

Audition Passages for Jeeves & Other Characters

If you are auditioning for Jeeves, you will also be required to read for the other characters played by Jeeves (Watkyn Basset, Madeline Bassett, Fink-Nottle and Byng). These passages are highlighted in yellow. Please take careful note of the information provided about each character to help you prepare for your audition.

JEEVES

Character: Jeeves is Wooster's efficient and loyal valet. He appears solemn and stony-faced, but has a dry sense of humour. His demeanour is very formal (straight back, hands behind his back) and speaks with an upper-class English accent.

BERTIE. What happened, Jeeves?

JEEVES. Well, sir, I gather that, alerted by the sound of breaking glass, the constable entered the collection room just in time to catch sight of a dim figure stealing out through the French window. He pursued it into the garden, and was overtaking it and might shortly have succeeded in effecting an arrest, when there sprang from the darkness a dim figure—

BERTIE. The same dim figure?

JEEVES. No, sir. Another one.

BERTIE. A big night for dim figures.

JEEVES. Yes, sir.

BERTIE. Is Constable Oates a dim figure?

JEEVES. Not in this context. No, sir.

BERTIE. Better call these dim figures Pat and Mike, or we shall be getting mixed.

JEEVES. A and B perhaps, sir?

BERTIE. If you prefer it, Jeeves. So Oates had just caught up with dim figure A, you say, when dim figure B sprang from the darkness—

JEEVES. —and struck Constable Oates upon the nose.

BERTIE. Harold Pinker! He was supposed to punch me!

JEEVES. Yes, sir. No doubt Miss Byng inadvertently forgot to apprise him that there had been a change in the evening's arrangements.

BERTIE. What became of Harold?

JEEVES. On becoming aware of the officer's identity, he apologised, sir, and then withdrew.

BERTIE. Well, I don't know what to make of this, Jeeves. This dim figure. I am referring to dim figure A. Who could it have been? Had Oates any views on the subject?

JEEVES. Very definite views, sir. He is convinced that it was you.

BERTIE. Me, Jeeves?

JEEVES. And it is his intention, as soon as he is able to secure Sir Watkyn's cooperation, to proceed here and search your room again.

SIR WATKYN BASSETT

Character: A fuddy-duddy judge with old-fashioned ideas. Easily outraged and offended. Very likely to convict someone on the way they look or what he thinks they might do rather than on the evidence before him. Officious and pedantic.

BASSETT. Roderick. I want you to meet this fellow. I gave him three months not long ago for snatching bags at railway stations and it is quite evident that his term in jail has had the most excellent effect on him. He has reformed.

SPODE. Oh, yes? What makes you think he has reformed?

BASSETT. Of course he has reformed. It's perfectly obvious that he is no longer stealing bags. What are you doing now, young man?

SPODE. Stealing umbrellas apparently. I notice he's got yours.

[BERTIE suddenly becomes aware that he is holding BASSETT's umbrella.]

BERTIE. I say. I'm most frightfully sorry. I thought that umbrella was mine.

BASSETT. That is the trouble with you, young man. You are totally unable to distinguish between *meum* and *tuum*. Well, I am not going to have you arrested this time, but I advise you to be very careful. Come, Roderick.

STEPHANIE (STIFFY) BYNG

Character: Selfish, confident and calculating. Must have a female voice.

STIFFY. Oh! How dare you!

OATES. Miss Byng. This makes twice that the animal has committed an aggravated assault on my bicycle. I shall be forced to register a complaint with Sir Watkyn.

STIFFY. You leave my uncle out of this. And anyway, you shouldn't ride a bicycle. Bartholomew hates bicycles.

OATES. I ride a bicycle, miss, because if I didn't I should have to cover my beat on foot.

STIFFY. Do you good. Get some fat off you.

OATES. Ooh. I shall have to summons you once more for being in possession of a savage dog, not under proper control.

[OATES exits.]

STIFFY. Gosh. Hallo, Bertie. When did you get here?

