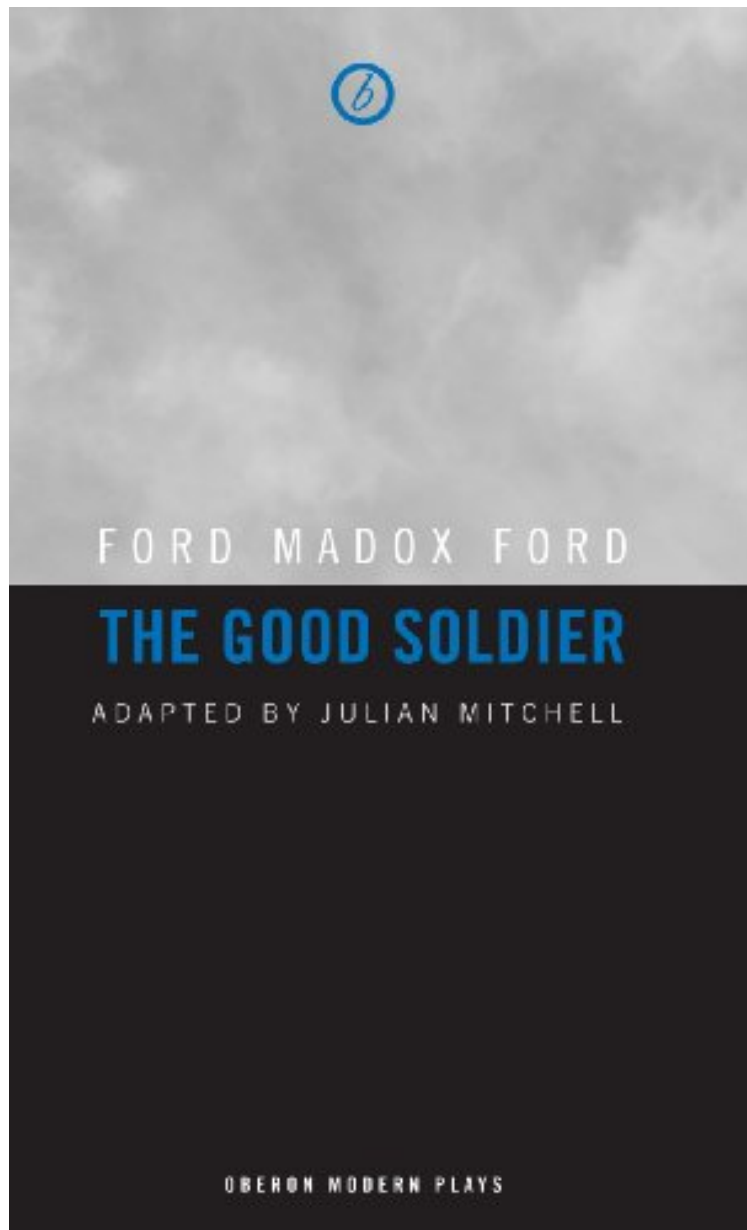


(Download pdf) The Good Soldier (Oberon Modern Plays)

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Ford Madox Ford

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Ford Madox Ford : The Good Soldier (Oberon Modern Plays) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Good Soldier (Oberon Modern Plays):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Be a good little soldier"By R. DelPartoOne of the quintessential writers in British Literature Ford Madox Ford typifies the period of Modernism and The Good Soldier is a good

