 trimming the hedge with shears. They now join STIFFY
 and the MAIDS. BERTIE is startled still further.)

ALL

LOVE'S MAZE IS A CRAZY KALEIDOSCOPE,
 ALL ROADS LEADING DIFF'RENT WAYS.
 LOVE'S MAZE, LIKE A SWAYING CALLIOPE,
 ONE DANCE WHERE THE PIPER PAYS.

LOVE'S MAZE IS A HATTER'S MAD PARTY TIME,
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ALL PRAISE AS WE DANCE IN ITS CORRIDORS,
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BEHOLD EVERY LOVER WHO'S EVER BORN,
ALL LOST IN THEIR OWN LOVE'S MAZE...

LOVE'S MAZE IS A MAGICAL LABYRINTH,
CLOSE PATHS HIDDEN FAR FROM GAZE.
LOVE'S MAZE IS FOR LOVERS IN JEOPARDY,
LOST THERE IN A RAINBOW HAZE...

ALL PRAISE AS WE DANCE IN ITS CORRIDORS,
ALL PART OF THESE GRAND DISPLAYS.
BEHOLD EVERY LOVER WHO'S EVER BORN,
ALL LOST IN THEIR OWN LOVE'S MAZE...

(She smiles angelically at BERTIE. At the end BERTIE
hesitates for a second. Then:)

BERTIE

No, I'm sorry, Stiffy. Once a Wooster's made up his mind, I'm afraid that's it.
Sorry.

STIFFY

I must remember to make sure Uncle Watkyn reads his Times this evening. He
always sits down with it after dinner.

BERTIE

Doesn't matter to me. He thinks I'm Augustus Fink-Nottle, anyway.

STIFFY

But earlier this afternoon, Uncle Watkyn came down with someone he believed
to be you. Someone who Madeline greeted as Bertie Wooster. Though it
obviously wasn't you. Who was that person, Bertie? Was that the real Mr.
Fink-Nottle?

BERTIE

Yes. Gussie.

STIFFY

Well, he's not going to be very popular with Uncle Watkyn, is he? Bertie
Wooster coming down and asking to marry his daughter when all the time he's
apparently engaged to me. That's going to get your friend into dreadfully hot
water when Uncle Watkyn reads about it this evening. Still. Nothing to do with
you, is it? You go back to town, Bertie. Leave your friend to face the music.

BERTIE

You're appalling, Stiffy. What do you want me to do, then?

STIFFY

I want you to stay here and think about it. I'll be back later with Harold. We'll tell you our plan. Wait there, Bertie. See you later.

(STIFFY moves away from BERTIE and abandons him in the maze.)

BERTIE

(alarmed) Stiffy! Stiffy! You can't leave me in here. Stiffy! How do I get out? Which way's the out?

STIFFY

Bye! Bye, Bertie!

(STIFFY goes. JEEVES has reappeared.)

BERTIE

(to us) It took me several minutes to find my way out of the maze.

(JEEVES clears his throat.)

Yes, what is it, Jeeves?

JEEVES

To be strictly accurate, it took you several hours, sir.

BERTIE

Oh, well, minutes – hours, Jeeves. What's the difference? Stage licence. Very well, it took me several hours to find my way out of the maze. What time did I get out, for heaven's sake?

JEEVES

Half past nine, sir.

(The lights dim.)

BERTIE

At night?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

Did I miss dinner?

JEEVES

And tea, sir. Before you were rescued.

BERTIE

Rescued? Who by?

JEEVES

By –

(At this point BASSETT appears with a step ladder.)

BASSETT

(calling) Who's that making that din in there? Who is that in my maze?

BERTIE

(calling) Hallo!

(BASSETT sets up the step ladder and climbs it.)

BASSETT

(peering down) Who is that in there?

BERTIE

It's me.

BASSETT

Good heavens, it's Fink-Nottle.

BERTIE

Hallo again.

BASSETT

What are you doing in my maze?

BERTIE

I'm so sorry, I was just taking a stroll round. Lost all sense of time.

BASSETT

Well, come out. Come out at once!

BERTIE

Certainly. (uncertainly) – Er... Right, is it?

BASSETT

No, left. Turn left. Then right. Then right.

BERTIE

Right.

BASSETT

No, not right, left.

BERTIE

Yes, I meant left, right.

BASSETT

(to himself) He is, he's completely deranged. Wooster's manservant was absolutely right.

(The lights change. BERTIE is out of the maze.)

BERTIE

Ah, here we are. Thanks most frightfully.

BASSETT

I shan't even begin to ask you what you were doing in there. Why you're here at all. What brought you here. There is no point. You're obviously one of those people who are just suddenly here. Without rhyme or apparent reason. So we'd better learn to live with it, hadn't we? Tomorrow you will probably materialise in my bathroom or lying underneath the billiard table. Who can tell?

BERTIE

I came to see Stiffy.

BASSETT

I presume you are referring to my niece, Stephanie?

BERTIE

That's the one.

BASSETT

Yes, that would explain a little. Knowing some of her friends... Well, you'd better come and join us for coffee, I suppose. At least then we'll know where you are.

(They move a little way. The stepladder is taken off.
BUDGE enters with his coffee cup.)

BUDGE

Beautiful night.

BASSETT

Yes, indeed. Cyrus, let me introduce you to Mr. Fink –

BERTIE

(swiftly) Fink we've met. Hallo again.

BUDGE

Yes. We met earlier. Mr. Woo-

BERTIE

Woo-hoo needs no introduction.

BASSETT

Good. Good. (To BERTIE) Let me see if I can rustle you up some coffee.

BERTIE

Thank you.

BUDGE

(handing BASSETT his cup) Thank you.

BASSETT

Oh, by the way, Cyrus, you haven't inadvertently picked up my copy of The Times, have you? I appear to have mislaid it.

BERTIE

(pleased) Hah!

BUDGE

No, I have my own copy. You want to borrow mine?

BERTIE

(uneasily) Ah!

BASSETT

If I may. I might just glance through it in bed.

BUDGE

I'll leave it out for you.

BASSETT

Thank you so much. Won't be a second, Mr. —

BERTIE

(swiftly) No hurry.

(BASSETT leaves them together.)

BUDGE

You feeling better?

BERTIE

I'm sorry?

BUDGE

They were saying earlier, Wooster's ill. Stomach upset, was it?

BERTIE

(confused) Er...

BUDGE

When you didn't come down to dinner, when you stayed up in your room, I guessed it was probably stomach.

BERTIE

Yes. (to us) Gussie obviously overcome with pre-Madeline nerves.

BUDGE

You missed a great dinner.

BERTIE

Did I?

BUDGE

Mind you, I couldn't eat my usual. Madeline was sitting opposite me. Those eyes. Boy. Have you ever noticed her eyes? A colour like – like – a delicate, a very delicate shade of boysenberry. Do you care for boysenberry?

BERTIE

Never tried it.

BUDGE

It's your lucky day. We got some for breakfast. It's like –

BERTIE

Good-o. Look, do excuse me.

(GUSSIE appears from another direction. He looks rather frail. BERTIE does not immediately see him or he BERTIE. But CYRUS does.)

BUDGE

Well, hi. Here's someone I've not met.

GUSSIE

Oh, hallo.

BUDGE

Cyrus Budge. How do you do?

GUSSIE

Oh, right. My name's Bert –

BERTIE

Bert surely you've met Gussie? Haven't you met?

GUSSIE?

Gussie? No, I'm not supposed to be –

BERTIE

Gussie. Unusual name. Like liquid water melon...

BUDGE

Yes?

GUSSIE

(to BERTIE) I thought we agreed I was going to be...

BERTIE

No. Not just at the moment, Gussie. (indicating BUDGE) Just at present, I'm Bertram Wooster.

BUDGE

What's that?

BERTIE

I'm Bertram Wooster.

BUDGE

Yes, I know you are.

BERTIE

Oh, yes. Of course. Well, I thought I'd just re-introduce myself. We do that. After dinner. Over here. Quite a bit.

BUDGE

That a fact? Is that a tradition?

BERTIE

Yes. Can't think how it started. Probably everyone's so drunk by then, they need to. (He laughs)

SONG: THE HALLO SONG

IT'S AN ENGLISH TRADITION

WE LIKE TO SAY HALLO.

WE HOPE BY SHAKING HANDS THAT WE'LL RECALL YOUR NAME

WE WORK ON THAT BASIS, REMEMBERING FACES

BUT THAT'S ABOUT ALL.

I KNOW YOU'RE SOMEBODY SOMETHING

IT'S ON THE TIP OF MY TONGUE

YOU'RE EITHER EDITH SITWELL OR THE BOW STREET BEAK,

I'LL KNOW WHO YOU ARE, THE MOMENT YOU SPEAK...

BUT MEANWHILE JUST PUT IT RIGHT THERE.

HOW DO YOU DO?

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU DO?

HOW DO YOU DO?	GUSSIE
HALLO AGAIN...	BERTIE
HOW GOES IT ALL?...	BUDGE
GOOD DAY TO YOU...	GUSSIE
YOU KEEPING FIT...?	BERTIE
SO GREAT TO MEET YOU...	BUDGE
IT'S BEEN AN AGE...	GUSSIE
A TINY WORLD...	BERTIE
HOW DO YOU –	BUDGE
HOW DO YOU –	GUSSIE
HOW DO YOU –	BERTIE
HOW DO YOU –	BUDGE
HOW DO YOU DO?	ALL
HOW'S LIFE WITH YOU?	BUDGE
GOOD EVENING ALL...	GUSSIE
YOU'RE LOOKING WELL...	BERTIE

BUDGE

WELL, HI THERE, STRANGER...

GUSSIE

SURPRISE, SURPRISE...

BERTIE

WHAT COULD BE NICER, MEETING LIKE THIS?

I CONFESS I'VE FORGOTTEN

WHO ON EARTH YOU CAN BE.

IT COULD BE YOU'RE NIJINSKY OR THE MAN NEXT DOOR –

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU –

GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU –

BERTIE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU –

ALL

HOW DO YOU DO?

GUSSIE

YOU'RE EITHER PABLO PICASSO

BUDGE

OR MAYBE HARPO MARX.

BERTIE

YOU MIGHT BE SARAH BERNHARDT – NO, YOU'RE WITTGENSTEIN –

GUSSIE

WHOEVER I AM THOUGH, THE PLEASURE'S ALL MINE –

BUDGE

LET'S TAKE IT AND SHAKE IT RIGHT THERE.

BERTIE

WELL, FANCY THIS...

GUSSIE

IT'S SURELY NOT...?

