

The Inimitable Jeeves Study Guide

The Inimitable Jeeves by P. G. Wodehouse

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Inimitable Jeeves Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Chapters 1 and 2.....	3
Chapters 3 and 4.....	5
Chapters 5 and 6.....	7
Chapters 7 and 8.....	9
Chapters 9 and 10.....	11
Chapters 11 and 12.....	13
Chapters 13 and 14.....	15
Chapters 15 and 16.....	18
Chapters 17 and 18.....	21
Characters.....	23
Objects/Places.....	26
Themes.....	28
Style.....	30
Quotes.....	33
Topics for Discussion.....	35



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

1: Bertie Wooster wakes up, and his valet Jeeves has his morning tea for him. It's the perfect temperature and taste. In fact, everything Jeeves does is perfect and any advice or knowledge he dispenses is unerring. Jeeves informs Bertie of the news and weather, and tells him not to bet on a particular horse that he got a tip on. Jeeves also reveals that Bingo Little had left word.

Bertie takes a ride to the local park, and there meets Bingo by accident. Bertie and Bingo were schoolmates back in the day. Bingo lives on his rich uncle's allowance and is somewhat dim-witted and clownish. He also has a tendency to fall deeply in love with women. Bingo confesses that he has fallen in love with a girl named Mabel, and that he would like Bertie to meet her.

Bingo takes Bertie to a run-down "tea-and-buns shop." Bertie wonders what a well-to-do gentleman like Bingo is doing taking a girl to such a place, but as it turns out Mabel is a waitress working there. She is pretty, but there is the problem of her being lower class.

Later, Bingo asks Bertie for Jeeves' advice in convince his uncle, called Old Little, that Bingo is right to want to marry a low-class girl. Otherwise, Old Little might become angry if he finds out Bingo is flirting with a waitress and threaten to cut off his allowance. Jeeves arrives at the idea that Bingo read his uncle (who is housebound with gout) a series of romance novels by an author named Rosie M. Banks. These novels frequently feature upper-class men romancing lower-class women. Through the power of direct suggestion, through repetition of this theme Old Little will become used to the idea and ultimately give Bingo his blessing to pursue Mabel. Through the course of Jeeves' conversation with Bertie, it is revealed that Jeeves is attracted to Miss Watson, Old Little's very good cook.

2: Some days later, Jeeves' idea for Bingo to read romance novels to Old Little is a big success. Old Little has become smitten with the novels. Bingo tells Bertie that Old Little has asked Bertie to come over and have lunch. Bertie is suspicious - what does Old Little know about him? - but against his better judgment he attends lunch. It turns out that Bingo told Old Little that Bertie is actually the author of the Banks' romance novels, writing under a pen name. Bertie is floored, but he keeps the illusion up.

Bingo wants Bertie to bring up a raise for Bingo's allowance at lunch, as Bingo wants more money to marry Mabel. However, at the suggestion of a raise Old Little refuses, saying he must save up money for his own wife. It is revealed that Old Little has not only grown accustomed to the idea that upper-class men should marry lower-class women, per the romance novels, he has put the notion into practice, and become engaged to Miss Watson, his cook. The reason is quite selfish: Old Little was afraid Miss Watson would be lured away to a better-paying job, and he enjoyed her cooking



too much to let her go. Bertie breaks the bad news that Jeeves' sweetheart, Miss Watson, is now engaged to Old Little, but in fact Jeeves anticipated the engagement and encouraged it, because despite his feelings Jeeves knew Miss Watson was not right for him. Adding another complication, Jeeves has now fallen for Mabel the waitress.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

In the first few paragraphs, Jeeves is concisely but thoroughly characterized. He delivers Bertie's tea as measured by a variety of factors: taste, temperature, etc. Bertie thinks very highly of Jeeves, and believes him to be perfect and wise in most any matter put before him, including delivering news of the day, providing tips on horse racing, and predicting weather conditions. This brief characterization demonstrates the closeness between Bertie and Jeeves, and the fact that Bertie is perfectly aware that Jeeves constantly saves him from serious trouble. Jeeves is highly intelligent and a Renaissance man - someone who knows a lot about a broad variety of subjects.

Bingo's latest infatuation, with Mabel, starts the comic misadventures. The fact that Bingo withholds the true nature of Bertie for him (along with the reader) to discover later is crucial for the initial bit of comedy. Bertie expects Bingo to meet a well-to-do noblewoman at a proper restaurant, and Bingo brings him to a run-down tea shop to meet a waitress. Throughout the volume, much comedy and situational comedy moments are derived from the gap between expectation and result.

Bingo's problem with Mabel - the fact that his conservative uncle, who provides him his living allowance, will not approve - is the first instance in the volume of a recurring problem for Bingo to find ways to please his uncle Old Little. Unlike Bertie, who appears to have access to his own wealth and therefore needs to answer to no one regarding finances, Bingo must kowtow to his uncle. This kowtowing is fertile ground for several comic situations.

Jeeves has the brilliant idea to have Old Little read romance novels. His ideas are universally successful and always wise. However, establishing another pattern that will recur throughout the volume, Bingo and/or Bertie take good advice by Jeeves and take it to an unhealthy and unsuccessful extreme. This time, Bingo tells Old Little that Bertie actually is the romance novelist writing under a pen name.

Like all of the nearly self-contained stories in the book, this episode ends with Jeeves rescuing everyone from themselves. His solution is also self-enriching, as are most of his solutions. Jeeves knew Old Little would marry Miss Watson, who Jeeves was infatuated with but who was not ultimately right for Jeeves. The characters then return to a sort of status quo. The status quo, however, can change with the result being the various stories are only nearly self-contained, and not completely so, because they slightly build upon one another.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

3: Bingo has gotten over Mabel, Bertie has lately been doing well in his "career" of betting on horse races and life seems good. But the happiness is shattered when Bertie receives an invitation from his Aunt Agatha to visit her in her hotel in Roville, France. Aunt Agatha is a very domineering and temperamental woman, and her invitation cannot be refused with very damaging repercussions. And so Bertie and Jeeves fly off to Roville.

In Roville, the hotel staff including Wilfred the manager have been cowed by demanding Aunt Agatha. Agatha wishes to introduce Bertie to a girl named Aline Hemmingway. Agatha believes Bertie needs to settle down and marry, and Aline seems like the perfect girl. Bertie naturally resists any such attempts to be set up. Bertie meets Aline and her priest brother Sidney, who seem nice enough, but Bertie is not attracted to Aline. Bertie is coerced into taking Aline and Sidney driving the next day.

While dressing for the driving date, Bertie puts on a horrid and colorful cummerbund. Jeeves, ever a man of taste, strongly advises Bertie to refrain from wearing the cummerbund, but Bertie admonishes Jeeves for lacking any sense of excitement and he wears it. The driving date proceeds as planned.

Afterwards, Bertie asks Jeeves for advice on how to disentangle himself from Agatha and her matrimonial plans, but Jeeves coldly states he has no advice. Bertie senses Jeeves is angry at being told off about the cummerbund.

4: Aline and Sidney visit Bertie in his hotel room in some distress. Sidney confesses that he just spent all he had gambling at roulette. To make matters worse, Sidney borrowed 100 pounds from a well-known nobleman, and lost that entire amount as well. If Sidney doesn't repay the nobleman soon, the nobleman will spread news about Sidney's gambling vice all around town, and Sidney might lose his priesthood.

Bertie gives them 100 pounds, happy to help. Aline and Sidney want to show Bertie they are honest by insisting Bertie hold a very valuable real pearl necklace for them as collateral. Bertie takes the case with the necklace in it and writes the pair a receipt indicating the transaction. The two thank Bertie profusely then leave.

Jeeves, who had been observing all of this, steps forward and tells Bertie he has been tricked. Jeeves' previous employer had been duped in the very same manner by Sidney and Aline. Sidney's criminal name is "Soapy Sid" and he is a slippery thief. Their scheme is to trade an empty necklace case out for the real necklace case after showing Bertie the pearl necklace. Afterward, they planned to return with the 100 pounds and demand the pearl necklace back. Since Bertie was given an empty case, he wouldn't



have it, and so he would have to pay back the value of the necklace, worth much much more than the mere 100 pounds.

