

Ye Olde Plum News

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OVERTURNING TABLES

GEORGE EMERSON, ASHE MARSON, RUPERT BAXTER

Coming down to first causes, the only reason why collisions of any kind occur is because two bodies defy Nature's law that a given spot on a given plane shall at a given moment of time be occupied by only one body. The spot where George Emerson and Ashe Marson defied this law, both on secret mission in the dark of the night, was near the foot of the big staircase in the hall of Blandings. They collided, fought and fell. In due season they reached the foot of the stairs and a small table covered with occasional china and photographs in frames which lay adjacent to the foot of the stairs... George kicked Ashe on the left ankle. Ashe rediscovered George's throat and began to squeeze it afresh, and a pleasant time was being had by all, when the Efficient Baxter, whizzing down the stairs, tripped over Ashe's legs, shot forward, and cannoned into another table, also covered with occasional china and photographs in frames... There were, indeed, no fewer than five or more in various spots waiting to be bumped into and smashed. (Something Fresh, 1915)

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BINGO LITTLE

"My dear old soul," I said, "what's up?" Bingo plunged about the room. "I will be calm!" he said, knocking over an occasional table. "Calm, dammit!" He upset a chair. (Bingo and the Little Woman, 1922)

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HAROLD "STINKER" PINKER

Bertie's old friend from the Oxford, now a curate, entered Bertie's guest room at Steeple Bumbleigh. But the change in him, I soon perceived, was purely superficial. The manner in which he now tripped over a rug and cannoned into an occasional table, upsetting it with all the old thoroughness, showed me that at heart he still remained the same gawling man with two left feet, who had always been constitutionally incapable of walking through the great Gobi Desert without knocking something over. (The Code of the Woosters, 1938)

"Bung him in," I said dully, and in due season the Rev. H. P. Pinker lumbered across the threshold and advancing with outstretched hand tripped over his feet and upset a small table, his almost invariable practice when moving from spot to spot in any room where there's furniture ... "You move in mysterious way your wonders to perform, Stinker. I believe you would bump into something if you were crossing the Gobi desert." "I've never been in the Gobi desert." "Well, don't go. It isn't safe." (Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves, 1963)

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BILL "BLISTER" LISTER

Gally brought Bill to Blandings and introduced him as Mr. Landseer, the famous artist. Lady Hermione Wedge was very suspicious. She said "How do you do, Mr. Landseer," in a voice that suggested that she hoped he was going to tell her that the doctors had given him three weeks to live, and supplied him with a cup of tea. Bill knocked over a cake table, and they all settled down to make a cosy evening of it... Gally said that he had never been able to understand his brother's objection to London, a city which he himself had always found an earthly Paradise. He applied to Bill to support him in this view, and Bill, who had fallen into a dream about Prudence, started convulsively and kicked over the small table on which he had placed his cup... The fact was that Bill, though an admirable character, was always a little large for any room in which he was confined. To ensure his not kicking over cake tables, you would have had to place him in the Gobi Desert. Gally in his genial way had just offered, if Bill wanted to make a nice clean job of smashing up the premises, to bring him an axe. (Full Moon, 1947)

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JERRY SHOESMITH

For an instant, Jerry sat rigid, like a character in one of his stories hypnotized by a mad scientist. Then, leaping to his feet, he sprang across the room. In doing so, he overturned a small table, on which were a bowl of wax fruit, a photograph in a pink frame of the speculative builder to whom Sunnybrae owed its existence, the one who never used mortar,

and a china vase bearing the legend "A Present From Llandudno". (Pigs Have Wings, 1952)

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BERTRAM "BERTIE" WOOSTER

Aunt Dahlia asked Bertie to sneak into her room and steal her necklace. I found the ladder, by the toolshed as foreshadowed, and lugged it across country to the desired spot. I propped it up. I climbed it. In next to no time I was through the window and moving silently across the floor. Well, not so dashed silently, as a matter of fact, because I collided with a table which happened to be in the fairway and upset it with quite a bit of noise. "Who's there?" asked a voice. Bertie had sneaked into the wrong room. It was Florence Craye who woke up. (Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954)

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LORD EMSWORTH

His lordship couldn't sleep and had gone for a walk to his beloved Empress. Returning he found himself locked out of the castle. The Duke of Dunstable resided in the garden suite. With the feeling that the happy ending was only moments away he rounded the house, and there, just as he had anticipated, was the garden suite with its window as hospitably open as any window could be... Just as he entered the room, the stable cat rubbed itself against him. Lord Emsworth, filled with much the same emotions as had gripped him in his boyhood when a playful schoolmate, creeping up behind him in the street, had tooted a motor horn in his immediate rear, executed one of those sideways leaps which Nijinsky used to be so good at in his prime. It was followed by the sort of crash an active bull might have produced if let loose in a china shop. Lady Constance had placed a piecrust table containing on its surface a clock, a bowl of roses, another bowl holding a potpourri, a calendar, an ashtray and a photograph of James Schoonmaker and herself in their wedding finery. It was with this that Lord Emsworth had collided as he made his entree. (A Pelican at Blandings, 1969)

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