



Effi Briest (Oxford World's Classics)

Theodor Fontane

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'I loathe what I did, but what I loathe even more is your virtue.'

Seventeen-year-old Effi Briest is steered by her parents into marriage with an ambitious bureaucrat, twenty years her senior. He takes her from her home to a remote provincial town on the Baltic coast of Prussia where she is isolated, bored, and prey to superstitious fears. She drifts into a half-hearted affair with a manipulative, womanizing officer, which ends when her husband is transferred to Berlin. Years later, events are triggered that will have profound consequences for Effi and her family.

Effi Briest (1895) is recognized as one of the masterpieces by Theodor Fontane, Germany's premier realist novelist, and one of the great novels of marital relations together with *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina*. It presents life among the conservative Prussian aristocracy with irony and gentle humour, and opposes the rigid and antiquated morality of the time by treating its heroine with sympathy and keen psychological insight.

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