



Short Stories (Dover Thrift Editions)

Edith Wharton

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Described by literary critic Robert Morss Lovett as "a novelist of civilization, absorbed in the somewhat mechanical operations of civilization, absorbed in the somewhat mechanical operations of culture, preoccupied with the upper ('and inner') class," Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edith Wharton (1862-1937) also wrote superbly crafted works of short fiction. The seven stories in this excellent collection demonstrate the author's ability to create memorable tales on themes of love and marriage, divorce, the experience of the artist, high society and its workings and other topics.

"Souls Belated," a tragedy of mores, focuses on characters overcome by the demands of convention, while "The Pelican" and "The Muse's Tragedy" both present women whose realities differ from their public personae. "Expiation" is a satiric, revealing story about the publishing industry, featuring a writer determined to increase the sales of her first novel. In "The Dilettante," a young man who prides himself on his ability to manipulate women must face ironic consequences when he introduces his fiancée to his supposed lover. "Xingu" is a witty satire on the intellectual pretensions of a group of rich women, while "The Other Two" presents a darkly humorous look at the consequences of divorce.

Gathered in this inexpensive volume, these stories provide an excellent sampling of Wharton's masterly efforts in the short story genre, a form of fiction she felt especially suited to her talents and one that enabled her to achieve a focused and intimate realism.

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