



AS YOU MONOLOGUE IN ONE AGE YOU FIND IT

BY RICHARD MANSFIELD
DRAWING BY DEARBORN MELVILL

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Sir Algernon Alwyn of Alwyn on Alwyn, Bart., a man with a manor and a park.
Henry Alwyn, his brother.
Lady Dorothy Newman (commonly called Lady Banjo).
Lucy Newman, her sister.
The Rev. Dr. Parsifal Penryck (commonly called "Pen and Ink").
Major the Hon. Marengo Marjoribanks (commonly called "Stubbles"), uncle to Sir Algernon.
Lady Marjory Marjoribanks, aunt to Sir Algernon.

Robert Doolittle Marjoribanks, son of Major and Lady Marjoribanks.
Guillaume Perseverance Poynter (commonly called "Pressed Beef").
Messrs. Fudge and McPherson, family lawyers.
Harriet McPherson, wife of the junior partner.
Fraser, a butler.
Messengers, servants, etc.

The period is 1886. The place is a country house near Oxford in England. Scene—The library at Alwyn Hall.



ALGERNON (outside): On no account, Fraser, let me be disturbed—(entering—stands by table)—I must realize my position,—letters—accounts!—Since father died, I have been in a dream, a bad dream—everything has gone to the dogs—bills unpaid—steward postponed—even Harry—my little brother Harry—at Oxford—neglected. First dinner since poor dad died. (Aloud) Yes—There's Lady Banjo—found it—I mean Lady Newman—our worthy pastor, Dr. Penryck—Maj. the Hon. Marengo Marjoribanks—my gallant uncle—Cousin Bobbie—good chap, Bobbie—Robert Doolittle Marjoribanks, best fellow in the world,—yes, yes, Fraser, in a minute!

(Going to window)—"All mine as far as eye can see! All this is mine!" He said to Egypt's king,—Tush, I'm quoting—Polycrates, bad luck! Poor dad died and I in my turn became Sir Algernon Marjoribanks Alwyn, seventh baronet, of Alwyn on Alwyn—with an income derived from railroad stocks—principally American—according to Fudge and McPherson, our family lawyers, of nearly £10,000 a year—Fudge says, to be exact, nine thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight pounds, nine shillings and six pence, after deducting commissions—who draws the commissions? Fudge, I suppose, and McPherson?

Let me see, what did he explain? In the first place he demonstrated, quite unnecessarily, that I was sole heir to the title and estate. Estate consists of 1,500 acres of park land. Dad had a row with his tenants some 20 years ago and evicted the lot—turned every inch of ground into park and garden and paddock—ornamental lakes, and so on. Result very charming, but without pecuniary advantages. Moreover, Alwyn hall and park, etc., etc., entailed and can't be sold or rented, and, according to terms of dad's will, there are to be no farms and no tenants. The chap that happens to be baronet must live on his income of £10,000 derived from railroad stock, bonds, etc.—he must keep up the hounds, the chapel, the conservatories, the nursery, etc., etc. So if it were not for the railroads Sir Algernon Alwyn, Bart., would be Sir Algernon Alwyn, Beggar. However, the bonds are there, safe enough in a tin box, at the law office of Messrs. Fudge and McPherson.

There are Harry's letters—drat the boy—he never writes unless he wants something (sitting down and taking up letters).—Immediate! urgent!—very urgent! deliver immediately!—forward at once!—well, he's certainly in a hurry—I'd better open the last one—no use reading the lot.—The devil!—what's this?

"Algie—This is simply to say that if the money is not here by nine o'clock on Tuesday, I shall blow out my worthless brains—"

Tues—why, to-day's Tuesday!—and it's five o'clock!—let's see the first letter (opens and reads):
"Played with Lord Rook, Sir Winslow Sharper—oh, of course—got up—£650 in debt to Rook and Sharper—honor!—family honor!—will repay all from small income—you must send at once, etc."

Of course—of course, and I'll send for Master Harry to keep out of the clutches of my Lord Rook in future,—college life!—nice place for innocent boys—brandies and sodas—cigars—cards—phew!—Well, here goes—telegraph blank—

"Will honor your draft Fudge and McPherson—£600, Algernon Alwyn."

What? Oh, a note? Just come? All right. Be off with the telegram. Oh—Fudge and McPherson? Business, I suppose? A woman's hand? Fudge and McPherson always typewrite. (Opens letter.) What's this?

