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Monty Bodkin's wooing of Gertrude Butterwick on the R.M.S. Atlantic is not progressing as it should. And the cause of all the trouble is Miss Lotus Blossum, the brightest star in Hollywood's firmament. The easy camaraderie of Miss Blossom, coupled with the idea that Monty is the only person who can send the errant Ambrose back to her welcoming arms, is causing Mr Bodkin moments of acute distress.

The Luck of the Bodkins Details

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From Reader Review *The Luck of the Bodkins* for online ebook

Margaret says

This is a top-notch Wodehouse. Oh, sure, it doesn't have Jeeves and Wooster or Lord Emsworth and Duchess or even Psmith, but who cares? It does have Monty Bodkin (whom I encountered in *Heavy Weather* as one of Lord Emsworth's endless string of secretaries) and an extra complicated, extra delightful plot, which takes place mostly on a ship from England to America.

Wodehouse is at the top of his form with his marvelous idiom, beginning with the very first, irresistible sentence: "Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the Hotel Magnifique at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty, hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French." It's sheer hilarity from cover to cover, and wonderfully, it's even a little longer than most Wodehouse novels, a lovely bonus.

Henry Avila says

A French farce with English reserve, (best describes this saga) well not too much... after all it was written by the great P.G. Wodehouse... Mr. Montague "Monty" Bodkin a wealthy but idle British bachelor with a romantic problem, it seems Gertrude Butterwick...love these peculiar names...the gentleman's lady friend has a strange daddy, who insists that rich Monty gets a job or no marriage to his pretty daughter, and the really strange part is she will obey his ultimatum, this transpires in 1935...things have changed a little. Troubles send our fragile hero to the Riviera, in Cannes, to calm his nerves in a resort hotel, even during the Depression the affluent need to relax. The adoring Bodkin is writing to his love a letter of his passion for her, but he is not the brightest bulb in the neighborhood, and tries to ask a fat man at a nearby table to help him with a spelling problem, turns out this is a Hollywood Mogul fighting with his pesky sister-in-law Mabel Spence, she has a ghastly message from scary Grayce...pardon me the rotund gentleman is called Ivor "Ikey" Llewellyn, a most unpleasant person to be around and the interruption causes a stormy reaction, to put it mildly...This episode permits the paranoid, Movie studio boss to have bad thoughts a plot by his young, former actress wife, Grayce, safely in Paris, to smuggle her pearl necklace by customs in New York without paying taxes... he is petrified, fears jail, could this moron be a spy for them? Bodkin did get a job as a detective, a telegram, (don't know what that is) arrives and the recipient Monty is crushed, his girlfriend has called off the engagement. Nevertheless this man is a Bodkin, stout heart noblemen, not officially but they should be, he will follow his dear on an ocean liner, the R.M.S. Atlantic to America. NOW THE FUN BEGINS...Three couples on board, they can't leave...fighting, loving (mostly hating each other, temporarily of course) the combatants are Monty and Gertrude, you have already met...Reggie Tennyson a charming Englishman without a penny in love, her name is Mabel, yes that one and last but very far from least his big brother Ambrose, a novelist who's books are sadly not read ...yet Lotus Blossom a big movie star, in Mr.Llewellyn's studio, is enchanted with him. This mob is always in and out of their staterooms, things are said and taken back, love follows hate and returns to hate, with a few tears, in-between and many laughs, a family feud begins, Reggie and Ambrose are Gertrude's cousins ... a continuous struggle for the happy ending..does it exist... The stressed out Llewellyn offers everyone a contract... The nosy room steward, Mr. Albert Peasemarch dominates the story, he stirs and the damage is inflicted, he means well though but is clueless, like a man walking in a dense fog, this will keep the narrative very interesting, if not boiling and we should not forget grumpy Wilfred...who is Wilfred ..the pet alligator of Miss Blossom, every movie star has their eccentricities.....

IF YOU LIKE TO LAUGH THIS IS FOR YOU.

Jenny Maloney says

If you're a fan of early cinema this book--originally published in 1935--is for you. There's plenty of in-jokes geared towards producers, nepotism, and actors. At one moment in the book I had to pause because Monty Bodkin (the Lucky Bodkin of the title) was compared to Leslie Howard and Clark Gable, both of whom were to star in *Gone With the Wind* four years *after* Wodehouse mentions them. Shall we give P.G. a pat on the back for smushing such stellar talent together before Selznick?

