

# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

A Humorous Reading

by  
Oscar Wilde



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From the play, "The Importance of Being Earnest."

The scene is the morning room of Algernon's flat in Half Moon Street. Discovered are Algernon and Jack Worthing. Jack has just expressed his intention of marrying Algernon's cousin, Gwendolen.

ALGERNON: My dear fellow, girls never marry the men they flirt with.

JACK: Oh, that is nonsense!

AL: It isn't. It accounts for the number of bachelors one sees. In the second place, before I allow you to marry Gwendolen, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. The name is in this cigarette case you left here.

JACK: Have you had my cigarette case all this time?--If you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

AL: But she says, "From little Cecily with her fondest love."

JACK: My dear fellow, some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. Give me back my cigarette case. (Follows Algernon)

AL: (Retreating, reads) "From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack." Why an aunt, no matter what her size should call her nephew her uncle, I can't quite make out. Besides, your name isn't Jack at all; here is one of your cards. "Mr. Ernest Worthing."

JACK: Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

AL: Your small Aunt Cecily calls you her dear uncle.

JACK: Well, produce my cigarette case, and I'll explain.

AL: Here. Now produce your explanation.

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