

## **The Importance of Being Earnest Oscar Wilde**

When Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff discover that the women they fall in love with will only marry a man named Ernest, they find themselves entangled in a lie as they unwillingly share their alter – ego – Ernest Worthing. Ruled over by the formidable Lady Bracknell. Finally, all is revealed by the timid and rigidly moral, but flawed Miss Prism.

### **Character Brief**

#### **Jack Worthing – Playing Age - Early 30's**

The protagonist of the play. Outwardly respectable. Jack leads a double life as Jack on his country estate and Ernest when he is in town. He was discovered in a handbag in the cloakroom of Victoria station and raised by an elderly gentleman. Jack was made guardian to the man's granddaughter, Cecily Cardew. He is in love with Algernon's cousin, Gwendolen Fairfax.

#### **Algernon Moncrieff - Early 30's**

Algernon is a charming and idle bachelor, nephew of Lady Bracknell, cousin of Gwendolen Fairfax, and best friend of Jack Worthing, whom he has known for years as Ernest. He is clever and amusing. In order to get out of dull social situations, Algernon has invented a fictional invalid called 'Bunbury' who he has to visit frequently.

#### **Gwendolen Fairfax – Early 30's**

Lady Bracknell's daughter and cousin to Algernon. She is in love with Jack, who she believes is called Ernest. She is clearly a highly intellectual character and speaks with authority on matters of taste and morality. A pretentious young woman who is determined she will only marry a man who has the name Ernest.

#### **Cecily Cardew – 18-20**

Jack's ward. Like Gwendolen, she is obsessed with the name Ernest. This has prompted her to fall in love with Jack's 'brother' Ernest. She invents a romance and a broken engagement between them. When Algernon turns up masquerading as Jack's brother she immediately insists that she is in love with him.

### **Lady Bracknell 50 – 70**

An authoritarian character who dominates every scene she is in. Algernon's aunt and Gwendolen's mother. She wants her daughter to marry well and has a list of eligible men. She makes unintentional humorous remarks. She represents a Wilde's satirical view of the hypocrisy of the British Aristocracy.

### **Miss Prism ( Governess) – 50 +**

Cecily's governess, prone to moralizing to such an extent that her remarks often cause amusement. She, however, is not entirely blameless, as she admits her earlier error. She has romantic feelings for Dr Chasuble

### **Lane – 50+**

Algernon's valet, he is well aware of Algernon's habit of 'Bunburying'

### **Merriman ( Butler ) 40+**

The butler at Jack's country estate – a rather sardonic character.

### **Rev Chasuble – 50-70**

A rector in the local church near Jack's estate. He is asked by both Algernon and Jack to christen them 'Ernest' He holds secret feelings for Miss Prism.

It is my intention to set the play in the 1920's but this will be discussed further at the auditions.

Thank you

Carole