

《Ethan Frome (平装)》

图书基本信息

书名：《Ethan Frome (平装)》

13位ISBN编号：9780451522276

10位ISBN编号：0451522273

出版时间：1987年1月1日

出版社：Signet Book

作者：Edith Wharton

页数：136 页

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内容概要

A marked departure from Edith Wharton's usual ironic contemplation of the fashionable New York society to which she herself belonged, *Ethan Frome* is a sharply etched portrait of the simple inhabitants of a nineteenth-century New England village. The protagonist, Ethan Frome, is a man tormented by a passionate love for his ailing wife's young cousin. Trapped by the bonds of marriage and the fear of public condemnation, he is ultimately destroyed by that which offers him the greatest chance at happiness. Like *The House of Mirth* and many of Edith Wharton's other novels, *Ethan Frome* centers on the power of local convention to smother the growth of the individual. Written with stark simplicity, this powerful and tragic novel has long been considered one of Wharton's greatest works.

Kids will respond to the audio version of *Ethan Frome*, in the same way they have responded to the book. First, kids enjoy short fiction, and Marilyn Langbehn's fully voiced reading is short. Also kids like strong feelings, and what is stronger than Ethan's restrained fury at Zeena? Finally, kids are intrigued with irony and view with awe Ethan's twisted fate. Langbehn voices perfectly the carping, invidious Zeena. But in using her voice far below its natural range for Ethan, she weakens his characterization and the ironic effect. This, coupled with careless production editing, prevents full immersion in the text. This is a good audiobook but not a great one. P.E.F.

Tragic novel by Edith Wharton, published in 1911. Wharton's original style and her use of hard-edged irony and the flashback technique set *Ethan Frome* apart from the work of her contemporaries. The main characters are Ethan Frome, his wife Zenobia, called Zeena, and her young cousin Mattie Silver. Frome and Zeena marry after she nurses his mother in her last illness. Although Frome seems ambitious and intelligent, Zeena holds him back. When her young cousin Mattie comes to stay on their New England farm, Frome falls in love with her. But the social conventions of the day doom their love and their hopes. The story forcefully conveys Wharton's abhorrence of society's unbending standards of loyalty. Written while Wharton lived in France but before her divorce (1913), *Ethan Frome* became one of the best known and most popular of her works.

The setting for this piercing New England novel is the aptly named Starkfield, where, despite violently blue skies, the chill of cold and snow seems to have settled in the hearts of its inhabitants. Tethered to his farm, first by helpless parents, later by his querulous, hypochondriac wife Zeena, Ethan Frome ekes out a living. Then Zeena's cousin, the impoverished and enchanting Mattie Silver, comes to work for them, and Ethan's hopes and dreams are rekindled. Yet theirs is a forbidden love, constrained by Zeena's presence. And the impossible intensity in which the three exist will have devastating consequences for all.

America's most famous woman of letters, and the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize, Edith Wharton was born into one of the last "leisured class" families in New York City, as she put it, in 1862. Educated privately, she was married to Edward Wharton in 1885, and for the next few years, they spent their time in the high society of Newport (Rhode Island), then Lenox (Massachusetts) and Europe. It was in Europe that Wharton first met Henry James, who was to have a profound and lasting influence on her life and work. Wharton's first published book was a work of nonfiction, in collaboration with Ogden Codman, *The Decoration of Houses* (1897), but from early on, her marriage had been a source of distress, and she was advised by her doctor to write fiction to relieve her nervous tension. Wharton's first short stories appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, and though she published several volumes of fiction around the turn of the century, including *The Greater Inclination* (1899), *The Touchstone* (1900), *Crucial Instances* (1901), *The Valley of Decision* (1902), *Sanctuary* (1903), and *The Descent of Man and Other Stories* (1904), it wasn't until 1905, with the publication of the bestselling *The House of Mirth*, that she was

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recognized as one of the most important novelists of her time for her keen social insight and subtle sense of satire. In 1906, Wharton visited Paris, which inspired *Madame de Treymes* (1907), and made her home there in 1907, finally divorcing her husband in 1912. The years before the outbreak of World War I represent the core of her artistic achievement, when *Ethan Frome* (1911), *The Reef* (1912), and *The Custom of the Country* (1913) were published. During the war, she remained in France organizing relief for Belgian refugees, for which she was later awarded the Legion of Honor. She also wrote two novels about the war, *The Marne* (1918) and *A Son at the Front* (1923), and continued, in France, to write about New England and the Newport society she had known so well in *Summer* (1917), the companion to *Ethan Frome*, and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), for which she won the Pulitzer Prize. Wharton died in France in 1937. Her other works include *Old New York* (1924), *The Mother's Recompense* (1925), *The Writing of Fiction* (1925), *The Children* (1928), *Hudson River Bracketed* (1929), and her autobiography, *A Backward Glance* (1934).

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