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## Edith Wharton

### The Age of Innocence



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Author: Edith Wharton

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## Description

An elegant portrait of desire and betrayal in Old New York. In the highest circle of New York social life during the 1870's, Newland Archer, a young lawyer, prepares to marry the docile May Welland. Before their engagement is announced, he meets May's cousin, the mysterious, nonconformist Countess Ellen Olenska, who has returned to New York after a long absence.

## Insightful reviews

Paul: I loved this book and seem to be developing a penchant for reading books which drift along in a sedate way and in which not much appears (on the surface) to happen. Appearances are deceptive though and Wharton's prose is beautiful and the dialogue sharp, and with depth of meaning.

The novel is set in high society New York in the 1870s; a social milieu where convention reigned on the surface, but where some of the men had slightly scandalous secrets. Newland Archer and May Welland are about to be engaged to be married and the novel follows their engagement and early married life. Newland falls in love with newcomer Ellen Olenska, who has fled a violent marriage in Europe.

This is really about the society of women; Newland Archer believes in his own moral and intellectual superiority, but he really doesn't have a clue what is happening behind the scenes. Wharton dissects the hypocrisy of a society where customs and position take centre stage. But she also extols the virtue of stability and family life at the same time. This was really like a chess match between Ellen and May; the man being the pawn and the prize and unaware that he was either. The men in the novel are innocent in the sense that they are naive, but they are also corrupt because they are unfaithful and philandering. The women play their game to maintain family, stability and tradition; the men to follow their own devices and desires. Wharton analyses with precision and lays out the society she grew up in for all to see. A great novel and worth reading.

Phrynne: Beautifully written of course but not an especially interesting story. Newman Archer is actually a very unlikeable person although obviously a symptom of the society in which he was raised. I felt sorry for all of them because in the end no one was really happy. A bit depressing really. I do like the way [Edith Wharton](#) writes but sadly this book did not really do it for me.

Desislava:

*"The real loneliness is living among all these kind people who only ask one to pretend!"*

*The Age of Innocence* is a well-written book. It's definitely not the most exciting book, actually there were some boring parts because Edith Wharton does get a bit carried away at times.

The novel is a study on the genders and how we interacted (and arguably still do) under societal constraints. I had a hard time truly caring for any of the characters, but that's intentional.

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Wharton's critical outlook on New York City high society is what you should focus on, analyzing Newland Archer's hypocrisy ([view spoiler](#)) and May's tragic pretense. Also there were way too many secondary characters in my opinion.

All in all, I liked it. The novel does a good job showing the social norms of the time and how everyone modified their behavior by what was expected of them instead of what they may have wanted.

*"Ah, good conversation - there's nothing like it, is there? The air of ideas is the only air worth breathing."*

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Dini: This beautifully-written vintage tells the tale of individuals trapped within the "eternal triangle of love". Edith Wharton skillfully info the lifestyle, customs and manners of upper-class long island society within the 1870s, during which each relatives looks similar a technique or another. Newland Archer, who's engaged to the innocent, conservative may well Welland, falls in love along with her unique Europeanized cousin Ellen Olenska. he's torn among following his impulse to be with Ellen, whose marriage is at the rocks, or pleasurable what's thought of to be his 'duty' and quiet down with may possibly like everybody expects him to. What i love approximately this novel is that the tale and outlines circulation easily and the language isn't really too tough for a classic. However, the plot strikes particularly slowly simply because I felt Newland retains going backward and forward in his hassle among the 2 women. i really watched the Martin Scorsese motion picture many years earlier than I learn this, and whereas I felt no sympathy to any personality within the movie in particular, whilst studying the e-book I are inclined to sympathize with either Ellen and May, and dislike Newland. i believe his love for Ellen is just in response to her "mysterious and outlandish background" and shouldn't have been as powerful if no longer for his personal emotions of confinement. i love Ellen for her rules and integrity – now not loads like Newland's feel of 'duty' yet a reluctance to harm different people's feelings. May, at the different hand, is very underestimated through Newland, who thinks she "knew not anything and anticipated everything". The reader will later locate that he was once very, very wrong. Overall, the ebook was once now not outstanding yet I beloved it nonetheless. probably if I hadn't watch the motion picture prior my opinion would've been different. i am nonetheless attracted to analyzing Wharton's different works, though. Oh, and that i love the canopy of the Wordsworth variation that I read. A becoming picture, so swish and classic.

Mona: Tragic story of a guy Suffocated through conference in 1870s New York Newland Archer, a promising younger attorney transforming into up within the cream of latest York society, is engaged to may well Welland. every body round him considers this to be an excellent match. Except that May's cousin, Ellen Olenska, arrives from Europe, and Newland unearths himself attracted to Ellen. Ellen, a local New Yorker, is fleeing a nasty marriage abroad. She is beautiful, kind, and completely unpretentious. Newland, though, is trapped in what's anticipated of a guy of his circumstances. He marries might ([view spoiler](#)) [and passes up the opportunity to feel free with Ellen, who's most likely the affection of his life. He does this besides the fact that

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May, sensing she has a rival, supplies Archer an opportunity to bail out in their engagement. (hide spoiler)Archer finally ends up married to a girl with whom he can't converse and with whom he has little in common. This novel brilliantly depicts how society's stifling expectancies of conformity within the 1870's beaten the existence and love out of people. The name "Age of Innocence" is perhaps ironic. The "innocent" those that faux to not comprehend what's occurring (view spoiler)[specifically among Archer and Ellen, who in truth by no means consummate their love, even if every person assumes they have, (hide spoiler)] wordlessly conspire to strength their very own to "toe the line" within the demeanour noticeable to be fitting. below a veneer of "niceness" is a stultifying and controlling malice. The writing is great and the specified depictions of 1870's big apple attention-grabbing and crystal clear. Newland's circle is full of superficial those who glance down their noses at artists, writers and "foreigners" (such as Madame Olenska) or somebody who's a little different. They skewer someone who has the audacity to fail in enterprise and ostracize their unlucky relations. These humans fill their days with gossip, clothes, opera, and doing the predicted issues (dinner parties, vacation trips in Newport or St. Augustine, etc., adorning their pricey homes, etc.) every little thing has to be "comme il faut" (for example, women usually are not presupposed to put on the clothes they've got ordered from Paris till a 12 months or elapses). The publication is masterfully placed together. Although this novel is especially assorted than "Ethan Frome", as in "Ethan Frome", Wharton bargains with a tragic, doomed enjoyed that's pried aside through social expectations. The book's finishing is magnificent and poignant. this isn't a "fun" book, however it is a helpful read. I listened to the audio and browse alongside within the Kindle book. Dick Hill used to be an decent, yet no longer great, audio reader, even though he wasn't too subtle. He might overemphasize any passages that have been meant to be satirical.

Mike Puma: "The vast accretion of flesh which had descended on her in center realistic a flood of lava on a doomed urban had replaced her from a plump lively little lady with a neatly-turned foot and ankle into whatever as sizeable and august as a average phenomenon." Does writing get any finer than that? and a few say:A) the Edith Wharton is boring, whereas others say...B) she had no experience of humor. I'd say: She was once in the back of me on the supermarket this day and observed an identical factor I saw.

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