



## Lady Windermere's Fan

*Oscar Wilde*

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Beautiful, aristocratic, an adored wife and young mother, Lady Windermere is 'a fascinating puritan' whose severe moral code leads her to the brink of social suicide. The only one who can save her is the mysterious Mrs Erlynne whose scandalous relationship with Lord Windermere has prompted her fatal impulse. And Mrs Erlynne has a secret - a secret Lady Windermere must never know if she is to retain her peace of mind.

## Lady Windermere's Fan Details

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Author : Oscar Wilde

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## From Reader Review Lady Windermere's Fan for online ebook

### Cheri says

I enjoyed reading this play, though the situations are so of their period that it can at times feel unrelatable to any modern person.

I have never seen a good performance of it. In fact, it has produced several of the worst stage productions I have ever seen. The play seems to lend itself to stilted acting and un-motivated action. Worse than that, is watching modern actresses who seem to confuse overt sexuality with flirtation, attempt to reproduce the witty and mannered seductions. And if that isn't bad enough, the incredible naivete and goodness of Lady Windermere, often comes off as cloying stupidity.

This is one play that really seems better kept on the page. I would love it if someone proved me wrong.

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### Tosh says

Reading an Oscar Wilde play is sort of like life being perfect. The structure of the work is faultless, the dialogue is uber-clever and fantastic. What's wrong with Wilde? Nothing. He's perfect. I can't imagine any writer who wrote so beautifully in his native language. There are some people who are born with 'it' and Wilde is one of them. Of course for someone so perfect he would have to get involved in some nasty social business via his decade. But when you look back at Wilde, one realizes that he is someone from the 19th Century who is saying goodbye to the Victorian era and culture. It's like he couldn't wait to jump into the 20th Century. Which makes it sad that we didn't accept Wilde with our open arms. We killed the thing that was so beautiful and right.

Wilde was born in 1854 and died in 1900. I was born in 1954 and was convinced I would be dead by the year 2000 - just because of Wilde. It's silly and egotistic on my part, yet it also shows how much I love Wilde.

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### Soumen Daschoudhury says

Here I mark my salutation again; Oscar Wilde is a remarkably witty genius, a true observant and a sly story teller.

How easily he read not only the lips of society but the rationale hidden in their words, the cause for the effect and how beautifully he reverberates in his witty words, the incomprehensible fillers we miss in the thoughts behind the mouthing of the gaudy characters to submerge their ostentation and bring out the real ugliness or the real goodness. How sharpened his skills were as an observer, every character lying naked to the soul in his presence. He was a cynic who understood the value of everything.

I had read somewhere once, *"If people saw in the mirror their true characters rather than their images, there wouldn't have been many mirrors left in the world"*.

This short play undulates between trust, deceit and forgiveness. Mrs. Erlynne, out of nowhere has pronounced her presence in the lives of Lord and Lady Windermere and her bearing is having a catastrophic effect on their love and relationship. Love, the overrated emotion has its own trying asks and one may spend his whole lifetime just proving it. Who is this scandalous seductress who is so popular among the men, where has she come from and why is she imposing herself on their lives, what are her intentions?

We all err, but only the one who gets caught is termed a thief, gets beaten up and is scarred for life. Oscar Wilde drives home the point that even the best of persons cannot be a Puritan in society for long, we all are misled sometimes and we all shed our values sporadically for our situational conveniences, we have to! It is a mental flaw to label someone as good or bad; even the worst of people have done some goodness in their lives and the best of people have been uglier. Patience is a virtue and to find goodness is another.

***“We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars”.***

I had watched the movie ‘A Good Woman’ featuring Helen Hunt and Scarlett Johansson and had liked it immensely but didn’t know that it was based on this play, now I do!

Some witty excerpts from the play:

***“Lord Darlington: Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good or bad. They are either charming or tedious.”***

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***“Cecil Graham: Oh! Gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now, I never moralise. A man who moralises is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralises is invariably plain.”***

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***“Cecil Graham: Now, my dear Tuppy, don’t be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if, we are good, when they meet us, they don’t love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.”***

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***“Dumby: In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst; the last is a real tragedy!”***

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## Mohammed says

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## An upbeat reader says

I extremely enjoyed reading this play. Oscar wilde is a shrewd writer and it is utterly noticeable in his works. Hence his wisdom is depicted within the plot, the characters, the speech and so forth. It is mighty interesting how he dealt with a daily problem in a penetrating way. The play is all about human nature and how people are used to exaggerate things, especially women(who are in love lol). How they keep nagging....Moreover how people judge others before truly knowing them; First the lady who thought that her husband is depraved and in love with an other woman who in reality is her mother and second the husband who thought that the mother is a woman of sins, when she was seeking to save her daughter marriage. It is full of sarcasm and humour.

It teaches alot and worth reading too !

