



# The Purloined Paperweight

*P.G. Wodehouse*

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## The Purloined Paperweight Details

Date : Published December 15th 1989 by Paperweight Press (first published May 12th 1967)

ISBN : 9780933756090

Author : P.G. Wodehouse

Format : Hardcover 188 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Comedy, Literature, European Literature, British Literature

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## From Reader Review The Purloined Paperweight for online ebook

### Dave says

Pleasant late Wodehouse--more like the early ones, without quite the madcap comedy of errors or distinct world of crazy people (like in Jeeves/Wooster or Blandings Castle). Still funny and charming. American title is better: *The Purloined Paperweight*.

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### Betsy says

Not an all-out laugh fest or binge, but a jolly good time all the same.

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### Sheryl says

i had actually HEARD of this book from deep in my distant past so that maybe it was well known long ago? anyway, hugh grant and steven fry are huge fans of his and played jeeves and wooster on the BBC long ago...

very quick read but i didn't want it to end...i wanted more so now the search is on...since i listen over and over again in the car i now must start reading them in bed...they are a tremendous number, thank goodness.

i need them to relieve the tremendous stress in my life now so...they do the trick.

warning. do not attempt to read these if you are a serious socialist and hate the aristocracy and upper class. they are parodied but also humanized. they are a guilty pleasure for me...

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### Colleen says

Frothy fun. The plot is as intricate as the workings of a music box. As typical for a PG Wodehouse novel, the characters don't change, but they are delightful enough as they are that the reader doesn't really mind that. A quick read that's perfect for the lazy days of summer.

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### Sarah says

I had heard of P.G. Wodehouse, but never read anything by him until a fellow reviewer suggested I should. And, having no rhyme or reason to which Wodehouse book to read, I chose the one with the oddest title. This book actually goes by another name than the one I have. It has been re-released with the title "Company for Henry."

Comments I've received when mentioning I'm reading a Wodehouse book have all followed a similar strain

– “He’s so...British!” Sometimes this was meant in a good way, sometimes in a bad. But I have to say I heartily agree. He is a very British author. (Possibly because he was born in Britain???) Most Americans I’ve come in contact with mean one of two things if they label it “British” in nature (other than originating in Britain). First – that it is very staunch, outwardly unemotional, and proper. Second – it is very silly and hard for them to understand at times (such as Monty Python or Fawlty Towers). Wodehouse (@ least this novel) falls in the latter category.

This novel is not a mystery. However, it has enough plot twists to possibly qualify as one. An inside out mystery, possibly – where you know whodunnit and there is no maliciousness involved. Henry is the owner of a rather gaudy and painful looking country house named Ashby Hall. It has been in his family for years, and due to certain legal restrictions, he is unable to sell valuable parts of family history despite the fact that he owes a great deal of money to certain parties. He has been joined by his lovely and level-headed niece, Jane. Jane is engaged to an interior designer who has been in the Americas for some time – named Lionel. Jane also has a lackabout brother named Algy, who is always coming up with get rich quick schemes. (With me so far?) Algy has been mooching off his friend, Bill, who looks rather intimidating but has a heart of gold. Also in this comedy are the characters of Wendell Stickney – a distant relative of Henry’s who is an American and collects French paperweights. Wendell has an Aunt who lives with him named Kelly – who used to be a showgirl in her single days.

Henry is hoping to sell Ashby Hall to Stickney, in order to get the monstrosity off his hands and to be able to pay his debts. Algy is trying to foist money out of Bill, who has come into a modest inheritance. And Stickney is trying to learn about his family line in any way he can. Jane is trying to keep Algy and Henry from being thrown in jail and making fools of themselves. Kelly is just along for the ride.

When Stickney discovers a valuable French paperweight in the Ashby Hall contents, he decides he must have it, no matter what. He, Kelly, and Henry concoct a plan to sell the paperweight to Stickney while making it look to the authorities as if it were stolen. All would seem to go according to plan until people start falling in love, getting mistaken for insurance auditor’s agents, and start trying to work to their own ends alongside the original plan.

Wodehouse manages to keep you delightfully confused for the majority of the novel, as the characters dance unconscious circles around each other – making the plot thicken and intensify with every step. I highly commend my friend for recommending this novel to me and definitely recommend you, reader, check out a Wodehouse novel at your earliest convenience.

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### **Douglas Wilson says**

Read this one before, under the title The Purloined Paperweight. I liked it better this time for some reason. Always fun.

