

## The Inimitable Jeeves

*P.G. Wodehouse*

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I have a Kindle lying around. Good to have while on a trip, but why download books when they can only be read and not continue as parts of the furniture? Anyway, the Kindle has been lying around unused since I returned from Chile a year ago, why not temporarily at least revive it, so it does not rust from chocking on dust? So I looked for downloading a book I would not miss when denied subsequent existence on the shelf. So why not another Wodehouse to give him a second chance? He supposedly took great care to devise plots, so maybe an entire volume consisting of interdependent chapters rather than short stories would show him at his best? 'The Inimitable Jeeves' at the price of a dollar and about 130 pages seemed ideal. Not much to lose.

About an intricate plot forget about it, instead you have a series of rather independent episodes that hang together by a thin thread. As a reader coming to Wodehouse you are struck by the sheer inanity, but to be offended would be to be naive not to say foolish, after all the very inanity is the whole point, it would be like claiming that the characters in a joke are not sufficiently developed. Once one may understand this contract between reader and author things will fall into place. On the other hand such arguing is a bit disingenuous, after all does not much of the charm to be found by so many aficionados be due to a kind of nostalgia for a pleasant leisured life, when a devoted butler takes care of all your worldly concern and you spend your days at the Club dressing up for dinner and following up with some unspecified diversions in the evening. Money is always trickling down to keep you in comfort, and the only drama life involves is when that source threatens to dry up. Of course, what can be argued is that a life so spent in purposeless idleness, is rather a source of comic relief than tragic censure.

The verbal play is supposed to be the forte of Wodehouse. British humor at its best, dry not to say subtle, hitting you not immediately but as a bitter-sweet aftertaste, so much the more pungent for being delayed. I must admit that I was smiling a few times, even nodding my approval a few times, at times making me think of Evelyn Waugh, who, however, lays it on a bit thicker and with far more gusto. But does it make it worthwhile? Anyway inanity may irritate you, but in the long run it soothes, and I can see how you could slowly acquire a taste for it, after all it is inoffensive, and as such relaxing. Reading, after all, should not always be a serious business.

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