

APPENDICES

Synopsis of *Sister Carrie*

In August 1889, Caroline “Carrie” Meeber boards a train to Chicago. On the train, she gets acquainted with Charles Drouet, a travelling salesman. In Chicago, Carrie lives with her sister’s family, the Hansons. They allow Carrie to stay with them but she has to pay a rent. Carrie gets a job in a shoe factory but in winter, she becomes ill and loses her job. One day when Carrie is looking for a new job, she meets Drouet. He persuades her to leave the Hansons. Soon Carrie and Drouet live together. As time passes, Carrie perceives that Drouet is not going to marry her. One evening, they are visited by G. W. Hurstwood, a friend of Drouet's who is the manager of a saloon. Carrie and Hurstwood are fascinated by each other and they meet frequently afterwards.

Later, Drouet enlists Carrie to be an actress in an amateur performance and she becomes a success. The next day, Hurstwood confesses his love and Carrie responds favourably. Eventually Drouet and Hurstwood's wife discover their affairs. One night when Hurstwood stays late in his office, he discovers that the safe has been left unlocked and he holds the money as the door of the safe slams shut. He is frightened and decides to flee. He rushes to Carrie's flat and makes her go with him. In Canada, Hurstwood is tracked down by a private

detective and he returns most of the money. The couple are illegally married. They move to New York. As Hurstwood's business venture fails and he finds himself unable to find employment, their condition becomes so difficult that Carrie decides to look for work. She gets a part as a chorus girl in a Broadway opera. Her fortune rises steadily after that and she decides to leave Hurstwood. In a few years, Carrie gains fame and fortune as Hurstwood continues to decline and finally commits suicide.

Synopsis of *The House of Mirth*

Lily Bart is a beautiful socialite who wants to marry a wealthy man. She lives with her aunt, Mrs. Peniston, who gives her occasional allowance. One day, she meets Lawrence Selden, a friend whom she usually meets at house-party, at the Grand Central Station. After exchanging greetings, Lily and Selden take a walk and retire to Selden's apartment for tea. On leaving Selden's apartment, Lily meets Simon Rosedale, the owner of the building and a bachelor who wants to have a higher position in society. Later, Lily attends a house-party at the Trenors, where she attempts to be engaged to Percy Gryce, a wealthy bachelor. However, when Selden arrives at the house-party, Lily turns her attention to him. Mrs. Dorset, another guest at the house-party who adores Selden immensely, is bitter with Lily's attention to Selden and sabotages Lily's plan to marry Gryce.

After attending the house-party at the Trenors, Lily decides to stay with her aunt for the autumn. At Mrs. Peniston's place, she is approached by Mrs. Haffen, a charwoman who works at Selden's apartment, because the latter believes that Lily is the writer of the love letters which Selden tries to destroy.

Lily buys the letters although they are actually written by Mrs. Dorset. She buys the letters because she thinks Selden would like her to buy them and help him to destroy them. After various incidents with Rosedale, as well as with Mr. Trenor and Selden, Lily receives an invitation to join the Dorsets on a Mediterranean cruise. During the trip, when Mrs. Dorset is almost discovered to have an affair, she accuses Lily of flirting with her husband. The European stories regarding Lily's activities reach America and Mrs. Peniston. After hearing the stories, Mrs. Peniston changes her will and when she dies, she only leaves Lily \$10,000, not all her wealth as Lily has expected.

Rejected by her friends for the perceived affair with Mr. Dorset, Lily works as a private secretary and later works at a millinery shop. Her mounting bills and increasing sleeplessness cause her to rely on chloral in order to rest. Lily resumes her contact with Rosedale, who offers to marry her if she uses Mrs. Dorset's letters to gain back her position in society. After some considerations, she begins to take the letters to Mrs. Dorset but on the way to Mrs. Dorset's house, she visits Selden's apartment and in Selden's department, she is reminded of her love for Selden. Therefore, in the end, Lily does not use the letters because she loves Selden and does not want to hurt him. The following morning, she is found dead of chloral overdose in her boarding-house.

Biography of Theodore Dreiser

Theodore Dreiser was born in Terre Haute, Indiana on August 27th, 1871. His father emigrated from Germany and became a proprietor of a wool mill in Indiana. In 1869, the family's fortunes changed for the worse when a fire

destroyed the mill. Depressed over his family's poor social standing, at the age of sixteen he decided to seek work in Chicago. There he had a number of nondescript jobs until he was helped by his former teacher, Mildred Fielding, to have education in Indiana University, where he studied for a year (1889 – 1890). After that, he worked as a reporter, drama critic, special feature writer, editor, and freelance writer.

Dreiser married Sara Osborne White in 1898. With her encouragement, he began writing his first historic novel, *Sister Carrie* (1900). After five months of writing his second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), he began to have a severe writer's block. His disability lasted almost three years and with the encouragement of his friend, H. L. Mencken, Dreiser completed *Jennie Gerhardt*. He made up for the lost time with the publication of fourteen books between 1911 and 1925. Shortly after he had taken his first trip to Europe in 1912, he separated from his wife. He is remembered primarily for his novels, but actually he has written various genres: novels [*Sister Carrie* (1900), *The Financier* (1912), *The Titan* (1914)], volumes of poetry [*Moods, Cadenced and Disclaimed* (1928)], short stories [*Free and Other Stories* (1918)], plays, travel books, autobiographies [*Newspaper Days* (1922), *Dawn* (1931)], philosophical essays, social criticism, and character sketches.

In 1944, he married Helen Richardson and lived his final years in California. Dreiser died of heart failure on December 28th, 1945, before completing the last chapter of *The Stoic* (1947).

Source: Riggio

Biography of Edith Wharton

Edith Wharton was born Edith Newbold Jones on January 24th, 1862 to George Frederic and Lucretia Jones. The family was wealthy from their shipping, banking, and real estate businesses. Edith lived in Europe for six years and returned to the United States when she was ten years old. She did not go to school like her brothers. Instead, she received lessons from her governess and educated herself by reading books from her father's library.

In 1885, Edith married Edward Robbins Wharton, who was a banker from Boston and came from a similar social background, but he was not interested in artistic or intellectual issues like Edith. Consequently, their marriage lacked something that Edith needed from life. In 1907, she discovered that her husband had a mistress in Boston and had taken money from her to support his affair. This revelation and her desire to pursue writing led to their divorce in 1912.

In 1905, *The House of Mirth*, the book that made her famous, was published. The other popular books included *Ethan Frome* (1911), *The Reef* (1912), *The Custom of the Country* (1913), *Summer* (1917), and *The Age of Innocence* (1920). She won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1921 for *The Age of Innocence*. Edith was a volunteer in France during World War I. She wrote about her wartime experiences in *The Marne* (1918) and *A Son at the Front* (1923). She also wrote a collection of short stories, poems, articles, translations, and reviews. Edith was at her best when she was portraying the manners of New England at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Influenced to a great degree by her friend Henry James, she depicted the contradictions of upper-class society.

In August 1937, Edith suffered a stroke and died in France. She was buried in the American Cemetery at Versailles.

Source: Lombardi