

## Act One

*[The living room of Algernon Moncrieff's flat in Mayfair, London. Lane is arranging afternoon tea on a table. Algernon enters]*

**Algernon:** Lane, have you made the cucumber sandwiches for Lady Bracknell's tea?

**Lane:** Yes, sir. *[Handing them to Algernon on a silver tray]*

**Algernon:** *[Looking carefully at them, taking two and sitting down on the sofa]* Oh, by the way<sup>p</sup>, Lane, I looked at your notebook. I noticed that when Lord Shoreman and Mr Worthing dined with me on Thursday night, eight bottles of champagne were drunk.

**Lane:** Yes, sir; eight bottles.

**Algernon:** Why is it that, in a bachelor's home, the servants always drink the champagne? I just ask because I am interested, Lane.

**Lane:** I think that it is because the champagne is better in a bachelor's home. I have noticed that the champagne in married people's homes is rarely very good.

**Algernon:** Good heavens<sup>p</sup>! Is marriage so depressing?

**Lane:** I believe marriage is very pleasant, sir. I haven't had much experience of it myself. I have only been married once, and that was because of a misunderstanding<sup>30</sup> between myself and a young person.

**Algernon:** *[Lazily, without interest]* I am not very interested in your family life, Lane.

**Lane:** No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

**Algernon:** That is very understandable. Well, thank you, Lane.

*[Lane goes off]*

**Algernon:** *[To himself]* Lane's views on marriage seem very casual. Really, if the servants don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem to have no morals<sup>31</sup>.

*[Lane enters]*

**Lane:** Mr Ernest Worthing is here, sir.