

Lady Windermere's Fan (1925)

Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947)

OVERVIEW

Auteur: Ernst Lubitsch was a German-American film director, producer, writer, and actor. He is famous for urbane comedies of manners. With the growth of his prestige, his films came to be known as having *the Lubitsch touch*. Lubitsch was born in 1892 in Berlin, as the son of Simon Lubitsch, a tailor, and Anna (née) Lindenstaedt. His family was Ashkenazi Jewish. He did not enter his father's tailoring business, and by 1911, he was a member of Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater. Lubitsch was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director three times for *The Patriot* (1928), *The Love Parade* (1929), and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). In 1946, he received an Honorary Academy Award for his contributions to the art of motion pictures. His best-known works are *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), *Design for Living* (1933), *Ninotchka* (1939), *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). Lubitsch died of a heart attack on November 30, 1947, in Hollywood at the age of 55.

Film: *Lady Windermere's Fan* is a 1925 American silent drama film. The film is based on Oscar Wilde's 1892 play *Lady Windermere's Fan*. It stars Ronald Colman, May McAvoy, Bert Lytell, and Irene Rich. The adaptation is written by Julien Josephson. The cinematography is by Charles Van Enger. The film is preserved by several archives. It was transferred onto 16 mm film by Associated Artists Productions in the 1950s. In 2002, it was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress, being deemed 'culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant'. *Lady Windermere's Fan* is marked by deft illustrations of "the Lubitsch touch".

Historical background: *Lady Windermere's Fan* is based on a four-act comedy by Oscar Wilde with the name *Lady Windermere's Fan, A Play About a Good Woman*. It was first performed on Saturday, 20 February 1892, at the St James's Theatre in London. Wilde gained huge popularity as a playwright with his production of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, his *recherché*, which is an obscure, exotic, and rare attitude, and personal aesthetics was reflected in his writing. The play concerns Lady Windermere, who suspects that her husband is having an affair with another woman who then confronts him about this. She eventually leaves her husband because of his presumed infidelity with a woman called Mrs. Erlynne. After discovering what has occurred, Mrs. Erlynne follows Lady Windermere and tries to persuade her to return to her husband. In the course of events, it is revealed that Mrs. Erlynne is Lady Windermere's mother and she sacrifices her reputation to save her daughter's marriage.

CHARACTERS

Lady Windermere: Wife of Lord Windermere, a jealous and suspicious lady who reveres her mother
Lord Windermere: Husband of Lady Windermere
Mrs. Erlynne: Mother of Lady Windermere, a wise woman trying to connect with her *daughter*
Lord Darlington: A man who is in love with Lady Windermere and tries to win her affection
Lord Augustus Lorton: London's most distinguished bachelor who has feelings for Mrs. Erlynne
The Duchess of Berwick: A snooty and gossipy lady who loves talking about Mrs. Erlynne

SYNOPSIS

Lady Windermere tries to stop Lord Darlington's flirtatious behavior toward her. Meanwhile, her husband Lord Windermere receives a letter from a stranger who is asking to meet him regarding an urgent matter. As he goes to meet this woman called Mrs. Erlynne, he learns that she is his wife's mother, drowned in debt. So, he writes her a cheque to help and also silence her because her wife believes her mother to be dead and reveres her memory. In the coming days, there is a horse race that Mrs. Erlynne comes to

watch and where she attracts the attention of many, including London's most distinguished bachelor Lord Augustus Lorton. As three ladies, including the Duchess of Berwick gossip about Mrs. Erlynne; Lord Windermere defends her which makes his wife Lady Windermere suspicious. As Mrs. Erlynne leaves, Lord Lorton follows her and starts seeing her regularly. Lady Windermere's birthday comes. Her husband buys her beautiful jewelry and a fan. As he leaves the house, Lord Darlington and she see him take a taxi instead of using his car which makes Lady Windermere further suspicious. Lord Darlington tells her that she may find in her husband's cheque book the name of Mrs. Erlynne. He further confesses his love for her. Meanwhile, Mrs. Erlynne blackmails Lord Windermere to invite her to her daughter's birthday reception. When her husband returns home, Lady Windermere confronts him about the cheque. Lord Windermere explains that he only helped a woman in need. She becomes infuriated after learning that Mrs. Erlynne will be coming to her birthday reception. Because of his wife's strong opposition, Lord Windermere sends a letter to Mrs. Erlynne asking her not to come to the reception. Mrs. Erlynne does not open the letter assuming it to be an invitation. At the ball, she realizes that she is not on the guest list but uses Lord Augustus Lorton to enter the party. She asks Lord Windermere to introduce her to his wife and finally meets her daughter. Meanwhile, the Duchess of Berwick spreads rumors and gossip about her to the other ladies which she stops by flattering the Duchess and soon Mrs. Erlynne is accepted by all the ladies. Lady Windermere sees Mrs. Erlynne talking to someone whom Lady Windermere takes to be her husband. Mrs. Erlynne tries to explain to her that she was talking to Lord Augustus but she does not believe her and leaves to go to Lord Darlington's house. Mrs. Erlynne finds her farewell note to Lord Windermere and takes it away. She goes to Darlington's house to persuade her daughter to come back home. Soon Lord Darlington and many other men, including Lord Windermere, arrive. The two women hide in the library but Lady Windermere has forgotten her fan on the sofa. After the men find the fan, Lord Windermere demands that Lord Darlington explain why his wife's fan is there. As the two men are about to fight, Mrs. Erlynne comes and says she took Lady Windermere's fan by mistake. After this scandal, all the men, including Lord Augustus Lorton leave. The next morning, Mrs. Erlynne comes to return the fan and say goodbye to her daughter as she will go back to France later on. She dissuades Lady Windermere from telling the truth about last night to her husband as telling the truth about what happened would kill the love of Lord Windermere. After having said goodbye to each other, Mrs. Erlynne leaves. On her way back, she encounters Lord Augustus and tells him that his behavior last night was outrageous and she no longer wishes to marry him. Lord Augustus is shocked but he follows her into the taxi that she gets on and they leave together.

