APPRAISALS USED IN THE DIALOGUES OF
OSCAR WILDE’S DRAMA
“THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST”

THESIS
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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“O you who believe! Seek help in patience and the prayer. Truly! Allah is with the patience”

(Qs. Al-Baqarah: 153)

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. My Beloved Parents
2. My Beloved Husband, Abi Mujahid
3. My Beloved Sisters & Brothers, and All my friends
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First and foremost, the writer wishes to express her high gratitude to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for blessing and leading her to complete this thesis.

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ABSTRACT


Keywords: Appraisal devices, affect, judgment, appreciation, amplification, source of attitudes, power

Appraisal is a system of interpersonal meaning (Martin and Rose, 2003). People use appraisal to negotiate their experiences, feelings, and thoughts in a social relationship with others. It is concerned with the linguistic resources by which texts come to express, negotiate, and naturalize their inter-subjective and ideological positions. It has five devices: Affection, Judgment, Appreciation, Amplification, and Source of Attitudes. Drama that is performed by its characters draws human being’s interaction through its dialogues and settings. The characters may use one or more of these appraisal devices. Therefore, the dialogues of the drama can be the media to know the intentional use of language throughout the characters’ negotiating attitudes.

This thesis was intended to analyze what appraisal devices are employed in the dialogues of Oscar Wilde’s Drama “The Importance of Being Earnest” and to find out the power of the drama and of the author based on the appraisal devices used in the dialogues.

My research design was a qualitative one with Eggins and Slade’s (1997: 138-140) data analysis model: identifying, classifying, summarizing, and interpreting. The data are the dialogues that were broken down into some clauses. Then I identified the clauses whether they employed appraisal devices or not. While collecting the data, I encoded the speaker and the clauses by numbering them. After that, I identified and classified the encoding data in accordance with the appraisal devices: affection, judgment, appreciation, amplification, and source of attitudes. I calculated the classified data into a summarization table. It contains total number of clauses and total number of appraisal devices per character. Last, I interpreted the classified data and the table in order to discover the ideology or the relation between the characters in the drama.

After applying Eggins and Slade’s model, I found 1,187 total appraisal devices and 1,659 total clauses. The largest numbers of appraisal devices are amplification (489 words) and appreciation (336 words). The characters use 196 words of judgment and 53 words of source of attitudes. These show that generally the characters are more concerned with evaluating things than with evaluating human behavior.

Algernon, Jack, and Lady Bracknell have the largest number of appraising words; therefore they tend to be the most expressive speakers of all. Through the characters’ dialogues, Oscar Wilde tries to explore the Victorian custom and society of that time. Hopefully, the readers can understand and know how to interact interpersonally to their environments.

This thesis is very important for students, teachers, language practitioners, and curriculum developers who want to enrich their appraising vocabulary. They also can use the vocabulary as tools to help their work.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Language is a tool for construing an experience to be a meaning so that it can be communicated. People construe their experiences to be meanings using language. Therefore, they could share information and communicate their experiences to others. Their interaction can be direct or indirect. If people say something indirectly, it means that they imply something. To do this, they may use one or both of language forms: spoken and written to communicate their experiences. They try to achieve mutual understanding in their communities. As Eggins and Slade (1997) said that interaction/communication is not just a process of taking turn in producing sounds and words but it is a semantic activity, a process of making meanings.

People elaborate their own political, philosophical, and existential posture in a continuous and changing negotiation with their social environment through language. They have to be in one-cultural boundaries while negotiating their experiences since language cannot be separated from its culture. This situational context is the one that makes an utterance, expression, or clause intelligible. People live in a context that can be thought of as their culture or society so that their linguistic representation will be meaningful while they are in their contexts, context of situation or context of culture.

Each text has its own context. The context could be situational or cultural context. A literary text that is a kind of text also has cultural context. In fact, literary texts that are made by different authors and at different times must have
different issues/themes. The text of drama as part of our world has its immediate context to express the writer’s experience about life through the dialogues and the settings taken. People can refer differently to words like "liberty," "love," "democracy," "vice," "illness," "wealth" and "justice," depending on their contexts.

According to Eggins and Slade (1997: 116), appraisal as one of the semantic systems that expresses attitudes in casual talk is an important device for constructing and signaling degrees of solidarity and intimacy in relationship. It focuses on the attitudes which interactants express towards each other and towards the world. Appraisal helps the interactants to negotiate their experience interpersonally to other people.

Drama as one of people’s creations shows us bits of human life, thought, and world through the characters’ dialogues. The characters express the writer’s ideology and tendency within stage performance. They perform the dialogues in order to negotiate the writer’s idea to the audience. They present language forms in the dialogues as clause or clause complex. Halliday and Matthiessen (1999: 512) emphasize that the fundamental element of grammar is clause. Clause presents the parameter within which the processes may unfold. Thus, this study presents the dialogues of drama that are broken down into several chunks/clauses/sentences as the data. The writer analyzed each chunk to see whether there are appraisal devices found in the drama. Then, I interpreted the data to discover power of the drama.

I limit this study on all dialogues of the drama in order to know its power and how the author presents his ideas through the dialogues he creates. Power refers to the message that the author implied. Therefore, I use appraisals as a tool
to analyze the power of the drama. By applying appraisals, we can feel and understand well what the author may intend beyond the story he made.

The drama I chosen, *The Importance of Being Earnest* is one of the greatest comedies so that it was possibly influenced by people’s customs living at that time. It may contain negotiating attitudes.

**1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

There are many researches in discourse field, especially in appraisal systems. Why are many people interested in analyzing appraisals? The answer is because this field talks a lot about the nature of the participants. Appraisal as a discourse system has an important role to interpret people’s attitudes towards their society. It concerns on evaluating and negotiating attitudes. It relates to the power of a text and makes the text meaningful. Consequently, we can feel and understand the ideas of the text, including a drama. So, it is very important for us to use appraisal while reading and speaking a text.

In this thesis, I took drama as a media to know the power of the drama itself and the power of its author. Why I took drama? The reason is that the drama is one of literary texts performing real life. It consists of dialogues being supported by context of culture so that it becomes meaningful. It draws human beings’ interaction. Therefore, drama as part of our life cannot be separated from its situation and culture. The societal system indirectly will influence what kind of drama is being produced. Serayawati (2000: 1) asserts that a good dialogue isn’t only such a transcript of sentences, but it is a language that reveals characters so that it has a context describing times, places, and themes. Grolier in his Academic Encyclopedia (1983: 257) defines that drama refers to actions or deeds meaning “to act” or “to do” as they are performed in a thearetical setting.
I use Oscar Wilde’s drama, The Importance of Being Earnest. It is one of the English stage’s finest comedies written in 1895. I am interested to analyze it since comedy is rooted more in the events of our daily lives, such as the way we live together in communities. David L. Sill (International Encyclopedia of the Social Science vol. 3, 1968: 210) asserts that in comedies of manners, the action is based on the observation of the ways of life of the characters in the play. Comedy deals with the lighter side of life.

Comedy is also usually used as a medium to criticize social phenomena. For instance, drama that was written in 1960 must be different from the one written in 2000. It is produced in order to draw people’s powers at that time. We can know and understand the power of a drama from the characters’ dialogues. Hopefully, we could use these findings to communicate interpersonally to others in real-life situation. We also could understand the characteristics of people through their ways of speaking. Therefore, this study is very important for researchers, teachers, or students to understand the power of the drama through the appraisal devices used.

1.3 Statement of the problem

This thesis is meant to address the following issue: What appraisal devices are used in the dialogues of Oscar Wilde’s Drama “The Importance of Being Earnest”.

1.4 Objectives of the study

This thesis is intended to find out what appraisal devices are used in the dialogues, and to find out the power of the drama and of the author through the appraisal devices used in the dialogues.
1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are appraisal devices employed by the characters. They are performed in accounts and interpretation as the thesis description. Hopefully, this study is useful for further researchers, English learners, teachers, and curriculum developers to enrich their knowledge about appraisal devices. Therefore, they could make better interpersonal communication with their society. People may compare the data to real-life dialogues and select them as resources for negotiating their ideas and experiences interpersonally.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the investigation of appraisal devices used by the characters in the dialogues of The Importance of Being Earnest to make it easy to understand. The analysis focuses on the analysis of the types of the appraisal systems, and the ideology served by the appraisal devices.

1.7 Unit of Analysis

In this study, the unit of analysis is appraisal device.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Based on the title of this thesis, the descriptions of the terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. According to Martin and Rose (2003: 13), appraisal is a system of interpersonal meaning. People use it to negotiate their experiences, feelings, and thoughts in a social relationship with others. In a broad scope, appraisal theory is concerned with the linguistic recourses by which texts come to express, negotiate, and naturalize their inter-subjective and ideological positions.
2. Drama derived from the Greek verb *dran* meaning “to act” or “to do”. It consists of a set of dialogues to be performed on stage. The Importance of Being Earnest is one of the greatest English comedies written in 1895. It contains three acts with three different scenes. Set in London, the action largely takes place in the Manor House; in the garden and in the drawing room, and also in Algernon’s flat.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Text and Context

Matthiesssen (1995: 1) asserts that language is a resource for making and expressing meanings relating to various aspects of the social system (culture). People use language to communicate and negotiate their ideas. Communication is a process whereby we create, negotiate, and interpret personal meanings. Functionalists consider that in communication, people use language as a means to develop a text. They create and develop text while negotiating together in exchanging meanings. This means that they work together to complete the text. There is a pattern that one side gives an incomplete move and the other completes it. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 1) say that text in linguistics refers to any passage, spoken or written of whatever length, that forms a unified whole. Moreover, Halliday (1994: 311) adds that the text is something that happens, in the form of talking, or writing, listening, or reading. When it is analyzed, people analyze the product of this process.

In Systemic Functional System, text is seen as a unit of meaning, not of form, as a basis for analyzing language. It relates to the quality (meaning), not the quantity (form) of the text. Text is not only seen from the wording contained, but also how wording works together to set up one whole meaning. Consequently, each wording could take the right position in the text as the role it plays. It also happens in literature text whose meaning is expressed in words. The art of drama is not in the meaning of the action, but in how that meaning is expressed.
While creating meaning, it is situated by its context; context of culture and context of situation. It means that in creating or understanding a text, there is context that must be interpreted to reach its meaning. People are elaborating their own political, philosophical, and existential posture in a continuous and changing negotiation with their social environment. They have to be in one-cultural boundaries since language cannot be separated from the culture. According to Eggins (1994: 26), context of situation (register) is the immediate situational context in which the text is produced. This context is the one that makes an utterance, expression, or clause intelligible. A linguistic representation will be meaningful while it is in its context, context of situation. The other context is Genre (Context of Culture) that is widely used in some fields of arts, literature, and media. Comedy, romantic story, heroic novel, or a newspaper article belongs to a different genre. Eggins (1994: 26) emphasizes that genres are how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them. This means that people may have different genres to perform different social functions.

Halliday (1985b: 46) asserts that context of situation is the mediate environment in which the text is actually functioning. Halliday and Hasan (1985: 12) propose a conceptual framework that can be used to interpret the social context of text, the environment in which the meanings are being exchanged. This framework is under the following terms: (1) the field of discourse refers to what is happening and to the nature of the social action that is taking place. It relates to the “play”, the kind of activity (predict experiential meaning), (2) the tenor of language refers to who is taking part, to the nature of participants, their statuses, and roles. It relates to the “players”, the actors or rather the interacting roles that are involved in the creation of the text (predict interpersonal meaning), and (3) the
mode of discourse refers to what part of language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in a situation. It relates to the “parts”, the particular functions that are assigned to language (predict textual meanings).

According to Halliday (1985b: 46) that context of situation focuses the interpretation on the immediate environment of a context. But, the context of culture focuses more on the broader background of the context of the situation. Context of culture considers any actual context of situation including the field, the tenor and the mood. People live in a context that can be thought of as their culture. This context does not begin with the birth of them. In the same way that people are "born into" a language, they come to occupy a place in their context; it is a social and linguistic framework that has an important role in molding how people think, act, feel, and understand what happens.

The players of the drama as part of our world have their immediate context to express the writer’s ideas. They may refer words like "liberty," "love," "democracy," and "justice," to the word “independence”, and do not only choose what meanings to give these words, but also deliberately construct the dialogues’ meanings and intentions.

2.2 Concept of Clause

People usually communicate their feelings, thoughts, or experiences with others using language. People may use spoken or written language forms as clause or clause complex to negotiate their ideas. Gerot and Wignell (1994: 82) confirm that the sentence is a unit of written language therefore it is only applicable in
analyzing the written language instead of the concept of clause that is being applicable for both written and spoken languages. Moreover, Halliday and Matthiessen (1999: 512) emphasize that the fundamental element of grammar is clause and it presents the parameter within which the processes may unfold.

This study presents the dialogues of drama that were broken down into several chunks/clauses/sentences. They are analyzed to see whether there are appraisal devices or not found. Gerot and Wignell (1994: 82) say that a clause can be defined as the largest grammatical unit and a clause complex is two or more clauses logically connected. It is also defined as an idealization of the written language.

According to functionalists, a text is usually analyzed in the clause level. They also view clause functional unit with a triple construction of meaning that function simultaneously. Halliday (1994: 34) defines three kinds of meanings in the following sub-section.

Clause as Message

It deals with the information structure, textual metafunction. In any position of a clause, any information is put has substantial impact on the meaning of the whole clause, because position reflects its importance. Information is arranged to give focus on a certain part of clause to deliver. This arrangement has an impact on what is considered old and what is new. What is put at the beginning is considered more important than the one put next. Every information puts in the beginning is considered as Theme, and the rest is considered as Rheme. In this term, the theme functions as a message in the structure of clause.
In a text, clause functions not only as a collection of words but also has a meaning as a message. Halliday (1994: 37) confirms that in English, the clause is organized as a message by having a special status assigned to one part of it. Theme in the construction of a clause is an important element of a message, since it is the most essential part of the writers’ intentions as a message.

**Clause as Exchange**

It deals with interpersonal meaning, for example meanings that express a speaker’s attitudes and judgments (Gerot and Wignell, 1994: 13). This kind of meaning relates to the tenor of a discourse. This meaning deals with the exploration of the message in the drama. The characters use it in expressing their feeling in the dialogues they speak. At the social context level, dialogue can be interpreted as a process of exchange.

In functional linguistics field, a clause has a certain characteristic referring to its function such as an exchange. This means that along with its organization as a message, the clause is also as an interactive event involving speaker, or writer, and audience: a transaction. Halliday (1994: 34) points out that a clause has a meaning as an exchange, a transaction between a speaker and a listener; the subject is the warranty of the exchange. A speaker does not only speak to his listener but he also requires something.

Based on Halliday’s notion, a clause involves two variables: (1) the roles that are defined by the exchange process, and (2) the nature of commodity that is being exchanged. There are two main types of speech role: (a) giving, which means inviting to receive, and (b) demanding, which means inviting to give. The
word “act” of speaking is appropriately called an “interact” that means an exchange. In this case while giving implies receiving, demanding implies giving a response. Besides those kinds of speech roles, in an exchange people also should consider the commodity, which relates to the commodity being exchanged. This may be either goods and services or information.

**Clause as Representation**

People try to make sense of their experience in this world through language. They construe language in a piece of written and spoken forms through clauses. The clause is a main aspect of expressing a language. As Halliday (1994) says that the clause plays a central role because it embodies in general principle for modeling experience, namely the principle that reality is made up of processes.

In other words, while considering the clause from the experiential metafunction view, the relevant systems are known as “Transitivity” and the clause itself is interpreted as a process of configuration, which construes a set of experience or events. These are represented as a configuration of a process, participants involved in, and attendant circumstances (Martin et al., 1997).

The clause as representation is construed in language using a particular organization that is to realize experiential meaning involving transitivity (process type). Thus, its structures express representational meaning: what the clause is about, which typically of some processes, with associated participants and circumstances (manner, place, time, etc).

People have to know the difference between the minor clause and the major clause. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994: 83) a minor clause has no
predicator; major clauses do. Minor clauses are usually used in spoken languages including greetings and exclamations. They are meaningful but cannot be classified as a clause.

A major clause is a clause which has a predicator, and usually has a subject that can be ellipsis. Major clauses are divided into two kinds of clauses: independent and dependent clauses. Gerot and Wignell (1994: 84) assert that independent clauses imply that they can stand alone. They are arranged into statements, questions, commands and exclamations. On the other hand, dependent clause is a clause that depends on the independent clause.

2.3 The Mood Element

2.3.1 Structure of the Mood

Halliday (1994: 68-71) points out when we use language to interact, one of the things we are doing is establishing a relationship between the person speaking now and the person who will probably speak next. According to Eggins (1994: 156), there are two essential functional constituents of mood components of a clause: a subject and a finite. These are explained by Halliday (1985a: 76) as follows:

1. subject realizes the thing by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied. The identification of it can be achieved by a tag test. For example, Oscar Wilde wrote The Importance of Being Earnest (didn’t he)? Both Oscar Wilde and He are subjects of the sentence. Another test to detect the subject is to change the verb from singular to plural. For instance, he was teaching to they were teaching, loves to love, etc. This means that the
corresponding part of the clause that has to change is the subject, i.e: *he* and *they*.

2. finite is defined in terms of its function in the clause to make the proposition definite, to anchor the proposition in a way that we can argue about it. The identification of finite also involves a tag test: verbal part. For example, *Jamal was reading a novel, wasn’t he?* Both *was* and *wasn’t* are finites. If the verbal part of a clause has two or more words, for instance *will be teaching, has been gone*, etc, the identification of finite will be the **FIRST** of these verbal elements (*will* and *has* respectively).

Relating to the function of finite to anchor the proposition, and to make it applicable, Halliday (1994: 76) refers to reference to time and reference to modality as Finite Verbal Operators, which include:

1. temporal finite verbal operators: these words anchor the proposition by reference of time either positive or negative in past (*did/didn’t, was/wasn’t, had/hadn’t, used to/didn’t use to*), present (*does/doesn’t, is/isn’t, has/hasn’t*), or future (*will/won’t, shall/shan’t, would/wouldn’t, should/shouldn’t*).

2. finite modal operators: these words anchor the proposition not by reference to time but by reference to Modality either in low (*can, may, could, might*), median (*will, would, should, is/was to*) or high (*must, ought to, need, has/had to*).

According to Halliday (1994: 74) the general principle behind the expression of mood in the clause is as follows: the grammatical category that is
characteristically used to exchange information is the indicative; within the category of indicative, the characteristic expression of a statement is the declarative, that of a question is the interrogative; and within the category of interrogative, there is a further distinction between yes/no interrogative for polar question, and WH-interrogative, for content questions. These features are typically expressed as follows:

1. the presence of mood element, consisting of subject plus finite, realizes the feature “indicative”

2. within the indicative, what is significant is the order of subject and finite:
   1) the order subject before finite realizes “declarative”
   2) the order finite before subject realizes “yes/no interrogative”
   3) in a WH-interrogative the order is:
      a. subject before finite if the WH-element is the Subject
      b. finite before subject otherwise

2.3.2 Meaning of Subject and Finite

According to Halliday (1994: 75), people need to consider each of these elements in turn, since both are semantically motivated but the contribution they bring to the clause is not the same. These are the further definition of finite and subject:

(1) finite element has the function of making the proposition finite. It relates the proposition to its context in the speech event. This can be done in one of two ways. One is by reference to time of speaking, for example is in A young man is crossing the river. The other is by reference to the judgment of the speaker,
for instance *should* in *You should come on time*. This means that in grammatical terms, the first is primary tense, and the second is modality. Primary tense means past, present, or future at the moment of speaking. A proposition may become arguable by having its relevance to the speech event specified in these temporal terms. Whereas modality means the speaker’s judgment of the probabilities, or the obligations, involved in what is said. A proposition may become arguable by being presented as likely or unlikely, desirable or undesirable. In other words, it relates to modal terms.

(2) subject element provides the rest of what it takes to form a proposition by reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied. In a goods and service clause, the Subject specifies the one that is actually responsible for realizing the offer or command. For example, *I’ll open this door, shall I* (offer) and *Don’t disturb me, It’s a holiday* (command). So, the typical subject of an offer is the speaker and that of a command is the person being addressed. In passive form of offer and command, subject is dissociated from the *Actor*, but it still specifies the one who is responsible for the success of the proposal. But in a proposition this means the one on which the validity of the information made to rest. The Subject also has the same principle at work in statement and questions.

### 2.4 Appraisals as a Discourse System

Matthiesssen (1995:1) asserts that language is a resource for making and expressing meanings relating to various aspects of the social system (culture). People construe their experiences to be meanings using language therefore they could share information and communicate their experiences to others. They may
choose one or both of language forms: spoken and written while communicating. They try to achieve mutual understanding so that both the sender and the receiver could understand each other.

There are two principles offered by Matthiessen (1995: 3) that could be a base to organize language whether spoken or written, called orders of abstraction and functional diversification. Orders of abstraction deal with the stratification of language, the meaning (semantics), the wording (lexicogrammar) and the sounding (phonology). It deals with how people construe their experiences to be communicated to others.

The other of language organization is functional diversification. By this, language is a resource for the participants to engage with one another to exchange meanings. According to Matthiessen (1995: 3), this involves (1) enactment of roles and relations, (2) construal of experience, and (3) presentation of the meanings created through enactment and construal as information organized into text in context. In this case, language plays an important role to represent all three kinds of meanings above. Moreover, Matthiessen (1995: 19) calls these three bands in a functional term as interpersonal, ideational, and textual meanings. They are diversified based on the context of situation.

Martin and Rose (2003: 6-7) then develop these metafunctions in a discourse system into five systems. They are appraisal, ideation, conjunction, identification, and periodicity. Martin and Rose provide very clear explanation about appraisal. They say that appraisal is concerned with evaluation- the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the way in which values are sourced and readers aligned. It is an interpersonal kind of meanings that realize variations in the tenor of a text.
Halliday and Hasan (1985: 12) assert that the tenor of discourse refers to who is taking part, and to the nature of the participants, their statuses, and roles: what kinds of role relationships obtain among the participants. They also emphasize that in semantics the field is expressed through the experiential function, the tenor is expressed through the interpersonal function, and the mode is expressed through the textual function. This means that it is possible to provide descriptions about exchange of meaning in terms of field (refers to the social action), tenor (refers to who is taking part), and mode (refers to the channel).

From a short explanation above, one can conclude that appraisal is the only system dealing with interpersonal metafunction. It also deals with the development of text in which there is a relation between the interactants. This study focuses on appraisal devices used by the interactants in which there is the power/philosophy between the characters. Furthermore, most texts, including the drama as a literary text, can’t be free from this negotiation. That is why readers may often find similar occurrence presented differently in dialogues of different drama. Consequently, it becomes important for readers or learners to know more about this interpersonal meaning through literary text.

2.4.1 Appraisals—Negotiating attitudes

Appraisal is a system of interpersonal meaning (Martin and Rose, 2003). People use appraisal to negotiate their experiences, feelings, and thoughts in a social relationship with others. In a broad scope, appraisal theory is concerned with the linguistic resources, e.g., text and context, evaluation, and interpersonal meaning, by which texts come to express, negotiate, and naturalize their inter-subjective and ideological positions. This means that the theory is concerned more with the language of evaluation, attitude, and emotion. That is, it relates to meanings which
the participants engage with their utterances. It has to do with evaluating things, people’s characters, and their feelings.

This system also relates the choices of the wordings to the ideological bases used in a text. The choosing of appropriate expression or wordings makes it possible for us to predict the characters’ attitudes. The resources of appraisal are used for negotiating social relationships, by telling others how one feels about things and people. White (2001) confirms that the appraisal term is used as a cover-all term to encompass all evaluative uses of language.

Appraisal system also shows how language can be used to get things done in a material, cause and effect sense. In general, we can say that a discourse analysis makes use of the development of situation. It has to do with the process of speaking as such and how speech is used to achieve certain goals. People represent the accumulated experience of their culture by engaging their feelings through a language. When speakers say something, actually they imply their negotiated attitudes that may consist of three types: affect, judgment, and appreciation (in Martin and Rose, 2003: 25).

2.4.2 Kinds of Attitudes

According to Martin and Rose (2003: 25), there are three kinds of attitudes; expressing people’s feeling, judging people characters, or appreciating things.

2.4.2.1 Affect

Affect relates to emotions. It is used to express feelings, with positive and negative emotional responses and dispositions. Feelings can be implicitly expressed through the choice of wordings. This means that interactants may express their feelings directly or indirectly toward a certain situation in discourse. Moreover,
they could express different feelings in different texts. For instance, a drama that
performs about politic or social problem can be a comedy or heroic one.

According to Martin and Rose (2003: 25), there are two general ways in
discourse to express people’s feelings. Firstly, people could have good feelings or
bad feelings so that affect can be positive or negative. Secondly, people may
express their feelings directly or they infer their feelings from behavior. It means
that affect can be direct or implied.

Affect colors the whole text and should be analyzed within the context.
People should be aware of affect that can be indicated through verbs of emotion,
adverbs (typically circumstances of manner), adjectives of emotion, or through
nominalization (the turning of verbs and adjective into nouns). Consequently,
while analyzing affect, people have to focus on these terms both in their words or
group of words. Here is a table of options for affect that will make the explanation
above clearer:

Table 1 Options for Affect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTIONS FOR AFFECT</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Positive           | We were **ecstatic**.  
                    | We even **celebrated**. |
| Negative           | I was **torn** to pieces.  
                    | I can’t explain the **pain** and **bitterness** in me. |
| Direct             | **Ecstatic**  
                    | **Wild consuming fear** |
|                    | **Withdrawn**  
                    | **Shake uncontrollably** |
| Implicit           | **Wander** from window to window  
                    | **Rolls this way**, that side of the bed |
|                    | **Ice** cold in a sweltering night  
                    | **Eyes**…dull like the dead |

(source: Martin and Rose, 2003: 28)
Affect is also realized in clause in various grammatical niches. Affect can be as ‘quality’, as ‘process’ or as ‘comment’. One clause sometimes contains one or more realizations of affect in any grammatical position.

### 2.4.2.2 Judgment

Besides affect, in appraisal, we also have *judgment* that refers to the act of judging people’s characters. It relates to the human behavior evaluation that may be negatively or positively assessed by a set of social norms. Therefore, judgment involves an assertion relating to a set of religious, moral or legal rules or regulations.

Judgment is similar to affect in the case of positive or negative, direct or implied. White (2001) confirms while judgment is implied, we have to consider the term of provoked and evoked judgment. He says that provoked judgment has no explicit judgment wordings, whereas evoked is purely factual description which is likely to lead to some inference of good/bad, praiseworthy/blameworthy, appropriate/inappropriate behavior. Judgment differs from affect in the sense of personal judgments of admiration or criticism, and moral judgments of praise or condemnation. Here are the options of judgment in a table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Implied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admire</td>
<td>Bubbly, vivacious, energetic, Intelligent, popular</td>
<td>He was working in a top security structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticize</td>
<td>What was wrong with him?...I can’t handle the man anymore!</td>
<td>I can’t explain the pain and bitterness in me when I saw….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Their leaders have the guts to stand by their vultures…</td>
<td>I envy and respect the people of the struggle…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Our leaders are too holy and innocent. And faceless</td>
<td>‘those at the top’ were again targeting the next ‘permanent removal from society’…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Martin and Rose, 2003: 30)
Judgment can be thought of as the institutionalization of feelings as Martin and Rose’s explanation about norms of how people should and shouldn’t behave above shows us.

2.4.2.3 Appreciation

*Appreciation* deals with aesthetic evaluation of humans that is appreciating the value of things in discourse. It concerns with positive and negative assessments of objects, artifacts, processes, and states of affairs rather than with human behavior (White, 2001). Both appreciation and judgment share the same feelings of the ‘appraised’. But they are different in the form that judgment is done towards people (human subject) and appreciation is done towards ‘things’.

Appreciation of things includes people’s attitudes about TV show, film, book, CDs; about paintings, sculptures, homes, public buildings, parks; about plays, recitals, parades, or spectacles and performance of any kind (Martin and Rose, 2003: 33). As with the affect and judgment, things also can be appreciated positively or negatively. Here is a table that contains the positive and negative appreciations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A beautiful relationship</td>
<td>My unsuccessful marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A very serious issue</td>
<td>A frivolous question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing of breaches</td>
<td>Broken relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redressing of imbalances</td>
<td>The community he or she has injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration of broken relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Martin and Rose, 2003: 34)
2.4.3 Amplifying Attitudes

People may have different attitudes towards something or someone. It deals with their feelings towards the situation. Martin and Rose (2003: 37) confirm that attitudes are gradable. This means that we can say how strongly we feel about someone or something. According to Martin and Rose (2003: 38), there are two kinds of amplifying attitudes: force and focus. First, force is for ‘turning the volume up or down’. Force involves a set of resources for adjusting how strongly we feel about people and things. This includes words that intensify meanings such as *very/*really/*extremely* or vocabulary items that include degrees of intensity such as happy/delighted/ecstatic. Second, focus involves ‘sharpening’ or ‘softening’ categories of people or things such as *about/*exactly or *real/*sort of/*kind of. Both resources are referred to as graduation as described in table 4 below:

**Table 4 Options for Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Intensifiers</th>
<th>He still plays <em>great</em>. The second part is <em>fantastic</em>… <em>Ice</em> cold in a sweltering night <em>Dammit</em>, there must be a clique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal lexis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Sharpen</td>
<td><em>A true</em> guitar legend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soften</td>
<td><em>A part-time</em> blues fan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Martin and Rose, 2003: 43)

In amplifying the force of attitudes, there are four sub-types: intensifier, attitudinal lexis, metaphors, and swearing. Intensifiers make it possible for people to compare things or to say how strongly they feel about someone or something. For instance, ‘*a very serious issue*’ seems to say that the issue implies something dangerous behind it. Attitudinal lexis ‘*lexis with attitudes*’ refers to vocabulary items that include the degrees of intensity, such as happy/delighted/ecstatic. These kinds of words, lexis/lexical items have their own sense of intensifying.
2.4.4 Sources of Attitudes

According to Martin and Rose (2003: 39), source of attitudes is the analysis of who the evaluations are coming from? This is the way a writer has the responsibility of what s/he writes, whether it is her/his wordings or others’. There are two terms related to this point: monoglossia (‘single voice’) and heteroglossia (‘different voices’). Monoglossia refers to the source, which is simply the author, and heteroglossia refers to the source of an attitude, which is other than the author. For monoglossia, it relates to the author who makes a statement. The responsibility of the proposal or proposition s/he makes is on her/him. In heteroglossia, there are three ways of stating the source of attitudes: projection, modality, and concession.

First, projection happens while people quote or report what people say or think in their speaking or writing. According to Martin and Rose (2003: 44) projection is the relation between people who say and what they say. Projections may quote the exact words that someone generally say or report. Martin and Rose (2003: 47) explain four ways in which the projection is used to attribute sources: as projecting clauses, as names for speech acts, as projecting within clauses, and as scare quotes. Examples of these are provided in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5 Ways for Projection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projecting clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names for ‘speech act’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projecting within clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scare quotes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Martin and Rose, 2003: 47)
Second is modality. Halliday (in Martin and Rose, 2003: 42) describes modality as a resource which set up a semantic space between yes and no- a cline running between positive and negative poles. There are two general kinds of modality, one for negotiating services, and the other for negotiating information. The last concession is the way in which people track readers’ expectation, adjusting them as our writings unfold. This can be done by stating something which attracts readers’ expectations; that there is something people want to say more. Consequently, concession is known as “counterexpectancy”.

2.5 Dialogues in Drama

Drama as one of literary work is simply called a play, which is written into a set of dialogues to be performed orally. Serayawati (2000: 1) says that a good dialogue is not only such a transcript of sentences, but it is a language that reveals characters. Therefore, it has a context describing times, places, and themes. According to Grolier Academic Encyclopedia (1983: 257), drama refers to actions or deeds meaning “to act” or “to do” as they are performed in a theatre setting.

Actions in a drama take place in the world where the characters live, move, and have their beings so that it closely relates to human beings’ lives and characteristics. Drama is a kind of contextualized text that the dialogues draw a real life. This means that the dialogues in a drama can be regarded as near real-life conversation. According to International Encyclopedia of the Social Science vol. 3 (1968: 210), in comedies of manners, the action is based on the observation of the ways of life of the characters in the play. The Importance of Being Earnest uses witty dialogues and much intrigue and plotting in the story. It is a comedy
drama. It deals with the lighter side of life and is rooted more in events of our daily lives such as the way we live together in communities. Therefore, it becomes interesting to be analyzed.

