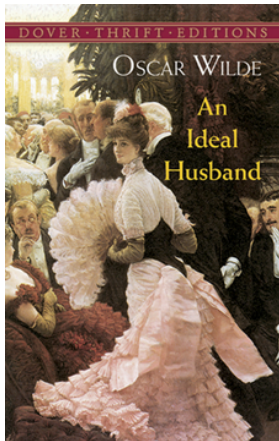


## **An ideal husband / Oscar Wilde**



An Ideal Husband is an 1895 stage play by Oscar Wilde that revolves around blackmail and political corruption, and touches on the themes of public and private honour. The action is set in London, in the present, and takes place over the course of twenty-four hours.

Sooner or later, Wilde notes, we shall all have to pay for what we do. But he adds that, No one should be entirely judged by their past. Together with *The Importance of Being Earnest*, it is often considered Wilde's dramatic masterpiece. After *Earnest*, it is his most popularly produced play.

### **About the author**

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was an Irish poet and playwright. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, he became one of the most popular playwrights in London in the early 1890s. He is best remembered for his epigrams and plays, his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and his criminal conviction for gross indecency for homosexual acts.



Wilde tried his hand at various literary activities: he wrote a play, published a book of poems, lectured in the United States and Canada on "The English Renaissance" in art and interior decoration, and then returned to London where he lectured on his American travels and wrote reviews for various periodicals. Known for his biting wit, flamboyant dress and glittering conversational skill, Wilde became one of the best-known personalities of his day.

### **Other books by Oscar Wilde**

*The Canterville Ghost and other stories*

*The importance of being earnest*

*The picture of Dorian Gray*

*The collected works of Oscar Wilde*

## Discussion questions

1. How did you **experience the book**? It's not always helpful to talk about whether or not you liked the book, but rather how you felt as you were reading it? Were you pulled effortlessly into the book...or did you have difficulty getting into it? Why? Did you find yourself amused, intrigued, enthralled, disturbed, fearful, irritated, angered, or impatient?
2. Are the **characters convincing**-do they come across as believable human beings with underlying motivations? Are they fully developed as emotionally complex individuals? Or are they one-dimensional, with little emphasis on their inner lives?
3. Which characters do you **admire or dislike**-and why? What are their primary characteristics; how would you describe them? In what ways do the characters interact with others-a parent with children; a husband with his wife; a friend with friend.
4. What **motivates the actions** of a given character? To what degree does the character's past play a role in her present actions? Are those actions justified or ethical?
5. Do any characters **grow or change** over the course of the novel? Does any character come to learn something about himself or view the world differently? If so, what does she learn? Or is the character "static," unchanging from beginning to end?
6. What is the **central conflict** of the plot? Is the conflict internal to the character (a psychological conflict)? Or is it external, having to do with character vs. character? Character vs. society? Character vs. nature? (Most novels have a combination of both internal and external conflict.)
7. Is the novel **plot-driven**? In other words, does the plot unfold quickly, focusing more on action than on the inner lives of the characters? Which do you prefer?

8. Is the plot **well-developed**? Is it believable...or is it forced? Is it suspenseful or more contemplative? Does it unfold naturally, or do you feel manipulated along the way by coincidences, odd plot twists, or cliffhangers?
  
9. Is the **ending** satisfying? Predictable or not? Does it wrap up the ends neatly? Is it too neat, too pat? Does it leave some issues unresolved, questions unanswered? If you could change the ending, would you...if so, how would you change it?
  
10. What **central ideas** might the author be exploring-the novel's themes? Consider ideas about the nature of love, the requirements of goodness, the meaning of justice, the burden of the past...basic human issues that are at stake in the book.

Discussion questions sourced from: Litlovers [Generic Fiction Questions](#)