

READING

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Lady Augusta Bracknell

Lady Augusta Bracknell was a very distinguished lady, known by many people in London for her excellent dinner parties. She had an opinion on most things and people rarely disagreed with her. Her daughter, Miss Gwendolen Fairfax, was beautiful and well educated. She enjoyed interesting conversation and she pretended not to be as intelligent as she appeared. It was around half past five when their arrival was announced by Lane.

Lady Bracknell was wearing a heavy dress of many layers and a hat. Her hat sat slightly to the right of her head. She wore a large necklace around her neck. Gwendolen had a simpler dress. She looked slim and fashionable. She was carrying a parasol.

‘Good afternoon, Algernon!’

His aunt allowed him to kiss her cheek.

‘I hope you are behaving well,’ she said.

‘I am feeling well,’ replied Algernon.

‘In my experience, the two things are very different,’ said Lady Bracknell. ‘I’m sorry that we are late. I went to visit Lady Harbury. She doesn’t look the same since her poor husband died. In fact, she looks twenty years younger!’

She walked around the room to make sure everything was in order before finally sitting down. The butler brought over a tray and put it on a small side table.

‘Algernon, where are the cucumber sandwiches you promised me?’ she asked.

‘Lane, where are the cucumber sandwiches?’ asked Algernon.

‘I’m sorry, sir. I tried to get some cucumbers at the market. I offered good money for them too, but I couldn’t find them anywhere.’

(From Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, chapter 2)

Level: Step 3, B1.2



READING&AUDIO ACTIVITIES

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Comprehension check

1 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why is Lady Bracknell well known in London?
- 2 What does Gwendolyn Fairfax like?
- 3 Who do they visit?
- 4 What happened to Lady Harbury?
- 5 Who is Lane and what's his job?

2 Vocabulary: which is the odd one out?

- 1 hat gloves scarf purse
- 2 mother son friend daughter
- 3 cucumber salad pumpkin zucchini

3 Language&style

How would you define the style of this text? Choose from the following (more than one).

- lively sad humorous ironic serious

4 Listening

Listen to the text and decide if each statement is correct (A) or incorrect (B).

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Algernon doesn't care about cucumber sandwiches | A | B |
| 2 Lady Bracknell had cake with Lady Harbury | A | B |
| 3 Algernon cannot have dinner with his aunt | A | B |
| 4 Lady Bracknell likes Bunbury a lot. | A | B |
| 5 Algernon is worried for his friend Bunbury | A | B |
| 6 People always talk when they listen to music | A | B |

