

# edith wharton the age of innocence

Edith Wharton *The Age of Innocence*: A Timeless Exploration of Society and Desire

**edith wharton the age of innocence** remains one of the most celebrated novels in American literature, capturing the intricate social dynamics of New York's elite during the late 19th century. This masterful work, published in 1920, not only earned Wharton the Pulitzer Prize but also continues to resonate with readers for its nuanced portrayal of love, duty, and societal expectations. If you've ever wondered why this novel holds such a cherished place in literary history, diving into its themes, characters, and historical context will offer a richly rewarding experience.

## The Historical and Social Context of Edith Wharton *The Age of Innocence*

Understanding the backdrop against which Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence* is essential to fully appreciating the novel's depth. Set in the 1870s, the story unfolds within the rigid confines of New York's aristocracy—a world governed by strict codes of conduct and an unyielding emphasis on appearances.

### Gilded Age New York Society

The Gilded Age, marked by rapid economic growth and stark social stratification, forms the foundation of the novel's setting. Wharton, herself a member of this elite class, offers an insider's perspective on the rituals and expectations that dictated behavior. From lavish balls to carefully arranged marriages, the social calendar was both a playground and a prison for those involved.

This context helps illuminate the characters' motivations. For instance, Newland Archer, the novel's

protagonist, is torn between his duty to conform and his desire for personal happiness—a conflict emblematic of the era’s tensions.

## **Wharton’s Personal Insight**

Edith Wharton’s own experiences influenced her portrayal of this society. Having grown up in similarly privileged surroundings, she witnessed firsthand the limitations imposed on women and the pressures to maintain family reputations. Her nuanced depiction goes beyond mere critique; it also conveys a sense of empathy for individuals trapped by circumstances beyond their control.

## **Exploring the Themes in Edith Wharton *The Age of Innocence***

One of the reasons *The Age of Innocence* remains relevant is its exploration of universal themes that transcend time.

### **Society vs. Individual Desire**

At the heart of the novel lies the tension between societal expectation and personal longing. Newland Archer’s internal struggle highlights how difficult it was to break free from established norms. His engagement to May Welland represents duty, while his attraction to the unconventional Countess Ellen Olenska symbolizes forbidden desire.

This theme encourages readers to reflect on the compromises people make to fit in, and how societal pressures can stifle authenticity.

## **The Role of Women and Gender Expectations**

Wharton's narrative also critically examines the limited roles available to women in her day. May Welland embodies the ideal "innocent" woman—docile, obedient, and focused on maintaining social harmony. In contrast, Ellen Olenska challenges these norms through her independence and defiance of convention.

Through these characters, Wharton sheds light on the constraints women faced and the cost of nonconformity within a patriarchal society.

## **Appearance vs. Reality**

Another compelling theme is the contrast between outward appearances and internal realities. The polished veneer of New York's elite masks emotional turmoil, hidden desires, and moral ambiguity. This duality invites readers to question the authenticity of social facades, a concept that remains relevant in today's world of curated images and social media.

## **Character Analysis: The Heart of Edith Wharton The Age of Innocence**

The novel's rich character development breathes life into its themes, making the story both intimate and expansive.

### **Newland Archer: The Reluctant Conformist**

Newland Archer is a fascinating protagonist because of his internal conflict. Raised with traditional

values, he initially embraces his role in society. Yet, his encounters with Ellen Olenska awaken a yearning for freedom and passion that challenges his worldview. Archer's hesitation and ultimate decisions reveal the deep psychological impact of societal constraints.

## **May Welland: The Embodiment of Innocence**

May represents the idealized feminine virtues of her time—purity, grace, and submission. However, her character is more complex than a simple stereotype. Through subtle actions and moments of quiet strength, she ensures the preservation of social order, raising questions about power and agency within prescribed roles.

## **Countess Ellen Olenska: The Outsider**

Ellen is the catalyst who disrupts the social equilibrium. Having returned from Europe after a scandalous separation, she challenges New York's rigid conventions. Her independence and unconventional attitudes make her a compelling figure of resistance, symbolizing the possibility of alternative ways of living even within restrictive societies.

