

the house of mirth by edith wharton

The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton: A Timeless Exploration of Society and Self

the house of mirth by edith wharton stands as a remarkable work in American literature, weaving a compelling narrative about society, class, and the complexities of human nature. Published in 1905, this novel delves deep into the gilded world of New York's upper class at the turn of the 20th century, revealing the intricacies and often harsh realities behind the polished façades of wealth and privilege. Edith Wharton's keen observations and elegant prose bring to life a story that remains relevant today, offering readers an insightful look at social ambition, personal tragedy, and the pursuit of happiness.

The Context and Setting of The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton

When exploring the house of mirth by Edith Wharton, understanding the historical and social context is crucial. Set in the early 1900s, the novel captures the rigid social codes and expectations of New York's high society, sometimes referred to as the "Gilded Age." This was a period marked by rapid economic growth, ostentatious displays of wealth, and an unyielding social hierarchy.

Wharton herself was part of this elite world, which gives the novel an authenticity and sharpness in its critique. The social rituals, the obsession with reputation, and the underlying tensions between old money and new money families create a vivid backdrop against which the drama unfolds. The house of mirth becomes a metaphor for this glittering yet fragile social sphere, where appearances often mask deeper struggles.

The Gilded Age and Its Influence on the Novel

The Gilded Age was characterized by:

- Economic boom and industrial expansion
- A widening gap between the rich and the poor
- Strict social stratification and codes of conduct
- Emphasis on marriage as a social and economic strategy

These elements are intricately woven into the narrative, highlighting how the protagonist, Lily Bart, navigates this complex environment.

Lily Bart: The Tragic Heroine of *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton

At the heart of the house of mirth by Edith Wharton is Lily Bart, a young woman whose beauty and charm make her a coveted figure in society. However, her story is far from a simple fairy tale. Lily's struggle to secure a place within the social elite while maintaining her independence and integrity forms the emotional core of the novel.

Wharton paints Lily with great nuance — she is neither saint nor villain but a deeply human character caught between desire and duty, freedom and constraint. Her journey reflects the limited roles available to women in her time and the devastating consequences of societal judgment and personal missteps.

Lily's Social Ambitions and Constraints

Lily's predicament is emblematic of the pressures faced by women in the early 20th-century upper class:

- Marriage as a means of social and financial security
- The importance of maintaining a spotless reputation
- The limited opportunities for women to achieve independence
- The conflict between personal happiness and societal expectations

Despite her intelligence and wit, Lily's failure to fully conform to these expectations leads to her social downfall, underscoring the rigid and unforgiving nature of the world she inhabits.

The Complexity of Lily Bart's Character

What makes the house of mirth by Edith Wharton particularly compelling is the psychological depth given to Lily. She is at once sympathetic and flawed, navigating a world that offers little room for error. Her charm and vivacity attract admiration, but her inability or unwillingness to fully embrace the social game results in isolation and tragedy.

Wharton's portrayal challenges readers to consider the cost of societal conformity and the price of personal freedom, themes that resonate beyond the novel's historical setting.

Themes Explored in The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton

The house of mirth by Edith Wharton is rich with themes that continue to captivate readers and scholars alike. These themes are intricately interwoven, making the novel a multifaceted exploration of human experience.

Social Class and Wealth

A central theme is the influence of social class and wealth on identity and relationships. The novel exposes how money and status dictate behavior, opportunities, and even morality within the elite circles. Lily's precarious position as someone with a fading fortune highlights the fragility of social standing and the harsh judgments that come with it.

The Role of Women and Gender Expectations

Wharton offers a critical look at the limited roles available to women, particularly within affluent society. The house of mirth by Edith Wharton shows how women's lives were often defined by marriage prospects and social acceptance rather than personal achievement or autonomy.

Appearance vs. Reality

The novel frequently contrasts the glamorous exterior of the "house of mirth" with the underlying struggles faced by its characters. This theme reveals the superficiality and hypocrisy of high society, where appearances are carefully curated but often deceptive.

Isolation and Alienation

Lily's increasing alienation from society and her eventual downfall speak to broader themes of loneliness and exclusion. The novel poignantly depicts how societal rejection can devastate an individual's spirit and prospects.

Edith Wharton's Writing Style and Literary Significance

One of the reasons the house of mirth by Edith Wharton endures is Wharton's masterful writing style. Her prose is elegant yet accessible, blending detailed social commentary with rich character development.

