

Bel Ami: A Tale of Social Climbing and Moral Decay

Guy de Maupassant's *Bel Ami* is a scathing indictment of French society in the late 19th century. The novel follows the rise of Georges Duroy, a young man from a poor background who uses his charm and cunning to climb the social ladder. Along the way, he seduces and marries a series of wealthy women, exploiting their connections and money to advance his own career.

Duroy is a master manipulator, but he is also a deeply flawed character. He is selfish, ambitious, and ruthless. He cares nothing for the women he uses, and he is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve his goals. As he rises through the ranks of society, he becomes increasingly corrupt and cynical.

Bel Ami is a cautionary tale about the dangers of ambition and the corrupting power of society. It is a story that is as relevant today as it was when it was first published in 1885.



Bel-Ami (Oxford World's Classics) by Guy de Maupassant

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 4032 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 368 pages

Lending : Enabled

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The Characters

- **Georges Duroy:** A young man from a poor background who uses his charm and cunning to climb the social ladder.
- **Madeleine Forestier:** A wealthy and beautiful woman who becomes Duroy's first wife.
- **Suzanne Walter:** A young and innocent woman who falls in love with Duroy.
- **Clotilde de Marelle:** A wealthy and influential widow who becomes Duroy's second wife.
- **Charles Forestier:** Madeleine's husband, a wealthy and influential journalist.
- **Jacques Rival:** A fellow journalist who is Duroy's rival for Madeleine's affections.

The Plot

The novel begins with Duroy meeting Forestier, a wealthy and influential journalist. Forestier takes Duroy under his wing and introduces him to the world of Parisian high society. Duroy quickly learns how to use his charm and good looks to get what he wants. He seduces Madeleine, Forestier's wife, and the two begin an affair.

When Forestier dies suddenly, Duroy marries Madeleine and inherits his wealth and influence. He then sets his sights on Clotilde de Marelle, a

wealthy and influential widow. Duroy seduces Clotilde and the two marry.

As Duroy rises through the ranks of society, he becomes increasingly corrupt and cynical. He uses his position to amass wealth and power, and he cares nothing for the women he uses.

The Themes

- **The dangers of ambition:** Duroy is a man who is driven by ambition. He is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve his goals, regardless of the cost. This ultimately leads to his downfall.
- **The corrupting power of society:** The society that Duroy inhabits is one that is filled with corruption and vice. This society corrupts Duroy and turns him into a ruthless and cynical man.
- **The importance of love:** Duroy is a man who is incapable of love. He uses women to get what he wants, but he does not care for them. This ultimately leads to his loneliness and isolation.

The Critical Reception

Bel Ami was a critical and commercial success when it was first published in 1885. Critics praised the novel's wit, cynicism, and realism. The novel has remained popular ever since, and it is considered to be one of the great works of French literature.

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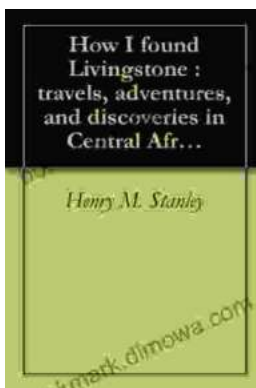
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