

The Pretty Lady

Arnold Bennett

The Pretty Lady

'The Pretty Lady' is considered to be one of Bennett's most revealing and under-rated works. It is the story of a French prostitute, Christine, who has escaped from wartime Ostend, and set herself up in business in London. Though a refugee, she demands no pity; she is self-sufficient, practical and realistic. Christine is not a harpy preying on innocent soldiers, but a canny businesswoman, doing the best she can with the opportunities life has given her. Her main relationship is with G.J. Hoape, a wealthy man above the military age. Bennett in this novel presents a disturbing image of wartime society, fragmented, uneasy and divided. There are references to industrial unrest and to social injustices, and hints that the British press is less than frank about the war.
(Summary by Simon Evers)

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