The Importance of Being Earnest

A Trivial Comedy for Serious People

The entire play as a full colour graphic novel!

Two young gentlemen living in 1890’s England use imaginary friends to inject some excitement into their seemingly dull lives. Jack Worthing invents a brother, Ernest, whom he pretends to be in order to visit his beloved Gwendolen in the city. Meanwhile, friend Algý Moncrieff uses the name ‘Ernest’ while visiting Jack’s beautiful young ward, Cecily in the country.

Much confusion ensues as the two women find out they have been deceived by their ‘Ernests’.

Some would call this a society comedy; others, a Victorian farce. Regardless of the term used, this three-act play from Oscar Wilde captures the era effortlessly.

With an intricate attention to detail, wonderful characterisation and dramatically expressive and humorous artwork, this really is a graphic novel to cherish.

Script Adaptation, Characters & Artwork: John Stokes
Lettering, Design & Layout: Jo Wheeler
Editor in Chief: Clive Bryant

“Whether the comic contains the original text or an adapted version, it’s about enticing young readers to read, introducing them to the Classics, and providing them with a chance to appreciate and understand great literature. That’s how horizons are broadened. That’s education.”

Chad Boudreau,
www.ComicReaders.com

“Classical Comics provide schools with a fabulous resource. Every school should have copies and every school library NEEDS these publications... It is perfect for guided reading and provides a non reductive access point to the classics of literature for pupils who would not otherwise engage with such texts.”

Alan Peat,
Educational Consultant

“The folks at Classical Comics have ‘turned up the excitement volume’ when it comes to classical literature.”

Mary Lee Hahn,
AY ear of Reading

“Classical Comics’ graphic novels stand out way above others. The quality of the artwork is exceptional - the detail, relevance to the subject matter and the way they convey the emotions of the book are wonderful!”

Sarah Brew,
www.parentsintouch.co.uk

GOOD AFTERNOON, DEAR ALGERNON, I HOPE YOU ARE BEHAVING VERY WELL.
I’m feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

That’s not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together.

Dear me, you are smart!

I am always smart! Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

You’re quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments.—

— and I intend to develop in many directions.

I’m sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn’t been there since her poor husband’s death. I never saw a woman so altered;

She looks quite twenty years younger.

And now I’ll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

Certainly, Aunt Augusta.
Won’t you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

Thanks, mamma. I’m quite comfortable where I am.

Good heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

No cucumbers!

No, sir. Not even for ready money.

That will do, Lane, thank you.

Thank you, sir.

I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief. It certainly has changed its colour, from what cause I, of course, cannot say.
“Thank you. I’ve quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband.

It’s delightful to watch them.

I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he is going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd.

Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others.
Thank you, Algernon.

It is very thoughtful of you.

I’m sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations.

It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me.

I’ll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he’ll be all right by Saturday.

Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don’t listen, and if one plays bad music people don’t talk, but I’ll run over the programme I’ve drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

Certainly, mamma.

French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and, indeed I believe is so.
WHENEVER PEOPLE TALK TO ME ABOUT THE WEATHER, I ALWAYS FEEL QUITE CERTAIN THAT THEY MEAN SOMETHING ELSE, AND THAT MAKES ME SO NERVOUS.

I DO MEAN SOMETHING ELSE.

I THOUGHT SO. IN FACT, I AM NEVER WRONG.

MISS FAIRFAX, EVER SINCE I MET YOU I HAVE ADMIRE YOU MORE THAN ANY GIRL...

I HAVE EVER MET...

I MET YOU.

MAMMA HAS A WAY OF COMING BACK SUDDENLY INTO A ROOM THAT I HAVE OFTEN HAD TO SPEAK TO HER ABOUT.

AND I WOULD LIKE TO BE ALLOWED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LADY BRACKNELL’S TEMPORARY ABSENCE...

I WOULD CERTAINLY ADVISE YOU TO DO SO.

MISS FAIRFAX, EVER SINCE I MET YOU I HAVE ADMIRE YOU MORE THAN ANY GIRL...

I HAVE EVER MET...

I MET YOU.

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.

CHARMING DAY IT HAS BEEN, MISS FAIRFAX.

PRAY DON’T TALK TO ME ABOUT THE WEATHER, MR. WORTHING.
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 someone 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.

Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me. My own Ernest!

But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

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

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.

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.

It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own.

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.

It produces vibrations.

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.
Mr. Worthing?

We... may I propose to you now? I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you.

Gwendolen, I must get christened at once -

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.

GWENDOLEN, I MUST GET CHRISTENED AT ONCE -

I MEAN WE MUST GET MARRIED AT ONCE. THERE IS NO TIME TO BE LOST.

MARRIED, MR. WORTHINGS?

SURELY, YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU AND YOU LED ME TO BELIEVE, MISS FAIRFAX, THAT YOU WERE NOT ABSOLUTELY INDIFFERENT TO ME.

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.

Well... may I propose to you now?

Well... I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

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.

Well... you know that I love you and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

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.

Well... may I propose to you now?

I think it would be an admirable opportunity and to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you.