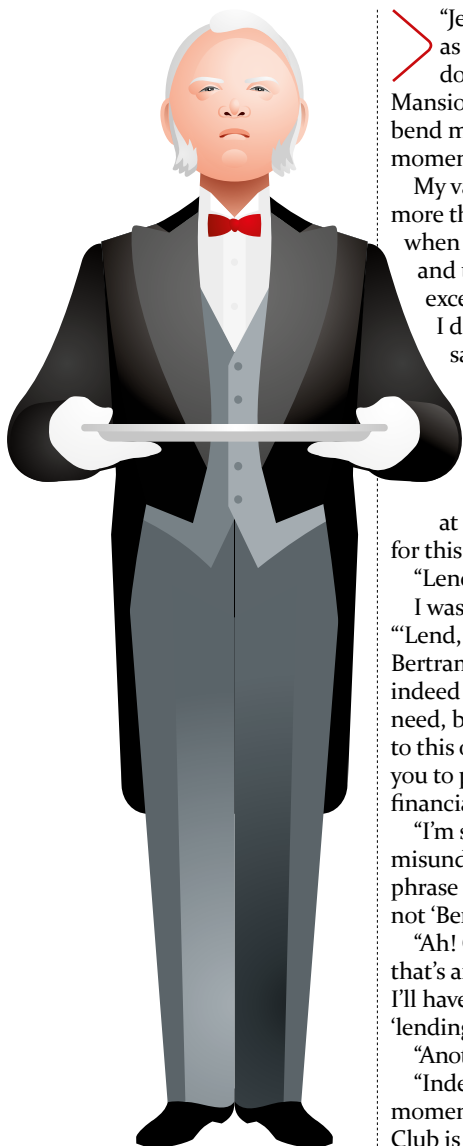


JEEVES AND THE CORPORATE TREASURY

What every good IPO needs is a steady hand at the tiller. Particularly when the CFO's hand is less than steady



> “Jeeves!” I ballyhoed, as I returned to the domestic fold at Berkeley Mansions. “Sally forth and bend me your ears for momentous news!”

My valet, Jeeves, is never more than a gnat’s wing afar when he is summonsed, and this occasion was no exception to that rule. I daresay he not only sallied forth, but sallied fifth, sixth and seventh, as well. A large glass of one of Jeeves’ restorative bracers was instantly at my elbow and not long for this world.

“Lend, sir,” said Jeeves. I was taken rather aback. “Lend, sir”? Now listen, Jeeves, Bertram Wooster is a friend indeed to any good man in need, but I’m not sure I take to this ordering about from you to provide temporary financial assistance.”

“I’m sorry, sir, you misunderstand me. The phrase is, ‘Lend me your ears’, not ‘Bend me your ears.’”

“Ah! Got it!” I said. “Well, that’s another financial thing I’ll have to know all about, this ‘lending of ears’ business.”

“Another financial thing, sir?”

“Indeed! For this is my momentous news. The Drones Club is to become what is

known as a ‘plc’ and to make itself available to all honest seekers of fortune on the stock market. We are to do what I’m told is an IPO, Jeeves.”

A second’s pause and the driest of coughs, and Jeeves asked, “Is that entirely wise, sir?”

“Absolutely!” I insisted, putting my foot down and my hand out for a medicinal refill.

“May I enquire as to who will be on the board of management of said enterprise?” asked Jeeves, as he swapped an empty glass for a full one.

“It’s true that not all the i’s have been dotted and there may be an uncrossed t or two. For one thing, Gussie Fink-Nottle and Oofy Prosser couldn’t decide who should be CEO and who should be chairman,” I explained.

“And how was that particular sixes-and-sevens conundrum resolved, sir?” Jeeves enquired.

“We don’t know yet,” I said. “Truth be told, they settled the matter in a drinking competition and neither of them has been seen since. But the best bit is that I’m to be the chief financial wotsit!”

A second second’s pause and an even drier cough, and Jeeves asked, “Is that entirely wise, sir?”

SHUTTERSTOCK

“*Carpe diem*, Jeeves! That’s Latin for The Day of the Goldfish.”

“Perhaps, sir, I might offer you my services as the corporate treasurer,” said Jeeves.

This sounded like he might be on to something. There isn’t a Rolls-Royce on the road with a glove box big enough to house Jeeves’ brain. While the Woosters store up charm, wit and general bonhomie, the Jeeves personae (if personae is the word I’m looking for) can take apart a situation, analyse it until it apologises for having troubled you, and then put the whole lot back together again.

“Just one thing,” I enquired. “What exactly is a corporate treasurer?”

“A corporate treasurer is to a CFO what a gentleman’s gentleman is to a gentleman,” said Jeeves. “The soul of discretion, the provider of counsel, the trusted cash handler, the one who keeps the CFO out the soup, as it were. The priority is numeracy over notoriety. The Drones Club board of management wouldn’t even know I’m there.”

“Sounds like you’ve landed the job,” I said.

“Thank you,” said Jeeves.

“No, thank you, Jeeves.”



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