



The Mating Season

P.G. Wodehouse

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At Deverill Hall, an idyllic Tudor manor in the picture-perfect village of King's Deverill, impostors are in the air. The prime example is man-about-town Bertie Wooster, doing a good turn to Gussie Fink-Nottle by impersonating him while he enjoys fourteen days away from society after being caught taking an unscheduled dip in the fountains of Trafalgar Square. Bertie is of course one of nature's gentlemen, but the stakes are high: if all is revealed, there's a danger that Gussie's simpering fiancée Madeline may turn her wide eyes on Bertie instead.

It's a brilliant plan - until Gussie himself turns up, imitating Bertram Wooster. After that, only the massive brain of Jeeves (himself in disguise) can set things right.

The Mating Season Details

Date : Published January 1st 2002 by The Overlook Press (first published 1949)

ISBN : 9781585672318

Author : P.G. Wodehouse

Format : Hardcover 272 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Classics, Comedy, European Literature, British Literature, Audiobook, Funny, Novels, Literature, 20th Century

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From Reader Review The Mating Season for online ebook

Oliver Ho says

I'd read the collected Jeeves and Wooster short stories a few years ago, and this is the first of their novels I've read. Very funny, very light, many excellent lines, like when Wodehouse describes someone as, "a tall, drooping man, looking as if he had been stuffed in a hurry by an incompetent taxidermist."

Two other examples:

"He looked like a peevish halibut."

...

"I am told by those who know that there are six varieties of hangover – the Broken Compass, the Sewing Machine, the Comet, the Atomic, the Cement Mixer and the Gremlin Boogie, and his manner suggested that he had got them all."

Jason Koivu says

If you're me and I'm you, who are or are not these other two chaps?

That's is the question one might ask when diving into a terribly tangled web of deceit such as you'll find in P.G. Wodehouse's *The Mating Season*, where a faked identity might be the only thing that saves our hero Bertie Wooster from the horrors of marriage!

This is one of my personal favorite of Wodehouse's. It amps up the daffy mishaps tenfold! The storyline gets delightfully twisted intentionally as half the cast pretends to be someone they're not in an effort to get out of one fix or another. Even the usually incorruptibly proper Jeeves gets in on the ruse, doing his utmost for his employer Wooster, who's doing his utmost to remain unmarried to the drippy Madeline Bassett, while possibly hitching her up with his loopy, newt-loving friend.

Bassett indeed! Wodehouse pushes his penchant for ridiculous names to the absolute limit in this volume. There are Haddocks, Fink-Nottles and even a Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright! And practically none are willing to lay claim to their true names. Do you blame them?

I highly recommend you go ahead and embroil yourself up to the eyeballs in the confusticatingly good-time comedy that is *The Mating Season*.

Luís C. says

Source: <http://allreaders.com/book-review-sum...>

In *The Mating Season*, Bertie Wooster finds himself yet again entangled with Madeline Bassett. Bertie Wooster, his manservant Jeeves, and a bunch of Bertie's friends (Gussie Fink-Nottle, Madeline Bassett, and Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright) end up on holiday at the country manor Deverill Hall, but at very different times. Deverill Hall is the home of five intimidating aunts led by a hoity-toity matriarch molded in the image of Aunt Agatha: Dame Daphne Winkworth. Bertie has been invited to lend an urbane and sophisticated note to a village concert there, which is being organized by the Vicar and Catsmeat's sister Corky.

But Bertie has far more grave concerns than whether or not he will make a fool of himself to please Corky and Dame Daphne. Only Gussie, Catsmeat and Bertie are expected at Deverill Hall initially, but Bertie ends up driving down there without Gussie. This is because Gussie has gotten himself arrested and if Madeline finds out, she will definitely break off her engagement to Gussie and run to marry Bertie instead. Bertie cannot imagine a fate worse than being married to the kooky, bizarre, airheaded Madeline, so he decides to impersonate Gussie at Deverill Hall so that Dame Daphne will be fooled and word won't get out that Gussie was arrested. Jeeves shakes his head at this, knowingly it will end terribly, and he is proven right when Gussie unexpectedly arrives: he was let out on bail, and hastily tries to mend things by saying he is Bertie Wooster.