I CAN'T BELIEVE... BUDGE

GOOD LORD ALIVE! BERTIE

HOW LONG'S IT BEEN? GUSSIE

YOU'VE HARDLY CHANGED... BUDGE

YOU'VE LOST SOME WEIGHT... BERTIE

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! GUSSIE

IT'S BEEN A WHILE... BUDGE

YOU'RE JUST THE SAME... BERTIE

HOW DO YOU – BUDGE

HOW DO YOU – GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU – BERTIE

HOW DO YOU – BUDGE

HOW DO YOU – ALL

HOW DO YOU DO? GUSSIE

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE? BERTIE

HOW'S LIFE BACK HOME? BUDGE

HOW'S BUSINESS BEEN?

GUSSIE

AND HOW'S YOUR FATHER?

BERTIE

MY SAINTED AUNT!
WHAT COULD BE BETTER, MEETING LIKE THIS?
THOUGH I HAVEN'T AN INKLING
NOT A CLUE WHO YOU ARE
YOU COULD BE AMY JOHNSON

BUDGE

NO, I'M AL CAPONE.
HOW DO YOU –

GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU –

BERTIE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU –

ALL

HOW DO YOU DO?

BUDGE

AREN'T YOU MARLENE DIETRICH?

GUSSIE

I THINK I'M BERNARD SHAW

BERTIE

IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER WHO ON EARTH YOU ARE,
THE TRUTH OF IT ALL IS OUR FRIENDSHIP'S BEEN FAR
TOO LONG NOW TO BOTHER WITH NAMES.
JUST ANOTHER EPISODE
IN THE WOOSTER MORAL CODE

ALL

LET'S EXTEND THE HAND OF GREETING
HALLO THERE, WHOEVER YOU ARE
HOW DO YOU DO.

(They all shake hands once more.)

BUDGE

(as they do so) That's great. Great tradition.

BERTIE

We're fond of it.

BUDGE

(to GUSSIE) I'm sorry. What did you say your name was?

GUSSIE

- er Fink-Nottle.

BUDGE

Cyrus Budge. Good to meet you, Mr. — Hey! Hey! One moment there! Hold hard! Hold hard! Hold hard there, feller! Fink-Nottle. Fink-Nottle. Now I know who you are. Of course. You're the guy who's in danger of standing in my way here.

GUSSIE

Sorry?

BUDGE

Aren't you the one who's sweet on Madeline?

GUSSIE

What about it?

BUDGE

Well, hear this, boy. Let it be known that from this moment on you have serious competition. And I mean serious competition. OK?

GUSSIE

Competition? Who from?

BUDGE

From me. Right?

GUSSIE

(belligerently, for him) Oh, yes?

(BASSETT returns with a cup of coffee.)

BASSETT

I do apologise, Mr. Fink-Nottle, for taking so long. They had to make fresh coffee, apparently. But here you are, better late than never. (He makes to give the cup to BERTIE)

GUSSIE

(taking the cup) Thank you.

BASSETT

Oh, that was really intended for —

BERTIE

Doesn't matter, doesn't matter at all.

BASSETT

I can have some more brought out...

BERTIE

No, no...

BUDGE

Hallo there. Let me re-introduce myself. Cyrus Budge the third. Junior.

BASSETT

(looking at him, strangely) Hallo. Yes. Yes...

BUDGE

And you'll be...?

BASSETT

Watkyn Bassett. We've just had dinner together.

BUDGE

Hi there. (to BERTIE) Did I do it wrong?

BERTIE

Perfect.

BASSETT

Another madman.

BUDGE

I was just saying to Mr. Fink-Nottle here, we may have a dispute on our hands.

BASSETT

(humouring him) Really? Oh dear, what about?

BUDGE

About your daughter. The lovely Madeline. I'm afraid she's breaking hearts left and centre. Worst comes to the worst, we fellers might have to resort to traditional methods. Fight for the lady's hand.

BASSETT

I hope it won't come to that.

BUDGE

Well, if she's unable to choose between us and Mr. Fink-Nottle refuses to step down we could be verging on the confrontational here.

BASSETT

(looking at BERTIE) Mr. Fink-Nottle? Oh, I don't think you have to worry about Mr. Fink-Nottle.

BUDGE

(looking at GUSSIE) No?

BASSETT

No. At least I sincerely hope not. No, it's Mr. Wooster you'll have to watch out for.

BUDGE

(turning to BERTIE) Really? Mr. Wooster, as well? How many guys is she seeing?

BASSETT

Guys? Just the one guy, I trust?

BUDGE

Mr. Fink-Nottle seems to think he's in there with a chance.

BASSETT

Well, he's not. He certainly is not. It's just Mr. Wooster...

BUDGE

Mr. Wooster?

BERTIE

And I'm sure Mr. Wooster can take care of himself.

BUDGE

(squaring up to BERTIE) Oh, you think he can, huh? Well, so can Mr. Budge.

GUSSIE

And so can Mr. Wooster.

BUDGE

Yes, I heard him the first time. You keep out of it. I'm talking here to Mr. Wooster.

BASSETT

Then you'd better talk to Mr. Wooster, surely.

BUDGE

(indicating BERTIE) I'm talking to Mr. Wooster.

BERTIE

(indicating GUSSIE) Yes, well, be a good fellow and go and talk to Mr. Wooster.

BUDGE

Mr. Wooster?

BASSETT

(indicating GUSSIE) This is Mr. Wooster.

BUDGE

(looking at GUSSIE) Wait a minute. Hold hard! You're Mr. Wooster?

GUSSIE

Yes, I'm Wooster.

BUDGE

You're Wooster as well?

BASSETT

As well as what?

BUDGE

(indicating BERTIE) As well as this Wooster? There's two Woosters, is that it? You're both called Wooster.

BASSETT

(indicating GUSSIE) No, this one's Wooster. There's only one Wooster.

BUDGE

(indicating BERTIE) Well, who's this one if he's not Wooster?

BASSETT

That's Mr. Fink-Nottle.

(Pause. They all shake hands again. Cue for a brief reprise of THE HALLO SONG.)

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU DO?

BASSETT

HOW DO YOU DO?

GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU DO?

BERTIE

HALLO AGAIN...

BUDGE

HOW GOES IT ALL?

BASSETT

GOOD DAY TO YOU...

GUSSIE

YOU KEEPING FIT...?

BUDGE

SO GREAT TO MEET YOU...

BERTIE

IT'S BEEN AN AGE...

BASSETT

A TINY WORLD...

BUDGE & GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU -

BERTIE & BASSETT

HOW DO YOU -

BUDGE & GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU -

BERTIE & BASSETT

HOW DO YOU -

ALL

HOW DO YOU DO?

(MADELINE has wafted on. The men stare at her.)

MADELINE

(in a little voice) Hello.

BASSETT

Oh now, my dear, don't get cold out here, will you?

MADELINE

Oh, daddy, don't fuss... I'm terribly strong, really. (to BERTIE) Hello, Bertie.
This is a nice surprise.

GUSSIE

Hallo...

MADELINE

Oh? (Realising her mistake) Oh, yes. Sorry. Hello.

BUDGE

She doesn't seem to know who's who, either.

BERTIE

Well, people do tend to get us muddled. Same colouring.

BUDGE

Good evening, Madeline. You're looking quite beautiful this evening.

MADELINE

(coolly) Thank you, Cyrus.

BUDGE

Maybe you'd care to take a walk later?

MADELINE

Well, it depends on – on whether Mr. – Wooster has any objections...

BUDGE

(to GUSSIE) You don't have any objections, do you Wooster?

GUSSIE

I – I – er...I...

BUDGE

He has no objections.

MADELINE

(coolly) Well. In that case, fine. I'd love to, Cyrus.

BASSETT

My dear, I don't think you've met our other – guest, Mr. Fink-Nottle. Have you met Mr. Fink-Nottle?

BERTIE

Hallo there!

MADELINE

(giggling) Daddy, that's not Mr. Fink-Nottle, that's...that's...oh.

BASSETT

What's that, my dear?

MADELINE

Nothing.

BASSETT

What are you saying? Are you saying that's not Mr. Fink-Nottle?

MADELINE

Well... Maybe it is. On second thoughts.

BASSETT

No, no, come along now. You've just this minute said it wasn't. Now who is it, if it's not Mr. Fink-Nottle...

MADELINE

It's – it's – somebody else...

BUDGE

I knew there was something fishy here... I knew it...

BASSETT

Who are you? You'd better tell us, now.

BUDGE

You'd better.

BASSETT

You're not Mr. Fink-Nottle...

BUDGE

And you're not Mr. Wooster...

GUSSIE

No, I'm Mr. Wooster.

MADELINE

Gussie's Mr. Wooster...

BASSETT

So who are you?

BUDGE

Who the hell are you?

BERTIE

Ah, well. Game's up, I see. The point is I've been travelling incognito, hoping not to be recognised and now the cover's blown. Oh, dear. Worth a try, anyway. A few precious minutes of anonymity, away from the hurly burly of the public eye, the searchlight of the popular –

BUDGE

(loudly) JUST TELL US YOUR NAME, FELLER!

BERTIE

-Er. Little.

BUDGE

Little?

BASSETT

Little?

BERTIE

Mr. Little. My friends tend to call me Bingo.

BASSETT

I see. Well, it's as good a name as any other, I suppose.

BERTIE

Pretty good under the circumstances. Wouldn't you say so, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Extremely enterprising. I congratulate you, sir.

BERTIE

Thank you.

JEEVES

There was just one small fly though in an otherwise unsullied ointment, sir.

BERTIE

(suspiciously) Oh, yes? Don't tell me...

(HONORIA'S voice is heard across the lawn splitting the calm of the night.)

HONORIA

Hall – ooooo!

BASSETT

What on earth - ?

(HONORIA comes on with BINGO. He looks dejected.)

BERTIE

I might have known it.

HONORIA

Hallo, everyone. (warmly) Hallo, Bertie.

BERTIE & GUSSIE

(together) Hallo.

HONORIA

Just been for an after dinner walk. Guess who I met in the village. My friend and missing walking companion. Remember I told you about him? He very kindly walked back with me.

BINGO

(glumly) Yes.

BUDGE

Hi! Cyrus Budge the third. Junior. And your name, sir, is...?

BINGO

(distracted) Oh, yes. I'm...

BERTIE

(excitedly) Good heavens, I've just this minute seen who it is. Good Lord, my dear chap, I didn't recognise you for a minute... Ladies and gentlemen, this is a quite extraordinary coincidence – this is none other than the real Mr. Fink-Nottle. Everyone meet Gussie. Gussie, say hallo to everyone.

BINGO

(stunned) Hallo.

(A stunned pause. Cue for a brief reprise of: THE HALLO SONG.)

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, GUSSIE, HONORIA & BERTIE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, GUSSIE, HONORIA, BERTIE, BASSETT & MADELINE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, GUSSIE, HONORIA, BASSETT, MADELINE & JEEVES

HOW DO YOU –
HOW DO YOU - ?

