

(5) Reclam: 41/21-45/07 (631) [1w / 1m]

Algy homing in on young Cecily

Ccl: "Mr. Ernest Worthing, B.4 The Albany, W." Uncle Jack's brother! [...] Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. [...]

Ccl: I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like everyone else. - He does!

Alg: You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

Ccl: You are under some strange mistake: I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than unusually tall for my age. But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

Alg: Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

Ccl: If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

Alg: Oh! Of course I have been rather reckless.

Ccl: I am glad to hear it.

Alg: In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

Ccl: I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

Alg: It is much pleasanter being here with you.

Ccl: I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

Alg: That is a great disappointment. [...]

Ccl: I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

Alg: About my what?

Ccl: Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

Alg: I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

Ccl: I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

Alg: Australia? I'd sooner die.

Ccl: Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

Alg: Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Ccl: Yes, but are you good enough for it?

Alg: I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

Ccl: I'm afraid I have no time, this afternoon.

Alg: Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

Ccl: [...] I think you should try.

Alg: I will. - I feel better already.

Ccl: You are looking a little worse.

Alg: That is because I am hungry.

Ccl: How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

Alg: Thank you. Might I have a button-hole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a button-hole first.

Ccl: A Marechal Niel?

Alg: No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

Ccl: Why?

Alg: Because you are like a pink rose, cousin Cecily.

Ccl: I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

Alg: Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

Ccl: Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

Alg: They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

Ccl: Oh! I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about.