I know what you're thinking and, no, you don't have to be a fan of movie history to enjoy this story. It just helps.

There's plenty of rip-roaring trouble. Monty Bodkin wants to marry Gertrude Butterwick, who misunderstands a tattoo of his and breaks their engagement. As he tries to win her back over the course of a six day crossing-of-the-Atlantic he has to thwart movie starlets (and boy, does Wodehouse nail the speaking patterns of the early mega-watt actresses like Katherine Hepburn/Bette Davis in *Miss Lotus Blossom*) novelists, movie producers, and the good intentions of his best friend Reggie. Mickey Mouse plays a part, as does Wilfred the Alligator.

The most enjoyable part of this book is spending time with the characters. Each one is so well-drawn that you don't lose your place, which is tricky with a "cast" of this size. Gertrude is a hockey-playing sportswoman who can handle herself. Lotus "Lottie" Blossom is star of stage and state-rooms. Ambrose Tennyson is "not the right Tennyson". Ivor Llewellyn is a three-chinned, Customs-fearing movie producer. Peasemarch is the feudal serf who can't keep his nose out of anyone's business. And Reggie is the intelligent blighter who somehow manages to pull everyone together.

If you're looking for something to make you smile, this one'll do it. Part of it is inexplicable.

No, literally. Part of it is the word "inexplicable."

Jenny
Place For The Stolen
Under Ground Writing Project

Terence Manleigh says

What can one say? Wodehouse is an angel in human shape, dispensing joy and laughter whenever he sits down at the typewriter. I adore him. This book? It's the usual penicillin.

First Second Books says

This is one of PG Wodehouse's screwball comedies – there are five or six twenty-something protagonists who are variously in love with each other, plus a customs-avoiding jewelry-smuggling multi-millionaire, all

trapped on a cruise ship from London to New York. Many hijinx ensue. Sadly, no one gets thrown off the side of the boat.

Lady Shockley says

One of my favorite Wodehouses. Monty Bodkin and his beloved hockey playing fiancée, Gertrude Butterwick set sail for New York. But oh, what adventures there are to be had on a cruise ship! Smuggling, spies, broken hearts and renewed hopes for happiness; just the things a Wodehouse novel *should* have. All that and an alligator named Wilfred. What could possibly go wrong?

June Louise says

I am a massive fan of PG Wodehouse - his characters are all very memorable and the comic storyline of "The Luck of the Bodkins" really cheered me up on a cold February day.

This novel is set on the RMS Atlantic which is sailing to America bearing the Tennyson brothers, their cousin Gertrude Butterwick, the Tennyson's old Eton school friend Monty Bodkin as well as the Hollywood movie magnate Ikey Llewellyn, his sister Mabel Spence, the actress Lotus Blossom (an infuriating character who travels everywhere with her pet alligator), as well as the hapless steward Albert Peasemars (who I found myself yelling at at different times during the book). Without describing the plot in my review, all I will say is that this group of characters get up to no-end of scrapes during their six-day voyage; and at the centre of all this is a necklace that Llewellyn's wife wants him to smuggle out of Europe without paying duty.

Highly recommended.

John Machata says

I've been reading and re-reading PG Wodehouse, one English's great wordsmiths. One of the best opening of any novel ever written:

"Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the Hotel Magnifique at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty, hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French."

-- The Luck of the Bodkins, by P.G. Wodehouse

Nandakishore Varma says

“Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the Hotel Magnifique at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to speak French.”

It is such sentences that make me an ardent fan of Wodehouse. He was a master of the English language.

BTW, I get this look whenever I am about to speak Hindi!

Lindley Walter-smith says

One of the most delightful of Wodehouse's novels, which is saying something. The likeable, idle-rich Monty, still in pursuit of winning his beloved's heart by holding down a job for a year, ends up on a cruise ship pursuing her to America after a little understanding. As a result he is drawn into the complicated affairs of the Hollywood elite, and ridiculous twists and turns follow before the happy ending. Brilliantly funny, well-written and full of sunshine. And alligators.

❁?Rory?❁ says

Read for Anglophiles group.

Veronique says

4.5

Well, I was always a little apprehensive at the prospect of reading Wodehouse. Not sure why. Perhaps I felt I wouldn't get the humour... Whatever the reason, I really shouldn't have worried!

"Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the Hotel Magnifique at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty, hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French."

