**SIDE 4 Lady Bracknell and Jack**

**Lady Bracknell.**  [Sitting down.]  You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

**Jack.**  Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

**Lady Bracknell.**  [Pencil and note-book in hand.]  I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men.  However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires.  Do you smoke?

**Jack.**  Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

**Lady Bracknell.**  I am glad to hear it.  A man should always have an occupation of some kind.  How old are you?

**Jack.**  Twenty-nine.

**Lady Bracknell.**  A very good age to be married at.  I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing.  Which do you know?

**Jack.**  [After some hesitation.]  I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

**Lady Bracknell.**  I am pleased to hear it.  What is your income?

**Jack.**  Between seven and eight thousand a year.

**Lady Bracknell.**  [Makes a note in her book.]  In land, or in investments?

**Jack.**  In investments, chiefly.

**Lady Bracknell.**  That is satisfactory. Land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure.

**Jack.**  I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don’t depend on that for my real income.

**Lady Bracknell.**  A country house!  How many bedrooms?  Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards.  You have a townhouse, I hope?  A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

**Jack.**  Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square.

**Lady Bracknell.**  What number in Belgrave Square?

**Jack.**  149.

**Lady Bracknell.**  [Shaking her head.]  The unfashionable side.  I thought there was something.  However, that could easily be altered.

**Jack.**  Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

**Lady Bracknell.**  [Sternly.]  Both, if necessary, I presume.  Now to minor matters.  Are your parents living?

**Jack.**  I have lost both my parents.

**Lady Bracknell.**  To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.  Who was your father?  He was evidently a man of some wealth.  Was he born into the world of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

**Jack.**  I am afraid I really don’t know.  The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents.  It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don’t actually know who I am by birth.  I was . . . well, I was found.

**Lady Bracknell.**  Found!

**Jack.**  The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time.  Worthing is a place in Sussex.  It is a seaside resort.

**Lady Bracknell.**  Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

**Jack.**  [Gravely.]  In a hand-bag.

**Lady Bracknell.**  A hand-bag?

**Jack.**  [Very seriously.]  Yes, Lady Bracknell.  I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

**Lady Bracknell.**  In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

**Jack.**  In the cloak-room at Victoria Station.  It was given to him in mistake for his own.

**Lady Bracknell.**  The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

**Jack.**  Yes.  The Brighton line.

**Lady Bracknell.**  The line is immaterial.  To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life.  As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognized position in good society.

**Jack.**  May I ask you then what you would advise me to do?  I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen’s happiness.

**Lady Bracknell.**  I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

**Jack.**  Well, I don’t see how I could possibly manage to do that.  I can produce the hand-bag at any moment.  It is in my dressing-room at home.  I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

**Lady Bracknell.**  Me, sir!  What has it to do with me?  You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel?  Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[**Lady Bracknell** sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

**Jack.**  Good morning!