Use of Symbolism and Imagery

Wharton employs symbolism throughout the novel to deepen its themes. For example, the “house of mirth” itself symbolizes the glittering but ultimately hollow world of New York’s elite. Objects, settings, and social events often carry layered meanings that enrich the narrative.

Psychological Realism

Wharton’s insight into human psychology allows readers to connect deeply with her characters. She explores their motivations, fears, and contradictions with subtlety, making the story feel both intimate and universal.

Impact on American Literature

The house of mirth by Edith Wharton helped establish her as a leading literary figure and contributed to the development of American realism. It offers a critical perspective on social issues that remains relevant, influencing generations of writers and readers.

Adaptations and Cultural Legacy

The house of mirth has inspired various adaptations, from films to stage productions, reflecting its lasting appeal. These adaptations often highlight different facets of the story, from its social critique to its emotional depth.

Notable Film and Television Versions

Some of the most well-known adaptations include:

- **The House of Mirth** (2000 film): Starring Gillian Anderson, this adaptation received praise for its faithful portrayal of the novel’s themes and characters.
- Television adaptations that explore the social dynamics and psychological drama central to the story.

These adaptations have introduced Wharton’s work to new audiences, ensuring that her insights into society continue to resonate.

The Novel's Influence on Modern Discussions of Society and Gender

Beyond entertainment, *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton remains relevant in contemporary conversations about gender roles, social mobility, and the pressures of societal expectations. Scholars and readers often turn to the novel to explore early feminist themes and critiques of wealth and privilege.

Reading *The House of Mirth* Today: Tips for Modern Readers

If you're considering diving into *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton, here are a few tips to enhance your experience:

1. **Familiarize yourself with the historical context:** Understanding the Gilded Age's social dynamics will deepen your appreciation of the novel's critiques.
2. **Pay attention to character motivations:** Wharton's characters are complex and multifaceted; reflecting on their choices can reveal broader themes.
3. **Notice the social rituals and settings:** The detailed depictions of parties, conversations, and fashion offer rich insights into the era.
4. **Reflect on the themes of appearance and reality:** Consider how these ideas apply not only to the novel but to contemporary society as well.

Reading with an eye for these elements can transform *The House of Mirth* into not just a story about the past but a mirror reflecting ongoing human concerns.

The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton invites readers into a world of elegance and hardship, ambition and loss. Its exploration of social mores, gender constraints, and personal tragedy continues to captivate and challenge, making it a timeless piece of literature that speaks across generations. Whether you approach it as a historical novel, a psychological study, or a social critique, it offers a richly rewarding experience that stays with you long after the final page.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of 'The House of Mirth' by Edith Wharton?

'The House of Mirth' primarily explores themes of social class, wealth, and the constraints placed on

women in early 20th-century American high society.

Who is the protagonist of 'The House of Mirth' and what challenges does she face?

The protagonist is Lily Bart, a beautiful but impoverished socialite who struggles to maintain her position in New York's high society while facing financial difficulties and moral dilemmas.

How does Edith Wharton portray New York society in 'The House of Mirth'?

Wharton portrays New York high society as rigid, materialistic, and unforgiving, emphasizing the social pressures and superficial values that govern the lives of its members.

What role does money play in 'The House of Mirth'?

Money is depicted as a crucial factor determining social status and personal freedom, with characters often making decisions based on financial necessity or the desire to secure wealth and social standing.

How does 'The House of Mirth' reflect Edith Wharton's views on gender roles?

The novel critiques the limited roles and expectations imposed on women, highlighting how women like Lily are judged primarily on their beauty, marriage prospects, and ability to conform to societal norms.

What is the significance of Lily Bart's downfall in the novel?

Lily's downfall illustrates the harsh consequences of societal judgment and the lack of support for women who fail to navigate the social system successfully, ultimately leading to her tragic end.

How does 'The House of Mirth' compare to other works by Edith Wharton?

'The House of Mirth' shares themes with other Wharton novels such as 'Ethan Frome' and 'The Age of Innocence,' particularly the exploration of societal constraints and individual desires in restrictive social environments.

What literary techniques does Edith Wharton use in 'The House of Mirth'?

Wharton employs detailed character development, social satire, and a third-person omniscient narrative to provide insight into the characters' inner lives and critique societal norms.

Why is 'The House of Mirth' still relevant to modern readers?

The novel remains relevant because it addresses timeless issues such as social inequality, gender expectations, and the pursuit of identity within restrictive social frameworks, resonating with contemporary discussions on these topics.