Meanwhile, Corky of the vicarage, Catsmeat's sister, is in love with the young heir to Deverill Hall, Esmond. Since Dame Daphne is Esmond's aunt, Corky wants to remain on good terms with Dame Daphne but also realizes she cannot - the older woman will never thaw in her disapproval of Corky. Matters are complicated when Gussie, who has been rehearsing the concert with Corky while impersonating Bertie, falls in love with her. Meanwhile, Catsmeat is in love with the sprightly, bright-eyed Gertrude, Dame Daphne's daughter. Alas, Gertrude is being eyed by Esmond a little as well, and Aunt Agatha wants Bertie to marry her.

Everything threatens to fall apart when it appears that Madeline and Aunt Agatha might arrive at Deverill Hall, since they know what Bertie looks like, but Jeeves ably comes to the rescue by helping Aunt Agatha's son escape from school for a little holiday in the village with Jeeves and Bertie, while Aunt Agatha, terrified of her son's whereabouts by this cruel prank, searches for her son in the school's county. Jeeves solves the problems of the couples next, helping Catsmeat arrange a secret elopement with Gertrude, thus getting her out of the picture for Bertie, Corky and Esmond, while Esmond plans to win Corky over completely by performing well at her concert. Unfortunately, Esmond is completely tied to his aunts' apron strings, which is part of the reason why he can't marry Corky without their approval, and this dependency is shown again when it's revealed that Esmond's song for Corky's concert was written by two of his aunts, and is terrible. But wise Jeeves thinks that if Esmond's performance goes well, he will finally gain enough confidence to become his own man and make his own decisions. Meanwhile, Corky plays up Gussie's crush on her to make Esmond jealous, and both Bertie and Jeeves tell her to stop it. Esmond's song ends up doing exactly what Jeeves predicted, and he does finally gain the courage.

Meanwhile, the danger of Madeline remains, especially as she turns up at Deverill Hall and Gussie wants to break it off with her. Jeeves mends bridges between the two before Madeline can blow the whistle by convincing Gussie that Corky does not care for him. After Gussie breaks into a police cottage to rescue a friend, Jeeves manipulates Madeline into saving him by saying that he went there to rescue her, and the lovers are reunited once again.

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Kinga says

There are books which you read and think: "Psh.. I could write that. And better."

Well, this is not one of those books. There is no doubt in my mind that I could never produce anything of such brilliance. Wodehouse has such a way with words. The sentences are full of rhythm and flow effortlessly. The punchline is delivered with a perfect timing and will have you chuckle.

The plot is as you would expect it to be from a comedy of manners. There are romantic entanglements and romantic misunderstandings, mistaken identities, blunders, and on top of that, five horrid aunts (four old maidens and one widow) that form the biggest obstacle on our characters' road to happiness. Personally, I feel the five aunt plot device was underdeveloped. There was so much potential in it but it seemed that Wodehouse decided to let the aunts be on this occasion.

I am surprised that most people seem to think that Wooster is bit of a saphead. How can that be so? First of all, he is Hugh Laurie, that is, Doctor House, who is very smart*. So that alone rules out his stupidity. Second of all, Wooster is the narrator, and the narrative, as I have already said, is nothing short of genius. So I ask you, how can he be stupid? I say, give me Wooster anytime of the day and I will take him gladly, keep him and never let him go. Also he is a very patient man as well, because I thought I would have definitely punched Jeeves if he said: "Indeed, sir?" one more time.

And to end this review, shall I leave you with a quote?

"Except for knowing that when you've heard one, you've heard them all, I'm not really an authority on violin solos, so cannot state definitely whether La Pulbrook's was or was not a credit to the accomplices who had taught her the use of the instrument. It was loud in spots and less loud in other spots, and it had that quality which I have noticed in all violin solos, of seeming to last much longer than it actually did."

* in case you have just landed on this planet recently, I am referring to the popular British show in which Wooster was played by Hugh Laurie.

Tal says

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Girish says

Aunt's aren't gentlemen and it is beneficial to your health if you could avoid them in general (including other's). What we have is 4 aunts of a poor gentlemen with whom Bertie has to stay to mend matters of heart and give vent to the stage itch in him. Bad enough that he has to go under the name of Gussie Fink Nortle to save his own bachelor soul. Worse is when all the 4 couples in the story having tiffs thereby endangering Bertie's freedom!

