

ETHAN FROME

EDITH WHARTON

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

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SYNOPSIS

Introduction: A young engineer constructing a powerhouse at Corbury Junction near Starkfield, Massachusetts, tells of meeting 52-year-old Ethan at the post office. Tall, grizzled, and lame on the right side, Ethan was injured in a sledding accident at age 28. The narrator engages Ethan to drive him to work and lends him a biochemistry book. One February night a week later, when the train is delayed, Ethan takes the narrator directly to the junction, passing his sawmill and farm. Stranded by drifts, the narrator spends the night at the Frome farmhouse and learns of Ethan's wretched life since the accident.

Chapter 1: Ethan is married to Zeena, a 35-year-old self-absorbed hypochondriac. Last year, Mattie Silver, her 20-year-old cousin, arrived to work as a domestic. Ethan escorts Mattie to all the local socials, finding her a way to relieve the tedium of his life with Zeena. He is jealous after Denis Eady dances the final Virginia reel with Mattie.

Chapter 2: Mattie eludes Denis's flirtation. Ethan drives her home and avoids Zeena by intending to go over the mill accounts in the cold, but relents and goes to bed with his wife.

Chapter 3: The next morning, Ethan regrets not kissing Mattie, who works for relatives because she is too frail for store work. At noon, Ethan and Jotham Powell, his hired man, return to the farm. Zeena announces she is traveling to Bettsbridge overnight and staying with Aunt Martha Pierce to consult a new doctor. Ethan is delighted to spend an evening alone with Mattie.

Chapter 4: Ethan fantasizes about marrying Mattie and recalls how Zeena nursed his mother. After his mother's death, 21-year-old Ethan married 28-year-old Zeena out of loneliness. A year after they married, she developed physical complaints. Because they had planned to move to a large town, Zeena takes a perverted joy in despising the farm.

Ethan asks builder Andrew Hale for a \$50 advance. Hale replies he needs extra time because he is repairing a house for his son and future daughter-in-law. At dinner, Mattie selects Zeena's red pickle dish, which the cat breaks. Ethan promises to replace or repair it and puts it back in the china closet.

Chapter 5: Ethan promises to take Mattie sledding the next night. He assumes she will soon marry. At 11:00 P.M., they retire to their rooms.

Chapter 6: Ethan plans to send Jotham to fetch Zeena from the depot, but the horse cuts his knee. Ethan buys glue from the widow Harmon, but Zeena returns early before he can mend the dish. He promises to complete the gluing during the night.

Chapter 7: Dr. Buck advises Zeena to hire a maid, who will arrive the next afternoon. Zeena and Ethan quarrel over

the cost. Zeena catches Ethan in the lie about a \$50 advance from Hale and insists Mattie must leave. Zeena blames Mattie's father for leaving her destitute. She discovers the broken dish and calls Mattie a bad girl.

Chapter 8: In the study, Ethan ponders running away to the West with Mattie, but has no traveling funds. The next day, before Mattie leaves, Zeena accuses her of stealing a kitchen towel and a match-safe.

Chapter 9: Ethan consoles Mattie and shoulders her trunk. He drives Mattie to town and stops at Shadow Pond. He wishes she were dead rather than married to someone else. She agrees. When they pass the coasting hill, Mattie requests a sled ride and proposes they run the sled into the elm. After the crash, Ethan feels her face beneath his hand.

Chapter 10: The narrator finds Zeena tending Mattie, who is reduced to a witchy cripple. At the boarding house the next day, Ruth Hale admits gossips pieced together the love triangle. Only Ruth and the doctor have the courage to visit. Ruth pities the multiple misery Ethan faces every day from two spiteful invalids.

TIME LINE

- age 19** Ethan studies engineering in Worcester and journeys to Florida.
- age 20** Ethan quits school to tend to his sick father. Ethan's mother loses touch with reality because of isolation. Zeena comes to tend Ethan's mother.
- age 21** Ethan marries Zeena after his mother dies.
- age 27** Ethan meets Mattie Silver at the depot. She tends Zeena.
- later** Ethan joins Mattie at a picnic at Shadow Pond and finds her locket. He regularly escorts her to socials.
- age 28** Ethan waits outside a church social.
- near midnight** Denis Eady leads Mattie in a Virginia reel, but she refuses to ride in his cutter.
- next day at noon** Zeena announces her journey to Bettsbridge to stay overnight with Aunt Martha Pierce. Ethan fails to get \$50 from Andrew Hale. Dr. Buck instructs Zeena to hire a full-time maid. Aunt Martha Pierce engages a maid.
- that night** Ethan enjoys an evening alone with Mattie. The cat breaks Zeena's pickle dish.
- next day** Ethan buys glue from the Widow Homan to mend the dish.
- later** Zeena returns and demands Mattie leave the next day.
- that night** Ethan sleeps in his study pondering abandonment of his wife and land.
- next day** He fails again to get money for the trip West.
- that afternoon** He drives Mattie past Shadow Pond.

