

(7) (814) [1 w / 1 m]

Algernon proposes to Cecily

Ccl: Oh, [...]. I thought you were with Uncle Jack. [...]

Alg: He's going to send me away.

Ccl: Then have we got to part?

Alg: I am afraid so. It is a very painful parting.

Ccl: It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. [...]

Alg: Thank you.

Mrn: The dog-cart is at the door, sir.

Ccl: It can wait, Merriman – for – five minutes.

Mrn: Yes, Miss.

Alg: I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

Ccl: I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me I will copy your remarks into my diary.

Alg: Do you really keep a diary? [...]

Ccl: [...] Pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached "absolute perfection." You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

Alg: Ahem! [...] Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

Ccl: [...] Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

Alg: Cecily!

Mrn: The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

Alg: Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

Mrn: Yes, sir.

Ccl: Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew [...].

Alg: Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

Ccl: You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

Alg: For the last three months?

Ccl: Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

Alg: But how did we become engaged?

Ccl: Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be

something in him after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

Alg: Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

Ccl: On the 14th of February last. [...] The next day I bought this little ring in your name. [...]

Alg: Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

Ccl: [...] And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters.

Alg: My letters! By my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

Ccl: You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. [...]

Alg: Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

Ccl: Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. [...]

Alg: What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

Ccl: You dear romantic boy. I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

Alg: Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

Ccl: I am so glad. [...] Besides, of course, there is the question of your name.

Alg: Yes, of course.

Ccl: You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love someone whose name was Ernest. There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. [...]

Alg: But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

Ccl: But what name?

Alg: Oh, any name you like – Algernon – for instance.

Ccl: But I don't like the name Algernon.

Alg: Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. [...] Seriously, Cecily – if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

Ccl: I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.

Alg: I must see [Dr Chasuble] at once on a most important christening – I mean on most important business.

Ccl: Oh!

Alg: I shan't be away more than a half an hour.

Ccl: Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you today for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a period as half an hour. Couldn't you make it twenty minutes?

Alg: I'll be back in no time.

Ccl: What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.