Bertie demands to know why Jeeves hadn't alerted him to the scheme, but Jeeves has had him covered all along. Jeeves stole the necklace from Sidney when he wasn't looking.

It turns out that Sid originally stole the necklace from Aunt Agatha. Bertie visits Agatha to find her yelling at the hotel staff about her missing necklace and accusing a maid of stealing it. Bertie delights in giving Agatha her necklace back, because he uses it as an opportunity to berate Agatha for yelling at the innocent hotel staff. He also is able to tell Agatha that Aline was the thief's accomplice, and that Agatha made a terrible decision by trying to marry him off to such a woman. Thus Bertie achieves 'revenge' of sorts on Agatha and remains an unmarried man.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Chapter 3, like the start of most episodes, establishes a status quo, at least in the mind of Bertie Wooster: Bingo has forgotten Mabel and bears no other infatuation for the time being, and Bertie has been doing well in horse racing, which he calls a "career." This distortion of any normal sense of reality - calling horse racing a career - is common throughout the volume as author Wodehouse parodies the upper class.

This status quo is then broken by an event, here the appearance of Aunt Agatha, whom Bingo dreads because she is constantly needling him to settle down and get married. Marriage is anathema to Bingo: he sees it as a kind of death, or at least a terrible and irreversible transformation of a male. However, the comedy of the situation arises from Bertie wishing to hide his true feelings and, in essence, fit in with the rest of his family and the Idle Rich. Thus, he endures taking Aline driving, for example.

The appearance of Bertie's loud cummerbund, and Jeeves disapproval of it, establishes a recurring pattern of Bertie making poor fashion choices and Jeeves taking exception. This choice has its own comic value - Jeeves could disapprove of much larger and more systemic lifestyle choices of Bertie, but he zeroes in on socks and cummerbunds. In fact, clothing becomes a sort of currency between Bertie and Jeeves. Bertie can use his loud fashion choices to irk Jeeves - indeed, Bertie's fashion is just about the only thing that can fluster Jeeves. On the other hand, at several points after Jeeves has saved the day, Bertie chooses to reward Jeeves by allowing him to dispose of a loud piece of clothing.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

5: It is time for Jeeves' annual vacation in which he takes two weeks off and finds a suitable replacement valet for Bertie. Bertie overhears Jeeves telling this substitute that Bertie is a nice fellow but "by no means intelligent." This shocks Bertie, but he says nothing to Jeeves.

At the oyster-bar Bertie meets Bingo. Bingo lost a lot of money on horses, and so he's decided to get a job tutoring a boy named Oswald Glossop. In the course of his new job, Bingo has fallen deeply in love with Oswald's sister, Honoria. Bertie knows Honoria as a brainy, musclebound "pot of poison."

Later, Bertie meets Aunt Agatha. He doesn't think she'll dare to recommend a wife after what happened with Aline Hemmingway, but she does: Honoria Glossop. Agatha has accepted (for Bertie) Honoria's invitation to visit their estate. Bertie seems to be in another pickle, but because of what Jeeves said about him, he refuses to ask Jeeves for advice, to prove he has good ideas on his own.

Bertie arrives at the Glossops, and Bingo is around. On a garden bridge above a lake, Oswald is sitting fishing and Bertie says hello, but all the kid can say is "it's all right" to any question. Bertie comes up with a "brilliant" plan to ingratiate Bingo with Honoria, alienate Honoria from himself, and shake Oswald from his trance. Bertie and Bingo agree on a time the next day when Bertie will bring Honoria to the lake where Oswald is fishing. Bingo will be hiding nearby. Bertie will shove Oswald off the bridge, and Bingo will save him. That way, Honoria will think Bertie is cruel and Bingo courageous.

6: Bertie's plan is set in motion. Precisely at three he arrives at the lake bridge with Honoria, where Oswald is fishing. Bertie tries to sing Bingo's praises to Honoria, but Honoria thinks Bertie is talking about himself. Bertie approaches Oswald, closes his eyes, and pushes. Oswald goes flailing into the water, and Bertie cries for help. But, Bingo does not come. With Oswald continuing to thrash, Bertie goes in after him, getting soaking wet. Oswald then seems to easily swim to shore and run back home, such that Bertie can't even look heroic. Honoria saw Bertie push Oswald, and thinks Bertie staged it all just to impress her. She is smitten with Bertie, just the opposite of what Bertie intended.

Later, Bertie catches up with Bingo and wonders where he was. Bingo became smitten with an entirely different girl - Daphne Braythwayt - and forgot about the whole plot entirely. Bertie gets a vacation letter from Jeeves, who informs him about the fine weather, and then he leaves for the drawing room, where Honoria will read to him.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

Before, the reader has seen Jeeves consistently save the day and act as Bertie's ultimate guardian. This episode introduces the complication that Jeeves is taking vacation and therefore there is a danger that Bertie will be particularly vulnerable.

Bingo's newest dilemma promises this danger. He has fallen in love with Honoria Glossop, and is tutoring a little brat named Oswald, Honoria's brother. In typical comic hyperbole, Bertie refers to Honoria as a "pot of poison," and so the reader is well aware of the volatility of the situation, and the eventual need to extricate Bingo from it.

Bertie's "brilliant" plan, to shove Oswald off the bridge, is obviously terrible from the start, and is in sharp contrast to the actual brilliance of one of Jeeves' ideas. In fact, the plan is so awful that it has the opposite of the intended effect: Honoria becomes closer to Bertie and wishes to marry him, rather than becoming closer to Bingo. Jeeves' final letter at the end of the episode, in which he talks about the fine weather on his vacation, adds a kind of insult to injury regarding Bertie's complete inability to solve his own problems.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

7: Bertie is now (lamentably) engaged to Honoria Glossop, and she has been "moulding" him culturally by reading to him and bringing him to classical concerts. One day, Honoria remarks that, once they marry, Jeeves will have to be dismissed as she believes the valet to be a bad influence on Bertie. Aunt Agatha agrees, and Bertie considers the threat a blow that must be handled.

Agatha then confides that there may be a problem for the impending marriage. Sir Roderick, Honoria's father, heard about Bertie tipping Oswald into the river, and feels Bertie may not mentally be the right fit for his daughter. Roderick is a nerve specialist, a sort of psychologist that tends to the mentally unstable among the Idle Rich. Roderick has also heard about a Wooster in the family, Bertie's uncle Henry, who was obsessed with rabbits to the point of madness. Roderick would like to meet Bertie to assure that Bertie is not mentally deficient.

Claude and Eustace are mentioned, cousin twins of Bertie who are attending Oxford. They are bright but mischievous boys, and are currently trying to get into an exclusive fraternity at Oxford, the Seekers. Bertie hurries to his flat to prepare to greet Roderick, and he runs into Claude and Eustace. He meets their companion, Lord Rainsby. The three of them are in town for the day. Bertie bids a hasty goodbye and gets to his flat, where Jeeves has prepared lunch and has everything in order for Roderick.

8: Roderick arrives at the flat. Things go fairly well, but Roderick keeps swearing he hears a cat, an animal he detests. Roderick goes on about the people he treats, and he also relates a story about how his hat was stolen from his head by some unknown persons in a passing taxicab as he vehicle was stuck in London traffic.

Roderick again insists there is a cat very nearby, and Bertie hears the meowing too. He asks Jeeves if there are any cats, and Jeeves replies that there are at least three in the bedroom. Roderick and Bertie go to investigate, and there are not only three but dozens of cats in the bedroom. Jeeves states that they were attracted by the fish under Bertie's bed. This is all bizarre to Bertie. Roderick is overcome and grabs his coat to leave. Bertie tries to leave with him to attempt to explain, and Jeeves hands him his hat. Roderick recognizes the hat as his own that was stolen earlier that day, so now Roderick thinks Bertie is a thief along with a cat obsessed maniac. Roderick leaves in a huff.