Appraisal as a discourse system is often used in the real and natural conversation. It also may be used in literary text. It basically could apply in any speech situation that involves the negotiating attitudes.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

An utterance could imply people’s attitudes. They may have intentions and motives to their addressee. They can even switch from referent to referent without losing their meanings. Discourse symbolizes and encodes social activity. While communicating, people have to understand the context of a situation so that they could negotiate well. People also use language in their social community to achieve specific goal. But sometimes interpersonal and non explicit negotiation in an interchange cannot be captured by semantic meaning. Consequently, it is important for us to know the intentional use of language throughout negotiating attitudes. The framework of this study is as the figure below:
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

In this study I focused on the dialogues in which the characters communicate and interact to each other through their performances. Dialogues of a drama may be adopted from real-life situation so that they have themes that are close with the situation that happened at that time. I use a qualitative research to analyze data. According to Hammersley and Atkitson (1995) in Holloway, et al. (1996: 4) qualitative method focuses on every day life of people. It describes people’s lives and feelings so that it does not relate to numerical data. Berg (1989: 2) says that qualitative term does not relate to the numeral data, but it relates to the meanings, concepts, definitions, and description of things. So, the qualitative research is appropriate with my analysis that contains meanings, concepts, and characteristics.

3.2 Source of the Data

The source of the data is all dialogues of Oscar Wilde’s drama “The Importance of Being Earnest”. It is one of the greatest English comedies written in 1895. It contains three acts with three different scenes. The characters of this drama are Jack Worthing, Algernon Moncrief, Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen, Cecily, Dr. Chasuble, Mrs. Prism, Merriman, and Lane.
3.3 Methods of the Study

3.3.1 Method of Data Collection

Scott (1990) said that the most important aim of the collection and analysis of documents is the interpretation of their meanings: the researcher interprets the meaning of the text in context, studies the situation and condition, and establishes the writer’s intention (in Holloway, Immy, and Stephanie, 1996: 68). To collect the data, I encoded the data by using coding sheet for appraisal described in Eggins and Slade (1997: 139).

3.3.2 Method of data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in several steps based on Eggins and Slade’s (1997: 138-140) model as follows:

1. Identifying appraisal items; this step is to identify all the dialogues whether they employ appraisal devices or not. These will most often be adjectives, but they can also be nominal groups, verbs (particularly of affect and appreciation), adverbs, and phrases.

2. Classifying appraisal items; this step is to classify the identified data into one of the five appraisal devices explained above.

3. Summarizing appraisal choices. This analysis is to summarize the lexical choices and to calculate the total number of appraisal devices used by each character.

4. Interpretation of the appraisal items; this analysis is to interpret the appraisal devices that appear in the drama based on the summarization table. Therefore, we could know the power of the drama and of the author.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

I am trying to find out the appraisal devices used in the dialogues of Oscar Wilde’s drama “The Importance of Being Earnest”. I took several steps. First, I broke down a dialogue into some clauses. Second, I identified the clauses based on the theory of appraisal explained in the previous chapter. I identified all the appraising items in the drama before doing the classification. Then, I applied one of five appraisal devices: affection, judgment, appreciation, amplification, and source of attitudes in terms of projection. They are most often adjectives, but they can also be nominal groups, verbs (particularly of affect and appreciation), adverbs, and phrases.

I classified the data that are categorized as appraising lexis by encoding them as follows:

1. Bold and underlined for Affection (feeling, situation). For example the word sorry in ‘I am sorry for that, for your sake (Algernon in act 1) means that sorry is affection.

2. Bold for Judgment (person) such as the word liar in ‘He is a liar’ refers to judgment.

3. Underlined for Appreciation (things). For example the word wonderful in ‘I play with a wonderful expression’ (Algernon in act 1) means appreciation.

4. Italics for Amplification (the frequency) such as the word accurately in ‘Any one can play accurately’, and
5. Italics and underlined for Source of attitudes (the speaker). For example the words *I know* in *I know*, of course, how important it is not to keep a business *engagement* refers to source of attitudes.

From the appraisal analysis in the text of the drama shown in the appendices, we can see that Algernon produces the greatest number of appraisal devices, followed by Lady Bracknell, Jack, Cecily, Miss Prism, Chasuable, Gwendolen, Lane and with Merriman producing the least of all. This can be summarized in table form as follows:

Finally, I interpreted the pattern displayed within the text. Based on the table above, the appraisal devices used could be analyzed in more details as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Attitudes</th>
<th>Jack</th>
<th>Algernon</th>
<th>Cecily</th>
<th>Gwendolen</th>
<th>Lady Bracknell</th>
<th>Miss Prism</th>
<th>Chasuable</th>
<th>Merriman</th>
<th>Lane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Appraisal devices</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Clauses</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplification</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Attitudes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.1 Affection

I found some characters use direct emotional states to express their feelings. They use the words such as fear, doubt, gladly, enthusiastic, afraid, don’t like, love, don’t care, bored, happily, frightened, proud, sure, painful, hate, interested in, and etc. The direct emotional statements could be negative or positive. The appraising
vocabulary of negative affection that frequently appears in the dialogues are doubt, afraid, bored, don’t like, hate, painful, and sad. This shows that among the characters there are conflicts and each person does not believe each other. Therefore, they sometimes say negative statements. For example, Algernon says that “I hate people” (in act 1, 103: iii), “well, I don’t like your clothes” (in act 2, 176: i), and “I am afraid Aunt Augusta won’t quite approve of your being here“ (in act 1, 33: ii-iii) to Jack. Based on my result, we could see that Algernon is the most appraising speaker since he has the largest number of affection vocabulary. He also tends to have negative mind/cynical to Jack.

Besides the negative affection, the drama also contains some positive affection such as admirable, right, glad, pleased, graceful, enthusiastic, sure, happy, delightful, and etc. For example, Jack uses the word delightful in “How perfectly delightful!” (in act 1, 32: i) and in love in “I am in love with Gwendolen” (in act 1, 36: i). This means that Jack expresses his emotional states directly. He is also a protagonist who is the sympathetic and plausible character.

Jack has the least of affection. This means that his feeling is not too strong to someone or something. He does not always give comment to the others, except to Gwendolen and Algernon. For example, his word, doubt is in “I have no doubt about that, dear Algy “ (in act 1, 40: i). His affection words are mostly positive to Gwendolen such “I am in love with Gwendolen” (in act 1, 36: i). The dialogues generally draw how people had communicated their feelings to others expressively. They usually speak openly, especially who have a high social status. For example, Algernon says that “well, I don’t like your clothes” to Jack. He seems comment directly and negatively on Jack.
Affections that are used in the dialogues make the drama meaningful. It has a power since each character negotiate their own feelings expressly. We also can know what Oscar Wilde actually implies from the affection words he made. To find out his power beyond the affection use in this drama, we also have to consider the context of situation and the context of culture. I took some examples to be interpreted per turn speaker (for more examples of affection, see appendix 1-5) as follows:

**4.1.1 Positive affection**

46 Cecily (i) I am **glad** to hear it.

Interpretation: the situation set in Cecily’s garden. She spoke with Algernon the person who assumed as Earnest. Therefore, she was very interested and respect to him. In this clause, we see that Cecily respond him well by presenting her feelings that she is glad to hear what Algy said.

48 Cecily (iii) though I am **sure**

Interpretation: in this clause, Cecily talked optimistic to Algernon. She believed on her feeling that something he stated is very pleasant. We can understand her feeling through the word ‘sure’. It shows people’s optimistic (a feeling of believe ness).

132 Lady B (iii) I’m **sure** (iv) the programme will be delightful,

Interpretation: Lady Bracnell in this clause was communicating with Algernon and Gwendolen, her daughter. She looked very optimistic to the
programme that Algy discussed. She tended to believe Algernon well.

124 Lady B (viii) It’s **delightful** to watch them.

Interpretation: Lady Bracknell gave positive comment on Marry Farquhar’s family. She seems interested in them.

28 Chasuble (ii) he usually **likes** to spend his Sunday in London.

Interpretation: Chasuable said that Jack’s feeling that he likes to stay in London on Sunday. The word ‘likes’ shows Jack’s feeling to stay in London on Sunday.

### 4.1.2 Negative affection

48 Cecily (i) I don’t think (ii) you should be so **proud** of that,

Interpretation: Cecily tends to have negative feeling to Algernon. She did not believe in Algernon’s feeling about hypocrisy.

99 Jack (i) For heaven’s sake, don’t try to be **cynical**. (ii) It’s perfectly easy to be **cynical**.

Interpretation: in this turn, Jack talked to Algernon not to be cynical to him. This shows that Algernon is a gambol person. He often comments negatively on Jack. Moreover, Jack is an orphan who did not have a high status like him.

9 Miss Prism (iv) Indeed I am **not sure** (v) that I would desire to reclaim him. (vi) I am **not in favour** of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment’s notice.
Interpretation: the words ‘not sure’ and ‘not in favour’ express negative feelings since they draw that Miss Prism was not optimist and she also did not like to a modern changes.

127 Chasuble (vi) What seem to us **bitter** trials are often blessings in disguise.

Interpretation: Chasuable stated that the feeling of trials that were bitter is often useful. The word ‘bitter’ shows negative feeling how people to face a terrible situation.

4.1.3 Direct affection

4.1.3.1 Emotional state

24 Jack (iv) It is excessively **boring**.

Interpretation: the word ‘boring’ refers to Jack’s statement that he was boring about people’s life in town and in country. He said this feeling directly.

13 Algernon (ii) I am much **interested in** your family life, Lane.

Interpretation: Algernon said his feeling expressly to Lane that he was interested in Lane’s family.

125 Algernon (i) I am **afraid**, Aunt Augusta,

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Algernon was worried that he could not eat together with Lady Bracnell, his aunt. He said his feeling directly to her.
2  Cecily (i) But I **don’t like** German.

14  Cecily (iv) I **don’t like** novels (v) that end happily.

Interpretation: Cecily also stated her feeling openly to Miss Prism. She did not 
like German as she did not like novels that end happily.

40  Cecily (ii) I feel rather **frightened**. (iii) I am so **afraid** (iv) he will 
look just like every one else.

Interpretation: Cecily doubted to Earnest, in this case Earnest is Algernon in 
which he will be as the other.

67  Algernon (i) I will. (ii) I feel **better** already.

Interpretation: Algernon said to Cecily that he had been good.

184  Algernon (iii) I’m in **love** with Cecily, (iv) and that is everything.

Interpretation: Algernon stated his feeling to himself that he loves Cecily much.

190  Algernon (i) I am **afraid** so.

Interpretation: Algernon worried about his parting to Cecily. Therefore, Algernon 
was afraid to go away from Cecily.

3  Algernon (i) I’m **sorry** for that, for your sake.

Interpretation: Algernon stated his feeling that he understood Lane whom can not 
listen to his playing biola since his position is as a butler in 
Algernon’s house.
67 Lady B. (v) So far I am **satisfied**.

Interpretation: Lady Bracknell said to Jack that she was satisfied to Mrs. Markby’s dinner parties.

### 4.1.3.2 Physical Expression

61 Jack (iv) one should talk of **in private**.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Jack talked to Algernon that someone should talk in private. The word “in private” shows physical expression meant talk personally.

190 Algernon (ii) It’s a very **painful** parting.

Interpretation: Algernon stated his feeling about his parting to Cecily. The word “painful” parting refers to a physical expression that he was very sad to leave Cecily.

6 Cecily (iii) he often looks a little **bored**

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Cecily spoke to Miss Prism about Jack’s condition, her uncle. Based on her opinion, Jack often looked bored. So, the word “bored” expresses Jack’s physical attitude that he didn’t enjoy staying with Cecily.

37 Merriman (ii) He seemed very much **disappointed**.

Interpretation: Merriman told that Algernon seemed disappointed to Cecily. The word “seemed” and “disappointed” means his face expression
while knowing Jack in town. They express his feeling through physical expression.

After finding the affection in Oscar Wilde’s drama, we can know how he presents his feeling through the dialogues of the drama. He very concerns with people’s feeling and attitude in that time. He describes the situation and people’s culture well by using various affection vocabularies. He can invite the readers to understand more about people custom and we can feel as the characters did through his words.

4.2 Judgment

There are two options for judgment; personal and moral. I found some direct personal admiration while the characters judge each other. They evaluate other behavior. The appraising vocabulary of personal are young, unromantic, charming old, tall, not tall, little, serious, perfect, well, poor, dear, childish, ridiculous, unmarried, unfortunate, sentiment, small, foolish, careless, modern, tedious, secret, careless, and etc (for the complete example, see appendix 6-13).

These are three examples of direct personal admiration; the most earnest-looking in the sentence “You are the most earnest-looking person” (act 1, 70: vii), kind in “You are kind enough to inform me (act 1, 76:ii), the prettiest in “You are the prettiest girl” (act 1, 77: ii), and smart in Algernon you are smart! (act 1, 104: iii). There is also direct personal criticism such as over-dressed in “that is better than being always over-dressed” (act 2, 181: ii), over-educated in “I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated” (act 2, 182: ii), and well-punished in “He is well punished for his morbidity” (act 3, 54: vi).
The clauses also contain praise and condemn judgment (moral) such as smart in “I am always smart!” (act 1, 108: i) for praise, and serious and well for condemnation in “Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well” (act 2, 4: i-iii). These are the appraising vocabulary of moral judgment in the dialogues; kind, well-aware, generous, no sense of moral, high moral, etc.

Most of the characters give many appraising words of judgment, especially option for personal. They evaluate each other directly rather than implied. It shows that they interact openly to others by commenting both personally and morally. Moreover, Algernon and Lady Bracknell are the characters who have the most appraising vocabulary of judgment. This means that they frequently tend to judge others negatively, especially when judging Jack. It is supported by the settings of the drama that the characters live in aristocracy situation which makes them the greatest example of a hedonist who like nothing better than to eat, gossip, and gambol without any consequence. Lady Bracknell is also a remarkable character who only views marriage as a financial arrangement. She is the major antagonist in the play who blocks her daughter’s potential marriage. Following the examples of judgment taken from the data classification in appendix (for more examples, see appendix 14-26):

4.2.1 Personal

4.2.1.1 Admire

76 Algernon (ii) as soon as you are kind enough to inform me

Interpretation: the sentence “you are kind” refers to Jack. He told that Jack was kind to inform him about Jack’s identity in town and in country.
104 Lady B. (iii) you are behaving very well.

Interpretation: Lady Bracknell expected Algernon was well. Hopefully, he had a good condition. The word “well” refers to his healthy or his general condition.

65 Jack (i) Yes. (ii) Charming old lady she is, too.

Interpretation: the word “charming old” refers to Cecily. Jack told that Cecily is a charming old lady to Algernon. Actually, she is still young. Because Jack does not like Algernon, he lied about Cecily’s physical appearance.

86 Algernon (vii) I was quite right in saying (ix) You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists

Interpretation: the word “right” in this dialogue means that Algy said truly that Jack is one of the most Bunburyists. He tried to convenient Jack about that opinion.

107 Algernon (ii) you are smart!

Interpretation: Algernon tried to get closer and whispered to Gwendolen; therefore he said that she is smart. The word “smart” in this dialogue means that she was excellent.

124 Lady B (vi) She is such a nice woman, (vii) and so attentive to her husband.

Interpretation: Lady Bracknell very admired Mrs. Mary Farquhar since she was very attentive to her husband. She asked Algernon to meet her. The word “nice” and “attentive” shows that Lady Bracknell likes to her attitude.
Merriman (vi) he was **anxious** to speak to you privately for a moment.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Merriman told Cecily that Algernon was anxious.

The word “anxious” means that Algernon wants to talk with Cecily privately. He seemed like to her.

4.2.1.2 Criticize

Algernon (vii) Bunbury is **invaluable**.

Interpretation: the word “invaluable” shows that Algernon criticize Bunbury. It is a negative word meaning not valued.

Algernon (ii) You are absurdly **careless** about sending out invitations. (iii) It is **very foolish** of you.

Interpretation: in this dialogue Algernon judged Jack that he is not careful in sending invitations. Algernon also pointed out that his carelessness is his foolish. The word “careless” and “foolish” describe negative judgment.

Lady B (vii) that they are **improper**, (viii) and either look **shocked**.

Interpretation: they refer to people who like French songs. Lady Bracknell agreed to that opinion. The word the word “improper” and “shocked” mean negative.

Cecily (iv) that I look quite **plain** after my German lesson.

Interpretation: the word “plain” means that Cecily was not enthusiastic after getting German lesson. This word shows that she did not enjoy learning Germany.
83  Jack (iii) You are hardly **serious** enough.

Interpretation: Jack judged that Algernon was serious to understand his comment about Bunbury. The word “serious” refers to a positive judgment since it shows optimistic.

### 4.2.2 Moral

#### 4.2.2.1 Praise

130  Lady B (xii) I am always telling that to your **poor** uncle, (xiii) but he never seems to take much notice... (xiv) as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. (xv) I should be much **obliged** (xvi) if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be **kind** enough not to have a relapse on Saturday.

Interpretation: the word “poor”, “obliged”, and “kind enough not to” refers to negative judgments. Lady Bracknell seemed sentiment to Mr. Bunbury. She rather did not like with him.

27  Algernon (i) Got **nice** neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

Interpretation: in this dialogue, the word “nice” shows a positive judgment to Jack’s neighbours in Shropshire. He assumed that Jack had nice neighbours.

67  Jack (i) My **dear** fellow, (ii) what on earth is there in that? (iii)

Interpretation: the word “dear” means beloved. It is a praise word. Jack called Algernon with a good name, my dear fellow.

109  Jack (i) You’re quite **perfect**, Miss Fairfax.
Interpretation: in this dialogue, Jack tried to whisper Gwendolen, Miss Fairfax. He gave her her positive judgment. This describes that he tends to like and is interested to her.

24 Chasuble (ii) you are **not inattentive**.

Interpretation: the word “not inattentive” has the same meaning as attentive. This shows moral. Chasuble said that Cecily was an attentive girl. He praised her.

4.2.2.2 Condemn

3 Algernon (vi) **sentiment** is my **forte**.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Algernon emphasized to Lane that he was a sentiment person. The word “forte” and “sentiment” shows who Algernon is. They tend to be a negative character.

74 Algernon (vi) that I have always suspected you of being a **confirmed** and **secret** Bunburyst;  

Interpretation: the word “confirmed” and “secret” show Algernon assumption about Jack that he is a mysterious man.

92 Algernon (xviii) who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly **scandalous**. (xxi) Besides, now that I know you to be a **confirmed** Bunburyst

Interpretation: the word “scandalous” refers to a negative judgment. Algernon pointed out that amount of woman in London was perfectly scandalous while flirting with their own husbands. This word
shows that he is a sentiment person. He also judged that Jack is a confirmed Bunburyist.

17 Algernon (iv) They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

Interpretation: the word “no sense of moral” shows a negative perception about people in the lower orders. He tended to judge them negatively.

Oscar Wilde in this drama tries to show each character explicitly through their dialogues. He expresses the characters well. He uses many judgments to describe them. Therefore, we, as the readers, can understand who those become antagonist and protagonist. We also can know which a good or a bad character. He is very attentive to the characters’ building in order to deliver what people custom in that time.

In this drama, Algernon is the most expressive speaker since he has the most number of judgments. Moreover, he often gives negative judgment to Jack. He tends to be sentiment to Jack. Through his words, Oscar Wilde shows us people’s attitudes lived in that era. People who live in a high status as Algernon and Lady Bracknell behave negatively to the lower people. For example is her attitude while knowing that Jack is only an orphan. She then warns her daughter, Gwendolen not to marry with him.

4.3 Appreciation

There are two kinds of appreciation; positive and negative. The clauses in the drama contain both positive and negative appreciations. Positive appreciations tend to be optimistic in evaluating things. They are such as delightful, good, easy,
possible, valued, vital, wonderful, high, pleasant, intellectual, etc. whereas the negative ones tend to be pessimistic in evaluating things. Following are the examples of the negative appreciations; invalid, nonsense, disgraceful, horrid, false, improbable, severe, unalterable, irrevocable, terrible, bad, incomparable, improbable, invaluable, problematic, out of, unpleasant, distasteful, fearful, absurd, not satisfactory, impatient, irreligious, etc.

Based on my result, the number of appreciations is larger than judgment. This implies that the characters are more concerned with evaluating things than with human behavior. In the drama, Lady Bracknell has the largest number of appreciation. This shows that she is aware of her environment, including with her daughter marriage. She embodies all the classic Victorian belief that marriage is ‘a financial arrangement’. Therefore, she prohibits Gwendolen to marry Jack while he is only an orphan. Following are some examples of appreciation (for more examples, see appendix 27-45):

4.3.1 Positive appreciation

3 Algernon (iv) but I play with wonderful expression.

Interpretation: the word “wonderful” refers to positive expression. In this dialogue, Algernon admired himself that he played with wonderful expression.

12 Lane (ii) it is a very pleasant state, sir. (iii) I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, the word “pleasant” means joyful. Lane said that Algernon’s statement is really good. He always gave him praise.

44 Jack (i) And very good bread and butter it is too.
Interpretation: the word “good” refers to the bread. It means that the bread has high quality and also the butter. From Jack’s dialogues, we can know that people who prepared these bread and butter had high status.

137 Chasuble (i) These are very joyful tidings.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Chasuble liked those tidings. The word “joyful” means enjoyable and interesting things. He stated his appreciation of the tidings to Miss Prism.

39 Algernon (ii) It is very romantic to be in love.

Interpretation: the word “romantic” means positive appreciation to the feeling of love. It shows that Algernon was enthusiastic to be in love with someone. He stated his appreciation to Jack.

85 Jack (i) That wouldn’t be at all a bad thing.

Interpretation: the word “bad” refers to thing. Jack commented that modern literature is not always negative thing. The word “wouldn’t” before bad shows positive statement. Therefore, “bad” in this dialogue includes as a positive appreciation to thing.

4.3.2 Negative appreciation

78 Algernon (iii) and pray make it improbable

Interpretation: the word “improbable” refers to Jack’s explanation about his cigarette case. Algernon very wanted to know about Cecily, the
name labeled in that cigarette. His appreciation is a negative one since he seemed can not believe to Jack’s.

35 Algernon (ii) the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. (iii) It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

Interpretation: the word “disgraceful” and “bad” show negative appreciation to Jack’s way to flirt with Gwendolen. Those words mean that Jack and Gwendolen can not to be romantic flirting each other.

57 Jack (i) There is no good offering a large reward now

Interpretation: actually, the word “good” is positive appreciation. Because there is “no” before “good”, this appreciation becomes a negative one. “Good” refers to the offering of large reward. In this dialogue, Jack spoke with Algernon.

14 Lane (ii) it is not a very interesting subject.

Interpretation: the case of this dialogue is the same as the previous dialogue. The word “interesting” actually is a positive one. Because it has “not”, it becomes negative appreciation for the subject.

17 Algernon (ii) Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example,

Interpretation: in this dialogue, Algernon spoke with himself. He assumed that the lower people did not give us a good example. It is a negative appreciation. The word “don’t set us a good example” means that they don’t have any good attitudes.
From the appreciation words in the dialogues, the readers of the drama know that Oscar Wilde appreciate things and situation well. He is able to describe thing detailed. He makes the drama live with the using of appreciation. The most appreciation vocabularies that almost appear in the drama are negative ones since there are two dominant characters who become antagonist, Algernon and Lady Bracknell. The other characters perform plain people so that they rarely comment on evaluating the things or events around them.

Oscar Wilde tends to concern on appreciation. He writes the dialogues with many numbers of appreciations. He is so attentive to the things and the situation appeared in that time. He draws them explicitly and expressively. Therefore, we directly can understand what his ideas are about life in Victorian era.

4.4 Amplification
There are two options for amplification; force and focus. Force includes words that intensify meanings such as excessively, perfectly, never, very, quite, surely, candidly, hardly, strongly, enough, legally, distinctly, accurately, etc. The drama also contains focus that involves ‘sharpening’ or ‘softening’ categories of people or things in the dialogues such as only, every, no, any, all, and etc.

The number of amplification vocabulary in the drama is the largest than affection, judgment, appreciation, and source of attitudes. The characters have more the appraising vocabulary of force than focus. This describes that the characters tend to intensify people and things than to sharpen and soften both. The result of amplification implies that they like to exaggerate a condition. For example Jack’s and Algernon’s attitudes indicate that they try to convince
Gwendolen and Cecily whether one of them is Earnest. They seem to have a dual identity. Following are the examples of affection (for more examples, see appendix 27-45):

**4.4.1 Force**

3 Algernon (ii) I don’t play accurately – (iii) any one can play accurately.

Interpretation: the word “accurately” refers to Algernon’s play. He wants to create a perfect play. He talked it to Lane.

9 Algernon (ii) that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? (iii) I ask merely for information.

Interpretation: the word “invariably” means very various. This shows Algernon’s force to the servant’s habit at the bachelor’s establishment. The word “merely” means that he wanted to know about Lane only for information. Those words describe intensifying of work.

10 Lane (iii) that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, the word “rarely” means that Lane did not often find a first-rate brand in married households. This word intensifies statement about the champagne.

39 Algernon (ii) It is very romantic to be in love. (v) One usually is, (viii) The very essence of romance is uncertainty. (ix) If ever I get married, (x) I’ll certainly try to forget the fact.

Interpretation: the words “very”, “ever” and “certainly” draw Algernon intensifying. He wanted to intensify love and romance. He liked to make a gambol, especially to Cecily.
36 Jack (ii) I have come up to town expressively to propose to her.

Interpretation: in this dialogue, the word “expressively” means intensify Jack’s proposal to marry Gwendolen. He wanted to propose her openly.

73 Jack (ii) you talk exactly (iv) It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist. (vi) It produces a false impression,

Interpretation: the word “exactly” refers to Algernon’s talk. It means that Jack gave his talk force in order to intensify its meaning.

67 Jack (vi) that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. (viii) that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt!

Interpretation: in this dialogue, the word “surely” tried to convenient Algernon, that Cecily was really his aunt. Through this word, Jack wants to intensify his words about Cecily.

4.4.2 Focus

14 Lane (iii) I never think of it myself.

Interpretation: the word “never” in this dialogue means sharpening Lane’s attitude to think about his family. He tended not like to say his family expressly to Algernon.

21 Algernon (ii) it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o’clock.

Interpretation: the word “slight” means softening the refreshment that is Algernon told. He assumed that took slight refreshment at five o’clock is customary in good society. His dialogues looked like a suggestion to Jack.
93 Jack (vi) Cecily is a little too much interested in him. (vii) It is rather a bore.

Interpretation: the word “too” means sharpening Jack’s statement to Algernon about Cecily’s feeling to him. But, the word “rather” means softening his opinion that her habit is a bore.

144 Cecily (iii) There is some good in every one.

Interpretation: the word “every” in this dialogue refers to any one. Cecily believed that there is some good in every one. “Every” means sharpening her opinion about people’s kindness.

Based on my findings, the amplification has the most number of vocabularies. This shows that Oscar Wilde is a very sensitive person. He can amplify people, things, or situation well. He gives the dialogues sense of life by using amplification. Therefore, the drama is very joyful. It has many various using of amplification. the readers directly can understand what he really want to.

Oscar Wilde can communicate well with his audience through the character’s dialogues. He is able to involve us feel life in that time. His amplification vocabulary guide the readers to know well the content of the story.

4.5 Source of Attitudes

Source of attitudes relates to who the evaluations are coming from. It could be monoglossia or heteroglossia. Monoglossia refers to the speaker/the author whereas heteroglossia refers to the other source outside the author. Heteroglossia has three ways of stating the source of attitudes; projection, modality, and concession. According to Martin and Rose (2003:47), there are five ways for
projection. They are projecting clauses, names for ‘speech act’, projecting within clauses, and scare quotes. For my analysis, I took only projecting clauses and names for ‘speech act’ to sharpen the analysis of source of attitudes. The examples for projecting clauses are such as I tell, I speak, you know, I knew, etc, and a good example what on earth is the use of them, etc. for names of speech act. These are some examples of source of attitudes in the drama as follows (for more examples, see appendix 46-49):

### 4.5.1 Projecting clauses

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) <em>I don’t know</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:** in this dialogue, the word “I don’t know” refers to Algernon that he did not know why he is interested in Lane’s family. This sentence is influenced by the outsider besides Algernon himself. It involves the environment in that time.

| 2  | Cecily  | (ii) It isn’t at all a becoming language. (iii) *I know* perfectly well |

**Interpretation:** the word “I know” means that Cecily realize her condition after getting German lesson. This statement is also influenced by her environment.

| 37 | Merriman | (iii) *I mentioned* |

**Interpretation:** in this dialogue, the word “I mentioned” means that Merriman informed Mr. Worthing that Cecily and Miss Prism were in the garden. He looked openly to speak with him.
60  Cecily  (ii) he said at dinner on Wednesday night,

Interpretation: the word “he” refers to Jack. “He said” is influenced by the environment happened in that time. Cecily was influenced by Jack’s command that Algernon should go away from her house.

4.5.2 Names for ‘speech act’

132  Lady B  (xi) But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, (xii) I believe is so. (xiii) Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

Interpretation: the word “respectable language” is a source of attitudes because it has a dependent clause that explains this word. In this dialogue, Lady Bracknell believe that German is a respectable language.

148  Algernon  (vi) I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, (vii) especially considering it is the first time (viii) I have come here.

Interpretation: the word “enthusiastic welcome” is a kind of source of attitudes since it is detailed by the phrase “especially considering it is…”. Algernon expected that he would get an enthusiastic welcome while coming at Cecily’s house.

145  Miss Prism  (vii) And here, on the lock, are my initials. (viii) I had forgotten (ix) that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. (xii) It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

Interpretation: the word “extravagance mood” in this dialogue shows Miss Prism’s mood. It is influenced by the outsider’s condition.

Oscar Wilde concerns on projection. He uses only a few of source of attitudes to create his drama. Based on my findings, he sharpens his idea for the
characters by taking the influence outside. He adopts people custom expressly so that his drama is very real and natural. Its readers can know easily what the content of the drama and the idea of Wilde are.

All the characters principally use a large number of amplification (489 words) and appreciation (336 words). The least appraisal device is source of attitude (53 words). They use 196 words of judgment and 113 words of affection. Algernon is the most expressive character since he has the largest number of judgment. He tends to judge people frequently, especially to judge Jack. He frequently looks down at Jack. This is also done by Lady Bracknell to Jack. She does not consent to Gwendolen marriage after she knew that Jack is an orphan.

Lady Bracknell has the largest number of appreciation. It means that she likes evaluating things, including meals, social status, and marriage. She likes to gossip. Gwendolen and Miss Prism are more self-centered and flighty. It can be seen from the number of amplification and appreciation vocabularies which are almost similar. Gwendolen has 14 words for appreciation and 15 words for amplification. Miss Prism also has 35 words for appreciation and 36 words for amplification. They communicate their thoughts of someone or something expressly only to the people they trusted.

Gwendolen only wants to marry someone named Earnest since she believes that the name Earnest expresses honesty and responsibility also inspires absolute confidence. Like Gwendolen, Cecily is also interested in marrying only if her husband’s name is Earnest. Cecily, Gwendolen, and Miss Prism are flat characters since they have the least of judgment.
Chasuable is a rector who frequently visits Jack’s country house to see Miss Prism. He only tends to concern on Miss Prism’s condition. He does not take part a lot in the dialogue; therefore he has a few words of affection (8 words) and Lane and Merriman are butlers so that they do not involve themselves a lot in the drama. Lane is more active than Merriman. He is especially perceptive about class tensions and his humor to deflate them. Merriman has fewer roles than Lane. Consequently, his total number of appraisal devices is the least one (6 words).

Based on my result, Wilde explores the Victorian society and belief through the performance of the dialogue. He tries to explain and criticize the moral of people of that time. Victorian society tends to have a dual identity, and views marriage only as a social tool. People’s attitudes which are only interested in the name of Earnest demonstrate how they look at someone upon titles, not character.