## **The Narrative Style and Literary Techniques in Edith Wharton**

### **The Age of Innocence**

Wharton's writing style significantly contributes to the novel's enduring appeal.

### **Elegant Prose and Symbolism**

Her prose is characterized by elegance and precision, capturing the subtle nuances of social interaction. Symbolism plays a key role, with objects like the opera and the bow window serving as metaphors for the characters' emotional states and societal roles.

## **Point of View and Psychological Depth**

The story is primarily told from Newland Archer's perspective, allowing readers intimate access to his thoughts and feelings. Wharton's psychological insight makes the characters' struggles palpable and invites readers to examine their own internal conflicts.

## **Adaptations and Cultural Impact of Edith Wharton The Age of Innocence**

The novel's influence extends beyond the page, having inspired various adaptations and continuing discussions about its themes.

### **Film and Theater Interpretations**

One of the most notable adaptations is Martin Scorsese's 1993 film version, which brought the story to life with striking visuals and strong performances by Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder. This adaptation renewed interest in the novel and introduced it to broader audiences.

Additionally, stage productions and radio plays have explored the story's dramatic potential, emphasizing its timeless relevance.

## **Influence on Modern Literature**

Wharton's exploration of societal constraints and individual desires has influenced countless writers. Themes from *The Age of Innocence* echo in contemporary works that examine class, gender roles, and the tension between tradition and change.

## **Why Edith Wharton *The Age of Innocence* Still Matters Today**

Even a century after its publication, the novel offers valuable insights that resonate in the modern world.

## **Reflections on Social Expectations**

In an age where social media often compels people to present curated versions of themselves, Wharton's critique of appearance versus reality feels especially pertinent. The novel encourages readers to consider how much of our behavior is shaped by the desire to conform and how that impacts personal freedom.

## **Understanding Historical Gender Roles**

For those interested in the history of women's rights and societal roles, *The Age of Innocence* provides a vivid snapshot of the challenges faced by women in the late 19th century. It invites reflection on progress made and obstacles that remain.

## Timeless Human Emotions

Ultimately, the novel speaks to universal human experiences—love, longing, regret, and the search for identity. These themes ensure that Edith Wharton's work continues to touch readers across generations.

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Exploring Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* reveals a richly layered narrative that transcends its historical setting. Through its vivid characters, intricate social commentary, and elegant prose, it provides a window into a bygone era while offering enduring lessons about society and the human heart. Whether you're a longtime fan or encountering the novel for the first time, its timeless exploration of the delicate balance between personal desire and societal expectation is sure to engage and inspire.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the central theme of Edith Wharton's 'The Age of Innocence'?

'The Age of Innocence' primarily explores themes of societal expectations, the constraints of tradition, and the conflict between individual desires and social duties in 19th-century upper-class New York.

### Who are the main characters in 'The Age of Innocence'?

The main characters are Newland Archer, a young lawyer; May Welland, his fiancée; and Ellen Olenska, May's unconventional cousin who challenges social norms.

### How does 'The Age of Innocence' depict New York society in the

## **1870s?**

The novel portrays New York society as rigid, conservative, and obsessed with maintaining appearances, where social conventions and family honor dictate personal choices.

## **What role does Ellen Olenska play in 'The Age of Innocence'?**

Ellen Olenska serves as a symbol of freedom and rebellion against societal constraints, challenging Newland Archer's conventional worldview and stirring his internal conflict.

## **Why did Edith Wharton write 'The Age of Innocence'?**

Edith Wharton wrote 'The Age of Innocence' to critique the restrictive social codes of upper-class society and to explore the tension between individual desires and societal expectations.

## **What awards has 'The Age of Innocence' received?**

'The Age of Innocence' won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1921, making Edith Wharton the first woman to receive this prestigious award.

## **How does the novel address the concept of innocence?**

The novel uses 'innocence' ironically to highlight the naivety and moral blindness of society, where characters maintain a facade of innocence while suppressing true feelings and desires.

## **What is the significance of the title 'The Age of Innocence'?**

The title reflects the nostalgic view of a bygone era marked by strict social codes and innocence on the surface, masking the underlying repression and complexity of human emotions.