BERTIE

(interrupting the proceedings) Hold it! Hold it! Hold it!

(The song stops abruptly.)

That's quite enough of that, thank you.

(The others go off a bit disgruntled.)

Is that really what happened, Jeeves?

JEEVES

I think we may have simplified it slightly, sir.

BERTIE

Good Lord. Any sign of that banjo?

JEEVES

Not yet, sir.

BERTIE

Oh. Better stick with the narrative, then.

JEEVES

Advisable, sir.

BERTIE

Think they're following it? This lot?

JEEVES

Impossible to tell, sir.

BERTIE

Well. See if they're still here when we come back, eh?

JEEVES

An excellent suggestion, sir. An acid test.

BERTIE

Care for a quick one?

JEEVES

Perhaps a small tonic wine, sir.

BERTIE

My treat, Jeeves.

JEEVES

Thank you, sir.

(They have gone off. END OF ACT I.)

ACT TWO

(The same. JEEVES and BERTIE return.)

BERTIE

Ah! Jolly good. Still here. Most of them. What news of the Kentish banjo, Jeeves?

JEEVES

The driver has just telephoned. It is on its way, sir.

BERTIE

Splendid. Any moment now then, eh, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Any, sir.

BERTIE

In the meantime, I suppose we had better resume our tale. And so we shall.
(He pauses) Where were we?

JEEVES

May I, sir?

BERTIE

Of course.

JEEVES

We resume the narrative a few moments later. We are still in the grounds of Totleigh Towers. It is 9.45 –

(Sunlight and birdsong.)

- pm.

(Moonlight and owls.)

Sir Watkyn Bassett has retired to the house somewhat confused by the varying identity of many of his guests. If you will recall, the real Mr. Fink-Nottle was masquerading as Mr. Wooster, whilst the real Mr. Wooster was masquerading as Mr. Little. Miss Glossop had gone indoors to change following her walk with Mr. Little, now known as Mr. Fink-Nottle. Meanwhile, Mr. Cyrus Budge the third –

BERTIE

Junior.

JEEVES

Junior... had taken advantage of the confusion to take Miss Bassett for a walk in the rose garden...

BERTIE

The boulder. And Stiffy? I never feel easy unless I know where she is.

JEEVES

I understand she is presently collecting the Reverend Mr. Pinker from the station, sir. Off the last train. He was due to arrive earlier on the five twenty six but there was some slight accident.

BERTIE

Accident?

JEEVES

The Reverend Mr. Pinker boarded the train at Paddington, slammed the door rather too hard and de-railed it, sir.

BERTIE

Sounds probable. And me? Where was I?

JEEVES

More or less where you're standing now, sir. In animated discussion with Mr. Fink-Nottle, currently Mr. Wooster and Mr. Little currently Mr. –

BERTIE

Yes, alright, Jeeves, that will do!

(GUSSIE and BINGO have appeared under this last.)

GUSSIE

...I wish you'd both stop claiming this is my fault.

BERTIE

Who else's? If you and Madeline hadn't concocted this half-witted scheme, Bingo and I would have been happily about our business, instead of which we're –

GUSSIE

Nobody asked you down here, did they?

BERTIE

Let's just say I had an offer it was very hard to say no to.

BINGO

Don't try and evade things, I know why you came, Bertie. There's no need to lie.

BERTIE

I came because of Stiffy. She went and put this announcement in the –

BINGO

Don't lie to me, Bertie, I know why you came. You came because of Honoria.

BERTIE

Honoria?

BINGO

She told me just now.

BERTIE

Honoria?

BINGO

While we were walking up from the village. That's why she came to see me at the hotel. To tell me in person. God, she's so considerate!

BERTIE

Tell you what?

BINGO

That she'd – that she realised she'd made a terrible mistake. That you were the only man she'd ever loved. Damn you! That as soon as she saw you arriving like a knight in armour – her words, not mine – snake in sheep's clothing would be nearer the mark – as soon as she saw you, she vowed never to let you go again.

BERTIE

Oh, grief.

BINGO

She apologised to me for any false hopes she may have aroused. And if that wasn't enough, she then said the worst thing she could possibly say. She said she hoped we could both stay friends.

BERTIE

Listen, this is appalling, I had no idea – I mean, it was pure coincidence, meeting her – I mean –

BINGO

Bertie!

BERTIE

Mmm?

BINGO

Don't. Don't insult me, please. Credit me with a modicum of intelligence. As an ex-friend, you might at least do that.

BERTIE

This is absurd. Gussie, talk to him.

GUSSIE

Talk to him? Why should I talk to him? I'm not even talking to you. Thanks to you, I may have lost Madeline for ever. She's gone off somewhere with Budge. I'll be lucky ever to see her again.

BERTIE

Oh, don't be so ridiculous. Madeline would never go off with Budge, not when she has you. What? Spend the rest of her life talking jam. She knows which side her bread's buttered, don't you worry. She's not that st... (considering) Yes, I see what you mean.

GUSSIE

I'm never speaking to you again, Bertie, and that's it.

BINGO

Nor am I.

BERTIE

Oh, terrific. Right. I see. Well, be like that. See if I care.

(A silence.)

At this point, we appear to have run out of narrative.

(BERTIE clears his throat. The other two stand ignoring him.)

Jeeves!

(JEEVES appears.)

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

I think the story's in need of a – What do you call those things?

JEEVES

Deus ex Machina, sir?

BERTIE

Sounds like the chap. Any chance of one turning up shortly, only...

JEEVES

One about to arrive, sir.

BERTIE

Thank heavens for that. Who?

JEEVES

Me, sir.

BERTIE

You? Re-entering the narrative, you mean?

JEEVES

If I may be permitted, sir...

BERTIE

Yes, of course. Just the chap.

(JEEVES makes to go off.)

Where are you going?

JEEVES

To make an entrance, sir.

BERTIE

Oh, absolutely. Carry on. (To the others) There you are, you see.

(JEEVES goes.)

SONG: BY JEEVES

IT IS PATENTLY CLEAR
ANY AWKWARDNESS HERE
CAN BE CLEARED UP IN LESS THAN A TRICE.
- OUR IDENTITY SWITCH
WHO IS WHO, WHICH IS WHICH -
WE'RE IN NEED OF SOME SOLID ADVICE.
THERE'S A PAINFULLY SIMPLE SOLUTION,
IT'S AS PLAIN AS THE NOSE ON YOUR FACE...

BINGO

BY GAD!

GUSSIE

BY GOSH!

BINGO

BY HECK!

GUSSIE

BY GUM!

BINGO

BY RABBIT'S FOOT!

GUSSIE

BY KINGDOM COME!

BERTIE

BY ALL MY SAINTED AUNT BELIEVES!

BINGO

BY GEORGE!

GUSSIE

BY JOVE!

ALL

BY JEEVES!

WHEN WE'RE FACED WITH THE GRIND
OF EXERTING THE MIND,
WE ARE FILLED WITH A DEEP SENSE OF DREAD.

BERTIE

"HOW ON EARTH," I HEAR CRIES,
"DOES ONE GIVE EXERCISE,
TO A THING THAT'S IN BED IN YOUR HEAD?"

BINGO

WHAT WE NEED IS A FREE RANGE CONSULTANT.

GUSSIE

WHERE ON EARTH DO YOU FIND ONE OF THOSE?

BERTIE

BY HOOK! BY CROOK!

GUSSIE

BY WAY! BY PASS!

BINGO

BY SEA! BY AIR!

BERTIE

BY ROAD!

GUSSIE

BY GRASS!

BINGO

BY SEVEN DWARVES!

BERTIE

BY FORTY THIEVES!

ALL

BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!

BERTIE

BY SHUTTLECOCK!

GUSSIE

BY CROQUET HOOP!

BINGO

BY PANAMA!

BERTIE

BY WINDSOR SOUP!

GUSSIE

BY ALL THOSE CARDS TUCKED UP HIS SLEEVES!

ALL

BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!

OUR COLLECTIVE I.Q.

OF AROUND 42

CANNOT COPE, TO BE PERFECTLY FRANK.

ALL TRUE LEADERS OF MEN

DELEGATE, NOW AND THEN,

TRY TO KEEP THEIR MINDS TOTALLY BLANK.

TO APPRECIATE LOFTIER MATTERS

BINGO

THINGS THAT MOSTLY GO OVER MY HEAD.

BERTIE

BY DERBY DAY!

GUSSIE

BY NURSERY TEA!

BINGO

BY MOOSE!

BERTIE

BY SPOONS!

GUSSIE

BY HALF PAST THREE!

BINGO

BY EVERY TENDER BREAST THAT HEAVES!

ALL
BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!

BERTIE
BY MARMALADE!

GUSSIE
BY BOWLER HAT!

BINGO
BY TOOTHPASTE TUBE!

BERTIE
BY BURMESE CAT!

GUSSIE
BY BABY NEWTS!

BINGO
BY AUTUMN LEAVES!

ALL
BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!

BEHOLD HOW JEEVES WITH SLEIGHT OF HAND
CONCEIVES A SCHEME SO CAREFULLY PLANNED,
EVEN WE CAN UNDERSTAND
IF HE TAKES IT TERRIBLE SLOW – LY

BERTIE
BY BASINGSTOKE!

BINGO
BY CARDBOARD BOX!

GUSSIE
BY BUDGE'S KNEES!

BERTIE
BY BASSETT'S SOCKS!

BINGO
BY EACH THAT CONJUROR DECEIVES!

ALL
BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!

BERTIE
BY JUMPING JACK!

GUSSIE
BY EASY CHAIR!

BINGO
BY BAIN MARIE!

BERTIE
BY CAMEMBERT!

GUSSIE
BY EVERY FRUIT BAT IN THE EAVES!

ALL
BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!

BINGO
BY WALKING BOOT!

GUSSIE
BY THERMAL DRAWERS!

BERTIE
BY CANAPÉS!

BINGO
BY SANTA CLAUS!

GUSSIE
BY ALL HIS MIGHTY BRAIN ACHIEVES!

BERTIE
BY EVERY SPELL THE MASTER WEAVES!

ALL
BY HECK! BY GEORGE! BY JOVE! BY JEEVES!
BY JEEVES! BY JEEVES! BY JEEVES!
BY JEEVES!

(The finish triumphantly. JEEVES enters.)

JEEVES
Good evening, sir.

BERTIE
Ah, Jeeves!

BINGO & GUSSIE
Jeeves!

BERTIE

What a surprise.

JEEVES

Is there a problem, sir?

BERTIE

Yes. I'll tell you everything. (He takes a deep breath) I told him.

JEEVES

I see sir.

(Pause. JEEVES considers. They watch him anxiously.)

BINGO

Well?

GUSSIE

Well?

BERTIE

What's the answer, Jeeves?

JEEVES

I'm afraid I could not say, sir.

BERTIE

Can't say?