SCENES

Lady Windermere arranges the seating of her dinner guests

We see Lady Windermere arranging the seating of her dinner guests. She thinks about where the seating of Lord Darlington shall be, she almost places his seating card next to hers. As she does so, she has a peculiar smile on her face, but then changes her mind.



Lord Darlington has arrived at Lady Windermere's house

Soon, a servant comes in and tells the lady that Lord Darlington has arrived. She accepts him. Lord Darlington and she shake hands. He wishes to kiss her hand but she does not allow it. Then she looks away. He suddenly kisses her hand. She says to him: 'I presume you came to see my husband.' He shakes his head meaning that he did not come to see her husband but her. She looks shocked and sits on the corner of a sofa. Lord Darlington comes to sit near her.



Lord Windermere reads a letter from Edith Erlynne Next,

we see Lord Windermere reading a letter, looking concerned. In the letter, it is written: 'Dear Lord Windermere, This note from a total stranger may surprise you—but it is important that you see



me at once if you would avoid certain unpleasant disclosures. Yours very truly, Edith Erlynne' Lord Windermere looks thoughtful and looks at the letter once again.

Lord Darlington chats with Lord Windermere At that moment, his wife Lady Windermere enters the room and tells him that Lord Darlington is most anxious to see him. Lord Darlington enters the room and starts chatting with Lord Windermere while Lady Windermere looks concerned. Soon, Lord Windermere asks them whether they would mind if he runs away. Lord Darlington has a broad smile on his face. His wife hugs Lord Windermere who tries to secretly take the letter Edith Erlynne sent him. Lord Darlington realizes that he is trying to get the letter and helps to move the letter a bit closer to him so Lord Windermere can take it. Soon, Lord Windermere leaves the room.



Lord Darlington confesses his love for Lady Windermere Lady Windermere looks very nervous. She goes to sit on a sofa while Lord Darlington goes to sit in the opposite direction. He says to her: 'Lady Windermere, I have a bit of news that might interest you.' She gets curious and goes to sit near him. Lord Darlington says to her that he loves her. Then he gets up and sits on the opposite sofa.



Edith Erlynne looks melancholically at a photo of Lady Windermere After a life of adventure abroad, Mrs. Erlynne had drifted to London—her social standing a thing of the past, the present a problem for her polished wits. We see Edith Erlynne who has covered her face with her hands, looking tired and thoughtful. She looks at a magazine that has a photo of Lady Windermere. She looks wistfully at the photo, then she tears the page off of the magazine. She sighs.



Lord Windermere visits Mrs. Erlynne to learn the truth Then a servant comes and informs her that Lord Windermere has arrived. She accepts him. They shake hands. She asks him to sit on the sofa which he rejects. Then he shows her the letter that she had sent him: 'Who are you—and what does this letter mean?' Mrs. Erlynne has a very sad look on her face. She says to him moments later: 'I am the mother of your wife.' Lord Windermere quickly closes the door. He has a shocked look on his face and does not want anyone to know this secret. Mrs. Erlynne smiles bitterly. Soon she says to him: 'I knew you would doubt me— here are the proofs of my identity.' Lord Windermere looks at the papers while she lights a cigarette. After he has read the papers, Lord Windermere has an angry look on his face: 'You know very well that your daughter was brought up to believe her mother is dead—you also know why!' 'She worships her dead mother. The truth would kill her!'



Lord Windermere helps Mrs. Erlynne who has a lot of debts to pay She looks at the distance with wistful eyes and goes to sit on a chair. Her servant comes and brings her another bill. Understanding her dire situation, Lord Windermere decides to help her and writes a cheque amounting to 1500 pounds.



Mrs. Erlynne cherishes the photo of her daughter Lady Windermere

Later, his eyes catch the sight of the photo of Lady Windermere. Realizing that he is looking at the photo, Mrs. Erlynne gives him the photo which he first takes. But as he is about to leave, he sees how sad she looks and decides to give the photo back to her. She takes it back smilingly and puts the photo in a drawer as if she is also thereby symbolically putting all her pain and emotions into the drawer of her subconscious. She and he shake hands and she smiles bitterly once again. *Thanks to Windermere's cheques, Mrs. Erlynne lived in extravagant style—not accepted by society but the subject of its gossip.*



At the horse race, the society seems very interested in Mrs. Erlynne

Next, we see a horse race. Mrs. Erlynne is among men and prepared to watch the race from the front lines. We see that as she walks, men turn their heads and look at her. People sitting in their seats and waiting for the race to start also look at her with their binoculars. Everyone seems so interested in her.



Mrs. Erlynne's eyes catch those of the London's most distinguished bachelor Lord Augustus Lorton

Soon Mrs. Erlynne's eyes catch those of Lord Windermere. They look both full of emotion and Lord Windermere looks at her intensely, but thereafter he pretends not to have seen her and continues to talk to Lord Darlington about the horse race. Mrs. Erlynne bends her head down. However, she soon sees her daughter and looks at her with longing eyes. As she is looking at her daughter, Lord Augustus Lorton, London's most distinguished bachelor, sees Mrs. Erlynne and thinks that she is looking at him.



The Duchess of Berwick, Lady Plymdale, and Mrs. Cowper gossip about Mrs. Erlynne

The Duchess of Berwick, Lady Plymdale, and Mrs. Cowper look at Mrs. Erlynne with their binoculars and they gossip about her as if they are discussing a vital matter. One of the gossiping ladies talks to Lady Windermere about Mrs. Erlynne but she seems not to be very much interested in this matter. One of the other women smiles as she looks at Mrs. Erlynne through the binoculars: 'She is getting gray—' They tell Lady Windermere that Mrs. Erlynne is 'quite gray'. The same woman also tells Lord Augustus Lorton that: 'she is perfectly gray' at which the Lord smiles. Then they look at her jewelry. The same woman asks: 'I wonder where the woman gets all her money?'