"My Dear Sir Algernon—I am addressing myself to you in the hope that dreadful as this communication must necessarily be—and believe me, no less dreadful for you to receive than for me to write,—it will come less harshly from one whom you have known so long and who was once your dear mother's devoted companion and friend.—My poor husband is so stricken by the blow which has suddenly blasted our happiness, that he has fallen into a stupor from which, I fear, nothing but a miracle can rouse him. Dear Sir Algernon, I will not keep you in suspense but tell you briefly—and perhaps you will say brutally, that our senior partner, Mr. Fudge, to whom my husband looked up with such childlike confidence and pride, left suddenly last week for Australia—yesterday my husband found it necessary to go to your box for some papers, the interest being due on several of your investments, when he discovered that the box was empty!—every security of yours which had been in the hands of Fudge and McPherson had disappeared! Hoping against hope my husband searched everywhere but no trace of your papers could be found.—he came home in the evening—pale, distraught, confessed his trouble to me and then sank into the stupor from which nothing can rouse him. My heart is bleeding for my husband—my heart is bleeding for you—I am hoping, hoping still that there may be some mistake. But Mr. Fudge's sudden departure—the disappearance of all your securities, so easily converted into cash, and the fact that Mr. Fudge drew nearly every penny standing to our credit in the bank, can, I fear, point at but one conclusion: Mr. Fudge, whom we so honored and revered in this community, is a thief!—With tears of sorrow and shame, I am your most distressed servant,
Harriet McPherson."

(Rises.) Ruined! gone! everything gone!—not a penny left!—cleaned out! Impossible!—I can't realize it! How do I feel—a beggar! A few moments ago I was rich—or thought I was—now I'm a beggar—with a manor and a park—here goes—(writes):

"Dear Old Nunkey—Can you let me have a cheque for a thou' by bearer—Looking forward to seeing you all at dinner this evening! Your affectionate nephew,
Algie."

There, Fraser!—Tell Tom to run across to Uncle Marjoribanks with this note and hurry back!—If he stops to talk to Matilda Ann, I'll take his scalp.

But Lucy!—Lucy?—Lucy won't want to be married to a pauper with a manor and a park—but I know what it will be.—Nothing will change me—Rich or poor, I am yours, Lucy.—Dear old girl (writes).

"My darling Lucy—I have just had an awful shock—Mrs. McPherson writes to say that old Fudge has left for Australia and taken my little 'all' with him,—I love you and shall never love anyone but you in all my life, but of course you won't marry a beggar (even with a manor and a park), and so, dear, you are free, unless it is your choice to wait until I shall have recovered by hard work my lost fortune. As for me, I am yours until death, only I thought it right to let you know, and even if you give me up, I am, your devoted slave.
Algernon."

But she won't give me up,—I know she won't—my little Lucy—(folds letter and addresses envelope, rising) Fraser—(rings bell)—Fraser—(goes to door)—

Here's a letter from auntie and a long letter from uncle:

"Algernon—I am, I may say, fatally wounded—(Good heavens—has he shot himself?)—treacherously shot, mortally injured by a member of my family.—The gun that fired the shot is no other than the letter I have just received from you,—no Martini-Henry could have done its work better. This morning while on a reconnoitering expedition in the village I ran across Mrs. McPherson. As she was flying signals of distress, I halted on my march to question her and I drew from her the information that her husband's partner, Fudge, had absconded with your funds.—The blow was so severe that I was obliged to abandon my position and retire upon the nearest public house, which happened to be the Alwyn Arms. Here I fortified and entrenched myself and it was not until the afternoon that I felt sufficiently strengthened to continue the advance on Marengo House. You can imagine my horror on opening your dispatch to discover the treachery of one, upon whose loyalty I would have staked the campaign. Had it not been for the reconnaissance this morning I should have been under the impression, that, still amply endowed with the fortune your father bequeathed to you, and which you have so recklessly squandered.—(squandered?—recklessly!)—you required a momentary loan of £1,000 and with the motto of my house "noblesse oblige" ever before my eyes, I should have instantly complied—I, an old soldier, would have marched unsuspectingly into the ambush your cunning had prepared for my destruction. I enclose a few lines from your heart-broken aunt.
Marengo Majoribanks.

Late Major Her Majesty's Dragoon Guards."