Additional Resources

The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton: A Critical Examination of Social Stratification and Personal Tragedy

the house of mirth by edith wharton stands as a seminal work in American literature, offering a piercing critique of early 20th-century New York high society. Published in 1905, this novel encapsulates the tensions between individual desires and rigid social conventions, all through the tragic experiences of its protagonist, Lily Bart. Edith Wharton's intricate narrative deftly exposes the moral ambiguities and hypocrisies of the Gilded Age elite, making the book not only a social commentary but also a timeless exploration of human vulnerability.

In-Depth Analysis of The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton

At its core, *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton explores themes of social ambition, gender roles, and the destructive nature of societal expectations. The story revolves around Lily Bart, a beautiful, intelligent woman who navigates the treacherous waters of New York's upper crust. Despite her charm and wit, Lily is trapped by the era's limited opportunities for women, where marriage is often the only path to financial security and social standing.

Wharton's narrative style is both elegant and precise, mirroring the polished veneer of the society she critiques. The novel is structured to gradually reveal Lily's decline, highlighting the unforgiving nature of social rejection. Unlike some contemporaneous works that romanticize high society, Wharton adopts an investigative tone, scrutinizing the moral decay beneath the glittering surface.

Social Stratification and Class Critique

One of the most compelling aspects of *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton is its detailed portrayal of social stratification. The novel vividly illustrates how the rigid class system of the Gilded Age restricts individual freedom. For Lily Bart, social mobility is a delicate balancing act. She must maintain appearances and adhere to strict codes of conduct, or risk ostracism.

Wharton exposes the double standards and gender inequalities that govern this society. Men wield economic power and social influence, while women like Lily are judged primarily on their beauty and marital prospects. This dynamic creates a perilous environment where a single misstep can lead to ruin.

Character Study: Lily Bart

Lily Bart emerges as a complex figure whose internal conflicts drive the narrative forward. She is at once sympathetic and flawed—a woman who yearns for independence but is ensnared by the very social norms she wishes to escape. Her intelligence and sensitivity are overshadowed by her inability to secure a stable position within the social hierarchy.

Wharton's portrayal of Lily's psychological landscape is nuanced, revealing the emotional toll of societal pressure. The character's gradual descent into isolation and despair is depicted with subtlety, making her tragedy all the more poignant. Through Lily, Wharton critiques the limited roles available to women and the harsh consequences of transgressing social boundaries.

Narrative Techniques and Symbolism

The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton employs a range of literary devices to enhance its themes. Symbolism is particularly prominent; the "house of mirth" itself serves as a metaphor for the superficial gaiety masking the characters' underlying unhappiness. The opulent settings contrast sharply with Lily's growing sense of alienation.

Wharton's use of free indirect discourse allows readers intimate access to Lily's thoughts and feelings, fostering empathy while maintaining narrative objectivity. This technique also underscores the disconnect between the protagonist's inner life and the external judgments imposed upon her.

Comparative Perspectives and Literary Significance

When compared to other social novels of its time, The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton stands out for its incisive social critique and psychological depth. Unlike the more romanticized depictions found in contemporaneous works, Wharton's novel offers a stark, unvarnished look at the consequences of social ambition.

Its themes resonate with those in Henry James's writings, particularly in the exploration of expatriate Americans and social mores. However, Wharton's perspective is uniquely American, grounded in the specific realities of New York's elite. This specificity enriches the novel's historical value and enhances its relevance to readers interested in social history.

Pros and Cons of Wharton's Approach

- **Pros:**

- Detailed and accurate portrayal of Gilded Age society
- Complex character development, especially of Lily Bart

- Use of symbolism and narrative techniques to deepen thematic impact
- Strong feminist undertones highlighting women's societal constraints

• **Cons:**

- Some readers may find the pacing slow due to the novel's focus on social minutiae
- The tragic ending can be perceived as bleak and offering little resolution
- Limited male character development in comparison to Lily's portrayal

Modern Relevance and Adaptations

The enduring appeal of *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton lies in its exploration of themes that remain pertinent today: social status, gender dynamics, and the cost of conformity. Modern readers can draw parallels between Lily Bart's struggles and contemporary issues such as societal expectations and economic inequality.

The novel has inspired various adaptations, including film and stage versions, which reinterpret Wharton's critique for new audiences. These adaptations often emphasize the emotional and psychological dimensions of Lily's character, highlighting the timeless nature of her plight.

