

Ye Olde Plum News

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NOVELISTS IN PLUM'S WORLD

FLORENCE CRAYE

She is one of those intellectual girls, her brain crammed to bursting point with little grey cells, and about a year ago ... she wrote this novel (Spindrift) and it was well received by the intelligentsia, who notoriously enjoy the most frightful bilge. (Joy in the Morning, 1947)

Bertie asked Jeeves: 'Did you ever read Spindrift?' 'I skimmed through it, sir.' 'What did you think of it? Go on Jeeves, don't be coy. The word begins with an l.' 'Well, sir, I would not go so far to apply to it the adjective which I fancy you have in mind, but it seemed to me a somewhat immature production, lacking in significant form.... The story was not wholly devoid of interest.' (Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954)

Bertie brought her to a night club because she wanted to collect atmosphere for a scene in her new novel, with the hero Rollo Beauminster. (Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954)

Florence expected a future husband to behave like a Hollywood Yes-man. She regarded Bertie's soul as a chunk of plasticine and she had the mission to mould it. She substituted 'Blood On The Bannisters', the book he was studying, for 'Types Of Ethical Theory'. (Joy in the Morning, 1947). She also instructed him to read a perfect frightful thing by a bird called Tolstoy. Despite this Bertie was engaged to Florence four times. (Carry On, Jeeves, 1910, Joy in the Morning, 1947, Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit, 1954, Much Obliged, Jeeves, 1971)

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GEORGE 'BOKO' FITTLEWORTH

Wrote fiction for the masses and also plays. *He makes pots of money with his pen. You see his stuff everywhere. He got an offer to go to Hollywood. (Joy in the Morning, 1947)*

The first sight of Boko reveals to the beholder an object with a face like an intellectual parrot. Furthermore, as is the case with so many of the younger literati, he dresses like a tramp cyclist, affecting turtle-neck sweaters and grey flannel bags with a patch on the knee and conveying a sort of general suggestion of having been left out in the rain overnight in an ash can.... Writers are allowed a wide latitude. ... In appearance, as I have indicated, this man of letters is a cross between a comedy juggler and a parrot that has been dragged through a hedge backwards. (Joy in the Morning, 1947)

Put an author in the driver's seat of a car, and his natural goofiness seems to become intensified. Not only did Boko persistently overtake on blind corners, but he did it with a dreamy, faraway look in his eyes, telling one the plot of his next novel. (Joy in the Morning, 1947)

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JULIA UKRIDGE

An aunt of Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge and a famous and wealthy novelist. The only title by her mentioned is 'The Heart of Adelaide'. She was president of the prestigious Pen and Ink Club in London. (Ukridge, 1924)

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JAMES "CORKY" CORCORAN

Alter-ego for young Plum. Author of one published humorous novel, and of a one-act play. Wrote mostly articles for magazines as 'Interesting Bits' and 'Society'. He ghosted the memoirs of late Sir Lakenheath. He once tried to speed his writing up by dictating to a secretary, but found this impossible. (Ukridge, 1924)

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SIR RAYMOND BASTABLE

There may have been men in London who thought more highly of Sir Raymond Bastable than did Sir Raymond Bastable, but they would have been hard to find. With a Brazil nut from a catapult his hat was shot from his head. He was furious. Lord Ickenham challenged him: You could have got these views of yours on the younger generation off your chest in a novel. Something on the lines of Evelyn Waugh's Vile Bodies - witty, bitter, satirical and calculated to make the younger generation see itself as in a mirror and wish that Brazil nuts had never been invented. He took on the challenge and wrote the novel 'Cocktail Time' under the pseudonym Richard Blunt. The book was denounced by the Bishop of Stortford as obscene, immoral, shocking, impure, corrupt, shameless, graceless and depraved. Should his nom-de-pen be blown Sir Raymond's chances in the coming election to the parliament would be zero, so he gave his nephew Cosmo Wisdom the role of the author. (Cocktail Time, 1958)

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ASHIE MARSON

was a tall, well-built, fit-looking young man, with a clear eye and a strong chin. He was writer of crime fiction under the pseudonym Felix Clovelly. New stories about 'Adventures of Gridley Quayle, Investigator' were published every month in the magazine British Pluck Library. Some of the stories: The Adventure of the Blue Ruby, The adventure of the Missing Marquess, The Adventure of the Wand of Death, The Adventure of the Secret Six. Freddie Threepwood was a great admirer of Gridley Quayle. (Something Fresh, 1915)

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ROSIE M BANKS

A celebrated novelist in the romantic style and Bingo Little's wife. Among her novels: All for Love, A Red, Red Summer Rose, The Courtship of Lord Strathmorlick, Madcap Myrtle, Mervyn Keene, Clubman, Only a Factory Girl, 'Twas Once in May, The Woman Who Braved All. While collecting atmosphere for a novel, she worked as a waitress at a club and met Bingo Little. In just a few days they were married. (The Inimitable Jeeves, 1917)

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BLAIR EGGLESTON

On paper, Blair Eggleston was bold and ruthless. Like so many of our younger novelists, his tone was that of a disillusioned, sardonic philanderer who had drunk the wine-cup of illicit love to its dregs but was always ready to fill up again and have another. Ther were passages in some of his books, notably Worm i' the Root and Offal, which simply made you shiver, so stark was their cynicism, so brutal the force with which they tore away the veils and revealed Woman as she is. (Hot Water, 1932)

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ADELA CREAM

Was tall and thin with a hawk-like face that reminded me of Sherlock Holmes. She had an ink spot on her nose, the result of working on her novel of suspense. She had written 'Blackness At Night' and other violent detective novels, mainly for the American market. One of her characters, a gangster called Scarface McColl, was blown into pieces together with his car. Bertie meant: Cream unquestionably wielded a gifted pen. (Jeeves in the Offing, 1960)

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EMMA LUCILLE AGEE

The Agee woman told us for three quarters of an hour how she came to write her beastly book, when a simple apology was all that was required. (The Girl in Blue, 1970)

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RAYMOND PARSLow DEVINE

This rising young novelist was a member of the Wood Hills Literary and Debating Society. *'The critics say that he is more Russian than any other young English writer.' ... 'I should have thought the wheeze would be to be more English than any other English writer.' 'Nonsense! Who wants an English writer to be English? You've got to be Russian or Spanish or something to be a real success.' (The Clicking of Cuthbert, 1921)*

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