Lady Windermere is disturbed that her husband defends Mrs. Erlynne

As the women continue to gossip, Lord Windermere interferes: 'Why gossip about a woman you have never met? She may be very nice.' The women all turn silent. One of the women tells Lady Windermere: 'I cannot understand why your husband defends the woman!' Lady Windermere soon becomes very suspicious and she asks her husband why she defended Mrs. Erlynne. Meanwhile, Lord Darlington is slightly smiling. Soon, Lord Augustus Lorton leaves them. Lady Windermere is still thoughtful and suspicious because of the way her husband has defended Mrs. Erlynne. Her eyes search for Mrs. Erlynne but she seems to have left the place.



Horse race begins

Soon, the horse race begins. Everybody gets up to look at the horses racing, but the three women, Lady and Lord Windermere, and Lord Darlington still look



at the piece of paper containing information about the horses. They all seem to be unaware of the fact that the race has started.

Lord Augustus Lorton follows Mrs. Erylne Next, we see Mrs. Erylne followed by Lord Augustus Lorton. This following or chasing provides us with another comic relief. A gentleman's relation to a lady is indicated by the manner in which he rings her doorbell. We see a man hesitating to ring the doorbell of Mrs. Erylne. After looking himself in the mirror for one last time and buttoning up his jacket, he proceeds to ring the bell. A servant opens the door to him. It turns out the gentleman is Lord Augustus Lorton. The servant takes his hat and he enters the room where Mrs. Erylne is. They sit on a sofa and start talking and Mrs. Erylne lights a cigarette that Lord Augustus Lorton has given her.



Lord Augustus Lorton becomes close friends with Mrs. Erylne

But when the relation becomes more friendly— We see Lord Augustus Lorton ringing the bell rather insistently. After the servant opens the door, he directly hangs his hat and walking stick himself. Then he proceeds to Mrs. Erylne's room with a joyful look on his face and kisses her hand. He wishes to kiss her on the cheek too but she does not allow it. Then he takes the cigarette she is having from her hands as he does not want her to smoke. As he puts out the cigarette, he sees a Cuban cigar in the ashtray and becomes instantly suspicious and jealous. Mrs. Erylne laughs at his behavior: 'What right have you to be jealous? You don't love me. If you really loved me, you would marry me in spite of what society might say—' Lord Augustus Lorton cannot answer her and remains silent. Mrs. Erylne goes near the ashtray and takes the Cuban cigar. Then she takes out a purse from Lord Augustus' pocket from which she pulls another cigar. It turns out the two cigars are exactly the same and the cigar which was used belongs to Lord Augustus Lorton. After showing the two exact cigars to the Lord, Mrs. Erylne says: 'I am sorry my maid forgot to empty the ashtray, but it happens even in—society.' Lord Augustus looks very sorry and tries to kiss the hand of Mrs. Erylne which she does not allow. Then Mrs. Erylne slaps his face jokingly which makes him laugh out loud.



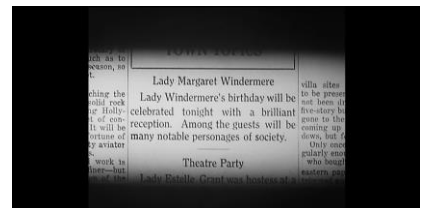
Lady Windermere gets many birthday presents

Lord Windermere arranges some items on the desk and invites his wife to the room. On the desk there are various necklaces and jewelry he bought for her. Lady Windermere kisses him. Then her eyes catch one of the beautiful bracelets he got for her. She looks at the bracelet, then kisses her husband once again. Next, she looks at a necklace and kisses her husband again to thank him. Lastly, her eyes catch a fan. She looks at it with admiring eyes and kisses her husband once again.



Mrs. Erylne learns about her daughter's birthday reception

Mrs. Erylne has a serious and thoughtful look on her face. She reads a newspaper which says: 'Lady Windermere's birthday will be celebrated tonight with a brilliant reception. Among the guests will be many notable personages of society.'



Lord Darlington causes Lady Windermere to become doubtful about her husband

Lord Windermere tells his wife that he has to leave. As he leaves, Lord Darlington enters the room. He shakes hands with Lady Windermere. She shows him the presents her husband bought for her but Lord Darlington cannot take his eyes off of her. Then they go near the window. Looking out the window, Lady Windermere sees that her husband does not get on his usual



car, rather he gets on a taxi. This makes his wife suspicious. Lord Darlington says insinuatingly: 'When a married man dismisses his own car and hires a taxi— — —!' Lady Windermere becomes worried. However, she soon laughs as if dismissing the matter as something trivial. Lord Darlington holds her hands as he wants her to be more serious about this issue, but the Lady gets angry and the Lord proceeds to leave the room. Right before he leaves, he says to her: 'You may find— in your husband's cheque book— the name of Mrs. Erlynne. It's not fair of me and I know it, but— —I love you.'

Lady Windermere tries to find the secret of her husband Lady Windermere goes to her husband's study room and closes the door. She sits on a chair, noticeably nervous and agitated. She tries to open the drawer of her husband's desk but finds it to be locked. As she tries to open the lock, a servant comes in and The Duchess of Berwick enters the room. They start chatting. Lady Windermere seems to have forgotten what has been troubling her.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

Lord Windermere accepts to invite Mrs. Erlynne to the birthday reception of his wife Lord Windermere is in the house of Mrs. Erlynne. They seem to have a disagreement. Mrs. Erlynne begs him for something but he does not seem to be accepting of what she is asking for. Soon, we find out what she is asking for as she says to Lord Windermere: 'I am desperate—if you refuse to invite me tonight—I will go to my daughter and tell her who I am!' She seems quite decisive such that the Lord finally accepts her wish to be invited to the birthday reception. She goes on to speak: 'To be seen at your house tonight means my social recognition— possibly my marriage to Lord Augustus.' Then they shake hands. Lord Windermere leaves.



