

Male/Male Duologue Sightreading

The Importance of Being Earnest

Oscar Wilde

Algernon and Jack

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: 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: In the country.

Algernon: What on earth do you do there?

Jack: 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: O, 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! 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's 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 I ever get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

Jack: I have no doubt about that dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specifically invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

Algernon: Oh! There is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven - - Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta.

Jack: Well, you have been eating them all the time.

Algernon: That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt.

An Ideal Husband

Oscar Wilde

Lord Caversham and Lord Goring

Caversham: Well, sir, what are you doing here? Wasting your time as usual I suppose?

Goring: My dear father, when one pays a visit it is for the purpose of wasting other people's time, not one's own.

Caversham: Have you been thinking over what I spoke to you about last night?

Goring: I have been thinking about nothing else.

Caversham: Engaged to be married yet?

Goring: Not yet; but I hope to be before lunch-time.

Caversham: You can have till dinner-time if it would be of any convenience to you.

Goring: Thanks awfully, but I think I'd sooner be engaged before lunch.

Caversham: Humph! Never know when you are serious or not.

Goring: Neither do I, father.

Pause

Caversham: I suppose you have read *The Times* this morning?

Goring: *The Times*? Certainly not. I only read *The Morning Post*. All that one should know about modern life is where the Duchesses are; anything else is quite demoralising.

Caversham: Do you mean to say you have not read *The Times* leading article on Robert Chiltern's career?

Goring: Good heavens! No. What does it say?

Caversham: What should it say, sir? Everything complimentary of course. Chiltern's speech last night on this Argentine Canal

scheme was one of the finest pieces of oratory ever delivered in the House since Canning.

Goring: Ah! Never heard of Canning. Never wanted to. And did...did Chiltern uphold the scheme?

Caversham: Uphold it sir? How little you know him! Why, he denounced it roundly, and the whole system of modern political finance. This speech is the turning-point in his career, as *The Times* points out. "Sir Robert Chiltern...most rising of our young statesmen...Represents what is best in English public life..." They will never say that of you, sir.

Goring: I sincerely hope not, father. However, I am delighted at what you tell me about Robert, thoroughly delighted. It shows he has got pluck.

Caversham: He has got more than pluck, sir, he has got genius.

Goring: Ah! I prefer pluck. It is not so common, nowadays, as genius is.

Caversham: I wish you would go into Parliament.

Goring: My dear father, only people who look dull ever get into the House of Commons, and only people who are dull ever succeed there.

Caversham: Why don't you try to do something useful in life?

Goring: I am far too young.

Caversham: I hate this affection of youth, sir. It is a great deal too prevalent nowadays.

Goring: Youth isn't an affection. Youth is an art.

Caversham: What don't you propose to that pretty Miss Chiltern?

Goring: I am of a very nervous disposition, especially in the morning.

Caversham: If she did accept you she would be the prettiest fool in England.

Goring: That is just what I would like to marry. A thoroughly sensible wife would reduce me to a condition of absolute idiocy in less than six months.

Caversham: You don't deserve her, sir.

Goring: My dear father, if we men married the women we deserved, we should have a very bad time of it.

