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I think I have told you before about young Tuppy Glossop. He was the fellow, if you remember, who, callously ignoring the fact that we had been friends since boyhood, betted me one night at the Drones that I could swing myself across the swimming bath by the rings—a childish feat for one of my lissomeness—and then, having seen me well on the way, looped back the last ring, thus rendering it necessary for me to drop into the deep end in formal evening costume.

To say that I had not resented this foul deed, which seemed to me deserving of the title of the crime of the century, would be paltering with the truth. I had resented it profoundly, chafing not a little at the time and continuing to chafe for some weeks.

But you know how it is with these things. The wound heals. The agony abates.

I am not saying, mind you, that had the opportunity presented itself of dropping a wet sponge on Tuppy from some high spot or of putting an eel in his bed or finding some other form of self-expression of a like nature, I would not have embraced it eagerly; but that let me out. I mean to say, grievously injured though I had been, it gave me no pleasure to feel that the fellow's bally life was being ruined by the loss of a girl whom, despite all that had passed, I was convinced he still loved like the dickens.

On the contrary, I was heart and soul in favour of healing the breach and rendering everything hotsy-totsy once more between these two young sundered blighters. You will have gleaned that from my remarks to Aunt Dahlia, and if you had been present at this moment and had seen the kindly commiserating look I gave Tuppy, you would have gleaned it still more.

It was one of those searching, melting looks, and was accompanied by the hearty clasp of the right hand and the gentle laying of the left on the collar-bone.

"Well, Tuppy, old man," I said. "How are you, old man?"

My commiseration deepened as I spoke the words, for there had been no lighting up of the eye, no answering pressure of the palm, no sign whatever, in short, of any disposition on his part to do Spring dances at the sight of an old friend. The man seemed sandbagged. Melancholy, as I remember Jeeves saying once about Pongo Twistleton when he was trying to knock off smoking, had marked him for her own. Not that I was surprised, of course. In the circs., no doubt, a certain moodiness was only natural.

I released the hand, ceased to knead the shoulder, and, producing the old case, offered him a cigarette.

He took it dully.

"Are you here, Bertie?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm here."

"Just passing through, or come to stay?"

I thought for a moment. I might have told him that I had arrived at Brinkley Court with the express intention of bringing Angela and himself together once more, of knitting up the severed threads, and so on and so forth; and for perhaps half the time required for the lighting of a gasper I had almost decided to do so. Then, I reflected, better, on the whole, perhaps not. To broadcast the fact that I proposed to take him and Angela and play on them as on a couple of stringed instruments might have been injudicious. Chaps don't always like being played on as on a stringed instrument.

"It all depends," I said. "I may remain. I may push on. My plans are uncertain."

He nodded listlessly, rather in the manner of a man who did not give a damn what I did, and stood gazing out over the sunlit garden. In build and appearance, Tuppy somewhat resembles a bulldog, and his aspect now was that of one of these fine animals who has just been refused a slice of cake. It was not difficult for a man of my discernment to read what was in his mind, and it occasioned me no surprise, therefore, when his next words had to do with the subject marked with a cross on the agenda paper.

"You've heard of this business of mine, I suppose? Me and Angela?"

"I have, indeed, Tuppy, old man."

"We've bust up."

"I know. Some little friction, I gather, in re Angela's shark."

"Yes. I said it must have been a flatfish."

"So my informant told me."

"Who did you hear it from?"

"Aunt Dahlia."

"I suppose she cursed me properly?"

"Oh, no."

"Beyond referring to you in one passage as 'this blasted Glossop', she was, I thought, singularly temperate in her language for a woman who at one time

hunted regularly with the Quorn. All the same, I could see, if you don't mind me saying so, old man, that she felt you might have behaved with a little more tact."

"Tact!"

"And I must admit I rather agreed with her. Was it nice, Tuppy, was it quite kind to take the bloom off Angela's shark like that? You must remember that Angela's shark is very dear to her. Could you not see what a sock on the jaw it would be for the poor child to hear it described by the man to whom she had given her heart as a flatfish?"

I saw that he was struggling with some powerful emotion.

"And what about my side of the thing?" he demanded, in a voice choked with feeling.

"Your side?"

"You don't suppose," said Tuppy, with rising vehemence, "that I would have exposed this dashed synthetic shark for the flatfish it undoubtedly was if there had not been causes that led up to it. What induced me to speak as I did was the fact that Angela, the little squirt, had just been most offensive, and I seized the opportunity to get a bit of my own back."

"Offensive?"

"Exceedingly offensive. Purely on the strength of my having let fall some casual remark—simply by way of saying something and keeping the conversation going—to the effect that I wondered what Anatole was going to give us for dinner, she said that I was too material and ought not always to be thinking of food. Material, my elbow! As a matter of fact, I'm particularly spiritual."

"Quite."

"I don't see any harm in wondering what Anatole was going to give us for dinner. Do you?"

"Of course not. A mere ordinary tribute of respect to a great artist."

"Exactly."

"All the same——"

"Well?"

"I was only going to say that it seems a pity that the frail craft of love should come a stinker like this when a few manly words of contrition——"

He stared at me.

"You aren't suggesting that I should climb down?"

"It would be the fine, big thing, old egg."

"I wouldn't dream of climbing down."

"But, Tuppy——"

"No. I wouldn't do it."

"But you love her, don't you?"

This touched the spot. He quivered noticeably, and his mouth twisted. Quite the tortured soul.

"I'm not saying I don't love the little blighter," he said, obviously moved. "I love her passionately. But that doesn't alter the fact that I consider that what she needs most in this world is a swift kick in the pants."

A Wooster could scarcely pass this. "Tuppy, old man!"

