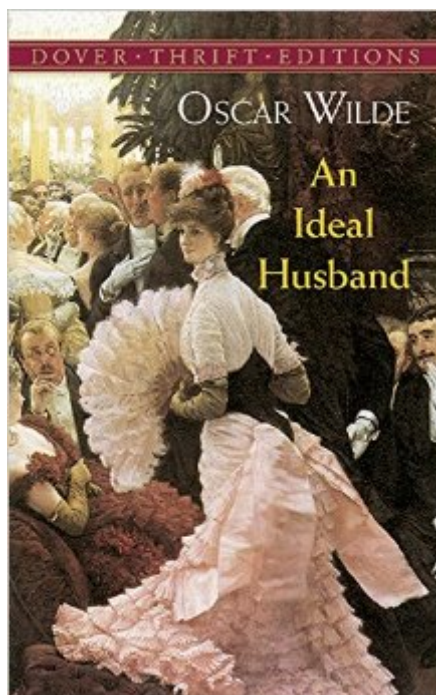


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An Ideal Husband (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

Although Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) created a wide range of poetry, essays, and fairy tales (and one novel) in his brief, tragic life, he is perhaps best known as a dramatist. His witty, clever drama, populated by brilliant talkers skilled in the art of riposte and paradox, are still staples of the theatrical repertoire. *An Ideal Husband* revolves around a blackmail scheme that forces a married couple to reexamine their moral standards – providing, along the way, a wry commentary on the rarity of politicians who can claim to be ethically pure. A supporting cast of young lovers, society matrons, an overbearing father, and a formidable femme fatale continually exchange sparkling repartee, keeping the play moving at a lively pace. Like most of Wilde's plays, this scintillating drawing-room comedy is wise, well-constructed, and deeply satisfying. An instant success at its 1895 debut, the play continues to delight audiences over one hundred years later. *An Ideal Husband* is a must-read for Wilde fans, students of English literature, and anyone delighted by wit, urbanity, and timeless sophistication.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Oscar Wilde gives us here one of his best plays. He explores the political world in London and how a young ambitious but poor man can commit a crime, which is a mistake, to start his good fortune. But he builds his political career on ethical principles. Sooner or later someone will come into the picture to blackmail him into supporting an unacceptable scheme, by producing a document that

could ruin his career if revealed. His past mistake may come back heavily onto him. But he resists and sticks to his moral reputation. He prefers doing what is right to yielding to some menace. He may lose though his political ambition and career and his wife's love. But love is saved by forgiveness and the man's career is also saved by the work of a real friend who recaptures the dubious document and destroys it. In other words love and an ethical career are saved by the burying of the old mistake into oblivion. In other words love and friendship are stronger than the scheming action of a blackmailer. This is a terrible criticism of victorian society which is based more on appearances than principles and yet able to destroy a man's absolutely ethical present life with a mistake from his youth, throwing the baby along with the water of the bath. It is also a criticism of the victorian political world where you cannot have a career if you are not rich, money appearing as the only way to succeed, at least to succeed fast. But it is a hopeful play because love and friendship are beyond such considerations and only consider the best interest of men and women, in the long run and in the name of absolute purity. Better be a sinner and be forgiven when you have reformed than see a reformed sinner destroyed by the lack of forgiveness.

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