

# \*Ye Olde Plum News\*

No 58 August 2024

## ON PLATES WITH WATERCRESS

### CHURCH OF ABYSSINIA

*They had disagreed about the apostolic claims of the church of Abyssinia, which was odd because it was generally about politics that Stiffy disagreed with people. ... Dunstable maintained that those claims were perfectly justified, and your father said the church of Abyssinia was talking through its hat, and things got more and more heated, and finally Dunstable took up a bowl of fruit salad and was about to strike your father with it, when your father grabbed this turkey, which was on a side table with the other viands, and one blow laid him out as flat as a crêpe suzette. ... But do you know what I find the strangest aspect of the whole affair? That either of them should ever have heard of the church of Abyssinia. You wouldn't have thought they would have recognized the church of Abyssinia if it had been served up to them on a plate with watercress round it. (A Pelican at Blandings, 1969)*

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### FINER FEELINGS

*A charity performance for the church organ was given in the village hall of King's Deverill. The whole performance gave one a sort of grey, hopeless feeling, like listening to the rain at three o'clock on a Sunday afternoon in November. Even the standees, tough, rugged men who would not have recognized the finer feelings if you had served them up on a plate with watercress round them, obviously felt the pathos of it all. They listened in dejected silence, shuffling their feet, and I didn't blame them. (The Mating Season, 1949)*

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### LEADERSHIP IN DIVORCES

*In one field of sport America still led the world. Her supremacy in the matter of Divorce remained unchallenged. Patriots pointed with pride at the figures, which showed that while thirteen in every thousand American everloving couples decided each year to give their chosen mates the old heave-ho, the best, the nearest competitor, Switzerland, could do was three... A judge in America denied a woman her thirteenth divorce. It may be that it is this judge who are lacking in team spirit... Has this judge never reflected that it is just this sort of thing that discourages ambition and is going to hand the world's leadership to the Swiss on a plate with watercress round it? (Over Seventy, 1957)*

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### ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

*A year ago he did not know one end of a paintbrush from the other. He didn't know he had any nerves. If you had brought him the artistic temperament on a plate with watercress round it, he wouldn't have recognized it. And now, just because he's got a studio, he thinks he has a right to go up in the air if you speak to him suddenly and rub about the place hitting snakes with teaspoons as if he were Michelangelo! (Uneasy Money, 1917)*

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### THE CHARACTER OF PSMITH

*The character of Psmith ... is the only thing in my literary career which was handed to me on a plate with watercress round it, thus enabling me to avoid the blood, sweat and tears inseparable from an author's life. Lord Emsworth, Jeeves and the rest of my dramatis personae had to be built up from their foundations, but Psmith came to me ready-made... (The World of Psmith, preface, 1974).*

The real life model behind Psmith was a certain young man, Rupert D'Oyly Carte, a schoolmate to a cousin of Wodehouse.

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### OTHER GIRLS

*Hugo told Millicent: "If you haven't realized by this time that I love you, and always shall love you, and have never loved anybody else, and never shall love anybody else, you're a fathead. If you brought me Sue Brown or any other girl in the world on a plate with watercress round her, I wouldn't so much as touch her hand." (Summer Lightning, 1929)*

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### WORDS OF GEORGE CYRIL WELLBELOVED

*Lord Ickenham told: All you have to go on is Wellbeloved's word, and that would not carry much conviction. I like George Cyril Wellbeloved and always enjoy exchanging ideas with him, but I wouldn't believe his word if he brought it to me on a plate with watercress round it. On this occasion he probably deviated from the policy of a lifetime and told the truth, but what of that? (Service With a Smile, 1961)*

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### CUE

Bertie canvassed for his friend Ginger Winship, who run for Tories in the election to Parliament. Bertie met a lady and advised her to cast her vote in favour of Winship. "On what do you base that advice?" She couldn't have given me a better cue. She had handed it to me on a plate with watercress round it. Bertie soon enough found out that he was trying to persuade Mrs. McCorkadale, Winship's opponent, to vote against herself. (Much Obligated, Jeeves, 1971)

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### HUSSIES

Jill Wyvern was annoyed that Bill Rowcester kept secrets from her. "You're always going off in your car, sometimes for a week at a stretch. For all I know, you may have been spending your time festooned with hussies," "I wouldn't so much as look at a hussy if you brought her to me on a plate with watercress round her." (Ring for Jeeves, 1953)

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### A HEART OF GOLD

*Rupert Baxter (Lord Emsworth's former secretary, now in the service of the Duke of Dunstable) had no illusions about his employer. He did not suppose that the gruff exterior of the Duke of Dunstable hid a heart of gold, feeling – correctly – that if the Duke were handed a heart of gold on a plate with watercress round it, he would not know what it was. (Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939)*

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### REASON

Mr Cook, father of Vanessa Cook, was furious with Bertie Wooster. Bertie found he didn't listen to reason. And it was plain that Cook in his present frame of mind wouldn't recognise reason if you served it up to him in an individual plate with watercress round it. (Aunts Aren't Gentlemen, 1974)

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