"N. B.—I need not say that it will be out of the question for me or any member of my family to accept your invitation to dinner this evening."

The old—the old—no, I won't—I won't abuse him behind his back, but when I see him I'll let him know!

(Sighs), (writes):

"My Dear Doctor, and My Dear Old Friend—A calamity has overtaken me—to be brief—Fudge has disappeared with all my money—I am, of course, temporarily embarrassed. Remembering your many expressions of good will and your oft repeated request that I should apply to you when in trouble, I do not hesitate now to ask you to aid me by giving bearer your cheque for £1,000, for which I enclose my I. O. U.—I hope that in spite of my misfortune you will not fail to come to dinner this evening and we'll uncork a bottle of '74 to drown our sorrow.
Always your affectionate friend,
Algernon Alwyn."

Ah, let's see what Auntie Munch has to say (opens letter, reads):

"My Dear Algernon—Your uncle has just, with the greatest delicacy and with all possible consideration for my feeble condition, broken to me the fearful crash that has enveloped our house in its awful pall!—To think that only a few moments ago I was a happy woman watering my beloved roses in a sunlit garden, when out of a clear sky the bolt fell and ravaged in an instant, like a pack of cards, the beautiful placid sea on which we were sailing so peacefully. To think, Algernon, that you, in whom I have always had such mistaken faith, should have been the serpent to gnaw away with one blow the foundations of our confidence in humanity!—Your poor uncle says that by your act you have placed yourself within the power of the police and without the pale of society. You will know, of course, why it would have been impossible for us to comply with your attempt to rob us, by yielding up a thousand pounds: We have your cousin Robert to consider! and it is, as you are aware, compounding a felony to rob Peter to pay Paul. I am with every expression of sorrow and horror, your completely collapsed aunt,
Marjory Marjoribanks."

"P. S.—And oh, Algernon, I was looking forward with so much pleasure to our first dinner this evening, that is another sad blow!—P. S. P. S.—you will have to discharge that expensive cook!"

This is getting worse and worse!—Why, oh, why doesn't Tom come back with a word from Lucy—then I wouldn't mind that abusive nonsense!—Six to dinner—three friends gone—No, that's not fair to Bobbie—(writes):

"Dear Old Bobbie—I suppose you've heard by now of my smash?—all gone—nothing left but the house and the park.—Have you any dollars to spare? If so, bring them around at dinner time, if you can get out without a row—We'll have one more good dinner and laugh and chaff and drink brown sherry!—never mind about the dollars if you're hard up, but come! From your old fag,
Algie."

(Tears letter open):

"My Dear Sir Algernon—Oh—formal—I think I'll sit down (sits)—"My Dear Sir Algernon—Lucy being particularly engaged,—Mr. Robert Marjoribanks is visiting us this afternoon,—damn Robert Marjoribanks!—"I am taking it upon myself to answer your letter. As soon as the dear child read what you had to say she was greatly distressed, and came to confide in me. My Dear Sir

Algernon, I am forced to admire your honesty in at once apprising my poor girl of your changed position and the correct and sensible view you take of the situation. To marry upon nothing a year would be absurd and it would take you years to retrieve your fortune. My daughter quite agrees with me in believing that when poverty walks in at the door love flies out at the window. You must not imagine from this that Lucy is not deeply moved and dreadfully upset. She extends to you all her heartfelt sympathy! She would write to you herself but she is on the very verge of a breakdown and the necessity to entertain her guests forces her to present a brave front to the world!—and since the engagement has to be broken off it is better to do it now and at once, rather than to prolong the suffering by senseless shilly-shallying. Judging by your own most sensible letter, I have every reason to believe that you will coincide with me in this. With sincere regard from us both and every expression of good will and sympathy, believe me to be, dear Sir Algernon,
Yours faithfully,
Anita Turnival Newman."

"P. S.—I think it would be better for us not to come to your dinner this evening, so will you please accept our thanks and regrets?"

I don't believe it—I can't believe it—Lucy—to throw me over like that! Lucy, a heartless woman of the world! Lucy to love,—to pretend to love me for my income! No, I'll not believe it! If my faith in her is lost there is indeed nothing left.

