

Miss Prism reprimands Cecily

- MPr:** Cecily, Cecily! [...] The watering of flowers is rather [the gardener's] duty than yours? Especially at the moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.
- Ccl:** But I don't like German. [...]
- MPr:** Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. [...]
- Ccl:** Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! [...]
- MPr:** [...] I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.
- Ccl:** I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.
- MPr:** Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. [...] You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.
- Ccl:** I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. [...]
- MPr:** [...] I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.
- Ccl:** I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down I should probably forget all about them.
- MPr:** Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.
- Ccl:** Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that [the bookshop] sends us.
- MPr:** Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.
- Ccl:** Did you really, Miss Prism? [...] I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.
- MPr:** The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what fiction means.
- Ccl:** I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?
- MPr:** Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

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