## **How has 'The Age of Innocence' been adapted for film and theater?**

'The Age of Innocence' has been adapted into several films, most notably the 1993 movie directed by Martin Scorsese, as well as various stage productions that capture the novel's social critique.



# What literary style is Edith Wharton known for in 'The Age of Innocence'?

Edith Wharton is known for her elegant, detailed prose and use of irony and social commentary to critique the manners and morals of the upper class in 'The Age of Innocence.'

## Additional Resources

**\*\*Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence: A Timeless Exploration of Society and Desire\*\***

**edith wharton the age of innocence** stands as one of the most enduring works of early 20th-century American literature. Published in 1920, this novel offers a profound exploration of the social mores, class structures, and the intricate dance between personal desire and societal expectation in upper-class New York during the 1870s. Edith Wharton's ability to dissect the subtle tensions and contradictions of her characters' lives has cemented *\*The Age of Innocence\** as a seminal piece in both literary and cultural studies. This article delves into the novel's themes, character dynamics, historical context, and its relevance today, while incorporating key insights that resonate with readers and scholars alike.

## Historical Context and Social Setting

Set during the Gilded Age, a period marked by economic expansion and stark social stratification, *\*The Age of Innocence\** captures the rigid conventions of New York's aristocracy. Edith Wharton, herself a member of this social class, provides an insider's critique of the era's codes of conduct and the often suffocating expectations placed upon individuals, particularly women.

The novel's protagonist, Newland Archer, embodies the conflict between individual aspirations and societal duty. As a lawyer engaged to the socially acceptable May Welland, he finds himself drawn to May's unconventional cousin, Ellen Olenska, whose return from Europe threatens to upend the

carefully maintained social order. Through this love triangle, Wharton explores the limitations imposed by tradition and the cost of rebellion.

## The Role of Social Conventions

Wharton meticulously details the rituals and unwritten rules that govern the characters' lives. From formal dinners to whispered gossip, every interaction is laden with meaning. These social conventions function as a form of control, limiting personal freedom and enforcing conformity.

- **Marriage as social contract:** Marriages in the novel serve less as romantic unions and more as strategic alliances that preserve family status.
- **Gender expectations:** Women like May are expected to embody innocence and submission, while men navigate between desire and duty.
- **Reputation and scandal:** The fear of social ostracism is a powerful deterrent against transgression, shaping characters' decisions.

## Character Analysis and Psychological Depth

Edith Wharton's characterization in *The Age of Innocence* is nuanced and psychologically rich, offering insight into the internal struggles of individuals trapped by their environment.

### Newland Archer: The Reluctant Conformist

Newland Archer's internal conflict epitomizes the central tension of the novel. He is torn between his genuine affection for Ellen Olenska and his loyalty to May Welland and the societal expectations she represents. Archer's character illustrates the paralysis that can result from the clash between personal desires and social obligations.

## **Ellen Olenska: The Outsider**

Ellen's European experiences and defiance of New York's rigid norms position her as both alluring and threatening. She challenges the status quo, embodying the possibility of freedom and change. Yet, her outsider status also underscores the limitations faced by those who resist conformity.

## **May Welland: The Idealized Innocence**

May represents the idealized qualities of the upper class: purity, decorum, and adherence to tradition. However, Wharton subtly critiques this idealization, revealing the passive but potent influence May wields within the social fabric.

## **Thematic Explorations**

*\*The Age of Innocence\** is rich with themes that continue to resonate in contemporary discussions about identity, societal pressure, and the nature of happiness.

## **Tradition Versus Change**

One of the novel's most compelling themes is the tension between tradition and change. The characters navigate an environment resistant to transformation, where deviation from established norms invites harsh repercussions. Wharton's portrayal of this struggle highlights the cost of maintaining social order at the expense of individual fulfillment.

## Illusion and Reality

Wharton explores the illusions that sustain society—the facades of happiness, propriety, and innocence that often mask deeper dissatisfaction and conflict. The title itself suggests a nostalgic yearning for a simpler past that was, in reality, fraught with its own complexities.

## Freedom and Constraint

Freedom in *\*The Age of Innocence\** is largely illusory. Characters like Ellen seek liberation from societal constraints but find themselves constrained by reputation, gender roles, and familial expectations. The novel questions whether true freedom is attainable within rigid social structures.