In sum, *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton offers a multifaceted examination of a society obsessed with appearances and the devastating effects this obsession can have on individuals. Its rich narrative, complex characters, and incisive social commentary continue to captivate scholars and readers alike, cementing its place as a cornerstone of American literary realism.

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the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 2002 First published in 1905, the House of Mirth portrays the moral, social and economic constraints on a woman who dared to claim the privileges of marriage without assuming the responsibilities.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 2007-12-26 In

The House of Mirth, Edith Wharton depicts the glittering salons of Gilded Age New York with precision and wit, even as she movingly portrays the obstacles that impeded women's choices at the turn of the century. The beautiful, much-desired Lily Bart has been raised to be one of the perfect wives of the wealthy upper class, but her spark of character and independent drive prevents her from becoming one of the many women who will succeed in those circles. Though her desire for a comfortable life means that she cannot marry for love without money, her resistance to the rules of the social elite endangers her many marriage proposals. As Lily spirals down into debt and dishonor, her story takes on the resonance of classic tragedy. One of Wharton's most bracing and nuanced portraits of the life of women in a hostile, highly ordered world, *The House of Mirth* exposes the truths about American high society that its denizens most wished to deny. With an introduction by Pamela Knights.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth by Edith Wharton Edith Wharton, 2020-10-19 *The House of Mirth* (1905), a novel by Edith Wharton (1862-1937), tells the story of Lily Bart, a well-born but impoverished woman belonging to New York City's high society around the turn of the last century. Wharton creates a portrait of a stunning beauty who, though raised and educated to marry well both socially and economically, is reaching her 29th year, an age when her youthful blush is drawing to a close and her marital prospects are becoming ever more limited. *The House of Mirth* traces Lily's slow two-year social descent from privilege to a tragically lonely existence on the margins of society. In the words of one scholar, Wharton uses Lily as an attack on an irresponsible, grasping and morally corrupt upper class.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 1990-01 First published in 1905, *THE HOUSE OF MIRTH* shocked the New York society it so deftly chronicles, portraying the moral, social and economic restraints on a woman who dared to claim the privileges of marriage without assuming the responsibilities. Lily Bart, beautiful, witty and sophisticated, is accepted by 'old money' and courted by the growing tribe of nouveaux riches. But as she nears thirty, her foothold becomes precarious; a poor girl with expensive tastes, she needs a husband to preserve her social standing and to maintain her in the luxury she has come to expect. Whilst many have sought her, something - fastidiousness or integrity- prevents her from making a 'suitable' match.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Illustrated Edith Wharton, 2020-11-20 Lily Bart, a beautiful but impoverished socialite, is on her way to a house party at Bellomont, the country home of her best friend, Judy Trenor. Her pressing task is to find a husband with the requisite wealth and status to maintain her place in New York society. Additional challenges to her success are her advancing age--at twenty-nine, she has been on the marriage market for more than ten years--her penchant for gambling at bridge that has left her with debts beyond her means to pay, and her efforts as part of upper-crust society to keep up appearances with her wealthy friends. Lily's choices are further complicated by her innermost desire to marry for love as well as money and status, and her longing to be free of the claustrophobic constrictions and routines of upper-crust society. Judy has arranged for her to spend more time in the company of Percy Gryce, a potential suitor who is wealthy but whom Lily finds boring. Lily grew up surrounded by elegance and luxury--an atmosphere she believes she cannot live without, as she has learned to abhor dinginess. The loss of her father's wealth and the death of her parents left her an orphan at twenty. Lacking an inheritance or a caring protector, she adapts to life as a ward of her strait-laced aunt Julia Peniston from whom she receives an erratic allowance, a fashionable address, and good food, but little direction or parenting. Lily despises her aunt Julia and avoids her whenever possible while simultaneously relying on her for both necessities and luxuries. In the opening sentence of *The House of Mirth* Edith Wharton places Lily in Grand Central Station[i] where Selden, a friend and possible love interest, is taken by surprise to see her.[1] Threats to Lily's reputation exist because of her tendency to push the limits of polite and acceptable behavior. On the way to visit Bellomont, she impulsively accompanies Selden during her two-hour wait for the change of trains to his Manhattan flat in the Benedick Building. On leaving the building, she encounters Mr. Rosedale, a Jewish