BERTIE. Oh, recently... Have you got a small, brown, leather-covered notebook that Gussie Fink-Nottle dropped yesterday?

STIFFY. Yes. I've got it. I must say it does make splendid reading. Really excellent character studies of Roderick Spode and Uncle Watkyn. Though why anyone should waste their time on those two when there's Oates simply crying out to be written about, I can't imagine.

SIR WATKYN BASSET & STIFFY BYNG

Context: One part of the play involves Jeeves acting as Bassett and Stiffy at the same time. He will be wearing a half/half costume and must switch between the two characters (including, of course, their voices) very quickly.

STIFFY. You want to see me, Uncle Watkyn?

[STIFFY turns 180 degrees to reveal the BASSETT profile.]

BASSETT. Yes, I want to have a word with you. Take my hand. Walk by my side. Sit down. Sit down.

[BASSETT swivels round to become STIFFY. The switching of position continues to happen as the dialogue unfolds.]

STIFFY. Oh, hallo, Bertie. I didn't know you were here. Have you and Uncle Watkyn been having a nice talk?

BASSETT. 'Nice' is not the adjective I would have selected.

STIFFY. Oh?

BASSETT. Mr Wooster has just informed me that he wishes to marry you.

STIFFY. Oh, Bertie, I'm terribly flattered and grateful... And, well, all that sort of thing. But, Bertie dear, I'm terribly sorry. I'm afraid it's impossible. I'm in love with someone else.

MADELINE BASSETT

Character: Lives in a fairy tale world of romance. She is described by Bertie as ‘A droopy, soupy, sentimental exhibit, with melting eyes and a cooing voice’. She cannot pronounce her ‘r’s, which adds to her drippiness.

BERTIE. I had a communication from Gussie, more or less indicating that you and he were over.

MADELINE. So that’s why you came! You thought there might still be some hope? Oh, Bertie, really there is no hope, none. You must not build dream castles in the air. It can only cause you pain. I love Augustus.

BERTIE. Then what did he mean by saying, ‘serious rift Madeline and self.’

MADELINE. Oh, that? That was nothing. It was all too silly and ridiculous. Just the teeniest, weeniest little misunderstanding. I thought I found him flirting with my cousin Stephanie, and I was silly and jealous. But he explained everything this morning. He was only taking a fly out of her eye.

BERTIE. So everything’s all right between you two now?

MADELINE. Everything. I have never loved Augustus more than I do now. I wonder if you’ve noticed any difference in him? An improvement, if such a thing were possible. Have you not felt in the past, Bertie, that, if Augustus had a fault, it was a tendency to be a little timid?

GUSSIE FINK-NOTTLE

Character: Naive in the ways of the world, Gussie is essentially a little boy in a man's body. He is rather excitable and has very poor eyesight. He is fascinated by newts and fails to understand everyone else's lack of enthusiasm.

BERTIE. Gussie, what's happened to you? You've changed. I mean, telling Spode not to talk rot. I wouldn't have the nerve to tell Spode not to talk rot.

GUSSIE. Well, to tell you the truth, Bertie, neither would I a week ago.

BERTIE. What happened a week ago?

GUSSIE. A week ago, Bertie, I discovered that I would have to make a speech at the wedding breakfast. The mere idea appals me. The thought of having to get up in front of hundreds of people with Roderick Spode on one side and Sir Watkyn Bassett on the other...

[They break off to check that the coast is clear.]

Do you know Sir Watkyn intimately?

BERTIE. Not very. He once fined me five quid for pinching a policeman's helmet on Boat Race night.

GUSSIE. Well, you can take it from me, he's a hard nut and he strongly objects to having me as a son-in-law. For one thing, he would have liked Madeline to marry Spode – who I may mention, has loved her since she was so high. But apart from the fact that she wanted to marry me, Spode didn't want to marry her. He looks upon himself as a Man of Destiny, you see, and feels that marriage would interfere with his mission.