

ACT II OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

JACK:

- Miss Prism: "... I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility" (page 272)
 - The first real idea of Jack's country persona
- Algernon: "... I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result" (page 281)
 - Jack isn't as elegant or fashionable as Algy
- Gwendolyn: "... He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception" (page 287)
 - Ironic, as we know that Jack/Ernest is deceiving Gwendolyn on several levels at this point in the play.
- Jack: "... it is very painful to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have been reduced to such a painful position..." (page 291)
- Algernon: "What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have such an absolutely trivial nature" (page 292)
 - Non sequitur
- Stage Directions:
 - 'Enter... slowly... dressed in the deepest mourning' (page 277)
 - * Sets the scene for his melodramatic explanation of 'Ernest's' 'death'
 - 'shaking his head', 'press[ing] his hand convulsively', 'kiss[ing] her brow in a melancholy manner' (pages 278-279)
 - * Examples of his over-acting of his 'distress' at his brother's death.
 - 'Jack glares at [Algernon] and does not take his hand' (page 280)
 - * Shows Jack's disapproval of Algy's interruption of his well-thought out scheme. Also very childish

- The fight over the muffin-dish (page 293-294)
 - Again, show childishness and triviality

MARRIAGE:

- Miss Prism: "... by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation" (page 277)
- Miss Prism: "No married man is ever attractive except to his wife"
 - Chasuble: "And often, I've been told, not even to her" (page 277)
- Cecily: "... we have been engaged for the last three months."
- Algernon: "For the last three months? ... But how [?]" (page 283)
 - Shows triviality of marriage - how easily it is to be married. Also - woman in charge rather than the man
- Cecily: "It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once (page 284)
 - Inconstancy defines the seriousness of marriage (non sequitur)
- Words referring to marriage: "entrapped", "foolish promise", "unfortunate entanglement" (page 288)
- Gwendolyn: "We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where [he is] at present" (page 291)
 - Name more important than actual person

ETIQUETTE:

- Jack: "Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd" (page 281)
- Jack: "But I hate tea-cake."
- Algernon: "Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!" (page 294)
 - Politeness defined by food (trivial)

INTELLECTUALISM:

- Cecily: "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" (page 272)
 - Importance of language style over actual content
- Miss Prism: "The good ended happily and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means" (page 273)
 - Strict boundaries on creativity
- Chasuble: "I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer" (page 275)
 - Classical allusion, but made comical by Miss Prism's lack of understanding
- Gwendolyn: "... even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the... physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples... If it were not so, indeed, History would be quite unreadable" (page 287)
 - Trivialisation of History - scandal most interesting part.

WIT / CLEVERNESS

- Chasuble / Miss Prism: "I spoke metaphorically..." (pages 274, 277)
 - Use of cleverness to disguise feelings - facade
- Algernon: "If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always absolutely over-educated" (page 281)
- Cecily: "... flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in the country" (page 289)
- Gwendolyn: "I am glad to say... I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different" (page 289)
 - Use of wit as a verbal weapon
- Algernon: "It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stockbrokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties" (page 293)
- Jack: "... but you have been christened."
- Algernon: "... So I know my constitution can stand it... I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now... You can hardly have forgotten

that someone very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off... by a severe chill" (page 294)

- Algy subtly reminds Jack that if he is exposed as a fake, then so is Jack.

TRIVIALITY VS. SERIOUSNESS

- Cecily: "... Sometimes [Uncle Jack] is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well" (page 272)
 - Seriousness compared to an illness
- Cecily: "... the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down I should probably forget all about them." (page 273)
- Algernon: "... it is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning..." (page 281)
- Cecily: "... we have been engaged since February... and... I only met you today for the first time" (page 285)
- Algernon: "... one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying" (page 292)
 - Serious about trivial things

SETTING

- "Garden at the Manor House... full of roses. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew-tree..." (page 272)
 - New setting - more romantic

HANDS

- Chasuble: (raising his hand) (page 277)
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- "Jack presses his hand convulsively" (page 278)
 - Hands an extension of Jack's deception
- Enter Algernon and Cecily hand in hand (page 279)
- Jack: "Nothing will induce me to take his hand" (page 280)
 - Hand-shake symbolises acceptance of Algy's deceit

Act 3 ^{Setting Hands} Quotes on Jack, Marriage, Intellectualism, Trivial vs. Serious

Jack: "(very irritably) How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell" - sarcastic (pg 298)

"And after six months nobody knew her" - defensive of Cecily (pg 299)

"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" - hypocritical (pg 300)

"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" - also marriage motif - shows Jack's manipulation (pg 302)

"Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But... why should there be one law for men and another for women?" (pg 305)

"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." (pg 306)

"On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital importance of Being Ernest" (pg 307)

Marriage: "I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell" (pg 297)

"I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta" (pg 298)

"Mr Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell" (pg 298)

"... and after three months her own husband didn't know her" (pg 299)

- Lady Bracknell

"And after six months nobody knew her" (pg 299) - Jack, suggesting husbands don't know their wives

"To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each others character before marriage" - Lady Bracknell (pg 300)

"... but I couldn't wait all that time... waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question" - Cecily (pg 301)

"Mr Worthing! I am unmarried!" (pg 305) - Miss Prism

"He was eccentric... and that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion..." (pg 306) - Lady Bracknell

~~Intellectualism~~ "Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young and of physical weakness in the old" (pg 297) - Lady Bracknell

"Her unhappy father is... 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" (pg 297) - Lady Bracknell

"I was not aware that Mr Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity." (pg 297) - Lady Bracknell

