

SIDE 1

Act 2 (pg. 21- pg. 22) Cecily and Algernon

Algernon. [*Raising his hat.*] You are my cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

Cecily. And you are Uncle Jack's brother, 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.

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. Well I certainly wouldn't let **Jack** buy my outfit.

Cecily. He said at dinner on Wednesday night that you were moving to Australia.

Algernon. Oh, he did, did he? Australia indeed. I'm not going anywhere.

Cecily. You're going to stay? [*Looks deeply into his eyes.*]

Algernon. [*Growls lustfully.*] You're damn right.

Cecily. Rowr, rowr! [*She chases him into the house.*]

SIDE 2

Act 2 (pg. 29 - pg. 31) Cecily and Gwendolen

Cecily. [*Advancing to meet her.*] Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

Gwendolen. Cecily Cardew? [*Moving to her and shaking hands.*] What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

Cecily. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

Gwendolen. [*Still standing up.*] I may call you Cecily, may I not?

Cecily. With pleasure!

Gwendolen. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

Cecily. If you wish.

Gwendolen. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

Cecily. I hope so. Pray sit down.

(They both sit down together.)

[Merriman brings in tea, coffee, cake and bread, then stands by]

Gwendolen. You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

Cecily. Oh no! I live here.

Gwendolen. [*Severely.*] Really?

Cecily. My dear guardian has the difficult task of looking after me.

Gwendolen. Your guardian?

Cecily. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

Gwendolen. Oh! It is strange that Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure,

however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. [*Rising and going to her.*] I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well, just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly —

Cecily. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

Gwendolen. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception.

Cecily. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

Gwendolen. Yes.

Cecily. Oh, but it is not Mr. **Ernest** Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

Gwendolen. Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. **Ernest** Worthing who is your guardian?

Cecily. Quite sure. [*A pause.*] In fact, I am going to be Ernest's wife.

Gwendolen. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. [*Rather shy and confidingly.*] Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

Gwendolen. [*Quite politely, rising.*] My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me.

Cecily. [*Very politely, rising.*] I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [*Shows diary.*]

Gwendolen. [*Examines diary carefully.*] It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5:30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [*Produces diary of her own.*] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

Cecily. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you, he clearly has changed his mind.