example. Although the book is quite short with over 140 pages, Ford writes of a deeper meaning within the storyline, especially between the main characters of Edward and Leonora Ashburnham and the intrigue that surrounds their marriage and relationship. However, an interconnectedness that is disjointed and resonates of the time period in which the story was written about the turn of the century and several factors show within each chapter. And as one has noted, it is not a story about war on the battlefield but one of conflicting relations. Similarly to Modernist writers of the early twentieth century, Ford's writing in *Soldier* falls within the lines of Henry James and Willa Cather. It is not so much what is written in so little pages of a book but the content and the intricacies of the characters that play out intensely that one cannot simply read between the lines but with careful and immense understanding. Without revealing too many details, consider the time and place in history and how James and Cather's writings focused on natural and social realism but shaded with metaphors and allusions. But when metaphors are stripped away, the interactions and observations of the characters are revealed, especially complications between Edward and Leonora; their relationship appeared upon the surface typical for the period, well to do and upper middle class, but underneath the surface it was unconventional veiled with indiscretions. Subtly suggested, traditions of the nineteenth century were a thing of the past and hints of a bit of mystery and tragedy to the storyline. The *Good Soldier* is an enticing story that may intrigue the curious reader, and that may come to fruition by the last chapter. Definitely, the book is a page-turner and afterwards, may be one of those a-hah moments.⁷ of 7 people found the following review helpful. Good job! By C. Ebeling This has been on my reading bucket list since it first showed up on a recommended list distributed in a British lit survey course I took in college. It continued to show up, like "Best of the 20th Century" lists. Now I've found out why. From its great opening line that sounds a tad Russian--"This is the saddest story I have ever heard"--to its last revelation of many revelations of character and the human condition--it is always in top artistic form. It predates *The Great Gatsby* by a decade and I'm guessing Fitzgerald read it. The first person narrative structure begins similarly, one man, the American John Dowell, discounting himself as a major player as he promises to tell the story of a bigger player, the British Captain Edward Ashburnham, the "good soldier" of the title. Like *Gatsby*, the circles in which they move are largely affluent, and marriage conventions are flouted. But there the similarities begin to disappear. Ford's characters are more self-deceived than self-made, and there are the cultural contrasts of American vs. European character and protestant vs. Catholic tossed in for good measure. John Dowell proves to be a difficult narrator: though he suggests that it is the understandable problem of ordering memory that he builds the story hesitantly and thus sometimes doubles back to fill in more facts, the tangled story telling may be due as much to his own reluctance to deal with certain truths until he is finally ready. He may not be as much of a bystander as he initially suggests, or as innocent. To say more would spoil the plot. This is an absorbing read, and relatively short. It is also worth reading as a model of modern literary art. It is well informed by the recent arrival of psychology, it strains against the rigidity of Victorian and Edwardian social codes, it smashes Aristotle's rules about plot progression. How the story is told is as important as the story. Energy electrifies it and that makes it a pleasure to read despite the fact that it deals considerably with pathetic human weaknesses. The critical introduction is reliable as most Penguin classic supplementary essays are, and is best read afterward since there are spoilers. Helpful notes do not intrude on the text but are discretely listed at the end.⁰ of 0 people found the following review helpful. They Were All "Good People" - maybe By R. J. Marsella The *Good Soldier* as narrated by one of the four main characters is a series of reminiscences around the relationships and hypocrisy that develops during the friendship of two married couples, one American and one British. Slowly the somewhat dark interior lives of each is revealed by his linking of seemingly unrelated events. Infidelities, financial deceptions and manipulations are revealed and brushed aside by the narrator's insistence that they were all "good people". A well regarded and influential modernist short novel that is well worth reading. I read that Ford was influenced by the works of Guy De Maupassant and this book did remind me of some of De Maupassant's short fictions. Very penetrating psychological insights slowly revealed by one of the participants.

"This is the saddest story I have ever heard." So begins Julian Mitchell's stage adaptation of Ford Madox Ford's classic novel, *The Good Soldier*, a tale of deceit, delusion, and disintegrating marriage in pre-war Britain. Two seemingly upstanding couples find their friendships enveloped by scandal and tragedy, as the facade of wealth and privilege falls away and details of their indiscretions emerge. A fascinating new stage adaptation from an award-winning writer.

First published in 1915, Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* begins, famously and ominously, "This is the saddest story I have ever heard." The book then proceeds to confute this pronouncement at every turn, exposing a world less sad than pathetic, and more shot through with hypocrisy and deceit than its incredulous narrator, John Dowell, cares to imagine. Somewhat forgotten as a classic, *The Good Soldier* has been called everything from the consummate novelist's novel to one of the greatest English works of the century. And although its narrative hook--the philandering of an otherwise noble man--no longer shocks, its unerring cadences and doleful inevitabilities proclaim an enduring appeal. Ford's novel revolves around two couples: Edward Ashburnham--the title's soldier--and his capable if off-putting wife, Leonora; and long-transplanted Americans John and Florence Dowell. The foursome's

ostensible amiability, on display as they pass parts of a dozen pre-World War I summers together in Germany, conceals the fissures in each marriage. John is miserably mismatched with the garrulous, cuckolding Florence; and Edward, dashing and sentimental, can't refrain from falling in love with women whose charms exceed Leonora's. Predictably, Edward and Florence conduct their affair, an indiscretion only John seems not to notice. After the deaths of the two lovers, and after Leonora explains much of the truth to John, he recounts the events of their four lives with an extended inflection of outrage. From his retrospective perch, his recollections simmer with a bitter skepticism even as he expresses amazement at how much he overlooked. Dowell's resigned narration is flawlessly conversational--haphazard, sprawling, lusting for sympathy. He exudes self-preservation even as he alternately condemns and lionizes Edward: "If I had had the courage and the virility and possibly also the physique of Edward Ashburnham I should, I fancy, have done much what he did." Stunningly, Edward's adultery comes to seem not merely excusable, but almost sublime. "Perhaps he could not bear to see a woman and not give her the comfort of his physical attractions," John surmises. Ford's novel deserves its reputation if for no other reason than the elegance with which it divulges hidden lives. --Ben Guterson [a] masterpiece Jake Kerridge, *The Sunday Telegraph* --. "It is excellent to see a Broadview edition of this seminal modernist work. 'On Heaven' is an inspired choice for an appendix, as is the extract from Henry James: *A Critical Study*, which will enable the reader to trace Ford's application of his critical analyses. Biography, textual analysis, contemporary response - they're all here. The reader of this edition is well-equipped for satisfying engagement with Ford's great novel." (Sara Haslam)