APPENDICES

Biography of Oscar Wilde

Oscar Fingal O’ Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in 1854. William Wilde, his father, was a doctor, specialist in disease of the eye and ear. Lady Jane Francesca Wilde, his mother, was a poet, journalist and well-known intellectuals in Dublin, Ireland. Although Wilde’s were not of the aristocracy, they were nonetheless prosperous and sent Oscar to the finest schools as he grew up. His mother was a best friend for him, as Oscar seems especially influenced by his mother, a brilliantly humorous storyteller, and he was frequently invited while still a child to participate in their intellectual circle of friends (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 23, page 596).

In 1871, Oscar attended the Portora Royal School at Enniskillen, where Oscar excelled at studying the classics, obtaining top prize his last two years, and also earning a second prize in drawing. In 1871, Oscar was awarded by the Royal School Scholarship to attend Trinity College in Dublin. Again, he did particularly
well in his classics courses, placing first in his examinations in 1872 and earning the highest honor the college could give on an undergraduate, a Foundation Scholarship. In 1874, Oscar reached his successes at Trinity with two final achievements. He won the college's Berkeley Gold Medal for Greek and was awarded a Demyship scholarship to Magdalen College in Oxford.

Oscar's father died on April 19, 1876, leaving the family financially strapped. Henry, William's eldest son, take over the wild's role. He paid the finance on the family's house and supported them until his sudden death in 1877. Meanwhile, Oscar continued to do well at Oxford. He was awarded the Newdigate prize for his poem, *Ravenna*, and a First Class in both his "Mods" and "Greats" by his examiners. After graduation, Oscar moved to London to live with his friend Frank Miles, a popular high society portrait painter. In 1881, he published his first collection of poetry. *Poems* received mixed reviews by critics, but helped to move Oscar's writing career along, and was a well-known enough entity to be satirized by a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera. He moved to the avant-garde neighborhood of Chelsea in London (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 23, page 596).

In December 1881, Oscar sailed for New York to travel across the United States and carry a series of lectures on aesthetics. The 50-lecture tour was originally scheduled to last four months, but extended to nearly a year, with over 140 lectures given in 260 days. In between lectures he made time to meet with Henry Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Walt Whitman. He also arranged for his play, *Vera*, and then was staged in New York the following year. When he returned from America, Oscar spent three months in Paris writing a blank-verse
tragedy that had been commissioned by the actress Mary Anderson. When he sent it to her, however, she turned it down. He then started out on a lecture tour of Britain and Ireland (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 23, page 596).

In 1884, Oscar married a shy and rich Irishwoman, Constance Lloyd. She was a skilled woman who could speak several European languages and had an outspoken, independent mind. After they had married, they moved in to a posh London house. Their marriage was awarded two children, Cyril in 1885 and Vyvyan in 1886. For supporting Oscar’s family, he briefly worked at The Woman’s World magazine from 1887-1889, and he wrote a collection of fairy tales and more essays championing the Aesthetic movement. In the 1890s, he published his two works of children’s stories, The happy Prince And Other Tales (1888) and The House of Pomegranates (1892). In 1890, he also published his first and only novel, The Picture of Dorian Gray, a Faustian tale about beauty and youth. In February 1892 he opened his first play, Lady Windermere's Fan. The other plays such as Salome (1892), A Woman of No Importance (1893), An Ideal Husband (1895), and The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) were his works which finally made him well-known as a playwright. His last play, The Importance of Being Earnest, is also considered his greatest and the modern shining example of the comedy of manners.

However, by now Wilde was infatuated with the younger, beautiful poet Lord Alfred Douglas (known as "Bosie"), and he was not shy about flaunting their sexual relationship. Douglas’s father, the Marquess of Queensbury, accused Wilde of sodomy. Wilde, never one to back down from a fight, charged Queensbury with
slander. However, Queensbury had several of Wilde's letters to Bosie and other incriminating evidence as well. Alongside the provocative material in Wilde's work, the writer was found guilty of homosexuality in a second trial and sentenced to two years of hard labor (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 23, page 596).