Lady Windermere does not want Mrs. Erlynne to come to her birthday under any circumstances Lord Windermere enters the house. Realizing that her husband has arrived, Lady Windermere pretends to be reading a book. Her husband sits near her but seems to be nervous and at a loss as to what to say. Then he sees that the lock on his desk drawer has been broken. He goes to open the drawer which is full of cheques. Lady Windermere shows him the cheque he had written for Mrs. Erlynne and asks what this is all about. He says: 'There is nothing wrong—believe me, dear I simply helped a woman who deserved it.' However, Lady Windermere does not believe anything he says and tears start to flow from her eyes. Her husband tries to assure her saying: 'You will change your mind when you meet her—I have asked her here tonight' which creates the opposite of the intended effect on his wife. Lady Windermere cannot believe what she is hearing. She says to her husband: 'If she dares to come here— I will strike her across the face with this fan!' She goes on to cry on the sofa.



Mrs. Erlynne waits impatiently for her invitation card *Though the hour for the reception had arrived, Mrs. Erlynne still waited for her invitation card.* We see Mrs. Erlynne pacing back and forth in her room. Soon, her servant brings her a letter which is stamped with the symbol W which Mrs. Erlynne takes to be the invitation from the Windermere family. She does not open the letter but directly leaves her house to go to the house of Windermere.



The birthday reception and Lord Darlington's curiosity The reception runs smoothly. Guests are content and smiling. One of the servants announces that Lord Darlington has arrived. Hearing this, Lady Windermere looks visibly nervous. Lord Darlington comes to greet her and everybody else. Lord Darlington makes peculiar facial expressions to Lady Windermere to convey to her his curiosity



about whether she had found out about the relationship between her husband and Mrs. Erlynne. At first, Lady Windermere behaves as if she does not care about this and pretends to ignore Lord Darlington. However, later on, she goes near him. She blatantly lies to him saying: 'You were quite wrong. My husband has never met Mr. Erlynne.' First, Lord Darlington looks puzzled to hear this. Nevertheless, upon pondering, he realizes that she is lying and slightly smiles.

Mrs. Erlynne finds a way to enter the birthday reception

Soon, new guests arrive. Among the guests, there is also Mrs. Erlynne. The servants try to tell Mrs. Erlynne that she is not invited and that her name is not on the list of guests. She takes out the letter that was sent to her to prove that she has been invited to the birthday reception. However, opening the letter, she sees that the letter says: 'My dear Mrs. Erlynne— Please do not come tonight. My wife is so upset about your invitation that I am forced to cancel it. Regretfully, Windermere.' Reading this, she tries not to show her disappointment. At that moment, Lord Augustus Lorton enters the house. She shakes hands with Lord Augustus Lorton. Then they start chatting. Later, she asks Lord Lorton to take her coat and she enters the reception room.



Mrs. Erlynne and Lady Windermere finally meet A servant announces her name at which Lady Windermere is shocked. She looks at her daughter with a wistful facial expression. Then she sees Lord Windermere who comes to greet her. The three ladies; The Duchess of Berwick, Lady Plymdale, and Mrs. Cowper all look at her with examining and suspicious eyes. Mrs. Erlynne wishes to be introduced to Lady Windermere. Thus she finally meets her daughter. As she shakes her hand, the fan that Lady Windermere is holding falls from her hands to the ground. She says to Mrs. Erlynne: 'How kind of you to honor us! I have heard so much about you—from every side.' Then she goes to check on other guests to stop their whispering and gossiping.



The Duchess of Berwick starts spreading rumors about Mrs. Erlynne Inside, the Duchess of Berwick starts spreading rumors and gossip about Mrs. Erlynne. She goes from group to group to talk badly about her.



Mrs. Erlynne succeeds in winning the Duchess over Soon, many men gather around Mrs. Erlynne. Mrs. Erlynne realizes that the Duchess of Berwick is talking about her with Lord Augustus Lorton, so she excuses herself and goes near them. She tells the Duchess: 'I have yearned—positively yearned—to meet the best-dressed woman in London!' The Duchess feels very much flattered and she starts behaving positively toward Mrs. Erlynne. They sit together and soon other women gather around them and finally accept Mrs. Erlynne as one of them.



Lord Darlington tries to console Lady Windermere Lady Windermere is outside on the terrace, crying. A man comes to hold her hand as she is crying whom she presumes to be her husband and starts shouting angrily. However, the man turns out to be Lord Darlington. He gives her the fan she forgot back in the main room. Lady Windermere takes the fan and goes away. Lord Darlington follows her. They talk but the Lady seems uncomfortable about having to talk to him. The Lord says: 'I am leaving England tomorrow—you will never see me again. Goodbye, Margaret.'



Lady Windermere misunderstands a situation After the Lord goes away, Lady Windermere sees Mrs. Erlynne talking to a man. Lady Windermere thinks that she is talking to Lord Windermere and gets jealous but in actuality, the man that Mrs. Erlynne is talking to is none other than Lord Augustus Lorton. He says to her: 'Is it too late to ask you to marry me?' As she is thinking of an answer, her eyes catch the sight of Lady Windermere. She excuses herself to Lord Lorton and goes near her to tell her that Lord Windermere is looking for her. As she has misunderstood the situation, she sarcastically says to her: 'I am sure he has not missed me—you have entertained him so well.' Mrs. Erlynne is shocked by this statement.