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before 5:00 P. M. They attempt suicide by sledding down Schoolhouse Hill, but they survive.

later Zeena nurses Ethan back to health. Mattie returns to the farm as an invalid.

age 47 or 48 Ethan studies at a Worcester technological college for a year.

age 52 Ethan meets the narrator in Starkfield and drives him to the depot each day.

week later Snow inhibits the trip; the narrator spends the night at Ethan's house and observes the crankiness of Mattie and Zeena.

next day Ruth Hale completes the narrator's observations with comments about Ethan's misery.

AUTHOR SKETCH

Edith Wharton, a keen spokeswoman against social repression, owes much to her aristocratic family tree. Born on January 24, 1862, Edith Newbold Jones was a pampered child. She was tutored in literature, art, and social correctness. On trips to Europe, she became fluent in French, German, and Italian. As a girlhood exercise in composition, she imitated classic authors.

At age 23, Wharton married Boston financier Edward Robbins "Teddy" Wharton, a family friend with a mental illness 13 years her senior. They traveled France and kept homes in Newport, New York City, and near Lenox, Massachusetts.

In 1913, the Whartons divorced after she discovered he robbed her trust fund to keep up a mistress. In despair, she began writing *The Decoration of Houses*. In 1891, she began publishing realistic short fiction in *Scribner's*, *Century*, and *Harper's*. She made friends with writers William Dean Howells, George Meredith, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, and Sinclair Lewis.

In 1907, Wharton relocated in France and wrote a bitter commentary on American soullessness and crassness. Journalist Morton Fullerton encouraged her bent for eroticism. During World War I, she won the Order of Leopold and a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor for aiding the unemployed, the Red Cross, and tuberculosis victims, and supported 600 Belgian and French refugees. She died of stroke on August 11, 1937, and was buried at Versailles.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Wharton filled her fiction with the private cruelties and misery of the upper class, and sided with their victims. Her first bestseller, *The House of Mirth*, serialized in *Scribner's* and awarded a Pulitzer Prize, placed Wharton among the social mannerists. Her second major work, *Ethan Frome*, is a crisp, ironic novelette written in the style of Henry James, yet uniquely suited to Wharton's New England experience. The work cloaks a struggling working-class family in such frustration that desolation and grim irony overwhelm the resolution.

Critics conclude the novel and its companion, *Summer*, derive intensity from Wharton's loveless marriage. Equally barren of refuge or fulfillment are the characters in *The Age of Innocence*, which she serialized in *Revue des deux Mondes* and adapted for the New York stage. In 1936, Owen Davis and Donald Davis wrote a successful stage version of *Ethan Frome*; in 1993, Liam Neeson starred in the American film version.

Wharton's overall success at clear images and sharp, sometimes painful nuances of social and emotional isolation

earned her a lasting place among America's writers. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Additional awards include an honorary degree from Yale, a second Pulitzer Prize, and the dedication of *Babbitt*, the impetus for which Sinclair Lewis credited to her. In 1980, the Mount, her Massachusetts hermitage, became part of the National Trust. Her letters and manuscripts, housed at Yale University, provided R. W. B. Lewis with close-up analysis for *Edith Wharton: A Biography* and a subsequent collection of her personal correspondence.