Lord Rainsby stops by, and the business with the cats is revealed. As part of initiation into the Seekers club, Claude and Eustace and Lord Rainsby had to go on a scavenger hunt. They got a fish, three cats, and Roderick's hat. They asked Jeeves if he would agree to storing them at Bertie's house for the day and Jeeves agreed. Rainsby is sad the hat is gone and the fish eaten and the cats gone; they must return to the Seekers



empty-handed. Moreover, Claude and Eustace got arrested for trying to steal a truck in the spirit of the scavenger hunt. Bertie gives Rainsby a ten-pound note to spring the boys from jail.

Jeeves was once again behind all the madness. He knew Bertie was not happy with Honoria, so he wanted to give Roderick every impression that Bertie was mad. Jeeves also knew, from Agatha's butler friend, that Honoria meant to fire Jeeves, and so Jeeves was extra motivated to give a bad impression to Roderick. Bertie and Jeeves decide to travel to the United States to escape this latest social disaster.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

Chapter 7 establishes a new status quo: Bertie is now engaged to Honoria, and is being "moulded" by the woman by being read to and being forced to attend classical concerts and the like. Honoria even wishes to be rid of Jeeves, which is probably the scariest threat she could muster, as Bertie is so utterly dependent on his valet.

The latest situation begins with Bertie having to please Sir Roderick, Honoria's father, and prove he is not mentally ill or otherwise unfit. Once again, Bertie's inability to dishonor his family or disappoint his aunt provides the impetus for Bertie to please, this time by being a perfect gentleman for Roderick.

The situation is further complicated by the entrance of Claude and Eustace and their friend Lord Rainsby. In addition to being deemed a comedy of manners, Wodehouse's work could be called anarchic comedy because of just such a complication. Seemingly disparate plots - Roderick and Bertie's lunch, and the college boys' desire to get into the Oxford Seekers club - collide together in unpredictable ways. As usual, the mastermind is Jeeves, who has the foresight to bring these disparate plots together with ultimately desirable, and comic, results. In this instance, as in many others, Bertie is completely unaware of Jeeves' machinations under the very end, when Jeeves' brilliance is revealed.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

9: Bertie and Jeeves have been living in the U.S. for about three weeks. They receive word that Aunt Agatha has sent a young man, Cyril Bassington-Bassington, to the United States with a letter of introduction for Bertie. Bertie sees this as the perfect opportunity to get back on Agatha's good side by taking care of Cyril. Bertie's big motivation is to be able to come back to London for the big horse race at Goodwood.

Tired of waiting for Cyril, Bertie has lunch with a playwright friend, George Caffyn, who has just written a musical comedy called *Ask Dad*. When Bertie gets back, Jeeves informed him that Cyril called and said he'd been arrested. The reason is not given. Bertie and Caffyn rush to the police station. Cyril was arrested for shoving a police officer who gave him a poke with a nightstick. Cyril was not used to the way American police dress and thought it was a postman.

Cyril strikes up a friendship with Caffyn and goes to see a dress rehearsal of *Ask Dad*. Meanwhile, Bertie gets a telegram from Agatha informing him to not introduce Cyril to theater under any circumstances. Later, Cyril sees the letter and thinks it's funny as well as ironic that Caffyn had just offered him a bit part in *Ask Dad*. Cyril's real motivation by coming to the U.S. was to pursue a career in acting, something he couldn't do in England under his father's watchful eyes. Bertie and Jeeves are left to come up with something to discourage Cyril from pursuing theater.

10: Cyril spends the next days rehearsing his lines in Bertie's flat. One day, Bertie is surprised to find a little boy in his flat, which he nicknames Sidney the Sunbeam, sarcastically, because he's nasty and insulting. Jeeves says that he is the son of a noble, who was walking with a valet Jeeves knew when he invited the boy and the valet over for lunch. Sidney the Sunbeam sees Cyril and calls him a "fish-face" who should never act with such a face. Cyril is unsettled by the nasty child.

A week later, Bertie attends a rehearsal of *Ask Dad*. He meets a man there named Blumenfield, who is the manager and patron of the play. The dress rehearsal proceeds well enough, with frequent stops to discuss lines and behaviors, etc. However, Bertie is startled with a child yells out to Blumenfield and begins to give opinions about the play. It's Sidney the Sunbeam, who is really Blumenfield's child. As Caffyn explains, Blumenfield believes his child represents the average theater-goer, and so he pays particular attention to the boy's opinions.

When Cyril finally gets his chance to say his couple of lines, Sidney the Sunbeam objects and tells his father to get rid of the "fish-faced" fellow, which Blumenfield orders. Cyril yells at him and they verbally spar until Cyril leaves the stage.



Later, Cyril says goodbye to Bertie, as he is off to Washington. His theatrical confidence shattered, Cyril says he's decided not to pursue theater in order to honor his father's wishes. After he's gone, Jeeves slyly confesses that he suggested to Sidney the Sunbeam that Cyril was not a good actor.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

The new status quo is Bertie and Jeeves living in the United States. The fact that Bertie sooner jets off to a different country than face his aunt regarding an awkward social situation is another aspect of Wodehouse's parody of the Idle Rich. Bertie simply cannot confront his domineering aunt: this is a certainty throughout the series. Instead, he must hope to regain her favor indirectly, through a successful mentoring of Cyril Bassington-Bassington (a character in the Wodehouse tradition of having a funny name).

At the end of Chapter 9, Cyril's true reason for visiting the States is revealed: he wishes to pursue an acting career. By fleeing from a disapproving relative, Cyril is in fact very similar to Bertie. As usual, Bertie cannot seem to address the problem directly, like an adult. Instead, like a child, he hopes Jeeves will solve the problem or somehow an elaborate and indirect scheme will present itself.

The scheme takes the form of Jeeves bribing Sidney the Sunbeam to sabotage Cyril's acting career. It is appropriate that children and college students are frequently the co-conspirators of Bertie, Bingo and Jeeves, as their various schemes are, at the heart of it, very immature. Jeeves forces Cyril to reconsider his career and head back to London, and in doing so demonstrates his usual keen perception of human nature. Note that Jeeves did not directly compel Cyril to abandon his career; he only provided a catalyst (Sidney the Sunbeam), suggesting perhaps that Jeeves even knew what was best for Cyril in this instance, beyond focusing on what was best for Bertie.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

11: Bertie and Jeeves have returned to London. Bertie travels to Hyde Park and by the famed Speakers' Corner, where demonstrations for various causes take place. One group represented is "Heralds of the Red Dawn," and a man in a beard is really inciting the crowd with class inequality rhetoric and communist propaganda.

He happens to meet Old Little, who has recovered enough from the gout to get around. Old Little by this time has married Miss Watson, his former cook. He has also accomplished a peerage - he is now Lord Bittlesham. Old Little owns a small stable, and states that the horse Ocean Breeze is a favorite to win the upcoming Goodwood Cup. Bertie vows to bet for the horse given this insider tip.

They turn their attention to the bearded Red Dawn speaker, after he signals them out specifically as "non-producers" and symbols of the do-nothing Idle Rich class. They walk away after Old Little refuses to listen.

The next day, Bertie meets his old pal Bingo. Bingo reveals that it was him in the beard as the Red Dawn communist speaker. Bertie is taken aback. Bingo is adopting the disguise in order to court yet another woman, this time the daughter of a Red Dawn radical. Her name is Charlotte Corday Rowbotham. To ingratiate himself with Daddy Rowbotham, Bingo has adopted his disguise so Old Little doesn't find out and deprive him of his allowance on principle. Bingo invites himself and members of the Red Dawn over to Bertie's flat for lunch. Bingo also reveals that he's putting a large sum of money on Ocean Breeze in the Goodwood Cup.

Red Dawn members come and have lunch at Bertie's. This includes father Rowbotham, Charlotte Rowbotham, Bingo in disguise, and a man named Comrade Butt. The lunch goes alright, but Bertie learns that Comrade Butt is betrothed to Charlotte. Jeeves informs him that he caught Charlotte and Bingo flirting and that Comrade Butt caught them and is now very jealous.

