

ACTOR RICHARD BURTON described a conversation with Sheran Hornby as “inine.” He said to her, “You all sound like characters from P.G. Wodehouse,” pronouncing “Wodehouse” as “any sensible man would, rhyming ‘Wode’ with ‘spode’... Wode-as-in-spode-house.” To which she replied, “Wood-as-in-good-house.”

“What makes you so sure that it is ‘wood’ and not ‘wode?’” he asked.

“Because he is,” she said, “my grandfather.”

P.G. WODEHOUSE IS the subject of a number of biographies and studies, some of which are listed on page 16. If you’d like to read Wodehouse on Wodehouse, look for the following:

Author! Author! New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.

Bring on the Girls, co-written with Guy Bolton. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953.

Over 70. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1957.

IRISH PLAYWRIGHT SEAN O’CASEY dismissed

P.G. Wodehouse as “the performing flea of English literature.”

Undaunted, Wodehouse immediately put the insult to advantage by calling his 1962 autobiography *Performing Flea*. It was published in the United States under the title *Author! Author!*

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At their home on Long Island, New York, he and his wife Ethel lived lives of happy routine among cats and dogs, especially Pekingese and dachshunds. He left to his wife, whom he occasionally called “Baby Doll,” all decisions about domestic life. She once observed that she was sure he would be happy living in a dog house if he were assured writing materials and quiet.

He was described by friends as ungregarious and a man of simple tastes, with no pretensions; one of his editors called him humble. Though dismissed by many in the literary establishment, Wodehouse drew the praise of such varied writers as Orwell, Evelyn Waugh, Rudyard Kipling, Agatha Christie, Hillaire Belloc, and Ogden Nash. His writings have been translated into all the European languages as well as into Chinese and Japanese.

Forgiven for his “Berlin broadcasts” indiscretions, Wodehouse was made a knight of the British Empire just before his death in 1975.

Richard Osborne reports that upon hearing of Wodehouse’s death, he asked a Carmelite priest to remember the author at mass. “He replied, ‘Well, I will, since you ask me. But in the case of someone who brought such joy to so many people in the course of his life, do you think it is necessary?’”*

**After Hours With P.G. Wodehouse*

And Then There Was Jeeves

Jeeves first appeared in a 1917 short story, “Extricating Young Gussie,” and continued to be prominent thereafter in numerous other stories. He and Bertie made their novel debut in 1934 in *Thank You, Jeeves*. Wodehouse recalled that Jeeves was conceived when he saw possibilities in another butler he had created for the stage. The character had two lines: “Mrs. Gregson to see you, sir” and “Very good, sir. Which suit will you wear?” It was only later that “the man’s qualities dawned upon me. I still blush,” he said, “to think of the off-hand way I treated him at our first encounter.”*

Jeeves’ name appears in at least 15 titles of Wodehouse novels, short story collections, and omnibus editions.

*Introduction to *The World of Jeeves*.



From Page to Stage and Screen

By Jeeves is not the first time Jeeves and Bertie Wooster have stepped off the pages of P.G. Wodehouse’s novels and short stories. They have pursued crackpot adventures on stage, in film, and on television.

With his longtime collaborator Guy Bolton, Wodehouse put Jeeves on stage in the 1950s in *Come On, Jeeves*. A new version of *Come On, Jeeves*, titled *Betting on Bertie*, is currently in development with music and lyrics by Robert Wright and George Forrest.

Edward Duke adapted several Jeeves stories for his one-man show, in which he played both Jeeves and Bertie. *Jeeves Takes Charge* was seen in Great Britain and the United States, including engagements at Washington’s Ford’s Theatre.

Wodehouse also adapted his servant-master stories for the films, *Thank You, Jeeves* and *Step Lively, Jeeves*, both of which starred Arthur Treacher.

A British-made 1960s television series called “The World of Wooster” starred Dennis Price as Jeeves and Ian Carmichael as Bertie.

Another British-made series, “Jeeves and Wooster,” starring Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie, has been seen in the United States on PBS.