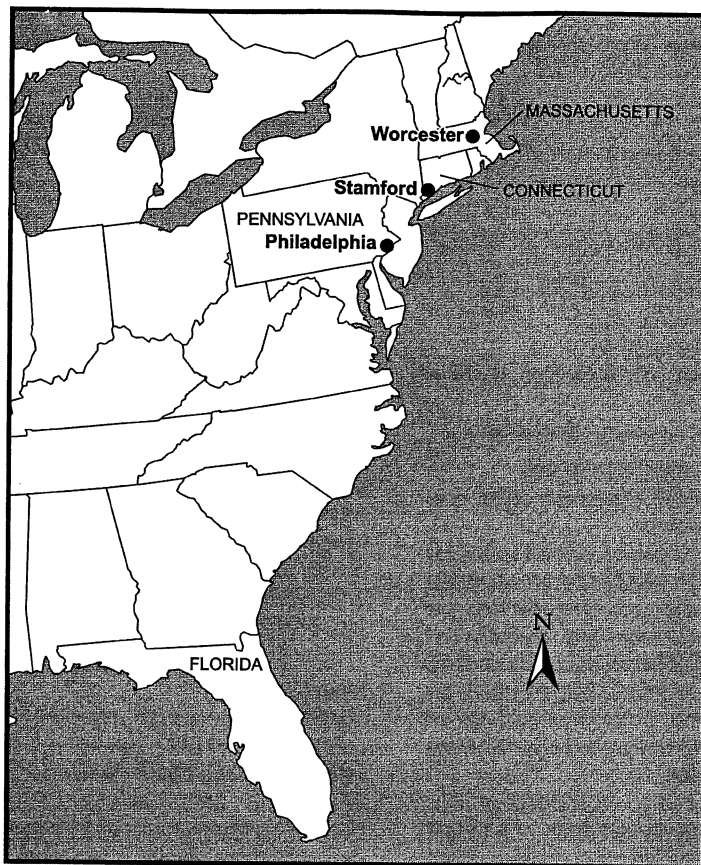
OTHER WORKS BY EDITH WHARTON

The Age of Innocence (1920)
The Angel at the Grave (1901)
Artemis to Actaeon (1909)
A Backward Glance (1934)
The Buccaneers (unfinished) (1938)
Certain People (1930)
The Children (1928)
Crucial Instances (1901)
The Custom of the Country (1913)
The Decoration of Houses (1897)
The Descent of Man (1904)
Ethan Frome (1911)
Fighting France, from Dunkerque to Belfort (1915)
French Ways and Their Meaning (1919)
The Fruit of the Tree (1907)
Ghosts (1937)
The Glimpses of the Moon (1922)
The Gods Arrive (1932)
The Greater Inclination (1899)
Here and Beyond (1926)
The Hermit and the Wild Woman (1908)
The House of Mirth (1905)
Hudson River Bracketed (1929)
Human Nature (1933)
In Morocco (1920)
Italian Backgrounds (1905)
Italian Villas (1904)
Madame de Treymes (1907)
The Marne (1918)
The Mother's Recompense (1925)
A Motor Flight Through France (1908)
Old New York (1924)
The Other Two (1904)
The Reef (1912)
Sanctuary (1903)
A Son at the Front (1923)
Summer (1917)
Tales of Men and Ghosts (1910)
The Touchstone (1900)
Twelve Poems (1926)
Twilight Sleep (1927)
The Valley of Decision (1902)
Verses (1878) (co-authored by Ogden Codman, Jr.)
The World Over (1936)
The Writing of Fiction (1925)
Xingu (1916)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To define realism
2. To describe the physical, mental, and emotional effects of a failed marriage
3. To characterize the influence of inclement weather on human behavior and mood
4. To acknowledge the importance of achievement, autonomy, and self-fulfillment
5. To outline the role of women as care-givers
6. To summarize sources of frustration
7. To contrast characters in their responses to despair, isolation, change, fear, entrapment, and insecurity
8. To weigh the significance of family, work, love, prestige, and trust
9. To explain the role of transportation in the action
10. To narrate examples of community interaction
11. To evaluate the narrator's objectivity

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To recount how Zeena changes from hypochondriac to

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nurse

2. To discuss the attraction between Ethan and Mattie
3. To explain how the narrator learns Ethan's story
4. To characterize the importance of New England to the plot
5. To describe Ethan's attempts at deception and lying
6. To contrast Mattie, Zeena, Mrs. Andrew Hale, and Ruth in terms of compassion
7. To note the coping mechanisms that get Ethan through the winter
8. To analyze the scene in which the suicide pact fails
9. To assess the change in Ethan's marriage
10. To contrast life in Starkfield with rural life
11. To list ways in which Zeena divulges her passive aggressive nature
12. To isolate epiphanies in Ethan's growing discontent