JEEVES

I see no immediate solution, not at present.

BINGO

No?

GUSSIE

You don't?

JEEVES

I regret not, sir.

BERTIE

Jeeves!

JEEVES

Will you excuse me, sir, I must unpack.

(JEEVES leaves them.)

BINGO

What on earth's got into him?

GUSSIE

He's usually infallible.

BERTIE

Well, it only goes to prove what I've been saying for years. The man is obviously past his perishable shelf life. Completely shot and the sooner we put him out to graze, the soon –

(JEEVES has re-appeared. BERTIE is the last to see him.)

Ah, Jeeves!

JEEVES

(frostily) A note, sir.

(He hands BERTIE a piece of coloured paper.)

BERTIE

(likewise) Thank you, Jeeves.

JEEVES

(departing) From Miss Glossop, sir.

BINGO

You swine, Bertie.

BERTIE

Oh, yes, Thank you, Jeeves. This'll be... I'm almost certain – she offered to – to share the cost of the petrol. For the lift I gave her earlier. I said I wouldn't hear of it but she insisted, you know... (opening the note and glancing at it swiftly) I read the note swiftly. Oh, yes. Petrol.

(HONORIA appears.)

HONORIA

(swiftly) Dear Bertie I must see you urgently my darling come to my room a.s.a.p. all my love Honoria kiss kiss kiss.

(BERTIE jumps. HONORIA goes off.)

BINGO

(angrily) I heard that!

BERTIE

Alright! Sorry! (sotto) What was all that, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Merely a stage convention, sir.

BERTIE

Well, that's quite enough of them. No more. Is nothing private?

BINGO

You...swine...Bertie... I'm going to drown myself.

(BINGO rushes off.)

BERTIE

(to JEEVES) See that?

(A cry from off. MADELEINE comes rushing past them in tears again. She goes off. BUDGE appears after her.)

BUDGE

Maddy! Maddy, baby. Hey! (To them) What did I say this time? I don't understand the dame. One minute it's come for a walk I want to be with you, the next I put an arm round her and she's telling me –

GUSSIE

(beside himself with fury) YOU PUT AN ARM ROUND HER? Arm? Her? Round? Put?

BUDGE

Yes. So?

GUSSIE

How? How? How? Daring!

BUDGE

What?

GUSSIE

I'm going to budge you, Box. I threaten you to some fists. Do you hear me? For Madeline. Alright? I don't care.

BUDGE

What? You want to fight me? Is that it?

GUSSIE

Yes. You – you – you betcher.

BUDGE

For Maddy? You're joking? You wouldn't stand a chance. You know how fit I am? You know how fit? (He picks up a statue)

GUSSIE

You're fit for nothing – you lechering – jam pot!

BUDGE

Right. You want a fight, you've got yourself a fight. Midnight, Mister. Right here, OK? I'd bring a couple of stretcher bearers if I were you. You're going to need them.

(BUDGE goes off, leaving GUSSIE holding the statue and slowly sagging under the weight.)

BERTIE

An ugly turn, Jeeves.

JEEVES

Distinctly unattractive, sir.

BERTIE

(helping GUSSIE to replace the statue) Gussie, old pal, don't you think you should reconsider this a bit – I mean, if...

GUSSIE

Oh, go away, Bertie, just go away. This is all your fault. Every single bit of it.

(GUSSIE rushes off.)

BERTIE

This is getting like the fourth act of Medea, Jeeves.

JEEVES

There is a certain air of tragedy, sir.

BERTIE

Stygian gloom forlorn, Jeeves.

JEEVES

Indeed.

BERTIE

Is there any way of patching things up?

JEEVES

With Miss Glossop and Mr. Little the problem is complicated by the fact that whilst Mr. Little undoubtedly harbours strong feelings towards Miss Glossop, I gather they are not reciprocated...

BERTIE

Ah! The old unrequited bit.

JEEVES

Whereas, with Miss Bassett and Mr. Fink-Nottle, I think the problem there is that Miss Bassett has grown increasingly impatient with Mr. Fink-Nottle and his apparent inability to declare his true feelings. She as a result has resorted to the age-old but somewhat unreliable device of trying to expedite matters through jealousy.

BERTIE

I see. So Cyrus is merely a stalking horse?

JEEVES

That is my understanding, sir. Though one with a dangerous kick if mishandled.

BERTIE

Absolutely. Not a chap to enter for the dressage.

JEEVES

Hardly, sir. I would therefore suggest... (he hesitates)

BERTIE

Yes, carry on, Jeeves. I am all attention.

JEEVES

I would suggest that it is time you intervened personally.

BERTIE

Me?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

How?

JEEVES

By communicating Mr. Fink-Nottle's true feelings to Miss Bassett.

BERTIE

(doubtfully) Think she'll listen?

JEEVES

I'm sure she will, sir. It is, after all, a message she wishes to hear.

BERTIE

Good point. This is obviously a case which needs some...what shall I say – expertise?...tact...?

JEEVES

Savoir faire?

BERTIE

Exactly. Ambassadorial skills to the fore, eh, Jeeves? Assume the time honoured role of love's messenger...

JEEVES

Cyrano de Bergerac, sir.

BERTIE

Thank you, Jeeves, I shall need it. Right. Which way?

JEEVES

Behold, here she comes.

BERTIE

Ah!

(MADELINE enters deep in some dream. JEEVES makes to go off.)

Where are you going?

JEEVES

To find Mr. Fink-Nottle, sir. In order to introduce him at the correct moment in the proceedings.

BERTIE

Jolly good.

(JEEVES goes.)

BERTIE

Girding my loins. (loudly) Hallo, there...

MADELINE

Bertie! No, I mean – Gussie! No, Bingo! No – oh! Golly!

BERTIE

Bertie'll do. Strictly entre nous.

MADELINE

Oh, it's all got so complicated, hasn't it, Bertie? I mean, when Augustus and I thought of it, it was going to be such a simple little plan. Now it's become sort of catching. Everyone's someone else, aren't they, so now you're not sure who anyone is, are you?

BERTIE

Can be tricky.

MADELINE

And anyway, none of it's worked, Augustus still hasn't...

BERTIE

Popped the question?

MADELINE

I don't think he ever will. I'm going to die an old maid, Bertie.

BERTIE

Oh, come on, hardly. You're far too young.

MADELINE

I tried to make him jealous with Cyrus but he didn't even react. All I got was Cyrus putting his sticky hands all over me...

BERTIE

Probably only jelly. Jam.

MADELINE

I've had to change my dress twice. No, now I know it. Augustus doesn't really love me. He can't do.

BERTIE

Oh, he does.

MADELINE

He just pretended he did.

BERTIE

He's absolutely besotted, Madeline. Believe me. He thinks you're –

BEAUTIFUL.

MADELINE

Oh, yes?

BERTIE

INDESCRIBABLE...

MADELINE

Yes?

BERTIE

LOVING AND TENDER...

MADELINE

Go on...

BERTIE

TOO GOOD FOR THIS WORLD.

MADELINE

That's me.

BERTIE

So you see...if Gussie were here now...looking up at that moon like a...a...

MADELINE

...like a big, yellow, bounceable ball...

BERTIE

Yes. That's the one...as he sat here beside you, he'd be saying...

MADELINE

He wouldn't be saying anything. That's the point. He never does. He just sits there. Spluttering and muttering...

BERTIE

Muttering, yes. Well, you know old Gussie. That's just his way, isn't it? That's just his way of saying...

MADELINE

...of saying nothing at all. Exactly. I mean, it's been weeks and months and days. I'm getting older and older, Bertie.

BERTIE

Oh come, now. You can't be a day over – what, twenty four?

MADELINE

(indignantly) I'm twenty two.

BERTIE

There you are... Younger by the minute. But the point of all this, let's face it, is that it's not what Gussie says, surely. It's what he feels. I mean love's a funny thing. It doesn't always look quite the same. It varies from person to person, if you follow. I mean with Budge it's a brisk covering in jam, but with Gussie – it's more subtle – more oblique – like – steamed fish – it creeps up on you...

SONG: WHEN LOVE ARRIVES

WHEN LOVE ARRIVES, IT'S HARD TO TELL,
HE DOESN'T RING THE FRONT DOOR BELL,
HE DOESN'T WAIT POLITELY IN THE HALL
OR LEAVE HIS CARD.

HE DOESN'T WAIT TO WIPE HIS FEET,
IN FACT HE'S NOT AT ALL DISCREET,
HE DOESN'T PHONE TO WARN YOU HE WILL CALL AND MEANS TO STAY.

HE MAY NOT COME WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING HIM TO VISIT –
BUT IF HE DOES, MAKE SURE HE FINDS YOU HOME.

BERTIE (contd.)

SURRENDER NOW, FOR WHAT'S THE USE?
AND WAVE THAT FRIENDLY FLAG OF TRUCE.
JUST RUSH RIGHT OUT TO GREET HIM
DON'T HESITATE AT ALL, DEAR,
YOU'LL BLESS THE DAY THAT LOVE RINGS YOUR BELL.

MADELINE

DING! DING!

BERTIE

HALLO?

MADELINE

WHO'S THERE?

BERTIE

IT'S LOVE.

MADELINE

COME IN.

BERTIE

KISS, KISS.

MADELINE

HEE-HEE!

BERTIE

SO CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LEND AN EAR,
FOR I SUSPECT HE'S SOMEWHERE NEAR
AND THAT IT'S YOU THAT HE HAS COME TO FIND —

MADELINE

OH, BERTIE, DEAR...

BERTIE

SO LET HIM HOLD YOU TIGHT AND SNUG —

MADELINE

LIKE KITTENS CUDDLED IN A RUG?

BERTIE

WELL, THAT'S THE SORT OF THING I HAD IN MIND...

MADELINE

OH LOOK, MY DEAR!
EACH DANDELION CLOCK IS VERY SOFTLY CHIMING
TO TELL THE FLOWERS IT'S TIME TO GO TO BED...

BERTIE

WHAT'S THAT SHE SAID?

MADELINE

I KNOW THIS NIGHT CAN'T BE IN VAIN.
THE STARS SHINE IN GOD'S DAISY CHAIN
AND EVEN MR. MOON'S BEGUN TO SNORE...

BERTIE

GOOD GRIEF, NO MORE...
LOOK, SOFTLY NOW, JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES –

MADELINE

(covering her eyes) AND WILL I GET A BIG SURPRISE?

BERTIE

WHAT ELSE D'YOU THINK I'M DOING ALL THIS FOR,
YOU LOVELY THING, YOU...?
JUST WAIT RIGHT THERE TILL LOVE HIMSELF ARRIVES...

(JEEVES has arrived with GUSSIE. BERTIE, still singing stealthily, moves to them and places GUSSIE in his original position by MADELINE.)

