

Hunt, Johansson shine in difficult roles

A GOOD WOMAN

Starring Helen Hunt, Scarlett Johansson, and Tom Wilkinson

Directed by Mike Barker, based on Oscar Wilde's play *Lady Windermere's Fan*

As I like to go into movies cold, I didn't know *A Good Woman* was based on Oscar Wilde's famous play.

I was amazed the filmmakers had crowded so many clichés into the script. Then it occurred to me, they were the real things!

Seems we've used Mr. Wilde's deliciously sarcastic and ironic words in our everyday language to the point of banality.

But that's not a complaint against the film as much as an observation on Mr. Wilde's enduring popularity.



Anne Brodie

On Movies

The film stars Ms Johansson as Mrs. Windermere, whose husband develops a mysterious association with an older woman with a past.

Ms Hunt is Mrs. Erylne, the older woman. Fleeing debt and disgrace in Manhattan, she lands in Italy, looking for a rich husband

and new start.

She becomes part of an aristocratic English American community summering on Italy's gorgeous Amalfi coast.

They're pampered and wealthy, with little to do but relax, take tea, throw parties and gossip about each other.

And by gum, they love to rip into Mrs. Erylne.

Of course, Mrs. Erylne is despised by the women who know a home wrecker when they see one.

She's rather more accepted by the men, some of whom are willing to tie their carts to her well-used one.

She's smart, wily and poor and soon she's spending a fortune.

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Mr. Wilde's grasp of human nature is acute.

He knows about over bred flibbertigibbets and he knows about

pain - have you ever read *De Profundis*? Yikes.

Ms Hunt and Ms Johansson are top notch in these difficult roles. Both seem to soak up their characters' essences, making an old play throb with contemporary meaning.

Oscar nominated English actor Mr. Wilkinson plays Tuppy, a lonely man with a fortune who is willing to take on Mrs. Erylne, reputation and all, because he loves her intelligence.

He says he has no brain but he has a heart and a brain. He can see past the superficialities of his class.

A Good Woman first appeared at the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival.

No word by why it took so long to be released, but it is worth the wait.

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