

SIDE 1

Act 1 (pg. 14- pg. 16) Lady Bracknell and Jack

Lady Bracknell. [*Sitting down.*] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing. [*Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.*]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [*Pencil and note-book in hand.*] You are not down on my list of eligible young men. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady Bracknell. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady Bracknell. A very good age to be married. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack. [*After some hesitation.*] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. What is your income?

Jack. Eight thousand a year. I own a country home and a house in Belgrave Square.

Lady Bracknell. What number in Belgrave Square?

Jack. 149.

Lady Bracknell. [*Shaking her head.*] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. [*Thoroughly disgusted.*] Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

Jack. I regret to say that I have lost both of my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose **both** parents looks like carelessness. Who was your father?

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Jack. I am afraid I don't know. The fact is that my parents seem to have lost **me**. I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady Bracknell. Found?!

Jack. The late Mr. Thomas Worthing found me.

Lady Bracknell. Where did this gentleman **find** you?

Jack. [*Gravely.*] In a hand-bag.

Lady Bracknell. [*Incredulously.*] A hand-bag?!

Jack. [*Very seriously.*] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—in the cloak room at Victoria Station.

Lady Bracknell. The cloak room at Victoria Station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady Bracknell. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life.

Jack. What would you advise me to do?

Lady Bracknell. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to produce two parents as soon as possible.

Jack. Well, I don't see how I could manage to do *that*. I can produce the *hand-bag* at any moment.

Lady Bracknell. You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak room and form an alliance with a *purse*? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[*Lady Bracknell sweeps out in majestic indignation.*]

Jack. Good morning!

SIDE 2

Act 3 (pg. 37- pg. 38) Lady Bracknell and Jack

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. [*Steps forward.*] 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!

Jack. He came here without an invitation, he is impersonating my brother, who does not exist, he has been greedily eating my muffins, and, what's more, he hurt me when we were wrestling.

Lady Bracknell. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration, I have decided to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

Jack. Oh!