

"What else?" demanded Hermione, ominously.

"I explained to him that, while in the majority of cases it was a very undesirable thing for a girl to be married as young as nineteen, yet in our case there might be certain advantages. . . ."

"Such as"

"Well" Applebo regarded her warily, edging a little away. "I pointed out the fact that, if a man ever expected to live in peace with a lady of such violent disposition as his youngest daughter's, it was of inestimable advantage to catch her young and then train her. . . ."

Thwack!!

"Ouch! Do you think that is a nice way to treat your fiancé?"

"What did papa say to that?"

"He heartily agreed with me. After that he gave his consent and we had a drink on it. He had several. Then he happened to think of a partridge that he'd left in the oven, and bolted off. I had a feeling that, if anything had gone wrong with the partridge, he might blame me and withdraw his favour, so I escaped and came here to tell you the glad news. And you whack me with a stick. . . ."

Thwack!!!