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The first of the telegram arrived shortly after noon, and Jeeves brought it in with the before-luncheon snifter. It was from my Aunt Dahlia, operating from Market Snodsbury, a small town of sorts a mile or two along the main road as you leave her country seat.

It ran as follows:

Come at once. Travers.

And when I say it puzzled me like the dickens, I am understating it; if anything. As mysterious a communication, I considered, as was ever flashed over the wires. I studied it in a profound reverie for the best part of two dry Martinis and a dividend. I read it backwards. I read it forwards. As a matter of fact, I have a sort of recollection of even smelling it. But it still baffled me.

Consider the facts, I mean. It was only a few hours since this aunt and I had parted, after being in constant association for nearly two months. And yet here she was—with my farewell kiss still lingering on her cheek, so to speak—pleading for another reunion. Bertram Wooster is not accustomed to this gluttonous appetite for his society. Ask anyone who knows me, and they will tell you that after two months of my company, what the normal person feels is that that will about do for the present. Indeed, I have known people who couldn't stick it out for more than a few days.

Before sitting down to the well-cooked, therefore, I sent this reply:

Perplexed. Explain. Bertie.

To this I received an answer during the after-luncheon sleep:

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

Three cigarettes and a couple of turns about the room, and I had my response ready:

How do you mean come at once? Regards. Bertie.

I append the comeback:

I mean come at once, you maddening half-wit. What did you think I meant? Come at once or expect an aunt's curse first post tomorrow. Love. Travers.

I then dispatched the following message, wishing to get everything quite clear:

When you say "Come" do you mean "Come to Brinkley Court"? And when you say "At once" do you mean "At once"? Fogged. At a loss. All the best. Bertie.

I sent this one off on my way to the Drones, where I spent a restful afternoon throwing cards into a top-hat with some of the better element. Returning in the evening hush, I found the answer waiting for me:

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. It doesn't matter whether you understand or not. You just come at once, as I tell you, and for heaven's sake stop this back-chat. Do you think I am made of money that I can afford to send you telegrams every ten minutes. Stop being a fathead and come immediately. Love. Travers.

It was at this point that I felt the need of getting a second opinion. I pressed the bell.

"Jeeves," I said, "a V-shaped rumminess has manifested itself from the direction of Worcestershire. Read these," I said, handing him the papers in the case.

He scanned them.

"What do you make of it, Jeeves?"

"I think Mrs. Travers wishes you to come at once, sir."

"You gather that too, do you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I put the same construction on the thing. But why, Jeeves? Dash it all, she's just had nearly two months of me."

"Yes, sir."

"And many people consider the medium dose for an adult two days."

"Yes, sir. I appreciate the point you raise. Nevertheless, Mrs. Travers appears very insistent. I think it would be well to acquiesce in her wishes."

"Pop down, you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I certainly can't go at once. I've an important conference on at the Drones tonight. Pongo Twistleton's birthday party, you remember."

"Yes, sir."

There was a slight pause. We were both recalling the little unpleasantness that had arisen. I felt obliged to allude to it.

"You're all wrong about that mess jacket, Jeeves."

"These things are matters of opinion, sir."

"When I wore it at the Casino at Cannes, beautiful women nudged one another and whispered: 'Who is he?'"

"The code at Continental casinos is notoriously lax, sir."

"And when I described it to Pongo last night, he was fascinated."

"Indeed, sir?"

"So were all the rest of those present. One and all admitted that I had got hold of a good thing. Not a dissentient voice."

"Indeed, sir?"

"I am convinced that you will eventually learn to love this mess-jacket, Jeeves."

"I fear not, sir."

I gave it up. It is never any use trying to reason with Jeeves on these occasions.

"Pig-headed" is the word that springs to the lips. One sighs and passes on.

"Well, anyway, returning to the agenda, I can't go down to Brinkley Court or anywhere else yet awhile. That's final. I'll tell you what, Jeeves. Give me form and pencil, and I'll wire her that I'll be with her some time next week or the week after. Dash it all, she ought to be able to hold out without me for a few days. It only requires will power."

"Yes, sir."

"Right ho, then. I'll wire 'Expect me tomorrow fortnight' or words to some such effect. That ought to meet the case. Then if you will toddle round the corner and send it off, that will be that."

"Very good, sir."

And so the long day wore on till it was time for me to dress for Pongo's party.

Pongo had assured me, while chatting of the affair on the previous night, that this birthday binge of his was to be on a scale calculated to stagger humanity, and I must say I have participated in less fruity functions. It was well after four when I got home, and by that time I was about ready to turn in. I can just remember groping for the bed and crawling into it, and it seemed to me that the lemon had scarcely touched the pillow before I was aroused by the sound of the door opening.

I was barely ticking over, but I contrived to raise an eyelid.

"Is that my tea, Jeeves?"

"No, sir. It is Mrs. Travers."

And a moment later there was a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and the relative had crossed the threshold at fifty m.p.h. under her own steam.

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