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## Eva says

I'm a sucker for femme fatale versus puritanical women stories especially when these are accompanied by the wit of Mr. Wilde

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## Cemre says

Ciddi Olman'ın Önemi, ?deal Koca ve Lady Windermere'in Yalpazesi tema ve karakterler olarak birbirlerini an'ımsatsalar da okuyucuya çok keyifli bir okuma sunuyor. Lady Windermere'in Yalpazesi'ni de di?er iki oyun gibi büyük bir keyifle okudum, çok e?lendim. Sahnede de izleyebilmeyi çok isterim.

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## Christopher says

I highly recommend finding Wilde's plays on audio and listening to them while driving early in the morning. Press play as you sit in your freezing car, spend the first scene in a shivering fit, then ease into the second scene all nice and warm and toasty, at ease enough now to chuckle or chortle or guffaw at the playwright's acerbic wit. Pause in the middle of an argument between the Windermers to roll your window down and request through a metal box a concoction of glutinous egg, english muffin, cheese and disturbingly circular meat. It's shameful but sometimes you just don't have the time or motivation in the morning to fix something healthy. Burn your tongue on bitter coffee as someone delivers a killer one-liner. Let your mind wander for a moment at a traffic light when you notice a single shoe in the middle of the intersection, imagining a kid limping through the halls at school, head bobbing up and down like a carousel unicorn, then finding yourself lost when it comes to the action of the play. Hit the 30-second reverse button once, then twice more just to be safe, to gather context to regain your footing in the world of Lady Windermere's ball.

What's this? A plot twist, spousal misunderstandings, they really should attend some seminars on the importance of communication. The upheaval of social norms and mores. Lies, betrayal, what a way to start a day! All on the way to work one Friday morning, in your beater of a car, you really need to get that oil checked, it seems to be putting out more gray smoke than usual, several different shades of grey, and after all it's been six thousand miles since its last change, but who has the time for that? You know exactly where the story is going, not necessarily the plot, it's impossible to predict exactly what will happen, but you can see its shape: it's a comedy, it ends happily, not like the usual stuff you like, your mother pointed out last weekend

when you recommended a tv show you liked that you always make her watch things that end with blood dripping on a photograph or someone crying at the bottom of a well or some such nonsense, but she likes movies that end with a wedding. You must admit, the montages they play through the first song of the credits of that type of movie, everything and everyone major key and dressed in white, a New England beach in the background probably, seabirds present but not causing any commotion, a handsome thirty-something dancing with a flower girl, those hit a certain delightful chord when you somehow manage to see them. Everything is not doom and gloom. You should tell yourself this more often.

Although you know this will end with a wedding-type montage, perhaps not a literal wedding but you get the point—major key, that's the point—you pull into your office parking lot as the final scene is beginning, before the turmoil is resolved, and someone is pouting just as you turn the key and kill the engine. You will have to file yourself away for 9 hours before returning to your too old, too unreliable car to finish Lady Windermere's story. Step out of the car and realize that you are wearing only one shoe. A lonely, brightly polished, black leather loafer, its mate lying probably along the side of the highway or in the no-man's land of a suburban intersection. Walk inside to your brightly lit office condominium, bobbing up and down less like a carousel unicorn than a carousel camel.

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## Melissa says

Wilde's wit never bores me, which is why he is one of my favorite authors. Below are a few quotations I particularly liked from Lady Windermere's fan:

"... scandal is gossip made tedious by morality."

"In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it."

"What is a cynic?...A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing."

"That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good."

"I can resist everything except temptation."

"Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes."

"Repentance is quite out of date. And besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that."

"Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they're better."

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## Franco Santos says

*Todos estamos en el fondo de un pozo, pero algunos miramos las estrellas.*

No soy aficionado a las obras de teatro, **pero tengo que admitir que esta me gustó mucho.** Escrita como

solo Oscar Wilde podía hacerlo. El autor retrata harto bien la sociedad victoriana, con sus estilos y sus objetos. Muy bueno.

**Tiene un final que no vi venir de ninguna manera.**

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## **Bettie? says**

Bettie's Books

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## **Maria Espadinha says**

The Charming Trip

Truths , Dares and Lies...

Saviour Silences and Devastating Truths!

Sssssshhhhhhh... --- DON'T SAY IT!...

"It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming..."

Forget about Goodness!  
Forget about Badness!  
Take the Charming Boat!  
All Aboard?!... ;)

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## **Duane says**

I think these classic plays are better enjoyed on stage than by reading. That seems so obvious that it seems silly to say. But the problem for most of us is, we haven't seen them on stage and probably won't. There is enough going on in this play though to make it a fun read. I use the word fun rather loosely because, even though it is a comedy, it doesn't seem like one to me. Maybe that is one of the things lost in reading versus watching, I don't know. I think it's a subtle style of humor that probably worked better with 19th century readers/audiences than in the 21st century. It felt more like a drama to me. But it has stood the test of time, performed first in London in 1893, and throughout the world during the 20th century, with a major production as late as 2004 at the Harken Center in Washington D.C.