(as he does so) WAIT THERE...STAY THERE...RIGHT THERE... DON'T MOVE...STAY PUT...WAIT THERE...RIGHT THERE... (he whistles)

(As the song ends they indicate that GUSSIE should kiss MADELINE, who, with her eyes still covered, looks good and ready. BERTIE and JEEVES watch like guardian angels. GUSSIE kisses MADELINE.)

MADELINE

(as they part, her eyes still closed) Oh, Bertie...

GUSSIE

(stunned) Bertie? Bertie? BERTIE?

MADELINE

(opening her eyes) Oh!

GUSSIE

(angrily, to BERTIE) Bertie!

(GUSSIE rushes off, distraught.)

MADELINE

(reproachfully) Oh, Bertie!

(MADELINE goes.)

BERTIE

Oh, Lord, What might be termed a Persian among the pigeons, Jeeves.

JEEVES

Very much so, sir. However I'm quite sure that matters will soon be sorted out, once you have –

(BUDGE enters, angrily.)

BUDGE

I saw that, Little. I saw every second of that. You're the guy I need to be fighting. Not that poor sap, Wooster. You're the one, Little!

BERTIE

Me?

BUDGE

You can't treat a girl like Maddy like that.

BERTIE

Like what?

BUDGE

I saw you, Little. Procuring her for immoral purposes...

BERTIE

(indignantly) Procuring her?

BUDGE

In the State where I come from, you know what we do with men like you at large, Little? We lynch 'em, Little, we lynch 'em. Be here at midnight. And be warned.

(BUDGE storms off.)

BERTIE

You were saying, Jeeves? Matters will soon be sorted out – was that the phrase used?

JEEVES

Once you have had your meeting with Miss Byng and the Reverend Mr. Pinker...

BERTIE

No. I am having no more meetings. Moreover I am having no more to do with this place. Enough is enough! Come along. We can be home by midnight.

JEEVES

But, sir –

BERTIE

No, Jeeves. No buts.

JEEVES

The Times, sir.

BERTIE

The what?

JEEVES

The copy of Mr. Budge's Times, sir. The one Sir Watkyn is at this moment settling down to read, having retired to bed.

BERTIE

Ah. No chance of him dropping asleep?

JEEVES

After earlier events he is wide awake.

BERTIE

Any hope of him missing out on the births, deaths and marriages?

JEEVES

Sir Watkyn has reached an age when they provide a regular source of satisfaction, sir. Especially the deaths.

BERTIE

A certain pleasure in outstripping the field?

JEEVES

Precisely.

BERTIE

(after a second) Well. Nonetheless. Too bad. Too bad, eh, Jeeves? Let them stew, that's what I say. Nothing to do with me if Stiffy gets engaged to this chap Wooster. My name's – what is it currently? – my name's Little. Bingo Little. No relation at all. Follow on.

(BERTIE makes as if to go. Underscore: CODE OF THE WOOSTERS.)

JEEVES

(pained) Sir...

BERTIE

What now?

JEEVES

The code, sir.

BERTIE

Of the Woosters?

JEEVES

Surely, sir.

BERTIE

Lord. It's a weighty burden, Jeeves.

JEEVES

I can imagine. But probably no worse than spending the rest of your life answering to the name of Bingo Little.

BERTIE

You think that's on the cards?

JEEVES

Undoubtedly.

BERTIE

Bingo Little? Bingo Little? No, it doesn't suit me, does it? I mean, it's fine for chaps like Bingo but...

JEEVES

May I add, sir, it is not a name that suits me either.

BERTIE

How do you...? Meaning you might...?

JEEVES

Be forced regretfully to seek alternative employment, sir.

BERTIE

Et tu, Jeeves. Is it to be my fate like that of all heroes? To be stabbed in the back?

JEEVES

Agamemnon, sir.

BERTIE

It is far, far too late for that, Jeeves. Or should I call you Judas?

JEEVES

(pained) Sir...

SONG: WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY, JEEVES?

BERTIE

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY, JEEVES?

WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY?

JEEVES

(speaking) Sir –

BERTIE

YOUR JOB'S TO PROTECT ME AND TO CUSHION ME FROM SHOCKS
NOT TO LET THE POOR YOUNG MASTER
END UP CROUCHING IN A BOX,
LEAVE HIM POSING AS A COATSTAND THERE,
THE MINUTE SOMEONE KNOCKS
NO, SOMEBODY'S GOT TO PAY, JEEVES,
SOMEBODY'S GOT TO PAY

JEEVES

(speaking) If you would –

BERTIE

THREATENED WITH A LYNCH MOB AND I LOSE MY OLDEST FRIENDS,
I'M EMBROILED WITH RANDOM FEMALES
BENT ON DIRE ROMANTIC ENDS,
YOURS IS FRANKLY NOT A JUDGEMENT, JEEVES,
ON WHICH A CHAP DEPENDS,
IT'S BORDERING ON RISQUÉ, JEEVES,
UTTERLY DÉCLASSÉ.

JEEVES

(speaking) If I may –

BERTIE

YOUR JOB'S TO INSPIRE ME WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAISE
NOT ABANDON ME WITH STIFFY IN SOME FRIGHTFUL LEAFY MAZE,
NOT TO MAKE ME CHANGE MY NAME THREE TIMES
IN JUST AS MANY DAYS

HERE AM I IN AN EXTREME POSITION,
GENERAL CUSTER OUT OF AMMUNITION,
DIDN'T GET HERE BY MY OWN VOLITION,
AS TENNYSON ONCE THUNDERED
SOMEONE HERE HAS BADLY BLUNDERED.

JEEVES

(speaking) Sir –

BERTIE

IT'S CHAOS AND DISARRAY, JEEVES.
MISERY AND DISMAY.

JEEVES

(speaking) Perhaps I might - ?

BERTIE

CALLING THIS A SHAMBLES IS TO UNDERSTATE THE CASE,
LOOK AT ALL THESE BANJO LOVERS, NOT A DRY EYE IN THE PLACE,
I SHALL NEVER HAVE THE NERVE AGAIN TO LOOK THEM IN THE FACE.
SO WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY, JEEVES?
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SAY?

JEEVES

I FEAR I MUST CONFESS IT, SIR
DESPITE MY BEST ENDEAVOURS TO
ENSURE A FLUID NARRATIVE,
THINGS HAVEN'T GONE TO PLAN.

EVENTS WERE OVERTAKEN, SIR
BY UNSEEN TECHNICALITIES
I REALLY CAN ASSURE YOU, THOUGH,
I'VE DONE THE BEST I CAN.

THERE COMES THE ODD OCCASION, SIR
WHEN FACING UP TO DESTINY
WE'D DO AS WELL REMEMBERING
A MAN IS BUT A MAN.

YOU HAVE MY FIRM ASSURANCES
THAT COME THE GRAND DENOUEMENT, SIR,
EVENTS WILL ALL RESOLVE THEMSELVES,
IN SPITE OF COME WHAT MAY.

I ONLY CAN APOLOGISE
FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE,
INJURIOUS TO YOUR DIGNITY,
THAT HAPPENS ON THE WAY.

I SIMPLY WISH TO EMPHASIZE,
I HAVE YOUR INTERESTS UPPERMOST.
AND THAT, SIR, IN CONCLUSION, SIR,
IS ALL I HAVE TO SAY!

BERTIE

Very well, Jeeves. I will proceed. However, I don't wish to hurt your feelings but from now on, I will walk alone. I have found, on the whole, that in this narrative your suggestions have not been helpful.

JEEVES

I'm sorry, sir.

BERTIE

I would be grateful if in the future you restrict yourself solely to your stage managerial duties.

JEEVES

Very good, sir.

BERTIE

I will continue unaccompanied.

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

(Pause.)

BERTIE

What happened next?

JEEVES

This, sir.

HAROLD

(off) Pssst!

BERTIE

What?

HAROLD

(off) Pssst! Bertie!

BERTIE

Who's that?

(HAROLD and STIFFY enter furtively. JEEVES withdraws.)

HAROLD

It's us.

BERTIE

Oh, it's you.

STIFFY

Where have you been, you idiot? We've been walking round and round that maze looking for you for hours.

BERTIE

Well, I wasn't staying in there –

STIFFY

Ssshh!

HAROLD

Ssshh!

BERTIE

Ssshhh! (more quietly) I wasn't staying in there all this time. Where have you been, you've been gone for hours? You're lucky I'm still here.

STIFFY

Lucky for you. I've hidden Uncle Watkyn's Times but I haven't destroyed it yet. It could quite easily turn up again. Suddenly.

BERTIE

Forget that. He's got hold of another copy. From that blighter Budge.

STIFFY

Oh.

BERTIE

Sitting up in bed reading it, even as we speak, no doubt.

STIFFY

Never mind. I can build it in as part of our master plan.

BERTIE

Master plan?

STIFFY

Yes.

BERTIE

This is the one that includes me?

STIFFY

That's the one.

HAROLD

It's brilliant, Bertie, it's entirely Stephanie's idea.

(STIFFY and HAROLD speak almost at once.)

STIFFY

(over him) Very simply –

HAROLD

(over her) Very, very simply –

STIFFY

(over him) All you have to do –

HAROLD

(over her) All you need to do, Bertie...

STIFFY

(over him) It's perfectly straightforward –

HAROLD

(over her) Absolutely nothing to it –

STIFFY

(over him) It can't fail –

HAROLD

(over her) Totally infallible –

BERTIE

(over them both) Just a minute, just a minute! It's like trying to listen to an announcement at a gymkhana. One at a time.

STIFFY

All we need you to do, Bertie, is to break into the house and pretend to burgle it.

(Silence. BERTIE laughs mirthlessly)

HAROLD

(to STIFFY) I told you he'd like it.

BERTIE

You want me to burgle Tottleigh Towers?

HAROLD

He's got it in one.

BERTIE

Home of Sir Watkyn Bassett, magistrate?

STIFFY

Yes.

BERTIE

Would you like me to kidnap him as well?

HAROLD

(doubtfully) No, I don't think so.

BERTIE

Garrotte the staff? Set fire to the west wing? Dismantle the main staircase?

HAROLD

No, no, no...

STIFFY

It only has to look like a burglary, Bertie.

BERTIE

Oh, yes? What's the difference between a burglary and one that looks like a burglary? No, this isn't a burglary, inspector, it just looks like one. They've turned the place upside down and taken all the silver but it's not a burglary, sorry to have troubled you. Not at all sir, just passing by. As a matter of fact, I'm not a real policeman either, I just look like one.

STIFFY

When you've quite finished...

BERTIE

Don't worry, I have. Goodnight.

HAROLD

Bertie, hear us out. Please.

BERTIE

You mean there's more?

HAROLD

All you have to do is climb through an upstairs window – we've made sure there's a ladder been left out – the window will be open. It's an empty room. In it you'll find a sack of stuff which Stiffy's already taken. You take that downstairs and let yourself out the front door. That will set off the alarm.