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Edith Wharton's style, present the following terms and applications:

irony an implied discrepancy between what is said or done and what is meant, as found in the tragic turn of events that spoils Mattie's genial personality and turns her into the same miserable whiner Zeena had been. The reduction of Mattie to invalidism is the fault of Ethan's sled ride and its failure to free them from earthly torment. Still a poor man eking a living from farm and sawmill, Ethan has no hope of enjoying his home life, which is now dominated by increased poverty and two bitter, spiteful women.

literary foil a character who serves as an opposite or as a standard by which another character is matched. The Mattie Silver who dances a reel with Denis Eady is a bright, upbeat character. She wears a cherry fascinator scarf, a symbol of her engaging personality. As he and Mattie near home, he dreads leaving the rare private time with her to return to Zeena, the complaining, self-pitying, hate-mongering wife. The contrast of these two women precipitates Ethan's inner discontent and his retreat into poorly constructed lies and attempts to avoid Zeena in order to spend more time with Mattie.

realism a recreation of life in theme, plot, setting, mood, and characterization. To project real situations, Wharton describes a believable social scenario in which townspeople recognize the misery that confines Ethan, yet can do little more than visit and commiserate to relieve him. The harsh winter landscape, reliance on horse and wagon, and limited financial means immure Ethan in wretchedness. To escape, he retreats into memories of Florida and a time when he wanted to study science and engineering. Like others of his time, he reads magazine ads luring the discontented to the West, an expanding area settled by people seeking reprieve from untenable home and work situations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The milieu of Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* echoes the emotional landscape of the Frome household. In the dead of winter, Ethan lives in a loveless marriage and tends a querulous, spend-thrift hypochondriac. While treating his wife's cousin to outings in town, Ethan observes a youthful female spirit who contrasts the cold-heartedness and manipulation that comprises his daily existence. The walks to town and back present the frozen landscape, glimpses of the failing farm and sawmill, and a brilliant night sky that twinkles with the constellations Ethan once knew from his readings in sci-

ence. By contrast, a dead cucumber vine and missing door key at the porch welcomes Ethan and Mattie back to the house.

The state of transportation in bad weather provides the framework for the narrator's friendship with Ethan, who needs the money he earns for driving the man to his job. A heavy snow sends Ethan's horse into a drift and offers a reason for the narrator to visit, spend the night, and see for himself the two women who make up Ethan's daily struggle. In close quarters, the parlor pairs Mattie, a withered invalid, with her care-giver, Zeena Frome, a former invalid who is forced to care for Mattie and Ethan after the disastrous sled ride.

Beyond the confining atmosphere of a New England landscape in winter are yearnings for a trip to Florida or an escape to the far west and a magazine teasing Ethan with the possibilities of flight from his failing marriage, farm and sawmill. Additional contrasts come from views of an engaged couple kissing on a wintry night and the bustle of town, where trains arrive daily at the depot and the livery stable rents out horses to carry visitors to their destinations. Chained to his dreary agrarian microcosm, Ethan limps to the post office and converses sparingly with townspeople while concealing his constant heartache.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

Novels

Isabel Allende, *House of the Spirits*

Johan Bojer, *The Emigrants*

Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*

Willa Cather, *My Antonia* and *O Pioneers*

Conrad Richter, *The Sea of Grass*

O. E. Rølvaag, *Giants in the Earth*

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

Jessamyn West, *Friendly Persuasion*

Plays

Lillian Hellman, *The Little Foxes*

Poetry

Hamlin Garland, *Main-Travelled Roads*

Edgar Lee Masters, *Spoon River Anthology*

Nonfiction

Elinore Pruitt Stewart, *Letters of a Woman Homesteader*

Internet

"The Edith Wharton Society," <http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/wharton/news.html>.

Videos/DVDs

The Color Purple

O Pioneers!

Ordinary People

Remains of the Day

THEMES AND MOTIFS

Themes

- physical handicap
- farm labor
- marriage
- hypochondria
- passive aggression
- loss
- passion
- acceptance

Motifs

- coping with bad health and financial setbacks
- quelling a yearning for romance
- loving an unattainable person

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- assuming the role of rescuer and care-giver
- comprehending the need for a mate coping with community trauma