## Literary Style and Narrative Technique

Edith Wharton's prose in *\*The Age of Innocence\** is characterized by its elegance, precision, and subtle irony. Her descriptive passages vividly evoke the opulent world of New York's elite, while her narrative voice maintains a measured, almost journalistic tone that invites readers to observe rather than judge.

Wharton employs free indirect discourse, allowing readers access to Newland Archer's internal thoughts without fully aligning with his perspective. This technique enhances the psychological complexity of the narrative and encourages critical engagement with the characters' motivations.

## Symbolism and Imagery

The novel is replete with symbolic elements that reinforce its themes:

- **The red carnation:** Often associated with passion and forbidden desire, the red carnation surfaces during key moments of tension.
- **The opera:** The setting of the opera scenes underscores the performative nature of social interactions.
- **Architecture and interiors:** The detailed descriptions of homes and social spaces reflect the characters' social status and internal states.

## Comparative Perspectives and Cultural Impact

When compared to other works of its time, *The Age of Innocence* stands out for its subtle critique of upper-class society. While contemporaneous authors such as Henry James also explored similar themes of social constraint, Wharton's novel is distinctive in its focus on the specific milieu of New York's elite.

The novel's cultural impact extends beyond literature. Its 1993 film adaptation directed by Martin Scorsese brought the story to a wider audience, highlighting the timelessness of its themes through visual storytelling.

## Pros and Cons of The Age of Innocence in Modern Reading

- **Pros:** Offers a rich historical perspective, complex characters, and insightful social commentary.
- **Cons:** The slow pace and detailed social rituals may challenge readers accustomed to more action-driven narratives.

# Edith Wharton's Legacy Through The Age of Innocence

\*The Age of Innocence\* solidified Edith Wharton's reputation as a keen observer and critic of social dynamics. Her nuanced portrayal of a fading era invites readers to reflect on the interplay between personal freedom and social responsibility. The novel's continued relevance in academic and literary circles underscores its status as a cornerstone of American literature.

In a world where societal expectations continue to influence individual choices, Wharton's exploration of these themes remains profoundly resonant. The novel's intricate examination of love, duty, and sacrifice within the constraints of social order offers enduring insights into the human condition.

## Edith Wharton The Age Of Innocence

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**edith wharton the age of innocence:** The Age of Innocence Edith Wharton, 2016-08-09  
Winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for fiction and the basis of the sumptuous 1993 Martin Scorsese movie, Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* shows no sign of losing popularity as each new generation embraces this devastating tale of love and loss set among the upper classes in 1870s New York. The story centers on a couple's impending marriage, and the introduction of a woman plagued by scandal whose presence threatens their happiness. Newland Archer, the story's protagonist is a young, popular, successful lawyer living with his mother and sister in an elegant New York City house. Since childhood, his life has been shaped by the customs and expectations of upper-class New York City society. His engagement to May Welland is one in a string of accomplishments. At the story's start, he is proud and content to dream about a traditional marriage in which he will be the husband-teacher and she the wife-student. His life changes when he meets Countess Ellen Olenska. Through his relationship with her-first friendship, then love-he begins questioning the values on which he was raised.

**edith wharton the age of innocence: The Age of Innocence Edith Wharton** Edith Wharton, 2021-08-15  
*The Age of Innocence* was originally published in 1920 as a four-part series in *Pictorial Review*, then later that same year as Wharton's twelfth novel. It went on to win the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Wharton the first woman to win the award. Upper-class New York gentleman Newland Archer is set to wed May Welland in a picture-perfect union when the bride's cousin, Ellen Olenska, returns from a failed marriage overseas. As Newland endeavors to help Countess Olenska be reinstated into the family's good graces, his affections for her grow. Newland soon finds himself torn between his desire to conform to the society he knows

