

FEMALE MONOLOGUES

MISS PRISM - Cecily, Cecily! Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson. 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 town. Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanor 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. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man, his brother. I do not think that even I could produce any effect on the character that according to his own brother's admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed, I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favor of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap.

GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX - Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on Mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over Mamma, I lost at the age of three. But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry someone else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you. The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by Mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibers of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. It may be necessary to do something desperate. That, of course, will require serious consideration.

CECILY CARDEW - You silly boy! Of course I'll marry you. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months. Ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. I daresay it was foolish me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest. The engagement was settled on the 14th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this little bangle with the true lovers knot I promised you always to wear. You've wonderful good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given you for leading such a leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener. The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

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JACK WORTHING - I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Ms. Cardew's Guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely declined to give. 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. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon, during my temporary absence in London on important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretense of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my Butler, an entire pint bottle of my Apple Cider. 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 have 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. My decision is unalterable. I declined to give my consent.

ALGERNON MONCRIEFF - 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'm quite sure of it now. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Earnest, 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 if I choose. Bunbury is 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 Tonight, I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week. 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 sit down with either no woman at all, or two. Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. 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.

REV. CHASUBLE - Your brother Ernest dead? Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolences. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers. Was the cause of death mentioned? I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here? You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. 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. 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 analogs I drew. (For

LANE/MERIMAN – use any of the three male monologues