Wilde also tries to perform art as a mirror of reality that serves a social purpose so that it can be useful as a tool to criticize people’s attitudes of that time. Wilde exposes the trivial lives of the aristocracy well through Algernon and Lady Bracknell characters who are the greatest examples of hedonists. Wilde also describes his ideas of Victorian tendency by using comedy of manners and farce in order to paradoxically expose the absurdities of society.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

Conclusions
Based on my analysis of the application of the appraisal devices in ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’ above, I found 1.187 total appraisal devices and 1.659 total clauses. The largest numbers of appraisal devices are amplification and appreciation. This means that generally the characters are more concerned with evaluating the value of thing than with evaluating human behavior. They communicate their feelings expressly, except Lane and Merriman.

Algernon, Jack, and Lady Bracknell are the most expressive speakers since they have more appraising vocabulary of judgment than Cecily, Gwendolen, Miss Prism, Chasuable, Merriman and Lane. Gwendolen, Chasuable, Merriman, and Lane are the characters who have the least of affection vocabulary. This means that they do not consider their feelings whether negative or positive to others.

Since Merriman and Lane are butlers, they do not speak much. They also do not use many appraisal devices. But Lane is more active than Merriman. He has more appraising vocabulary of appreciation and amplification than Merriman does.

Pedagogical Implication
Appraisal devices relate to how people negotiate their ideas interpersonally. They will help people to communicate well. Therefore, learning and applying them in a real life is very useful. Based on my result, the kind of appraising vocabulary the characters use indirectly influences their feelings, thoughts, and ideas to others.
We also, as readers, have experienced how to evaluate something or someone expressively.

This thesis is very important for students, teachers, language practitioners, and curriculum developers. Students can learn the lexical choices of appraising items as tools to evaluate people and things. They have many choices to be communicated to others. They will consider which kind of appraising vocabulary that is positive or negative for the audience. Student also can practice the items into some activities such as practicing drama, role play, etc. Certainly, this is appropriate with the competence-based curriculum we are applying.

Teachers can use my result as the sources to explain the function of each appraising vocabulary and how to employ it in communication. Hopefully, the student can understand the types of appraising vocabulary and know how to use it. For language practitioners including researchers, my result may be used to do a further research. Then, curriculum developers can use my result to enrich their work.
REFERENCES

Berg, B. L. 1989. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Allyn and Bacon


The Identification of the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NV1</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>[Lane is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, Algernon enters.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) Did you hear (ii) what I was playing, Lane?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) I didn’t think (ii) it polite to listen, sir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) I’m sorry for that, for your sake. (ii) I don’t play accurately – (iii) any one can play accurately – (iv) but I play with wonderful expression. (v) As far as the piano is concerned, (vi) sentiment is my forte. (vii) I keep science for Life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Yes, sir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>And, speaking of the science of Life, (i) have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Yes, sir. [Hands them on a salver.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>[Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] (i) Oh!... by the way, Lane, (ii) I see from your book that on Thursday night, (iii) when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, (iv) eight bottles of champagne are entered (v) as having been consumed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) Why is it (ii) that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? (iii) I ask merely for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. (ii) I have often observed (iii) that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) Good heavens! (ii) Is marriage so demoralising as that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) I believe (ii) it is a very pleasant state, sir. (iii) I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. (iv) I have only been married once. (v) That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13 Algernon [Languidly.] (i) *I don’t know* (ii) that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

14 Lane (i) No, sir; (ii) it is not a very interesting subject. (iii) I never think of it myself.

15 Algernon (i) *Very natural*, (ii) I am sure. (ii) That will do, Lane, thank you.

16 Lane (i) Thank you, sir. [Lane goes out.]

17 Algernon (i) Lane views on marriage seem somewhat lax. (ii) Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example, (iii) what on earth is the use of them? (iv) They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

NV2 Lane [Enter Lane.]

18 Lane Mr. Ernest Worthing.

NV3 Jack [Enter Jack.]

NV4 Lane [Lane goes out.]

19 Algernon (i) How are you, my dear Ernest? (ii) What brings you up to town?

20 Jack (i) Oh, pleasure, pleasure! (ii) What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, (iii) I see, Algy!

21 Algernon [Stiffly.] (i) I believe (ii) it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o’clock. (iii) Where have you been since last Thursday?

22 Jack [Sitting down on the sofa.] In the country.

23 Algernon (i) What on earth do you do there?

24 Jack [Pulling off his gloves.] (i) When one is in town one amuses oneself. (ii) When one is in the country (iii) one amuses other people. (iv) It is excessively boring.

25 Algernon And (i) who are the people you amuse?

26 Jack [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

27 Algernon (i) Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

28 Jack (i) *Perfectly horrid!* Never speak to one of them.
29  Algernon  (i) How immensely you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way, (ii) Shropshire is your county, is it not?

30  Jack  Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? (i) Who is coming to tea?

31  Algernon  (i) Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

32  Jack  (i) How perfectly delightful!

33  Algernon  (i) Yes, (ii) that is all very well; (iii) but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won’t quite approve of your being here.

34  Jack  (i) May I ask why?

35  Algernon  (i) My dear fellow, (ii) the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. (iii) It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

36  Jack  (i) I am in love with Gwendolen. (ii) I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

37  Algernon  (i) I thought you had come up for pleasure? (ii) I call that business.

38  Jack  (i) How utterly unromantic you are!

39  Algernon  (i) I really don’t see anything romantic in proposing. (ii) It is very romantic to be in love. (iii) But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. (iv) Why, one may be accepted. (v) One usually is, (vi) I believe. (vii) Then the excitement is all over. (viii) The very essence of romance is uncertainty. (ix) If ever I get married, (x) I’ll certainly try to forget the fact.

40  Jack  (i) I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. (ii) The Divorce Court was specially invented for (iii) people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

41  Algernon  Oh! (i) there is no use speculating on that subject. (ii) Divorces are made in Heaven - [Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. Algernon at once interferes.] (iii) Please don’t touch the cucumber sandwiches. (iv) They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]

42  Jack  (i) Well, you have been eating them all the time.
43 Algernon  (i) That is quite a different matter. (ii) She is my aunt. [Takes plate from below.] (iii) Have some bread and butter. (iv) The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. (v) Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

44 Jack  [Advancing to table and helping himself.] (i) And very good bread and butter it is too.

45 Algernon  (i) Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat (ii) as if you were going to eat it all. (iii) You behave (iv) as if you were married to her already. (v) You are not married to her already, (vi) and I don’t think you ever will be.

46 Jack  (i) Why on earth do you say that?

47 Algernon  (i) Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. (ii) Girls don’t think it right.

48 Jack  (i) Oh, that is nonsense!

49 Algernon  (i) It isn’t. (ii) It is a great truth. (iii) It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors (iv) that one sees all over the place. (v) In the second place, I don’t give my consent.

50 Jack  Your consent!

51 Algernon  (i) My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. (ii) And before I allow you to marry her, (iii) you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell.]

52 Jack  (i) Cecily! What on earth do you mean? (ii) What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily! (iii) I don’t know any one of the name of Cecily.

NV5  [Enter Lane.]

53 Algernon  (i) Bring me that cigarette case (ii) Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time (iii) he dined here.

54 Lane  Yes, sir. [Lane goes out.]

55 Jack  (i) Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? (ii) I wish to goodness you had let me know. (iii) I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. (iv) I was very nearly offering a large reward.

56 Algernon  (i) Well, I wish you would offer one. (ii) I happen to be more than usually hard up.
57 Jack (i) There is no good offering a large reward now (ii) that the thing is found.

NV6 [Enter Lane with the cigarette case on a salver. Algernon takes it at once. Lane goes out.]

58 Algernon (i) I think (ii) that is rather mean of you, Ernest, (iii) I must say. [Opens case and examines it.] (iv) However, it makes no matter, for, (v) now that I look at the inscription inside, (vi) I find (vii) that the thing isn’t yours after all.

59 Jack (i) Of course it’s mine. [Moving to him.] (ii) You have seen me with it a hundred times, (iii) and you have no right whatsoever to read (iv) what is written inside. (v) It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

60 Algernon (i) Oh! (ii) it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule (iii) about what one should read and what one shouldn’t. (iv) More than half of modern culture depends on (v) what one shouldn’t read.

61 Jack (i) I am quite aware of the fact, (ii) and I don’t propose to discuss modern culture. (iii) It isn’t the sort of thing (iv) one should talk of in private. (v) I simply want my cigarette case back.

62 Algernon (i) Yes; (ii) but this isn’t your cigarette case. (iii) This cigarette case is a present from some one of the name of Cecily, (iv) and you said (v) you didn’t know any one of that name.

63 Jack (i) Well, (ii) if you want to know, (iii) Cecily happens to be my aunt.

64 Algernon Your aunt!

65 Jack (i) Yes. (ii) Charming old lady she is, too. (iii) Lives at Tunbridge Wells. (iv) Just give it back to me, Algy.

66 Algernon [Retreating to back of sofa.] (i) But why does she call herself little Cecily (ii) if she is your aunt (iii) and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] ‘From little Cecily with her fondest love.’

67 Jack [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.] (i) My dear fellow, (ii) what on earth is there in that? (iii) Some aunts are tall, (iv) some aunts are not tall. (v) That is a matter (vi) that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. (vii)
You seem to think (viii) that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! (ix) That is absurd! (x) For Heaven’s sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows Algernon round the room.]

68 Algernon (i) Yes. (ii) But why does your aunt call you her uncle? ‘From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.’ (iii) There is no objection, (iv) I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, (v) but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, (vi) should call her own nephew her uncle, (vii) I can’t quite make out. (viii) Besides, your name isn’t Jack at all; (ix) it is Ernest.

69 Jack (i) It isn’t Ernest; (ii) it’s Jack.

70 Algernon (i) You have always told me (ii) it was Ernest. (iii) I have introduced you to every one as Ernest. (iv) You answer to the name of Ernest. (v) You look (vi) as if your name was Ernest. (vii) You are the most earnest-looking person (viii) I ever saw in my life. (ix) It is perfectly absurd your saying (x) that your name isn’t Ernest. (xi) It’s on your cards. (xii) Here is one of them. [Taking it from case.] ‘Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany.’ (xiii) I’ll keep this as a proof (xiv) that your name is Ernest (xv) if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else. [Puts the card in his pocket.]

71 Jack (i) Well, (ii) my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, (iii) and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

72 Algernon (i) Yes, (ii) but that does not account for the fact (iii) that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. (iv) Come, old boy, (v) you had much better have the thing out at once.

73 Jack (i) My dear Algy, (ii) you talk exactly (iii) as if you were a dentist. (iv) It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist (v) when one isn’t a dentist. (vi) It produces a false impression.

74 Algernon (i) Well, (ii) that is exactly what dentists always do. (iii) Now, go on! (iv) Tell me the whole thing. (v) I may mention (vi) that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyst; (vii) and I am quite sure of it now.

75 Jack (i) Bunburyst? (ii) What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyst?
65

76 Algernon (i) I’ll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression (ii) as soon as you are kind enough to inform me (iii) why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

77 Jack (i) Well, (ii) produce my cigarette case first.

78 Algernon (i) Here it is. [Hands cigarette case.] (ii) Now produce your explanation, (iii) and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa.]

79 Jack (i) My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. (ii) In fact it’s perfectly ordinary. (iii) Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me (iv) when I was a little boy, (v) made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. (vi) Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect (vii) that you could not possibly appreciate, (viii) lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

80 Algernon (i) Where is that place in the country, by the way?

81 Jack (i) That is nothing to you, dear boy. (ii) You are not going to be invited... (iii) I may tell you candidly (iv) that the place is not in Shropshire.

82 Algernon (i) I suspected that, my dear fellow! (ii) I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. (iii) Now, go on. (iv) Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

83 Jack (i) My dear Algy, (ii) I don’t know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. (iii) You are hardly serious enough. (iv) When one is placed in the position of guardian, (v) one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. (vi) It’s one’s duty to do so. (vii) And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one’s health or one’s happiness, (viii) in order to get up to town (ix) I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, (x) who lives in the Albany, (xi) and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. (xii) That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

84 Algernon (i) The truth is rarely pure and never simple. (ii) Modern life would be very tedious (iii) if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

85 Jack (i) That wouldn’t be at all a bad thing.
86 Algernon (i) Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. (ii) Don’t try it. (iii) You should leave (iv) that to people who haven’t been at a University. (v) They do it so well in the daily papers. (vi) What you really are is a Bunburyist. (vii) I was quite right in saying (viii) you were a Bunburyist. (ix) You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists (x) I know.

87 Jack (i) What on earth do you mean?

88 Algernon (i) You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, (ii) in order that you may be able to come up to town (iii) as often as you like. (iv) I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, (v) in order that I may be able to go down into the country (vi) whenever I choose. (vii) Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. (viii) If it wasn’t for Bunbury’s extraordinary bad health, (ix) for instance, I wouldn’t be able to dine with you at Willis’s to-night, (x) for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

89 Jack (i) I haven’t asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

90 Algernon (i) I know. (ii) You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. (iii) It is very foolish of you. (iv) Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

91 Jack (i) You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

92 Algernon (i) I haven’t the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. (ii) To begin with, (iii) I dined there on Monday, (iv) and once a week is quite enough to dine with one’s own relations. (v) In the second place, whenever I do dine there (vi) I am always treated as a member of the family, (vii) and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. (viii) In the third place, (ix) I know perfectly well (x) whom she will place me next to, to-night. (xi) She will place me next to Mary Farquhar, (xii) who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. (xiii) That is not very pleasant. (xiv) Indeed, it is not even decent... (xv) and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. (xvii) The amount of women in London (xviii) who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. (xix) It looks so bad. (xx) It is simply washing one’s clean linen in public. (xxi) Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist (xxii) I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. (xxiii) I want to tell you the rules.
93 Jack  (i) I’m not a Bunburyist at all. (ii) If Gwendolen accepts me, (iii) I am going to kill my brother, (iv) indeed I think (v) I’ll kill him in any case. (vi) Cecily is a little too much interested in him. (vii) It is rather a bore. (viii) So I am going to get rid of Ernest. (ix) And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr... with your invalid friend (x) who has the absurd name.

94 Algernon  (i) Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, (ii) and if you ever get married, (iii) which seems to me extremely problematic, (iv) you will be very glad to know Bunbury. (v) A man who marries without knowing Bunbury (vi) has a very tedious time of it.

95 Jack  (i) That is nonsense. (ii) If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, (iii) and she is the only girl (iv) I ever saw in my life (v) that I would marry, (vi) I certainly won’t want to know Bunbury.

96 Algernon  (i) Then your wife will. (ii) You don’t seem to realise, (iii) that in married life three is company (iv) and two is none.

97 Jack  [Sententiously.] (i) That, my dear young friend, is the theory (ii) that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

98 Algernon  (i) Yes; (ii) and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

99 Jack  (i) For heaven’s sake, don’t try to be cynical. (ii) It’s perfectly easy to be cynical.

100 Algernon  (i) My dear fellow, it isn’t easy to be anything nowadays. (ii) There’s such a lot of beastly competition about. [The sound of an electric bell is heard.] (iii) Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. (iv) Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. (v) Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, (vi) so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, (vii) may I dine with you to-night at Willis’s?

102 Jack  (i) I suppose so, (ii) if you want to.

103 Algernon  (i) Yes, (ii) but you must be serious about it. (iii) I hate people (iv) who are not serious about meals. (v) It is so shallow of them.

NV7  [Enter Lane.]
Lady B. and Ms Fairfax. [Algernon goes forward to meet them. Enter Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen.]

Lady B. (i) Good afternoon, dear Algernon, (ii) I hope (iii) you are behaving very well.

Algernon (i) I’m feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B (i) That’s not quite the same thing. (ii) In fact the two things rarely go together. [Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness.]

Algernon [To Gwendolen.] (i) Dear me, (ii) you are smart!

Gwendolen (i) I am always smart! (ii) Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

Jack (i) You’re quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen (i) Oh! (ii) I hope (iii) I am not that. (iv) It would leave no room for developments, (v) and I intend to develop in many directions. [Gwendolen and Jack sit down together in the corner.]

Lady B (i) I’m sorry (ii) if we are a little late, Algernon, (iii) but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. (iv) I hadn’t been there (v) since her poor husband’s death. (vi) I never saw a woman so altered; (vii) she looks quite twenty years younger. (viii) And now I’ll have a cup of tea, (ix) and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

Algernon Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table.]

Lady B (i) Won’t you come (ii) and sit here, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen (i) Thanks, mamma, (ii) I’m quite comfortable (iii) where I am.

Algernon [Picking up empty plate in horror.] (i) Good heavens! Lane! (ii) Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? (iii) I ordered them specially.

Lane [Gravely.] (i) There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. (ii) I went down twice.

Algernon (i) No cucumbers!

Lane (i) No, sir. (ii) Not even for ready money.

Algernon (i) That will do, Lane, thank you.
120 Lane (i) Thank you, sir. [Goes out.]

121 Algernon (i) I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, (ii) about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

122 Lady B (i) It really makes no matter, Algernon. (ii) I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, (iii) who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

123 Algernon (i) I hear (ii) her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

124 Lady B (i) It certainly has changed its colour. (ii) From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [Algernon crosses and hands tea.] (iii) Thank you. (iv) I’ve quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. (v) I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. (vi) She is such a nice woman, (vii) and so attentive to her husband. (viii) It’s delightful to watch them.

125 Algernon (i) I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, (ii) I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

126 Lady B [Frowning.] (i) I hope not, Algernon. (ii) It would put my table completely out. (iii) Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. (iv) Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

127 Algernon (i) It is a great bore, (ii) and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, (iii) but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say (iv) that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with Jack.] (v) They seem to think I should be with him.

128 Lady B (i) It is very strange. (ii) This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

129 Algernon (i) Yes; (ii) poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

130 Lady B (i) Well, (ii) I must say, Algernon, (iii) that I think (iv) it is high time (v) that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind (vi) whether he was going to live or to die. (vii) This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. (viii) Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. (ix) I consider it morbid. (x) Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. (xi) Health is the primary duty of life. (xii) I am always telling that to your poor uncle, (xiii) but he never seems to take much notice... (xiv) as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. (xv) I should be much obliged (xvi) if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday,
(xvii) for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. (xviii) It is my last reception, (xix) and one wants something (xx) that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season (xxi) when every one has practically said (xxii) whatever they had to say, (xxiii) which, in most cases, was probably not much.

131 Algernon
(i) I’ll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, (ii) if he is still conscious, (iii) and I think (iv) I can promise you (v) he’ll be all right by Saturday. (vi) Of course the music is a great difficulty. (vii) You see, (viii) if one plays good music, (ix) people don’t listen, (x) and if one plays bad music (xi) people don’t talk. (xii) But I’ll run over the programme (xiii) I’ve drawn out, (xiv) if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

132 Lady B
(i) Thank you, Algernon. (ii) It is very thoughtful of you. [Rising, and following Algernon.] (iii) I’m sure (iv) the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. (v) French songs I cannot possibly allow. (vi) People always seem to think (vii) that they are improper, (viii) and either look shocked, (ix) which is vulgar, or laugh, (x) which is worse. (xi) But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, (xii) I believe is so. (xiii) Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

133 Gwendolen
(i) Certainly, mamma.

NV10 [Lady Bracknell and Algernon go into the music-room, Gwendolen remains behind.]

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

Turn Speaker Text

NV1 [Miss Prism discovered seated at the table. Cecily is at the back watering flowers.]

1 Miss Prism [Calling.] (i) Cecily, Cecily! (ii) Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton’s duty than yours? (iii) Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. (iv) Your German grammar is on the table. (v) Pray open it at page fifteen. (vi) We will repeat yesterday’s lesson.
2 Cecily [Coming over very slowly.] (i) But I **don’t like** German. (ii) It isn’t at all a **becoming language**. (iii) **I know perfectly well** (iv) that I look **quite plain** after my German lesson.

3 Miss Prism (i) Child, you knew how **anxious** your guardian is (ii) that you **should** improve yourself in **every way**. (iii) He laid **particular** stress on your German, (iv) as he was leaving for town yesterday. (v) Indeed, he **always** lays stress on your German (vi) when he is leaving for town.

4 Cecily (i) **Dear** Uncle Jack is **so very serious**! (ii) Sometimes he is **so serious** (iii) that I think he cannot be **quite well**.

5 Miss Prism [Drawing herself up.] (i) Your guardian enjoys the **best of health**, (ii) and his gravity of demeanour is **especially** to be commended in one so **comparatively young** (iii) as he is. (iv) **I know** (v) no one who has a higher **sense of duty and responsibility**.

6 Cecily (i) I suppose (ii) that is why (iii) he often looks a little **bored** (iv) when we three are together.

7 Miss Prism (i) Cecily! (ii) I am **surprised** at you. (iii) Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. (iv) **Idle** merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. (v) You must remember his constant anxiety about that **unfortunate young** man his brother.

8 Cecily (i) I wish (ii) Uncle Jack would allow (iii) that **unfortunate young** man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. (iv) We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. (v) I am **sure** you **certainly would**. (vi) **You know** German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man **very much**. [Cecily begins to write in her diary.]

9 Miss Prism [Shaking her head.] (i) I do not think (ii) that **even I could produce any effect** on a character (iii) that according to his own brother’s admission is **irretrievably weak and vacillating**. (iv) Indeed I am **not sure** (v) that I would desire to reclaim him. (vi) I am **not in favour** of this **modern mania** for turning **bad** people into **good** people at a moment’s notice. (vii) As a man sows (viii) so let him reap. (ix) You must put away your diary, Cecily. (x) I **really** don’t see (xi) why you should keep a diary **at all**.
10 Cecily (i) I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. (ii) If I didn’t write them down, (iii) I should probably forget all about them.

11 Miss Prism (i) Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary (ii) that we all carry about with us.

12 Cecily (i) Yes, (ii) but it usually chronicles the things (iii) that have never happened, (iv) and couldn’t possibly have happened. (v) I believe (vi) that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels (vii) that Mudie sends us.

13 Miss Prism (i) Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. (ii) I wrote one myself in earlier days.

14 Cecily (i) Did you really, Miss Prism? (ii) How wonderfully clever you are! (iii) I hope it did not end happily? (iv) I don’t like novels (v) that end happily. (vi) They depress me so much.

15 Miss Prism (i) The good ended happily, (ii) and the bad unhappily. (iii) That is what Fiction means.

16 Cecily (i) I suppose so. (ii) But it seems very unfair. (iii) And was your novel ever published?

17 Miss Prism (i) Alas! (ii) No. (iii) The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. [Cecily starts.] (iv) I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. (v) To your work, child, (vi) these speculations are profitless.

18 Cecily [Smiling.] (i) But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

19 Miss Prism. [Rising and advancing.] (i) Dr. Chasuble! (ii) This is indeed a pleasure.

NV2 [Enter Canon Chasuble.]

20 Chasuble (i) And how are we this morning? (ii) Miss Prism, you are, (iii) I trust, well?

21 Cecily (i) Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. (ii) I think (iii) it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

22 Miss Prism (i) Cecily, (ii) I have not mentioned anything about a headache.
23 Cecily (i) No, dear Miss Prism, (ii) I know that, (iii) but I felt instinctively (iv) that you had a headache. (v) Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, (vi) when the Rector came in.

24 Chasuble (i) I hope, Cecily, (ii) you are not inattentive.

25 Cecily (i) Oh, I am afraid (ii) I am.

26 Chasuble (i) That is strange. (ii) Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism’s pupil, (iii) I would hang upon her lips. [Miss Prism glares.] (iv) I spoke metaphorically. – (v) My metaphor was drawn from bees. (vi) Ahem! (vii) Mr. Worthing, (viii) I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

27 Miss Prism (i) We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

28 Chasuble (i) Ah yes, (ii) he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. (iii) He is not one of those (iii) whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, (iv) that unfortunate young man his brother seems to be. (v) But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

29 Miss Prism (i) Egeria? (ii) My name is Laetitia, Doctor.

30 Chasuble [Bowing.] (i) A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. (ii) I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

31 Miss Prism (i) I think, dear Doctor, (ii) I will have a stroll with you. (iii) I find (iv) I have a headache after all, (v) and a walk might do it good.

32 Chasuble (i) With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. (ii) We might go as far as the schools and back.

33 Miss Prism (i) That would be delightful. (ii) Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. (iii) The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. (iv) It is somewhat too sensational. (v) Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

NV3 [Goes down the garden with Dr. Chasuble.]

34 Cecily [Picks up books and throws them back on table.] Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid German!

NV4 [Enter Merriman with a card on a salver.]
35 Merriman  (i) Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. (ii) He has brought his luggage with him.

36 Cecily  [Takes the card and reads it.] (i) ‘Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W.’ Uncle Jack’s brother! (ii) Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

37 Merriman  (i) Yes, Miss. (ii) He seemed very much disappointed. (iii) I mentioned (iv) that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. (v) He said (vi) he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

38 Cecily  (i) Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. (ii) I suppose (iii) you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

39 Merriman  (i) Yes, Miss.

NV5  [Merriman goes off.]

40 Cecily  (i) I have never met any really wicked person before. (ii) I feel rather frightened. (iii) I am so afraid (iv) he will look just like every one else.

NV6  [Enter Algernon, very gay and debonair.] (i) He does!

41 Algernon  [Raising his hat.] (i) You are my little cousin Cecily, (ii) I’m sure.

42 Cecily  (i) You are under some strange mistake. (ii) I am not little. In fact, (iii) I believe (iv) I am more than usually tall for my age. [Algernon is rather taken aback.] (v) But I am your cousin Cecily. (vi) You, (vii) I see from your card, are Uncle Jack’s brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

43 Algernon  (i) Oh! (ii) I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. (iii) You mustn’t think (iv) that I am wicked.

44 Cecily  (i) If you are not, (ii) then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. (iii) I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. (iv) That would be hypocrisy.

45 Algernon  [Looks at her in amazement.] (i) Oh! (ii) Of course I have been rather reckless.

46 Cecily  (i) I am glad to hear it.
In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

I don’t think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

It is much pleasanter being here with you.

I can’t understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won’t be back till Monday afternoon.

That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious... to miss?

Can’t you miss it anywhere but in London?

No, the appointment is in London.

Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

About my what?

Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

I certainly wouldn’t let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

I don’t think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

Australia! I’d sooner die.

Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Yes, but are you good enough for it?
Algernon  (i) I’m afraid  (ii) I’m not that. (iii) That is why (iv) I want you to reform me. (v) You might make that your mission, (vi) if you don’t mind, cousin Cecily.

Cecily  (i) I’m afraid  (ii) I’ve no time, this afternoon.

Algernon  (i) Well, (ii) would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

Cecily  (i) It is rather Quixotic of you. (ii) But I think (iii) you should try.

Algernon  (i) I will. (ii) I feel better already.

Cecily  (i) You are looking a little worse.

Algernon  (i) That is (ii) because I am hungry.

Cecily  (i) How thoughtless of me. (ii) I should have remembered (iii) that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, (iii) one requires regular and wholesome meals. (iv) Won’t you come in?

Algernon  (i) Thank you. (ii) Might I have a buttonhole first? (iii) I never have any appetite (iv) unless I have a buttonhole first.

Cecily  A Marechal Niel? [Picks up scissors.]

Algernon  (i) No, (ii) I’d sooner have a pink rose.

Cecily  Why? [Cuts a flower.]

Algernon  (i) Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

Cecily  (i) Miss Prism says (ii) that all good looks are a snare. (iii) Miss Prism never says such things to me.

Algernon  (i) Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [Cecily puts the rose in his buttonhole.] (ii) You are the prettiest girl (iii) I ever saw.

Cecily  (i) Miss Prism says (ii) that all good looks are a snare.

Algernon.  (i) They are a snare (ii) that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

Cecily  (i) Oh, (ii) I don’t think (iii) I would care to catch a sensible man. (iv) I shouldn’t know what to talk to him about.
[They pass into the house. Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble return.]

81 Miss Prism  (i) You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. (ii) You should get married. (iii) A misanthrope I can understand - a womanthrope, never!

82 Chasuble  [With a scholar’s shudder.] (i) Believe me, (ii) I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. (iii) The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

83 Miss Prism  [Sententiously.] (i) That is obviously the reason (ii) why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. (iii) And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, (iv) that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. (v) Men should be more careful; (vi) this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

84 Chasuble  (i) But is a man not equally attractive (iii) when married?

85 Miss Prism  (i) No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

86 Chasuble  (i) And often, I’ve been told, not even to her.

87 Miss Prism  (i) That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. (ii) Maturity can always be depended on. (iii) Ripeness can be trusted. (iv) Young women are green. [Dr. Chasuble starts.] (v) I spoke horticulturally. (vi) My metaphor was drawn from fruits. (vii) But where is Cecily?

88 Chasuble  (i) Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

[Enter Jack slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.]

89 Miss Prism  Mr. Worthing!

90 Chasuble  Mr. Worthing?

91 Miss Prism  (i) This is indeed a surprise. (ii) We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

92 Jack  [Shakes Miss Prism’s hand in a tragic manner.] (i) I have returned sooner (ii) than I expected. (iii) Dr. Chasuble, I hope (iv) you are well?
Chasuble (i) **Dear** Mr. Worthing, (ii) I trust (ii) this garb of woe does not be token some **terrible** calamity?

Jack My brother.

Miss Prism (i) **More shameful** debts and extravagance?

Chasuble (i) Still leading his life of pleasure?

Jack [Shaking his head.] Dead!

Chasuble (i) Your brother Ernest dead?

Jack (i) **Quite** dead.

Miss Prism (i) What a lesson for him! (ii) I trust (iii) he will profit by it.

Chasuble (i) Mr. Worthing, (ii) I offer you my sincere **condolence**. (iii) You have **at least** the consolation of knowing (iv) that you were always **the most generous** and forgiving of brothers.

Jack (i) **Poor** Ernest! (ii) He had many faults, (iii) but it is a **sad**, sad blow.

Chasuble (i) **Very sad** indeed, (ii) Were you with him at the end?

Jack (i) No. (ii) He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. (iii) I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

Chasuble (i) Was the cause of death mentioned?

Jack (i) A **severe chill**, (ii) it seems.

Miss Prism (i) As a man sows, (ii) so shall he reap.

Chasuble [Raising his hand.] (i) **Charity**, dear Miss Prism, **charity**! (ii) None of us are perfect. (iii) I myself am **peculiarly susceptible** to draughts. (iv) Will the interment take place here?

Jack (i) No. (ii) He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

Chasuble (i) In Paris! [Shakes his head.] (ii) I **fear** that **hardly** points to any **very serious** state of mind at the last. (iii) You would **no doubt** wish me to make some slight allusion to this **tragic domestic** affliction next Sunday. [Jack presses his hand convulsively.] (iv) My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost **any** occasion,
joyful, or, as in the present case, **distressing**. [All sigh.] (v) I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. (vi) The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. (vii) The Bishop, (viii) who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies (ix) I drew.

111 Jack  (i) Ah! (ii) that reminds me, (iii) you mentioned christenings (iv) I think, Dr. Chasuble? (v) I suppose (vi) you know how to christen all right? [Dr. Chasuble looks astounded.] (vii) I mean, of course, (viii) you are continually christening, aren’t you?

112 Miss Prism  (i) It is, (ii) I regret to say, one of the Rector’s most constant duties in this parish. (iii) I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. (iv) But they don’t seem to know (v) what thrift is.

113 Chasuble  (i) But is there any particular infant in (ii) whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? (iii) Your brother was, (iv) I believe, unmarried, (v) was he not?

114 Jack  Oh yes.

115 Miss Prism  [Bitterly.] (i) People (ii) who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

116 Jack  (i) But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. (ii) I am very fond of children. (iii) No! (iv) the fact is, (v) I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, (vi) if you have nothing better to do.

117 Chasuble  (i) But surely, Mr. Worthing, (ii) you have been christened already?

118 Jack  (i) I don’t remember anything about it.

119 Chasuble  (i) But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

120 Jack  (i) I certainly intend to have. (ii) Of course I don’t know (iii) if the thing would bother you in any way, (iv) or if you think (v) I am a little too old now.

121 Chasuble  (i) Not at all. (ii) The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

122 Jack  Immersion!
123 Chasuble  (i) You need have no apprehensions. (ii) Sprinkling is all (iii) that is necessary, (iv) or indeed I think advisable. (v) Our weather is so changeable. (vi) At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

124 Jack  (i) Oh, (ii) I might trot round about five (iii) if that would suit you.

125 Chasuble  (i) Perfectly, perfectly! (ii) In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. (iii) A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

126 Jack  (i) Oh! (ii) I don’t see much fun in being christened along with other babies. (iii) It would be childish. (iv) Would half-past five do?