BERTIE

Oh, good-o.

HAROLD

Once you're safely outside, I'll be waiting for you. We'll pretend to struggle, just to make it look convincing. As soon as Sir Watkyn arrives you drop the sack and run for it. End of scheme.

BERTIE

What could be simpler?

HAROLD

Brilliant, isn't it?

STIFFY

Uncle Watkyn will be so grateful to Harold that he'll grant him anything.

HAROLD

Or anyone. (He smiles at STIFFY)

STIFFY

For ever. (She smiles at HAROLD) (To BERTIE) Isn't it simple?

BERTIE

It's simple minded. I'm speechless. Just speechless.

STIFFY

You wouldn't deny us a little favour like that, would you?

HAROLD

Thank you, Bertie. We'll always remember this, won't we, Stephanie?

STIFFY

Thank you, Bertie.

HAROLD

This existence of ours, Stephanie's and mine, it can't go on indefinitely, Bertie. These snatched clandestine meetings... A stolen kiss here, a furtive glance there. What way is that to live? It can't go on.

STIFFY

I love him, Bertie.

HAROLD

I love her, Bertie.

SONG: HALF A MOMENT

TIME, THEY SAY, IS RELATIVE
INFINITE AS SPACE.

THIS MUST BE ETERNITY,
NEITHER TIME NOR PLACE...

HALF A MOMENT

WE ARE TOGETHER

I SHALL WANT

NO ONE ELSE AND NOTHING NEW.

HALF A MOMENT

I SHALL TREASURE

KEEP IT LOCKED AWAY

FOR SOME FUTURE RAINY DAY

SHOULD YOU LEAVE ME

WITH JUST THIS MOMENT

IN MY MIND, I SHALL CAPTURE IT ANEW.

LIKE SOME PICTURE

TAKEN IN MY CHILDHOOD,

HALF A MOMENT

SPENT WITH YOU.

STIFFY

TIME LOOKS KINDLY
ON FLEETING LOVERS,
THEY CAN TURN
THE BRIEFEST HOUR INTO A DAY.
TURN A MOMENT
TO A LIFETIME
MAKING IT TO LAST,
BLENDING FUTURE WITH THE PAST...

EV'RY MOMENT
WE SPEND TOGETHER
I DON'T CARE
WHAT THEY SAY OR TRY TO DO.
CAN'T ERASE IT,
ALL THAT'S GONE BETWEEN US,
EVERY LOVING SECRET
SHARED WITH YOU.

(PINKER plucks a rose to give to STIFFY. Unknowingly,
he manages to uproot the whole bush.)

STIFFY & PINKER

HALF A MOMENT
WE ARE TOGETHER
I SHALL WANT
NO ONE ELSE AND NOTHING NEW.
HALF A MOMENT
I SHALL TREASURE
KEEP IT LOCKED AWAY
FOR SOME FUTURE RAINY DAY

WE'RE TOGETHER
WHAT ELSE CAN MATTER?
EVEN THOUGH
HALF A MOMENT IS TOO FEW.
I SHALL SAVE IT
TILL I HAVE ANOTHER
MAKING ONE WHOLE MOMENT
FILLED WITH YOU.

(PINKER gives the bush to STIFFY. They kiss.)

BERTIE

(to us, a tear in his eye) I ask you, how can a chap say no?

HAROLD

Well, Bertie?

BERTIE

NO!

STIFFY

(grimly) Alright. If that's your answer. Alright. We shall see.

(STIFFY starts to leave.)

(fiercely) Alright! Alright!

BERTIE

There was something in the tone of her voice...

STIFFY

(snarling) ALRIGHT!

BERTIE

...which I didn't care for. (calling after her) Stiffy!

STIFFY

(turning) Well?

BERTIE

Yes. Well. Ladder will be available?

STIFFY

Just behind the hedge there.

BERTIE

Window open?

STIFFY

Back of the house, first floor, fourth one along from the left...

BERTIE

Bag of swag ready and waiting?

STIFFY

Under the spare room bed.

BERTIE

Down the stairs...?

STIFFY

Through the front door...

BERTIE

Setting off the alarm...?

HAROLD

Running into me. Quick struggle...

STIFFY

And away you go.

BERTIE

Nothing to it.

HAROLD

Falling off a log.

STIFFY

Piece of cake.

BERTIE

If you ever run short of cash, you tow, you could always sell insurance.

STIFFY

(kissing him on the cheek) Thank you, Bertie.

(STIFFY hands BERTIE the bush.)

BERTIE

Yes, yes, alright.

STIFFY

Better do it soon. Before Uncle Watkyn gets to the engagements column.

BERTIE

I don't intend to hang about here, don't worry.

STIFFY

Just give me time to get into bed.

HAROLD

(pumping his hand) Bless you, Bertie.

BERTIE

Aaggh!

HAROLD

Sorry.

BERTIE

(testing his fingers) How are you at christenings?

STIFFY

Harold's wonderful at everything. See you later.

HAROLD

Later. (He gives BERTIE a thumbs up)

BERTIE

Righty-ho!

(HAROLD and STIFFY leave. JEEVES has reappeared.)

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Jeeves?

JEEVES

Do you require any assistance with the narration, sir?

BERTIE

No, thank you, Jeeves. All I want from you is a ladder.

JEEVES

Certainly, sir.

(BERTIE hands JEEVES the rose bush.)

BERTIE

Wait! And something to represent a window and a bag of swag. End of prop list.

JEEVES

Very good, sir.

(JEEVES leaves, momentarily.)

BERTIE

I waited a few minutes to allow Stiffy time to slip into the jim jams. It was a moonlit night hardly ideal for the planned activities, but despite my misgivings I could not help experiencing a tremor of excitement for what lay ahead. Wooster, man of action, was about to undergo his finest...

(JEEVES has returned with the 'ladder'. It is a homemade device consisting of an ordinary single ladder attached to a trestle or similar. It thus forms a rudimentary seesaw, one end longer than the other.)

(seeing it) What on earth is that?

JEEVES

The ladder, sir. A somewhat rudimentary but nevertheless effective scenic device, sir.

BERTIE

(doubtfully) We shall see.

(JEEVES goes off again. BERTIE inspects the ladder doubtfully. JEEVES beckons on the 'window'. This is also free-standing. It consists of a box upon which a window frame has been mounted. JEEVES directs this to be placed carefully, some distance from the ladder.)

(watching this) Window?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

I feel I am about to perform some feat of acrobatics, Jeeves.

JEEVES

Only mildly, sir.

BERTIE

I hope so. How does this operate?

JEEVES

Allow me.

(JEEVES now 'foots' the ladder so that the longer end points into the air.)

(inviting BERTIE to climb) Sir...

BERTIE

Up that?

JEEVES

If you would.

BERTIE

Without a safety net? Oh, well.

(BERTIE places his foot on the bottom rung and shapes to climb.)

JEEVES

Sir!

BERTIE

What?

JEEVES

Perhaps you might require this, sir?

(He hands BERTIE a mask. It is a balaclava with an animal's face glued to the front.)

BERTIE

(coolly) And what is this, may I ask?

JEEVES

A mask, sir.

BERTIE

To be worn by me?

JEEVES

I would advise it.

BERTIE

Let me get this straight, Jeeves. Not only am I expected to behave like a circus performer, you are also asking me to do so disguised as a pig, is that correct?

JEEVES

I apologise for the choice of animal, sir. The selection from the property store was limited. Fortunately a children's production of The Three Little Pigs was recently in the theatre's repertoire –

BERTIE

I do not wish to hear this, Jeeves. I don't care if it was forty pigs. I refuse to join their ranks, is that clear?

JEEVES

The alternative, sir, is risk of recognition.

BERTIE

Recognition?

JEEVES

Yes.

BERTIE

By Bassett?

JEEVES

And others.

BERTIE

(a second's pause) Well, I'm not wearing it till the last minute.

JEEVES

Very prudent.

BERTIE

Hold the ladder. Here I go. Back of the house?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

Fourth window from the left?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

Wish me – what is it? – Cyrano de Bergerac.

JEEVES

Cyrano de Bergerac, sir.

BERTIE

Thank you. I made my way cautiously up the ladder.

(BERTIE climbs the ladder. Suspenseful music from OZZIE.)

What on earth's that?

JEEVES

Suspenseful music, sir.

BERTIE

Well, we can do without it. This is dangerous enough.

JEEVES

Very good, sir. (He signals to OZZIE)

(The suspenseful music is replaced by something more reassuring.)

BERTIE

That's better. (He continues his climb) Fortunately, I combined a steel nerve with a total lack of fear for hei – ei – eights...

(He has reached over halfway, the ladder begins to tip down. An alarming dramatic chord.)

(alarmed) Jeeves!

JEEVES

It's alright, sir, I have it under control...

BERTIE

What's happening? What on earth's happening?

(The ladder tips down now to the horizontal. In doing so it hits the window unit which topples over so that also now rests horizontally.)

Good grief.

JEEVES

You're quite safe, sir. Just don't look down.

BERTIE

Why not? Oh yes, I see. That's down, isn't it? Down is sideways?

JEEVES

Precisely.

BERTIE

A clearer demonstration of horizontal thinking it is hard to conceive – ah!

(BERTIE reaches the window.)

You must imagine, if you will, that I am now several dozen feet up –

JEEVES

Fifteen feet nine inches, sir...

BERTIE

Fifteen feet nine – thank you, Jeeves – and clinging to the window ledge by my finger nails. Cautiously, with a practised skill, I levered open the window.

(BERTIE struggles to open it.)

Dammit. It doesn't want to open. Jeeves!

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

I can't seem to get it open.

JEEVES

No, sir?

BERTIE

Are you certain we have the right window?

JEEVES

Very certain, sir.

BERTIE

(struggling with the window) Well, I – I don't know quite what to do...

JEEVES

Allow me, sir...

(JEEVES walks to the other end of the ladder where
BERTIE is and unlatches the window from the other side.)

BERTIE

Thank you, Jeeves.

JEEVES

Not at all, sir.

BERTIE

(opening the window) Ah, that's more like it. With the stealth of a cat, Wooster eased his way through the window...

JEEVES

Sir!

BERTIE

Yes, what is it, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Your mask, sir...

BERTIE

Oh, yes, very well. Give it here, then.

JEEVES

Certainly, sir.

(JEEVES again walks to the other end of the ladder to
hand BERTIE the mask through the window.)

BERTIE

Thank you.

JEEVES

My pleasure, sir.

BERTIE

Jeeves – if it's alright for you to stroll up and down like that, then why am I - ?

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Oh, it doesn't matter.

(BERTIE puts on the mask.)

(rather muffled) This doesn't look silly, does it, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Not at all, sir.

