

The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays

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✓ Verified Book of The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays

Summary:

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Combining epigrammatic brilliance and shrewd social observation, the works collected in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays* are edited with an introduction, commentaries and notes by Richard Allen Cave in Penguin Classics.

'To lose one parent may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness'

The Importance of Being Earnest is a glorious comedy of mistaken identity, which ridicules codes of propriety and etiquette. Manners and morality are also victims of Wilde's sharp wit in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance* and *An Ideal Husband*, in which snobbery and hypocrisy are laid bare. In *Salomé* and *A Florentine Tragedy*, Wilde makes powerful use of historical settings to explore the complex relationship between sex and power. The range of these plays displays Wilde's delight in artifice, masks and disguises, and reveals the pretensions of the social world in which he himself played such a dazzling and precarious part.

Richard Allen Cave's introduction and notes discuss the themes of the plays and Wilde's innovative methods of staging. This edition includes the excised 'Gribsby' scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

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