

CECILY. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWENDOLEN. Well, to speak with perfect candor, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honor. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than ancient history, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, history would be quite unreadable.

CECILY. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. Yes.

CECILY. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother — his elder brother.

GWENDOLEN, *(sitting down again)* Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

CECILY. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

GWENDOLEN. Ah! That accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? ~~Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?~~

CECILY. Quite sure. *(a pause)* In fact, I am going to be his.

GWENDOLEN. *(enquiringly)* I beg your pardon?

CECILY. *(rather shy and confidingly)* Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWENDOLEN. *(quite politely, rising)* My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

CECILY. *(very politely, rising)* I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. *(Shows diary.)*

GWENDOLEN. *(examining diary through her lorgnette carefully)* It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at five-thirty. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. *(Produces a diary of her own.)* I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

CECILY. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

GWENDOLEN. *(meditatively)* If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CECILY. *(thoughtfully and sadly)* Whatever unfortunate

# What I did last Summer

By A.R. Gurney Jr.

CHARLIE. What cavalry?

ANNA. Never mind, but they'll be here, Charlie. So you're my last best hope. Now let's see what you've done.

CHARLIE. Not much, actually.

ANNA. It lacks commitment . . . We'll have to liberate your spirit. We'll tune up on my tomatoes.

CHARLIE. Your tomahtoes? Again?

ANNA. My *tomaytoes*, please. They're a vulgar fruit. Use the vulgar pronunciation.

CHARLIE. We've already talked about your *tomaytoes*.

ANNA. Then let's see how much you remember.

CHARLIE. Your seeds go way, way back.

ANNA. Yes.

CHARLIE. They came from your great-grandmother who was an Indian princess . . .

ANNA. Yes . . .

CHARLIE. And she got them from her lover, who was a French trapper . . .

ANNA. Yes. Who rowed them across the Niagara gorge . . .

CHARLIE. And so they've come down to you . . .

ANNA. Generation by generation . . .

CHARLIE. (*With more enthusiasm.*) And they'll last beyond you, too . . .

ANNA. Exactly. Because they're perennials. See? All the little buds are beginning. Soon we'll have flowers, and then fruit. Most people do what at this point?

CHARLIE. They pinch them and stake them and prune them.

ANNA. But not me . . .

CHARLIE. You let them grow any way they want . . .

ANNA. And all, all will bear fruit, as long as they get plenty of water, plenty of sun and plenty of . . .

BOTH. Good, honest shit!

ANNA. (*She bends down.*) Here. I'll pinch off a shoot. (*She brings it to him.*) Smell that. Inhale it deep into your lungs . . . Now close your eyes, and keep working . . . (*He does.*) That's the smell of old France, and Canada, and the Niagara Frontier . . . At the end of the summer, I plan to give you some of my seeds. Some day, some other summer, you will have the pleasure of picking a ripe tomato from one of my plants. First, you will simply weigh it in the palm of your hand. Then you will admire

its shape and color. Suddenly you will close your eyes and mash it into your mouth. You'll let the juice spill out, and the meat roll around on your tongue, and then you'll swallow—meat, juice, seeds, and all. And then you'll open your eyes, open them wide, and give out a great, loud war-whoop of praise to life, and the noble tomato, and to me, Anna Trumbull, the Pig Woman, who introduced you to it. (*She crosses to him.*) And now let's see what you've done. (*She takes up his work, looks at it.*) Hmmm.

CHARLIE. It keeps collapsing.

ANNA. Mmmm.

CHARLIE. Maybe I'm not a sculptor either.

ANNA. Of course you are. I'll tell you what you've made. What you've made is a spectacular ash-tray, that's what you've made. If I smoked, I'd use it continuously. In fact, it's so good I'm thinking of taking up smoking.

CHARLIE. You're just trying to make me feel better.

ANNA. Well what's wrong with that? Go wash off in the lake while I fix lunch, and then we'll try again. (*They start Off R.*)

CHARLIE. After lunch, can't I work on your car? Maybe *that's* my potential.

ANNA. Nonsense. After lunch we'll try working with wood.

CHARLIE. Oh Anna . . .

ANNA. And if wood doesn't work, we'll try something else. We'll keep plugging, you and I, on into the night.

CHARLIE. I'm going out with my friends tonight.

ANNA. (*As they exit, R.*) Well then we'll seize the day. And if you work hard, I will tell you the story of my cucumbers. There is an amusing anecdote connecting them to the sexual member of my lover, old Doctor Holloway. I think you're man enough to hear it. (*They exit, R., Charlie carrying the tub. Ted comes on from U.L. singing "Pistol Packin' Mama." He gets into his "car," adjusts the "mirror," combs his hair, and then waits impatiently. Bonny backs On nervously from U.L.*)

TED. (*Rolling down the "window", leaning out.*) Come on.

BONNY. He's not here yet.

TED. Who? Don't tell me you asked Charlie!

BONNY. He said he'd meet me in the driveway right after supper.

TED. You and your buddy system . . . You'd think a guy could ask a girl for a date without her bringing along another guy.

brought with him thirty communist assassins  
gists and they all stood around singing "Hare Krishna..."  
BECKY. STOP!! This isn't gonna work. I'm just trying to  
get a point across. I just wanted to tell you something  
that's about me, but I also want you to listen. Would  
you hear what I was saying if I didn't say nazi hair  
dresser with it? There's always gotta be some kind of a  
hook, something to grab people and make them listen.  
People just can't hear what you're saying. They only  
listen to the words. People spend years arguing over  
words and not their meaning. And we're all pretty much  
saying the same thing. I mean, I have to bombard peo-  
ple with these flashing messages just so they'll get the  
point. And usually, all they receive is the flashing mes-  
sages. Isn't the purpose of speech to communicate?  
When's the last time you communicated with someone?  
We must've lost the ability somewhere down the line.  
When we learned to talk, we forgot to listen.

In Search of a Monologue  
by Andrew Kincaid