**JACK/GWENDOLEN SIDE**

**Jack.**  Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

**Gwendolen.**  Pray don’t talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing.  Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else.  And that makes me so nervous.

**Jack.**  I do mean something else.

**Gwendolen.**  I thought so.  In fact, I am never wrong.

**Jack.**  And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell’s temporary absence.

**Gwendolen.**  I would certainly advise you to do so.  Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

**Jack.**  [Nervously.]  Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

**Gwendolen.**  Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact.  And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative.  For me you have always had an irresistible fascination.  Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you.  [**Jack** looks at her in amazement.]  We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in an age of ideals.  The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial pulpits, I am told; and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest.  There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence.  The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

**Jack.**  You really love me, Gwendolen?

**Gwendolen.**  Passionately!

**Jack.**  Darling!  You don’t know how happy you’ve made me.

**Gwendolen.**  My own Ernest!

**Jack.**  But you don’t really mean to say that you couldn’t love me if my name wasn’t Ernest?

**Gwendolen.**  But your name is Ernest.

**Jack.**  Yes, I know it is.  But supposing it was something else?  Do you mean to say you couldn’t love me then?

**Gwendolen.**  [Glibly.]  Ah! that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.

**Jack.**  Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don’t much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don’t think the name suits me at all.

**Gwendolen.**  It suits you perfectly.  It is a divine name.  It has a music of its own.  It produces vibrations.

**Jack.**  Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names.  I think Jack, for instance, a charming name.

**Gwendolen.**  Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed.  It does not thrill.  It produces absolutely no vibrations . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain.  Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John!  And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John.  She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment’s solitude.  The only really safe name is Ernest.

**Jack.**  Gwendolen, I must get christened at once—I mean we must get married at once.  There is no time to be lost.

**Gwendolen.**  Married, Mr. Worthing?

**Jack.**  [Astounded.]  Well . . . surely.  You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

**Gwendolen.**  I adore you.  But you haven’t proposed to me yet.  Nothing has been said at all about marriage.  The subject has not even been touched on.

**Jack.**  Well . . . may I propose to you now?

**Gwendolen.**  I think it would be an admirable opportunity.