businessman known to her set and the owner of the building. Attempting to cover the appearance of an indiscretion, she worsens the situation by telling Rosedale she had been consulting her dress-maker.[j] This obvious lie is the first of a series of faux pas Lily gets caught up in. As she makes an effort to explain away the social chances she takes, she becomes easy prey for her enemies to misrepresent her intention and behavior. Near the week's end, the tall, handsome and engaging Lawrence Selden unexpectedly shows up at Bellomont. Having already failed to meet Percy for morning church services, and fully aware that Lawrence has just ended an illicit relationship with the married but vindictive Bertha Dorset, Lily chooses to go for a long walk with Lawrence and to spend the afternoon with him instead of with Percy or the rest of the party. Even though Lily has already made it clear to Selden during their tête-à-tête in his flat that she looked at him as that friend who won't be afraid to say disagreeable things to her,[k] she becomes drawn to him romantically. Succumbing to her agreeable femininity, Selden begins to fall in love with Lily. He feels safe in nurturing an emotional attachment to her because she clearly states that she cannot and will not marry a man of his modest means. Fresh out of his four-year affair with Bertha Dorset Lawrence begins to slide into another emotional attachment with the equally unavailable Lily.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 1999-08-10
Selected by the Modern Library as one of the 100 best novels of all time In *The House of Mirth*, Edith Wharton depicts the glittering salons of Gilded Age New York with precision and wit, even as she movingly portrays the obstacles that impeded women's choices at the turn of the century. The beautiful, much-desired Lily Bart has been raised to be one of the perfect wives of the wealthy upper class, but her spark of character and independent drive prevents her from becoming one of the many women who will succeed in those circles. Though her desire for a comfortable life means that she cannot marry for love without money, her resistance to the rules of the social elite endangers her many marriage proposals. As Lily spirals down into debt and dishonor, her story takes on the resonance of classic tragedy. One of Wharton's most bracing and nuanced portraits of the life of women in a hostile, highly ordered world, *The House of Mirth* exposes the truths about American high society that its denizens most wished to deny. With an introduction by Pamela Knights.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 2021-05-04
The House of Mirth (1905), by Edith Wharton, is a novel about New York socialite Lily Bart attempting to secure a husband and a place in rich society. It is one of the first novels of manners in American literature.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 2021-03-30
The House of Mirth is a 1905 novel by the American author Edith Wharton. It tells the story of Lily Bart, a well-born but impoverished woman belonging to New York City's high society around the turn of the last century.[a] Wharton creates a portrait of a stunning beauty who, though raised and educated to marry well both socially and economically, is reaching her 29th year, an age when her youthful blush is drawing to a close and her marital prospects are becoming ever more limited. *The House of Mirth* traces Lily's slow two-year social descent from privilege to a tragically lonely existence on the margins of society. In the words of one scholar, Wharton uses Lily as an attack on an irresponsible, grasping and morally corrupt upper class.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth Edith Wharton, 2016-01-25
Chapter 1 Selden paused in surprise. In the afternoon rush of the Grand Central Station his eyes had been refreshed by the sight of Miss Lily Bart. It was a Monday in early September, and he was returning to his work from a hurried dip into the country; but what was Miss Bart doing in town at that season? If she had appeared to be catching a train, he might have inferred that he had come on her in the act of transition between one and another of the country-houses which disputed her presence after the close of the Newport season; but her desultory air perplexed him. She stood apart from the crowd, letting it drift by her to the platform or the street, and wearing an air of irresolution which might, as he surmised, be the mask of a very definite purpose. It struck him at once that she was waiting for some one, but he hardly knew why the idea arrested him. There was nothing new about Lily Bart, yet he could never see her without a faint movement of interest: it was

characteristic of her that she always roused speculation, that her simplest acts seemed the result of far-reaching intentions. An impulse of curiosity made him turn out of his direct line to the door, and stroll past her. He knew that if she did not wish to be seen she would contrive to elude him; and it amused him to think of putting her skill to the test. Mr. Selden—what good luck! She came forward smiling, eager almost, in her resolve to intercept him. One or two persons, in brushing past them, lingered to look; for Miss Bart was a figure to arrest even the suburban traveller rushing to his last train. Selden had never seen her more radiant. Her vivid head, relieved against the dull tints of the crowd, made her more conspicuous than in a ball-room, and under her dark hat and veil she regained the girlish smoothness, the purity of tint, that she was beginning to lose after eleven years of late hours and indefatigable dancing. Was it really eleven years, Selden found himself wondering, and had she indeed reached the nine-and-twentieth birthday with which her rivals credited her?