and his new-found passion for the forbidden Countess.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** The Age of Innocence Edith Wharton, C. W. E. Bigsby, 1993 Cambridge Literature is a series of literary texts edited for study by students aged 14-18 in English-speaking classrooms. It will include novels, poetry, short stories, essays, travel-writing and other non-fiction. The series will be extensive and open-ended and will provide school students with a range of edited texts taken from a wide geographical spread. It will feature writing in English from various genres and differing times. The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton is edited by Janet Beer Goodwyn, Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at Roehampton Institute.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** *The Age of Innocence* Edith Wharton, 2018-11-17 The Age of Innocence: Large Print Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 1921 by Edith Wharton The Age of Innocence centers on one society couple's impending marriage and the introduction of a scandalous woman whose presence threatens their happiness. Though the novel questions the assumptions and mores of turn of the century New York society, it never devolves into an outright condemnation of the institution. In fact, Wharton considered this novel an apology for the earlier, more brutal and critical, *The House of Mirth*. Not to be overlooked is the author's attention to detailing the charms and customs of this caste. The novel is lauded for its accurate portrayal of how the nineteenth-century East Coast American upper class lived and this combined with the social tragedy earned Wharton a Pulitzer - the first Pulitzer awarded to a woman.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** The Age of Innocence Annotated Edith Wharton, 2021-02-21 The Age of Innocence is a novel by Edith Wharton, published to widespread acclaim in 1920. Set in the late 19th century among the monied upper class in America during the gilded age, it recreates the setting and cultural details with exceptional realism while contrasting the elegant and mannered facade of the upper classes with their grasping and cruel schemes. The story opens at a performance of Faust at the old Academy of Music. A man named Newland Archer is in attendance, and revels in his success and prospects. The scion of one of the wealthiest and most socially important New York families, he is a successful lawyer and is set to marry the young, beautiful, and sheltered May Welland. May is an ideal social match for Newland, and he anticipates the perfection of their marriage in terms of the parties and connections opening up before him. Newland meets May's cousin, Countess Ellen Olenska. Thirty years old and beautiful, Ellen is independent and shows her scorn for the social niceties of wealthy society. Ellen is cultured and intelligent, but has caused scandal by leaving her husband, Count Olenska. Newland finds himself powerfully attracted to Ellen, and suddenly sees May as a dull and provincial girl. When Ellen announces her intention to divorce her husband--an act that would ruin the Welland family name--one of Newland's law partners asks that he intervene with Ellen and convince her not to. Newland begins calling on the Countess in order to convince her that she should simply remain living separately from her husband. Newland and Ellen begin corresponding via letters, and come to know each other very well as a result. Newland enjoys Ellen's intelligence and her willingness to question society's rules and her role in them, where May's willingness to play by those rules and conform to her family's wishes seems increasingly unattractive. Ellen agrees not to divorce her husband. His admiration and attraction to Ellen grows during this period. Alarmed at his feelings for Ellen, Newland travels to Florida to visit with May and her family and asks May to move up their wedding date because he can sense his resolve crumbling. May refuses, horrified at upsetting the careful balance of society rules. She accuses Newland of having second thoughts about her appropriateness to be his wife, and Newland insists he still loves her. Newland confesses his love to Ellen, who is shocked. She agrees to remain in America only if Newland promises they will merely be platonic friends, which he does. May relents and sends a telegram agreeing to accelerate the wedding plans, hinting that she understands better than Newland what is happening. Newland and May marry. Their marriage is one of convenience; there is no love or passion and Newland finds May dull. He also finds his old life of parties and social events dull, and thinks constantly of Ellen. Ellen has moved to Washington, D.C., and their correspondence has ended, but Newland finds himself thinking of her constantly. He meets Ellen by chance in Newport, Rhode Island and finds her circumstances have changed: The family has cut off

her allowance because Count Olenska wishes her to return to him and she refuses. He tells her he wishes her to become his mistress, since divorce would be impossible for both of them. Ellen initially refuses, and returns to New York to care for her grandmother in order to have her allowance reinstated. Newland, with renewed access to Ellen, becomes determined to seize his chance at happiness and keeps pushing Ellen to become his mistress. When Ellen tells Newland she will consummate their relationship, Newland is ecstatic--but then Ellen informs him suddenly that she is returning to Europe, without explanation. Newland decides to leave May and accompany Ellen there. May announces to Newland that she is pregnant, however--and furthermore tells him she had confessed as much to Ellen earlier. Newland understands that Ellen decided...

