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The Sunday Times
3 February

Dear Charles,

I hope all goes well with you. I never seem to hear of you unless some disaster, major or minor, has taken place. Owing to lack of communication on your part, I have not the remotest idea of what is going on at Eton or how you are progressing, if at all, in your work. Jane has not come down this weekend and I have no idea what she is up to. Nor do I know where she is living: she might be on the run from the police judging from the rapidity with which she changes her domicile. I had a bad and painful attack of gout last week and now I have a throat infection and am partially deaf. Getting old is revolting and I hate it. Poor David Gundry, who stayed at Barclay House a couple of times, was killed in a car accident last week. He went off the road at 90 mph and that was that. A tragic waste of a young life. We are now off to lunch with the Hislops. Last week

Dear Lupin

we went to the theatre and saw 'The Secretary Bird, which is very light but by no means unamusing. Inspector Barlow and the man who plays his boss were sitting just behind us. I had to drive to Doncaster and back last week which was rather tiring. Louise is home and seems in good form. She is the one member of this family that gives me no trouble.

Best love,

D

I am now fifteen years old and enjoying a somewhat undistinguished career at Eton College. In an end-of-term report, my Classical Tutor sums up the situation thus: 'Nero was content to roll in the dust in order to collect his laurels. Mortimer however seems merely content just to roll in the dust.'

Budds Farm

23 May

Dear Charles,

It was nice to hear from you again after rather a long interval! I'm glad to hear that life seems to be going reasonably well. What has happened to Ordinary Faulkner to make him so cheerful? The prospect of getting rid of you, I suppose! I am going over to Eton if I can tomorrow for Charles Gladstone's Memorial Service. I woke up this morning with the house stinking of oil and full of smoke. One of the boilers had gone all wrong and a chimney was on fire, too. I switched

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the boiler off, opened the windows and went to bed. I saw a hideous car pile-up on Saturday. Two cars – a Zephyr and a Cresta – were upside down and one had gone over a ditch and into a field. Two people were killed. Louise and Jane come home tomorrow. Thank God it is slightly warmer today. I have had a couple of barmy letters from Gar. One of Mr Luckes's cows got loose in the garden and was a great nuisance. Are you keen on pictures by Toulouse-Lautrec? If you are I will send you a book on him. I think in future I shall call you 'Lupin' after Mr Pooter's son in 'The Diary of a Nobody'. I'm sure Mr Kidson would agree it is very suitable for you.

Yours ever,

D

And so I take on the name of Lupin, the disreputable son who was the source of much of Mr Pooter's worries.