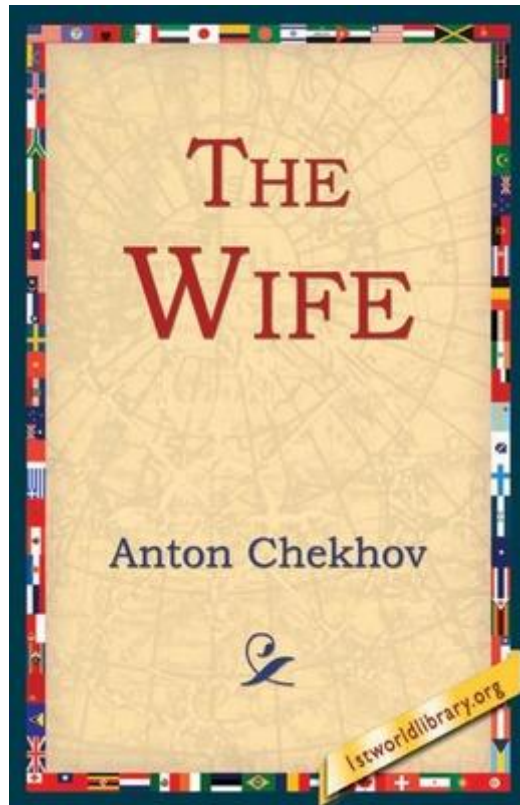


The Wife - Anton Chekhov



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The author is well aware that whosoever discusses historical mysteries pleases the public best by being quite sure, and offering a definite and certain solution. Unluckily Science forbids, and conscience is on the same side. We verily do not know how the false Pucelle arrived at her success with the family of the true Maid; we do not know, or pretend to know, who killed Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey; or how Amy Robsart came by her death; or why the Valet was so important a prisoner. It is only possible to restate the cases, and remove, if we may, the errors and confusions which beset the problems. Such a tiny point as the year of Amy Robsart's marriage is stated variously by our historians. To ascertain the truth gave the author half a day's work, and, at last, he would have voted for the wrong year, had he not been aided by the superior acuteness of his friend, Mr. Hay Fleming. He feels morally certain that, in trying to set historians right about Amy Robsart, he must have committed some conspicuous blunders; these always attend such enterprises of rectification.

Author: Chekhov, Anton Publisher: 1st World Library - Literary Society
Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: The Wife Pages: 00000 (Encrypted PDF) On Sale: 2004-05-15
SKU-13/ISBN: 9781595400048 Category: Fiction : Literary

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