Mrs. Erlynne finds Lady Windermere's letter to her husband She goes back into the mansion and looks for Lady Windermere everywhere, yet she cannot find her. She lights a cigarette. As she looks out the window, she sees Lady Windermere getting in a car. Mrs. Erlynne looks extremely worried about the Lady. Then she sees a letter on the desk which is written to Lord Windermere. The letter says: 'You may have your Mrs. Erlynne—I am going to Darlington who loves me. Margaret.' Mrs. Erlynne reads the letter in a state of shock. After reading it, she hides it and goes out of the room.



Mrs. Erlynne tries to stop Lord Windermere from looking for his wife As she is leaving, she runs into Lord Windermere whom she tells: 'Your wife has a little headache—she is lying down.' Lord Windermere wishes to see his wife but Mrs. Erlynne stops him from doing so. She begins to tell him a fictitious story about what happened between them: '—and we became quite friendly—really! I told her of my engagement to Lord Augustus and she was delighted.' The Lord insists on seeing her but Mrs. Erlynne stops him again by saying: 'She wants to rest, do you see? Don't disturb her. Do not wake her. If necessary, make some little apology for her.' After she sees that he is convinced, she leaves the mansion to go after Lady Windermere.



Mrs. Erlynne tries to convince Lady Windermere to come back to her house Lady Windermere is at the house of Lord Darlington. Soon after she arrives, Mrs. Erlynne comes after her to talk to her. She shows her the letter she wrote to Lord Windermere. As Lady Windermere tries to take the letter back, Mrs. Erlynne throws it into the fireplace. She begs her to come back to her home: 'I swear to you there is nothing between Lord Windermere and myself! Go home! Please go home!' Lady Windermere gets angry at her and what she is saying. Mrs. Erlynne tries to convince her further: 'Trust me, child—trust me as you would your own mother.' Lady Windermere is infuriated by these remarks: 'How dare a woman like you speak of my mother—my mother!' Tears fill up in Mrs. Erlynne's eyes. Even though heartbroken, she tries to persuade Lady Windermere to come back home one more time: 'I did just what you are doing tonight—and ruined my life.'



As Lord Darlington and other men arrive at the house, the two ladies hide in the library When they hear the sounds of cars arriving, they look out the window and see that Lord Darlington, Lord Windermere, and their friends have all arrived at Lord Darlington's house. Mrs. Erlynne says to Lady Windermere: 'If they find you here, you will be dishonored—an outcast!' They decide to hide in the library. The men come to the house.



Mrs. Erlynne saves Lady Windermere's reputation at the cost of her own

Lady Windermere soon remembers that she has lost her fan in the main room. Mrs. Erlynne looks out the keyhole and sees the fan on the sofa. Lord Augustus Lorton finds the fan and tells about it to the other men. Lord Windermere realizes that this is the fan of his wife and confronts Lord Darlington about it. Lord Darlington says that he does not know anything about how the fan ended up in his house. Then things escalate and they start to fight. At that very moment, the door opens and Mrs. Erlynne comes out. She takes the fan from the ground and says: 'I am afraid I took your wife's fan by mistake—so sorry!' Lord Augustus Lorton is shocked to see her in Lord Darlington's house. Lord Darlington is shocked as well. The men start to leave the house one by one. As Mrs. Erlynne and Lord Darlington are the only ones left, she says to him: 'Forgive me for intruding—I am sure it will never be necessary again.' Then she leaves.



The following morning, Mrs. Erlynne comes to see Lady Windermere

The following morning Lady and Lord Windermere are having breakfast. Lord Windermere says to his wife: 'You were right about Mrs. Erlynne. She is thoroughly bad. Last night—' Lady Windermere tries to talk to him and convince him otherwise but he seems adamant regarding the conclusions he has reached about her. At that moment, a servant brings a note from Mrs. Erlynne that says: 'I am just leaving for France. I only came to say goodbye.' When she comes, Lord Windermere leaves the room after greeting her. Lady Windermere, on the other hand, is delighted to see Mrs. Erlynne.



Mrs. Erlynne convinces Lady Windermere to not tell the truth to her husband

After seeing how her husband has avoided Mrs. Erlynne, she wants to go and explain to him the truth about the last night. But Mrs. Erlynne stops her from doing so: 'Don't tell him! You would kill his love—and spoil the only decent thing I ever did.' After this, they say goodbye to each other and Mrs. Erlynne leaves the house.



Lord Augustus Lorton and Mrs. Erlynne leave together in a taxi

As she goes outside, she sees Lord Augustus Lorton coming to the house. She says to him: 'Your conduct last night was outrageous! I have decided not to marry you.' Lord Augustus Lorton is flabbergasted. Nevertheless, he follows her into the taxi she gets on.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Lady Windermere:

Lady Windermere is one of the main characters in the film. She is the wife of Lord Windermere and the daughter of Mrs. Erlynne. But she does not know that Mrs. Erlynne is her mother. She believes that her mother has died years ago. In the film, we see her as an immature character plagued by jealousy, suspicions, and paranoia about the loyalty of her husband.

Immature: We can tell that Lady Windermere is an immature character as can be seen in her behavior toward Lord Darlington. Even though she appears to be disturbed by his flirtatious behavior, she does not reject it. Because she does not make a definite statement to him and directly rejects him, Lord Darlington continues his flirtatious behavior toward her.

Jealous/suspicious: She first becomes suspicious of her husband Lord Windermere at the horse race. His defending of Mrs. Erlynne disturbs her. Later on, Lord Darlington mentions that she can find a cheque written for Mrs. Erlynne in her husband's study room. Because she is so suspicious, she opens the

drawer of Lord Windermere's desk and finds the cheque written for Mrs. Erlynne. It can be said that even though she is somewhat justified in becoming suspicious of her husband's loyalty, her suspicions and paranoia make her delusional. At her birthday reception, she sees Mrs. Erlynne talking to someone and believes that it is her husband flirting with her even though the person she is talking to, is in actuality, Lord Augustus Lorton. Thus, her paranoia and jealousy cause her to become even more delusional.