127 Chasuble  (i) Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch.] (ii) And now, dear Mr. Worthing, (iii) I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. (iv) I would merely beg (v) you not to be too much bowed down by grief. (vi) What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

128 Miss Prism  (i) This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

NV9  [Enter Cecily from the house.]

129 Cecily  (i) Uncle Jack! (ii) Oh, I am pleased to see you back. (iii) But what horrid clothes you have got on! (iv) Do go and change them.

130 Miss Prism  Cecily!

131 Chasuble  (i) My child! my child! [Cecily goes towards Jack; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]

132 Cecily  (i) What is the matter, Uncle Jack? (ii) Do look happy! (iii) You look as (iv) if you had toothache, (v) and I have got such a surprise for you. (vi) Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

133 Jack  Who?

134 Cecily  (i) Your brother Ernest. (ii) He arrived about half an hour ago.

135 Jack  (i) What nonsense! (ii) I haven’t got a brother.
81

136 Cecily (i) Oh, don’t say that. (ii) However badly he may have behaved to you in the past (iii) he is still your brother. (iv) You couldn’t be so heartless as to disown him. (v) I’ll tell him to come out. (vi) And you will shake hands with him, (vii) won’t you, Uncle Jack? [Runs back into the house.]

137 Chasuble (i) These are very joyful tidings.

138 Miss Prism (i) After we had all been resigned to his loss, (ii) his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

139 Jack (i) My brother is in the dining-room? (ii) I don’t know (iii) what it all means. (iv) I think (v) it is perfectly absurd.

NV10 [Enter Algernon and Cecily hand in hand. They come slowly up to Jack.]

140 Jack Good heavens! [Motions Algernon away.]

141 Algernon (i) Brother John, (ii) I have come down from town to tell you (iii) that I am very sorry for all the trouble (iv) I have given you, (v) and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [Jack glares at him and does not take his hand.]

142 Cecily (i) Uncle Jack, (ii) you are not going to refuse your own brother’s hand?

143 Jack (i) Nothing will induce me to take his hand. (ii) I think his coming down here disgraceful. (iii) He knows perfectly well why.

144 Cecily (i) Uncle Jack, (ii) do be nice. (iii) There is some good in every one. (iv) Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury (v) whom he goes to visit so often. (vi) And surely there must be much good in one (vii) who is kind to an invalid, (viii) and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

145 Jack (i) Oh! (ii) he has been talking about Bunbury, (iii) has he?

146 Cecily (i) Yes, (ii) he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

147 Jack (i) Bunbury! (ii) Well, I won’t have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. (iii) It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

148 Algernon (i) Of course I admit (ii) that the faults were all on my side. (iii) But I must say (iv) that I think (v) that Brother John’s
coldness to me is peculiarly painful. (vi) I expected a more enthusiastic welcome. (vii) especially considering it is the first time (viii) I have come here.

149 Cecily (i) Uncle Jack, (ii) if you don’t shake hands with Ernest (iii) I will never forgive you.

150 Jack (i) Never forgive me?

151 Cecily Never, never, never!

152 Jack (i) Well, this is the last time (ii) I shall ever do it. [Shakes with Algernon and glares.]

153 Chasuble (i) It’s pleasant; (ii) is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? (iii) I think (iv) we might leave the two brothers together.

154 Miss Prism (i) Cecily, you will come with us.

155 Cecily (i) Certainly, Miss Prism. (ii) My little task of reconciliation is over.

156 Chasuble (i) You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

157 Miss Prism (i) We must not be premature in our judgments.

158 Cecily (i) I feel very happy. [They all go off except Jack and Algernon.]

159 Jack (i) You young scoundrel, Algy, (ii) you must get out of this place as soon as possible. (iii) I don’t allow any Bunburying here.

NV11 [Enter Merriman.]

160 Merriman (i) I have put Mr. Ernest’s things in the room next to yours, sir. (ii) I suppose that is all right?

161 Jack What?

162 Merriman (i) Mr. Ernest’s luggage, sir. (ii) I have unpacked it (iii) and put it in the room next to your own.

163 Jack (i) His luggage?

164 Merriman (i) Yes, sir. (ii) Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.
165 Algernon (i) I am afraid (ii) I can’t stay more than a week this time.

166 Jack (i) Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. (ii) Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

167 Merriman (i) Yes, sir. [Goes back into the house.]

168 Algernon (i) What a fearful liar you are, Jack. (ii) I have not been called back to town at all.

169 Jack (i) Yes, you have.

170 Algernon (i) I haven’t heard (ii) any one call me.

171 Jack (i) Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

172 Algernon (i) My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

173 Jack (i) I can quite understand that.

174 Algernon (i) Well, Cecily is a darling.

175 Jack (i) You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. (ii) I don’t like it.

176 Algernon (i) Well, I don’t like your clothes. (ii) You look perfectly ridiculous in them. (iii) Why on earth don’t you go up and change? (iv) It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man (v) who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. (vi) I call it grotesque.

177 Jack (i) You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. (ii) You have got to leave... by the four-five train.

178 Algernon (i) I certainly won’t leave you so long (ii) as you are in mourning. (iii) It would be most unfriendly. (iv) If I were in mourning (v) you would stay with me, (vi) I suppose. (vii) I should think (viii) it very unkind (ix) if you didn’t.

179 Jack (i) Well, (ii) will you go (iii) if I change my clothes?

180 Algernon (i) Yes, (ii) if you are not too long. (iii) I never saw any body take so long to dress, and with such little result.

181 Jack (i) Well, at any rate, (ii) that is better than being always over-dressed (iii) as you are.
182 Algernon (i) If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, (ii) I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

183 Jack (i) Your vanity is ridiculous, (ii) your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. (iii) However, you have got to catch the four-five, (iv) and I hope (v) you will have a pleasant journey back to town. (vi) This Bunburying, (vii) as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

NV12 [Goes into the house.]

184 Algernon (i) I think (ii) it has been a great success. (iii) I’m in love with Cecily, (iv) and that is everything.

NV13 [Enter Cecily at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.] But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

185 Cecily (i) Oh, (ii) I merely came back to water the roses. (iii) I thought (iv) you were with Uncle Jack.

186 Algernon (i) He’s gone to order the dog-cart for me.

187 Cecily (i) Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

188 Algernon (i) He’s going to send me away.

189 Cecily (i) Then have we got to part?

190 Algernon (i) I am afraid so. (ii) It’s a very painful parting.

191 Cecily (i) It is always painful to part from people (ii) whom one has known for a very brief space of time. (iii) The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. (iv) But even a momentary separation (v) from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

192 Algernon Thank you.

(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

2 Turn  Speaker  Text

NV1 [Gwendolen and Cecily are at the window, looking out into the garden.]
Gwendolen (i) The fact (ii) that they did not follow us at once into the house, (iii) as any one else would have done, seems to me to show (iv) that they have some sense of shame left.

Cecily (i) They have been eating muffins. (ii) That looks like repentance.

Gwendolen [After a pause.] (i) They don’t seem to notice us at all. (ii) Couldn’t you cough?

Cecily (i) But I haven’t got a cough.

Gwendolen (i) They’re looking at us. (ii) What effrontery!

Cecily (i) They’re approaching. (ii) That’s very forward of them.

Gwendolen (i) Let us preserve a dignified silence.

Cecily (i) Certainly. (ii) It’s the only thing to do now. [Enter Jack followed by Algernon. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.]

Gwendolen (i) This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

Cecily (i) A most distasteful one.

Gwendolen (i) But we will not be the first to speak.

Cecily (i) Certainly not.

Gwendolen (i) Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. (ii) Much depends on your reply.

Cecily (i) Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. (ii) Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. (iii) Why did you pretend to be my guardian’s brother?

Algernon (i) In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

Cecily [To Gwendolen.] (i) That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, (ii) does it not?

Gwendolen (i) Yes, (ii) dear, (iii) if you can believe him.

Cecily (i) I don’t. (ii) But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.
19 Gwendolen (i) True. (ii) In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. (iii) Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? (iv) Was it in order (v) that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

20 Jack (i) Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

21 Gwendolen (i) I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. (ii) But I intend to crush them. (iii) This is not the moment for German scepticism. [Moving to Cecily.] (iv) Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing’s. (v) That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

22 Cecily (i) I am more than content with (ii) what Mr. Moncrieff said. (iii) His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

23 Gwendolen (i) Then you think (ii) we should forgive them?

24 Cecily (i) Yes. (ii) I mean no.

25 Gwendolen (i) True! (ii) I had forgotten. (iii) There are principles at stake (iv) that one cannot surrender. (v) Which of us should tell them? (vi) The task is not a pleasant one.

26 Cecily (i) Could we not both speak at the same time?

27 Gwendolen (i) An excellent idea! (ii) I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. (iii) Will you take the time from me?

28 Cecily (i) Certainly. [Gwendolen beats time with uplifted finger.]

29 Gwendolen (i) Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. (ii) That and Cecily is all! [Speaking together.]

30 Jack and Algernon (i) Our Christian names! (ii) Is that all? (iii) But we are going to be christened this afternoon. [Speaking together.]

31 Gwendolen. [To Jack.] (i) For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

32 Jack (i) I am.

33 Cecily [To Algernon.] (i) To please me (ii) you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?
34 Algernon (i) I am!

35 Gwendolen (i) How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! (ii) Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, (iii) men are infinitely beyond us.

36 Jack (i) We are. [Clasps hands with Algernon.]

37 Cecily (i) They have moments of physical courage of which (ii) we women know absolutely nothing.

38 Gwendolen [To Jack.] (i) Darling!

39 Algernon [To Cecily.] (i) Darling! [They fall into each other’s arms.]

NV2 [Enter Merriman. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.]

40 Merriman (i) Ahem! (ii) Ahem! (iii) Lady Bracknell!

41 Jack (i) Good heavens!

NV3 [Enter Lady Bracknell. The couples separate in alarm. Exit Merriman.]

42 Lady B. (i) Gwendolen! (ii) What does this mean?

43 Gwendolen (i) Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

44 Lady B. (i) Come here. (ii) Sit down. (iii) Sit down immediately. (iv) Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to Jack.] (v) Apprised, sir, of my daughter’s sudden flight by her trusty maid, (vi) whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, (vii) I followed her at once by a luggage train. (viii) Her unhappy father is, (ix) I am glad to say, under the impression (x) that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. (xi) I do not propose to undeceive him. (xii) Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. (xiii) I would consider it wrong. (xiv) But of course, you will clearly understand (xv) that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. (xvi) On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.
45 Jack (i) I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen Lady Bracknell!

46 Lady B. (i) You are *nothing* of the kind, sir. (ii) And now, as regards Algernon!... Algernon!

47 Algernon (i) Yes, Aunt Augusta.

48 Lady B. (i) May I ask (ii) if it is in this house (iii) that your *invalid* friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

49 Algernon. [Stammering.] (i) Oh! No! (ii) Bunbury doesn’t live here. (iii) Bunbury is somewhere *else* at present. (iv) In fact, Bunbury is dead,

50 Lady B. (i) Dead! (ii) When did Mr. Bunbury die? (iii) His death must have been *extremely* sudden.

51 Algernon. [Airily.] (i) Oh! (ii) I killed Bunbury this afternoon. (iii) I mean (iv) *poor* Bunbury died this afternoon.

52 Lady B. (i) What did he die of?

53 Algernon (i) Bunbury? (ii) Oh, he was *quite* exploded.

54 Lady B. (i) Exploded! (ii) Was he the victim of a *revolutionary outrage*? (iii) I was *not aware* (iv) that Mr. Bunbury was *interested in* social legislation. (v) If so, (vi) he is *well punished* for his morbidity.

55 Algernon (i) My *dear* Aunt Augusta, (ii) I mean (iii) he was found out! (iv) The doctors found out (v) that Bunbury could not live, (vi) that is (vii) what I mean – (viii) so Bunbury died.

56 Lady B. (i) He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. (ii) I am glad, (iii) however, that he made up his mind at the last to *some definite* course of action, (iv) and acted under *proper medical* advice. (v) And now that we have *finally* got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, (vi) may I ask, Mr. Worthing, (vii) who is that young person (viii) whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in (ix) what seems to me a *peculiarly unnecessary manner*?

57 Jack (i) That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [Lady Bracknell bows coldly to Cecily.]

58 Algernon (i) I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

59 Lady B. (i) I beg your pardon?
Cecily (i) Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

Lady B. [With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.] (i) I do not know (ii) whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, (iii) but the number of engagements (iv) that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. (v) I think (vi) some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. (vii) Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? (viii) I merely desire information. (ix) Until yesterday I had no idea (x) that there were any families or persons (xi) whose origin was a Terminus. [Jack looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.]

Jack [In a clear, cold voice.] (i) Miss Cardew is the granddaughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

Lady B. (i) That sounds not unsatisfactory. (ii) Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. (iii) But what proof have I of their authenticity?

Jack (i) I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. (ii) They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

Lady B. [Grimly.] (i) I have known strange errors in that publication.

Jack (i) Miss Cardew’s family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

Lady B. (i) Markby, Markby, and Markby? (ii) A firm of the very highest position in their profession. (iii) Indeed I am told (iv) that one of the Mr. Markby’s is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. (v) So far I am satisfied.

Jack [Very irritably.] (i) How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! (ii) I have also in my possession, (iii) you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew’s birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.
Lady B. (i) Ah! (ii) A life crowded with incident, (iii) I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. (iv) I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [Rises, looks at her watch.] (v) Gwendolen! (vi) the time approaches for our departure. (vii) We have not a moment to lose. (viii) As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you (ix) if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

Jack (i) Oh! (ii) about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. (iii) That is all. (iv) Goodbye, Lady Bracknell. (v) So pleased to have seen you.

Lady B. [Sitting down again.] (i) A moment, Mr. Worthing. (ii) A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! (iii) And in the Funds! (iv) Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady. (v) now that I look at her. (vi) Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, (vii) any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. (viii) We live, (ix) I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To Cecily.] (xi) Come over here, dear. [Cecily goes across.] (xii) Pretty child! (xiii) your dress is sadly simple, (xiv) and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. (xv) But we can soon alter all that. (xvi) A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. (xvii) I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, (xviii) and after three months her own husband did not know her.

Jack (i) And after six months nobody knew her.

Lady B. [Glares at Jack for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to Cecily.] (i) Kindly turn round, sweet child. [Cecily turns completely round.] (ii) No, (iii) the side view is (iv) what I want. [Cecily presents her profile.] (v) Yes, quite as I expected. (vi) There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. (vii) The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. (viii) The chin a little higher, dear. (ix) Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. (x) They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

Algernon (i) Yes, Aunt Augusta!

Lady B (i) There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew’s profile.

Algernon (i) Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. (ii) And I don’t care two pence about social possibilities.
Lady B. (i) Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. (ii) Only people (iii) who can’t get into it do that. [To Cecily.] (iv) Dear child, of course you know (v) that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. (vi) But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. (vii) When I married Lord Bracknell (viii) I had no fortune of any kind. (ix) But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. (x) Well, I suppose (xi) I must give my consent.

Algernon (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) Cecily, (ii) you may kiss me!

Cecily [Kisses her.] (i) Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady B. (i) You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

Cecily (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) The marriage, I think, (ii) had better take place quite soon.

Algernon (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Cecily (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) To speak frankly, (ii) I am not in favour of long engagements. (iii) They give people the opportunity of finding out each other’s character before marriage, (iv) which I think (v) is never advisable.

Jack (i) I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, (ii) but this engagement is quite out of the question. (iii) I am Miss Cardew’s guardian, (iv) and she cannot marry without my consent (v) until she comes of age. (vi) That consent I absolutely decline to give.

Lady B. (i) Upon what grounds may I ask? (ii) Algernon is an extremely, (iii) I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. (iv) He has nothing, (v) but he looks everything. (vi) What more can one desire?

Jack (i) It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, (ii) but the fact is (iii) that I do not approve at all of his moral character. (iv) I suspect him of being untruthful. [Algernon and Cecily look at him in indignant amazement.]
Lady B. (i) Untruthful! (ii) My nephew Algernon? (iii) Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

Jack (i) I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. (ii) This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, (iii) he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. (iv) Under an assumed name he drank, (v) I’ve just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, ‘89; (vi) wine I was specially reserving for myself. (vii) Continuing his disgraceful deception, (viii) he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. (ix) He subsequently stayed to tea, (x) and devoured every single muffin. (xi) And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, (xii) that he was perfectly well aware from the first (xiii) that I have no brother, (xiv) that I never had a brother, (xv) and that I don’t intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. (xvi) I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

Lady B. (i) Ahem! (ii) Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew’s conduct to you.

Jack (i) That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. (ii) My own decision, however, is unalterable. (iii) I decline to give my consent.

Lady B. [To Cecily.] (i) Come here, sweet child. [Cecily goes over.] (ii) How old are you, dear?

Cecily (i) Well, (ii) I am really only eighteen, (iii) but I always admit to twenty (iv) when I go to evening parties.

Lady B. (i) You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. (ii) Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. (iii) It looks so calculating... [In a meditative manner.] Eighteen, (iv) but admitting to twenty at evening parties. (v) Well, (vi) it will not be very long (vii) before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. (viii) So I don’t think (ix) your guardian’s consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

Jack (i) Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, (ii) but it is only fair to tell you (iii) that according to the terms of her grandfather’s will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age (iv) till she is thirty-five.
Lady B  
(i) That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. (ii) Thirty-five is a very attractive age. (iii) London society is full of women of the very highest birth (iv) who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. (v) Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. (vi) To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever (vii) since she arrived at the age of forty, (viii) which was many years ago now. (ix) I see no reason (x) why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive (xi) at the age you mention (xii) than she is at present. (xiii) There will be a large accumulation of property.

Cecily  
(i) Algy, could you wait for me (ii) till I was thirty-five?

Algernon  
(i) Of course I could, Cecily. (ii) You know (iii) I could.

Cecily  
(i) Yes, (ii) I felt it instinctively, (iii) but I couldn’t wait all that time. (iv) I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. (v) It always makes me rather cross. (vi) I am not punctual myself, (vii) I know, (viii) but I do like punctuality in others, (ix) and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

Algernon  
(i) Then what is to be done, Cecily?

Cecily  
(i) I don’t know, Mr. Moncrieff.

Lady B  
(i) My dear Mr. Worthing, (ii) as Miss Cardew states positively (iii) that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five - a remark (iv) which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature – (v) I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

Jack  
(i) But my dear Lady Bracknell, (ii) the matter is entirely in your own hands. (iii) The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, (iv) I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady B  
[Rising and drawing herself up.] (i) You must be quite aware (ii) that what you propose is out of the question.

Jack  
(i) Then a passionate celibacy is all (ii) that any of us can look forward to.

Lady B  
(i) That is not the destiny (ii) I propose for Gwendolen. (iii) Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [Pulls out her watch.] (iv) Come, dear, [Gwendolen rises] (v) we have already missed five, (vi) if not six, trains. (vii) To
miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

NV4

[Enter DR. Chasuble.]

109 Chasuble  (i) Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

110 Lady B  (i) The christenings, sir! (ii) Is not that somewhat premature?

111 Chasuble  [Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to Jack and Algernon.] (i) Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

112 Lady B  (i) At their age? (ii) The idea is grotesque and irreligious! (iii) Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. (iv) I will not hear of such excesses. (v) Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased (vi) if he learned (vii) that was the way (viii) in which you wasted your time and money.

113 Chasuble  (i) Am I to understand (ii) then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

114 Jack  (i) I don’t think that, (ii) as things are now, (iii) it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

115 Chasuble  (i) I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. (ii) They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views (iii) that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. (iv) However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, (v) I will return to the church at once. (vi) Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener (vii) that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

116 Lady B  [Starting.] (i) Miss Prism! (ii) Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

117 Chasuble  (i) Yes, Lady Bracknell. (ii) I am on my way to join her.

118 Lady B  (i) Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. (ii) This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. (iii) Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

119 Chasuble  [Somewhat indignantly.] (i) She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.
Lady B  (i) It is obviously the same person. (ii) May I ask (iii) what position she holds in your household?

Chasuble  [Severely.] (i) I am a celibate, madam.

Jack  [Interposing.] (i) Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew’s esteemed governess and valued companion.

Lady B  (i) In spite of what I hear of her, (ii) I must see her at once. (iii) Let her be sent for.

Chasuble  [Looking off.] (i) She approaches; (ii) she is nigh.

NV5  [Enter Miss Prism hurriedly.]

Miss Prism  (i) I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. (ii) I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [Catches sight of Lady Bracknell, who has fixed her with a stony glare. Miss Prism grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.]

Lady B  [In a severe, judicial voice.] (i) Prism! [Miss Prism bows her head in shame.] (ii) Come here, Prism! [Miss Prism approaches in a humble manner.] (iii) Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. Algernon and Jack pretend to be anxious to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] (iv) Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell’s house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator (v) that contained a baby of the male sex. (vi) You never returned. (vii) A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, (viii) standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. (ix) It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [Miss Prism starts in involuntary indignation.] (x) But the baby was not there! [Every one looks at Miss Prism.] (xi) Prism! (xii) Where is that baby? [A pause.]

Miss Prism  (i) Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame (ii) that I do not know. (iii) I only wish (iv) I did. (v) The plain facts of the case are these. (vi) On the morning of the day you mention, (vii) a day that is for ever branded on my memory, (viii) I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. (ix) I had also with me a somewhat old, (x) but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to
place the manuscript of a work of fiction (xi) that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. (xii) In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, (xiii) I deposited the manuscript in the basinette, (xiv) and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

128 Jack [Who has been listening attentively.] (i) But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

129 Miss Prism (i) Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

130 Jack (i) Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. (ii) I insist on knowing (iii) where you deposited the hand-bag (iv) that contained that infant.

131 Miss Prism (i) I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

132 Jack (i) What railway station?

133 Miss Prism [Quite crushed.] (i) Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair.]

134 Jack (i) I must retire to my room for a moment. (ii) Gwendolen, wait here for me.

135 Gwendolen (i) If you are not too long, (ii) I will wait here for you all my life. [Exit Jack in great excitement.]

136 Chasuble (i) What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

137 Lady B (i) I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. (ii) I need hardly tell you (iii) that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. (iv) They are hardly considered the thing.

NV8 [Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Every one looks up.]

138 Cecily (i) Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

139 Chasuble (i) Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

140 Lady B (i) This noise is extremely unpleasant. (ii) It sounds (iii) as if he was having an argument. (iv) I dislike arguments of any kind. (v) They are always vulgar, and often convincing.
[Looking up.] (i) It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled.]

(i) I wish (ii) he would arrive at some conclusion.

(i) This suspense is terrible. (ii) I hope (iii) it will last. [Enter Jack with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand.]

[Rushing over to Miss Prism.] (i) Is this the handbag, Miss Prism? (ii) Examine it carefully (iii) before you speak. (iv) The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

[Calmly.] (i) It seems to be mine. (ii) Yes, (iii) here is the injury (iv) it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. (v) Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, (vi) an incident that occurred at Leamington. (vii) And here, on the lock, are my initials. (viii) I had forgotten (ix) that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. (x) The bag is undoubtedly mine. (xi) I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. (xii) It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

[In a pathetic voice.] (i) Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. (ii) I was the baby (iii) you placed in it.

[Amazed.] (i) You?

[Embracing her.] (i) Yes... mother!

[Recoiling in indignant astonishment.] (i) Mr. Worthing! (ii) I am unmarried

(i) Unmarried! (ii) I do not deny that is a serious blow. (iii) But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one (iv) who has suffered? (v) Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? (vi) Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? (vii) Mother, I forgive you. [Tries to embrace her again.]

[Still more indignant.] (i) Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [Pointing to Lady Bracknell.] (ii) There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.
[After a pause.] (i) Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, (ii) but would you kindly inform me who I am?

(i) I am afraid (ii) that the news I have to give you (iii) will not altogether please you. (iv) You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon’s elder brother.

(i) Algy’s elder brother! (ii) Then I have a brother after all. (iii) I knew (iv) I had a brother! (v) I always said (vi) I had a brother! (vii) Cecily, - how could you have ever doubted (viii) that I had a brother? [Seizes hold of Algernon.] (ix) Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. (x) Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. (xi) Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. (xii) Algyn, you young scoundrel, (xiii) you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. (xiv) You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

(i) Well, not till to-day, old boy, (ii) I admit. (iii) I did my best, (iv) however, though I was out of practice.

[Shakes hands.]

(i) My own! (ii) But what own are you? (iii) What is your Christian name, (iv) now that you have become some one else?

(i) I never change, except in my affections.

(i) What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

(i) Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. (ii) At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, (iii) had I been christened already?

(i) Every luxury (ii) that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

(i) Then I was christened! (ii) That is settled. (iii) Now, what name was I given? (iv) Let me know the worst.
Lady B  (i) Being the eldest son (ii) you were naturally christened after your father.

Jack  [Irritably.] (i) Yes, but what was my father’s Christian name?

Lady B  [Meditatively.] (i) I cannot at the present moment recall (ii) what the General’s Christian name was. (iii) But I have no doubt (iv) he had one. (v) He was eccentric, (vi) I admit. (vii) But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

Jack  (i) Algy! (ii) Can’t you recollect what our father’s Christian name was?

Algernon  (i) My dear boy, (ii) we were never even on speaking terms. (iii) He died (iv) before I was a year old.

Jack  (i) His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, (ii) I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

Lady B  (i) The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. (ii) But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Jack  (i) The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. (ii) These delightful records should have been my constant study. [Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.] (iii) M. Generals... Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have - Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.] (iv) I always told you, Gwendolen, (v) my name was Ernest, (vi) didn’t I? (vii) Well, it is Ernest after all. (viii)I mean (ix) it naturally is Ernest.

Lady B  (i) Yes, I remember now (ii) that the General was called Ernest, (iii) I knew (iv) I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen  (i) Ernest! (ii) My own Ernest! (iii) I felt from the first (iv) that you could have no other name!

Jack  (i) Gwendolen, (ii) it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly (iii) that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. (iv) Can you forgive me?
(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)
The Identification of the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NV1</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>[Lane is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, Algernon enters.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) Did you hear (ii) what I was playing, Lane?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) I didn’t think (ii) it polite to listen, sir.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) I’m sorry for that, for your sake. (ii) I don’t play accurately – (iii) any one can play accurately – (iv) but I play with wonderful expression. (v) As far as the piano is concerned, (vi) sentiment is my forte. (vii) I keep science for Life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Yes, sir.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>And, speaking of the science of Life, (i) have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Yes, sir. [Hands them on a salver.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>[Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] (i) Oh!... by the way, Lane, (ii) I see from your book that on Thursday night, (iii) when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, (iv) eight bottles of champagne are entered (v) as having been consumed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) Why is it (ii) that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? (iii) I ask merely for information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. (ii) I have often observed (iii) that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Algernon</td>
<td>(i) Good heavens! (ii) Is marriage so demoralising as that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>(i) I believe (ii) it is a very pleasant state, sir. (iii) I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. (iv) I have only been married once. (v) That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Algernon [Languidly.] (i) I don’t know (ii) that I am much **interested in** your family life, Lane.

Lane (i) No, sir; (ii) it is not a **very interesting** subject. (iii) I **never** think of it myself.

Algernon (i) **Very natural**, (ii) I am **sure**. (ii) That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane (i) Thank you, sir. [Lane goes out.]

Algernon (i) Lane views on marriage seem somewhat lax. (ii) **Really**, if the **lower** orders don’t set us a good **example**, (iii) what on earth is the use of them? (iv) They seem, as a class, to have absolutely **no sense of moral** responsibility.

Lane [Enter Lane.]

Mr. Ernest Worthing.

Jack [Enter Jack.]

Lane [Lane goes out.]

Algernon (i) How are you, my dear Ernest? (ii) What brings you up to town?

Jack (i) Oh, pleasure, pleasure! (ii) What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, (iii) I see, Algy!

Algernon [Stiffly.] (i) I believe (ii) it is **customary** in good society to take some **slight** refreshment at five o’clock. (iii) Where have you been since last Thursday?

Jack [Sitting down on the sofa.] In the country.

Algernon (i) What on earth do you do there?

Jack [Pulling off his gloves.] (i) When one is in town one amuses oneself. (ii) When one is in the country (iii) one amuses other people. (iv) It is **excessively** **boring**.

Algernon And (i) who are the people you amuse?

Jack [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

Algernon (i) Got **nice** neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

Jack (i) **Perfectly horrid!** Never speak to one of them.
29 Algernon  (i) How immensely you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way, (ii) Shropshire is your county, is it not?

30 Jack      Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? (i) Who is coming to tea?

31 Algernon  (i) Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

32 Jack      (i) How perfectly delightful!

33 Algernon  (i) Yes, (ii) that is all very well; (iii) but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won’t quite approve of your being here.

34 Jack      (i) May I ask why?

35 Algernon  (i) My dear fellow, (ii) the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. (iii) It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

36 Jack      (i) I am in love with Gwendolen. (ii) I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

37 Algernon  (i) I thought you had come up for pleasure? (ii) I call that business.

38 Jack      (i) How utterly unromantic you are!

39 Algernon  (i) I really don’t see anything romantic in proposing. (ii) It is very romantic to be in love. (iii) But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. (iv) Why, one may be accepted. (v) One usually is, (vi) I believe. (vii) Then the excitement is all over. (viii) The very essence of romance is uncertainty. (ix) If ever I get married, (x) I’ll certainly try to forget the fact.

40 Jack      (i) I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. (ii) The Divorce Court was specially invented for (iii) people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

41 Algernon  Oh! (i) there is no use speculating on that subject. (ii) Divorces are made in Heaven - [Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. Algernon at once interferes.] (iii) Please don’t touch the cucumber sandwiches. (iv) They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]

42 Jack      (i) Well, you have been eating them all the time.
43 Algernon  (i) That is quite a different matter. (ii) She is my aunt.
[Takes plate from below.] (iii) Have some bread and butter. (iv) The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. (v) Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

44 Jack    [Advancing to table and helping himself.] (i) And very good bread and butter it is too.

45 Algernon (i) Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat (ii) as if you were going to eat it all. (iii) You behave (iv) as if you were married to her already. (v) You are not married to her already, (vi) and I don’t think you ever will be.

46 Jack    (i) Why on earth do you say that?

47 Algernon (i) Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. (ii) Girls don’t think it right.

48 Jack    (i) Oh, that is nonsense!

49 Algernon (i) It isn’t. (ii) It is a great truth. (iii) It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors (iv) that one sees all over the place. (v) In the second place, I don’t give my consent.

50 Jack    Your consent!

51 Algernon (i) My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. (ii) And before I allow you to marry her, (iii) you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell.]

52 Jack    (i) Cecily! What on earth do you mean? (ii) What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily! (iii) I don’t know any one of the name of Cecily.

NV5  [Enter Lane.]

53 Algernon (i) Bring me that cigarette case (ii) Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time (iii) he dined here.

54 Lane    Yes, sir. [Lane goes out.]

55 Jack    (i) Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? (ii) I wish to goodness you had let me know. (iii) I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. (iv) I was very nearly offering a large reward.

56 Algernon (i) Well, I wish you would offer one. (ii) I happen to be more than usually hard up.
105

57 Jack (i) There is no good offering a large reward now (ii) that the thing is found.

NV6 [Enter Lane with the cigarette case on a salver. Algernon takes it at once. Lane goes out.]

58 Algernon (i) I think (ii) that is rather mean of you, Ernest, (iii) I must say. [Opens case and examines it.] (iv) However, it makes no matter, for, (v) now that I look at the inscription inside, (vi) I find (vii) that the thing isn’t yours after all.

59 Jack (i) Of course it’s mine. [Moving to him.] (ii) You have seen me with it a hundred times, (iii) and you have no right whatsoever to read (iv) what is written inside. (v) It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

60 Algernon (i) Oh! (ii) it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule (iii) about what one should read and what one shouldn’t. (iv) More than half of modern culture depends on (v) what one shouldn’t read.

61 Jack (i) I am quite aware of the fact, (ii) and I don’t propose to discuss modern culture. (iii) It isn’t the sort of thing (iv) one should talk of in private. (v) I simply want my cigarette case back.

62 Algernon (i) Yes; (ii) but this isn’t your cigarette case. (iii) This cigarette case is a present from some one of the name of Cecily, (iv) and you said (v) you didn’t know any one of that name.