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## **Amaranta says**

*“ Posso resistere a tutto fuorchè alla tentazione” .*

Una commedia in quattro atti, una finestra sulla borghesia dell'epoca, sui matrimoni di facciata, sulle amanti da mantenere, sui viaggi di svago, sull'ipocrisia che cresce di salotto in salotto.

Un piccolo ventaglio è in fondo ciò che meglio rappresenta questa società, corrotta fino all'osso ma pur sempre splendente. "Nella vita moderna il superfluo è tutto" e si adatta perfettamente anche alla nostra epoca.

Lady Windermere è una donna innamorata del proprio marito. Sulla scena si profila Mrs Erlynn, una novella Mrs Cheveley, che sembra avere messo gli occhi proprio su Lord Windermere. Saranno le circostanze a chiarire pian piano l'equivoco creatosi.

*"Due soltanto sono le tragedie a questo mondo; la prima consiste nel non raggiungere quello che si vorrebbe, l'altra nell'ottenerlo. Quest'ultima è la peggiore e vera tragedia!"*

Spalla della coppia Lord Darlington, un perfetto grillo parlante, che paga la sua sincerità con la solitudine. C'è sempre un tocco d'amarezza in Mr Wilde.

Una commedia fuori genere, che solo il lieto fine svela tale.

*"Siamo tutti immersi nel fango ma alcuni di noi guardano le stelle."*

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## Laura Cooper says

Wilde's work hinges on paradoxical epigrams that are both sinister in their implications and deconstructionist in their content, we are disturbed by that the character who voices the epigrams doesn't seem to have an moral core of their being and see the absurdity of, for example, the distinction between Nature and Civilization. Derrida, but satirical.

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## Sara says

Lady Windermere's Fan is classified as a Comedy of Manners, and while there are certainly humorous elements present in the usual clever Wilde manner, I would contend that there is more of drama here than comedy. The story at the base of this play is quite serious. The subject of the ease with which a person (particularly a woman) could be ruined and expelled from society (something that Wilde, even as a man, knew something of) is a serious topic for Wilde. The instinctive love of a mother is a serious topic for me.

As is so often Wilde's technique, there is much misunderstanding and confusion that leads characters to do foolish or socially dangerous things. Mrs. Erlynn might be a bad woman, but she does a very good thing; Lady Windermere prides herself on being a good woman, but she does a very bad thing. Perhaps the lines are not that clear or delineated. I particularly enjoy the progress that Lady Windermere makes in her thinking by the end of the play. I also enjoy the contrivance in which we, the audience, share in a secret that the Lady does not know.

Plays are meant to be seen, not read. I have never had the privilege of seeing this play produced, but in 2004 a movie was made based on this play entitled "A Good Woman" and starring Helen Hunt. If you have not seen it, it is worth seeking out. I think Oscar Wilde would be proud.

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## Fenia says

WOW. Oscar Wilde is a genius! This was so realistic, there was so much wisdom pouring out of it. It was entertaining and short, straight forward, full of cherished quotes. Loved it! ♥

## Vanessa J. says

Well, it seems that my liking of Wilde's works follows a graphic like this one:

I am not kidding you. Every time I read another play, I think it's better than the one I read before. Perhaps I'm reading them in some particular order unknown to me, or my opinion is starting to get biased. In any case, I enjoyed this immensely.

This one involves more drama and problems than the plays I read previous to this one. It has a jealous wife, there's blackmailing, there are some misunderstood things that lead to more problems, etc. In short, it was brilliant.

My favourite of these plays keeps being *The Importance of Being Earnest*, even when I said my enjoyment for them has been growing exponentially.

In the end, I recommend this wholeheartedly. It's really funny, cynical, satirical and easy to read. There's none of that complex or dense writing that characterizes many Victorian works. Plus, it's written by the one and only Oscar Wilde. Need I say more?

### List of quotes:

“Ah, now-a-days we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay are compliments. They're the only things we *can* pay.”

“I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.”

“If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.”

“It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.”

“Men become old, but they never become good.”

"I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly ; but I don't see any chance of it just at present."

"It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her."

"Oh! gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now I never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain."

"Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better."

And yeah, I am perfectly aware that the list of quotes is longer than my "review."

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### Jasmine says

**"There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice."**

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### Kenny says

*We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.*

—?Lord Darlington Act IV

**Lady Windermere's Fan** is quite clever, quite witty, but at its heart is a comedy in the vein of **The Importance of Being Ernest**. And while all is resolved in a neat package by the end of Act IV, it is not as satisfying as most of Wilde's work. *Lady Windermere's Fan* is a social comedy, as is most of Wilde's work. It looks at the social norms, expectations and mannerisms of the time. And while it uses humor to criticize class situations, the humor is much more subtle than one would expect from Wilde.

In his letters, Wilde claimed that he did not want the play to be viewed as "a mere question of pantomime and clowning"; he was interested in the piece as a psychological study. In this, Wilde has succeeded.

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