Oh, one from Bobbie—(opens letter):

"Awfully sorry, old chappie, it's a damned shame! Wish I could help you! Was just coming over to ask you for a pony. I'm stony broke. Can't come to dinner—Wish I could!—Governor stormy! Swore like a trooper!—Says he disowns you. The Newmans have corralled me for dinner. If you want to get rid of your nags I think I can make a trade. Keep your hair on—you're not the first cogger that has come to grief. Speculation's the devil, but I never thought you were a plunger?—Here's how!
Bobbie."

Speculation! Plunger! Very soon they'll accuse me of robbing a bank! And shortly they'll have me arrested for murder! What was that game we used to play? You place a lot of people in a line and you say something innocent to the party at one end, and by the time it's been passed to the other end it isn't fit for publication. So that's what they've told Lucy. Plunger! No wonder she doesn't want to marry an idiot. (Sits down. Writes):

"My Dear Mr. Poynter—Bad news travels fast and therefore no doubt you have heard by now of the serious financial loss I have sustained. I am in immediate need of (I won't ask for a thou' this time, only enough to save Harry), of £600, and I venture to ask you if you will assist me? If yes, will you please send me your cheque by bearer? I should not write if I had not known you all my life as an old and valued friend of my father and of, yours very truly, and with many thanks in advance,
Algernon Alwyn."

Reply from Dr. Penryck? (Reads):

"The Rectory, Tuesday.
"This is no time, my poor boy, to preach a homily or to point a lesson. By now, I imagine, your spirit is sufficiently chastened not to need from my lips any word of reproof, reproach, criticism or condemnation. Your money was your own, but I must say that if my beloved friend's fortune was to be scattered to the four winds in so brief a space of time, I would have prayed heaven to direct its flow into a course more worthy of his hallowed memory! Think, too, what suffering you entail on him who has known and loved you since you were an infant; who held you in these old arms and whose now palsied fingers first guided your baby eyes across the animal alphabet!—I can not feel that I am to blame. Had you listened to my precepts early in life and later benefited by my counsel, had you taken full advantage of my still more recent after-dinner talks, when, with a light and playful touch I none the less earnestly endeavored to sow in your mind the seeds of wisdom, you would not now be seated upon the stool of repentance, contemplating the crumbling ruins of an erstwhile regal fortune!—Alas, your life at Oxford was but the prelude to your present fall!—Let him that is without sin cast the first stone, but still I must decline to become particeps criminis by lending you money. No, it may be that what appears to be now a great affliction may become the cornerstone of your salvation! Perhaps, my dear Algernon, the loss of your wealth may make a man of you. Take your knapsack and your wander-staff and sail for America!—Would I were young enough to accompany you! Heaven forbid that I should deny you consolation or advice, and I will come at eight and take a parting glass with you and wish you godspeed and a better life!
Your true friend,
Parsifal Penryck."

(A knock at the door. He goes to door—comes down with letter):

Wait a minute, Fraser (opens the letter). To be sure: "Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your favor of this date. I shall be happy to advance the amount named providing the collateral or security you propose to offer is first-class. I regret to say an important business engagement will prevent me from accepting your invitation to dinner this evening. Yours faithfully,
Guillaume Perseverance Poynter."

Wait a minute, Fraser,—(writes rapidly): "Dear Hal—I'm sending William with the dog cart for you. Leave a note for Messrs. Rook and Sharper to come on here after dinner and I'll satisfy them. I enclose a line for them. Don't fail to be here by eight o'clock for dinner.
Your Algie."

So! And

"Sir Algernon Alwyn presents his compliments to Lord Rook and Sir Winslow Sharper, and he will be glad to see them at Alwyn Hall this evening when he will satisfy any claims against his brother to the full extent of his, Sir Algernon's, fortune."
Things are about as black as they can be—and I don't

see a streak of light—if only, Lucy hadn't thrown me over—I'm glad I didn't go to her!

(A tap at the window)—what's that?—(tap is repeated)—somebody at the window,—burglar,—well, he's welcome!—policeman perhaps!—(tap repeated—goes to window, leans out)—

Lucy!
S'ish!

(A pair of arms are seen encircling his neck for an instant.)

Lucy! Lucy, don't go!—Lucy! She's gone—but oh—oh—(comes down with a note in his hand)—Reads:

"My Dear, Dear, Old Darling—I wonder if you believe what the mater wrote you? How could you? She's just told me.—My poor, poor darling—I'm going to rush across as soon as I'm dressed, when everybody will be in their rooms, and give you one kiss—and, dearest, that is to tell you that rich or poor, I am yours to death,
Lucy."

