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**ETHAN
FROMME**

EDITH WHARTON

ETHAN FROME

In the early years of the 20th century, life on a farm in Massachusetts is not easy. The New England winters are hard; snow and ice cover the fields for months, and the nights are long and cold. For a poor farmer like Ethan Frome, life has few bright moments.

Ethan is a slow, quiet man, but he feels things strongly. He feels the beauty of the world around him – stars shining in a moonless sky, the blue shadows of trees on sunlit snow. He feels the sad loneliness of his life, locked in a loveless marriage to Zeena, a cold, silent woman, whose only interest is her own ill health. Then Zeena's cousin, Mattie Silver, comes to live in the farmhouse, and as the months pass, Ethan feels a new happiness stealing into his life. He loves to watch Mattie's face across the dinner table, to see her sweet smile and hear her soft voice, to walk arm in arm with her across the snowy fields.

His wife Zeena says very little, but her cold, watchful eyes see everything . . .





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Classics

Ethan Frome

Stage 3 (1000 headwords)

Edited by
Susan Kingley



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Beginnings



If you know Starkfield, Massachusetts, you know the post office there. If you know the post office, you have probably seen Ethan Frome driving up to it in his buggy; and you have probably wondered who he was.

It was there that, several years ago, I saw him for the first time. He was a noticeable figure. His tall, strong body was badly twisted, and much shorter on the right side than on the left. He moved slowly and painfully, pulling himself



*His tall, strong body was badly twisted,
and he moved slowly and painfully, pulling himself along.*