Impulsive: She is an impulsive character. Once she believes, despite not enough evidence that her husband is cheating on her with Mrs. Erlynne, she decides to go to Lord Darlington's house on a whim. Her impulsive behavior almost ruins her entire life but fortunately, her mother Mrs. Erlynne comes to her help and saves her from a very complex and difficult situation.

Lord Windermere:

Lord Windermere is the husband of Lady Windermere. He is a principled man who loves his life and is of a helpful and emphatic nature as well. He becomes subject to his wife's suspicions and jealousy, and his behavior is frequently misunderstood by his wife.

Loving: We can see that Lord Windermere loves his wife judging from the several instances from the film. First of all, when Mrs. Erlynne explains that she is Lady Windermere's mother, he does not want his wife to know this truth because his wife believes that her mother died many years ago. If she had learned that her mother left them for another man when she was very small, that would ruin the image she had of her mother. Considering all this, Lord Windermere does not want his wife to be hurt by this new knowledge. From his thoughtfulness, we can conclude that he deeply loves his wife and does not want her to be traumatized in any way. Looking from a materialistic point of view, we can also see his love for his wife in the presents he buys for her. The luxurious jewelry and fan that he bought for her birthday symbolize his love for her.

Helpful: Lord Windermere is a helpful man. He helps Mrs. Erlynne to pay her debts and bills by writing cheques for her. Even though such an act is not something considered appropriate by society, he helps Mrs. Erlynne anyway because she is his wife's mother and she has been through many hardships. From this, we can conclude that he is a good-hearted individual.

Emphatic: Lord Windermere is also an emphatic man. He realizes how much Mrs. Erlynne loves her daughter. Even though he first takes the photo of Lady Windermere from her hands, he sees how much Mrs. Erlynne is saddened by this, so he gives the photo back to her. We can thus say he is an emphatic man seeing how he understands the importance of this photo to Mrs. Erlynne and how much she cherishes it.

Mrs. Erlynne:

Mrs. Erlynne is one of the main characters in the film. She is the mother of Lady Windermere, unbeknownst to her daughter. She had lived a life of adventure abroad. She is a loving, wise, and resourceful woman for whom there is nothing she cannot do for her child.

Loving: Mrs. Erlynne loves her daughter. She has lived a life of adventure abroad but she has returned for her and has always missed her. Her love for her daughter can be best seen in her facial expressions when she thinks about Lady Windermere. She has a wistful, melancholic, nostalgic, and bitter expression on her face which conveys to us the viewers her longing for her.

Impulsive: One characteristic that Mrs. Erlynne shares with her daughter is impulsivity. As her daughter Lady Windermere comes to quick conclusions about what she perceives, so does Mrs. Erlynne. For instance, when she gets a letter from the Windermeres, she takes the letter to be an invitation without even opening it. This shows us her impatient nature. Moreover, we learn near the end of the film that she had once left her family like her daughter was about to do as she came to Darlington's house. These impulsive decisions observed both in the mother and daughter suggest that there might be a hereditary component to these behaviors.

Resourceful: Mrs. Erylne is a resourceful woman, meaning she can find quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties. Other than the fact that she loves her daughter, her resourcefulness might be her defining characteristic. There are several instances and scenes in the film where we witness her clever solutions to seemingly difficult problems. For instance, even though it turns out that she is not invited to her daughter's birthday reception, she uses Lord Augustus Lorton to be able to gain entry. Furthermore, at the birthday reception, she realizes that gossip and rumors are being spread about her by the Duchess of Berwick. So, she targets her, meaning flatters her and wins her over to her side which makes it possible for her to be accepted by high society. Another instance where we see her quick-wittedness and ingenuity is when she goes to Darlington's house to persuade her daughter to come back. As they see that men from the birthday reception are all coming to Darlington's house, the two ladies hide in the library. When Lord Augustus Lorton finds the fan of Lady Windermere and Lord Windermere confronts Lord Darlington about how the fan ended up in his house, Mrs. Erylne makes a very clever move by sacrificing her own reputation to save her daughter. She claims that she mistakenly took Lady Windermere's fan as she came to Lord Darlington's house. This move is a very clever one on her part as actually she does not have much to lose—as she had already been the center of bad rumors and gossip before— whereas her daughter's social standing is at stake. Moreover, at the very end of the film, she makes a playful statement to Lord Augustus Lorton, saying that she does not want to marry him anymore because of his outrageous behavior when in fact it was her behavior that was outrageous by society's standards. These witty comebacks and resourcefulness emphasize her intelligence and wisdom as can be seen by the given examples.

Lord Darlington:

Lord Darlington is one of the side characters of the film. He is in love with Lady Windermere and confesses his love for her several times throughout the film. On the other hand, he is also a friend of Lord Windermere. So, there is a complex situation between these three characters which gets further complicated by the arrival of Mrs. Erylne.

Loving: The defining role that Lord Darlington plays in the film is that of a lover whose love is unrequited. His toward Lady Windermere can be seen in several scenes. For instance, when Lady Windermere is crying on the terrace because Mrs. Erylne showed up uninvited at her birthday reception, he is the one to console her and give her the fan that had slipped from her hands while she was talking to Mrs. Erylne.

Untrustworthy: Even though he is a loving character, it cannot be said that he is trustworthy. The reason for that is he is on friendly terms with Lord Windermere and despite knowing that Lady Windermere is married, he still makes romantic advances toward her. It can be said that he betrays his friend as his love for the Lady is greater than the degree of loyalty he has to the friendship of Lord Windermere. Therefore, he is not someone who can be relied on.

Lord Augustus Lorton:

Lord Augustus Lorton is the most distinguished bachelor in London. He is quite a flirtatious man as can be seen in his behavior toward Mrs. Erylne when he first sees her at the horse race and then follows her after she leaves. As he is also one of the side characters, we do not get to know about the intricacies of his personality. Nevertheless, we can infer that he has a warm and friendly temperament.