Now, fall walls!—come earthquake! torture me!—hang me!—what do I care?—Lucy loves me!—Lucy's true to me.—All the world may go against me, but my Lucy's my Lucy and she's my Lucy still.

(Knock at the door—goes to door)—Letter?

(Whistles a tune—opens letter)—

"Dear Sir—Not hearing from you up to closing time, I venture to remind you that I sent you a most important communication yesterday. Thinking that the letter may have escaped your notice I venture now to call your attention to it and request the honor of your commands. I am, dear sir, Your obedient servant,
George Henry Honeymoon."

Well, just wait a minute, Fraser, and I'll see what it is—(looks over letters on table)—Oh, yes, here's a letter to be sure.—County Bank—(opens letter).

"Dear Sir—I have the honor to inform you that before robbing for Australia, Mr. Fudge, of the firm of Messrs. Fudge & McPherson, deposited with us, for safe-keeping, securities, etc., standing in your name and of which Messrs. Fudge & McPherson had charge.—What! What!—"Mr. Fudge desires us to inform you of this and to say that Mr. McPherson being in very delicate health, he thought it wiser, subject to your consent, to put your affairs for the present in our hands. Mr. Fudge was obliged to leave in great haste for Sidney by yesterday's steamer, to attend to your uncle, Mr. Mortimer Alwyn, the great brewer"—(h'm, I've never seen him)—"whom we understand to be suffering from an incurable disease and whose heir we believe you are. We are sending you cheque book under separate cover, and awaiting your instructions, we have the honor to be, dear sir,
Your obedient servants,
"London & County Bank, Ltd.,
"Per G. H. Honeyman."

Good Lord, Fraser, bring me a whisky and soda—This has been too much—and Fraser, tell the messenger I'll call at the bank to-morrow morning and see Mr. Honeyman—bring me a whisky and soda if you want to save my life?

Ah, here's one from old Ryan,—old sawbones Ryan,—(opens letter)—

"Dear Sir—Mr. Fudge wishes me to inform you before leaving to wind up the affairs of your uncle in Australia that I have been called in by him in consultation with Drs. Clark & Sorrywait, and that we have come to the conclusion that Mr. McPherson will not be able to attend to business for some time, his memory being so severely affected that it is almost certain that he is suffering from a serious disease of the brain,—h'm, h'm—etc., etc.

(Sits down)—Lucy first (writes):

"Dearest, Dearest, Dearest Lucy—It's all right—we've found all the money and more. My apologies to your mother—tell her to leave everything—I mean, leave dinner and come and dine with me and to bring all her guests—and not to forget YOU—more anon. "Your Algie."

(Takes another sheet of paper):

"Dear Old Nunkey—It was a false alarm—the money is all here—every penny and more in sight—bring Aunty here to dinner at once or never speak again to your affectionate nephew,
Algie."

(Now for the American!)

"Dear Mr. Poynter—I'm sorry to have troubled you—it was all a mistake—I am still in possession of my fortune and I hear that it is to be shortly much increased. Put off that important business engagement and join,
Yours very truly, with many apologies,
Algernon Alwyn."

(An hour later)—H'm—So here we all are again! as we were, only a little wiser. No, we won't be cynical—we'll take the world as we find it and we'll thank God for Lucy—(pours out whisky and soda)—Here's to Lucy! (Drinks.) Ah, there they come—(great noise heard on staircase—goes to door—opens it wide)—Come up!—Come up, every one of you and welcome! Lucy!
(Quick curtain.)

In Gypsy Land.

Roumania is par excellence the land of the gypsy, for the Tsigani, as these wandering folk are called, contribute some 250,000 of the total population of 6,000,000. A hundred years ago they were kept in a state of regular slavery, being freely bought and sold, the Roumanian government owning 80,000 of them. It was not till 1854 that they were granted their freedom, and since that time most of them have accordingly been either rogues or vagabonds, or both, wandering hither and thither, a nuisance to honest people.

In their native Roumania, it is said that the gypsy race is rapidly dwindling away, owing to intermarriage with the Roumanians. Throughout the other countries of the world, however, which they haunt, little diminution has been noticed in their ranks. Indeed, in France they have become such a pest that radical measures have been taken to oust them from the country.