12: The next day Bertie meets Bingo and Old Little. Old Little has received a threatening letter from Red Dawn, but as Bingo privately confides to Bertie, the letter is actually from Bingo. Old Little has hired Bingo to find the writer of the letter, so in essence Bingo has created his own job. Bingo is still mad for Charlotte and is planning the wedding. Bertie thinks she's an awful woman and completely in the wrong politically and philosophically.

The much-anticipated Goodwood Cup arrives. Ocean Breeze, Old Little's horse and the "sure thing," does very badly and both Bertie and Bingo lose a lot of money. Bingo, as the bearded communist, is at the race, and Bertie witnesses Bingo issue a very caustic speech to his father, functioning both as a "communist" and as someone angry at a bad racing tip. He enraptures the crowd. Comrade Butt takes the podium next, but he is not



nearly as charismatic a speaker and he is soon booed. Desperate to change the crowd's reaction, Butt shows the crowd that members the upper-class are joining the communist cause by pulling off Bingo's beard and revealing Bingo. Bingo tries to fight Butt and the crowd erupts in a riot.

Later, Jeeves explains to Bertie how the valet had hinted to Comrade Butt that Bingo was the bearded communist. By doing so, old Rowbotham now thinks Bingo is a spy and deceiver, and so the wedding with Charlotte Rowbotham is off. Jeeves has once again saved the day.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

This is the first episode which involves politics; thus far, the proceedings have been decidedly apolitical. However, as the Idle Rich have been parodied in a gentle manner, so the same treatment is given to the "Red Dawn," a stand-in for the Communist party. For example, when members of the Red Dawn come to Bertie's to have lunch, they greedily devour all of the fine ham and other upper-class delicacies, even as they simultaneously denounce the food, sure evidence of their innate hypocrisy.

Bingo's decision to dress up as a Red Dawn member is one in a number of outlandish lengths Bingo will go to in order to impress a woman he has fallen for. This decision also shows Bingo's complete apathy toward any political system, as posing as a Communist and spouting inflammatory rhetoric one doesn't believe doesn't benefit any side or make any sort of genuine political statement.

Perhaps the funniest moment of this episode occurs when Bingo, having just lost the Goodwood Cup on a bad tip, once again assumes the guise of a Red Dawn member to verbally assault his rich uncle. Only this time, he is doing so for real and with genuine anger, as it was his uncle who gave him the bad tip. As a comic "topper," Bingo whips the crowd up into a frenzy with his lambasting of his uncle.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

13: Bingo has laid low for awhile, and is now tutoring a child at a country estate called Twing Hall. Bertie receives a letter from his cousins Claude and Eustace, who are also at Twing Hall studying for exams. The letter invites Bertie down to Twing Hall for a mysterious "golden opportunity," which Bertie accepts.

The estate is owned by Lord Wickhammersley, and his youngest daughter is named Cynthia. Bertie has known Cynthia since they were children, and loved her once though now they are merely friends. Bertie sits next to Cynthia during dinner, and learns that Bingo has been ogling Cynthia - Bingo has fallen in love again. Cynthia thinks Bingo is off, mentally, but also thinks he is sort of handsome. Later, Bertie relays to Bingo that she thinks he is handsome. Bingo is writing poetry about his new love for Cynthia.

Claude and Eustace join Bertie and Bingo. Their "golden opportunity" is a betting pool, thought of by a fellow Oxford student, Steggles. They are betting on which local parson out of the dozen nearby will deliver the longest sermon on Sunday. This is called the great Sermon Handicap. Bertie is familiar with one of the parsons, Heppenstall, which he believes to be far and away the most long-winded, and Steggles has given a bet on Heppenstall very favorable odds. Bertie puts ten pounds on Heppenstall for Claude, Eustace, Bingo, and himself, calling the group a syndicate.

However, soon the group gets nervous about their choice, and to ensure a long sermon, Bertie visits Heppenstall and asks him to read a particular sermon he remembered being especially long, about Brotherly Love. Heppenstall agrees.

Unfortunately, Heppenstall comes down with hay fever, and he will not preach. Panicked, Bertie puts five pounds on the second favorite, Hayward, to hedge their bets. Then, Bertie gets a letter from Heppenstall apologizing for being unable to render the sermon, and stating that in his place his nephew Bates will preach the sermon. And so Bates is the dark horse winner of the Sermon Handicap. Jeeves, as usual, comes out on top. Heppenstall dictated his letter to his butler, who Jeeves is friendly with, and so Jeeves had advance knowledge enough to put ten pounds on Bates.

14: Bingo has fallen out of love with Cynthia. A "village school treat" is going to occur on the grounds of Twing Hall soon, involving local schoolchildren in games like the potato sack race and the egg-and-spoon race. Steggles has developed another betting pool based upon the results of this event. Bertie and Bingo again agree to form a syndicate to win. They bet on the Mothers' Sack Race. For the Girls' Egg-and-Spoon Race, the heavy favorite is Sarah Mills. In another event, the Choir Boys' Handicap Race, Jeeves claims to know for sure who will win: Harold, a tubby and very unlikely boy to win a foot race. Jeeves knows because Harold insulted him and Jeeves chased after him. After



Jeeves proves the boys' speed by paying him to insult a footman and run away, Bertie and Bingo bet on the boy.

To ensure their investment, Bertie and Bingo train the boy, watch what he eats, and give him exercise. Unfortunately, Steggles sees Harold run and Bertie fears Steggles will try to sabotage Harold somehow.

Steggles does just that at an evening service. Harold begins screaming and squealing, interrupting the whole service. Harold claims that Steggles put a beetle down his back, but no one believes him and parson Heppenstall tosses him from the boys' choir. Harold can no longer compete in the event, then.

A sad Bertie tells Jeeves the news. Jeeves says he has taken the liberty to bet on a very long shot in the Girls' Egg-and-Spoon Race, Prudence Baxter, which may make back their money, but Bertie is skeptical.

Steggles manages to sabotage the syndicate's favorite for the Mothers' Sack Race by feeding her just before the race. It seems there is no hope, especially when Sarah Mills, the heavy favorite, comes in first in the Girls' Egg-and-Spoon Race. However, an announcement is made by Heppenstall after the race. It seems that an unknown valet (Jeeves) was seen bribing the top four finishers of the Girls' Egg-and-Spoon Race to race their best. As a result, the first four finishers in the race are disqualified, and the default winner is the fifth-placer, Prudence Baxter. The boys win big after all, thanks to Jeeves.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

This episode begins with a "golden opportunity" promised by Claude and Eustace, if Bertie comes to Twing Hall. In keeping with his gambling addiction, Bertie cannot resist such an opportunity.

When Bertie falls in love with Cynthia, he curses her because he is attempting to write poetry about her, and nothing good rhymes with Cynthia. This is indicative of just how flimsy Bertie's attachments to women are.

Whereas politics was the target of the lampoon in the last episode, this episode's victim is the Church of England. It is outrageous and completely sacrilegious for Bertie and the boys to start a betting pool based upon the lengths of sermons; however, as with everything truly comic, there is a shred of truth (people often get bored during long sermons) that is then exaggerated to ridiculous extremes. As with politics, the flippancy with which each member of the betting pools treats the Church is indicative of a certain casual disregard for the entire institution, a "shocking" stance that is exploited for comic effect.

Perhaps less shocking is the next episode's betting on events in the annual school "treat." However, the inhumane treatment inflicted on poor Harold and the other

children, who become merely a rope in the bettors' behind-the-scenes tug of war, provides the appropriate taboo to be mined for comedy.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

15: Some time later, Bertie receives a letter from Bingo, stating that the man is in love again, this time with Mary Burgess, niece of Reverend Mr. Heppenstall. Bingo is still at Twing Hall tutoring. Jeeves believes Burgess is a fine woman, and so Bertie decides to head there to meet the young lady. When they meet Burgess, she is accompanied by Reverend Mr. Wingham, Mr. Heppenstall's new curate. Wingham is vying for Burgess' affection, at odds with Bingo. Jeeves suggest that, instead of treating Wingham as an enemy, they become friends in order for Bingo to get closer to Burgess, which Bingo agrees to, and over the next couple of weeks Bingo and Wingham do many things together. Bertie and Jeeves leave.

