



# Ethan Frome

*Edith Wharton*

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## **Ethan Frome** Edith Wharton

Ethan Frome is considered one of the most powerful writings of the Pulitzer Prize awarded author Edith Warthon and is a story of a love triangle that has tragic consequences for all the people involved in it. The narrator, a man whose name is never revealed, arrives in Starkfield, a fictional town from New England, to stay there for the winter. He needs a driver who knows the surroundings very well, so he decides to hire Ethan Frome, the protagonist of the book, who is considered a sort of local celebrity. The main source of his "reputation" is the unfortunate accident he had suffered 24 years before, leaving him limp and with his spine crippled. In spite of these serious injuries, Frome has a powerful, imposing look, making the narrator curious to know more about his past and the dramatic incidents that made him "a ruin of a man". A snow storm leaves the protagonist no option than to offer the narrator shelter for the night, a good opportunity for the latter and the reader to find out more about the mystery surrounding Ethan Frome's past. The events had been triggered by the decision of his sickly wife, Zenobia, also known as Zeena, to bring in her cousin Mattie as a household help, because Zeena's delicate health made it difficult for her to cope with all the work. Although she is not so skilled a housemaid, Mattie is very enthusiastic and eager to please her elder cousin. Besides, her vivacious nature makes Ethan rediscover the joy of living, as he gradually falls in love with her. In spite of Mattie's efforts, Zeena is deeply dissatisfied with her and, after an apparently minor incident, she decides to send Mattie back, forcing Ethan to do something that dramatically changes the course of their life.

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