Friendly: Lord Augustus is an amicable character. He is a close acquaintance of the Windermeres. He initiates a good friendship with Mrs. Erylne. He is also good friends with Lord Darlington and Lord Windermere. One of the scenes where his friendly and jovial nature can be observed is when he finds the fan of Lady Windermere in Lord Darlington's house and —not knowing that the fan belongs to her— jokes about it to the other men. He also does not hold grudges. An example of this is that even though he sees Mrs. Erylne in the house of Lord Darlington on the night of the birthday reception, the following morning he follows Mrs. Erylne into the taxi, meaning he is still on good terms with her. This proves to us once again his light-hearted and untroubled character that is free of feelings of resentment.

The Duchess of Berwick:

The Duchess of Berwick is one of the side characters who provide comic relief in the film. She can be said to be a one-sided character as we do not get to know the depths of her personality.

Gossipy: She is the chief gossip in the film. She spreads rumors about Mrs. Erlynne. We first witness her snoop and gossip behavior at the horse race where she continually looks at Mrs. Erlynne with binoculars and comments on her appearance and finances even though she has never personally met her. She also keeps spreading gossip about her at the birthday reception of Lady Windermere. However, Mrs. Erlynne wins her over to her side as she resourcefully flatters her fashion style. That way, the Duchess' rumors come to an end, at least those involving Mrs. Erlynne.

THEMES

RELATIONSHIP

Marriage Marriage is one of the important themes in *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The marriage between Lord and Lady Windermere looks perfect when looked at from afar. However, in truth, it is not so. One of the reasons for that is Lord Darlington's flirtatious behavior toward Lady Windermere which she does not completely reject. Moreover, even though she is loved and provided for by her husband Lord Windermere, she is prone to become unwarrantedly jealous of him as can be seen in the horse race when Lord Windermere defends Mrs. Erlynne. It can be concluded that she does not fully trust her husband. The situation is made more complex because her husband also hides secrets from her, namely the fact that Mrs. Erlynne is her mother. So, the viewers are confronted with many open-ended questions about what a marriage is supposed to be like, whether there can or should be some secrets hidden from one's partner, or whether it is justified that not all secrets be known. These questions are not fully answered in the film and it is up to each viewer to make up his/her mind about these very human issues.

Loyalty / Betrayal Loyalty is faithfulness or devotion to some person whereas betrayal is the absence of, breaking, or violation of this devotion or trust which produces moral and psychological conflict within a relationship amongst individuals. The concepts of loyalty and betrayal are at the forefront in *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Lady Windermere is frequently doubtful about the loyalty of her husband whereas her own loyalty is also questionable as she does not directly reject the romantic advances of Lord Darlington. She makes up scenarios in her head about how her husband is unfaithful to her and has a relationship with Mrs. Erlynne. However, these scenarios have no bearing on reality as Lord Windermere merely provides financial help to Mrs. Erlynne because she is his wife's mother and in need of help. So, it can be said that the accusations of Lady Windermere are baseless. Lord Darlington's behavior is also questionable in terms of his loyalty to his friendship with Lord Windermere. Thus, his flirtatious behavior toward Lady Windermere is a breach of the trust between the two friends or close acquaintances.

Love & Caring Love and caring are interconnected terms and themes. Caring is the process of protecting a person and providing what that person needs. Love is a feeling of deep affection, associated with concepts such as compassion, fondness, and warmth. Lady Windermere is the subject of love and caring in the film. Lord Windermere does not tell her the truth that Mrs. Erlynne is her mother because he does not want to hurt her. For her birthday, he buys her beautiful jewelry. Thus, he cares both for her mental well-being and provides for her in terms of materiality. Mrs. Erlynne also cares for and protects her daughter as she sacrifices her reputation to save Lady Windermere from becoming a social outcast. Another person who deeply cares for Lady Windermere is Lord Darlington. He tells her that she can find the cheques of her husband written for Mrs. Erlynne in his drawer. He does so because—as he says—he loves her.

PSYCHOLOGY

Sadness Sadness, as an emotion associated with, or characterized by, feelings of disadvantage, loss, despair, grief, helplessness, disappointment, and sorrow is a recurrent theme of the film. We can observe

sadness most prominently in the three characters of the film. These are Mrs. Erylne, Lady Windermere, and Lord Darlington. Mrs. Erylne has spent her life without contacting her daughter and she has always had a longing to be with her. That is the reason she comes back to London. We do not know the exact details of why she left her daughter but it can be inferred from what she tells her daughter as an admonishment that she has left her husband for another man and ruined her life just as Lady Windermere was about to do by going to the house of Lord Darlington. But this was a wrong decision on Mrs. Erylne's part and she had to spend the rest of her life away from her daughter which has generated feelings of loss, separation, despair, helplessness, and sadness in her life. Her sadness regarding her separation from Lady Windermere can be seen in her facial expressions as she looks at the photo of her daughter in one of the early scenes of the film. Likewise, Lady Windermere experiences sadness because of the loss of her mother. She believes her mother to have died many years ago and this loss is an unhealed wound in her. Another character in whom we observe a certain kind of sadness is Lord Darlington as he is the subject of an unrequited love relationship. Regardless of how much he tries to get close to Lady Windermere, he encounters an invisible wall—that is the loyalty that Lady Windermere has to Lord Windermere—that does not allow him to build a romantic relationship with her. This creates feelings of disappointment and sadness in him which is why he decides to leave England at the end of the film.

