*The Importance of Being Ernest* by Oscar Wilde

Jack

My dear Algy, I don’t know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It’s one’s duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one’s health or one’s happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

Information about the monologue:

Jack is guardian to his young (and beautiful) niece, Cecily.

Jack is “Jack” in the country (where Cecily lives) but “Ernest” (his imaginary brother) in town. This allows Jack to live a double life: the responsible country gentleman, Jack, and the man-about-town, Ernest.