MEANING STUDY

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the novel. Explain each in context. Introduction or chapter and page numbers pinpoint each entry so you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. In the "best parlour," with its black horse-hair and mahogany weakly illuminated by a gurgling Carcel lamp, I listened every evening to another and more delicately shaded version of the Starkfield chronicle. (Introduction, p. 16)
(Invented in 1850 by Dietz Brothers & Company, the decorative brass Carcel lamp functioned with a key that wound a clockwork mechanism to pump oil from the base up a feeder tube to the burner.)
2. The house was bigger in my father's time: I had to take down the "L," a while back. (Introduction, p. 23)
(New Englanders typically joined house and barn with an ell, a right-angled hallway that allowed the homeowner to reach the granary and feed stalls without going outside in blizzards or heavy rain or fog. Some spacious ells, like the one at poet Robert Frost's Vermont farm, also contained storage and toilet facilities.)
3. Frome stamped on the worn oil-cloth to shake the snow from his boots, and set down his lantern on a kitchen chair which was the only piece of furniture in the hall. (Introduction, p. 24)
(An offshoot of table runners, tapestries, and wall hangings, oilcloth, also called waxcloth, dressed homes from the late 17th century as a waterproof covering for floors and tables. Developed in England in the Middle Ages from the oiled cloth or parchment that filled window frames, oilcloth paralleled the evolution of painted duck or canvas floorcloths, a common upgrading of drab wood in colonial homes. Around 1685, Richard and Edward Greenbury obtained a patent for adorning woolens and kerseys with oil paints.)
4. "It's like being in an exhausted receiver," he thought. (Chap. 1, p. 28)
(Ethan compares his wretched life to a glass chamber that a pump has emptied of oxygen. The term also refers to his exhausted patience with hard labor, little income, and a complaining wife who wastes his money on doctor visits and patent medicine.)
5. The musicians hurried to their instruments, the dancers—some already half-muffled for departure—fell into line down each side of the room, the older spectators slipped back to their chairs, and the lively young man, after diving about here and there in the throng, drew forth a girl who had already wound a cherry-coloured "fascinator" about her head, and, leading her up to the end of the floor, whirled her down its length to the bounding tune of a Virginia reel. (Chap. 1, pp. 29-30)
(Mattie wears a bit of fashion, a scarf that wraps around the neck and is left to dangle at both ends, displaying a knot or ornaments attached to each end. The most daring women chose fascinators of such a length that their decorated ends knots fell directly over their breasts.)
6. But look a here, ain't it lucky I got the old man's cutter down there waiting for us? (Chap. 2, p. 38)
(Denis Eady, son of the prosperous Starkfield grocer, cuts a fine figure with girls by driving a cutter, a slim, sleek sled intended for speed and joy rides. Contrasting the penury of Ethan, who drives a humble farm wagon, Denis represents decadence and worthlessness. Ethan longs to beat him with a buggy whip.)
7. She could trim a hat, make molasses candy, recite "Curfew shall not ring to-night," and play "The Lost Chord," and a pot-pourri from "Carmen." (Chap. 3, p. 51)
(Mattie's few accomplishments include making sweets, memorizing sentimental poems and music, and playing a selection of tunes from Carmen, a realistic opera Paris-born composer Georges Bizet wrote in 1875. Based on a story by Prosper Mérimée, the scandalous suite depicted the life of a prostitute.)
8. It's as dark as Egypt outdoors. (Chap. 5, p. 75)
(A common biblical illusion from Exodus, the reference to darkness in Egypt describes the plagues Moses called down on Pharaoh and his people for refusing to free Hebrew slaves. Ironically, the term illuminates the situation at Ethan's house, where his future lies dark and forbidding.)
9. The cat had jumped from Zeena's chair to dart at a mouse in the wainscot, and as a result of the sudden movement the empty chair had set up a spectral rocking. (Chap. 5, p. 78)
(Wainscoting is a common decorative method of relieving the tedium of plain walls. For a New England farmhouse, the covering of the lower half of the wall with paneling would also have covered a worn wall and shielded the family from drafts.)
10. He had scattered the contents of the table-drawer in his search for a sheet of paper, and as he took up his pen his eye fell on an old copy of the Bettsbridge Eagle. (Chap. 8, p. 106)
(Wharton makes double use of the newspaper's name. The eagle was a common symbol of patriotism from colonial days and developed into an American emblem of freedom. For Ethan, the free flight of a great bird suggests the mental image he has of liberating himself from Zeena and the farm and moving west with Mattie to create a new life.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Motivation