In 1897, while in prison, Wilde wrote *De Profundis*, an examination of his newfound spirituality. After his release, he moved to France under an assumed name. He wrote *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898 and published two letters on the poor conditions of prison; one of the letters helped reform a law to prevent children from imprisonment. His new life in France, however, was lonely, impoverished, and humiliating. Wilde died in 1900 at the age of 46 from Meningitis, in a Paris hotel room. Nevertheless, he retained his epigrammatic wit until his last breath; he is rumored to have said in the drab hotel room, "My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. One of us has to go." Critical and popular attention to Wilde has experienced a great resurgence; numerous films based on his plays and life have delighted audiences, while his writings remain a wellspring of witty and subtle thought on aestheticism, morality, and society (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 23, page 596).
Synopsis of *The Importance of Being Earnest*

The drama tells about two men, Earnest Worthing (or Jack in the cast list and Jack in the body of the play) and Algernon Moncrieff (Algy). In 1895, in a stylish and artistic London flat, Algy is preparing for the arrival of his aunt, Lady Bracknell, and her daughter, Gwendolen. His butler, Lane, brings in Jack. Jack says that he just returned from the country. Of course Algy is curious by his coming to town. Jack tells that she has come to town to propose Gwendolen. Algy is surprised, as doubt Jack’s love to Gwendolen. He is doubtful to Jack’s love to Gwendolen, because the way Jack flirts with Gwendolen is completely disgraceful as bad as Gwendolen flirts with Jack. Algy says that before Jack proposes to Gwendolen he has to explain first a question of Cecily. Algy calls Lane to bring in the cigarette case. Jack says that Cecily is her aunt. But Algy does not believe him, as the inscription inside the cigarette case says:” From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear uncle Jack.” Moreover Algy knows his name is not Jack, but Ernest. Jack finally reveals that he has a name of Ernest when he is in town and a name of Jack in the country. Algy says that Jack has been undergoing a “Bunburying”, as Algy does. Algy has also invented an invalid brother named Bunbury.

Jack explains that Cecily is a granddaughter of Thomas Cardew, who lives in the country. Jack was adopted by Mr. Cardew and inquired to be a guardian to Cecily. Cecily now lives at Jack’s place in the country under the guidance of her governess, Miss Prism. Since Jack must maintain a high level of morality to set an
example, he needs an excuse to get into town. He has invented an idle younger brother named Ernest who lives in Albany. Algernon also confesses that he has created an invalid, Bunbury, in the country. He uses the Bunbury whenever he needs to get out of town. Jack says he is tired to be "Ernest," but Algernon maintains that he will need him more than ever if he marries.

Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen arrive. Algy tells Lady Bracknell that he will be unable to attend her dinner tonight, as Bunbury is ill. They go into the music room. While Jack gives ten minutes to confesses his feeling to Gwendolen in the living room. Then Jack begins, he says that he likes her, and Gwendolen admits that she likes him, too. Gwendolen discloses that she has always dreamed to love someone named Ernest. Jack asks if his name were not Ernest would she still love him, and she answered She would, she will remain love him. He proposes to her, and she accepts. Suddenly Lady Bracknell comes in, and Gwendolen informs her of their engagement. Lady Bracknell says that only she or her father can engage Gwendolen, and orders her to wait in the carriage.

After examining Jack, Lady Bracknell learns from Jack that he was an orphan, found in a handbag on a train. She is stunned and says she will not allow her daughter to marry him. She wants Jack to look for a parent of any sex immediately, but he refuses that.

Jack tells Algy what happened, and also says he will “kill” his brother Ernest later in the week. Algernon expresses interest in meeting Cecily, but Jack does not want this to happen, as she is young and pretty. Then unexpectedly, Gwendolen returns. She tells Algernon to turn his back, as she wants to speak
personally with Jack. She asks Jack his address in the country. She promises to
write him quite often when he returns there. Algernon slyly listens their
conversation behind and writes down and checks a train timetable. As soon as
Jack and Gwendolen leave, Algy orders Lane to prepare everything he needs, as
he will be going Bunburying tomorrow.

In the garden at Jack's country house, Miss Prism and Cecily are
discussing Jack's seriousness; Miss Prism believes it is due to his anxiety over his
brother. Dr. Chasuble enters the garden and asks Miss Prism to leave for a walk
together. Merriman, their butler, announces the arrival of Ernest Worthing. Algy
enters and he introduces himself as Ernest. He and Cecily briefly discuss his
"wicked" reputation, while he tries to flirt with Cecily. Algy soon learns from
Cecily that Jack will be back Monday afternoon, Algernon says that he must leave
Monday morning.

