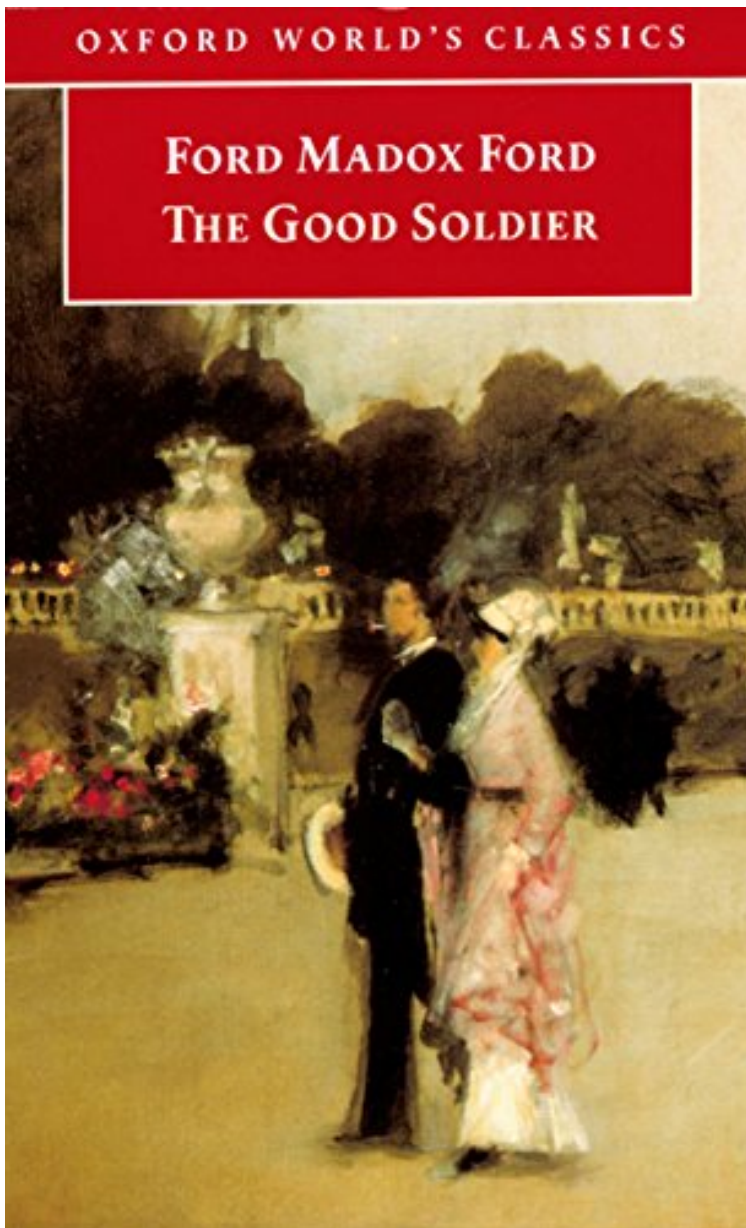


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# The Good Soldier: A Tale of Passion



*Par Ford Madox Ford*  
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**Description :** Description du produitAt the fashionable German spa town Bad Nauheim, two wealthy, fin de siecle couples -- one British, the other American -- meet for their yearly assignation. As their story moves back and forth in time between 1902 and 1914, the fragile surface propriety of the pre -- World War I society in which these four characters live is ruptured -- revealing deceit, hatred, infidelity, and betrayal. "The Good Soldier" is Edward Ashburnham, who, as an adherent to the moral code of the English upper class, is nonetheless consumed by a passion for women younger than his wife -- a stoic but fallible figure in what his American friend, John Dowell, calls "the saddest story I ever heard."

Presentation de l'auteur `The only novel of mine that I considered...at all to count'. Ford's study of the complex social and sexual relationship between an Edwardian English and American couple is narrated in such a seemingly haphazard way that it has perplexed and delighted readers since its publication in 1915. Despite its catalogue of death, insanity, and despair, this `Tale of Passion' has many comic moments, and has inspired the work of several distinguished writers, including Graham Greene. This is the only annotated student edition available. - ; `The only novel of mine that I considered...at all to count'. Ford's study of the complex social and sexual relationship between an Edwardian English and American couple is narrated in such a seemingly haphazard way that it has perplexed and delighted readers since its publication in 1915. Despite its catalogue of death, insanity, and despair, this `Tale of Passion' has many comic moments, and has inspired the work of several distinguished writers, including Graham Greene. This is the only annotated student edition available. .com 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 *Revue de presse* An often absorbing, impeccably graceful spectacle of human suffering that leaves the heart intact --Sam Marlowe, *Sunday Times* Mitchell's adaptation is as elegant as it is poignant and eloquent --Georgina Brown, *Mail on Sunday* [an] exemplary adaption --Susannah Clapp, *The Observer*