the house of mirth by edith wharton: *The House of Mirth Illustrated* Edith Wharton, 2020-12-22 The House of Mirth is a 1905 novel by the American author Edith Wharton. It tells the story of Lily Bart, a well-born but impoverished woman belonging to New York City's high society around the turn of the last century. Wharton creates a portrait of a stunning beauty who, though raised and educated to marry well both socially and economically, is reaching her 29th year, an age when her youthful blush is drawing to a close and her marital prospects are becoming ever more limited. The House of Mirth Traces Lily's slow two-year social descent from privilege to a tragically lonely existence on the margins of society. In the words of one scholar, Wharton uses Lily as an attack on an irresponsible, grasping and morally corrupt upper class.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: *The House of Mirth* Edith Wharton, 2021-01-01 First published in the year 1905, famous English writer Edith Wharton's fictional novel 'The House of Mirth' tells the story of Lily Bart, a well-born but impoverished woman belonging to New York City's high society around the turn of the last century.[a] Wharton creates a portrait of a stunning beauty who, though raised and educated to marry well both socially and economically, is reaching her 29th year, an age when her youthful blush is drawing to a close and her marital prospects are becoming ever more limited.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: *The House of Mirth* Edith Wharton, 2016-12-09 Why buy our paperbacks? Most Popular Gift Edition - One of it's kind Printed in USA on High Quality Paper Expedited shipping Standard Font size of 10 for all books 30 Days Money Back Guarantee Fulfilled by Amazon Unabridged (100% Original content) BEWARE OF LOW-QUALITY SELLERS Don't buy cheap paperbacks just to save a few dollars. Most of them use low-quality papers & binding. Their pages fall off easily. Some of them even use very small font size of 6 or less to increase their profit margin. It makes their books completely unreadable. About The House of Mirth The House of Mirth (1905), by Edith Wharton, is the story of Lily Bart, a well-born, but penniless woman of the high society of New York City, who was raised and educated to become wife to a rich man, a hothouse flower for conspicuous consumption. As an unmarried woman with gambling debts and an uncertain future, Lily is destroyed by the society who created her. Written in the style of a novel of manners, The House of Mirth was the fourth novel by Edith Wharton (1862-1937), which tells the story of Lily Bart against the background of the high-society of upper class New York City of the 1890s; as a genre novel, The House of Mirth (1905) is an example of American literary naturalism.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: *The House of Mirth (Complete)* Edith Wharton, 2018-08-08 First published in 1905, The House of Mirth shocked the New York society it so deftly chronicles, portraying the moral, social and economic restraints on a woman who dared to claim the privileges of marriage without assuming the responsibilities. Lily Bart, beautiful, witty and sophisticated, is accepted by 'old money' and courted by the growing tribe of nouveaux riches. But as she nears thirty, her foothold becomes precarious; a poor girl with expensive tastes, she needs a husband to preserve her social standing and to maintain her in the luxury she has come to expect. Whilst many have sought her, something - fastidiousness or integrity- prevents her from making a 'suitable' match.

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the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth (Original Classics) Edith Wharton, 2016-04-05 The House of Mirth (1905), a novel by Edith Wharton (1862-1937), tells the story of Lily Bart, a well-born but impoverished woman belonging to New York City's high society around the turn of the last century. Wharton creates a portrait of a ravishing beauty who, though raised and educated to marry well both socially and economically, is reaching her 29th year, an age when her marital prospects are becoming ever more limited. The House of Mirth traces Lily's slow two-year social descent from privilege to a tragically lonely existence on the margins of society.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth (Annotated) Edith Wharton, 2019-06-15 The House of Mirth (1905), Edith Wharton, is a novel about New York socialite Lily Bart attempting to secure a husband and a place in rich society. It is one of the first novels of manners in American literature.

the house of mirth by edith wharton: The House of Mirth (1905) by Edith Wharton, 2016-03-18 The House of Mirth (1905), by Edith Wharton, is the story of Lily Bart, a well-born, but penniless woman of the high society of New York City, who was raised and educated to become wife to a rich man, a hothouse flower for conspicuous consumption. As an unmarried woman with gambling debts and an uncertain future, Lily is destroyed by the society that created her. Written in the style of a novel of manners, The House of Mirth was the fourth novel by Edith Wharton (1862-1937), which tells the story of Lily Bart against the background of the high-society of upper class New York City of the 1890s; as a genre novel, The House of Mirth (1905) is an example of American literary naturalism.

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