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### **Balazs Almasi says**

Egy tipikus Wodehouse könyv, amiben nem lehet csalódní. Nincs a legjobb m?vei között, ezúttal nem fog kiesni a könyv a lezünkbe! a sok nevetés miatt, az első fejezetek igencsak langyosan csordogálnak. A végére aztán kifejezetten jó lesz a könyv, itt is el?kerül az író egyik kedvenc karaktere, a nagy dumás, lel?hetetlen fickó, aki a végére határozottan vicces dolgokat szövegel össze. És persze ahogy a többi könyvében, úgy a happy end itt sem maradhat el.

Könnyed, szórakoztató olvasmány, de nem éri el az író legjobbainak színvonalát.

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## Doug says

This book makes a pair of [interconnected] Thomas Hardy jokes, name-checks Southern [US] fried chicken as a wonderful thing, and lampshades its whole premise of a caper involving a missing paperweight as being quaint in the first few pages. Five stars! Stand amazed by it.

Ok, so even for Wodehouse, this one is light and full of contrivances. You could call it breezy, unnecessarily convoluted, prone to so many coincidences that even Dickens would complain, and a bit idealistic about human nature and love, but that, my dear, is the point. That's kind of like slagging off Van Gough paintings for being a bit "swirly" and having thick strokes. And while this novel is absolutely non-threatening to the brain, it still manages to have obvious puns mixed with really non-obvious jokes [a few you have to rewind just to make sure they were jokes], quick-fire references to pop culture that you might have to go off and look up, entire chunks of dialogue based around word repetition and multiple meanings, and honest human emotion mixed in with silly "drop of the hat" characters. The whole thing is careful parsing out of irony vs earnestness, in nearly every sense of those terms.

It also, for those who know something of the Fiasco RPG, plays out very much like a session said game with its many minor machinations building up to one large conflict. Henry is a lonely man stuck with a house he doesn't want. His niece Jane is sensible and engaged to Lionel, but she soon meets Bill, the roommate (and temporary benefactor) of her brother Algy. Algy is looking for funding for his many schemes. Which Wendell, a rich American cousin might provide. Henry is hoping to sell the house to Wendell. Wendell also collects 18th century paperweights, and is trying to conspire with Henry for a way to get a hold of one that Henry has (but due to heirloom laws, is not able to sell). Wendell's aunt Kelly is falling for Henry. Bill is falling for Jane but is unable to get near her because Henry doesn't trust Algy's friends. The conspiracy to get a hold of the paperweight ends up people making wrong assumptions about who is who and who is up to what. Toss in a broker man (there to settle amounts owed on a liquor tab) and a mixture of hired help, all with their own interlocking schemes, and you get the idea.

Perhaps interesting is also the glimpses this novel gives for the Wodehousian process. Algy is very similar to the Wooster style character, friendly and lovable if at times selfish and prone to idiocy. Except while in Jeeves & Wooster tales, Wooster is inevitably saved by Jeeves, Algy is mostly allowed to carry his many plans to fruition. The novel also introduces plot points that are stereotypically Wodehousian (mistaken identity and bossy females, for example) but has them backfire and go off at new angles at the very moment where you think you know what will happen next. Finally, though there are references to mid-20th-century, the whole thing is cast in Wodehousian timelessness, where the value of things and the level of technology just seems too non-specific to every know \*when\* are you reading about.

I'll leave my five-star rating up. I'd also recommend this as a fair first novel for someone trying to get into Wodehouse. Some of his earlier novels were better, but this one sums it up in a tighter package and plays more games with itself (all the way down to how it ends without every single loose end being tidily wrapped up). Took me less than a day to read it, but I would have loved to explore more of these characters. As silly as they often were.

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## Daniel says

TL;DR: 5 stars, one of the two best non-series Wodehouse I've read to date.

This was the perfect choice for the day. It's been far too long since I read some Wodehouse and Company for Henry has all the best Wodehouse tropes. Aunts and Uncles, Country Houses, poor relations, people engaged to the wrong partner, crazed collectors, stolen objects, love at first sight, and men who propose to fill an awkward pause in the conversation.

I was expecting this to be about trying to fix up Uncle Henry, but the focus is mostly on his intelligent and capable niece Jane, and her layabout brother Algy, who's sure to be rich any day now if only someone will lend him the money for his latest scheme. Algy is currently sponging off his old school friend Bill, lately come into an inheritance, and Jane is engaged to another of his old classmates, L.P. Green. An American millionaire and his Aunt are also involved.

None of the tropes are the most extreme examples of their type in Wodehouse canon, but the mix is excellent, and as always Wodehouse's style makes every sentence a joy. I always get out of breath reading Wodehouse as I inevitably end up reading large chunks of the text aloud.

I will not let such a long gap pass again before my next dip into Wodehouse oeuvre.

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### **Aarathi Burki says**

Very very funny book extremely hilarious loved the pair of Henry and Kelly . Great writing by wodehouse who can turn a simple scene into utmost comedy.

