PILBEAM. I don't know when I have been more shocked!

STELLA. Bertie, you don't think—

BERTIE. (Firmly:) Not if I can possibly avoid it.

PILBEAM. (Sentimentally:) Did you know, I once had the honor of waltzing with His Serene Highness in Vienna, in happier days.

STELLA. Bertie, do you suppose our foreign count could be connected to His Wounded Highness?

PILBEAM. Count? What count?

STELLA. The one on board. He is still on board, isn't he, Jeeves?

JEEVES. Count von Dietrichstein is, at present, much occupied with kippered herring.

PILBEAM. Not . . . Otto von Dietrichstein?

JEEVES. Indeed. According to the press, the count is envoy to His Serene Highness.

(From his hiding place, CRUMPET makes a garbled sound.)

STELLA. What was that?

BERTIE. What?

STELLA. Didn't you hear that cry?

BERTIE. Seagull. (BERTIE and JEEVES look up.) Wouldn't you say, Jeeves?

JEEVES. O, yes, sir. Seabirds of the family Laridae, which is, of course, a suborder of the Charadriiformes (kar-uh-dry-uh-FOR-meez).

PILBEAM. What a well-informed mind you have, Jeeves.

JEEVES. Very kind of you to say, Miss Pilbeam.

PILBEAM. If you have no immediate need of my services, Lady Stella, I should like to change my frock, since it appears that we are entertaining nobility.

STELLA. Yes, fine. Run along, Pilbeam.

PILBEAM. If you will excuse me, Lady Stella. Gentlemen [PILBEAM exits dreamily.]

STELLA. Quickly, any sign of Crumpet? (BERTIE opens his mouth.) Never mind. We must rally round. I'd better pop down and check up on—that is, entertain the count for a bit. See if I can't do a bit of sleuthing.

BERTIE. But—

STELLA. Oh! I nearly forgot. On our return, we encountered a messenger with a note from Crumpet's uncle—you know, the one that he's been trying to reach?

BERTIE. Really?

STELLA. Be a dear, Bertie, and make sure Crumpet gets this. (She hands a letter to BERTIE.) I'm off to vamp our mysterious count. Soon, all his secrets will be mine! Toodles!

(STELLA exits, excited to start sleuthing.)

BERTIE. Crumpet! Letter from your uncle. (CRUMPET emerges and seize the letter. He opens it and shakes it.)

CRUMPET. Drat!

BERTIE. What are you doing?

CRUMPET. Hoping in vain that a check will fall out.

BERTIE. Read!

CRUMPET. "My dear Percival, I understand you have been endeavoring to get in touch with me."

BERTIE. Too right, we have.

CRUMPET. "I must inform you of a curious situation that has arisen in connection with your legacy. You have, no doubt, often heard your late father speak of your twin brother, Alfred." —My what?

BERTIE. Who?

CRUMPET. Twin? How could—? I don't— This can't—

BERTIE. Deep breath.

CRUMPET. Father never so much as hinted at my having a brother, let alone a twin.

BERTIE. Where did they stash this mysterious brother all your life?

CRUMPET. Listen! "... your twin brother, Alfred, who was abducted when you were both babies."

BERTIE. I say! The plot thickens!

CRUMPET. Will you stop? "... As years went by and no news was received, nor any ransom demanded, Alfred was, at long last, presumed dead. However—"

BERTIE. Here it comes.
CRUMPET. Bertie! "I have recently received word that he is very much alive. He was raised by a wealthy family in (He stumbles a bit over this word) Tanganyika." —Where in the world?

BERTIE. Jeeves?

JEEVES. The African province of Tanganyika is located east of Lake Victoria, and is notable for its herds of zebra and wildebeests.

BERTIE. Thank you, Jeeves. That will be quite enough of that. Do go on, Crumpet.

CRUMPET. Right. "Alfred only recently learned his true identity and will arrive in Monte Carlo any day. This unexpected development will naturally cause a delay—" Agh! "—in settling your financial affairs, as I shall have to thoroughly examine Alfred’s credentials."

BERTIE. Credentials, eh?

CRUMPET. He goes on—

BERTIE. He certainly does.

CRUMPET. "The title remains with you, although your brother will naturally be entitled to a portion of the estate. But we’ll go into all that when next we meet. Your affectionate uncle, Augustus Arbut." Well of all the wretched, ill-timed bolts from the blue!

JEEVES. Pardon me, Sir Percival, but I wonder if this development does not present an opportunity?

CRUMPET. Right! An opportunity to tie up my inheritance, while also cutting it in half.

JEEVES. Yet, from an alternate viewpoint, this news might be regarded as a gift from heaven.

CRUMPET. (Indignantly) I mean, the legacy was left to my father’s "offspring" which I thought was me, but apparently there are scores of us!

JEEVES. Yes, sir, but—

CRUMPET. Rotten work, springing unexpected offspring on a chap at the eleventh hour!

JEEVES. As I am endeavoring to point out, sir, the existence of a twin makes your imminent flight to the Italian border, entirely moot.

CRUMPET. Moot?

BERTIE. Ooh! Ooh! Twins! You have a twin!

CRUMPET. Yes, Bertie, I have grasped that.

BERTIE. Don’t you see? While the authorities are out beating the bushes for that murderous rascal, Percival, you can masquerade as Alfred!

CRUMPET. What?