1. What causes Wharton to write about a failed marriage?
(Edith Wharton, who was once trapped in a failed marriage to Teddy Wharton, vented her disdain for compromise and emptiness in a chillingly realistic novelette, Ethan Frome, which she wrote in retrospect from her residence in Paris. Laced with vengeance and silent, lurking malice, the story revolves on a triad of personalities—the ill-mated Ethan, his malcontent wife Zeena, and Zeena's cousin, the cheery-voiced Mattie Silver. The conclusion exposes an ironic menage of three people destined to go to their graves bitter, dissatisfied, and worn out by daily misery and frustration. Wharton does not negate happiness in love relationships. She seems to hold out the example of the newly

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engaged couple, Ruth Varnum and Ned Hale, who kiss in the shadows and look forward to a wedding that includes Mattie as an attendant. However, another woman, whom her husband deserted to take his lover out West, survives on alimony and the income from a prosperous Bettsbridge lunchroom. The lone engaged couple contrasts one female survivor of abandonment, a list of widows, female chaperones at the church social, and the wretched image of Ethan limping into the post office to pick up cartons of patent medicine for his complaining wife. Wharton has no intention of brightening the story with positive commentary on marriage.)

Setting

2. Describe the church social.

(Chapter 1 opens with a sky hung with stars and Ethan waiting in the deserted street to accompany Mattie home from the church social. Looking through a basement window, he glimpses whitewashed walls and an iron stove heating the room "with volcanic fires." Like the banked fire within him, the heat suits the throng of young dancers who join in a Virginia reel while older women chaperone the party.

Adding to the festive atmosphere of a winter-time church social are a fiddler and girl playing the harmonium opposite a supper table offering pie and ice cream. The sound of clapping and a final dance returns Mattie to Ethan's view. Her sprightliness and dark hair and eyes suit the lively evening and make his heart beat fast. In the darkness outside, he watches "Mattie whirl down the floor from hand to hand" and observes her gestures and expressions as she laughs and lowers her eyelids. Her goodbyes and rejection of Denis Eady prepare Ethan for the two-mile walk home.)

Character Development

3. What causes Ethan to consider abandoning his wife and eloping with Mattie?

(The decision to marry Zeena Pierce was faulty. Too late, Ethan realizes he felt obligated to Zeena for tending his aged mother until her death. As Zeena withdraws into a "down-at-the-heel step," whining and making veiled complaints about his penury and Fromes at the almshouse, Ethan realizes that she is capable of cruelty. One of her tricks is to observe a situation without appearing to notice, then to bring it up later to throw Ethan off guard.

The domestic situation is already unhealthy when Mattie comes to help Zeena with the housework. For the first time, Ethan observes at close range a sweet-tempered girl who is admittedly a poor cook and housekeeper, but willing to be of service. In contrast to Zeena's malevolent spirit, Mattie lightens the tense household environment and introduces Ethan to the warmth of female company. His fantasies of marrying Mattie and escaping to the West indicate his desperation as a hard-scrabble farmer and operator of a sawmill with nothing to compensate him but a complaining wife.)

Historical Milieu

4. How does the novel reflect on American history?

(The draw of the West extended over much of America's early history, especially during the California and Alaska gold rushes and after the Civil War. As the army established a string of forts to protect pioneers entering Indian

territory, more settlers headed west with the Great Migration to new territory to seek opportunities the East couldn't provide. Stoking the popularity of westering were media reports and published journals of travels on the Oregon Trail, such as that of historian Francis Parkman, which lured homesteaders and drovers for 45 years.

Men like Lansford W. Hastings published handbooks for pioneers describing the trail and how to pack and prepare for it. These texts omitted the hardships of hostile Indians, portage, rattlesnakes, breakdowns, disease, and lack of fresh water, supplies, and food along the way. One glamorizer, Thomas Jefferson Farnham, author of *Travels in the Great Western Prairies (1841)* and *Life and Adventures in California (1846)* extolled the relaxed mental state that accompanied his journey and exclaimed those back east would "forsake that ignoble employment" if they could join him on the prairie.)

Theme

5. How does loss permeate the story?

(Wharton emphasizes personal tragedies and business losses throughout the story. She stresses widows—Mrs. Homan, Ruth Varnum Hale, old Mrs. Varnum, Mrs. Orin Silver, and Ethan's mother—and belittles Endurance Frome, the long-married ancestor of Ethan who is buried in the local cemetery under a stone that leaves unsaid the quality of her half-century marriage. Wharton also mentions the sudden death of Mrs. Orin Silver and the poverty of Ethan, Orin, Zeena, and Mattie. As proof of hardship, Zeena washes out medicine bottles for pickles and Mattie has to sell her piano to survive.