**edith wharton the age of innocence: Edith Wharton, the Age of Innocence** Edith Wharton, 2018-08-18 Newland Archer, the ambivalent protagonist, represents the apogee of good breeding. He is the ultimate insider in post-Civil War New York society. Although engaged to May Welland, a beautiful and proper fellow member of elite society, he is attracted to the free-spirited Countess Ellen Olenska, May's cousin and a former member of their circle who has been living in Europe but has left her husband, a cruel Polish nobleman, under mysterious circumstances and returned to her family's New York milieu. His upcoming marriage to the young socialite will unite two of New York's oldest families, but from the novel's opening pages, Olenska imports a passionate intensity and mysterious Old World eccentricity that disrupt the conventional world of order-obsessed New York. Ellen's hopes of being set free from her past are dashed when she is forced to choose between conformity and exile, while Newland's appointment by the Welland family as Ellen's legal consultant begins an emotional entanglement the force of which he could never have imagined.

**edith wharton the age of innocence: The Age of Innocence, 1920 (Pulitzer Prize Winner).**  
Novel By: Edith Wharton Edith Wharton, 2017-01-07 The Age of Innocence is Edith Wharton's twelfth novel, initially serialized in four parts in the Pictorial Review magazine in 1920, and later released by D. Appleton and Company as a book in New York and in London. It won the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Wharton the first woman to win the prize.[1] Though the committee agreed to award the prize to Sinclair Lewis, the judges rejected his Main Street on political grounds and established Wharton as the American 'First Lady of Letters', the irony being that the committee had awarded The Age of Innocence the prize on grounds that negated Wharton's own blatant and subtle ironies, which constitute and make the book so worthy of attention.[2] The story is set in upper-class New York City in the 1870s, during the Gilded Age. Wharton wrote the book in her 50s, after she had established herself as a strong author with publishers clamoring for her work. PLOT\*Newland Archer, gentleman lawyer and heir to one of New York City's best families, is happily anticipating a highly desirable marriage to the sheltered and beautiful May Welland. Yet he finds reason to doubt his choice of bride after the appearance of Countess Ellen Olenska, May's exotic and beautiful 30-year-old cousin. Ellen has returned to New York from Europe after scandalously separating herself (per rumor) from a bad marriage to a Polish count. At first, Ellen's arrival and its potential taint on the reputation of his bride-to-be's family disturb Newland, but he becomes intrigued by the worldly Ellen, who flouts New York society's fastidious rules. As Newland's admiration for the countess grows, so does his doubt about marrying May, a perfect product of Old New York society; his match with May no longer seems the ideal fate he had imagined. Ellen's decision to divorce Count Olenski causes a social crisis for the other members of her family, who are terrified of scandal and disgrace. Living apart can be tolerated, but divorce is unacceptable. To save the Welland family's reputation, a law partner of Newland asks him to dissuade Countess Olenska from divorcing the count. He succeeds, but in the process comes to care for her; afraid of falling in love with Ellen, Newland begs May to accelerate their wedding date, but she refuses. Newland tells Ellen he loves her; Ellen corresponds, but is horrified that their love will aggrieve May. She agrees to remain in America, separated but still married to Count Olenski, only if they do not sexually consummate their love. Newland receives May's telegram agreeing to wed sooner. Newland and May marry. He tries unsuccessfully to forget Ellen. His society marriage is loveless, and the social life he once found absorbing has become empty and joyless. Though Ellen lives in Washington and