63 Jack (i) Well, (ii) if you want to know, (iii) Cecily happens to be my aunt.

64 Algernon Your aunt!

65 Jack (i) Yes. (ii) Charming old lady she is, too. (iii) Lives at Tunbridge Wells. (iv) Just give it back to me, Algy.

66 Algernon [Retreating to back of sofa.] (i) But why does she call herself little Cecily (ii) if she is your aunt (iii) and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] ‘From little Cecily with her fondest love.’

67 Jack [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.] (i) My dear fellow, (ii) what on earth is there in that? (iii) Some aunts are tall, (iv) some aunts are not tall. (v) That is a matter (vi) that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. (vii)
You seem to think (viii) that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! (ix) That is absurd! (x) For Heaven’s sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows Algernon round the room.]

 Algernon  
(i) Yes. (ii) But why does your aunt call you her uncle?  
‘From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.’ (iii) There is no objection, (iv) I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, (v) but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, (vi) should call her own nephew her uncle, (vii) I can’t quite make out. (viii) Besides, your name isn’t Jack at all; (ix) it is Ernest.

 Jack  
(i) It isn’t Ernest; (ii) it’s Jack.

 Algernon  
(i) You have always told me (ii) it was Ernest. (iii) I have introduced you to every one as Ernest. (iv) You answer to the name of Ernest. (v) You look (vi) as if your name was Ernest. (vii) You are the most earnest-looking person (viii) I ever saw in my life. (ix) It is perfectly absurd your saying (x) that your name isn’t Ernest. (xi) It’s on your cards. (xii) Here is one of them. [Taking it from case.]  
‘Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany.’ (xiii) I’ll keep this as a proof (xiv) that your name is Ernest (xv) if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else. [Puts the card in his pocket.]

 Jack  
(i) Well, (ii) my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, (iii) and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

 Algernon  
(i) Yes, (ii) but that does not account for the fact (iii) that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. (iv) Come, old boy, (v) you had much better have the thing out at once.

 Jack  
(i) My dear Algy, (ii) you talk exactly (iii) as if you were a dentist. (iv) It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist (v) when one isn’t a dentist. (vi) It produces a false impression.

 Algernon  
(i) Well, (ii) that is exactly what dentists always do. (iii) Now, go on! (iv) Tell me the whole thing. (v) I may mention (vi) that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; (vii) and I am quite sure of it now.

 Jack  
(i) Bunburyist? (ii) What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?
Algernon (i) I’ll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression (ii) as soon as you are kind enough to inform me (iii) why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

Jack (i) Well, (ii) produce my cigarette case first.

Algernon (i) Here it is. [Hands cigarette case.] (ii) Now produce your explanation, (iii) and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa.]

Jack (i) My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. (ii) In fact it’s perfectly ordinary. (iii) Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me (iv) when I was a little boy, (v) made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. (vi) Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect (vii) that you could not possibly appreciate, (viii) lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

Algernon (i) Where is that place in the country, by the way?

Jack (i) That is nothing to you, dear boy. (ii) You are not going to be invited... (iii) I may tell you candidly (iv) that the place is not in Shropshire.

Algernon (i) I suspected that, my dear fellow! (ii) I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. (iii) Now, go on. (iv) Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

Jack (i) My dear Algy, (ii) I don’t know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. (iii) You are hardly serious enough. (iv) When one is placed in the position of guardian, (v) one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. (vi) It’s one’s duty to do so. (vii) And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one’s health or one’s happiness, (viii) in order to get up to town (ix) I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, (x) who lives in the Albany, (xi) and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. (xii) That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

Algernon (i) The truth is rarely pure and never simple, (ii) Modern life would be very tedious (iii) if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

Jack (i) That wouldn’t be at all a bad thing.
86 Algernon  
(i) Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. (ii) Don’t try it. (iii) You should leave (iv) that to people who haven’t been at a University. (v) They do it so well in the daily papers. (vi) What you really are is a Bunburyist. (vii) I was quite right in saying (viii) you were a Bunburyist. (ix) You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists (x) I know.

87 Jack  
(i) What on earth do you mean?

88 Algernon  
(i) You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, (ii) in order that you may be able to come up to town (iii) as often as you like. (iv) I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, (v) in order that I may be able to go down into the country (vi) whenever I choose. (vii) Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. (viii) If it wasn’t for Bunbury’s extraordinary bad health, (ix) for instance, I wouldn’t be able to dine with you at Willis’s to-night, (x) for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

89 Jack  
(i) I haven’t asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

90 Algernon  
(i) I know. (ii) You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. (iii) It is very foolish of you. (iv) Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

91 Jack  
(i) You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

92 Algernon  
(i) I haven’t the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. (ii) To begin with, (iii) I dined there on Monday, (iv) and once a week is quite enough to dine with one’s own relations. (v) In the second place, whenever I do dine there (vi) I am always treated as a member of the family, (vii) and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. (viii) In the third place, (ix) I know perfectly well (x) whom she will place me next to, to-night. (xi) She will place me next to Mary Farquhar, (xii) who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. (xiii) That is not very pleasant. (xiv) Indeed, it is not even decent... (xv) and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. (xvii) The amount of women in London (xviii) who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. (xix) It looks so bad. (xx) It is simply washing one’s clean linen in public. (xxi) Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist (xxii) I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. (xxiii) I want to tell you the rules.
(i) I’m not a Bunburyist at all. (ii) If Gwendolen accepts me, (iii) I am going to kill my brother, (iv) indeed I think (v) I’ll kill him in any case. (vi) Cecily is a little too much interested in him. (vii) It is rather a bore. (viii) So I am going to get rid of Ernest. (ix) And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr... with your invalid friend (x) who has the absurd name.

(i) Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, (ii) and if you ever get married, (iii) which seems to me extremely problematic, (iv) you will be very glad to know Bunbury. (v) A man who marries without knowing Bunbury (vi) has a very tedious time of it.

(i) That is nonsense. (ii) If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, (iii) and she is the only girl (iv) I ever saw in my life (v) that I would marry; (vi) I certainly won’t want to know Bunbury.

(i) Then your wife will. (ii) You don’t seem to realise, (iii) that in married life three is company (iv) and two is none.

(i) That, my dear young friend, is the theory (ii) that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

(i) Yes; (ii) and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

(i) For heaven’s sake, don’t try to be cynical. (ii) It’s perfectly easy to be cynical.

(i) My dear fellow, it isn’t easy to be anything nowadays. (ii) There’s such a lot of beastly competition about. [The sound of an electric bell is heard.] (iii) Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. (iv) Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. (v) Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, (vi) so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, (vii) may I dine with you to-night at Willis’s?

(i) I suppose so, (ii) if you want to.

(i) Yes, (ii) but you must be serious about it. (iii) I hate people (iv) who are not serious about meals. (v) It is so shallow of them.

[Enter Lane.]
Lady B. and Ms Fairfax. [Algernon goes forward to meet them. Enter Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen.]

(i) Good afternoon, dear Algernon, (ii) I hope (iii) you are behaving very well.

Algernon (i) I’m feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B (i) That’s not quite the same thing. (ii) In fact the two things rarely go together. [Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness.]

Algernon [To Gwendolen.] (i) Dear me, (ii) you are smart!

Gwendolen (i) I am always smart! (ii) Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

Jack (i) You’re quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen (i) Oh! (ii) I hope (iii) I am not that. (iv) It would leave no room for developments, (v) and I intend to develop in many directions. [Gwendolen and Jack sit down together in the corner.]

Lady B (i) I’m sorry (ii) if we are a little late, Algernon, (iii) but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. (iv) I hadn’t been there (v) since her poor husband’s death. (vi) I never saw a woman so altered; (vii) she looks quite twenty years younger. (viii) And now I’ll have a cup of tea, (ix) and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

Algernon Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table.]

Lady B (i) Won’t you come (ii) and sit here, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen (i) Thanks, mamma, (ii) I’m quite comfortable (iii) where I am.

Algernon [Picking up empty plate in horror.] (i) Good heavens! Lane! (ii) Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? (iii) I ordered them specially.

Lane [Gravely.] (i) There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. (ii) I went down twice.

Algernon (i) No cucumbers!

Lane (i) No, sir. (ii) Not even for ready money.

Algernon (i) That will do, Lane, thank you.
111

120 Lane (i) Thank you, sir. [Goes out.]

121 Algernon (i) I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, (ii) about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

122 Lady B (i) It really makes no matter, Algernon. (ii) I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, (iii) who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

123 Algernon (i) I hear (ii) her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

124 Lady B (i) It certainly has changed its colour. (ii) From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [Algernon crosses and hands tea.] (iii) Thank you. (iv) I’ve quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. (v) I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. (vi) She is such a nice woman, (vii) and so attentive to her husband. (viii) It’s delightful to watch them.

125 Algernon (i) I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, (ii) I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

126 Lady B [Frowning.] (i) I hope not, Algernon. (ii) It would put my table completely out. (iii) Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. (iv) Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

127 Algernon (i) It is a great bore, (ii) and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, (iii) but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say (iv) that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with Jack.] (v) They seem to think I should be with him.

128 Lady B (i) It is very strange. (ii) This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

129 Algernon (i) Yes; (ii) poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

130 Lady B (i) Well, (ii) I must say, Algernon, (iii) that I think (iv) it is high time (v) that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind (vi) whether he was going to live or to die. (vii) This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. (viii) Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. (ix) I consider it morbid. (x) Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. (xi) Health is the primary duty of life. (xii) I am always telling that to your poor uncle, (xiii) but he never seems to take much notice... (xiv) as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. (xv) I should be much obliged (xvi) if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday,
(xvii) for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. (xviii) It is my last reception, (xix) and one wants something (xx) that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season (xxi) when every one has practically said (xxii) whatever they had to say, (xxiii) which, in most cases, was probably not much.

131 Algernon  
(i) I’ll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, (ii) if he is still conscious, (iii) and I think (iv) I can promise you (v) he’ll be all right by Saturday. (vi) Of course the music is a great difficulty. (vii) You see, (viii) if one plays good music, (ix) people don’t listen, (x) and if one plays bad music (xi) people don’t talk. (xii) But I’ll run over the programme (xiii) I’ve drawn out, (xiv) if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

132 Lady B  
(i) Thank you, Algernon. (ii) It is very thoughtful of you. [Rising, and following Algernon.] (iii) I’m sure (iv) the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. (v) French songs I cannot possibly allow. (vi) People always seem to think (vii) that they are improper, (viii) and either look shocked, (ix) which is vulgar, or laugh, (x) which is worse. (xi) But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, (xii) I believe it is so. (xiii) Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

133 Gwendolen  
(i) Certainly, mamma.

NV10  
[ Lady Bracknell and Algernon go into the music-room, Gwendolen remains behind.]

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

Turn Speaker Text

NV1  
[Miss Prism discovered seated at the table. Cecily is at the back watering flowers.]

1 Miss Prism  
[Calling.] (i) Cecily, Cecily! (ii) Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton’s duty than yours? (iii) Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. (iv) Your German grammar is on the table. (v) Pray open it at page fifteen. (vi) We will repeat yesterday’s lesson.
2 Cecily [Coming over very slowly.] (i) But I don’t like German. (ii) It isn’t at all a becoming language. (iii) I know perfectly well (iv) that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

3 Miss Prism (i) Child, you know how anxious your guardian is (ii) that you should improve yourself in every way. (iii) He laid particular stress on your German, (iv) as he was leaving for town yesterday. (v) Indeed, he always lays stress on your German (vi) when he is leaving for town.

4 Cecily (i) Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! (ii) Sometimes he is so serious (iii) that I think he cannot be quite well.

5 Miss Prism (i) Child, you know how anxious your guardian is (ii) that you should improve yourself in every way. (iii) He laid particular stress on your German, (iv) as he was leaving for town yesterday. (v) Indeed, he always lays stress on your German (vi) when he is leaving for town.

6 Cecily (i) Your guardian enjoys the best of health, (ii) and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young (iii) as he is. (iv) I know (v) no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

7 Miss Prism (i) Cecily! (ii) I am surprised at you. (iii) Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. (iv) Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. (v) You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.

8 Cecily (i) I wish (ii) Uncle Jack would allow (iii) that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. (iv) We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. (v) I am sure you certainly would. (vi) You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. [Cecily begins to write in her diary.]

9 Miss Prism [Shaking her head.] (i) I do not think (ii) that even I could produce any effect on a character (iii) that according to his own brother’s admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. (iv) Indeed I am not sure (v) that I would desire to reclaim him. (vi) I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment’s notice. (vii) As a man sows (viii) so let him reap. (ix) You must put away your diary, Cecily. (x) I really don’t see (xi) why you should keep a diary at all.
114

Cecily  (i) I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. (ii) If I didn’t write them down, (iii) I should probably forget all about them.

Miss Prism  (i) Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary (ii) that we all carry about with us.

Cecily  (i) Yes, (ii) but it usually chronicles the things (iii) that have never happened, (iv) and couldn’t possibly have happened. (v) I believe (vi) that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels (vii) that Mudie sends us.

Miss Prism  (i) Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. (ii) I wrote one myself in earlier days.

Cecily  (i) Did you really, Miss Prism? (ii) How wonderfully clever you are! (iii) I hope it did not end happily? (iv) I don’t like novels (v) that end happily. (vi) They depress me so much.

Miss Prism  (i) The good ended happily, (ii) and the bad unhappily. (iii) That is what Fiction means.

Cecily  (i) I suppose so. (ii) But it seems very unfair. (iii) And was your novel ever published?

Miss Prism  (i) Alas! (ii) No. (iii) The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. [Cecily starts.] (iv) I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. (v) To your work, child, (vi) these speculations are profitless.

Cecily  [Smiling.] (i) But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

Miss Prism.  [Rising and advancing.] (i) Dr. Chasuble! (ii) This is indeed a pleasure.

NV2  [Enter Canon Chasuble.]

Chasuble  (i) And how are we this morning? (ii) Miss Prism, you are, (iii) I trust, well?

Cecily  (i) Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. (ii) I think (iii) it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

Miss Prism  (i) Cecily, (ii) I have not mentioned anything about a headache.
23  Cecily  (i) No, dear Miss Prism, (ii) I know that, (iii) but I felt **instinctively** (iv) that you had a headache. (v) Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, (vi) when the Rector came in.

24  Chasuble  (i) I hope, Cecily, (ii) you are **not inattentive**.

25  Cecily  (i) Oh, I am **afraid** (ii) I am.

26  Chasuble  (i) That is **strange**. (ii) Were I fortunate **enough** to be Miss Prism’s pupil, (iii) I would hang upon her lips. [Miss Prism glares.] (iv) I spoke **metaphorically**. – (v) My metaphor was drawn from bees. (vi) Ahem! (vii) Mr. Worthing, (viii) I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

27  Miss Prism  (i) We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

28  Chasuble  (i) Ah yes, (ii) he usually **likes** to spend his Sunday in London. (iii) He is not one of those (iii) whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, (iv) that **unfortunate young** man his brother seems to be. (v) But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil **any** longer.

29  Miss Prism  (i) Egeria? (ii) My name is Laetitia, Doctor.

30  Chasuble  [Bowing.] (i) A **classical** allusion **merely**, drawn from the Pagan authors. (ii) I shall see you both **no doubt** at Evensong?

31  Miss Prism  (i) I think, dear Doctor, (ii) I will have a stroll with you. (iii) I find (iv) I have a headache after all, (v) and a walk might do it **good**.

32  Chasuble  (i) With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. (ii) We might go **as far as** the schools and back.

33  Miss Prism  (i) That would be **delightful**. (ii) Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. (iii) The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. (iv) It is somewhat **too sensational**. (v) Even these **metallic** problems have their **melodramatic** side.

NV3  [Goes down the garden with Dr. Chasuble.]

34  Cecily  [Picks up books and throws them back on table.] **Horrid** Political Economy! **Horrid** Geography! **Horrid, horrid** German!

NV4  [Enter Merriman with a card on a salver.]
35 Merriman  (i) Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. (ii) He has brought his luggage with him.

36 Cecily  [Takes the card and reads it.] (i) ‘Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W.’ Uncle Jack’s brother! (ii) Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

37 Merriman  (i) Yes, Miss. (ii) He seemed very much disappointed. (iii) I mentioned (iv) that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. (v) He said (vi) he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

38 Cecily  (i) Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. (ii) I suppose (iii) you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

39 Merriman  (i) Yes, Miss.

NV5  [Merriman goes off.]

40 Cecily  (i) I have never met any really wicked person before. (ii) I feel rather frightened. (iii) I am so afraid (iv) he will look just like every one else.

NV6  [Enter Algernon, very gay and debonair.] (i) He does!

41 Algernon  [Raising his hat.] (i) You are my little cousin Cecily. (ii) I’m sure.

42 Cecily  (i) You are under some strange mistake. (ii) I am not little. In fact, (iii) I believe (iv) I am more than usually tall for my age. [Algernon is rather taken aback.] (v) But I am your cousin Cecily. (vi) You, (vii) I see from your card, are Uncle Jack’s brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

43 Algernon  (i) Oh! (ii) I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. (iii) You mustn’t think (iv) that I am wicked.

44 Cecily  (i) If you are not, (ii) then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. (iii) I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. (iv) That would be hypocrisy.

45 Algernon  [Looks at her in amazement.] (i) Oh! (ii) Of course I have been rather reckless.

46 Cecily  (i) I am glad to hear it.
47 Algernon (i) In fact, now you mention the subject, (ii) I have been very bad in my own small way.

48 Cecily (i) I don’t think (ii) you should be so proud of that, (iii) though I am sure (iv) it must have been very pleasant.

49 Algernon (i) It is much pleasanter being here with you.

50 Cecily (i) I can’t understand (ii) how you are here at all. (iii) Uncle Jack won’t be back till Monday afternoon.

51 Algernon (i) That is a great disappointment. (ii) I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. (iii) I have a business appointment (iv) that I am anxious... to miss?

52 Cecily (i) Couldn’t you miss it anywhere but in London?

53 Algernon (i) No, (ii) the appointment is in London.

54 Cecily (i) Well, (ii) I know, of course, (iii) how important it is not to keep a business engagement, (iv) if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, (v) but still I think (vi) you had better wait (vii) till Uncle Jack arrives. (viii) I know (ix) he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

55 Algernon About my what?

56 Cecily (i) Your emigrating. (ii) He has gone up to buy your outfit.

57 Algernon (i) I certainly wouldn’t let (ii) Jack buy my outfit. (iii) He has no taste in neckties at all.

58 Cecily (i) I don’t think (ii) you will require neckties. (iii) Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

59 Algernon (i) Australia! (ii) I’d sooner die.

60 Cecily (i) Well, (ii) he said at dinner on Wednesday night, (iii) that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

61 Algernon (i) Oh, well! (ii) The accounts (iii) I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. (iv) This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

62 Cecily (i) Yes, (ii) but are you good enough for it?
Algernon: (i) I’m afraid (ii) I’m not that. (iii) That is why (iv) I want you to reform me. (v) You might make that your mission, (vi) if you don’t mind, cousin Cecily.

Cecily: (i) I’m afraid (ii) I’ve no time, this afternoon.

Algernon: (i) Well, (ii) would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

Cecily: (i) It is rather Quixotic of you. (ii) But I think (iii) you should try.

Algernon: (i) I will. (ii) I feel better already.

Cecily: (i) You are looking a little worse.

Algernon: (i) That is (ii) because I am hungry.

Cecily: (i) How thoughtless of me. (ii) I should have remembered (iii) that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, (iii) one requires regular and wholesome meals. (iv) Won’t you come in?

Algernon: (i) Thank you. (ii) Might I have a buttonhole first? (iii) I never have any appetite (iv) unless I have a buttonhole first.

Cecily: A Marechal Niel? [Picks up scissors.]

Algernon: (i) No, (ii) I’d sooner have a pink rose.

Cecily: Why? [Cuts a flower.]

Algernon: (i) Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

Cecily: (i) Miss Prism says (ii) that all good looks are a snare.

Algernon: (i) Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [Cecily puts the rose in his buttonhole.] (ii) You are the prettiest girl (iii) I ever saw.

Cecily: (i) Miss Prism says (ii) that all good looks are a snare.

Algernon: (i) They are a snare (ii) that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

Cecily: (i) Oh, (ii) I don’t think (iii) I would care to catch a sensible man. (iv) I shouldn’t know what to talk to him about.
[They pass into the house. Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble return.]

81 Miss Prism (i) You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. (ii) You should get married. (iii) A misanthrope I can understand - a womanthrope, never!

82 Chasuble [With a scholar’s shudder.] (i) Believe me, (ii) I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. (iii) The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

83 Miss Prism [Sententiously.] (i) That is obviously the reason (ii) why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. (iii) And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, (iv) that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. (v) Men should be more careful; (vi) this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

84 Chasuble (i) But is a man not equally attractive (iii) when married?

85 Miss Prism (i) No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

86 Chasuble (i) And often, I’ve been told, not even to her.

87 Miss Prism (i) That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. (ii) Maturity can always be depended on. (iii) Ripeness can be trusted. (iv) Young women are green. [Dr. Chasuble starts.] (v) I spoke horticulturally. (vi) My metaphor was drawn from fruits. (vii) But where is Cecily?

88 Chasuble (i) Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

NV8 [Enter Jack slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.]

89 Miss Prism Mr. Worthing!

90 Chasuble Mr. Worthing?

91 Miss Prism (i) This is indeed a surprise. (ii) We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

92 Jack [Shakes Miss Prism’s hand in a tragic manner.] (i) I have returned sooner (ii) than I expected. (iii) Dr. Chasuble, I hope (iv) you are well?
Chasuble  (i) **Dear** Mr. Worthing, (ii) I trust (ii) this garb of woe does not be token some **terrible** calamity?

Jack  My brother.

Miss Prism  (i) **More shameful** debts and extravagance?

Chasuble  (i) Still leading his life of pleasure?

Jack  [Shaking his head.] **Dead**!

Chasuble  (i) Your brother Ernest dead?

Jack  (i) **Quite** dead.

Miss Prism  (i) What a lesson for him! (ii) I trust (iii) he will profit by it.

Chasuble  (i) Mr. Worthing, (ii) I offer you my **sincere** condolence. (iii) You have at least the consolation of knowing (iv) that you were always the most **generous** and forgiving of brothers.

Jack  (i) **Poor** Ernest! (ii) He had many faults, (iii) but it is a sad, sad blow.

Chasuble  (i) **Very sad** indeed. (ii) Were you with him at the end?

Jack  (i) No. (ii) He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. (iii) I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

Chasuble  (i) Was the cause of death mentioned?

Jack  (i) A **severe** chill, (ii) it seems.

Miss Prism  (i) As a man sows, (ii) so shall he reap.

Chasuble  [Raising his hand.] (i) **Charity**, **dear** Miss Prism, **charity**! (ii) None of us are perfect. (iii) I myself am peculiarly **susceptible** to draughts. (iv) Will the interment take place here?

Jack  (i) No. (ii) He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

Chasuble  (i) In Paris! [Shakes his head.] (ii) I **fear** that hardly points to any very **serious** state of mind at the last. (iii) You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic **domestic** affliction next Sunday. [Jack presses his hand convulsively.] (iv) My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost **any** occasion,
joyful, or, as in the present case, **distressing.** [All sigh.] (v) I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. (vi) The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. (vii) The Bishop, (viii) who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies (ix) I drew.

111 Jack (i) Ah! (ii) that reminds me, (iii) you mentioned christenings (iv) I think, Dr. Chasuble? (v) I suppose (vi) you know how to christen all right? [Dr. Chasuble looks astounded.] (vii) I mean, of course, (viii) you are continually christening, aren’t you?

112 Miss Prism (i) It is, (ii) I regret to say, one of the Rector’s most constant duties in this parish. (iii) I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. (iv) But they don’t seem to know (v) what thrift is.

113 Chasuble (i) But is there any particular infant in (ii) whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? (iii) Your brother was, (iv) I believe, unmarried, (v) was he not?

114 Jack Oh yes.

115 Miss Prism [Bitterly.] (i) People (ii) who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

116 Jack (i) But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. (ii) I am very fond of children. (iii) No! (iv) the fact is, (v) I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, (vi) if you have nothing better to do.

117 Chasuble (i) But surely, Mr. Worthing, (ii) you have been christened already?

118 Jack (i) I don’t remember anything about it.

119 Chasuble (i) But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

120 Jack (i) I certainly intend to have. (ii) Of course I don’t know (iii) if the thing would bother you in any way, (iv) or if you think (v) I am a little too old now.

121 Chasuble (i) Not at all. (ii) The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

122 Jack Immersion!
Chasuble (i) You need have no apprehensions. (ii) Sprinkling is all (iii) that is necessary, (iv) or indeed I think advisable. (v) Our weather is so changeable. (vi) At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

Jack (i) Oh, (ii) I might trot round about five (iii) if that would suit you.

Chasuble (i) Perfectly, perfectly! (ii) In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. (iii) A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

Jack (i) Oh! (ii) I don’t see much fun in being christened along with other babies. (iii) It would be childish. (iv) Would half-past five do?

Chasuble (i) Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch.] (ii) And now, dear Mr. Worthing, (iii) I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. (iv) I would merely beg (v) you not to be too much bowed down by grief. (vi) What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

Miss Prism (i) This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

Cecily (i) Uncle Jack! (ii) Oh, I am pleased to see you back. (iii) But what horrid clothes you have got on! (iv) Do go and change them.

Miss Prism Cecily!

Chasuble (i) My child! my child! [Cecily goes towards Jack; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]

Cecily (i) What is the matter, Uncle Jack? (ii) Do look happy! (iii) You look as if you had toothache, (v) and I have got such a surprise for you. (vi) Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

Jack Who?

Cecily (i) Your brother Ernest. (ii) He arrived about half an hour ago.

Jack (i) What nonsense! (ii) I haven’t got a brother.
Cecily (i) Oh, don’t say that. (ii) However badly he may have behaved to you in the past (iii) he is still your brother. (iv) You couldn’t be so heartless as to disown him. (v) I’ll tell him to come out. (vi) And you will shake hands with him, (vii) won’t you, Uncle Jack? [Runs back into the house.]

Chasuble (i) These are very joyful tidings.

Miss Prism (i) After we had all been resigned to his loss, (ii) his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

Jack (i) My brother is in the dining-room? (ii) I don’t know (iii) what it all means. (iv) I think (v) it is perfectly absurd.

[Enter Algernon and Cecily hand in hand. They come slowly up to Jack.]

Jack Good heavens! [Motions Algernon away.]

Algernon (i) Brother John, (ii) I have come down from town to tell you (iii) that I am very sorry for all the trouble (iv) I have given you, (v) and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [Jack glares at him and does not take his hand.]

Cecily (i) Uncle Jack, (ii) you are not going to refuse your own brother’s hand?

Jack (i) Nothing will induce me to take his hand. (ii) I think his coming down here disgraceful. (iii) He knows perfectly well why.

Cecily (i) Uncle Jack, (ii) do be nice. (iii) There is some good in every one. (iv) Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury (v) whom he goes to visit so often. (vi) And surely there must be much good in one (vii) who is kind to an invalid, (viii) and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

Jack (i) Oh! (ii) he has been talking about Bunbury, (iii) has he?

Cecily (i) Yes, (ii) he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

Jack (i) Bunbury! (ii) Well, I won’t have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. (iii) It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

Algernon (i) Of course I admit (ii) that the faults were all on my side. (iii) But I must say (iv) that I think (v) that Brother John’s
coldness to me is peculiarly painful. (vi) I expected a more enthusiastic welcome. (vii) especially considering it is the first time (viii) I have come here.

149 Cecily (i) Uncle Jack, (ii) if you don’t shake hands with Ernest (iii) I will never forgive you.

150 Jack (i) Never forgive me?

151 Cecily Never, never, never!

152 Jack (i) Well, this is the last time (ii) I shall ever do it. [Shakes with Algernon and glares.]

153 Chasuble (i) It’s pleasant; (ii) is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? (iii) I think (iv) we might leave the two brothers together.

154 Miss Prism (i) Cecily, you will come with us.

155 Cecily (i) Certainly, Miss Prism. (ii) My little task of reconciliation is over.

156 Chasuble (i) You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

157 Miss Prism (i) We must not be premature in our judgments.

158 Cecily (i) I feel very happy. [They all go off except Jack and Algernon.]

159 Jack (i) You young scoundrel, Algy, (ii) you must get out of this place as soon as possible. (iii) I don’t allow any Bunburying here.

NV11 [Enter Merriman.]

160 Merriman (i) I have put Mr. Ernest’s things in the room next to yours, sir. (ii) I suppose that is all right?

161 Jack What?

162 Merriman (i) Mr. Ernest’s luggage, sir. (ii) I have unpacked it (iii) and put it in the room next to your own.

163 Jack (i) His luggage?

164 Merriman (i) Yes, sir. (ii) Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.
Algeron (i) I am afraid (ii) I can’t stay more than a week this time.

Jack (i) Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. (ii) Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

Merriman (i) Yes, sir. [Goes back into the house.]

Algeron (i) What a fearful liar you are, Jack. (ii) I have not been called back to town at all.

Jack (i) Yes, you have.

Algeron (i) I haven’t heard (ii) any one call me.

Jack (i) Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

Algeron (i) My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

Jack (i) I can quite understand that.

Algeron (i) Well, Cecily is a darling.

Jack (i) You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. (ii) I don’t like it.

Algeron (i) You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. (ii) You have got to leave... by the four-five train.

Algeron (i) Well, I don’t like your clothes. (ii) You look perfectly ridiculous in them. (iii) Why on earth don’t you go up and change? (iv) It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. (vi) I call it grotesque.

Jack (i) You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. (ii) You have got to leave... by the four-five train.

Algeron (i) I certainly won’t leave you so long (ii) as you are in mourning. (iii) It would be most unfriendly. (iv) If I were in mourning (v) you would stay with me, (vi) I suppose. (vii) I should think (viii) it very unkind (ix) if you didn’t.

Jack (i) Well, (ii) will you go (iii) if I change my clothes?

Algeron (i) Yes, (ii) if you are not too long. (iii) I never saw any body take so long to dress, and with such little result.

Jack (i) Well, at any rate, (ii) that is better than being always over-dressed (iii) as you are.
182 Algernon (i) If I am *occasionally* a **little** **over-dressed**, (ii) I make up for it by being always immensely **over-educated**.

183 Jack (i) Your vanity is ridiculous, (ii) your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden **utterly absurd**. (iii) However, you have got to catch the four-five, (iv) and I hope (v) you will have a **pleasant** journey back to town. (vi) *This Bunburying*, (vii) as you call it, has not been a **great** success for you.

NV12 [Goes into the house.]

184 Algernon (i) I think (ii) it has been a **great** success. (iii) I’m in **love** with Cecily, (iv) and that is everything.

NV13 [Enter Cecily at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.] But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

185 Cecily (i) Oh, (ii) I **merely** came back to water the roses. (iii) I thought (iv) you were with Uncle Jack.

186 Algernon (i) He’s gone to order the dog-cart for me.

187 Cecily (i) Oh, is he going to take you for a **nice** drive?

188 Algernon (i) He’s going to send me away.

189 Cecily (i) Then have we got to part?

190 Algernon (i) I am **afraid** so. (ii) It’s a **very** **painful** parting.

191 Cecily (i) It is always **painful** to part from **people** (ii) whom one has **known** for a **very** brief space of time. (iii) The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. (iv) But **even** a momentary separation (v) from anyone to whom one has **just** been introduced is almost **unbearable**.

192 Algernon Thank you.

*(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)*

3 Turn Speaker Text

NV1 [Gwendolen and Cecily are at the window, looking out into the garden.]
Gwendolen (i) The fact (ii) that they did not follow us at once into the house, (iii) as any one else would have done, seems to me to show (iv) that they have some sense of shame left.

Cecily (i) They have been eating muffins. (ii) That looks like repentance.

Gwendolen [After a pause.] (i) They don’t seem to notice us at all. (ii) Couldn’t you cough?

Cecily (i) But I haven’t got a cough.

Gwendolen (i) They’re looking at us. (ii) What effrontery!

Cecily (i) They’re approaching. (ii) That’s very forward of them.

Gwendolen (i) Let us preserve a dignified silence.

Cecily (i) Certainly. (ii) It’s the only thing to do now. [Enter Jack followed by Algernon. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.]

Gwendolen (i) This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

Cecily (i) A most distasteful one.

Gwendolen (i) But we will not be the first to speak.

Cecily (i) Certainly not.

