

Aunt Jane

(a tragedy)

Ray Wooster

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Aunt Jane

Aunt Jane's antique shop ... how can I describe it? Clutter upon clutter upon clutter, except for the serried ranks of exquisite bone china coffee cups and saucers on the glass topped counter. An aroma of freshly ground coffee fills the shop. Aunt Jane's Ventaxia perfumed the shopping mall, Aunt's 'victims' followed their noses. Chairs, stools and sofas were occupied by the not so fit, the fit stood. The noise, ah yes the noise. Aunt likened it to a 'murmuration of starlings'.

George, Aunt's restorer, had his workshop at the back of the shop, drank tea and likened the noise as akin to a bleadin' fox in a 'en 'ouse. Several of our regulars began to collect the china, wash it and put it away. I kept pointing to my watch, it was well past feeding time for the animals down on the small holding in Harefield. Jane's 'Don't worry, Greg's got everything in hand' didn't reassure me one bit - I was like a cat on a hot tin roof. This animal rescue caper and running the shop is asking for trouble, even disaster.

I released my seatbelt and opened the passenger door a little, then closed it.

'Did you hear that?'

'Who didn't? Those poor animals must be starving - that lazy bastard - one of these days I'm going to kill him. Two years in Holloway to be rid of him will be a price well worth paying, you see if I don't!'

'Calm down, he probably forgot ... busy studying.'

'Studying be damned, on his X box more like!'