



My Man Jeeves

P. G. Wodehouse (1881 - 1975)

Read by:	Mark Nelson	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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My Man Jeeves (1919) is the first in a series of sixteen immensely popular books by P. G. Wodehouse featuring the unflappable character of Reginald Jeeves, valet to the wealthy, idle, and often chuckle-headed British aristocrat Bertie Wooster. The volume contains four stories featuring Jeeves and four others. All are narrated by Bertie and take place in the world of the upper class in the years between the world wars in London gentlemen's clubs, stately English country homes, and the café society of New York in the jazz age. Jeeves is the consummate manservant, a "gentleman's personal gentleman", in his own words, with a clear idea of proper dress and comportment, impeccable taste, encyclopedic knowledge of history, literature and the sciences, and a wealth of knowledge of the ways of the world coupled with a lively

ingenuity. He serves as Bertie's all-purpose guardian angel, finding ways to rescue Bertie from suffocating social situations, fashion gaffes, scrapes with the law, overbearing relatives, and problems in dealing with the fair sex, operating discreetly in the background until the inevitable revelations occur. The name Jeeves was borrowed from cricketer Percy Jeeves and the character is said to have been modeled on a butler named Eugene Robinson employed by Wodehouse as a researcher. The Jeeves canon consists of 11 novels and 35 short stories published over a span of 59 years. The character of Carson from *Downton Abbey* bears more than a passing resemblance to Jeeves, whose name can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary as a generic term for the quintessential nature of a butler or valet.

Sir Pelham Grenville "P. G." Wodehouse (October 15, 1881 – February 14, 1975) was an English author and one of the most popular and widely read humorists of the 20th century. He was born to a family with a long ancestral history in the lower echelons of the aristocracy; his father was a magistrate in Hong Kong, and he and his brothers were raised in the care of a nanny in a house adjoining his grandparents, as was the custom in families based in the colonies. He attended Dulwich College, then worked for a bank for two unhappy years before catching his stride as a writer with his early school stories. He is best known for his comic fiction featuring stereotypical British characters, but also wrote Broadway musical comedies with Jerome Kern and Guy Bolton in the 1910' and 1920's and screenplays for MGM in the 1930's. Wodehouse was prolific, producing over ninety books, forty plays, and two hundred short stories. He is noted for his inimitable style, which combines the erudition and precision of the upper crust with the slang and allusions of the mass culture and seasons it with wit and whimsy. Newspaper critics, like Gerald Gould in *The Observer*, expressed a widespread opinion: "In the most serious and exact sense of the word [PGW] is a great artist. He has founded a school, a tradition. He has made a language... He has explained a generation." He was in the habit of producing a novel every three months, a remarkable pace given his method of juggling multiple projects, meticulously building a plot and writing an extensive scenario of thirty thousand words before writing a book. While his characters and style are quintessentially British, Wodehouse lived abroad for much of his life, dividing his time between England and New York in the early years of the century, moving to France to avoid double taxation in the 1930's and then settling in the United States in 1947. He was knighted in 1975 six weeks before his death at age 93 in Southampton, Long Island, New York.