Gwendolen (i) Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. (ii) Much depends on your reply.

Cecily (i) Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. (ii) Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. (iii) Why did you pretend to be my guardian’s brother?

Algernon (i) In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

Cecily [To Gwendolen.] (i) That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, (ii) does it not?

Gwendolen (i) Yes, (ii) dear, (iii) if you can believe him.

Cecily (i) I don’t. (ii) But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.
19 Gwendolen (i) True. (ii) In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. (iii) Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? (iv) Was it in order (v) that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

20 Jack (i) Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

21 Gwendolen (i) I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. (ii) But I intend to crush them. (iii) This is not the moment for German scepticism. [Moving to Cecily.] (iv) Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing’s. (v) That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

22 Cecily (i) I am more than content with (ii) what Mr. Moncrieff said. (iii) His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

23 Gwendolen (i) Then you think (ii) we should forgive them?

24 Cecily (i) Yes. (ii) I mean no.

25 Gwendolen (i) True! (ii) I had forgotten. (iii) There are principles at stake (iv) that one cannot surrender. (v) Which of us should tell them? (vi) The task is not a pleasant one.

26 Cecily (i) Could we not both speak at the same time?

27 Gwendolen (i) An excellent idea! (ii) I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. (iii) Will you take the time from me?

28 Cecily (i) Certainly. [Gwendolen beats time with uplifted finger.]

29 Gwendolen (i) Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. (ii) That and Cecily is all! [Speaking together.]

30 Jack and (i) Our Christian names! (ii) Is that all? (iii) But we are Algernon going to be christened this afternoon. [Speaking together.]

31 Gwendolen. [To Jack.] (i) For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

32 Jack (i) I am.

33 Cecily [To Algernon.] (i) To please me (ii) you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?
34  Algernon  (i) I am!

35  Gwendolen  (i) How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! (ii) Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, (iii) men are infinitely beyond us.

36  Jack  (i) We are. [Clasps hands with Algernon.]

37  Cecily  (i) They have moments of physical courage of which (ii) we women know absolutely nothing.

38  Gwendolen  [To Jack.] (i) Darling!

39  Algernon  [To Cecily.] (i) Darling! [They fall into each other’s arms.]

NV2  [Enter Merriman. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.]

40  Merriman  (i) Ahem! (ii) Ahem! (iii) Lady Bracknell!

41  Jack  (i) Good heavens!

NV3  [Enter Lady Bracknell. The couples separate in alarm. Exit Merriman.]

42  Lady B.  (i) Gwendolen! (ii) What does this mean?

43  Gwendolen  (i) Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

44  Lady B.  (i) Come here. (ii) Sit down, (iii) Sit down immediately. (iv) Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to Jack.] (v) Apprised, sir, of my daughter’s sudden flight by her trusty maid, (vi) whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, (vii) I followed her at once by a luggage train. (viii) Her unhappy father is, (ix) I am glad to say, under the impression (x) that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. (xi) I do not propose to undeceive him. (xii) Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. (xiii) I would consider it wrong. (xiv) But of course, you will clearly understand (xv) that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. (xvi) On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.
Jack (i) I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen Lady Bracknell!

Lady B. (i) You are nothing of the kind, sir. (ii) And now, as regards Algernon!... Algernon!

Algernon (i) Yes, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) May I ask (ii) if it is in this house (iii) that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

Algernon. [Stammering.] (i) Oh! No! (ii) Bunbury doesn’t live here. (iii) Bunbury is somewhere else at present. (iv) In fact, Bunbury is dead,

Lady B. (i) Dead! (ii) When did Mr. Bunbury die? (iii) His death must have been extremely sudden.

Algernon [Airily.] (i) Oh! (ii) I killed Bunbury this afternoon. (iii) I mean (iv) poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

Lady B. (i) What did he die of?

Algernon (i) Bunbury? (ii) Oh, he was quite exploded.

Lady B. (i) Exploded! (ii) Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? (iii) I was not aware (iv) that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. (v) If so, (vi) he is well punished for his morbidity.

Algernon (i) My dear Aunt Augusta, (ii) I mean (iii) he was found out! (iv) The doctors found out (v) that Bunbury could not live, (vi) that is (vii) what I mean – (viii) so Bunbury died.

Lady B. (i) He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. (ii) I am glad, (iii) however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, (iv) and acted under proper medical advice. (v) And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, (vi) may I ask, Mr. Worthing, (vii) who is that young person (viii) whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in (ix) what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

Jack (i) That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [Lady Bracknell bows coldly to Cecily.]

Algernon (i) I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) I beg your pardon?
60 Cecily (i) Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

61 Lady B. [With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.] (i) I do not know (ii) whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, (iii) but the number of engagements (iv) that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. (v) I think (vi) some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. (vii) Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? (viii) I merely desire information. (ix) Until yesterday I had no idea (x) that there were any families or persons (xi) whose origin was a Terminus. [Jack looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.]

62 Jack [In a clear, cold voice.] (i) Miss Cardew is the granddaughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

63 Lady B. (i) That sounds not unsatisfactory. (ii) Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. (iii) But what proof have I of their authenticity?

64 Jack (i) I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. (ii) They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

65 Lady B. [Grimly.] (i) I have known strange errors in that publication.

66 Jack (i) Miss Cardew’s family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

67 Lady B. (i) Markby, Markby, and Markby? (ii) A firm of the very highest position in their profession. (iii) Indeed I am told (iv) that one of the Mr. Markby’s is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. (v) So far I am satisfied.

68 Jack [Very irritably.] (i) How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! (ii) I have also in my possession, (iii) you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew’s birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.
Lady B.  (i) Ah! (ii) A life crowded with incident, (iii) I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. (iv) I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [Rises, looks at her watch.] (v) Gwendolen! (vi) the time approaches for our departure. (vii) We have not a moment to lose. (viii) As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you (ix) if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

Jack  (i) Oh! (ii) about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. (iii) That is all. (iv) Goodbye, Lady Bracknell. (v) So pleased to have seen you.

Lady B.  [Sitting down again.] (i) A moment, Mr. Worthing. (ii) A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! (iii) And in the Funds! (iv) Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, (v) now that I look at her. (vi) Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, (vii) any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. (viii) We live, (ix) I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To Cecily.] (xi) Come over here, dear. [Cecily goes across.] (xii) Pretty child! (xiii) your dress is sadly simple, (xiv) and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. (xv) But we can soon alter all that. (xvi) A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. (xvii) I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, (xviii) and after three months her own husband did not know her.

Jack  (i) And after six months nobody knew her.

Lady B.  [Glares at Jack for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to Cecily.] (i) Kindly turn round, sweet child. [Cecily turns completely round.] (ii) No, (iii) the side view is (iv) what I want. [Cecily presents her profile.] (v) Yes, quite as I expected. (vi) There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. (vii) The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. (viii) The chin a little higher, dear. (ix) Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. (x) They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

Algernon  (i) Yes, Aunt Augusta!

Lady B  (i) There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew’s profile.

Algernon  (i) Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. (ii) And I don’t care two pence about social possibilities.
Lady B. (i) Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. (ii) Only people (iii) who can’t get into it do that. [To Cecily.] (iv) Dear child, of course you know (v) that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. (vi) But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. (vii) When I married Lord Bracknell (viii) I had no fortune of any kind. (ix) But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. (x) Well, I suppose (xi) I must give my consent.

Algernon (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) Cecily, (ii) you may kiss me!

Cecily [Kisses her.] (i) Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady B. (i) You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

Cecily (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) The marriage, I think, (ii) had better take place quite soon.

Algernon (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Cecily (i) Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady B. (i) To speak frankly, (ii) I am not in favour of long engagements. (iii) They give people the opportunity of finding out each other’s character before marriage, (iv) which I think (v) is never advisable.

Jack (i) I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, (ii) but this engagement is quite out of the question. (iii) I am Miss Cardew’s guardian, (iv) and she cannot marry without my consent (v) until she comes of age. (vi) That consent I absolutely decline to give.

Lady B. (i) Upon what grounds may I ask? (ii) Algernon is an extremely, (iii) I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. (iv) He has nothing, (v) but he looks everything. (vi) What more can one desire?

Jack (i) It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, (ii) but the fact is (iii) that I do not approve at all of his moral character. (iv) I suspect him of being untruthful. [Algernon and Cecily look at him in indignant amazement.]
90 Lady B.  
(i) Untruthful! (ii) My nephew Algernon? (iii) Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

91 Jack  
(i) I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. (ii) This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, (iii) he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. (iv) Under an assumed name he drank, (v) I’ve just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, ‘89; (vi) wine I was specially reserving for myself. (vii) Continuing his disgraceful deception, (viii) he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. (ix) He subsequently stayed to tea, (x) and devoured every single muffin. (xi) And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, (xii) that he was perfectly well aware from the first (xiii) that I have no brother, (xiv) that I never had a brother, (xv) and that I don’t intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. (xvi) I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

92 Lady B.  
(i) Ahem! (ii) Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew’s conduct to you.

93 Jack  
(i) That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. (ii) My own decision, however, is unalterable. (iii) I decline to give my consent.

94 Lady B.  
[To Cecily.] (i) Come here, sweet child. [Cecily goes over.] (ii) How old are you, dear?

95 Cecily  
(i) Well, (ii) I am really only eighteen, (iii) but I always admit to twenty (iv) when I go to evening parties.

96 Lady B  
(i) You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. (ii) Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. (iii) It looks so calculating... [In a meditative manner.] Eighteen, (iv) but admitting to twenty at evening parties. (v) Well, (vi) it will not be very long (vii) before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. (viii) So I don’t think (ix) your guardian’s consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

97 Jack  
(i) Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, (ii) but it is only fair to tell you (iii) that according to the terms of her grandfather’s will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age (iv) till she is thirty-five.
Lady B  (i) That does not seem to me to be a **grave** objection.  (ii) Thirty-five is a **very attractive** age. (iii) London society is **full** of women of the **very highest** birth (iv) who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. (v) Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. (vi) To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five **ever** (vii) since she arrived at the age of forty, (viii) which was many years ago now. (ix) I see **no** reason (x) why our dear Cecily should not be **even still more attractive** (xi) at the age you mention (xii) than she is at present. (xiii) There will be a **large accumulation** of property.

Cecily  (i) Algy, could you wait for me (ii) till I was thirty-five?

Algernon (i) Of course I could, Cecily. (ii) **You know** (iii) I could.

Cecily  (i) Yes, (ii) I felt it **instinctively** (iii) but I couldn’t wait all that time. (iv) I **hate** waiting **even** five minutes for anybody. (v) It **always** makes me **rather cross**. (vi) I am **not** punctual myself, (vii) **I know**, (viii) but I do like punctuality in others, (ix) and waiting, **even** to be married, is **quite** out of the question.

Algernon (i) Then what is to be done, Cecily?

Lady B  (i) My dear Mr. Worthing, (ii) as Miss Cardew states **positively** (iii) that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five - a remark (iv) which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature – (v) I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

Jack (i) But my **dear** Lady Bracknell, (ii) the matter is **entirely** in your own hands. (iii) The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, (iv) I will **most gladly** allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady B  [Rising and drawing herself up.] (i) You **must** be quite aware (ii) that what you propose is out of the question.

Jack  (i) Then a **passionate celibacy** is all (ii) that any of us can look forward to.

Lady B  (i) That is not the destiny (ii) I propose for Gwendolen. (iii) Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [Pulls out her watch.] (iv) Come, **dear**, [Gwendolen rises] (v) we have **already** missed five, (vi) if not six, trains. (vii) To
miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

NV4  [Enter DR. Chasuble.]

109  Chasuble  (i) Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

110  Lady B  (i) The christenings, sir!  (ii) Is not that somewhat premature?

111  Chasuble  [Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to Jack and Algernon.]  (i) Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

112  Lady B  (i) At their age?  (ii) The idea is grotesque and irreligious! (iii) Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized.  (iv) I will not hear of such excesses.  (v) Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased (vi) if he learned (vii) that was the way (viii) in which you wasted your time and money.

113  Chasuble  (i) Am I to understand (ii) then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

114  Jack  (i) I don’t think that, (ii) as things are now,  (iii) it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

115  Chasuble  (i) I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing.  (ii) They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views (iii) that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons.  (iv) However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, (v) I will return to the church at once.  (vi) Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener (vii) that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

116  Lady B  [Starting.]  (i) Miss Prism!  (ii) Did I bear you mention a Miss Prism?

117  Chasuble  (i) Yes, Lady Bracknell.  (ii) I am on my way to join her.

118  Lady B  (i) Pray allow me to detain you for a moment.  (ii) This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself.  (iii) Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

119  Chasuble  [Somewhat indignantly.]  (i) She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.
Lady B  
(i) It is obviously the same person. (ii) May I ask (iii) what position she holds in your household?

Chasuble  
[Severely.] (i) I am a celibate, madam.

Jack  
[Interposing.] (i) Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew’s esteemed governess and valued companion.

Lady B  
(i) In spite of what I hear of her, (ii) I must see her at once. (iii) Let her be sent for.

Chasuble  
[Looking off.] (i) She approaches; (ii) she is nigh.

NV5  
[Enter Miss Prism hurriedly.]

Miss Prism  
(i) I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. (ii) I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [Catches sight of Lady Bracknell, who has fixed her with a stony glare. Miss Prism grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.]

Lady B  
[In a severe, judicial voice.] (i) Prism! [Miss Prism bows her head in shame.] (ii) Come here, Prism! [Miss Prism approaches in a humble manner.] (iii) Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. Algernon and Jack pretend to be anxious to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] (iv) Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell’s house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator (v) that contained a baby of the male sex. (vi) You never returned. (vii) A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, (viii) standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. (ix) It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [Miss Prism starts in involuntary indignation.] (x) But the baby was not there! [Every one looks at Miss Prism.] (xi) Prism! (xii) Where is that baby? [A pause.]

Miss Prism  
(i) Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame (ii) that I do not know. (iii) I only wish (iv) I did. (v) The plain facts of the case are these. (vi) On the morning of the day you mention, (vii) a day that is for ever branded on my memory, (viii) I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. (ix) I had also with me a somewhat old, (x) but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to
place the manuscript of a work of fiction (xi) that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. (xii) In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, (xiii) I deposited the manuscript in the basinette, (xiv) and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

128 Jack [Who has been listening attentively.] (i) But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

129 Miss Prism (i) Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

130 Jack (i) Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. (ii) I insist on knowing (iii) where you deposited the hand-bag (iv) that contained that infant.

131 Miss Prism (i) I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

132 Jack (i) What railway station?

133 Miss Prism [Quite crushed.] (i) Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair.]

134 Jack (i) I must retire to my room for a moment. (ii) Gwendolen, wait here for me.

135 Gwendolen (i) If you are not too long, (ii) I will wait here for you all my life. [Exit Jack in great excitement.]

136 Chasuble (i) What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

137 Lady B (i) I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. (ii) I need hardly tell you (iii) that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. (iv) They are hardly considered the thing.

NV8 [Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Every one looks up.]

138 Cecily (i) Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

139 Chasuble (i) Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

140 Lady B (i) This noise is extremely unpleasant. (ii) It sounds (iii) as if he was having an argument. (iv) I dislike arguments of any kind. (v) They are always vulgar, and often convincing.
134 Chasuble  [Looking up.] (i) It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled.]

135 Lady B  (i) I wish (ii) he would arrive at some conclusion.

136 Gwendolen (i) This suspense is terrible. (ii) I hope (iii) it will last. [Enter Jack with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand.]

137 Jack  [Rushing over to Miss Prism.] (i) Is this the handbag, Miss Prism? (ii) Examine it carefully (iii) before you speak. (iv) The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

138 Miss Prism  [Calmly.] (i) It seems to be mine. (ii) Yes, (iii) here is the injury (iv) it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. (v) Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, (vi) an incident that occurred at Leamington. (vii) And here, on the lock, are my initials. (viii) I had forgotten (ix) that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. (x) The bag is undoubtedly mine. (xi) I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. (xii) It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

139 Jack  [In a pathetic voice.] (i) Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. (ii) I was the baby (iii) you placed in it.

140 Miss Prism  [Amazed.] (i) You?

141 Jack   [Embracing her.] (i) Yes... mother!

142 Miss Prism  [Recoiling in indignant astonishment.] (i) Mr. Worthing! (ii) I am unmarried.

143 Jack  (i) Unmarried! (ii) I do not deny that is a serious blow. (iii) But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one (iv) who has suffered? (v) Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? (vi) Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? (vii) Mother, I forgive you. [Tries to embrace her again.]

144 Miss Prism  [Still more indignant.] (i) Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [Pointing to Lady Bracknell.] (ii) There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.
Jack

[After a pause.] (i) Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, (ii) but would you kindly inform me who I am?

Lady B

(i) I am afraid (ii) that the news I have to give you (iii) will not altogether please you. (iv) You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon’s elder brother.

Jack

(i) Algy’s elder brother! (ii) Then I have a brother after all. (iii) I knew (iv) I had a brother! (v) I always said (vi) I had a brother! (vii) Cecily, - how could you have ever doubted (viii) that I had a brother? [Seizes hold of Algernon.] (ix) Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. (x) Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. (xi) Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. (xii) Algyn, you young scoundrel, (xiii) you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. (xiv) You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

Algernon

(i) Well, not till to-day, old boy, (ii) I admit. (iii) I did my best, (iv) however, though I was out of practice.

Gwendolen

[To Jack.] (i) My own! (ii) But what own are you? (iii) What is your Christian name, (iv) now that you have become some one else?

Jack

(i) Good heavens!... (ii) I had quite forgotten that point. (iii) Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, (iv) I suppose?

Gwendolen

(i) I never change, except in my affections.

Cecily

(i) What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

Jack

(i) Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. (ii) At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, (iii) had I been christened already?

Lady B

(i) Every luxury (ii) that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

Jack

(i) Then I was christened! (ii) That is settled. (iii) Now, what name was I given? (iv) Let me know the worst.
Lady B (i) Being the eldest son (ii) you were naturally christened after your father.

Jack [Irritably.] (i) Yes, but what was my father’s Christian name?

Lady B [Meditatively.] (i) I cannot at the present moment recall (ii) what the General’s Christian name was. (iii) But I have no doubt (iv) he had one. (v) He was eccentric, (vi) I admit. (vii) But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

Jack (i) Algy! (ii) Can’t you recollect what our father’s Christian name was?

Algernon (i) My dear boy, (ii) we were never even on speaking terms. (iii) He died (iv) before I was a year old.

Lady B (i) The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. (ii) But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Jack (i) The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. (ii) These delightful records should have been my constant study. [Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.] (iii) M. Generals... Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have - Markby, Migby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.] (iv) I always told you, Gwendolen, (v) my name was Ernest, (vi) didn’t I? (vii) Well, it is Ernest after all. (viii)I mean (ix) it naturally is Ernest.

Lady B (i) Yes, I remember now (ii) that the General was called Ernest, (iii) I knew (iv) I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen (i) Ernest! (ii) My own Ernest! (iii) I felt from the first (iv) that you could have no other name!

Jack (i) Gwendolen, (ii) it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly (iii) that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. (iv) Can you forgive me?
174 Gwendolen (i) I can. (ii) For I feel (iii) that you are sure to change.

175 Jack (i) My own one!

176 Chasuble [To Miss Prism.] (i) Laetitia! [Embraces her]

177 Miss Prism [Enthusiastically.] (i) Frederick! At last!

178 Algernon (i) Cecily! [Embraces her.] At last!

179 Jack (i) Gwendolen! [Embraces her.] At last!

180 Lady B (i) My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

181 Jack (i) On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, (ii) I’ve now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.

(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)
Classification of the Data per Appraisal Device

A. AFFECTION

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

1 Lane (i) I didn’t think (ii) it polite to listen, sir.

3 Algernon (i) I’m sorry for that, for your sake.

13 Algernon (ii) I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

24 Jack (iv) It is excessively boring.

32 Jack (i) How perfectly delightful!

33 Algernon (i) Yes, (ii) that is all very well; (iii) but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won’t quite approve of your being here.

36 Jack (i) I am in love with Gwendolen.

40 Jack (i) I have no doubt about that, dear Algy.

61 Jack (iv) one should talk of in private.

93 Jack (vi) Cecily is a little too much interested in him.

99 Jack (i) For heaven’s sake, don’t try to be cynical. (ii) It’s perfectly easy to be cynical.

103 Algernon (iii) I hate people

121 Algernon (i) I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta,

124 Lady B (viii) It’s delightful to watch them.

125 Algernon (i) I am afraid, Aunt Augusta,

132 Lady B (iii) I’m sure

(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

2 Cecily (i) But I don’t like German.

6 Cecily (iii) he often looks a little bored
Miss Prism (ii) I am surprised at you.

Cecily (v) I am sure you certainly would.

Miss Prism (iv) Indeed I am not sure (v) that I would desire to reclaim him. (vi) I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment’s notice.

Cecily (iv) I don’t like novels (v) that end happily.

Miss Prism (i) The good ended happily, (ii) and the bad unhappily.

Cecily (iii) but I felt instinctively

Cecily (i) Oh, I am afraid (ii) I am.

Chasuble (ii) he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London.

Merriman (ii) He seemed very much disappointed.

Cecily (i) I feel rather frightened. (ii) I am so afraid (iv) he will look just like every one else.

Algernon (ii) I’m sure.

Cecily (i) I am glad to hear it.

Cecily (ii) you should be so proud of that, (iii) though I am sure

Algernon (i) I’m afraid (ii) I’m not that

Cecily (i) I’m afraid (ii) I’ve no time, this afternoon.

Algernon (i) I will. (ii) I feel better already.

Chasuble (ii) I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. (iii) You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. (iv) My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing.

Chasuble (i) But is there any particular infant in (ii) whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? (iii) Your brother was, (iv) I believe, unmarried, (v) was he not?

Chasuble (vi) What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.
129 Cecily (ii) Oh, I am **pleased** to see you back.
132 Cecily (ii) Do look **happy**!
136 Cecily (iv) You couldn’t be so **heartless** as to **disown** him.
138 Miss Prism (ii) his sudden return seems to me peculiarly **distressing**.
141 Algernon (iii) that I am very **sorry** for all the trouble
148 Algernon (v) that Brother John’s coldness to me is peculiarly **painful**. (vi) I expected a more **enthusiastic** welcome, (vii) especially considering it is the first time (viii) I have come here.
153 Chasuble (i) It’s **pleasant**.
160 Merriman (ii) I suppose that is **all right**?
165 Algernon (i) I am **afraid** (ii) I can’t stay more than a week this time.
175 Jack (ii) I **don’t like** it.
176 Algernon (i) Well, I **don’t like** your clothes.
184 Algernon (iii) I’m in **love** with Cecily, (iv) and that is everything.
190 Algernon (i) I am **afraid** so. (ii) It’s a very **painful** parting.
191 Cecily (i) It is always **painful** to part from people

*(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)*

1 Gwendolen (iv) that they have some sense of **shame** left.
21 Gwendolen (i) I have the gravest **doubts** upon the subject.
44 Lady B. (vii) I followed her at once by a luggage train. (viii) Her unhappy father is, (ix) I am **glad** to say, under the impression

54 Lady B. (iii) I was **not aware** (iv) that Mr. Bunbury was **interested in** social legislation.
56 Lady B. (ii) I am **glad**
61 Lady B. (ii) whether there is anything peculiarly **exciting** in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire,
Lady B. (v) So far I am satisfied.

Lady B. (iii) I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. (iv) I am not myself in favour of premature experiences.

Jack (v) So pleased to have seen you.

Algernon (ii) And I don’t care two pence about social possibilities.

Lady B. (ii) I am not in favour of long engagements. (iv) which I think is never advisable.

Jack (i) I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter.

Cecily (iv) I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. (v) It always makes me rather cross. (viii) but I do like punctuality in others,

Jack (iv) I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady B (v) Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased.

Lady B (iv) I dislike arguments of any kind.

Miss Prism (x) The bag is undoubtedly mine. (xi) I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me.

Jack (i) Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive,

Lady B (i) I am afraid.

Jack (vii) Cecily, how could you have ever doubted

Lady B (iii) But I have no doubt.

Lady B (ii) But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Lady B (iv) I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen (iii) that you are sure to change.
B. JUDGMENT

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

3 Algernon (vi) sentiment is my forte.

12 Lane (v) That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

27 Algernon (i) Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

30 Jack Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? (i) Who is coming to tea?

51 Algernon (i) My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin.

65 Jack (i) Yes. (ii) Charming old lady she is, too.

66 Algernon (i) But why does she call herself little Cecily (ii) if she is your aunt (iii) and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] ‘From little Cecily with her fondest love.’

67 Jack (i) My dear fellow, (ii) what on earth is there in that? (iii) Some aunts are tall, (iv) some aunts are not tall.

68 Algernon (ii) But why does your aunt call you her uncle? ‘From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.’ (iv) I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt,

70 Algernon (vii) You are the most earnest-looking person (viii) I ever saw in my life.

72 Algernon (iii) that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. (iv) Come, old boy, (v) you had much better have the thing out at once.

74 Algernon (vi) that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist;

76 Algernon (ii) as soon as you are kind enough to inform me

79 Jack (i) My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. (viii) lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

81 Jack (i) That is nothing to you, dear boy.

82 Algernon (i) I suspected that, my dear fellow!
83 Jack (iii) You are hardly **serious** enough.

86 Algernon (vii) I was quite **right** in saying (ix) You are one of the most **advanced** Bunburyists

88 Algernon (vii) Bunbury is perfectly **invaluable**. (viii) If it wasn’t for Bunbury’s extraordinary **bad** health,

90 Algernon (ii) You are absurdly **careless** about sending out invitations. (iii) It is very **foolish** of you.

92 Algernon (xviii) who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly **scandalous**. (xxi) Besides, now that I know you to be a **confirmed** Bunburyist

93 Jack (ix) And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr... with your **invalid** friend

95 Jack (ii) If I marry a **charming** girl like Gwendolen,

97 Jack (i) That, my **dear young** friend, is the theory

100 Algernon (i) My **dear** fellow, it isn’t easy to be anything nowadays.

103 Algernon (ii) but you must be **serious** about it. (iv) who are **not serious** about meals. (v) It is so **shallow** of them.

104 Lady B. (iii) you are behaving very **well**.

107 Algernon (ii) you are **smart**!

108 Gwendolen (i) I am always **smart**!

109 Jack (i) You’re quite **perfect**, Miss Fairfax.

111 Lady B (iii) but I was obliged to call on **dear** Lady Harbury. (iv) I hadn’t been there (v) since her **poor** husband’s death. (vi) I never saw a woman so **altered**; (vii) she looks quite twenty years **younger**.

114 Gwendolen (ii) I’m quite **comfortable**

124 Lady B (vi) She is such a **nice** woman, (vii) and so **attentive** to her husband.

127 Algernon (iv) that my **poor** friend Bunbury is very **ill** again.

129 Algernon (xii) I am always telling that to your **poor** uncle, (xiii) but he never seems to take much notice... (xiv) as far as any
improvement in his ailment goes. (xv) I should be much **obliged** (xvi) if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be **kind** enough not to have a relapse on Saturday,

131 Algernon (ii) if he is still **conscious**, (v) he’ll be **all right** by Saturday.

132 Lady B (vii) that they are **improper**, (viii) and either look **shocked**, *(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)*

2 Cecily (iv) that I look quite **plain** after my German lesson.

3 Miss Prism (i) Child, you know how **anxious** your guardian is

4 Cecily (i) **Dear** Uncle Jack is so very **serious**! (ii) Sometimes he is so **serious** (iii) that I think he cannot be quite **well**.

5 Miss Prism (ii) and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively **young**

7 Miss Prism (iv) **Idle** merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation, (v) You must remember his constant anxiety about that **unfortunate young** man his brother.

8 Cecily (iii) that **unfortunate young** man, his brother, to come down here sometimes.

9 Miss Prism (iii) that according to his own brother’s admission is irretrievably **weak** and **vacillating**. (vi) I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning **bad** people into **good** people at a moment’s notice.

11 Miss Prism (i) Memory, my **dear** Cecily, is the diary

18 Cecily (i) But I see **dear** Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

23 Cecily (i) No, **dear** Miss Prism,

24 Chasuble (ii) you are **not inattentive**.

28 Chasuble (iv) that **unfortunate young** man his brother seems to be.

31 Miss Prism (i) I think, **dear** Doctor

37 Merriman (vi) he was **anxious** to speak to you privately for a moment.
Cecily (i) I have never met any really **wicked** person before.

Algernon (i) You are my **little** cousin Cecily,

Cecily (ii) I am **not** little. (iv) I am more than usually **tall** for my age. (vii) I see from your card, are Uncle Jack’s brother, my cousin Ernest, my **wicked** cousin Ernest.

Algernon (ii) I am not really **wicked** at all, cousin Cecily. (iv) that I am **wicked**.

Cecily (iii) I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be **wicked** and being really **good** all the time.

Algernon (ii) Of course I have been rather **reckless**.

Algernon (ii) I have been very **bad** in my own small way.

Algernon (iv) that I am **anxious**... to miss?

Cecily (i) It is rather **Quixotic** of you.

Cecily (i) You are looking **a little worse**.

Algernon (ii) because I am **hungry**.

Cecily (i) How **thoughtless** of me.

Algernon (i) Because you are **like** a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

Algernon (i) Then Miss Prism is a **short-sighted old** lady. (ii) You are the **prettiest** girl (iii) I ever saw.

Algernon. (ii) that every **sensible** man would like to be caught in.

Cecily (iii) I would care to catch a **sensible** man.

Miss Prism (i) You are too much **alone**, dear Dr. Chasuble.

Miss Prism (iii) And you do not seem to realise, **dear** Doctor, (v) Men should be more **careful**;

Chasuble (i) But is a man not equally **attractive**

Miss Prism (iv) **Young** women are **green**.

Jack (iv) you are **well**?
101 Chasuble  (iv) that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

102 Jack      (i) Poor Ernest!

108 Chasuble  (i) Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! (iii) I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts.

116 Jack      (i) But it is not for any child, dear Doctor.

120 Jack      (v) I am a little too old now.

121 Chasuble  (ii) The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

125 Chasuble  (iii) A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

126 Jack      ( (iii) It would be childish.

127 Chasuble  (ii) And now, dear Mr. Worthing.

144 Cecily    (iv) Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury

146 Cecily    (i) Yes, (ii) he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

147 Jack      (iii) It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

156 Chasuble  (i) You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

157 Miss Prism (i) We must not be premature in our judgments.

159 Jack      (i) You young scoundrel, Algy,

168 Algernon  (i) What a fearful liar you are, Jack.

176 Algernon  (ii) You look perfectly ridiculous in them. (iv) It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man

181 Jack      (ii) that is better than being always over-dressed

182 Algernon  (i) If I am occasionally a little over-dressed

191 Cecily    (v) from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.
(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

6 Cecily (ii) That’s very **forward** of them.

33 Cecily (ii) you are **ready** to face this fearful ordeal?

44 Lady B. (iv) Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the **young**, of physical weakness in the **old**. (viii) Her **unhappy** father is, (ix) I am glad to say, under the impression

51 Algernon (iv) **poor** Bunbury died this afternoon.

54 Lady B. (vi) he is **well punished** for his morbidity.

55 Algernon (i) My **dear** Aunt Augusta,

56 Lady B. (vii) who is that **young** person

66 Jack (i) Miss Cardew’s family solicitors are **Messrs**.

68 Jack (i) How extremely **kind** of you, Lady Bracknell! (iii) you will be **pleased** to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew’s birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

71 Lady B. (iv) Miss Cardew seems to me a most **attractive young** lady, (xi) Come over here, **dear**. [Cecily goes across.] (xi) **Pretty** child!

73 Lady B. (i) Kindly turn round, **sweet** child. (viii) The chin a little higher, **dear**.

77 Lady B. (iv) Dear child, of course you know

88 Lady B. (ii) Algernon is an **extremely**; (iii) I may almost say an ostentatiously, **eligible young** man.

89 Jack (iv) I suspect him of being **untruthful**.

90 Lady B. (iii) Impossible! He is an **Oxonian**.

91 Jack (xii) that he was perfectly **well aware** from the first

93 Jack (i) That is very **generous** of you, Lady Bracknell.
Lady B. (i) Come here, sweet child. [Cecily goes over.] (ii) How old are you, dear?

Lady B (i) You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration.

