

Right Ho, Madeline

Two Poems about the Droopy, Blonde, Saucer-Eyed Gawd Help Us

by Ewart Johns

Jeeves, bring me one of your specials
I must have gone soft in the head
I was misunderstood by Miss Bassett
And now we are slated to wed.

Confronted by the shapely Madeline Bassett
Fink-Nottle's heart descended to his boots
And failing to engage in amorous banter
The silly ass just lectured her on newts.

My First Wodehouse Experience

by Karen Shotting

My description of my first Wodehouse novel cannot be told without sharing some family background and explanation of my darling father's rule of the Shotting household.

I will quickly dispose of the preliminaries: I, like many others, was first introduced to the world of Wodehouse through the BBC's *Jeeves and Wooster* series. It only took one episode, and I knew this was a good thing that needed pushing along.

Shortly after viewing that first episode, I ankked off to South Coast Plaza to check out the W section of Rizzoli Bookstore's Fiction and Literature department. There I was confronted with an embarrassment of riches – a veritable sea of orange back-bindings (the old Ionicus versions of the Master's works) and a wealth of assorted other variations on the Wodehouse theme, for Rizzoli did not stint in its effort to bring the best literary offerings to its Southern California habitués. But how was I to choose the proper starting place? I knew I wanted a Jeeves book, but which one?

This is where we veer off into the Shotting family chronicles (please bear with me). I come from a fairly large family of six children. My father (with the full concurrence of my mother) decided that democracy was an interesting experiment for a large governmental unit such as the United States, but that a similar methodology did not fit on the micro level of the Shotting household – at least not if one wanted peace in our time. So he instituted a regime that the lowest foot soldier will recognize: he gave orders, and we obeyed; majority rule was unheard of and voting anathema. And, like many absolute rulers before him, Dad also conferred upon himself an appropriately august title. He referred to himself as, and issued

regulations and ukases under the authority of, The One, The *Only*, The Inimitable. (I wish you could hear him say it; I can't really do it justice in print.)

This regime was largely successful; however, there was *occasionally* dissension (and, to be absolutely frank, even outright insubordination) in the ranks. Questionings of the lord and master's authority and/or wisdom/knowledge were easily disposed of: things were done his way, and he knew best, because he was The One, the *Only*, The Inimitable.

OK, I think you can probably see where this is going. Let us return to Rizzoli and the W section of Fiction and Literature. Which Jeeves book did I choose? There could only be one choice for the daughter of The One, the *Only*, the Inimitable – my first Wodehouse book was, of course, *The Inimitable Jeeves*.

I started there and never looked back: I cruised my way through the Jeeves stories;

moved on to Blandings, Uncle Fred, Psmith and Ukridge; and thereafter read any Wodehouse I could get my hands on. At some point, I introduced my father to Wodehouse, and it gave me great pleasure to listen as he chortled over Bertie's sagas and Ukridge's schemes for amassing great wealth. His fondness for Wodehouse also led to his assuming another nickname: he enjoyed leaving messages asking me to call my "aged relative."

On a more serious note, I am sorry to say that The One, The *Only*, The Inimitable is no longer with us. During his last month in the hospital, I brought with me *Wodehouse is the Best Medicine*, but even the best medicine is not always successful, and The One, The *Only*, The Inimitable went to join the creator of *The Inimitable Jeeves* on February 21, 2010.