Upon the arrival of another Bingo telegram, Jeeves takes off to Twing Hall again. He returns with news that Steggles has began a bet concerning Bingo "landing" Burgess or not, and odds are against him. Steggles has again fixed the bet by involving Bingo and Burgess' younger brother in an eating contest, for which Bingo was blamed by Mary Burgess, thus losing favor. Jeeves has recommended to Bingo that he appear as an absolute saint by doing charitable works - tending to the sick, etc.

Bingo does these good deeds, and they increase his favor with Mary Burgess. When Wingham becomes sick and cannot direct the local school Christmas pageant, Bingo jumps at the chance to impress Mary by volunteering to take his place. Bingo has a grandiose conception of the play and works for weeks with the children in various song-and-dance numbers, etc. Bertie receives an invitation to the pageant (with all the credits given to Richard "Bingo" Little), and attends. Bertie is convinced that Steggles will try to sabotage Bingo.

The play starts well enough, but the lights go completely out and one point. But after five minutes, they go back on, with little damage done. However, the pageant arrives at a song Bertie has inserted, one called "Always Listen to Mother, Girls!" from another musical. The song has suggestive, bawdy lyrics and is entirely inappropriate for a school production. To worsen things, the very conservative Squire Tressidder, in the audience, is called upon to sing a refrain of the song, which he flatly refuses. The lights go on and off again.

For the final insult, one song involves a theme of oranges, and kids are supposed to hand out balls of yarn to represent oranges to the first couple of rows. Steggles switched out the yarn for real oranges, and the kids don't hand out but instead throw the oranges into the crowd. The rowdier element of the crowd begins tossing oranges back and forth, and it devolves into a food fight. After being hit a couple of times, Bertie flees the theater, as does most everybody else. Bingo's pageant is a complete failure, and he will have no chance with Mary Burgess.



Bertie is sad for his friend, but Jeeves managed to go in with a fellow valet to "buy the book" on Steggles' betting pool, acting as the house, and so they were rewarded handsomely by anyone betting on Bingo.

16: Aunt Agatha visits Bertie. He learns that cousins Claude and Eustace are being sent away, in a sort of exile, to South Africa. They were expelled from Oxford for pouring lemonade on a Junior Dean of their college. Agatha wants Bertie to house them for their last night in London and make sure they board their ship on time.

Claude and Eustace arrive. Bertie wants to turn in early, but Claude and Eustace insist on having an all-nighter on the town. The next day, hungover and groggy, Bertie is amazed to see Claude in his room, and not on a ship. At a club last night, Claude fell in love with a girl named Marion Wardour. He couldn't go to South Africa full of such love, so he ditched Eustace. As it is revealed, Eustace has also avoided the South African trip for the very same reason - he is in love with Marion as well. The boys both agree to fight for Marion's favor, and meanwhile hide out at Bertie's.

Aunt Agatha visits Bertie again. She becomes worried about the fate of the boys (she doesn't know they stayed in London), claiming that Uncle George may be a psychic because the other day he swears to have seen the ghost of Eustace on the street. Obviously it was the real Eustace he saw. Instead of fessing up, the boys agree to wear beards and disguises around town so they won't be detected.

Marion comes calling to Bertie and begs him to get rid of Claude and Eustace for her somehow - they have been dogging her constantly, although Claude has given her a nice cigarette case. Soon after, Agatha comes once again and orders Bertie to accompany Uncle George on a few days' vacation. George is in shock, first with Eustace's "ghost" and now because he claims to have seen a man with a big nose and beard in his home burglarizing him. In reality it was Claude in his disguise stealing the cigarette case he gave to Marion to impress her. Eustace hears of this "villainy" and the two do not speak to each other.

However, days later, Claude and Eustace both approach Bertie separately and state that they have decided to go to South Africa after all. Bertie buys their tickets and they leave separately. Jeeves has been behind this latest development. He gave Marion the advice to tell Claude and Eustace that she was traveling to South Africa to see a play and stay awhile. The two then jumped at the chance to travel down to meet her. To prevent them from immediately coming back, Marion further instructed Claude and Eustace that she would be traveling next to Madeira. As the final bit of good news, Bertie doesn't have to travel on vacation with his Uncle George after all, as Jeeves has supplied George's butler with his "pick-me-up" tonic, and the medicine fixed George right up.



Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

This episode features Bingo at his deceiving best. Whereas before he dressed as a Communist, for one example, in this episode he takes on an entirely different disguise, that of a community-minded, responsible philanthropist.

As with other episodes, Bingo takes an initial good idea from Jeeves but goes too far. He volunteers for the Christmas Entertainment and decides to rewrite the whole show in order to impress his latest love interest; rewriting an entire pageant is a good deal more involved than what Jeeves had suggested - caring for the sick and elderly - and so once again Bingo is over his head. Demonstrating his complete debauchery and lack of good taste, Bingo has the children sing a particularly bawdy selection from an adult musical comedy. Completely unaware of the line he has crossed, Bingo goes even further by forcing a child to urge a bishop in the audience to sing along.

In the next episode, Chapter 16, it is Claude and Eustace's turn to become smitten with a lady and do silly and socially erroneous things. Claude and Eustace are twins and are rarely seen apart, and so appropriately they fall in love with the same woman, a classic comic situation. The complication with Uncle George and his supposed psychic powers at having seen the ghost of Eustace is a thread that threatens even more anarchy.

Jeeves delivers Claude and Eustace a certain comeuppance for their foolishness by tricking them into boarding the boat for South Africa after all, based upon a lie. Par for the course, Jeeves even manages to get Bertie out of Uncle George's vacation, and all is well.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

17: Bertie and Bingo's usual gentlemen's club is undergoing cleaning and repair, and so they are stuck with relaxing at the Senior Liberal Club, every member of which seems to be in their eighties. At the club, the two order from a waitress, and Bingo again becomes smitten with her at first sight.

Bingo begs Bertie to re-assume the persona of Rosie M. Banks to his father Lord Bittlesham in order to restore his allowance and obtain approval from the old man for Bingo marrying the waitress. Bertie reluctantly agrees, and must read Rosie M. Banks' new book in order to chat with Bittlesham. Bittlesham is thrilled at the visit, and Bertie is able to convince him to restore Bingo's allowance. However, Bittlesham is annoyed at Bingo's inconstancy with women, and so he won't quite give his consent to the marriage. Bingo reveals at the end of the chapter that he married the waitress.

18: Bingo plans for Bertie to break the news of the marriage to Bittlesham, in the guise of Rosie M. Banks. Bertie does so, and while chatting with Bittlesham he notices Rosie M. Banks' new book on his table, with a particular passage highlighted. Using quotations from that passage, Bertie is able to convince Bittlesham that Bingo's marriage to the waitress is righteous, a result of fate and true love.

However, things go awry. As Bingo informs Bertie some time later, Bingo and the waitress met Bittlesham. At that point the waitress revealed that she is actually Rosie M. Banks the author, who was only moonlighting as a waitress in order to obtain first-hand research for her next book. Bittlesham is outraged at Bertie and Bingo's deception, and so is the real Rosie M. Banks. They are both demanding audience with Bertie for a personal explanation. Bertie takes Jeeves advice to get out of town on a hunting trip for a couple of weeks to let the heat die down.