Lady B (x) why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive

Cecily (vi) I am not punctual myself,

Jack (i) But my dear Lady Bracknell,

Lady B (iv) Come, dear

Chasuble (i) I am a celibate, madam.

Miss Prism (i) I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon.

Lady B (iii) Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. Algernon and Jack pretend to be anxious to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.]

Jack (i) Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive,

Lady B (iv) You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon’s elder brother.

Jack (ix) Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. (x) Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. (xi) Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. (xii) Algy, you young scoundrel,

Algernon (iii) I did my best

Lady B (v) He was eccentric,

Algernon (i) My dear boy
C. APPRECIATION

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

3 Algernon (iv) but I play with wonderful expression.

10 Lane (i) I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. (iii) that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

11 Algernon (i) Good heavens! (ii) Is marriage so demoralising as that?

12 Lane (ii) it is a very pleasant state, sir. (iii) I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present.

14 Lane (ii) it is not a very interesting subject.

15 Algernon (i) Very natural.

17 Algernon (ii) Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example,

21 Algernon (ii) it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o’clock.

30 Jack Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young?

35 Algernon (ii) the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. (iii) It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

39 Algernon (i) I really don’t see anything romantic in proposing. (ii) It is very romantic to be in love. (iii) But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal.

40 Jack (iii) people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

43 Algernon (i) That is quite a different matter.

44 Jack (i) And very good bread and butter it is too.

47 Algernon (ii) Girls don’t think it right.

48 Jack (i) Oh, that is nonsense!

49 Algernon (ii) It is a great truth. (iii) It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors
155

55 Jack (iii) I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. (iv) I was very nearly offering a large reward.

57 Jack (i) There is no good offering a large reward now

59 Jack (v) It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

60 Algernon (ii) it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule (iii) about what one should read and what one shouldn’t. (iv) More than half of modern culture depends on

61 Jack (ii) and I don’t propose to discuss modern culture.

67 Jack (ix) That is absurd!

70 Algernon (ix) It is perfectly absurd your saying

73 Jack (iv) It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist (v) when one isn’t a dentist.

76 Algernon (i) I’ll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression

78 Algernon (iii) and pray make it improbable

79 Jack (i) My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. (ii) In fact it’s perfectly ordinary.

83 Jack (ii) I don’t know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. (v) one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects (xi) and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. (xii) That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

84 Algernon (i) The truth is rarely pure and never simple. (ii) Modern life would be very tedious (iii) if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

85 Jack (i) That wouldn’t be at all a bad thing.

86 Algernon (v) They do it so well in the daily papers.

88 Algernon (i) You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, (iv) I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury,
92 Algernon (ix) I know perfectly well (xiii) That is not very pleasant. (xv) and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. (xx) It is simply washing one’s clean linen in public.

93 Jack (vi) Cecily is a little too much interested in him. (vii) It is rather a bore. (ix) And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr... with your invalid friend (x) who has the absurd name.

94 Algernon (iii) which seems to me extremely problematic (vi) has a very tedious time of it.

95 Jack (i) That is nonsense.

97 Jack (ii) that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

98 Algernon (ii) and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

99 Jack (ii) It’s perfectly easy to be cynical.

100 Algernon (i) My dear fellow, it isn’t easy to be anything nowadays. (ii) There’s such a lot of beastly competition about.

106 Lady B (i) That’s not quite the same thing.

115 Algernon (iii) I ordered them specially.

118 Lane (ii) Not even for ready money.

121 Algernon (ii) about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

122 Lady B (iii) who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

127 Algernon (ii) and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me,

128 Lady B (i) It is very strange. (ii) This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

129 Algernon (ii) poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

130 Lady B (iv) it is high time (vii) This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. (viii) Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. (xi) Health is the primary duty of life. (xiv) as far as any improvement in his ailment goes.
(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

1 Miss Prism  (ii) Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton’s duty than yours? (iii) Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. (iv) Your German grammar is on the table.

2 Cecily  (ii) It isn’t at all a becoming language. (iii) I know perfectly well

3 Miss Prism  (iii) He laid particular stress on your German

6 Cecily  (iii) he often looks a little bored

7 Miss Prism  (v) You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.

8 Cecily  (iv) We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism.

9 Miss Prism  (vi) I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment’s notice.

10 Cecily  (i) I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life.

12 Cecily  (vi) that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels

13 Miss Prism  (i) Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily

14 Cecily  (iii) I hope it did not end happily?

16 Cecily  (ii) But it seems very unfair.

17 Miss Prism  (vi) these speculations are profitless.
Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. It would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism’s pupil, whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors.

And a walk might do it good.

We might go as far as the schools and back.

That would be delightful. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

You are under some strange mistake.

then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. That would be hypocrisy.

I have been very bad in my own small way.

it must have been very pleasant.

It is much pleasanter being here with you.

how important it is not to keep a business engagement.

I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Yes, but are you good enough for it?

You are looking a little worse.

that when one is going to lead an entirely new life,

Might I have a buttonhole first? unless I have a buttonhole first.
No, (ii) I’d sooner have a pink rose.

(i) Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

(ii) it can be right for you to talk to me like that.

(ii) that all good looks are a snare.

(i) They are a snare

(iii) A misanthrope I can understand - a womanthrope, never!

(ii) I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. (iii) The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

(ii) why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. (iv) that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation.

(i) No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

(i) That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. (v) I spoke horticulturally.

(ii) this garb of woe does not be token some terrible calamity?

(i) More shameful debts and extravagance?

(ii) I offer you my sincere condolence.

(iii) but it is a sad, sad blow.

(i) Very sad indeed.

(i) A severe chill

(i) Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity!

(ii) I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. (iii) You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [Jack presses his hand convulsively.] (iv) My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing.
112 Miss Prism (ii) I regret to say, one of the Rector’s most constant duties in this parish.

113 Chasuble (i) But is there any particular infant in

123 Chasuble (iii) that is necessary, (iv) or indeed I think advisable. (v) Our weather is so changeable.

125 Chasuble (ii) In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time.

128 Miss Prism (i) This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

129 Cecily (iii) But what horrid clothes you have got on!  

135 Jack (i) What nonsense!

137 Chasuble (i) These are very joyful tidings.

138 Miss Prism (ii) his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

139 Jack (v) it is perfectly absurd.

143 Jack (ii) I think his coming down here disgraceful. (iii) He knows perfectly well why.

144 Cecily (vi) And surely there must be much good in one (vii) who is kind to an invalid.

146 Cecily (ii) he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

153 Chasuble (ii) is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation?

155 Cecily (ii) My little task of reconciliation is over.

156 Chasuble (i) You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

171 Jack (i) Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

172 Algernon (i) My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

176 Algernon (iv) It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man

178 Algernon (i) I certainly won’t leave you so long
180 Algernon (iii) I never saw any body take so long to dress, and with such little result.

183 Jack (i) Your vanity is ridiculous, (ii) your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd, (v) you will have a pleasant journey back to town. (vii) as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

184 Algernon (ii) it has been a great success.

187 Cecily (i) Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

7 Gwendolen (i) Let us preserve a dignified silence.

10 Cecily (i) A most distasteful one.

13 Gwendolen (i) Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you.

14 Cecily (i) Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable

16 Cecily (i) That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation,

18 Cecily (ii) But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

19 Gwendolen (ii) In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing.

22 Cecily (iii) His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

25 Gwendolen (i) True! (vi) The task is not a pleasant one.

26 Cecily (i) Could we not both speak at the same time?

27 Gwendolen (i) An excellent idea! (ii) I nearly always speak at the same time as other people.

29 Gwendolen (ii) That and Cecily is all!

31 Gwendolen (i) For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

33 Cecily (ii) you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

35 Gwendolen (i) How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes!

37 Cecily (i) They have moments of physical courage of which
(iv) Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. (vi) whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, (x) that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. (xiii) I would consider it wrong. (xvi) On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

Lady B. (i) Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? (iv) that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation.

Lady B. (i) He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. (iii) however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, (iv) and acted under proper medical advice. (ix) what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

Lady B. (ii) whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, (iv) that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. (vi) some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place.

Jack. (i) Miss Cardew is the grand-daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

Lady B. (i) That sounds not unsatisfactory.

Lady B. (i) I have known strange errors in that publication.

Lady B. (iv) I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. (ix) if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

Lady B. (vi) Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, (xii) your dress is sadly simple, (xvi) A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time.

Lady B. (vi) There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. (vii) The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. (viii) The chin a little higher, dear. (x) They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

Lady B. (i) There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew’s profile.
Algernon (ii) And I don’t care two pence about social possibilities.

Lady B. (ii) I am not in favour of long engagements.

Jack (ii) but this engagement is quite out of the question.

Lady B. (i) Untruthful! (iii) Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

Jack (i) I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. (ii) This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, (iii) he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. (iv) Under an assumed name he drank, (v) I’ve just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, ‘89; (vii) Continuing his disgraceful deception, (xi) And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is,

Lady B. (ii) Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew’s conduct to you.

Jack (ii) My own decision, however, is unalterable.

Lady B (i) You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. (ii) Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. (iii) It looks so calculating... (vi) it will not be very long (vii) before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage.

Lady B (i) That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. (ii) Thirty-five is a very attractive age.

Lady B (iv) which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature

Jack (i) Then a passionate celibacy is all

Lady B (ii) Is not that somewhat premature?

Chasuble (i) Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

Lady B (ii) The idea is grotesque and irreligious!

Jack (iii) it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

Chasuble (ii) They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views (iii) that I have completely refuted in four of my
unpublished sermons. (iv) However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular,

122 Jack (i) Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew’s esteemed governess and valued companion.

126 Lady B (iii) Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. Algernon and Jack pretend to be anxious to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] (v) that contained a baby of the male sex. (vii) A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, (ix) It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality.

127 Miss Prism (v) The plain facts of the case are these. (x) but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction (xi) that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. (xii) In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself,

135 Gwendolen (i) If you are not too long,

137 Lady B (iii) that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur.

139 Chasuble (i) Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

140 Lady B (i) This noise is extremely unpleasant. (v) They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

143 Gwendolen (i) This suspense is terrible.

145 Miss Prism (iv) it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. (v) Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, (ix) that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there.

150 Jack (ii) I do not deny that is a serious blow. (iii) But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one

155 Algernon (iv) however, though I was out of practice.

157 Jack (iii) Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable
159  Cecily  (i) What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

165  Lady B  (vii) But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

169  Lady B  (i) The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. (ii) But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

170  Jack  (ii) These delightful records should have been my constant study.

171  Lady B  (iv) I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

172  Gwendolen  (ii) My own Ernest

173  Jack  (ii) it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly

181  Jack  (ii) I’ve now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.

D. AMPLIFICATION

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

3  Algernon  (ii) I don’t play accurately – (iii) any one can play accurately

9  Algernon  (ii) that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? (iii) I ask merely for information.

10  Lane  (iii) that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

12  Lane  (ii) it is a very pleasant state, sir. (iii) I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. (iv) I have only been married once. (v) That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

13  Algernon  (i) I don’t know

14  Lane  (ii) it is not a very interesting subject. (iii) I never think of it myself.

15  Algernon  (i) Very natural,
Really, if the *lower* orders don’t set us a good example, they seem, as a class, to have *absolutely* no sense of moral responsibility.

(ii) it is customary in good society to take some *slight* refreshment at five o’clock.

(iv) It is *excessively* boring.

(i) *Perfectly* horrid! *Never* speak to one of them.

(i) How *immensely* you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way,

(iii) but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won’t *quite* approve of your being here.

(iii) It is almost *as* bad *as* the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

(ii) the way you flirt with Gwendolen is *perfectly* disgraceful. (iii) It is almost *as* bad *as* the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

(ii) I have come up to town *expressly* to propose to her.

(i) How *utterly* unromantic you are!

(ii) It is *very* romantic to be in love. (v) One usually is, (viii) The *very* essence of romance is uncertainty. (ix) If *ever* I get married, (x) I’ll *certainly* try to forget the fact.

(i) I have *no* doubt about that, dear Algy. (ii) The Divorce Court was *specially* invented for (iii) people whose memories are so *curiously* constituted.

(i) there is *no* use speculating on that subject (iv) They are ordered *specially* for Aunt Augusta.

(i) That is *quite* a different matter.

(i) And *very* good bread and butter it is *too*.

(iv) as if you were married to her *already*. (v) You are not married to her *already*, (vi) and I don’t think you *ever* will be.
47 Algernon (i) Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with.

51 Algernon (iii) you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily.

55 Jack (iv) I was very nearly offering a large reward.

57 Jack (i) There is no good offering a large reward now

58 Algernon (ii) that is rather mean of you, Ernest,

59 Jack (iii) and you have no right whatsoever to read (v) It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

61 Jack (i) I am quite aware of the fact, (v) I simply want my cigarette case back.

66 Algernon (iii) and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] ‘From little Cecily with her fondest love.’

67 Jack (vi) that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. (viii) that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt!

68 Algernon (iii) There is no objection, (vii) I can’t quite make out.

70 Algernon (vii) You are the most earnest-looking person (viii) I ever saw in my life. (ix) It is perfectly absurd your saying (xiv) that your name is Ernest (xv) if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else.

72 Algernon (v) you had much better have the thing out at once.

73 Jack (ii) you talk exactly (iv) It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist. (vi) It produces a false impression,

74 Algernon (ii) that is exactly what dentists always do. (iv) Tell me the whole thing. (vi) that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; (vii) and I am quite sure of it now.

76 Algernon (ii) as soon as you are kind enough to inform me

79 Jack (i) My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. (ii) In fact it’s perfectly ordinary. (vii) that you could not possibly appreciate,

81 Jack (i) That is nothing to you, dear boy. (iii) I may tell you candidly
83 Jack  (iii) You are *hardly* serious enough. (v) one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. (vii) And as a high moral tone can *hardly* be said to conduce *very* much to either one’s health or one’s happiness, (ix) I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, (xi) and gets into the *most* dreadful scrapes.

84 Algernon  (i) The truth is *rarely* pure and *never* simple. (ii) Modern life would be *very* tedious (iii) if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

85 Jack  (i) That wouldn’t be *at all* a bad thing.

86 Algernon  (v) They do it *so* well in the daily papers. (vi) What you *really* are is a Bunburyist. (vii) I was *quite* right in saying (ix) You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists

88 Algernon  (i) You have invented a *very* useful younger brother called Ernest, (vii) Bunbury is *perfectly* invaluable. (viii) If it wasn’t for Bunbury’s *extraordinary* bad health, (x) for I have been *really* engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

90 Algernon  (ii) You are *absurdly* careless about sending out invitations. (iii) It is *very* foolish of you.

91 Jack  (i) You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

92 Algernon  (i) I haven’t *the smallest* intention of doing anything of the kind. (iv) and once a week is *quite enough* to dine with one’s own relations. (vi) I am always treated as a member of the family, (vii) and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. (ix) I know *perfectly* well (xii) who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. (xiv) *Indeed*, it is *not even* decent... (xviii) who flirt with their own husbands is *perfectly* scandalous. (xx) It is *simply* washing one’s clean linen in public. (xxii) I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying.

93 Jack  (vi) Cecily is a little *too* much interested in him. (vii) It is *rather* a bore. (ix) And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr... with your invalid friend

94 Algernon  (ii) and if you *ever* get married, (iii) which seems to me *extremely* problematic, (iv) you will be *very* glad to know Bunbury. (vi) has a *very* tedious time of it.

95 Jack  (iii) and she is the *only* girl (iv) I *ever* saw in my life (vi) I *certainly* won’t want to know Bunbury.
99  Jack (ii) It’s perfectly easy to be cynical.

100 Algernon (i) My dear fellow, it isn’t easy to be anything nowadays. (iv) Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner.

103 Algernon (v) It is so shallow of them.

104 Lady B. (iii) you are behaving very well.

105 Algernon (i) I’m feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

106 Lady B (i) That’s not quite the same thing. (ii) In fact the two things rarely go together.

108 Gwendolen (i) I am always smart!

109 Jack (i) You’re quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

111 Lady B (ii) if we are a little late, Algernon, (vi) I never saw a woman so altered; (vii) she looks quite twenty years younger.

114 Gwendolen (ii) I’m quite comfortable

116 Lane (ii) I went down twice.

118 Lane (ii) Not even for ready money.

121 Algernon (i) I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, (ii) about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

122 Lady B (i) It really makes no matter, Algernon.

123 Algernon (ii) her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

124 Lady B (i) It certainly has changed its colour. (iv) I’ve quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. (vii) and so attentive to her husband.

126 Lady B (ii) It would put my table completely out.

127 Algernon (i) It is a great bore, (ii) and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, (iii) but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say (iv) that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again.

128 Lady B (i) It is very strange. (ii) This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.
130 Lady B (x) Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. (xii) I am always telling that to your poor uncle, (xiii) but he never seems to take much notice... (xiv) as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. (xvi) if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, (xx) that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season (xxi) when every one has practically said, (xxiii) which, in most cases, was probably not much.

131 Algernon (xiv) if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

132 Lady B (ii) It is very thoughtful of you. (iv) the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. (v) French songs I cannot possibly allow. (vi) People always seem to think (xi) But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed,

(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

1 Miss Prism (ii) Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton’s duty than yours? (iii) Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you.

2 Cecily (iii) I know perfectly well (iv) that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

3 Miss Prism (ii) that you should improve yourself in every way. (v) Indeed, he always lays stress on your German

4 Cecily (i) Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! (ii) Sometimes he is so serious (iii) that I think he cannot be quite well.

5 Miss Prism (i) Your guardian enjoys the best of health, (ii) and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young (iv) I know (v) no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

8 Cecily (v) I am sure you certainly would. (vi) You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much.

9 Miss Prism (ii) that even I could produce any effect on a character (iii) that according to his own brother’s admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. (x) I really don’t see (xi) why you should keep a diary at all.
10 Cecily (iii) I should probably forget all about them.

11 Miss Prism (ii) that we all carry about with us.

12 Cecily (ii) but it usually chronicles the things (iii) that have never happened, (iv) and couldn’t possibly have happened. (vi) that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels

13 Miss Prism (ii) I wrote one myself in earlier days.

14 Cecily (i) Did you really, Miss Prism? (ii) How wonderfully clever you are! (vi) They depress me so much.

16 Cecily (ii) But it seems very unfair. (iii) And was your novel ever published?

17 Miss Prism (iii) The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned.

21 Cecily (iii) it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

26 Chasuble (ii) Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism’s pupil,

28 Chasuble (v) But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

30 Chasuble (i) A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. (ii) I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

32 Chasuble (ii) We might go as far as the schools and back.

33 Miss Prism (iv) It is somewhat too sensational. (v) Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

37 Merriman (ii) He seemed very much disappointed. (iii) I mentioned (vi) he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

38 Cecily (iii) you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

40 Cecily (i) I have never met any really wicked person before. (ii) I feel rather frightened. (iii) I am so afraid (iv) he will look just like every one else.

43 Algernon (ii) I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily.

44 Cecily (ii) then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. (iii) I hope you have not been leading a
double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time.

45 Algernon (ii) Of course I have been rather reckless.

47 Algernon (ii) I have been very bad in my own small way.

48 Cecily (ii) you should be so proud of that, (iv) it must have been very pleasant.

49 Algernon (i) It is much plesanter being here with you.

51 Algernon (i) That is a great disappointment.

54 Cecily (iii) how important it is not to keep a business engagement, (vi) you had better wait

57 Algernon (i) I certainly wouldn’t let

59 Algernon (ii) I’d sooner die.

61 Algernon (iv) This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

62 Cecily (ii) but are you good enough for it?

64 Cecily (ii) I’ve no time, this afternoon.

66 Cecily (i) It is rather Quixotic of you.

67 Algernon (ii) I feel better already.

70 Cecily (iii) that when one is going to lead an entirely new life,

71 Algernon (iii) I never have any appetite

73 Algernon (ii) I’d sooner have a pink rose.

76 Cecily (iii) Miss Prism never says such things to me.

77 Algernon (iii) I ever saw.

81 Miss Prism (i) You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. (iii) A misanthrope I can understand - a womanthrope, never!

82 Chasuble (ii) I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. (iii) The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.
Miss Prism (i) That is *obviously* the reason (iv) that by *persistently* remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. (v) Men should be *more* careful; (vi) this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

Chasuble (i) But is a man not equally attractive

Miss Prism (i) No married man is *ever* attractive except to his wife.

Chasuble (i) And often, I’ve been told, *not even* to her.

Jack (i) I have returned *sooner*

Miss Prism (i) *More* shameful debts and extravagance?

Jack (i) *Quite* dead.

Chasuble (iii) You have *at least* the consolation of knowing (iv) that you were always the *most* generous and forgiving of brothers.

Chasuble (i) *Very* sad indeed

Chasuble (iii) I myself am *peculiarly* susceptible to draughts

Chasuble (ii) I fear that *hardly* points to any very serious state of mind at the last. (iv) My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing.

Jack (viii) you are continually christening, aren’t you?

Miss Prism (ii) I regret to say, one of the Rector’s *most* constant duties in this parish. (iii) I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject.

Chasuble (i) But is there *any* particular infant in

Miss Prism (ii) who live *entirely* for pleasure usually are.

Jack (vi) if you have nothing *better* to do.

Chasuble (i) But *surely*, Mr. Worthing, (ii) you have been christened already?

Chasuble (i) But have you *any* grave doubts on the subject?

Jack (i) I *certainly* intend to have. (iii) if the thing would bother you in *any* way, (v) I am a little *too* old now.
Chasuble (ii) The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

Chasuble (i) Perfectly, perfectly! (iii) A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

Chasuble (i) Admirably! Admirably! (iii) I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. (iv) I would merely beg (v) you not to be too much bowed down by grief. (vi) What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

Miss Prism (i) This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

Cecily (ii) However badly he may have behaved to you in the past (iv) You couldn’t be so heartless as to disown him.

Chasuble (i) These are very joyful tidings.

Miss Prism (ii) his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

Jack (v) it is perfectly absurd.

Algernon (iii) that I am very sorry for all the trouble (v) and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. (vi) I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, (vii) especially considering it is the first time

Cecily (iii) I will never forgive you.

Jack (i) Never forgive me?

Cecily  Never, never, never!

Jack (ii) I shall ever do it.
Chasuble (ii) is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation?

Cecily (i) Certainly, Miss Prism.

Cecily (i) I feel very happy.

Jack (ii) you must get out of this place as soon as possible. (iii) I don’t allow any Bunburying here.

Jack (ii) Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

Algernon (i) My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

Jack (i) I can quite understand that.

Algernon (ii) You look perfectly ridiculous in them. (iv) It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man (v) who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest.

Jack (i) You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else.

Algernon (i) I certainly won’t leave you so long (iii) It would be most unfriendly. (viii) it very unkind

Algernon (iii) I never saw any body take so long to dress, and with such little result.

Jack (i) Well, at any rate, (ii) that is better than being always over-dressed

Algernon (i) If I am occasionally a little over-dressed,

Jack (ii) your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd.

Cecily (ii) I merely came back to water the roses

Algernon (ii) It’s a very painful parting.

Cecily (ii) whom one has known for a very brief space of time. (iv) But even a momentary separation (v) from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)
Gwendolen (i) They don’t seem to notice us at all.

Cecily (ii) That’s very forward of them.

Cecily (i) Certainly. (ii) It’s the only thing to do now.

Cecily (i) A most distasteful one.

Cecily (i) Certainly not.

Gwendolen (i) Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you.

Cecily (ii) Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question.

Cecily (i) That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation,

Gwendolen (v) that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

Gwendolen (i) I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. (iv) Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing’s.

Gwendolen (ii) I nearly always speak at the same time as other people.

Cecily (i) Certainly.

Gwendolen (iii) men are infinitely beyond us.

Lady B. (iii) Sit down immediately. (vii) I followed her at once by a luggage train. (x) that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. (xii) Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. (xv) But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment.

Lady B. (i) You are nothing of the kind, sir.

Lady B. (iii) His death must have been extremely sudden.

Algernon (ii) Oh, he was quite exploded.

Lady B. (iii) however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, (iv) and acted under proper medical advice. (v) And now that we have finally got rid
of this Mr. Bunbury, (ix) what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

61 Lady B. (ii) whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire (iv) that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. (vii) Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? (viii) I merely desire information. (ix) Until yesterday I had no idea (x) that there were any families or persons

63 Lady B. (ii) Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen.

64 Jack (i) I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period.

67 Lady B. (ii) A firm of the very highest position in their profession. (iv) that one of the Mr. Markby’s is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties.

68 Jack (i) How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell!

69 Lady B. (iii) I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. (viii) As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you (ix) if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

70 Jack (ii) about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. (iii) That is all. (v) So pleased to have seen you.

71 Lady B. (ii) A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! (iii) And in the Funds! (iv) Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, (vi) Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, (vii) any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. (xii) your dress is sadly simple, (xiii) and your hair seems almost (xvi) A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time.

73 Lady B. (i) Kindly turn round, sweet child. (ii) No, (v) Yes, quite as I expected. (ix) Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. (x) They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

76 Algernon (i) Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world.
Lady B. (i) Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. (ii) Only people (v) that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. (viii) I had no fortune of any kind. (ix) But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way.

Lady B. (i) You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

Lady B. (ii) had better take place quite soon.

Lady B. (i) To speak frankly, (v) is never advisable.

Jack (ii) but this engagement is quite out of the question. (vi) That consent I absolutely decline to give.

Lady B. (iii) I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. (iv) He has nothing, (vi) What more can one desire?

Jack (i) It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, (v)

Jack (i) I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. (vi) wine I was specially reserving for myself. (viii) he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. (ix) He subsequently stayed to tea, (x) and devoured every single muffin. (xi) And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, (xii) that he was perfectly well aware from the first (xiii) that I have no brother, (xiv) that I never had a brother, (xv) and that I don’t intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. (xvi) I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

Lady B. (ii) Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew’s conduct to you.

Jack (i) That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell.

Cecily (ii) I am really only eighteen, (iii) but I always admit to twenty

Lady B (i) You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. (ii) Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. (vi) it will not be very long

Jack (ii) but it is only fair to tell you (iii) that according to the terms of her grandfather’s will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age.
Lady B (ii) Thirty-five is a very attractive age. (iii) London society is full of women of the very highest birth (ix) I see no reason (x) why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive (xiii) There will be a large accumulation of property.

Cecily (ii) I felt it instinctively, (iv) I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. (v) It always makes me rather cross. (ix) and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

Lady B (ii) as Miss Cardew states positively

Jack (ii) the matter is entirely in your own hands. (iv) I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady B (i) You must be quite aware

Jack (ii) that any of us can look forward to.

Lady B (v) we have already missed five,

Chasuble (i) Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

Lady B (v) Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased

Chasuble (ii) then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

Chasuble (iii) that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. (iv) However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, (vii) that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

Lady B (iii) Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

Chasuble (i) She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

Lady B (i) It is obviously the same person.

Lady B (vi) You never returned. (vii) A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight,
(iii) I only wish (vii) a day that is for ever branded on my memory, (ix) I had also with me a somewhat old, (xii) In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself,

(i) Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me.

(i) I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

(i) If you are not too long, (ii) I will wait here for you all my life

(i) I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. (ii) I need hardly tell you (iv) They are hardly considered the thing.

Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

(i) Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

(i) This noise is extremely unpleasant. (iv) I dislike arguments of any kind. (v) They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

(ii) Examine it carefully

(xi) I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. (xii) It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

(i) Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag.

(vi) Why should there be one law for men, and another for women?

(ii) There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

(ii) but would you kindly inform me who I am?

(iv) You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon’s elder brother.

(v) I always said (vii) Cecily, - how could you have ever doubted (xiv) You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

(ii) I had quite forgotten that point.
Gwendolen (i) I never change, except in my affections.

Jack (i) Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment (iii) had I been christened already?

Lady B (i) Every luxury

Jack (iv) Let me know the worst.

Lady B (i) Being the eldest son (ii) you were naturally christened after your father.

Lady B (vii) But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

Algernon (ii) we were never even on speaking terms.

Lady B (i) The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. (ii) But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Jack (iv) I always told you, Gwendolen, (ix) it naturally is Ernest.

Gwendolen (iv) that you could have no other name!

Jack (ii) it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly (iii) that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth.

Jack (ii) I’ve now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.
E. SOURCE OF ATTITUDES

(First Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

13 Algernon (i) I don’t know

17 Algernon (ii) Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example

132 Lady B (iv) the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. (xi) But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, (xii) I believe is so. (xiii) Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

(Second Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)

2 Cecily (ii) It isn’t at all a becoming language. (iii) I know perfectly well

3 Miss Prism (i) Child, you know how anxious your guardian is

5 Miss Prism (iv) I know (v) no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

13 Miss Prism (i) Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily.

23 Cecily (ii) I know that

37 Merriman (iii) I mentioned

54 Cecily (ii) I know, of course, (iii) how important it is not to keep a business engagement. (viii) I know (ix) he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

60 Cecily (ii) he said at dinner on Wednesday night,

78 Cecily (i) Miss Prism says

80 Cecily (iv) I shouldn’t know what to talk to him about.

87 Miss Prism (v) I spoke horticulturally.

111 Jack (vi) you know how to christen all right?

120 Jack (ii) Of course I don’t know

143 Jack (iii) He knows perfectly well why.

148 Algernon (vi) I expected a more enthusiastic welcome
191 Cecily (ii) whom *one* has *known* for a very brief space of time.

*(Third Act of The Importance of Being Earnest)*

27 Gwendolen (ii) I nearly always *speak* at the same time as other people.

37 Cecily (ii) *we* women *know* absolutely nothing.

61 Lady B. (i) I do not *know*.

71 Lady B. (xviii) and after three months her own husband did not *know* her.

72 Jack (i) And after six months *nobody knew* her.

88 Lady B. (iii) I may almost *say* an ostentatiously, eligible young man.

100 Algernon (ii) *You know* (iii) I could.

101 Cecily (vii) *I know*.

127 Miss Prism (ii) that *I* do not *know*.

130 Jack (ii) *I insist* on knowing

144 Jack (iii) before *you speak*.

145 Miss Prism (ix) that in an extravagant *mood* I had had them placed there. (xii) It has been a great *inconvenience* being without it all these years.