JEEVES. Twins being notable for their resemblance, it should present no difficulty for you, Sir Percival, to pass as Alfred, newly arrived from Africa and anxious to be reunited with your sibling.

BERTIE. Crumpet being nowhere to be found, you, Alfred, lounge on board, waiting in vain for your villainous brother to turn up.

CRUMPET. Who the devil’s going to believe I’m Alfred?

JEEVES. Who, sir, will deny it, with Mr. Wooster to back you up?

CRUMPET. (Indicating his shiner) But how do I explain this eye?

JEEVES. I did think that, perhaps, Mr. Alfred might sport an eye patch.

BERTIE. I say! Souvenir of a deadly encounter with a man-eating tiger!

JEEVES. Not in Africa, sir.

BERTIE. Savage, man-eating giraffe?

CRUMPET. What the devil do I say when the real Alfred turns up and calls me a liar?

BERTIE. Don’t be so hen-hearted. You’ve only got to keep it up for an hour or two until we get rid of this blasted Count von Doodle-Ping.

CRUMPET. (Hope dawns) Do you know, I really think it might work?

BERTIE. Bound to! This twin notion is the genuine Tabasco!

CRUMPET. Jeeves, you’re brilliant!

JEEVES. I am gratified to be of service, sir.

BERTIE. Mind you, we’d better keep this business just between the three of us.

CRUMPET. What? Surely we can confide in Stella.

BERTIE. Look, don’t think for a moment that I don’t trust Stella. It’s merely that . . . I don’t trust her.

CRUMPET. But—

BERTIE. Think man! What if she forgets and chirps, "Pass me a cocktail, Percy," right in front of the sinister count?

CRUMPET. I take your point.
JEEVES. Gentlemen, might I remind you that time is of the essence?
BERTIE. Right ho. Crumpet, you'd better trot below and change your rig so that you can burst forth on an unsuspecting world as Alfred from Africa. Jeeves, I think you'd better supervise.
JEEVES. Very good, sir. Perhaps something in a lightweight linen, Sir Percival?
CRUMPET. Jeeves, I have just been reprieved from the guillotine! At such a moment, who gives a hang what I wear?
JEEVES. (Pained) Oh, sir!
BERTIE. (Puts a sympathetic hand on JEEVES' shoulder) I'm sorry, Jeeves, you shouldn't have heard that.
JEEVES. (Steeling himself) I shall recover directly, sir.
BERTIE. (Sternly to CRUMPET:) See here, you ungrateful wart, you march below this instant and wash up. I want a word with Jeeves. When he does join you, you will place your undeserving self completely in his hands.
CRUMPET. I will. Jeeves, I'm dreadfully sorry. I didn't realize what I was saying.
JEEVES. Let us speak no more about it, sir.
BERTIE. (Waving off CRUMPET) Off with you! And mind no one spots you! (CRUMPET ducks as BERTIE continues grandly) Remember, nothing stands between us and victory except defeat!
(CRUMPET exits cautiously.)
JEEVES. You wished to speak with me, sir?
BERTIE. I did... Jeeves, there is a matter of some... that is, I am... I feel... there is something I ought to confess. Not confess. Apprise. Yes, that's better. Something, in short, that I ought to tell you.
JEEVES. I am all attention, sir.
BERTIE. It concerns Lady Stella. You may not have noticed, but she's terribly jolly. Very fetching profile.
JEEVES. Yes, sir.
BERTIE. The thing is, well, this may well be it, Jeeves.
JEEVES. "It," sir?
BERTIE. Pitching the woo, as it were.
JEEVES. "Woo," sir?
BERTIE. Popping the proverbial question.

JEEVES. Let me be the first to congratulate you, sir.
BERTIE. You... you don't disapprove, Jeeves?
JEEVES. It is hardly my place to say, sir.
BERTIE. Well, I know that it is hardly your place to say, Jeeves. Doesn't normally stop you.
JEEVES. Lady Stella is exceedingly high-spirited, sir. She would, perhaps, be best suited to a very strong-willed individual.
BERTIE. Oh, I quite agree. The Wooster Will of Iron is, no doubt, what attracted her.
JEEVES. Ahem.
BERTIE. Of course, nothing's definitely settled yet. She's... mulling.
JEEVES. Mulling, sir?
BERTIE. But I anticipate being accepted. Just the other day, she practically admitted she was fond of me.
JEEVES. Indeed, sir?
BERTIE. Well, what she actually said was that the sort of man she most admired was a self-reliant, manly man with strength, good looks, character, and ambition.
JEEVES. Ah.
BERTIE. Let's face it, Jeeves, that's me to a T. I mean, look at me! I'm clearly the sort of chap that any right-thinking girl longs to scoop up with a spoon.
JEEVES. Er, yes, sir. I did wonder...
BERTIE. Yes, Jeeves?
JEEVES. I have heard, on good authority, that Lady Stella harbors great affection for Sir Percival.
BERTIE. Crumpet? Ha-ha! Do be serious, Jeeves. Can you honestly see a lovely girl like Lady Stella being attracted to a pestilential boll weevil like Crumpet? Why, the fellow's a sheep-faced gargoyli! (Abruptly sincere) And, of course, one of my dearest friends.
JEEVES. Of course.
BERTIE. Still, you must admit, decidedly sheep-faced.
JEEVES. Far be it from me, sir, to criticize the facial peculiarities of your friends.
BERTIE. Stella and Crumpet! Ha-ha! Wherever did you hear such a Banbury tale, Jeeves?