Regret Regret is 'the emotion of wishing one had made a different decision in the past because the consequences of the decision one did make were unfavorable'. The character in whom regret is most clearly observable is Mrs. Erylne. She regrets her choice of leaving her family and daughter behind. When Lady Windermere goes to the house of Lord Darlington because of the presumed infidelity of her husband, Mrs. Erylne tells her daughter: *'I did just what you are doing tonight—and ruined my life.'* The feelings of regret and sadness are thus connected in Mrs. Erylne. It can be said that Lady Windermere also regrets her decision of having gone to the house of Lord Darlington at the end of the film as she realizes the drastic possible consequences of her actions and heeds the advice of Mrs. Erylne. Fortunately, with the help of her mother, Lady Windermere does not ruin her orderly family life.

Anger Anger is an intense emotional state involving a strong, uncomfortable, and non-cooperative response to a perceived provocation, hurt, or threat. Anger is not a frequently seen emotion in the film, nevertheless, it occurs in a few scenes. One of these scenes is when Lord Windermere learns that Mrs. Erylne is the mother of his wife. He absolutely does not want his wife to find out about the truth her mother. Because he knows that learning the truth about her mother would—metaphorically speaking—kill her. Another scene where we the viewers witness anger arising in the characters is when Lady Windermere gets suspicious about her husband and questions his fidelity. Her anger is mostly directed against her husband, but also she makes threatening remarks about Mrs. Erylne who—she doubts—might have an affair with Lord Windermere. Her anger escalates when she finds out about the cheques her husband has written for her and that he is thinking of inviting her to Lady Windermere's birthday reception. Her anger is expressed as she says: *'If she dares to come here— I will strike her across the face with this fan!'* Lady Windermere's anger arises once more when Mrs. Erylne comes to the house of Lord Darlington to persuade her to come back to her home. As Mrs. Erylne asks her to trust her, she would her own mother; Lady Windermere gets infuriated as she sees her mother who she believes has passed away years ago as a symbol of goodness, virtue, and righteousness which are characteristics that she has not been able to observe in Mrs. Erylne, as she sees her rather as the center of the gossip of high society rather than a paragon of virtue. Nevertheless, Lady Windermere's anger transforms into a sense of indebtedness to Mrs. Erylne as she sees how Mrs. Erylne sacrifices her own reputation to protect her from being an outcast.

Jealousy A scientific definition of romantic jealousy is that of 'complex thoughts, feelings, and actions which follow threats to the existence or quality of the relationship when those threats are generated by the perception of potential attraction between one's partner and a (perhaps imaginary) rival'. Jealousy is observed in several scenes throughout *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Firstly, Lord Augustus Lorton gets jealous of Mrs. Erylne when he sees a Cuban cigar in the ashtray in her house. He thinks or hypothesizes that Mrs. Erylne might be seeing another man which she replies by saying that he does not have a right to question her as he cannot even ask her to marry him because he is afraid of the judgment of society. Another scene where jealousy is observed is when Lady Windermere gets

suspicious of her husband when he defends Mrs. Erylne at the horse race. Her jealousy (and anger) escalate when she finds the cheques her husband wrote for her. Her jealousy comes even to such a degree that she delusionally believes Mrs. Erylne to be talking to her husband while in truth, she was talking to Lord Augustus Lorton who was asking her whether it was too late for them to marry each other. Thus, we see here how jealousy might cause one to create catastrophic and unrealistic scenarios in one's mind.

Otherness Otherness is the quality or fact of being different. The character who is seen as 'the other' in the film is Mrs. Erylne. She is the subject of rumors and gossip by other women. As is mentioned in the intertitles in the film *her social standing is a thing of the past*. The men look at her as an object of curiosity, women are occupied with her appearance and how *gray* she is. Lord Augustus Lorton makes romantic advances toward her but does not dare to ask her to marry him because of what society might say. Lord Windermere does not want Mrs. Erylne to tell Lady Windermere the truth that she is her mother because this truth would turn her world upside down. Looking at these examples of how she is treated by other people of the high society, it can be said that she is the other, the unaccepted, and yet an object of curiosity as well. However, when she goes to the birthday reception of Lady Windermere, her otherness transforms into recognition and she gets acknowledged by the members of high society. Her resourcefulness and her flattering the chief gossip make all the women accept her as one of them. Her sacrificing her reputation to save that of Lady Windermere makes her daughter accept and come to love her. It also seems that Lord Augustus Lorton is still intent on marrying Mrs. Erylne at the end of the film. So, we can say that even though she starts as the *other*, thanks to her resourcefulness, she makes the members of high society recognize and accept her in the end.

QUEST

Explore Mrs. Erylne drifts to London after a life of adventure abroad. She aims to see and meet her daughter. At the same time, she tries to secure a place in high society through her relationship with Lord Augustus Lorton. Thus, she explores the world of high society by attending horse races, Lady Windermere's birthday reception, and through her involvement in scandals such as when she sacrifices her own reputation to save that of her daughter. Her exploration quest ends up quite well for her as at the end of the film, she has developed good relations with her daughter and secured a place in society through her romantic relationship with Lord Augustus Lorton.

APPEARANCE

Secrets Secrecy is the practice of hiding information from individuals who do not have the need to know. That which is kept hidden is known as the secret. The main secret in *Lady Windermere's Fan* belongs to Mrs. Erylne as she hides the truth about her being the mother of Lady Windermere. Lord Windermere, after learning the fact from Mrs. Erylne herself, also hides the same truth from his wife on the grounds that she might be irrevocably hurt if she finds out this truth. At the very end of the film, Lady Windermere still does not know that Mrs. Erylne is her mother. However, she has developed a good relationship with her and it is an open-ended question whether she might disclose the full truth to her in the future. Another secret is between Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erylne as they are the only people who know that Lady Windermere went to the house of Lord Darlington presuming that her husband has cheated on her. Because Mrs. Erylne knows how such an act has the potential to ruin her daughter's marriage and kill the love of Lord Windermere, she has pretended to be the one to have gone to Lord Darlington's house. At the end of the film, her mother dissuades Lady Windermere from telling the full truth to her husband. This is, then, another secret that creates a bond between the mother and the daughter.