154 Jack (iii) *I knew* (v) *I always said*

159 Cecily (i) What a noble *nature* you have, Gwendolen!

171 Lady B (iii) *I knew*
# Appraisal Devices Analysis per Character

## Jack

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affection</th>
<th>Judgment</th>
<th>Appreciation</th>
<th>Amplification</th>
<th>Source of Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boring, right, admirable, high moral, interested in, bore, cynical, cynical, bad, sad, don’t like, pleased, pleased, fear, doubt, gladly, hate, doubted</td>
<td>Young, unromantic, charming, old, tall, not tall, old, little, serious, charming, young, perfect, well, poor, dear, little, old, childish, young, scoundrel, over-dressed, ridiculous, kind, moral, untrust, well-aware, generous, dear, unmarried, inquisitive, unfortunate, unfortunate, unfortunate, young, scoundrel,</td>
<td>Horrid, delightful, constituted, good, nonsense, frantic, large, good, large, modern, absurd, vulgar, false, dear, improbable, ordinary, dear, real, dreadful, pure, simple, bad, little, invalid, absurd, nonsense, dear, corrupt, easy, severe, nonsense, absurd, disgraceful, well, frantic, absurd, pleasant, great, late, whooping, German, English,</td>
<td>Excessively, perfectly, never, so, reckless, perfectly, expressly, utterly, curiously, very, very, nearly, very, ungentlemanly, quite, simple, surely, every, exactly, exactly, very, perfectly, never, possibly, candidly, hardly, enough, very, hardly, very, most, much better, rather, strongly, only, ever, certainly, perfectly, quite, sooner, quite, continually, very, nothing, better, certainly,</td>
<td>I tell, you talk, I know, you know, I know, I know, he knows, nobody knew, I insist, you speak, I knew, I said,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hundred and thirty, out of, temporary, possible, important, false, assumed, disgraceful, single, heartless, unalterable, passionate, practical esteemed, valued, small, serious, elder, irrevocable, delightful, constant, ghastly, terrible, own, vital, first, private,</td>
<td>any, too, perfectly, all, perfectly, enough, perfectly, ever, as...as, suddenly, quite, certainly, whole, any, better, utterly, carefully, extremely, all, quite, absolutely, very, frankly, no, specially, subsequently, only, every, all, more, perfectly, no, never, not even, any, distinctly, very, only, legally, entirely, most, all, any, no, carefully, kindly, ever, never, more, all, quite, better, already, the worst, naturally, suddenly,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Appreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorry, interested in, sure, afraid, graceful, romantic, romantic, romantic, absurd, sure, right, like, glad, hate, swallow, well, dear, distressed, afraid, bored, all right, sure, no taste, afraid, not that, better, hungry, sorry, painful, enthusiastic, afraid, don’t like, unfriendly, unkind, love, afraid, painful, don’t care, pleasant,</td>
<td>Sentiment, forte, no sense of moral, nice, little, small, most Earnest-looking, small, dear, old confirmed, secret, pure, simple, modern, tedious, modern, complete, dear, advance, useful, younger, invaluable, careless, foolish, scandalous, confirmed, serious, not serious, smart, ill, conscious, little, not</td>
<td>Wonderful, demoralizing, natural, good, customary, good, slight, well, dear, bad, definite, uncertainly, dear, different, dear, right, great, extraordinary, hard, fast, modern. Little, absurd, incomparable, improbable, invaluable, permanent, invalid, bad, pleasant, bad, clean, bad, problematic, married, happy, dear, ready, gold, grave, terrible, poor, dreadful, invalid, great, good, bad,</td>
<td>Accurately, accurately, invariably, merely, so, very, the lower, absolutely, very, quite, perfectly, almost, as…as, very, very, ever, certainly, specially, quite, already, already, ever, never, quite, every, ever, perfectly, better, exactly, quite, as…as, enough, really, never, very, really, quite, the most, so, very, as…as, perfectly, extraordinary, really, absurdly, very, so, the smallest, quite,</td>
<td>I know, I say, you said, I know, I know, I know, I conform, I say, I speak, I say, a more enthusiastic welcome, a good example, a short stroll</td>
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<td>wicked, wicked, reckless, anxious, short, sighted old, prettiest, snare, sensible, fearful, ridiculous, childish, over-dressed, over-educated, poor, dear, sweetest, dearest, prettiest, dear,</td>
<td>small, great, encouraging, good, buttonhole, pink, pink, deep, long, long, little, little, social, out of,</td>
<td>enough, perfectly, very, mostly, perfectly, simple, naturally, so, ever, extremely, very, very, beastly, only, ever, so, very, specially, greatly, not even, quite, hardly, very, really, at all, rather, very, certainly, sooner, particularly, enough, already, never, sooner, ever, every, very, all, better, peculiarly, more, especially, never, the smallest, perfectly, perfectly, actually,</td>
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Cecily

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<td>so, so, very,</td>
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<td>quite, certainly</td>
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<td>good, short,</td>
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<td>dear, dear,</td>
<td>horrid, horrid,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfortable,</td>
<td>smart, dear, not long</td>
<td>Dignified, dignified, unpleasant, particular, vital, true, pleasant, action, same, insuperable, terrible, absurd, terrible, own</td>
<td>Quite, certainly, any at all, very, as...as, the gravest, quite, especially, nearly, all, infinitely, too, all, never, no,</td>
<td>I speak</td>
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<td>Affection</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Appreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delightful, sure, glad, interested in, glad, satisfied, exciting, in favour, not in favour, dislike, afraid, no doubt, no doubt</td>
<td>Well, altered, nice, attentive, kind, obliged, poor, truthful, improper, shocked, young, unhappy, permanent, not aware, well-punished, young, young, attractive young, dear, pretty, sweet, dear, dear, eligible, young, untruthful, oxonian, sweet, dear, right, dear, attractive, dear, displeased, anxious, vulgar, convincing</td>
<td>Dear, same, little, dear, poor, nice, strange, bad, high, absurd, modern, primary, delightful, vulgar, laugh, respectable, physical, small, lengthy, wrong, invalid, social, great, definite, proper, exciting, particular, proper, out of, not satisfactory, strange, young, premature, little, hundred and thirty, solid, experienced, simple, marvelous, distinct, weak</td>
<td>Very, not quite, rarely, never, so, quite, younger, really, entirely, certainly, quite, so, completely, fortunately, very, curiously, hardly, particularly, every, practically, probably, enough, as...as, very, possibly, thoroughly, immediately, never, any, clearly, all, immediately, all, nothing, extremely, finally, at all, any, peculiarly, peculiarly, considerably, larger, merely, no, any, even, very, highest</td>
<td>I know, her own husband know, I say, you know, I knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor, Eccentric, poor, kind, obligated</td>
<td>little, high, distinct, long, advisable, impossible, careful, slight, long, grave, attractive, free, instant, large, impatient, out of, premature, grotesque, irreligious, shame, horror, male, three-volume, revolting, high, strange, unpleasant, elder, later, Indian, domestic, military, particular, few, few, occasionally, too, better, any, most, any, really, thoroughly, sadly, really, very, kindly, quite, higher, largely, very, never, never, disrespectfully, only, no, any, never, better, quite, frankly, ostentatiously, more, entirely, perfectly, ever, quite, so, very, very, full, the very highest, ever, no, even, more, positively, quite, already, any, more, any, highly, remotely, obviously, never, more, not even, hardly, hardly, extremely, only, consequently,</td>
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Miss Prism

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<td>Surprise, not sure, not in favour, bad, good, dear, happily, unhappily, distressing, delighted,</td>
<td>Anxious, idle, unfortunate, young, weak, facilitating, dear, alone, dear, dear, careful, attractive, young, green, premature, dear, unmarried,</td>
<td>Intellectual, on the table, particular, young, higher, constant, modern, three-volume, earlier, good, bad, abandoned, profitless, good, misanthrope, womanthorpe, primitive, pleasant, permanent, intellectual, shameful, constant, obvious, plain, old, capacious, unoccupied, mental, younger,</td>
<td>Surely, especially, every, the best, especially so, comparatively, irretrievably, slightly, unfortunately, too, never, obviously, persistently, more, very, weaker, no, ever, horticulturally, more, most, purer, entirely, extremely, all, suddenly, peculiarly, only, ever, never, so, unexpectedly, undoubtedly, all, really,</td>
<td>a higher sense, I spoke, I know, an extravagance mood, a great inconvenience</td>
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Dr. Chasuable

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<td>Likes, sad, fear, no doubt, distressing, bitter, pleasant, interested in,</td>
<td>Not inattentive, fortune, unfortune, young, attractive, dear, generous, dear, susceptible, perfect, hard-working, dear, cultivated, celibate, nigh,</td>
<td>Strange, enjoyment, classical, far, neologistic, well, primitive, sincere, terrible, serious, slight, tragic, domestic, joyful, present, particular, canonical, necessarily, invisible, changeable, similar, pure, joyful, perfect, immediate, heretical, unpublished, emotional,</td>
<td>Enough, metaphorically, any, merely, no, as...as, as...as, so, distinctly, not actually, not even, at least, the most, very, peculiarly, hardly, very, any, any, surely, already, any, perfectly, all, sure, perfectly, perfectly, recently, most, admirable, admirable, any longer, merely, too, very, so, quite, ready, no, at all,</td>
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<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>Amplification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>anxious</td>
<td>largest</td>
<td>Very, privately</td>
<td>I mention</td>
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**Merriman**

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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>polite</td>
<td>Superior, married, first-rate, pleasant, little, young, interesting,</td>
<td>Rarely, very, very, only, ready, very, never,</td>
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**Lane**
## Summarization of the Appraisal Devices

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<th>Jack</th>
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<th>Gwendolen</th>
<th>Lady Bracknell</th>
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<th>Dr. Chasuble</th>
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<td>Total Appraisal devices</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>Total Clauses</td>
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4 The Importance of Being Earnest

5 By Oscar Wilde

6

6.1 First Act

6.1.1 Scene: Morning-room in Algernon’s flat in Half-Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.

[Lane is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, Algernon enters.]

Algernon. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

Lane. I didn’t think it polite to listen, sir.

Algernon. I’m sorry for that, for your sake. I don’t play accurately - any one can play accurately - but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

Lane. Yes, sir. [Hands them on a salver.]

Algernon. [Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] Oh!... by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

Lane. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

Algernon. Why is it that at a bachelor’s establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

Lane. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

Algernon. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?
Lane. I believe it IS a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

Algernon. [Languidly.] I don’t know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

Lane. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

Algernon. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir. [Lane goes out.]

Algernon. Lanes views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don’t set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

[Enter Lane.]

Lane. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

[Enter Jack.]

[Lane goes out.]

Algernon. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

Jack. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

Algernon. [Stiffly.] I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o’clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

Jack. [Sitting down on the sofa.] In the country.

Algernon. What on earth do you do there?

Jack. [Pulling off his gloves.] When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

Algernon. And who are the people you amuse?

Jack. [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

Algernon. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

Jack. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.
Algernon. How immensely you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

Jack. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

Algernon. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

Jack. How perfectly delightful!

Algernon. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won’t quite approve of your being here.

Jack. May I ask why?

Algernon. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

Jack. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

Algernon. I thought you had come up for pleasure?... I call that business.

Jack. How utterly unromantic you are!

Algernon. I really don’t see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I’ll certainly try to forget the fact.

Jack. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

Algernon. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven - [Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. Algernon at once interferes.] Please don’t touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]

Jack. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

Algernon. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [Takes plate from below.] Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

Jack. [Advancing to table and helping himself.] And very good bread and butter it is too.
Algernon. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don’t think you ever will be.

Jack. Why on earth do you say that?

Algernon. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don’t think it right.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense!

Algernon. It isn’t. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don’t give my consent.

Jack. Your consent!

Algernon. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell.]

Jack. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily! I don’t know any one of the name of Cecily.

[Enter Lane.]

Algernon. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time he dined here.

Lane. Yes, sir. [Lane goes out.]

Jack. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you had let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I was very nearly offering a large reward.

Algernon. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

Jack. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thing is found.

[Enter Lane with the cigarette case on a salver. Algernon takes it at once. Lane goes out.]

Algernon. I think that is rather mean of you, Ernest, I must say. [Opens case and examines it.] However, it makes no matter, for, now that I look at the inscription inside, I find that the thing isn’t yours after all.
Jack. Of course it’s mine. [Moving to him.] You have seen me with it a hundred times, and you have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

Algeron. Oh! it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn’t. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn’t read.

Jack. I am quite aware of the fact, and I don’t propose to discuss modern culture. It isn’t the sort of thing one should talk of in private. I simply want my cigarette case back.

Algeron. Yes; but this isn’t your cigarette case. This cigarette case is a present from some one of the name of Cecily, and you said you didn’t know any one of that name.

Jack. Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

Algeron. Your aunt!

Jack. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

Algeron. [Retreating to back of sofa.] But why does she call herself little Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] ‘From little Cecily with her fondest love.’

Jack. [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.] My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For Heaven’s sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows Algeron round the room.]

Algeron. Yes. But why does your aunt call you her uncle? ‘From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.’ There is no objection, I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, should call her own nephew her uncle, I can’t quite make out. Besides, your name isn’t Jack at all; it is Ernest.

Jack. It isn’t Ernest; it’s Jack.

Algeron. You have always told me it was Ernest. I have introduced you to every one as Ernest. You answer to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest-looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd your saying that your name isn’t Ernest. It’s on your cards. Here is one of them. [Taking it from case.] ‘Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany.’ I’ll keep this as a proof that your name is
Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else. [Puts the card in his pocket.]

**Jack.** Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

**Algernon.** Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

**Jack.** My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn’t a dentist. It produces a false impression,

**Algernon.** Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

**Jack.** Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

**Algernon.** I’ll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

**Jack.** Well, produce my cigarette case first.

**Algernon.** Here it is. [Hands cigarette case.] Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa.]

**Jack.** My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it’s perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his granddaughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

**Algernon.** Where is that place in the country, by the way?

**Jack.** That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited... I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

**Algernon.** I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

**Jack.** My dear Algy, I don’t know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It’s one’s duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be
said to conduce very much to either one’s health or one’s happiness, in
order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother
of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most
dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

Algernon. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very
tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

Jack. That wouldn’t be at all a bad thing.

Algernon. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don’t try it. You
should leave that to people who haven’t been at a University. They do it
so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was
quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most
advanced Bunburyists I know.

Jack. What on earth do you mean?

Algernon. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in
order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have
invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I
may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is
perfectly invaluable. If it wasn’t for Bunbury’s extraordinary bad health,
for instance, I wouldn’t be able to dine with you at Willis’s to-night, for I
have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

Jack. I haven’t asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

Algernon. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is
very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving
invitations.

Jack. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

Algernon. I haven’t the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin
with, I dined there on Monday, and once a week is quite enough to dine
with one’s own relations. In the second place, whenever I do dine there I
am always treated as a member of the family, and sent down with either
no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well whom
she will place me next to, to-night. She will place me next Mary Farquhar,
who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is
not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent... and that sort of thing is
enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt
with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is
simply washing one’s clean linen in public. Besides, now that I know you
to be a confirmed Bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about
Bunburying. I want to tell you the rules.
**Jack.** I’m not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I’ll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr... with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

**Algernon.** Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

**Jack.** That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won’t want to know Bunbury.

**Algernon.** Then your wife will. You don’t seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none.

**Jack.** [Sententiously.] That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

**Algernon.** Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

**Jack.** For heaven’s sake, don’t try to be cynical. It’s perfectly easy to be cynical.

**Algernon.** My dear fellow, it isn’t easy to be anything nowadays. There’s such a lot of beastly competition about. [The sound of an electric bell is heard.] Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, may I dine with you to-night at Willis’s?

**Jack.** I suppose so, if you want to.

**Algernon.** Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them.

[Enter Lane.]

Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax.

[Algernon goes forward to meet them. Enter Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen.]

**Lady Bracknell.** Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

**Algernon.** I’m feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.
Lady Bracknell. That’s not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. [Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness.]

Algernon. [To Gwendolen.] Dear me, you are smart!

Gwendolen. I am always smart! Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

Jack. You’re quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions. [Gwendolen and Jack sit down together in the corner.]

Lady Bracknell. I’m sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn’t been there since her poor husband’s death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I’ll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

Algernon. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table.]

Lady Bracknell. Won’t you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen. Thanks, mamma, I’m quite comfortable where I am.

Algernon. [Picking up empty plate in horror.] Good heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

Lane. [Gravely.] There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

Algernon. No cucumbers!

Lane. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

Algernon. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir. [Goes out.]

Algernon. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

Lady Bracknell. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

Algernon. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

Lady Bracknell. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [Algernon crosses and hands tea.] Thank you. I’ve quite a
treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It’s delightful to watch them.

**Algernon.** I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

**Lady Bracknell.** [Frowning.] I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

**Algernon.** It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with Jack.] They seem to think I should be with him.

**Lady Bracknell.** It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

**Algernon.** Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

**Lady Bracknell.** Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice... as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

**Algernon.** I’ll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he’ll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don’t listen, and if one plays bad music people don’t talk. But I’ll run over the programme I’ve drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

**Lady Bracknell.** Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [Rising, and following **Algernon.**] I’m sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.
Gwendolen. Certainly, mamma.

[Lady Bracknell and Algernon go into the music-room, Gwendolen remains behind.]

6.2 Second Act

6.2.1 Scene: Garden at the Manor House. A flight of grey stone steps leads up to the house. The garden, an old-fashioned one, full of roses. Time of year, July. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew-tree.

[Miss Prism discovered seated at the table. Cecily is at the back watering flowers.]

Miss Prism. [Calling.] Cecily, Cecily! Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton’s duty than yours? Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday’s lesson.

Cecily. [Coming over very slowly.] But I don’t like German. It isn’t at all a becoming language. I know perfectly well that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

Miss Prism. Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress on your German when he is leaving for town.

Cecily. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

Miss Prism. [Drawing herself up.] Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

Cecily. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

Miss Prism. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.
Cecily. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. [Cecily begins to write in her diary.]

Miss Prism. [Shaking her head.] I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that according to his own brother’s admission is irrevocably weak and vacillating. Indeed I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment’s notice. As a man sows so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don’t see why you should keep a diary at all.

Cecily. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn’t write them down, I should probably forget all about them.

Miss Prism. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

Cecily. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn’t possibly have happened, I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us.

Miss Prism. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

Cecily. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don’t like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

Miss Prism. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

Cecily. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

Miss Prism. Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. [Cecily starts.] I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

Cecily. [Smiling.] But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

Miss Prism. [Rising and advancing.] Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

[Enter Canon Chasuble.]

Chasuble. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?
Cecily. Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

Miss Prism. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

Cecily. No, dear Miss Prism, I know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector came in.

Chasuble. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

Cecily. Oh, I am afraid I am.

Chasuble. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism’s pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [Miss Prism glares.] I spoke metaphorically. - My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

Miss Prism. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

Chasuble. Ah yes, he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of those whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, that unfortunate young man his brother seems to be. But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

Miss Prism. Egeria? My name is Laetitia, Doctor.

Chasuble. [Bowing.] A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

Miss Prism. I think, dear Doctor, I will have a stroll with you. I find I have a headache after all, and a walk might do it good.

Chasuble. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

Miss Prism. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

[Goes down the garden with Dr. Chasuble.]

Cecily. [Picks up books and throws them back on table.] Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

[Enter Merriman with a card on a salver.]
Merriman. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

Cecily. [Takes the card and reads it.] ‘Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W.’ Uncle Jack’s brother! Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

Merriman. Yes, Miss. He seemed very much disappointed. I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

Cecily. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

Merriman. Yes, Miss.

[Merriman goes off.]

Cecily. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like every one else.

[Enter Algernon, very gay and debonnair.] He does!

Algernon. [Raising his hat.] You are my little cousin Cecily, I’m sure.

Cecily. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [Algernon is rather taken aback.] But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack’s brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

Algernon. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn’t think that I am wicked.

Cecily. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

Algernon. [Looks at her in amazement.] Oh! Of course I have been rather reckless.

Cecily. I am glad to hear it.

Algernon. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

Cecily. I don’t think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

Algernon. It is much pleasanter being here with you.
Cecily. I can’t understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won’t be back till Monday afternoon.

Algernon. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious... to miss?

Cecily. Couldn’t you miss it anywhere but in London?

Algernon. No: the appointment is in London.

Cecily. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

Algernon. About my what?

Cecily. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

Algernon. I certainly wouldn’t let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

Cecily. I don’t think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

Algernon. Australia! I’d sooner die.

Cecily. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

Algernon. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Cecily. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

Algernon. I’m afraid I’m not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don’t mind, cousin Cecily.

Cecily. I’m afraid I’ve no time, this afternoon.

Algernon. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

Cecily. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

Algernon. I will. I feel better already.

Cecily. You are looking a little worse.
Algernon. That is because I am hungry.

Cecily. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won’t you come in?

Algernon. Thank you. Might I have a buttonhole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a buttonhole first.

Cecily. A Marechal Niel? [Picks up scissors.]

Algernon. No, I’d sooner have a pink rose.

Cecily. Why? [Cuts a flower.]

Algernon. Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

Cecily. I don’t think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

Algernon. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [Cecily puts the rose in his buttonhole.] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

Cecily. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

Algernon. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

Cecily. Oh, I don’t think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn’t know what to talk to him about.

[They pass into the house. Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble return.]

Miss Prism. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand - a womanthrope, never!

Chasuble. [With a scholar’s shudder.] Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

Miss Prism. [Sententiously.] That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

Chasuble. But is a man not equally attractive when married?

Miss Prism. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.
Chasuble. And often, I’ve been told, not even to her.

Miss Prism. That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green. [Dr. Chasuble starts.] I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily?

Chasuble. Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

[Enter Jack slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.]

Miss Prism. Mr. Worthing!

Chasuble. Mr. Worthing?

Miss Prism. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

Jack. [Shakes Miss Prism’s hand in a tragic manner.] I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

Chasuble. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

Jack. My brother.

Miss Prism. More shameful debts and extravagance?

Chasuble. Still leading his life of pleasure?

Jack. [Shaking his head.] Dead!

Chasuble. Your brother Ernest dead?

Jack. Quite dead.

Miss Prism. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

Chasuble. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

Jack. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

Chasuble. Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?

Jack. No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.
Chasuble. Was the cause of death mentioned?

Jack. A severe chill, it seems.

Miss Prism. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

Chasuble. [Raising his hand.] Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

Jack. No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

Chasuble. In Paris! [Shakes his head.] I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [Jack presses his hand convulsively.] My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [All sigh.] I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew.

Jack. Ah! that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? [Dr. Chasuble looks astounded.] I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren’t you?

Miss Prism. It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector’s most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don’t seem to know what thrift is.

Chasuble. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?

Jack. Oh yes.

Miss Prism. [Bitterly.] People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

Jack. But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do.

Chasuble. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

Jack. I don’t remember anything about it.

Chasuble. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?
Jack. I certainly intend to have. Of course I don’t know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

Chasuble. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

Jack. Immersion!

Chasuble. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

Jack. Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you.

Chasuble. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

Jack. Oh! I don’t see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

Chasuble. Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch.] And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

Miss Prism. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

[Enter Cecily from the house.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

Miss Prism. Cecily!

Chasuble. My child! my child! [Cecily goes towards Jack; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]

Cecily. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

Jack. Who?

Cecily. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

Jack. What nonsense! I haven’t got a brother.
Cecily. Oh, don’t say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn’t be so heartless as to disown him. I’ll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won’t you, Uncle Jack? [Runs back into the house.]

Chasuble. These are very joyful tidings.

Miss Prism. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

Jack. My brother is in the dining-room? I don’t know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

[Enter Algernon and Cecily hand in hand. They come slowly up to Jack.]

Jack. Good heavens! [Motions Algernon away.]

Algernon. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [Jack glares at him and does not take his hand.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother’s hand?

Jack. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in every one. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

Jack. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

Cecily. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

Jack. Bunbury! Well, I won’t have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

Algernon. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that Brother John’s coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, if you don’t shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you.

Jack. Never forgive me?

Cecily. Never, never, never!
Jack. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. [Shakes with Algernon and glares.]

Chasuble. It’s pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

Miss Prism. Cecily, you will come with us.

Cecily. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

Chasuble. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

Miss Prism. We must not be premature in our judgments.

Cecily. I feel very happy. [They all go off except Jack and Algernon.]

Jack. You young scoundrel, Algy, you must get out of this place as soon as possible. I don’t allow any Bunburying here.

[Enter Merriman.]

Merriman. I have put Mr. Ernest’s things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

Jack. What?

Merriman. Mr. Ernest’s luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

Jack. His luggage?

Merriman. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

Algernon. I am afraid I can’t stay more than a week this time.

Jack. Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

Merriman. Yes, sir. [Goes back into the house.]

Algernon. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

Jack. Yes, you have.

Algernon. I haven’t heard any one call me.

Jack. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.
Algernon. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

Jack. I can quite understand that.

Algernon. Well, Cecily is a darling.

Jack. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don’t like it.

Algernon. Well, I don’t like your clothes. You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why on earth don’t you go up and change? It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque.

Jack. You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. You have got to leave... by the four-five train.

Algernon. I certainly won’t leave you so long as you are in mourning. It would be most unfriendly. If I were in mourning you would stay with me, I suppose. I should think it very unkind if you didn’t.

Jack. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

Algernon. Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result.

Jack. Well, at any rate, that is better than being always over-dressed as you are.

Algernon. If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

Jack. Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

[Goes into the house.]

Algernon. I think it has been a great success. I’m in love with Cecily, and that is everything.

[Enter Cecily at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.] But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

Cecily. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

Algernon. He’s gone to order the dog-cart for me.
Cecily. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

Algernon. He’s going to send me away.

Cecily. Then have we got to part?

Algernon. I am afraid so. It’s a very painful parting.

Cecily. It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

Algernon. Thank you.

11.1 Third Act

11.1.1 Scene: Morning-room at the Manor House.

[Gwendolen and Cecily are at the window, looking out into the garden.]

Gwendolen. The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house, as anyone else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

Cecily. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

Gwendolen. [After a pause.] They don’t seem to notice us at all. Couldn’t you cough?

Cecily. But I haven’t got a cough.

Gwendolen. They’re looking at us. What effrontery!

Cecily. They’re approaching. That’s very forward of them.

Gwendolen. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

Cecily. Certainly. It’s the only thing to do now. [Enter Jack followed by Algernon. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.]
Gwendolen. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

Cecily. A most distasteful one.

Gwendolen. But we will not be the first to speak.

Cecily. Certainly not.

Gwendolen. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

Cecily. Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian’s brother?

Algernon. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

Cecily. [To Gwendolen.] That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

Gwendolen. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

Cecily. I don’t. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

Gwendolen. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

Jack. Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

Gwendolen. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German scepticism. [Moving to Cecily.] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing’s. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

Cecily. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

Gwendolen. Then you think we should forgive them?

Cecily. Yes. I mean no.

Gwendolen. True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

Cecily. Could we not both speak at the same time?
Gwendolen. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

Cecily. Certainly. [Gwendolen beats time with uplifted finger.]

Gwendolen and Cecily [Speaking together.] Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

Jack and Algernon [Speaking together.] Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

Gwendolen. [To Jack.] For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

Jack. I am.

Cecily. [To Algernon.] To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

Algernon. I am!

Gwendolen. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.

Jack. We are. [Clasps hands with Algernon.]

Cecily. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

Gwendolen. [To Jack.] Darling!

Algernon. [To Cecily.] Darling! [They fall into each other’s arms.]

[Enter Merriman. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.]

Merriman. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

Jack. Good heavens!

[Enter Lady Bracknell. The couples separate in alarm. Exit Merriman.]

Lady Bracknell. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

Gwendolen. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

Lady Bracknell. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to Jack.] Apprised, sir, of my daughter’s sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually
lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a
permanent income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed
I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong.
But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between
yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On
this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

Jack. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen Lady Bracknell!

Lady Bracknell. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards
Algernon!... Algernon!

Algernon. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr.
Bunbury resides?

Algernon. [Stammering.] Oh! No! Bunbury doesn’t live here. Bunbury is
somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead,

Lady Bracknell. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been
extremely sudden.

Algernon. [Airily.] Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury
died this afternoon.

Lady Bracknell. What did he die of?

Algernon. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

Lady Bracknell. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was
not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is
well punished for his morbidity.

Algernon. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found
out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean - so Bunbury died.

Lady Bracknell. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his
physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to
some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice.
And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr.
Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is
now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

Jack. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [Lady Bracknell bows coldly
to Cecily.]

Algernon. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.
Lady Bracknell. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. [With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.] I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus. [Jack looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.]

Jack. [In a clear, cold voice.] Miss Cardew is the grand-daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

Lady Bracknell. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

Jack. I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. [Grimly.] I have known strange errors in that publication.

Jack. Miss Cardew’s family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

Lady Bracknell. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markby’s is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

Jack. [Very irritably.] How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! I have also in my possession, you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew’s birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

Lady Bracknell. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [Rises, looks at her watch.] Gwendolen! the time approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose. As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

Jack. Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. That is all. Goodbye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.
Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down again.] A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her. Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To Cecily.] Come over here, dear. [Cecily goes across.] Pretty child! your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that. A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, and after three months her own husband did not know her.

Jack. And after six months nobody knew her.

Lady Bracknell. [Glares at Jack for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to Cecily.] Kindly turn round, sweet child. [Cecily turns completely round.] No, the side view is what I want. [Cecily presents her profile.] Yes, quite as I expected. There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. The chin a little higher, dear. Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

Algernon. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

Lady Bracknell. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew’s profile.

Algernon. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don’t care twopence about social possibilities.

Lady Bracknell. Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can’t get into it do that. [To Cecily.] Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.

Algernon. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. Cecily, you may kiss me!

Cecily. [Kisses her.] Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

Cecily. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

Algernon. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.
Cecily. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other’s character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

Jack. I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew’s guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

Lady Bracknell. Upon what grounds may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

Jack. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful. [Algernon and Cecily look at him in indignant amazement.]

Lady Bracknell. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

Jack. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I’ve just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, ‘89; wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin. And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that I don’t intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

Lady Bracknell. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew’s conduct to you.

Jack. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

Lady Bracknell. [To Cecily.] Come here, sweet child. [Cecily goes over.] How old are you, dear?

Cecily. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.
Lady Bracknell. You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating... [In a meditative manner.] Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don’t think your guardian’s consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

Jack. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather’s will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

Lady Bracknell. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

Cecily. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

Algernon. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

Cecily. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn’t wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

Algernon. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

Cecily. I don’t know, Mr. Moncrieff.

Lady Bracknell. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five - a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature - I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

Jack. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady Bracknell. [Rising and drawing herself up.] You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

Jack. Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.

Lady Bracknell. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [Pulls out her watch.] Come, dear,
[Gwendolen rises] we have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

[Enter DR. Chasuble.]

Chasuble. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

Lady Bracknell. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

Chasuble. [Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to Jack and Algernon.] Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

Lady Bracknell. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

Chasuble. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

Jack. I don’t think that, as things are now, it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

Chasuble. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, I will return to the church at once. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

Lady Bracknell. [Starting.] Miss Prism! Did I bear you mention a Miss Prism?

Chasuble. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

Lady Bracknell. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

Chasuble. [Somewhat indignantly.] She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

Lady Bracknell. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

Chasuble. [Severely.] I am a celibate, madam.
Jack. [Interposing.] Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew’s esteemed governess and valued companion.

Lady Bracknell. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

Chasuble. [Looking off.] She approaches; she is nigh.

[Enter Miss Prism hurriedly.]

Miss Prism. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [Catches sight of Lady Bracknell, who has fixed her with a stony glare. Miss Prism grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.]

Lady Bracknell. [In a severe, judicial voice.] Prism! [Miss Prism bows her head in shame.] Come here, Prism! [Miss Prism approaches in a humble manner.] Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. Algernon and Jack pretend to be anxious to shield Cecily and Gwendolen from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell’s house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [Miss Prism starts in involuntary indignation.] But the baby was not there! [Every one looks at Miss Prism.] Prism! Where is that baby? [A pause.]

Miss Prism. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the basinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

Jack. [Who has been listening attentively.] But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

Miss Prism. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

Jack. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.
Miss Prism. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

Jack. What railway station?

Miss Prism. [Quite crushed.] Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair.]

Jack. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

Gwendolen. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life. [Exit Jack in great excitement.]

Chasuble. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

Lady Bracknell. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing.

[Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Everyone looks up.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

Chasuble. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

Lady Bracknell. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

Chasuble. [Looking up.] It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled.]

Lady Bracknell. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

Gwendolen. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last. [Enter Jack with a handbag of black leather in his hand.]

Jack. [Rushing over to Miss Prism.] Is this the handbag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

Miss Prism. [Calmly.] It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.
Jack. [In a pathetic voice.] Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this handbag. I was the baby you placed in it.

Miss Prism. [Amazed.] You?

Jack. [Embracing her.] Yes... mother!

Miss Prism. [Recoiling in indignant astonishment.] Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried.

Jack. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. [Tries to embrace her again.]

Miss Prism. [Still more indignant.] Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [Pointing to Lady Bracknell.] There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

Jack. [After a pause.] Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

Lady Bracknell. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon’s elder brother.

Jack. Algy’s elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily, - how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother? [Seizes hold of Algernon.] Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. Alg, you young scoundrel, you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

Algernon. Well, not till to-day, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice.

[Shakes hands.]

Gwendolen. [To Jack.] My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become some one else?

Jack. Good heavens!... I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

Gwendolen. I never change, except in my affections.

Cecily. What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!
Jack. Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?

Lady Bracknell. Every luxury that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

Jack. Then I was christened! That is settled. Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst.

Lady Bracknell. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

Jack. [Irritably.] Yes, but what was my father’s Christian name?

Lady Bracknell. [Meditatively.] I cannot at the present moment recall what the General’s Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

Jack. Algry! Can’t you recollect what our father’s Christian name was?

Algernon. My dear boy, we were never even on speaking terms. He died before I was a year old.

Jack. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

Lady Bracknell. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Jack. The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. [Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.] M. Generals... Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have - Markby, Miggsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff? Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.] I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn’t I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

Lady Bracknell. Yes, I remember now that the General was called Ernest, I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!
**Jack.** Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

**Gwendolen.** I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

**Jack.** My own one!

**Chasuble.** [To Miss Prism.] Laetitia! [Embraces her]

**Miss Prism.** [Enthusiastically.] Frederick! At last!

**Algernon.** Cecily! [Embraces her.] At last!

**Jack.** Gwendolen! [Embraces her.] At last!

**Lady Bracknell.** My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

**Jack.** On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I’ve now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.