has remained distant, he is unable to cease loving her. Their paths cross while he and May are in Newport, Rhode Island. Newland discovers that Count Olenski wishes Ellen to return to him, but she has refused, although her family wants her to reconcile with her husband and return to Europe. Frustrated by her independence, the family has cut off her money, as the count had already done..... Edith Wharton ( born Edith Newbold Jones; January 24, 1862 - August 11, 1937) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American novelist, short story writer, and designer. She was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1927, 1928 and 1930. Wharton combined her insider's view of America's privileged classes with a brilliant, natural wit to write humorous, incisive novels and short stories of social and psychological insight. She was well acquainted with many of her era's other literary and public figures, including Theodore Roosevelt.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** *The Age of Innocence* Edith Wharton, 2021-05-23 The Age of Innocence was originally published in 1920 as a four-part series in Pictorial Review, then later that same year as Wharton's twelfth novel. It went on to win the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Wharton the first woman to win the award. Upper-class New York gentleman Newland Archer is set to wed May Welland in a picture-perfect union when the bride's cousin, Ellen Olenska, returns from a failed marriage overseas. As Newland endeavors to help Countess Olenska be reinstated into the family's good graces, his affections for her grow. Newland soon finds himself torn between his desire to conform to the society he knows and his newfound passion for the forbidden Countess.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** *The Age of Innocence - Edith Wharton* Harold Bloom, 2009 A collection of essays on Wharton's novel, The age of innocence, presented in chronological order by date of publication.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton Edith Wharton, 2020-11-09 This is Newland Archer's world as he prepares to marry the beautiful but conventional May Welland. But when the mysterious Countess Ellen Olenska returns to New York after a disastrous marriage, Archer falls deeply in love with her. Torn between duty and passion, Archer struggles to make a decision that will either courageously define his life--or mercilessly destroy it. Winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize, The Age of Innocence is Edith Wharton's masterful portrait of desire and betrayal during the sumptuous Golden Age of Old New York.

**edith wharton the age of innocence:** The Age of Innocence 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 Age of Innocence The Age of Innocence is Edith Wharton's twelfth novel, initially serialized in four parts in the Pictorial Review magazine in 1920, and later released by D. Appleton and Company as a book in New York and in London. It won the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Wharton the first woman to win the prize. The story is set in upper-class New York City in the 1870s, during the so-called Gilded Age.

**edith wharton the age of innocence: The Age of Innocence Novel by Edith Wharton (Fiction & Romance Novel) "The Annotated Version"** Edith Wharton, 2020-08-13 Winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize, The Age of Innocence is Edith Wharton's masterful portrait of desire and betrayal during the sumptuous Golden Age of Old New York, a time when society people dreaded scandal more than disease. This is Newland Archer's world as he prepares to marry the beautiful but conventional May Welland. But when the mysterious Countess Ellen Olenska returns to New York after a disastrous marriage, Archer falls deeply in love with her. Torn between duty and passion, Archer struggles to make a decision that will either courageously define his life-or mercilessly destroy it. The Age of Innocence centers on an upper-class couple's impending marriage, and the introduction of the bride's cousin, plagued by scandal, whose presence threatens their happiness.

Though the novel questions the assumptions and morals of 1870s New York society, it never develops into an outright condemnation of the institution. The novel is noted for Wharton's attention to detail and its accurate portrayal of how the 19th-century East Coast American upper class lived, as well as for the social tragedy of its plot. Wharton was 58 years old at publication; she had lived in that world and had seen it change dramatically by the end of World War I. The title is an ironic comment on the polished outward manners of New York society when compared to its inward machinations. It is believed to have been drawn from the popular painting *A Little Girl* by Sir Joshua Reynolds that later became known as *The Age of Innocence* and was widely reproduced as the commercial face of childhood in the later half of the 18th century. The title, while ironic, was not as caustic as the title of the story featured in *The House of Mirth*, which Wharton had published in 1905.

**edith wharton the age of innocence: The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton** Edith Wharton, 2021-04-12 *The Age of Innocence* is the twelfth novel by Edith Wharton, initially published in four volumes in the *Victorian Review* in 1920, and later published in book form by De Appleton in New York and London. She won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1921, making it the first novel written by a woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and thus Wharton was the first woman to win the award. The story takes place in an upper-class community in New York City in the 1870s.

**edith wharton the age of innocence: The Age of Innocence Illustrated** Edith Wharton, 2020-10-24 *The Age of Innocence* is a 1993 American historical romantic drama film directed by Martin Scorsese. The screenplay, an adaptation of the 1920 novel *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton, was written by Scorsese and Jay Cocks. The film stars Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, Winona Ryder and Miriam Margolyes, and was released by Columbia Pictures. The film recounts the courtship and marriage of Newland Archer (Day-Lewis), a wealthy New York society attorney, to May Welland (Ryder); Archer then encounters and legally represents the Countess Olenska (Pfeiffer) prior to unexpected romantic entanglements.

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