Bertie arrives back in London after the hunting trip very nervous, but he meets Bittlesham and he appears more nervous than angry. Bingo reveals that Jeeves came up with the idea that Bingo should tell Bittlesham and Rosie that Bertie is mentally ill, and that Bertie really thought he was Rosie M. Banks. That way, Bingo is off the hook (as he truly believed Bertie was Rosie, according to the lie), and Bertie won't get confronted. Bertie is horrified at the thought that several people around town think he is crazy, and he is about to yell at Jeeves for crafting such an idea, but Jeeves is such a perfect valet and he has laid out his dinner tea and slippers so perfectly that Bertie can't bring himself to yell.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

Bookending the volume nicely, Bertie in the persona of Rosie M. Banks makes a reappearance. In these last chapters, Bingo has the comically repetitive retort of "We



were at school together!" whenever Bertie expresses reluctance at going through with one of Bingo's harebrained schemes, as if merely attending Oxford at the same time is an excuse for doing such foolish things. Bingo has gone farther than he ever has before at the end of Chapter 17, revealing he has married the waitress. Bingo's casual regard of such a momentous event, an event he almost forgot to mention to Bertie, is further comic material that continues Bingo's characterization as a capricious fellow who makes hasty decisions.

Chapter 18 features Bertie and Bingo getting caught in their own lie in the worst way, with another comic reversal of fortune revealing the waitress is actually the real Rosie M. Banks in disguise. With both Lord Bittlesham and Rosie demanding an explanation, the situation looks entirely hopeless. But, to conclude on the right note, Jeeves rescues Bertie from the fire by claiming Bertie is insane and adopted the Rosie M. Banks persona out of madness. Once again, Bertie is among the last to know of his own rescue, and this angers him. However, as Bertie states at the beginning of the volume, Jeeves is so perfect that he really cannot be faulted for anything.



Characters

Bertie Wooster appears in All Chapters

Bertie Wooster is a member of the British upper-class, specifically the Idle Rich. He is perhaps in his late-20s, though an exact age is never given, beyond the fact that he attended Oxford several years ago. He comes from a family of great wealth, and therefore he needs no job to support himself. In fact, he calls betting on horses his career. His days are spent at the gentlemen's club, or having lunch, or visiting an acquaintance's country estate. He has no worries about money, though he wants to accumulate more through betting, and he frequently must give his friends like Bingo and Claude and Eustace money to get by.

Bertie is a bit of a clown, and his free-spiritedness combined with lack of responsibility and lack of work ethic is always getting him in trouble with his society and relatives, especially Aunt Agatha. He is desperate not to marry or settle down, considering that a kind of death, but Agatha is always pressing him to date this or that eligible noblewoman. Bertie is very immature, wanting only to play and eat all day like a child, and this immaturity gets him into all sorts of trouble.

As a sort of child-man, Bertie relies upon his trusty valet Jeeves to solve his problems and perform damage control after comic misadventures. Bertie has a very high opinion of Jeeves and considers him a perfect and wise man to be constantly consulted. However, Bertie rejects any notion that he is less than intelligent or capable of solving his own problems, although when he attempts to solve his own problems he usually makes matters worse.

Jeeves appears in All Chapters

Jeeves' is Bertie Wooster's ever-present valet. He is improbably wise and worldly, and he has an uncanny ability to offer brilliant advice and intervene in Bertie's affairs in order to save the poor chap. Jeeves is characterized as nearly omniscient: he possesses an amazing amount of knowledge about most any subject. Bertie depends upon Jeeves' advice heavily when making any important decision.

Despite his vast knowledge and foresight, Jeeves has the propriety and discretion of a perfect valet. He rarely offers advice or opinions unless asked, and even then he is very tight-lipped, usually offering a "Yes, Sir" or "No, Sir" in response to questions. On the surface, he appears to be uninterested in Bertie's affairs, remaining emotionless even when Bertie feels he is "in the soup," meaning in a very bad situation. However, behind the scenes Jeeves is very active in making sure Bertie is protected and unharmed in his various misadventures, performing actions without Bertie's knowledge.

While nothing really fazes Jeeves, he has a strong opinion about fashion, feeling a very conservative approach is most prudent. Bertie sometimes has a penchant for unusual or



loud clothing and accessories, and when Bertie persists in wearing such articles despite Jeeves' objection, Jeeves has a bit of a fit and, for example, won't give Bertie advice when asked.

In his off time, Jeeves reads books in order to improve himself. Much of his personal life is never depicted: he exists to save Bertie from himself.

Bingo Little appears in All Chapters

Richard "Bingo" Little is Bertie's best friend. Bertie and Bingo went to Oxford together. While they are both members of the Idle Rich, Bingo must please his uncle in order to receive his life allowance. Bingo has a weakness for women and romance, and is always falling in love rapidly, which provides Bertie and Jeeves plenty of challenges.

Honorita Glossop appears in Chapters 5, 6, 7

Honorita is a woman Bertie's Aunt Agatha fixes Bertie up with. Bingo becomes infatuated with the girl, but the feeling quickly passes. In an effort to get Honorita closer with Bingo, Bertie inadvertently attracts Honorita to himself, and for a while Bertie and Honorita are engaged. Bertie is able to break the engagement when Jeeves convinces Honorita's father Roderick that Bertie is crazy.

Aunt Agatha appears in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16

Aunt Agatha is Bertie's domineering, shrill old aunt. She is always insisting that Bertie settle down, grow up, and marry someone, and in this vein she sets Bertie up with several women. Bertie is afraid of Agatha, and he dares not openly contradict her, and so he must always cook up some scheme to please Aunt Agatha but prevent being married.

Cyril Bassington-Bassington appears in Chapters 9 and 10

The doubly-named Cyril is a young nobleman who comes to stay with Bertie while he is in the United States. Secretly, Cyril wants to pursue a theatrical career, and he gets a small part in a musical comedy. However, Jeeves spoils Cyril's ambitions by bribing a young boy to ridicule him in front of the boy's father, the musical's manager.



Cynthia Corday Rowbotham appears in Chapters 11 and 12

Cynthia, considered by Bertie to be a "vile" woman, is the daughter of a Communist revolutionary, Old Rowbotham, and she has inherited some of her father's ideals and forcefulness. Bingo falls in love with her and masquerades as a Communist Red Dawn member in order to get closer to her and win her affections. However, Bingo must fight with Comrade Butt for Cynthia's affection.

Claude and Eustace appears in Chapters 7, 13, 14, 16

Claude and Eustace are twin cousins of Bertie, who attend Oxford. Criminals in the making, they are always getting into trouble, whether it's stealing a car to get into Oxford's Seekers club, or getting expelled from school for dousing a school official with soda water. In one episode, they both fall in love with Marion, and decide to skip out on their exile to South Africa.

Steggles appears in Chapters 13, 14, 15

Steggles, called a "rat" by Bertie, is the immoral originator of the Sermon Handicap and the school treat betting pools. He sets odds for his betting pools and then goes about sabotaging competitors in order to make Bertie and his friends lose bets.

Rosie M. Banks appears in Chapters 17, 18

Rosie M. Banks is a novelist of popular romance novels. Bingo courts and marries a waitress at a gentleman's club, who was revealed to be Rosie in disguise doing research for her next book. She is outraged that Bertie impersonated her and demands an explanation. She is only assuaged when she is told by Jeeves that Bertie is insane.



Objects/Places

The Novels of Rosie M. Banks appears in Chapters 1, 2, 17, 18

At Jeeves' suggestion, Bingo reads the romance novels of Rosie M. Banks to his uncle in order to get his uncle's consent for Bingo's desired marriage to a waitress. The old uncle winds up loving the novels, which give him the idea to marry his own cook.

Roville, France appears in Chapters 3 and 4

Roville, France is where Bertie meets his Aunt Agatha, where she suggests Aline Hemmingway as a suitable girl for Bertie to court and marry. At the hotel, Bertie is conned by Soapy Sid and Aline his accomplice, but Jeeves saves the day by stealing back Aunt Agatha's precious pearl necklace.

Agatha's Pearls appears in Chapter 4

Soapy Sid hopes to con Bertie by offering him pearls stolen from Agatha as collateral for a small loan. After the transaction, Sid changed necklace cases, meaning Bertie is left with no necklace but an obligation to cover the necklace after the small loan is repaid. Jeeves steals the necklace back from Sid before he can realize his scheme.