"~~F~~... the number of engagements that go on seem to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance" (pg 298) - Lady Bracknell

"My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian." (pg 300) - Lady Bracknell

"They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons" (pg 302) - Chauncey

"It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality." (Lady Bracknell) (pg 303)

"The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study" (pg 306) - Jack

~~Trivial vs. Serious~~ "Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!" (pg 296) - Gwendolen and Cecily

"Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr Worthing, mamma." (Gwendolen, pg 297)

"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" (Lady Bracknell, 297) - about Bunbury's death

"A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr Markbys is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied." (Lady Bracknell, pg 298)

"We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces" (Lady Bracknell, 299)

"Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89, a wine I was especially reserving for myself." (Jack, 300)

"... he subsequently stayed to tea and devoured every single muffin." (Jack, 300)

"My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become someone else?" (Gwendolen, 305)

"At the time Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?" (Jack, 306)

"Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst." (Jack, 306) → Jack has just learnt of his parents death

Setting "Morning-room at the Manor House. Gwendolen and Cecily are at the window, looking out into the garden" (Act III, pg 295) → women observing men, make them seem like helpless onlookers

Hands Jack (clasps hands with Algernon) (pg 297) → confirming how united men are in their 'self-sacrifice'

"Who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?" (Lady Bracknell, 298) → shows scorn for public display of affection/solidarity of Cecily + Algernon

"Mr Worthing there is some error. (Pointing to Lady Bracknell) There is the lady who can tell you who you really are." (Miss Prism, 305) → interaction adds drama

"I did my best, however, though I was out of practice" (Algernon, 305) said to Jack when they discover they are brothers (shakes hands after to show good relationship)

Andrew
Charlotte
Paradees

Miss Prism Mobile

ACT 1

characters

Gwendolen

★ Miss Prism "Change of her admirable governess, Miss Prism" (pg 288)

Love/Romance

themes

Morality

Culture

Religion

motifs

Witticisms/Truisms

Stage directions

typical expressions

Eating/Food

★ Gwendolen characterization quotes: "It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flicks with her" (pg 254)

"Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter" (pg 255 line 88)

"If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen..." (pg 259 line 258)

"I'm always smart! Aren't I, Mr Worthing?" (pg 260 line 287)

"You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax" (pg 260 line 288)

"Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions" (pg 260 line 290)

"The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you" (pg 262 line 383)

"Yes, mamma" (pg 264 line 460)

"Gwendolen is as right as trivet" (page 268, line 584)

★ Love/Romance quotes:

"I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her" (pg 254, line 67)

"If I ever get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact" (pg 255, line 76)

... who always flicks with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent' (pg 254 line 240)

'Cecily is a little too much interested in him' (pg 254 line 250)

* 'But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't (line 339) Ernst'

'You really love me, Gwendolen?' (pg 263 line 385)

'You know that I love you' (pg 263 line 416)

'I adore you' (pg 263 line 414)

★ Morality quotes:

~~The only way to behave to a woman is to make her love to her as to a pretty, and to secure the if she is plain' (pg 264 line 284)~~
(They seem, as a class, to have ~~some~~ ~~views~~ ~~on~~ ~~marriage~~ ~~which~~ ~~show~~ ~~an~~ ~~absolute~~ ~~lack~~ ~~of~~ ~~any~~ ~~sense~~ ~~of~~ ~~moral~~ ~~responsibility~~.)
written with

★ Culture quotes: 'more than half of modern culture depends on what one should read' (pg 256, line 130)

+ French 'girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right' (pg 255, line 97)

+ Brewster Music 'Pardon me, you are not engaged to anyone / I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact' (pg 264, line 450)

★ Religion quotes:

'Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralizing' (pg 253, line 27)

can be used for both

★ Witticisms / Truisms quotes:

'Divorces are made in Heaven' (pg 255 line 81)

'girls never marry the men they flirt with' (pg 256, line 97)

'It is a great truth' (pg 255, line 100)

'is the whole truth pure and simple' (pg 258, line 208)

'A man should always have an occupation of some kind' (pg 265 line 428)

'Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit, touch it and the bloom is gone' (pg 265 line 480)

'Land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure' (pg 265)

'Health is the primary duty of life' (pg 261 line 336)

'I never saw a woman so altered, she looks quite twenty years younger' (pg 260 line 293)

★ Stage directions:

'inspects [the sandwiches], takes two, and sits down on the sofa' (pg 253, line 1)

'goes over and takes sandwich' (pg 254, line 54) (pg 255, line 82)

'Jack puts out his hand to take a sandwich. Algernon at once interferes'

'Algernon takes it at once' (pg 256, line 119)

'Follows Algernon round the room' (pg 256, line 149) (pg 260, line 281)

'Algernon goes forward to meet [Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax]'

'Sees Jack and bows to him with icy coldness' (pg 260, line 285)

'Gwendolen and Jack sit down together in the corner' (pg 260, line 281)

'Picking up empty plates in horror' (pg 260, line 299)

'Exchanges glances with Jack' (pg 261, line 326)

'... Gwendolen remains behind' (pg 262, line 358)

'nervously' / 'Jack looks at her in amazement' (pg 262)

'He tries to rise; she restrains him' (pg 264, line 443)

'They rise together' (status?) (page 264, line 447)

'pencil and note-book in hand' (page 265, line 463)

'after some hesitation' (pg 265, line 477)

'Algernon, who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself and writes the address on his shirt-cuff.' (pg 270, line 694)

★ Eating / Food quotes:

'have you got the cucumber sandwiches ...?' (pg 253, line 9)

'Goes over and takes sandwich' (pg 254, line 54)