BERTIE

So long as it doesn't. Where was I?

JEEVES

You were stealing with the stealth of a cat, sir.

BERTIE

(barely audible through the mask) Quite right. With the stealth of a cat, Wooster eased his way through the window... Aaagghh!

(BERTIE in his pig mask appears to be stuck half way through the window frame.)

I'm stuck. Jeeves! Couldn't you possibly have found a larger window?

JEEVES

I'm sorry, sir, but in the time available...

BERTIE

Where the hell did you get this? Snow White's cottage?

(BERTIE gives a final lunge. He frees himself but his violent movement causes him to fall downwards through the window. Silence.)

Grief!

JEEVES

Are you alright, sir?

BERTIE

Like a pig to the slaughter, Jeeves.

(BERTIE regains his feet. JEEVES removes the ladder during the next.)

(barely audible again) Regaining my feet, I surveyed the room accustoming my eyes to the darkness. In a moment or two, I made out the bed...

(A bed is wheeled on.)

BERTIE (contd.)

Oh, splendid. The production values are rocketing. I moved to the bed and groped underneath feeling for the bag of swag...

(BERTIE does this. In doing so, he places one hand on the bed. There is a squeal and the lights come on. HONORIA sits up in bed.)

HONORIA

(alarmed) Who the -? What the -? How the -? Where the -?

BERTIE

Hallo.

SONG: IT'S A PIG!

HONORIA

WHO ARE YOU? SOMEONE QUICK! THERE'S A MAN BROKEN IN!
IN A PIG MASK, BROKEN IN MY BEDROOM!
STAND WELL CLEAR! HE'S ALL MINE!
I CAN DEAL WITH THE SWINE,
WITH THIS CHAUVINIST PIG IN MY BEDROOM!
WHEN I'M THROUGH, I WILL BET,
YOU WILL LIVE TO REGRET –
THAT YOU PICKED ON ME, YOU AND I EVER MET.

(She grabs a hockey stick and brandishes it menacingly.
BERTIE retreats hastily.)

I'M TEACHING YOU A LESSON THAT YOU NEVER WILL FORGET,
YOU'RE A PIG! WHAT A PIG! WHAT A PIG!

(BERTIE backs into MADELINE'S bedroom, still pursued
by HONORIA. MADELINE sits up, terrified, clutching her
teddy bear.)

MADELINE

OH DEAR, HELP! IT'S A PIG! DADDY, HELP IT'S A PIG!
THERE'S A BEASTLY PIGGY IN MY BEDROOM.

HONORIA

CORNERED! HE'S CORNERED!

MADELINE

IS IT REAL OR A DREAM?
GET AWAY, OR I'LL SCREAM!
WHO ON EARTH LET THIS PIG IN MY BEDROOM?

HONORIA

LEND A HAND! BAR THE DOOR!
AND WE'VE TRAPPED HIM FOR SURE –

MADELINE

I SHALL DIE IF THE THING MAKES A MESS ON MY FLOOR...

HONORIA

SPEAKING AS A WOMAN WHO HAS HUNTED WILD BOAR,
WHAT'S A PIG, MORE OR LESS? WHAT'S A PIG?

Now we've got him!

BERTIE

Look, it's Bertie...

HONORIA

Nice and easy...

MADELINE

It's so dirty...

BERTIE

Listen, Maddy...

MADELINE

Don't come near me!

HONORIA

Don't dare touch her, do you hear me!

(BERTIE struggles in vain to remove his mask. It appears
to be stuck.)

BERTIE

Oh, this damn thing's stuck completely!
Exit Wooster, swift and sweetly!

HONORIA & MADELINE

FOLLOW THAT PIG!

(BERTIE has now retreated into BASSETT'S bedroom. He
falls on to the bed beside BASSETT.)

BASSETT

BLESS MY SOUL! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ON EARTH'S GOING ON?
THERE'S A CIRCUS ARTIST IN MY BEDROOM.

MADELINE

STOP HIM!

HONORIA

WE'VE GOT HIM!

BASSETT

CAN'T BELIEVE BOTH MY EYES
THERE'S A CHAP IN DISGUISE
THERE'S A CAT-BURGLING PIG IN MY BEDROOM!
CAREFUL, GIRLS, ALL STAND BACK
HE MAY TRY TO ATTACK...
IT'S A WELL KNOWN FACT THAT THEY HUNT AS A PACK
WAIT WHILE I DISTRACT HIM, TRY TO PUT HIM OFF THE TRACK,
WATCH THAT PIG!

HONORIA

WATCH THE PIG!

MADELINE

WATCH THE PIG!

BERTIE

Listen, people...

BASSETT

Don't you try it!

MADELINE

Tried to kiss me...

BERTIE

I deny it!

BASSETT

Oh, you swine you – (he grabs up his gun)

HONORIA

Caught him looting!

BASSETT

Raise your hands or I'll start shooting!

BERTIE

With a badly bruised libido,
Exit Wooster très rapido.

(BERTIE flees and manages, temporarily, to hide. GUSSIE
has joined them.)

HONORIA, MADELINE & BASSETT

FOLLOW THAT PIG!
(softly) HUNT THE PIG! HUNT THE PIG!
HUNT THE TWO-LEGGED PIG!
THERE'S A PIG LOOSE SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE HERE.

GUSSIE, HONORIA & MADELINE

FIND HIM!

BASSETT & GUSSIE

AND CATCH HIM!

MADELINE & HONORIA

EVERYBODY LOOK OUT
FOR THE GLIMPSE OF A SNOUT,

BASSETT & GUSSIE

FOR THE CLICK OF HIS TROTTERS ON THE STAIRWAY.

MADELINE

THERE HE IS!

HONORIA

FALSE ALARM!

BASSETT

WE MUST TRY TO KEEP CALM...

MADELINE

I'M AFRAID! I'M AFRAID!

GUSSIE

THEN TAKE HOLD OF MY ARM.

BASSETT

I'LL LET HIM HAVE BOTH BARRELS, IT'LL WORK JUST LIKE A CHARM
ON THE PIG.

BERTIE

(revealing himself, in alarm) STEADY ON!

ALL

THERE'S THE PIG!

(BERTIE still in flight and struggling to remove his mask is suddenly pulled into a doorway by STIFFY. She thrusts a bag into his hand.)

STIFFY

Bertie? Bertie? Ah! There you are, you idiot! What do you think you're doing?

BERTIE

Stiffy – you've got to help me, I'm... Ahhhhhhh!

(As the others reappear, STIFFY goes. BERTIE still grasping the bag of swag takes flight yet again.)

ALL

THERE'S THE PIG! THERE'S THE PIG!
 THERE'S THE HOUSEBREAKER PIG!
 THERE'S THE PIG WITH CRIMINAL INTENTIONS.
 ONCE HE'S CAUGHT THERE IS TALK,
 WE'LL REDUCE HIM TO PORK
 IN A WAY THAT'S TOO TERRIBLE TO MENTION.
 CAN'T ESCAPE, NOW HE'S CAUGHT,
 HE CAN GRUNT, HE CAN SNORT,
 IT'S A GREAT NEW GAME, CHASING PORKERS FOR SPORT,
 NOW WE'VE GOT HIM CORNERED THERE'S A LESSON TO BE TAUGHT
 TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG.
 NOW WE'VE GOT HIM CORNERED THERE'S A LESSON TO BE TAUGHT
 TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG.
 TO THE PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG. TO THE PIG.
 NOW WE'VE GOT HIM CORNERED THERE'S A LESSON TO BE TAUGHT
 TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG. TO THE PIG.
 TO THE PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG, PIG. TO THE PIG.

(As the song ends, BERTIE has reached the garden again.
 Bright moonlight. A fountain has arrived. Still in his mask,
 BERTIE stands regaining his breath.)

BERTIE

(calling softly) Stinker... Stinker, where are you?

(BUDGE enters. He sees BERTIE.)

BUDGE

Jeez! Who the hell are you, feller?

BERTIE

Oh, no.

(He prepares to take flight again but BUDGE is too quick
 for him.)

BUDGE

Not so fast. What have you got here?

(BUDGE grabs the sack from BERTIE and, keeping hold of
 him with one hand, shakes the sack with the other. The
 contents rattle.)

Are these yours? Huh? Come on, let's take a look at you.

(BUDGE drops the bag and prepares to unmask BERTIE.
 Before he can do so, HAROLD enters.)

HAROLD

Aha! An intruder!

BUDGE

And who are you?

HAROLD

(unconvincingly) A burglar, eh? I'll soon put a stop to that...

BUDGE

Not so fast, I caught this burglar...

HAROLD

No, I'm sorry, he's my burglar.

BUDGE

Your burglar? What do you mean, your burglar? He's my burglar. You keep back, mister, or I'll...

HAROLD

Oh, yes? Or you'll what? I'll take that bag, thank you.

BUDGE

(releasing BERTIE) Oh, no you don't. OK. OK. You asked for this!

(BUDGE throws a punch at the same time as HAROLD bends to pick up the bag, causing BUDGE to miss.)

HAROLD

(unaware) This is definitely mine!

(HAROLD straightens up, slinging the bag over his shoulder as he does so. He catches BUDGE a glancing blow. BUDGE staggers back and ends up sitting, slumped unconscious in the fountain.)

Oh, I'm most terribly sorry.

BERTIE

Nicely done, Harold. Cheerio!

(BERTIE makes to run off but GUSSIE comes on at this point, unaccountably ahead of the field.)

GUSSIE

Stop that pig!

BERTIE

Oh, not again.

(BERTIE evades GUSSIE and makes to run off.)

BINGO appears and blocks BERTIE'S path. He has a large rock tied to his waist. HAROLD stands by somewhat helplessly. This wasn't part of the plan.)

BINGO

What's happening? Can't a chap drown himself in peace?

GUSSIE

Stop him! He's a burglar!

BERTIE

No, I'm not, I'm...

BINGO

Right!

(BERTIE tries to dodge BINGO. BINGO tosses the rock to BERTIE. Under the weight of it, BERTIE staggers back and ends up sitting in the fountain, back to back with BUDGE, the rock in his lap. BINGO, still attached to the other end of the rope, runs round and round the fountain thus roping not only BERTIE but also BUDGE. BINGO is in the process of detaching himself when the others arrive, HONORIA, MADELINE, STIFFY and BASSETT who still has his gun.)

BASSETT

Alright! That's it! Nobody move! This gun is probably loaded!

(Silence.)

Well done.

HONORIA

(admiringly) Oh, Bingo!

BINGO

(singing) THAT WAS NEARLY US BACK THERE –

HONORIA

(singing) CLEARLY YOU AND ME.

MADELINE

(admiringly) Oh, Gussie!

GUSSIE

(singing) SO LET HIM HOLD YOU TIGHT AND SNUG...