Ask Dad appears in Chapters 9 and 10

Ask Dad is the name of playwright George Caffyn's musical comedy, for which Cyril Bassington-Bassington is offered a small part. However, during dress rehearsal, Cyril is ridiculed by the son of the theater manager, and after a yelling match, Cyril quits the musical and decides to abandon his theatrical career and go back to London.

Hyde Park appears in Chapters 11 and 12

Hyde Park is an important park in the heart of London. It features the Speakers' Corner, where Bertie encounters Bingo disguised with a beard as a Communist making a propaganda speech.

Twing Hall appears in Chapters 13, 14, 15

Twing Hall is a country estate that Bingo is forced to tutor at after his uncle reduces his allowance. Claude and Eustace are always at Twing Hall, ostensibly studying for exams. Bertie is invited to Twing Hall and introduced to the Sermon Handicap.



Sermon Handicap appears in Chapter 13

The Sermon Handicap, as devised by Steggles, is a betting pool dedicated to betting on which of a dozen local parsons will deliver the longest sermon on Sunday. Bertie bets big on Heppenstall, but his bet is ruined when Heppenstall comes down with fever.

Girls' Egg-and-Spoon Race appears in Chapter 14

This is one of the final events of the annual village school treat, which takes place at Twing Hall. Jeeves bets on the fifth-place winner, then proceeds to bribe the first four finishers, disqualifying them and making his bet the winner by default.

Uncle George's Cigarette Case appears in Chapter 16

Claude, in a fake nose and beard disguise, breaks into his Uncle's estate and steals his valuable cigarette case in order to impress Marion. George believes he has been the victim of a burglary. His twin, Eustace, hears of this and ceases speaking to Claude.

Village School Christmas Entertainment appears in Chapter 15

After Wingham becomes ill, Bingo steps in as the director of the annual Christmas pageant at Twing Hall. Bingo takes much too much creative control of the usually simple event. He inserts a bawdy song into the program, which alienates the family-friendly crowd.

Themes

The Idle Rich

Much of *The Inimitable Jeeves* takes place in the world of the Idle Rich (Idle Rich is even a phrase used several times in the book). Much of the humor of the book is derived because of the author's parody of this class. Bertie, Bingo, and other members of the Idle Rich are disconnected from the reality the reader is accustomed to. They certainly have a different culture - jet setting from one fabulous locale to another, without any financial worries and barely a care in the world. They also have different values - Bertie's goal is to remain unencumbered by any responsibility whatsoever. The Idle Rich are depicted as essentially narcissistic, out of touch, "loony" (a phrase used several times), dim-witted, and childlike. It is this exaggeration of a stereotype of the wealthy that author Wodehouse uses to comic effect.

Members of the Idle Rich are depicted as quite capable of inappropriate behavior and traits that lead to comic mischief of all sorts. Idle Rich immaturity leads Bertie to pushing a child off a bridge to make his friend look good, for one example, while it leads Bingo into disguising himself as a communist in order to better flirt with a girl. The Idle Rich quality of being narcissistic and self-absorbed leads to Bingo's frequent falling in love; he falls more for the idea of being in love than for any actual person. Claude and Eustace stealing for the Oxford Seekers club, not caring who they hurt.

Coming to the literal rescue of the Idle Rich, and especially Bertie, is Jeeves. The consequences in regards to the author's perspective on class is clear. Jeeves, of the servant class, is infinitely more wise, judicious, observant, intelligent, and most everything else than Bertie, the upper-class man he serves. Jeeves is a creation that champions the working man at the expense of poking fun at the Idle Rich, though that is not to say Wodehouse doesn't treat the Idle Rich with a lot of affection.

Love and Marriage

Bingo's love life, and to a lesser extent Bertie's love life, is a frequent cause for trouble in Bertie's day-to-day existence. Bingo is characterized as a hopeless romantic, in love with love, whose intense spells of affection go away as suddenly as they had arrived. Bertie, though more level-headed and sensible, is nonetheless as commitment-phobic as Bingo, dreading any potential mate suggested by his Aunt Agatha and resisting any woman molding him. Love and marriage is a common subject for humor, and this volume is no exception, as many of Bertie's comic misadventures are related to either putting a boy and girl together or driving them apart. Characters can go to hyperbolic lengths to accomplish these tasks, from Bertie masquerading as a female romance novelist to Claude dressing up in a ridiculous fake nose and beard to steal his uncle's cigarette case in order to impress his new flame Marion.



Bingo and Bertie represent two extreme perspectives on love, appropriate since Wodehouse frequently goes to the extremes in order to pull off his comic escapades. Bertie avoids love like the plague. He believes love leads to marriage which leads to a woman controlling a man's life. As with Bertie's brief engagement to Honoria Glossop, marriage is depicted as a woman digging her claws into a man, with Honoria dragging Bertie to concerts and readings in order to increase his "culture" and making the unthinkable demand of firing Jeeves. Bertie believes a large and vital piece of him would disappear if he were to marry. This sort of "old ball and chain" depiction of a wife is an ancient device that Wodehouse has incorporated into his own particular world of the Idle Rich and a comedy of manners.

While Bertie's view on love and marriage is too pessimistic, Bingo's conception of love is far too ideal to be able to exist in the real world. Putting his latest infatuation on a pedestal (as when he writes sentimental poetry about Gloria), Bingo makes love an untouchable, unworkable invention of his own head, something for which he is prepared to go extraordinary lengths.

Social Obligation

It is interesting to examine the amount of societal pressure applied to Bertie. For while it's true he is a rule-breaker and an iconoclast, he still seems to feel the usual societal pressures. For example, Bertie has no intention of settling down and marrying a woman, and in this way he is ignoring a certain societal expectation to get married around his age. However, when Aunt Agatha comes calling and seeks to set Bertie up with a woman, Bertie feels pressured to accept Agatha's matchmaking. Also, Bertie is eccentric enough to run away to America, for example, when the going gets rough in London and he has committed one too many social errors, but when Agatha sends a telegram asking Bertie to look after Cyril, Bertie jumps at the chance to get back in his aunt's good graces by taking care of the gentleman.

This very interesting dynamic between the desire to resist society and the desire to conform to society gives the comedy its situational humor and makes this a true comedy of manners. Bertie has somewhat of a disregard for society's expectations and society's view of him, a childish streak. However, he would not be having the problems he becomes embroiled in if society and his place in it did not matter to Bertie. He desperately wants to get on Aunt Agatha's good side, for example, even when it means she might suggest a girl to date he would have to accommodate. It is in fact this intense societal pressure that leads to the mad-capped resolutions of many of the stories, in which Jeeves solves a convoluted social situation with a similarly convoluted solution. It is the constant desire, primarily of Bertie and Bingo, to establish their non-conformist beliefs, values, and rules in a very conformist world (the Idle Rich). They wish to work within the system, not blow it up and create a new world order.

Style

Point of View

The Inimitable Jeeves takes place from the first-person point of view of Bertie Wooster, a member of the Idle Rich who becomes involved in comic misadventures only to be bailed out by his trusty valet Jeeves. Bertie is an iconoclast with a gambling addiction, but otherwise he has good intentions and wants to do right. It is through Bertie's eyes that the reader gleans information about the principal characters. Jeeves is characterized as extremely trustworthy and wise; Bingo is a "good chappie" but he's too easily seduced by women; Honoria is a "pot of poison" and similar characterizations.

The choice of this point of view is crucial, because usually the resolution to any certain episode has a "twist" that requires Bertie's ignorance of what Jeeves is doing behind the scenes. For example, when Bertie is conned by Soapy Sid and his accomplice, Jeeves reveals that he secretly stole back Aunt Agatha's pearls, saving the day. Bertie is shocked at the twist, marveling at Jeeves' perfect wisdom and foresight, right along with the reader.

Giving the narrative duties to Bertie Wooster also injects a lot of personality into the narrative. Bertie provides very colorful descriptions of characters and events. He is desperate to escape responsibilities like marriage, apathetic about things he should ostensibly care greatly about, and generally feels strongly about certain things that could never be spoken aloud in his conservative British upper-class society. The reader is given access to all of these comic thoughts because of this choice of point of view.