One chaos of a book featuring the regulars and the... irregulars. The plot line is complicated, but then one understands that about matters of the heart. Jeeves has to do a lot of heavy lifting to fix things, though some were automatically fixed thanks to the aforementioned matters of heart.

Fun book.. Felt maybe a tad more focus on the story than the humor.

Smitha says

The best pick me up for a soul suffering the doldrums of an ugly flu. Read it almost at a stretch while sniffling away to glory.

Jeeves, as is his habit, comes to the rescue of many an asundered soul.

This book involves hoards of aunts, their nephews, nieces, Bertie, Jeeves and guest appearance by Thos, Bertie's transmitting of a cousin.

The sundered hearts are Corky - Edmond, Catsmeat - Gertrude, Gussy - Madeline, Queenie - Dobbs the masquerades are Gussy - Bertie who impersonate each other (due to a peculiar set of circumstances involving Trafalgar square and its fountains, newts, policemen, judges, heartbreaks) and Catsmeat impersonating a butler, Meadows.

There are 6 aunts, each a terror, on her own, and withering nephews, plucky girls and hilarious plots. my advice - never read a Wodehouse in public. People will get a wrong impression about your sanity.

jzthompson says

It's not many months since I gave *The Code of the Woosters* a five-star rating, and this is a definite cut above that. Reading *The Mating Season*, I kept on thinking about the tv series of *American Gods*. Now the connection might not seem immediately apparent* but bear with me. A problem with the series is that it's obvious that the writers start each episode with a clear idea of the cliffhanger they want to get to, and then work backwards from that point until the episode is filled. Well, it seems to me Wodehouse's method is roughly similar. But in *AG* that translates to an awful lot of fat per episode, as the writers try to fill the unforgiving hour with 50 minutes of getting to the point, whilst with the Wodehouse, every chapter runs flawlessly along on silvered tracks, ending on a brilliant new plot wrinkle, that's at once utterly logical given what's gone before, but totally unguessable in advance. These wrinkles pile higher and higher until it seems no resolution could possibly be satisfying until finally, Wodehouse pulls the lever marked 'happy ending' and we can see that no other resolution would possibly have worked. It's all put together like clockwork. Utterly brilliant stuff.

*Although *AG*'s quasi-sequel *Anansi Boys* was Gaiman's attempt at writing a Wodehousian farce, so maybe

it's not as remote as it seems.

Nickie says

It took me a while to notice that I had a half-smile on my face every moment that I was reading this. Great way with words, faultless comic momentum. And i saw a picture of PG Wodehouse and he was quite the cutie too. What ho! Bally good etc

Steven says

Perhaps not Wodehouse's greatest story, but definitely one of his wittiest tellings.

F.R. says

The interconnectivity of things, part 94. Perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised, as the fiction of Wodehouse is nothing if not brimming full of literary allusions, but I was distinctly pleased to come across a direct reference to Robert Browning's 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came'. Having spent the previous two weeks reading the fourth volume of Stephen King's Dark Tower series, which takes its inspiration from that very poem, it seemed as if the world was all coming together in a series of exciting connections. The synapses of my mind fizzed and popped as a consequence.

Okay, on a very basic level this is man reads book which reminds him of previous book, but I always like the thrill when coincidence takes two very different things and folds them over each other. After all these are two very disparate examples of popular literature (in tone, plot and style) and I was expecting little which would directly connect them. But here it was. And it set me thinking, if there are doorways which take Roland of Gilead into New York, why aren't there doorways to take him into Bertie Wooster's world? Wouldn't we all like to see Roland and Bertie try to find some space on common ground? Once you think of it, isn't there a gap in that Ka-Tet for a dashing young hero in spats? Wouldn't Jeeves come up with a doozy of a plan to reach The Dark Tower quicker and do what needs to be done? I don't know if King is planning to write another Dark Tower novel, but if he is he need look no further than Pelham Grenville for inspiration.