MADELINE

(singing) LIKE KITTENS CUDDLED IN A RUG...

STIFFY

(irritably) Oh, Harold!

HAROLD

(singing) HALF A MOMENT, WE ARE TOGETH –

STIFFY

(despairingly) Harold!

BASSETT

Alright. First things first. Let's unmask that chap, shall we?

(BASSETT approaches BERTIE threateningly. He all but removes the mask from BERTIE'S face.)

BERTIE

(as BASSETT does so) Jeeves! Jeeves!

(JEEVES appears. The others freeze.)

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Oh, Jeeves, Jeeves, Jeeves...

JEEVES

A problem, sir?

BERTIE

A problem? Look at me, Jeeves. Trussed up and roasted. A suckling reduced to crackling. Do something.

JEEVES

(dubiously) Well, sir...

BERTIE

I take back everything I said, Jeeves. You are unique and irreplaceable, and will earn my undying gratitude if you can only come up with something to save the young master.

JEEVES

Well, sir. In that case, might I suggest...

BERTIE

Anything, Jeeves. Anything.

JEEVES

One moment, sir.

(JEEVES with surprisingly little effort rotates the fountain so that BERTIE and BUDGE change places. BASSETT, seemingly, is now removing the mask from the recumbent BUDGE.)

There, sir.

(Immediately, the action resumes where it stopped.)

BASSETT

(removing the mask from BUDGE) Good gracious me! It's Cyrus.

HONORIA

Cyrus?

MADELINE

Cyrus?

STIFFY

(puzzed) Cyrus?

HAROLD

Ah?

(GUSSIE and BINGO have risen, leaving BERTIE still in the fountain.)

BASSETT

Well, we'd better take him up to the house. I'll telephone the constabulary. (To HAROLD) I owe you a debt of gratitude, young man. Good heavens, isn't it - ? It's...

STIFFY

It's Harold, Uncle Watkyn, you remember Harold, don't you?

HAROLD

(grinding BASSETT'S hand) How do you do, sir?

BASSETT

Aggh! Harold, yes, well, good. Can you bring Cyrus up to the house? Good man.

(HAROLD starts to undo the rope and drag BUDGE to his feet. BUDGE is still very groggy.)

(to GUSSIE and BINGO) I think I owe you both a favour, too. Mr. Wooster - Mr. Fink-Nottle.

MADELINE

(taking GUSSIE'S arm) Daddy, this is Augustus. Not that one.

(A pause. GUSSIE sticks out his hand. BASSETT begins to laugh. It is not the laugh of an altogether sane man.)

HONORIA

And this is Mr. Little, of course. The real one.

(BINGO sticks out his hand. BASSETT'S laugh increases. He looks toward BERTIE.)

BERTIE

Hallo, Bertram Wooster...

(BASSETT continues to laugh. He looks towards BUDGE.
Cue for another rapid reprise of THE HALLO SONG.)

BUDGE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, MADELINE & GUSSIE

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, MADELINE, GUSSIE, HONORIA & BINGO

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, MADELINE, GUSSIE, HONORIA, BINGO,
STIFFY & HAROLD

HOW DO YOU –

BUDGE, MADELINE, GUSSIE, HONORIA, BINGO, STIFFY, HAROLD,
BERTIE & JEEVES

HOW DO YOU DO!

BASSETT

(as he runs off) Aaaaaarrrrrgggg!!!!

(BASSETT has gone. HAROLD pushes BUDGE off towards the house.)

BUDGE

(groggily to all and sundry) Hi, there! Cyrus Budge the third. Junior. Let me re-introduce myself. Cyrus. Budge. The third. Junior. Hi!

HOW DO YOU DO?

(They have gone.)

HONORIA

(to BERTIE) I think the least you could have done was to help the others, Bertie. Instead of just lounging there like a lizard.

BERTIE

I was...I...

HONORIA

Come on, Bingo. Let's leave him to sleep it off out here.

(HONORIA and BINGO go off.)

MADELINE

(as she follows) Pathetic. Really utterly pathetic, Bertie. I'm terribly disappointed in you. Come on, Augustus.

(GUSSIE and MADELINE go off. STIFFY follows on, picking up the bag.)

BERTIE

(feebly to her) Well. Straightened that up, anyway.

STIFFY

No thanks to you, you oaf. Honestly, Bertie, you nearly ruined everything. That's the very last time I ask you to help.

BERTIE

(hopefully) Really? Do you promise?

STIFFY

The very last time, ever.

(STIFFY goes. JEEVES who has been hovering throughout this, steps forward.)

JEEVES

(offering to assist BERTIE) May I, sir?

BERTIE

Thank you, Jeeves. (Regaining his feet) Well, all in all, a totally satisfactory outcome, wouldn't you say, Jeeves?

JEEVES

I would.

BERTIE

Knots tied here, there and everywhere. Like a boy scouts' convention. Congratulations.

JEEVES

Thank you, sir.

BERTIE

Quick thinking. The end, eh?

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

Oh, just one thing. How on earth did I manage to climb in through the wrong window? Into Honoria's room?

JEEVES

I'm afraid I can't explain that at all.

BERTIE

Ah, well. One flaw. You're allowed that.

JEEVES

Thank you, sir.

BERTIE

Oh, no! Jeeves. Disaster. It's not all over. What about The Times? Bassett still has Budge's Times.

JEEVES

No, sir. No longer.

(JEEVES produces the newspaper from his inside pocket.)

BERTIE

(aghast with admiration) Jeeves...!

JEEVES

Under cover of the general confusion...

BERTIE

Are there no limits...?

JEEVES

Some further good news, sir...

BERTIE

Yes?

JEEVES

The new banjo is here.

BERTIE

Really? Splendid. Roll it on, Jeeves, and on with the concert. I am in brisk banjo vein. (Looking at his watch) Oh. Bit late though, isn't it?

JEEVES

A trifle.

BERTIE

Well, perhaps there's time for just – one tune. Eh? Pity to disappoint them.

JEEVES

Indeed.

(JEEVES is handed the new banjo. He gives it to BERTIE.)

BERTIE

Oh, this is magnificent. Look at this, Jeeves. Splendid. Lovely wood. (He knocks on it expertly) Great colour. Delicious smell. Yes. Yes. Well, what shall we give them, do you think?

JEEVES

Your opening number, sir?

BERTIE

Banjo Boy! Splendid. Send them out with their feet tapping. Why not? Ozzie, give us an A. See if we're in tune, here.

(OZZIE plays a note. BERTIE strums the banjo. No sound is heard. BERTIE repeats the strumming, puzzled.)

Jeeves.

JEEVES

Sir?

BERTIE

Listen to this. (He strums)

JEEVES

Highly melodic.

BERTIE

Melodic?

JEEVES

Oh, yes.

BERTIE

Well, it may be as far as the odd dog or bat are concerned but to mere human ears there's no sound at all. These are what we musicians term muted strings, Jeeves.

JEEVES

If I might correct you, sir, they are in fact the latest Acoustically Balanced and Delayed Resonation strings. A set of ABDR strings, sir. Designed to project the sound over a wider area. Their effect is to give the impression of silence only in the immediate vicinity of the instrument itself.

BERTIE

Really?

JEEVES

I can assure you, sir, that from here the sound is quite deafening.

(BERTIE strums the strings.)

(holding his ears) Please, sir, if you don't mind.

BERTIE

Sorry, Jeeves. That's amazing, you know. Standing here I can't hear a sound. Ah well, science marches on, what?

(BERTIE lifts his hands to play. He hesitates.)

You're perfectly sure about this, Jeeves?

JEEVES

Oh yes, sir.

BERTIE

Alright. Here we go then.

JEEVES

Sir!

BERTIE

Yes?

JEEVES

Might I suggest that for this number, a full supporting chorus?

BERTIE

Full supporting chorus?

JEEVES

Behold! Here they come!

(The whole company, now changed into walk down costumes, come on.)

BERTIE

Good Lord.

JEEVES

Yes, sir.

BERTIE

A sudden leap in the budget, Jeeves.

JEEVES

The Wizard of Oz final walk down, sir.

BERTIE

Oh, yes. Right! Are we all ready? Here we go, then. Three, two, one and...

SONG: BANJO BOY

WHO'S THE MAN YOU'VE ALL BEEN SITTING THERE ANTICIPATING?
WHO'S THE MAN WITH HIS INSTRUMENT READY, WILLING AND WAITING?
WHO'S THE MAN FOR WHOM YOUR BREATH HAS BEEN EAGERLY BAITING?
IF I HADN'T ALREADY CONFESSED IT,
YOU'D NO DOUBT ALREADY HAVE GUESSED IT –

BERTIE & COMPANY

BANJO BOY, BANJO BOY, PLAY A NUMBER FOR ME,
WON'T YOU PLAY THAT MELODY?
WHEN YOU START YOUR PLAYIN' – MAMA STARTS A-SWAYIN'
SHE'S RIGHT THERE WITH 'EM – STOMPIN' THAT RHYTHM.
BANJO BOY, BANJO BOY, PLAY THE RAZZAMATAZZZ
YOU'RE THE SUNNY SOUTHLAND'S KING
YOU SET DIXIE HUMMIN' IT – WHEN YOU STARTED STRUMMIN' IT.
SEE THOSE FINGERS GOIN'

(Silent banjo break by BERTIE.)

COMPANY

WHEN YOU START TO SYNCOPATE,
SONGBIRDS SEEM TO ORCHESTRATE,
THE SWANEE STOPS ITS FLOWIN'
JUST HEAR HIM PLAY.
WHO CAN PLUNK YOUR HEARTSTRINGS FULL OF JOY?
THAT'S BANJO BOY...

(Silent banjo break by BERTIE and through the next.)

SONG: BANJO BOY

ALL

BANJO BOY, BANJO BOY, YOU'RE THE MUSICAL SUN
IN THOSE SOUTHERN SUNNY SKIES.
FEET WILL START THEIR FIDGETS – SEE THOSE MAGIC DIGITS,
HANDS ARE A CLAPPIN' – FINGERS A SNAPPIN'.
BANJO BOY, BANJO BOY, PLAY THAT FAVOURITE TUNE
THAT THE OLD FOLKS LOVE TO SING.
CAN'T YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE CRY –
WANNA SEE THOSE FINGERS FLY –
LISTEN TO HIM PLAYING' –

CAN'T YOU HEAR THOSE CHILDREN ROAR –
DIXIE'S SHOUTIN' OUT FOR MORE –
HEAR THE STEAMBOATS BLOWIN'
EIGHT TO THE BAR –
WHO'S THAT COTTON PICKIN' HUNK OF JOY?
THAT GOLDEN KID THAT FASHION CAN'T DESTROY?
WHOSE NAME THEY SHOUT FROM MAINE TO ILLINOIS?
THAT'S BANJO BOY...
BANJO BOY!