BERTIE. Toodle pip!

(The LADIES exit. BERTIE takes the opportunity to practice proposing.)

BERTIE. Ahem... See here, Stella, I am not a man to be trifled with. I demand you give me an answer, preferably in the affirmative and accompanied by girlish coos of delight... No. No good.

Stella, darling, I know how you admire strong, silent men. (He strikes a pose and holds it, silently.) Let's face it, there are so few of us left...

(CRUMPET appears. He is disheveled and sporting a black eye.)

CRUMPET. Pst. Bertie!

BERTIE. Crumpet, you blister, where have you been!

CRUMPET. Pipe down! Can't you see that my nerves are sticking out about a yard from my body?

BERTIE. You look as if you'd drunk from the cup of life and found a dead beetle at the bottom.

CRUMPET. Oh, Bertie!

BERTIE. Out with it, old can of fruit.

CRUMPET. I've done something dreadful.

BERTIE. Of course you have. Don't carry on so. I mean, naturally, one would prefer to be above reproach, but, failing that, the important thing is to get rid of the body.

CRUMPET. (Panicky) What?

BERTIE. (Confused) What?

CRUMPET. What made you say that?

BERTIE. Say what?

CRUMPET. Have you no finer feelings? How can you ever be popular if you go about saying things like that?

BERTIE. (Sternly) Crumpet! What happened, where have you been, and what idiotic thing have you done now? Also, I happen to be exceedingly popular.

CRUMPET. Sorry. Right. The thing is—and mind you, it's the sort of thing that might happen to anyone—I may have committed murder.

BERTIE. Oh... I see. Jeeves!

CRUMPET. What are you doing? I don't want Jeeves.
BERTIE. Jeeves is precisely what you want in a stitch like this. Very brainy fellow. Wears a size 14 hat.

(JEEVES enters, carrying the morning paper.)

JEEVES. You called, sir? Good morning, Sir Percival.

CRUMPET. Hullo, Jeeves.

BERTIE. Jeeves, Crumpet here has committed murder.

JEEVES. (Placidly:) How very alarming, sir.

CRUMPET. It's not certain. But it's possible. Difficult to say, really.

BERTIE. The only thing we can say, with any degree of certainty, is that Crumpet has made an ass of himself. Again.

CRUMPET. (Protesting:) Here, now!

BERTIE. Crumpet, as you know, Jeeves, has always been a bit thick—

CRUMPET. I say!

BERTIE. Today he has, at long last, achieved maximum thickness. Your services shall, no doubt, be required.

JEEVES. I shall give the matter my utmost attention, sir.

BERTIE. Crumpet, spill. Last I saw of you was at the casino. Start there. End here, with blackened eye and blackened conscience. For our part, we shall listen attentively, won't we, Jeeves?

JEEVES. All agog and with bated breath, sir.

CRUMPET. Well, you know I've been trying to track down my Uncle Augustus. It's not just the money. Well, it is, of course.

BERTIE. Of course.

CRUMPET. But there's more to it. You see, Bertie, I'm in love.

BERTIE. Not really? You?

CRUMPET. Certainly, me. Naturally, I'm longing to pop the question. But there's a hitch.

BERTIE. There always is. How the deuce are you going to support a wife on nothing a year?

CRUMPET. That's the hitch. That's why it's so vital to track down my uncle and get hold of the lettuce.

BERTIE. Oh, quite. I see that.

CRUMPET. But we've been here for days and failed at every attempt. So last night I fell into a fit of—

BERTIE. Stupidity?

CRUMPET. Depression. And so, as chaps do, I attempted to drown my sorrows.

BERTIE. (Nodding wisely:) Alcohol is a misunderstood vitamin. I suppose you got boiled?

CRUMPET. Completely. Can't recall a thing, except... I remember planting a tremendous facer on some bloke in a dark street... somewhere. Then... shouting. Then... me legging it for all I was worth.

BERTIE. And then?

CRUMPET. Came to this morning, face down under a bougainvillea in the public gardens, having lost my hat.

BERTIE. And gained a shiner.

CRUMPET. Are you following me so far, Jeeves?

JEEVES. You have been lucidity itself, sir.

CRUMPET. Right. So, here's my thought—

BERTIE. Your what?

CRUMPET. My thought. I do have one occasionally.

BERTIE. Never.

CRUMPET. Do shut up. I'm going to make a run for the Italian border. I say, Bertie, could you spot me a tenner?

(BERTIE obligingly hands over a bill.)

CRUMPET. Also, which way is Italy?

BERTIE. Haven't a clue. Your thoughts, Jeeves?

JEEVES. As Sir Percival's recollections are rather indistinct, I did wonder if the morning papers might shed some light on the events of last night.

CRUMPET. Splendid notion, Jeeves!

(BERTIE unfolds the newspaper proffered by JEEVES. He holds it so that the headline, "PRINCE ASSAULTED," faces the audience.)

BERTIE. It is! After all, Crumpet, I daresay you did nothing worse than pinch a policeman's helmet, which is the sort of prank anyone...

(JEEVES gently turns the paper so that BERTIE sees the front page.)