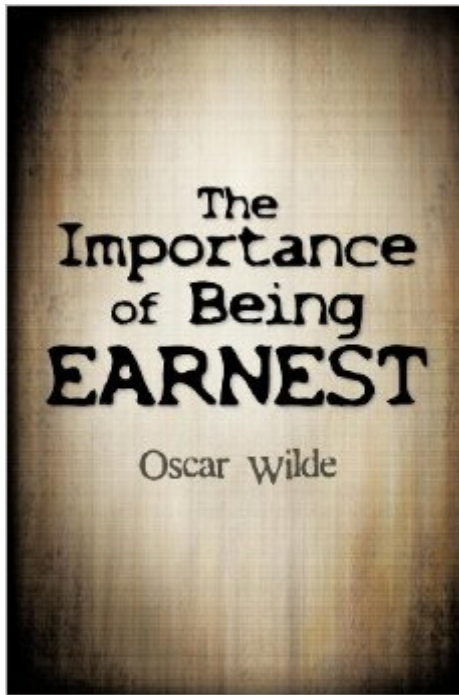


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The Importance Of Being Earnest



Synopsis

2011 Reprint of 1899 Edition. "The Importance of Being Earnest, A Trivial Comedy for Serious People" was first performed on 14 February 1895 at St. James's Theatre in London. It is a farcical comedy in which the protagonists maintain fictitious personae in order to escape burdensome social obligations. Working within the social conventions of late Victorian London, the play's major themes are the triviality with which it treats institutions as serious as marriage, and the resulting satirical treatment of Victorian manners and customs. Its high farce and witty dialogue have helped make it Wilde's most enduringly popular play.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People" is one of the first plays written in English since the works of Shakespeare that celebrates the language itself. Oscar Wilde's comedy has one advantage over the classic comedies of the Bard in that "The Importance of Being Earnest" is as funny today as it was when it was first performed at the St. Jame's Theater in London on February 14, 1895. After all, enjoying Shakespeare requires checking the bottom for footnotes explaining the meaning of those dozens of words that Shakespeare makes up in any one of his plays. But Wilde's brilliant wit, his humor and social satire, remain intact even though he was a writer of the Victorian era. Wilde believed in art for art's own sake, which explains why he emphasized beauty while his contemporaries were dealing with the problems of industrial England. "The Importance of Being Earnest" is set among the upper class, making fun of their excesses and

absurdities while imbuing them with witty banter providing a constant stream of epigrams. The play's situation is simple in its unraveling complexity. Algernon Moncrieff is an upper-class English bachelor who is visited by his friend Jack Worthing, who is known as "Ernest." Jack has come to town to propose to Gwendolen Fairfax, the daughter of the imposing Lady Bracknell and Algy's first cousin. Jack has a ward named Cecily who lives in the country while Algernon has an imaginary friend named "Bunbury" whom he uses as an excuse to get out of social engagements. Jack proposes to Gwendolen but has two problems.

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