Miss Prism and Chasuble return. She advises him to get married to a
mature lady. Then Jack comes to the garden in black dress. He says that he has
returned earlier than expected, and informs that his black dress describe his sorry,
as his brother Ernest has died in Paris last night. Jack asks Chasuble if he would
christen him this afternoon. He agrees. When Cecily appears from the house, she
tells that she is absolutely glad because of his brother coming. She says that she
has met Ernest and now he is in the dining room. Jack surprised and says he
doesn't have a brother anymore. She runs into the house and brings out Algy. Jack
refuses to shake Algernon's hand, but Cecily says that "Ernest" has been telling
him about his friend Bunbury, and that someone who takes care of an invalid must
have some good in him. Everyone but Jack and Algy leaves. Jack orders Merriman to get the dogcart, as Ernest has been called back to town. Jack tells Algy he must leave, while Algernon conveys an interest in Cecily. Jack exits.

Cecily enters the garden. Merriman tells Algernon the dogcart is ready, but Cecily says it can wait. Algernon compliments Cecily to her great delight, then tells Merriman that the dogcart can come back next week. He asks Cecily to marry him, and she points out that they have been engaged for three months. She shows him the box of letters he wrote to her. But actually the letters was written by Cecily for herself. She also admits that she loves him because his name is Ernest. Algy asks her whether she would still love him if his name were Algernon. And she says might be doubtful to love Algernon. Algy says he needs to see Chasuble quickly about christening. He wants to be christened as Ernest.

Merriman announces that Gwendolen has insisted to see Mr. Worthing (Jack). Cecily informs him that he has gone off to see Chasuble some time ago, but invites her in. Gwendolen immediately takes to Cecily, but wishes Cecily were not so young and charming, as "Ernest," despite his moral nature, is still susceptible to temptation. Cecily tells her that she is not Ernest's ward, but his brother Jack's. She also says that she is going to marry Ernest. They compare diary entries. Gwendolen feels she has the prior claim, since Ernest asked to marry her yesterday. The girls argue and insult each other.

When Jack enters the garden, Gwendolen asks if he is engaged to Cecily; he laughs and denies it. Cecily says the man before them is not Ernest at all, but
he is her Uncle Jack. As Gwendolen goes into shock, Algernon enters, and Cecily calls him Ernest. She asks if he is married to Gwendolen; he denies it. Gwendolen says that his name is Algernon. Cecily is upset, and she and Gwendolen hold each other and make up. Jack at last confesses that he has no brother Ernest, or any brother at all. The women leave the house. Jack is angry with Algy for he has been a troublemaker with his Bunburying. Then both Algy and Jack arrange to meet Chasuble and ask him to christen them "Ernest" later that evening. Jack tells Algy to leave his house, but he refuses.

Jack and Algernon meet Gwendolen and Cecily inside the country house. The women tell the men their Christian names are still being a problem. The men reveal that they are to be re-christened this afternoon, and the couples hug.

Lady Bracknell arrives, and Gwendolen, once again, informs her of her engagement. Unluckily, Lady Bracknell also does not agree with their engagement. She asks Jack to not continue their relationship.

Jack introduces Cecily to Lady Bracknell, and Algy says that he is engaged to her. Lady Bracknell gives her consent for their marriage, because she discovers Cecily has a large personal fortune. Jack, however, does not give his consent, as Jack assumes it is too young for Cecily to marry in her 18. He would only give his consent if she has reached 35 years old. He also suspects Algy as an untruthful man, as he has impersonated to be Jack's brother. It seems Jack is prowling to get his chance to marry Gwendolen. Jack tells Lady Bracknell that he would give his consent to the marriage of Algy and Cecily if she also gives
her consent to his marriage with Gwendolen. Arrogantly, Lady Bracknell refuses and tells Gwendolen to get ready for the train.

Chasuble enters and announces that the christenings are ready. Lady Bracknell refuses to allow Algernon to be baptized, and Jack tells Chasuble that the christenings will not be necessary any more. Chasuble says he will leave, and says that Miss Prism is waiting for him. Learning Miss Prism presents, Lady Bracknell surprised and, at once, accuses her of kidnapping a baby boy from her house 28 years ago. Miss Prism’s face goes pale; he replies that he admits that. Under Jack's questioning, Miss Prism reveals she accidentally left the baby in a handbag on the Brighton railway line. Jack leaves excitedly.

Jack leaves for a moment and returns with a handbag. Miss Prism confesses that it is the same handbag. Jack tells her he was the baby. Lady Bracknell informs Jack that he is the son of her sister. Jack soon realizes that Algy is his brother. Jack asks Lady Bracknell what his original name was. She says he was named after his father. After looking up his name under the Army Lists, they learn his full name was Ernest John Moncrieff. All people in the room are cheerful and embrace each other. Jack tells Lady Bracknell that this the first time in his live he has just realized the vital importance of being Ernest.