

Audition Passages for Seppings & Other Characters

If you are auditioning for Seppings, you will also be required to read for the other characters played by Seppings (Dahlia, Spode, Butterfield and Oates). These passages are highlighted in yellow. Please take careful note of the information provided about each character to help you prepare for your audition.

SEPPINGS

Character: Described as ‘doleful as a whipped dog, his gait is one of teetering exhaustion’, Seppings is Aunt Dahlia’s long-suffering butler. Jeeves recruits him because of his talent for impersonation, of which Seppings is secretly proud.

SEPPINGS. Good evening, sir.

BERTIE. What are you doing here, Seppings?

SEPPINGS. I came to lend a hand, sir.

JEEVES. I was also going to suggest that we might call upon Seppings to play a number of the other protagonists in this re-enactment. He does have a particular aptitude for impersonations.

BERTIE. Do you, Seppings?

SEPPINGS. I don’t think I’m in a position to judge, sir.

BERTIE. Is Mrs Travers at home, Seppings?

SEPPINGS. Yes, sir. She has requested that she is not to be disturbed this morning. But I do know that she wishes to speak with you.

BERTIE. Yes, she does.

SEPPINGS. You will find her in the library shortly, sir.

AUNT DAHLIA

Character: Aunt Dahlia bullies and manipulates Bertie and always expects to get her own way. She is rather loud and always speaks her mind. Please use a female voice with an upper-class English accent.

DAHLIA. So you were out on the tiles again last night.

BERTIE. What? Who told you that?

DAHLIA. It's an extraordinary thing – every time I see you, you appear to be recovering from some debauch. Don't you ever stop drinking? How about when you are asleep?

BERTIE. You wrong me, relative. Except at times of special revelry, I am exceedingly moderate in my potations. A brace of cocktails, a glass of wine at dinner and possibly a...

DAHLIA. Enough, Bertie, sit and listen. All I wanted was to tell you to go to an antique shop in the Brompton Road and sneer at a cow-creamer.

BERTIE. Do what to a what?

DAHLIA. They've got an eighteenth-century cow-creamer there that your Uncle Tom's going to buy this afternoon. It's a sort of cream jug, Bertie. It looks exactly like a cow, but smaller, of course, and made of silver. Go there and ask them to show it to you, and then sow doubts and misgivings in their mind and make them clip the price a bit. And tell them you think it's modern Dutch, which is apparently something a cow-creamer ought not to be... Understood? Good, because I've got work to do. Seppings, show Mr Wooster the door!

RODERICK SPODE

Character: Spode is a bully and a fierce, monocled thug with a robust voice. (Note the change in Spode's demeanour and speech when Jeeves approaches.)

SPODE. Good evening, Wooster. I should like a word with you.

BERTIE. Oh, yes.

SPODE. I have been talking to Sir Watkyn Bassett and he has told me the whole story of the cow-creamer.

BERTIE. Oh, yes?

SPODE. And we know why you are here.

BERTIE. Oh, yes.

SPODE. Stop saying 'Oh, yes?', you miserable worm, and listen to me. Oh, yes. It is perfectly plain to us why you are here. You have been sent by your Uncle Tom to steal this cow-creamer for him. You needn't trouble to deny it. I found you with the thing in your hands this afternoon. And now, we learn, your Aunt Dahlia is arriving. The muster of the vultures, ha!

BERTIE. What! Is she? Are you sure?

SPODE. Let me warn you, Wooster. If the thing disappears, I shall know where it has gone, and I shall immediately beat you to a jelly. To a jelly. Have you got that clear?

BERTIE. Oh, quite. To a jelly.

SPODE. Splendid.

[SPODE suddenly becomes aware that JEEVES is approaching and abruptly changes his tone.]

What a lovely evening, is it not? Extraordinarily mild for the time of year. Well, I mustn't keep you any longer. You will be wanting to go and dress for dinner.

RODERICK SPODE & AUNT DAHLIA

Context: One part of the play involves Seppings acting as Spode and Dahlia at the same time. He must switch between the two characters (including, of course, their voices) very quickly.

DAHLIA. What on earth have you got that sheet around you for? Wear it if you like, of course. But it doesn't suit you.

[AUNT DAHLIA pulls a compact from her pocket and turns away from the audience to powder her nose in order to produce SPODE's voice.]

SPODE. I must ask you to leave us, madam. I am going to thrash this man within an inch of his life.

DAHLIA. You don't touch a nephew of mine.

SPODE. I am going to break every bone in his body.

DAHLIA. You aren't doing anything of the sort. The idea! I have dealt with far bigger men than you, Mr Spode.

SPODE. Mrs Travers. I need to speak to you in private.

DAHLIA. Your tone is unnecessarily threatening.

SPODE. Mrs Travers, I would never touch a woman and I'm asking you not to touch a man. Please unhand me.

DAHLIA. Only if you promise to be civil.

SPODE. As a gentleman, I give you my word.

DAHLIA. Very well then, I'm sorry.

BUTTERFIELD

Character: Butterfield is yet another butler, who shares, with all the other butlers, a smug sense of self-importance and a barely hidden disdain for the people he serves. He deliberately riles Bertie by being excruciatingly obsequious and unctuous.

BUTTERFIELD. Excuse me, sir, but on her way out, Miss Byng gave me this notebook to give to you, sir.

BERTIE. Oh, thank you, Butterfield.

BUTTERFIELD. No, thank you, sir.

BERTIE. Have you seen Mr Fink-Nottle?

BUTTERFIELD. Yes, sir, he is in the drawing room with Miss Bassett.

BERTIE. That couldn't be more perfect. Would you be so kind as to present this to him?

BUTTERFIELD. Certainly, sir.

BERTIE. Thank you, Butterfield.

BUTTERFIELD. No, thank you, sir.

CONSTABLE OATES

Character: Constable Oates is not a very bright policeman; in fact, he is of the stupid, pedantic type. He demands respect but doesn't get it. He is fawning to the upper classes and a bully to the lower. Try this with a West Country accent (watch this video for an example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j737oPgPE3s>).

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.

[Bartholomew barks at appropriate moments.]

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.