

APPENDICES

SYNOPSIS OF THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

The Age of Innocence tells about the upper class of New York society in 1870's, when the social status is highly honoured. People in this society are ruled by strict norms. There are two contrasting woman characters portrayed in the novel. The first one, May Welland, is a member of New York society and the other, Ellen Olenska, is a new member of the society who comes from Europe.

May Welland is a conventional woman, who is still bound by the custom. She really cares for her manners and the way she dresses. Moreover, she is loyal to her spouse, though she knows that he has an affair with another woman. She pretends not knowing it because she wants her reputation to be good. May also always honours the norms of the society.

The other woman, who is in contrast with May, is Ellen Olenska. She is a modern woman, born in New York but when she is a kid she moves to France and spends her life with her aunt. She gets married to Count Olenska but her marriage is not happy. Her husband runs off with his mistress and so she wants to get divorced.

Furthermore, she goes back to New York to get help from her parents' family but she does not get either happiness or help. People even give her a bad reputation when they know she wants to get divorced. A divorce in New York society is a taboo at that time. As a result, she returns to France because she does not feel happy in New York.

BIOGRAPHY OF EDITH WHARTON

Edith Newbold Jones was born in New York on January 24, 1862 to George Frederic and Lucretia Jones. Her parents were descendants of English and Dutch colonists who became wealthy from their shipping, banking, and real estate businesses. They were considered an aristocratic New York family. Edith lived in Europe for six years with her family. She returned to the United States when she was ten years old and lived in a fashionable area of Manhattan. Although she was intellectually inclined, her parents did not send her to school with her brothers. Instead, she educated herself by reading books from her father's library and received lessons from her governess.

In 1885, she married Edward Robbins Wharton. "Teddy" was a banker from Boston and came from a similar social background.

She was also a volunteer in France during Word War I. Between 1900 and 1938, Wharton wrote many novels. In 1905, she published some literary books. They are The House of Mirth, Ethan Frome (1911), The Reef (1912), The Custom of the Country (1913), Summer (1917), and The Age of Innocence (1920), which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1921. She tells about her war experiences in The Marne (1918) and A Son at the Front (1923). She has also written a collection of short stories, poems, articles, translations, and reviews. In August 1937, Wharton suffered a stroke and died in France. She was buried in the American Cemetery at Versailles.