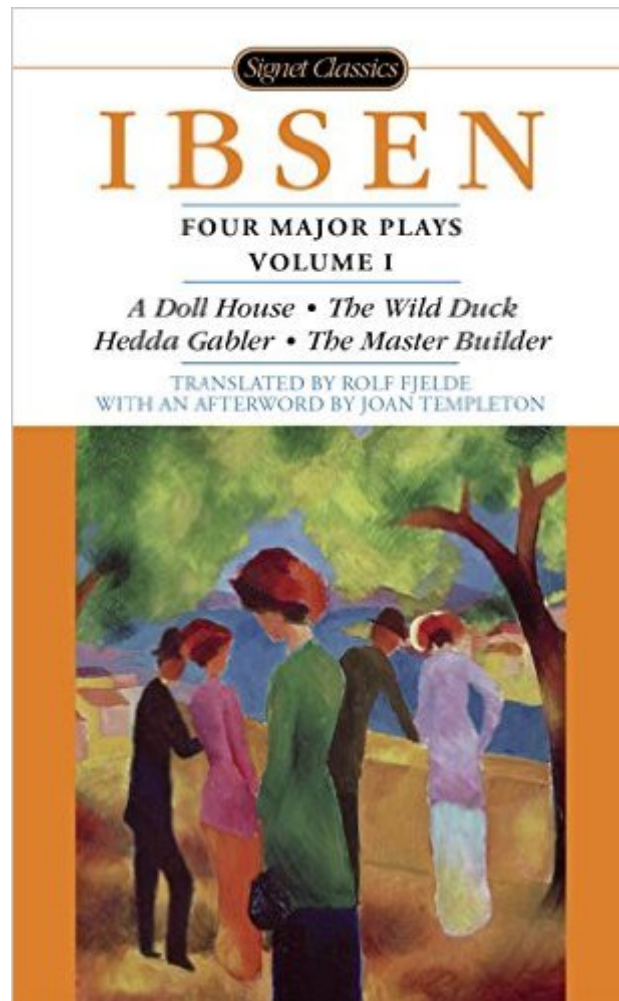


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Four Major Plays, Volume I (Signet Classics)



Synopsis

Four Major Plays
Volume I
A Doll House
The Wild Duck
Hedda Gabler
The Master Builder
Among the greatest and best known of Ibsen's works, these four plays brilliantly exemplify his landmark contributions to the theater: his realistic dialogue, probing of social problems, and depiction of characters' inner lives as well as their actions. Rich in symbolism and often autobiographical, each of these dramas deals convincingly and provocatively with such universal themes as greed, fear, and sexual hostility, and confronts the eternal conflict between reality and illusion. These Rolf Fjelde translations have been widely acclaimed as the definitive versions of the major works of the father of modern theater. Translated and with a Foreword by Rolf Fjelde and an Afterword by Joan Templeton

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Customer Reviews

This volume contains four of the many plays by Ibsen, four that are well-known and liked: The Doll House, The Wild Duck, Hedda Gabler, and The Master builder. The Doll House: The critic H. L. Mencken described Henrik Ibsen's plays as "obvious thoughts in sound plays." There is "nothing mysterious in them; there is not even anything new in them." Ibsen offered reality. He was not interested in presenting "morals, lesson, symbols and that sort of thing." Yet, "he hit upon an action that was all suspense and all emotion." Mencken quotes Ibsen: "What I wanted to do was to depict human beings, human emotions, and human destinies, upon groundwork of certain of the social conditions and principles of the present day." Many people may agree with

Mencken's assessment of Ibsen. However, others would contend that besides presenting reality, Ibsen also portrayed proper behavior. This can be seen in *A Doll's House*. It is realistic and relevant, but it also shows how the society of Ibsen's time mistreated women. The play presents a husband and a wife. The wife is a beautiful, unsophisticated, childlike, well-meaning, but ignorant of the adult world and affairs because women were not educated. All of her friends see her as a doll. Her husband treats her as one, calling her childish names. He tries to control all of her behavior, not because he is mean, but because he loves her and he thinks she is unable to make decisions. He tells her what to eat so that her teeth will not be spoiled from sugar and how much she should spend because she does not understand much about money. And it is the latter, the money, that gets her into trouble. Her husband was sick some years back and needed to travel and stay in a warmer climate for some months, but the couple had no money.

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