

there just now. He asked me to go to Hunston and bring his daughter to him. I told him that kidnapping was a little out of my line. 'Kidnapping is rather a harsh word,' he said. 'Yes,' said I, 'it's a criminal word, I believe.' But —"

Peter looked up, interrupting. "Is this all straight? Is that really what he wants you to do?"

"Naturally, Peter. Why not? You cling to the theory that such heroic measures are entirely unnecessary? So did I till I had threshed the whole thing up and down with Uncle Elbert for an hour and a half, trying to suggest some alternative that didn't look so silly. Kindly get the facts well into your head, will you? The man must pursue Mary's affection either there or here, mustn't he? He can't do it there because his wife won't let him. In order to do it here, one would say offhand that Mary would have to be here, and since her mother declines to bring her, it does look to me as if the job would have to be done by somebody else. However, if my logic is wrong, kindly let your powerful —"

"I don't say it's wrong. I merely say that it sounds like a cross between a modern pork-king's divorce suit and a seventeenth century peccadillo."

"And I reply that I don't care a hoot how it sounds. The only question of any interest to me, Peter, is whether or not Uncle Elbert has a moral right to a share in his own child. I say that he has such a right, and I say further that this is the only way in the world that he can assert his right. Oh, hang how it sounds! I'm the nearest thing to a son that he has

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