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### **Holly says**

I thoroughly enjoyed the plot thickening, right up until the last page. It was then that I read THE END, and realized most of the conflict was never resolved. I needed just one more chapter to set everything straight. Rather annoying. Nevertheless, Wodehouse always gives you some clever writing. Among my favorites are these:

"Its atmosphere was one of intensely respectable gloom."

"The authorities in charge of human affairs have decreed, no doubt for some excellent reason, that interior decorators as a class shall look simply terrible. Possibly the thought behind this was that if they were beautiful as well as talented, the mixture would be too rich."

"His attitude towards the future was always the old theatrical one that it would be all right on the night."

"I suppose infatuation with profiles and melting eyes is a sort of measles we poor dumb girls have to go through, and the great thing is to get it out of the system as soon as possible."

"Though never blind to his numerous defects, she had always recognized his ingenuity, even if too often it merely consisted of thinking up ways of avoiding work."

"Only by opening the door and jumping out could Wendell have avoided listening to the Niagara of anecdotes which Claude poured out on him."

"...when one is a toad beneath the harrow, which was Bill's unpleasant position, one resents effervescence in others."

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### **Libbeth says**

I will use this "review" for all the P. G. Wodehouse I have read. I read them all so long ago and enjoyed them so much that I have given them all 5 stars. As I re-read them I will adjust the stars accordingly, if necessary, and add a proper review.

When I first discovered P. G. Wodehouse I devoured every book I could find in the local library, throughout the eighties and early nineties. Alas, this means that I have read most of them and stumbling across one I have not read is a rare thing. I'm sure that through this great site I will joyfully find at least a few I have not read, and be able to track them down.

My records only began in 1982, so I do not have a note of any I read before then. I'm sure I will enjoy re-reading them.

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### **Emma says**

I read somewhere that this is one of the last books Wodehouse wrote. I have to say, it was not too good, the plot was and the characters could have been more funny. But you do as usual with him, stumble onto fun images here and there. It is certainly not as good as the previous Wodehouse I reviewed.

Something I thought uncanny, is that he mentions in it a book I just read and reviewed! Here is the excerpt, p.57:

'I don't think she's rich. I put her down as a poor relation. And even if she's rolling in money she won't sneer at us. She's much too good a sort. Do you ever read Chaucer's Canterbury Tales?'

'Well, with one thing ad another...Why?'

'She reminds me of his Wife of Bath. Breezy and uninhibited. She used to be on the stage.'

'That sounds all right.'

original post:

<http://wordsandpeace.wordpress.com/20...>

Emma @ Words And Peace

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### **Ian Wood says**

The titular Henry is Henry Paradenen whom after a career treading the boards has unexpectedly inherited Ashby Hall and the families associated financial obligations. American multi-millionaire relative J. Wendell Stickney and has arrived and Henry is keen to unload the family pile on him whilst wooing Stickney's Aunt Kelly. Henry's niece, Jane, is also involved in one of the unfortunate Wodehouse engagements to an interior decorator, Lionel Green (whom previously appeared in 'Money in the Bank' when he was unsuitably engaged to Anne Benedick), however Wodehouse hero Bill Hardy is on hand to give her the love she deserves.

With so much love and marriage going on the butler Ferris steals the show with his views on the matter, 'Weren't you happy when you got married Ferris?', 'No, Sir.', 'Was Mrs Ferris?', 'She appeared to take a certain girlish pleasure in the ceremony, Sir, but it soon blew over.' Ferris finally sums up 'Marriage is not a process for prolonging the life of love, Sir. It merely mummifies its corpse.' Ferris first appeared in 'The Small Bachelor' where he held the same views and used the same dialogue, however dialogue this good bears repeating.

Not the greatest Wodehouse novel and clearly written after his prime, however second rate Wodehouse is better than the best of the next brightest.

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## **F.R. says**

One would hardly be so foolhardy as to place 'Company for Henry' at the forefront of the Wodehouse oeuvre, but it would certainly be hard to deny that this slight – even middling – later novel shows off old P.G. at his most charming. The prose is as expected lovely, the wit is constantly sharp and it's just beautiful to watch him assemble this colourful (yet familiar) jigsaw puzzle of pieces to create one of his trademarked gentle farces. All the usual types are here: there's the dissolute owner of a country house; an American millionaire; a wastrel layabout of aristocratic heritage; a sprightly but no nonsense young lady; and a doughty and decent cove named Bill (all doughty and decent coves are named Bill in Wodehouse). The plot is the normal meeting of sweet but star-crossed lovers, purloined esoteric valuables, money troubles and confusion placed on top of misunderstanding then slotted next to mistaken identity. It's never going to blow anyone's monogrammed socks off, but it's a perfect and absolutely lovely time-waster.

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