From the very beginning, I was completely taken in by Monty Bodkins, his hilarious manners and incapability to spell, as well as by the colourful cast, which includes an actress with a pet alligator, a Hollywood film magnate, a hockey-playing sportswoman and a loquacious ship's porter to name a few.

This is a 1930s comedy weaving numerous convoluted plot strands revolving around the smuggling of a necklace, but really what shines through are its well-drawn characters and witty dialogue. Most of the action takes place on a ship crossing the Atlantic from Southampton to New York, which adds a little flavour of the stage. Imagine rip-roaring scenes full of misunderstandings as well as a good dose of film-making in-jokes.

I did enjoy this enormously, surprisingly, giggling throughout the entirety of the novel, and even bursting into laughter a couple of times (I shall never look at the word 'inexplicable' in the same light). If like me you were unsure about Wodehouse, do try this novel. I recommend the audiobook to get the full effect. There are two other stories with Monty, one prior to this one (Heavy Weather) and a sequel (Pearls, Girls And Monty Bodkin), which I shall be trying :O)

Dan Schwent says

I'm going to go out on a limb here and rank Luck of the Bodkins as my third favorite Wodehouse novel, just below Leave it to Psmith and Code of the Woosters. It's the longest Wodehouse book I've read yet and probably has the most twists. Highly recommended.

Vamsee says

Wodehouse at his absolute best...the man never fails to brighten up ur mood, using simple situation and amazing language to represent everyday characters.

Lloyd says

Probably Wodehouse's longest non-Jeeves/non-Blandings novel, *Luck of the Bodkins* appears to have started out as a play script or screenplay. If this surmise is correct, we can all shed a tear that Eric Blore never got to play the verbose, fat-headed, good-hearted cabin steward Albert Peasemarch.

Peasemarch, a man capable of quoting Shakespeare, singing *The Bandolero* to a dubious crowd of second-class passengers with only a day's rehearsal, and running the length of a ocean liner half a dozen times, proves also up to the task of nearly wrecking the nuptial plans of a trio of miscellaneous upper-class Englishmen, the titular Monty Bodkin foremost among them. Peasemarch becomes, by degrees, an annoyance, an affliction, and ultimately a curse approaching biblical proportions to Bodkin, a man so dim he makes Bertie Wooster look like Enrico Fermi by comparison.

Bodkin's role in this affair is smaller than the title might lead you to believe. Although he avoids the mid-point stabbing Shakespeare inflicted on Julius Caesar, there are moments in *Luck of the Bodkins* when he clearly longs for the sweet embrace of death, most notably when the American movie actress Lottie Blossom has, due to the incompetence of Peasemarch, gotten hold of a Mickey Mouse doll symbolic of his undying love for Gertrude Butterwick, and won't give it back unless he signs an acting contract with the big movie tycoon Ivor Llewellyn so that Llewellyn will give her fiance a job so that...no, there is too much.

Let me sum up: it is a feast, one I only wish we could savor with the clicking of a projector in the background, with Albert Peasemarch, Monty Bodkin, and Lottie Blossom up on the screen in glorious sepia-tinted black and white.

Karin says

Monty Bodkins is in love and engaged to Gertrude Butterwick, now that he has finally managed to figure out how to appear gainfully employed despite being independently wealthy. Her cousin Ambrose Tennyson is engaged to the beautiful American actress, Lotus Blossom, and his brother falls head over heels for Grayce, the sister-in-law, for the man who owns the picture company Lotus acts for. In the meantime, this man, Ivor Llewellyn, is highly stressed because Grayce has let him know, in no uncertain terms, that his wife wants him to smuggle an expensive necklace across the border so she won't have to pay duty (the fact that they could afford it be darned), and just at that time, Monty comes by to ask how to spell a word.

The farce begins in France, moves to England and then onto a transatlantic liner as Ivor frets that Monty, who was already booked on this ship, is certainly hot on his trail, Gertrude convinced Monty is actually in love with the assertive Lotus Blossom, and a certain cabin steward becomes embroiled in the mix. This is the first of the Drones Clubs books I have really enjoyed, right up there with the Wooster and Jeeves' books (and, indeed, better than a few of those).