As well as being one of the best prose stylists in the English language, what really sets Wodehouse apart in these novels is the way he sets plate after plate spinning and keeps them all going long after they should have shattered to the ground. Here we have Bertie pretending to be Gussie Fink-Nottle, Gussie pretending to be Bertie, Catsmeat Pirbright pretending to be faux Gussie's valet, a terrifying butler in the shape of Jeeves's uncle, a Hollywood goddess working her charms on an English village, an atheist policeman, a legion of aunts and the constant fear of the arrival of Bertie's Aunt Agatha and/or Madeline Bassett. The whole thing is a joy from start to finish, with confusion piled riotously onto calamity and more jokes than most writers manage to cram into an entire career. Until it reaches a point where you know there's only one man who can shimmer unobtrusively forward and sort everything out.

I particularly liked the categorization of the six different types of hangover: "the Broken Compass, the Sewing Machine, the Comet, the Atomic, the Cement Mixer and the Gremlin Boogie." Which of us, after a particularly rambunctious wedding reception, hasn't woken up with a case of the gremlin boogies?

Ian Wood says

The Jeeves and Wooster novels are arguably the jewel in the crown of Wodehouse's catalogue and 'The Mating Season' is without doubt the greatest of them all.

Gussie Fink-Nottle's engagement will be broken if his non appearance at Deverill Hall is reported to Madeline Bassett and since he was given 14 days without the option after Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright convinced him to wade in the fountain in Trafalgar square this is looking quite likely. Since Bertie would be the next in line, due to an unfortunate series of events, he is persuaded to visit under the Fink-Nottle banner with Catsmeat posing as his valet, Meadows, in order to be close to Gertrude Winkworth as their banns have recently been disallowed by the Deverill Hall residents. All looks lost without Jeeves to orchestrate proceedings however once the surly Magistrate is given cause the reconsider Gussie arrives as Bertie Wooster with his faithful servant Jeeves...

If you think the problem is confusing you should read the conclusion, and you really should read the conclusion. The greatest farce on earth.

Valerie Kyriosity says

When one meets with one's pastor's wife for a spot of counsel, and she prescribes, among other curatives, a dose of Wodehouse, one discerns that one will not need a spoonful of sugar to help *that* medicine go down, and one opens wide like a good little patient.

One can't help but wonder if the whole book was a setup for this one spectacular line: Bertie, having just a moment ago been mentally castigating Catsmeat for not acting like the valet as whom he was posing, recalls that C. had been reasonably distracted by his *real* purpose at Deverill Hall, the pursuit of the fair Gertrude: "and a man cannot be expected to be pressing his own suit and another man's trousers at the same time." (Or words to that effect, exactitude being elusive where audiobooks are concerned.) Bravo, Mr. Wodehouse, bravo.

The right reader is truly indispensable for comedy, and Jonathan Cecil was spot on. I mean, with a name like that, he'd rather have to be right, right?

Suzannah says

One of Wodehouse's very best. The village concert scene in particular is deeply cathartic for anyone who's been roped into that kind of event!

Krisette Spangler says

Spring is in the air, which means young hearts are ready to tie the knot. Unfortunately, a series of misunderstandings has sundered the hopes of the young lovers. Can Bertie and Jeeves reunite the lovers and extricate Bertie from a situation worse than death? You'll have to read the novel to find out.

Ray says

Right up there. It seems to have more and shorter set pieces than other Jeeves novels and the pace benefits as a result. Particularly liked the after dinner impromptu rehearsal. Wodehouse could have been just as much at home in the Spy novel genre, such are the plot dynamics.

Siv30 says

התורה והנבואה, ההלכה והפוסקים, המנהגים והערכים, הכלכלה והחברה, המדע והטכניקה, האמנות והספרות, השפה והחינוך, המשפט והארגון, הממשלה והצבא, כל אלו הם חלקים בלתי נפרדים מהתרבות העברית, ויש להם תפקיד חשוב בהקמת מדינת ישראל.