Setting

The Inimitable Jeeves is primarily set in 1920s London, between the World Wars. While Bertie and Jeeves may make excursions to the United States or other vacation spots around England, London is Bertie Wooster's primary home, and the place he feels most comfortable in.

Important to the setting is its focus on upper-class society. The so-called Idle Rich are a constant target of parody, and on appearance a strange culture, an exaggerated conception of the wealthy. This society has a very conservative structure and many social obligations, and much attention is put into fitting in and getting along. One must not ruffle feathers or strike out against the established order. Into this scenario characters like Bertie and Bingo are dropped, who have very little social grace, and who are otherwise rather debauched and foppish. Therefore, much of the comedy depends upon Bertie and Bingo rubbing up against the social order, trying desperately to remain "under the radar" so to speak, to fit in, but failing miserably each time.

The Inimitable Jeeves has a timeless quality, insofar that an approximate status quo is returned to after every episode, and the characters never change or age. And beyond



the vaguest of historical references, very little in the realm of current events, popular culture, or politics are mentioned, in order to maintain this feeling of timelessness.

Language and Meaning

Wodehouse employs a very impressive vocabulary for both Bertie's narrative and the dialogue of the characters. This is appropriate to an upper-class society in which members would have had access to an excellent education. Jeeves, as the wisest character, has especially impressive, even pedantic, vocabulary, though like a good servant much of his dialogue is in the form of "Yes, Sir" or "No, Sir."

Contemporary British slang is in frequent use in the narration, which serves to help ground the piece in a certain society and place. Slang is also a form of relief for Bertie (and for the reader?), who must otherwise exist and behave in a rigidly proper social environment. However, when Bertie is alone with people he is very comfortable with, namely Bertie and Jeeves, Bertie can also slip into using slang. These contemporary British slang words include: rummy, chappie, good egg, bally, dash it all, blighter, blooming, and more. Slang also aids to Bertie's general charm and helps to ally him with the reader - the reader feels Bertie is being sincere and talking to a close friend. Finally, casual vernacular and slang set Bertie apart from the stuffy lords and ladies he is surrounded with.

Much of the humor of *The Inimitable Jeeves* is derived from a tradition of deadpan British wit. Characters can be enmeshed in hopelessly silly and outrageous situations, but they remain steadfast and stoic, keeping their "stiff upper lip." This is reflected in the fact that characters speak very eloquently no matter the situation. Similarly, Bertie's narration can relate an outrageous situation or turn of events in the same deadpan fashion, adding a touch of humorous incongruity between what is happening and how it is being described.

Structure

The Inimitable Jeeves is divided into mostly self-contained episodes. These episodes may encompass two short chapters, or an entire episode can be told in a single long chapter. Each episode begins with a few paragraphs to establish a status quo. This usually involves Bertie going about his usual business of going to lunch or visiting his gentleman's club, and generally being a do-nothing member of the Idle Rich.

Next comes a comic complication. This can be brought by the entrance of a relative (Aunt Agatha is a common device used), a problem of Bingo's (usually falling in love), or some other awkward social obligation or challenge. This causes a great deal of anxiety for Bertie, who is unable to address the situation directly because of societal pressures. At this point, Bertie may turn to Jeeves, who offers succinct and brilliant advice. Or, in some episodes, Bertie and Jeeves may be feuding, or it may be too early for Jeeves to intervene, and in these instances Bertie must brave the next events without advice.

Jeeves' advice may be followed, and be going well for awhile, but then an additional complication may arise, or perhaps Bertie or Bingo use Jeeves' advice but take it to an unpleasant extreme. In any case, the complications appear to overwhelm Bertie, and the complications coalesce and climax in an outrageous embarrassment or backfire of intended plans.

However, just when things appear at their lowest, in a twist Jeeves may explain how he intervened in the events that unfolded. He may have even caused many of the misadventures, but it is revealed how the end result was ultimate.



Quotes

"[Jeeves] put the good old cup of tea softly on the table by my bed, and I took a refreshing sip. Just right, as usual. Not too hot, not too sweet, not too weak, not too strong, not too much milk, and not a dropped spilled on the saucer. A most amazing cove, Jeeves. So dashed competent in every respect." (page 9)

"'What! I'm hanged if I do!'
'And you call yourself a pal of mine!'
'Yes, I know; but there are limits.'
'Bertie,' said Bingo reproachfully, 'I saved your life once.'
'When?'
'Didn't I? It must have been some other fellow, then. Well, anyway, we were boys together and all that. You can't let me down.'" (page 23)

"[Aunt Agatha:] 'It is young men like you, Bertie, who make the person with the future of the race at heart despair. Cursed with too much money, you fritter away in idle selfishness a life which might have been made useful, helpful and profitable. You do nothing but waste your time on frivolous pleasures. You are simply an anti-social animal, a drone. Bertie, is is imperative that you marry.'" (page 35)

"'You will find Mr Wooster,' [Jeeves] was saying to the substitute chappie, ' an exceedingly pleasant and amiable young gentleman, but not intelligent. By no means intelligent. Mentally he is negligible - quite negligible.'
Well, I mean to say, what!
I suppose, strictly speaking, I ought to have charged in and ticked the blighter off properly in no uncertain voice. But I doubt whether it's human possible to tick Jeeves off." (page 55)

"'I think he's a bad influence for you,' said Honoria. 'When we are married, you must get rid of Jeeves.'
It was at this point that I jerked the spoon and sent six of the best and crispest [fried potatoes] sailing on to the sideboard, with Spenser gamboling after them like a dignified old retriever." (pages 72-73)

"You know, the longer I live, the more clearly I see that half the trouble in this bally world is caused by the light-hearted and thoughtless way in which chappies dash off letters of introduction and hand them to other chappies to deliver to chappies of the third part." (page 90)



"It's a rummy thing, but I had finished breakfast and gone out and got as far as the lift before I remembered what it was that I had meant to do to reward Jeeves for his really sporting behavior in this matter of the chump Cyril. It cut me to the heart to do it, but I had decided to give him his way and let those purple socks pass out of my life. After all, there are times when a cove must make sacrifices." (page 114)

"I never know, when I'm telling a story, whether to cut the thing down to plain facts or whether to drool on and shove in a lot of atmosphere, and all that. [...] But better give it a miss, I think." (page 131)

"I had an idea I was in love with Cynthia. However, it blew over. A dashed pretty and lively and attractive girl, mind you, but full of ideals and all that. I may be wronging her, but I have an idea that she's the sort of girl who would want a fellow to carve out a career and what not." (pages 141-142)

"I'm bound to say that, as a general rule, my idea of a large afternoon would be to keep as far away from a village school treat as possible. A sticky business. But with such grave issues toward, if you know what I mean, I sank my prejudices on this occasion and rolled up. I found the proceedings about as scaly as I had expected." (page 175)

"I don't know if you've ever met my Uncle George. He's a festive old egg who wanders from club to club continually having a couple with other festive old eggs. When he heaves in sight, waiters brace themselves up and the wine-steward toys with his corkscrew. It was my Uncle George who discovered that alcohol was a food well in advance of modern medical thought." (page 218)

"It was like one of those moments in a play where the chappie, about to steep himself in crime, suddenly hears the soft, appealing strains of the old melody he learned at his mother's knee. Softened, I mean to say. That's the word I want. I was softened." (page 252)

Topics for Discussion

What is Bertie's view of marriage? What is Bingo's?

What things go wrong with Bingo's Christmas Entertainment?

How does Jeeves save the day after betting in the village school treat events goes badly?

What is the nature of Bertie and Jeeves' relationship? How aware is Bertie of Jeeves' interference in his affairs?

What are the characteristics of the Idle Rich as depicted in this volume?

How does Bertie typically reward Jeeves for solving many of his personal problems?

What does the syndicate's betting on sermon length say about its members' views of church and organized religion?