"It's no good saying 'Tuppy, old man'."

"Well, I do say 'Tuppy, old man'. Your tone shocks me. One raises the eyebrows. Where is the fine, old, chivalrous spirit of the Glossops."

"That's all right about the fine, old, chivalrous spirit of the Glossops. Where is the sweet, gentle, womanly spirit of the Angelas? Telling a fellow he was getting a double chin!"

"Did she do that?"

"She did."

"Oh, well, girls will be girls. Forget it, Tuppy. Go to her and make it up."

He shook his head.

"No. It is too late. Remarks have been passed about my tummy which it is impossible to overlook."

"But, Tummy—Tuppy, I mean—be fair. You once told her her new hat made her look like a Pekingese."

"It did make her look like a Pekingese. That was not vulgar abuse. It was sound, constructive criticism, with no motive behind it but the kindly desire to keep her



from making an exhibition of herself in public. Wantonly to accuse a man of puffing when he goes up a flight of stairs is something very different."

I began to see that the situation would require all my address and ingenuity. If the wedding bells were ever to ring out in the little church of Market Snodsbury, Bertram had plainly got to put in some shrewd work. I had gathered, during my conversation with Aunt Dahlia, that there had been a certain amount of frank speech between the two contracting parties, but I had not realized till now that matters had gone so far.

The pathos of the thing gave me the pip. Tuppy had admitted in so many words that love still animated the Glossop bosom, and I was convinced that, even after all that occurred, Angela had not ceased to love him. At the moment, no doubt, she might be wishing that she could hit him with a bottle, but deep down in her I was prepared to bet that there still lingered all the old affection and tenderness. Only injured pride was keeping these two apart, and I felt that if Tuppy would make the first move, all would be well.

I had another whack at it.

"She's broken-hearted about this rift, Tuppy."

"How do you know? Have you seen her?"

"No, but I'll bet she is."

"She doesn't look it."

"Wearing the mask, no doubt. Jeeves does that when I assert my authority."

"She wrinkles her nose at me as if I were a drain that had got out of order."

"Merely the mask. I feel convinced she loves you still, and that a kindly word from you is all that is required."

I could see that this had moved him. He plainly wavered. He did a sort of twiddly on the turf with his foot. And, when he spoke, one spotted the tremolo in the voice:

"You really think that?"

"Absolutely."

"H'm."

"If you were to go to her——"

He shook his head.

"I can't do that. It would be fatal. Bing, instantly, would go my prestige. I know girls. Grovel, and the best of them get uppish." He mused. "The only way to work the thing would be by tipping her off in some indirect way that I am prepared to open negotiations. Should I sigh a bit when we meet, do you think?"

"She would think you were puffing."

"That's true."

I lit another cigarette and gave my mind to the matter. And first crack out of the box, as is so often the way with the Woosters, I got an idea. I remembered the counsel I had given Gussie in the matter of the sausages and ham.

"I've got it, Tuppy. There is one infallible method of indicating to a girl that you love her, and it works just as well when you've had a row and want to make it up. Don't eat any dinner tonight. You can see how impressive that would be. She knows how devoted you are to food."

He started violently.

"I am not devoted to food!"

"No, no."

"I am not devoted to food at all."

"Quite. All I meant——"

"This rot about me being devoted to food," said Tuppy warmly, "has got to stop. I am young and healthy and have a good appetite, but that's not the same as being devoted to food. I admire Anatole as a master of his craft, and am always willing to consider anything he may put before me, but when you say I am devoted to food——"

"Quite, quite. All I meant was that if she sees you push away your dinner untasted, she will realize that your heart is aching, and will probably be the first to suggest blowing the all clear."

Tuppy was frowning thoughtfully.

"Push my dinner away, eh?"

"Yes."

"Push away a dinner cooked by Anatole?"

"Yes."

"Push it away untasted?"

"Yes."

"Let us get this straight. Tonight, at dinner, when the butler offers me a ris de veau à la financière, or whatever it may be, hot from Anatole's hands, you wish me to push it away untasted?"

"Yes."

He chewed his lip. One could sense the struggle going on within. And then suddenly a sort of glow came into his face. The old martyrs probably used to look like that.

"All right."

"You'll do it?"

"I will."

"Fine."

"Of course, it will be agony."

I pointed out the silver lining.

"Only for the moment. You could slip down tonight, after everyone is in bed, and raid the larder."

He brightened.

"That's right. I could, couldn't I?"

"I expect there would be something cold there."

"There is something cold there," said Tuppy, with growing cheerfulness. "A steak-and-kidney pie. We had it for lunch today. One of Anatole's ripest. The thing I admire about that man," said Tuppy reverently, "the thing that I admire so enormously about Anatole is that, though a Frenchman, he does not, like so many of these chefs, confine himself exclusively to French dishes, but is always willing and ready to weigh in with some good old simple English fare such as this steak-and-kidney pie to which I have alluded. A masterly pie, Bertie, and it wasn't more than half finished. It will do me nicely."

"And at dinner you will push, as arranged?"

"Absolutely as arranged."

"Fine."

"It's an excellent idea. One of Jeeves's best. You can tell him from me, when you see him, that I'm much obliged."

The cigarette fell from my fingers. It was as though somebody had slapped Bertram Wooster across the face with a wet dish-rag.

"You aren't suggesting that you think this scheme I have been sketching out is Jeeves's?"

"Of course it is. It's no good trying to kid me, Bertie. You wouldn't have thought of a wheeze like that in a million years."

There was a pause. I drew myself up to my full height; then, seeing that he wasn't looking at me, lowered myself again.

"Come, Glossop," I said coldly, "we had better be going. It is time we were dressing for dinner."

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