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Algernon says

[9/10]

Once again P.G.Wodehouse explores the subject of romance in this new Jeeves and Wooster novel. It is somewhat inevitable, because:

This is springtime, the mating season, when, as you probably know, a livelier iris gleams upon the burnished dove and a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

As a result of a hilarious opening scene involving Gussie-Fink-Nottle, the search for newts inside the fountain in Trafalgar Square and a policeman, Bertie is forced to intervene in order to save his relationship with Madeline Bassett. He reluctantly leaves the comfort of his London apartment for a weekend in the country at Deverill Hall, Hampshire. In this idyllic location (*one of those villages where picturesque cottages breed like rabbits*), Cupid has been real busy and only the stalwart Jeeves could hope to unravel the tangled relationships involving : Claude Cattermole Pirbright - a.k.a. Catsmeat, his sister Cora Pirbright a.k.a. Corky - *a persuasive young gumboil* and former partner of Bertie in dancing school, Esmond Haddock - amateur singer at village festivals, his cousin Gertrude Winkworth, Queenie - a parlourmaid at Deverill Hall and her beau - village Constable Ernest Dobbs. Complicating matters as usual are a bevy of aunts - no less than five, when usually one is more than enough. Adding to the mayhem are Bertie's nephew Thomas and a dog with an intense animosity for policemen.

In all this romance saturated atmosphere, Bertie Wooster is the only one who regards marriage with dread, as exemplified in this dialogue with Jeeves:

- *I tell you Jeeves, the spirits are low. I don't know if you have been tied hand and foot to a chair in front of a barrell of gunpowder with an inch of lighted candle on top of it?*
- *No, sir, I have not had the experience.*
- *Well, that's how I'm feeling. I'm just clenching the teeth and waiting for the bang.*

His Nemesis is once again Madeline Bassett, an encounter between the two producing my favorite scene from the book, when in trying to retrieve a compromising letter, Bertie is caught in flagrante and compared to a tragedy stricken lover from a book by Rosie M. Banks.

As usual for a P. G. Wodehouse novel, his similes are insanely hilarious, like this introduction of reverend Sidney Pirbright : *A tall, drooping man, looking as if he has been stuffed in a hurry by an incompetent taxidermist* . My respect for him as an author was raised to a new high when I come upon this passage, where he rips the "fourth wall" and addresses the reader directly with his professional credo:

In dishing up this narrative for family consumption, it has been my constant aim throughout to get the right word in the right place and to avoid fobbing the customers off with something weak and inexpressive when they have a right to expect the telling phrase. It means a bit of extra work, but one has one's code.

The passage was originated when the author, not satisfied with the word "came" in a previous phrase,

replaced it with "curvetted". To give an idea of his incredible range, here is what Wodehouse substitutes in the book for "drunk" :

- scrooched,
- fried to the tonsils,
- pie-eyed,
- lathered,
- a mite polluted,
- doing the Lost Weekend,
- getting tight,
- pleasantly mellowed

I've reached the end of the book, as usual, with a happy smile on my face, and with the pleasant thought that there are still so many books by the author waiting patiently for their turn on my reading list.

Dan Schwent says

When Catsmeat Pirbright and Gussie Fink-Nottle come to Bertie Wooster with their lady problems, he has no choice but to help. Before you know it, Gussie's in stir, Bertie's pretending to be Gussie and Catsmeat is pretending to be Jeeves. Can Bertie get Jeeves to sort things out?

Spoiler alert: Yes.

Way back in 2012-ish, I decided to reread all of the Jeeves novels I read in that hazy time before Goodreads. Then I forgot about that goal until a few days ago.

I read this one ages ago so it was like a new book in a lot of ways. The only parts I remembered were the allusions to Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came, since I'm a Dark Tower junkie, and the bit with the cosh.

First, the primer for anyone who has never read a Jeeves book before: Bertie Wooster is one of the idle rich in Edwardian England and Jeeves is his valet (or Gentleman's Personal Gentleman) who specializes in extricating him from trouble.

Like pretty much all of P.G. Wodehouse's Jeeves tales, this one involves romantic misunderstandings and Bertie Wooster trying his best to sort them out without Jeeves. Once things are suitably dire, Jeeves swoops in with his super-brain and works things out. Not usually by coshing someone, though...

Wodehouse's tales always have a superb rhythm and this one is no exception. You can feel the reversals of fortune coming several pages away. Since I forgot most of this one, I thought for sure Bertie would wind up in stir for a month without the option. It was all sweetness and light by the end, though, as it usually is.

The Jeeves books all tend to blend together in my mind since they all have the same basic plot but Wodehouse manages to take things into different directions each time, keeping them fresh. Wodehouse does his one trick very, very well, I suppose. While I still put *The Code of the Woosters* at the top of the Jeeves list, this one is still in the upper echelon of Wooster and Jeeves books. Four out of five stars.