QNPoohBear says

Ivor Llewellyn is shocked when his sister-in-law Mabel announces her sister Grayce has bought a \$50,000 necklace she expects Ivor to smuggle into the U.S. without paying duties. Of course he can afford the price he's president of Suberba-Llewellyn Motion Picture Corporation, but Grayce threatens a Paris divorce if Ivor doesn't comply with her wishes. When Monty Bodkin, the unfortunate former secretary of Lord Emsworth and erstwhile detective for P. Frobisher Pilbeam, asks Ivor how to spell a word, Ivor gets it into his head that Monty overheard the conversation about the necklace and is really a customs agent in disguise. When Monty's fiancée Gertrude Butterwick breaks up with him, he books passage on the steamer Atlantic to follow her to New York. Ivor and Mabel are also on the ship, solidifying Ivor's belief Monty is after him. Also on board are Monty's pal Reggie Tennyson and his brother Ambrose, who has just been invited to come write scenarios for Suberba-Llewellyn Motion Picture Corporation. Reggie's gal pal, the famous actress Lotus Blossom is on the Atlantic too, wanting to renew her friendship with Reggie in a most demonstrative way.

Typically of Wodehouse this story features star-crossed lovers, zany scenes and instead of a butler, a meddling steward Alfred Peasemarch. I found this story has too many misunderstandings and confusions for my taste. It went on too long and the charm wore off quickly.

As stupid as Monty and Reggie are, Ivor and Alfred were worse. Alfred was so completely annoying, constantly popping up where he was not wanted and causing trouble. Wodehouse's men are usually pretty dim but for Ivor to believe MONTY is a Customs' Agent and someone else is a famous writer, he has to be incredibly stupid. He didn't annoy me as much as Alfred though. Every time Alfred was around, I cringed. Monty was my favorite character. I felt really bad for him. He's such a nice chap and didn't deserve anything that happened to him.

Wodehouse's women are usually much more intelligent than the men but not in this case. He really let me down with his obnoxious, annoying, stupid women. Lottie really took the cake. She was just so awful and obnoxious, not to mention cruel and thoughtless. She didn't care about willful destruction of property, Gertrude's feelings and thought it was funny to let people get a look at her unusual pet. She was selfish and cruel and I couldn't stand her. Her only growth is told rather than shown. Gertrude was no prize either. She

was supposedly very much in love with Monty but yet doubted him and never let him catch a break. Monty doesn't deserve her. Mabel was the only one with sense and she came up with a whole bunch of silly ideas to break the law. She also came up with a great idea to do something that would benefit her and the one she loved. Still, she was a strong female character and I found her the most likable of them all.

Ian Wood says

'The Luck of the Bodkins' tells the continuing story of Monty Bodkin and his engagement to Gertrude Butterwick which relies on his remaining in someone's employ for a whole year. We last met Monty at Blanding's Castle where he was employed as secretary for Lord Emsworth for the length of 'Heavy Weather' rather than the length of a year. Monty left Blanding's after gaining employment with Percy Pilbeam at the Argos Detective Agency. Monty is on Holiday at Cannes but follows Gertrude on board the RMS Atlantic after receiving a Cable breaking off their engagement.

The RMS Atlantic acts as a typical Wodehouse stately home for the purposes of the farce with state rooms replacing the usual bedroom setting for the misunderstandings and complications that litter farce like so many discarded gloves. The RMS Atlantic has the usual domestic staff with steward Albert Peasemarch undertaking most of the 'business' usually entrusted to butlers or under footmen. Trying to summarise the plot in less than the three hundred pages Wodehouse uses would rather miss the point of this type of book but in essence Monty loves Gertrude, who thinks he likes Lotus Blossom, a movie starlet whom adores Ambrose, who thinks she has fallen for his brother, Reggie, whom has definitely got it bad for Mabel Spence, sister-in-law to movie mogul Ikey Llewellyn, whom has been charged with smuggling jewels for his wife Grayce.

If the plot appears complicated you should try the resolution. And you really should try the resolution. The Liner setting allowed Wodehouse the unusual point that all his cast need not be aware of each other at the start of the voyage and allowed him to dispense with making half of them unwilling imposters. Definitely one of the masters most overlooked master pieces and my own personnel favourite.

Leslie says

4.5* for this audiobook edition, narrated by Jonathan Cecil.

Prime Wodehouse fare, with romantic entanglements, misunderstandings & colorful characters.

Lady Drinkwell says

Jolly good fun. At first I did not like the fact that this took place on a boat instead of a lovely stately home with aunts, pigs etc. However it soon grew on me and the humour was relentless.