Wharton litters the story with other examples of loss. In poor health are Andrew Hale, Ethan's parents, Ethan, Mattie, and Zeena. Those losing income are Eady's livery stable, the powerhouse, builder Andrew Hale, and Orin Silver's business, from which he embezzled money. Sprinkled into the text are a bright picnic and jovial wintertime pie-and-ice-cream social at the church, but these instances fail to offset the lost locket, the stumble and cut on the horse's knee, an epidemic livestock disease, rheumatism, and Ethan's failing mill business. By story's end there is little hope among the characters.)

Interpretation

6. How does Wharton use foreshadowing to imply a hopeless situation?

(Wharton begins implying despair from the story's beginning, especially after the narrator observes the slow, halting gait of Ethan. The text states, "It was not so much his great height that marked him, for the 'natives' were easily singled out by their lank longitude from the stockier foreign breed: it was the careless powerful look he had, in spite of a lameness checking each step like the jerk of a chain." The observation that the "Frome farm was always 'bout as bare's a milkpan when the cat's been round" summarizes the air of failure dogging Ethan's attempts to get out of debt and support his family.

With considerable sarcasm, Ethan looks at the tombstones of his ancestors and contemplates the meaning of: "SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF ETHAN FROME AND ENDURANCE HIS WIFE, WHO DWELLED TOGETHER IN PEACE FOR FIFTY YEARS." The unspoken details imply much to a man who lives in

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aggravated silence with a woman who remains calm while punishing him daily through gesture and recrimination for their poverty. The self-imposed martyrdom that ends the story replicates the depiction of Zeena when she first came to the farm to nurse Ethan's mother. Forced to care for Mattie, Zeena seethes with a rage that makes Mrs. Hale choose a day to visit when Ethan is away from the farm.)

Conflict

7. How does Mattie cause conflict?

(A sunny-natured relative, Mattie Silver comes to the Fromes by default after the failed life of Mattie's father, Orin Silver. Unable to support herself at clerking, she attempts to cook and clean house, but requires assistance and instruction on farm chores. Zeena makes no overt comments about the change in Ethan as he attempts to simplify hard work for Mattie. The fact Ethan mops the floor at night and assists with the churning nets peculiar looks that indicate Zeena's awareness of his attraction to Mattie.

Ethan fails to calculate the extent of Zeena's anger. He foolishly assumes Zeena sleeps late and doesn't realize he shaves daily to please Mattie. The spite Zeena stores up fills her with venom to direct at Mattie and Ethan after Mattie packs to leave the farm. Accusations of theft of a huckaback dish towel and match safe produce a wretched departure scene and become part of the reason Ethan wants to go down the sledding hill with Mattie and never return.)

Atmosphere

8. Why does Wharton choose the sledding hill as a place to commit suicide?

(Upon arriving at School House Hill, Ethan points to Ned Hale's sled under the spruces and helps Mattie out of the sleigh for their ride. Ethan's boast that he could "go down this coast with my eyes tied" discloses he knows the terrain and he is boasting of his skill to impress Mattie. Wharton compares his choice of death over life by describing the falling light: "It was the most confusing hour of the evening, the hour when the last clearness from the upper sky is merged with the rising night in a blur that disguises landmarks and falsifies distances." In similar fashion, the physical intimacy of sliding down the hill with Mattie clouds Ethan's thinking, forcing him to advance from despair to accept her proposal of a mutual suicide.

Mattie buoys Ethan's ego with the comments she "was never scared with you" and that Ethan has "the surest eye." Acknowledging they must part and never walk together again, Ethan is thrown off guard when Mattie embraces and kisses him while murmuring, "Good-bye—good-bye." When the church clock strikes five, she knows she must catch the train to an unknown destination and clouded future. To end the misery of parting, she proposes they go down again "So 't we'll never come up any more.")

Author Purpose

9. Why does the novel appeal to readers?

(For all its grimness, the novel takes the form of a well-made plot, as spare in description and dialogue as a short story. Because the author develops atmosphere, tone, and theme with every word, she appears to guide

the action as carefully as Ethan slides down School House Hill with Mattie. The use of an unnamed narrator contributes to the element of gossip and curiosity about Ethan's handicap and leads the reader to wonder how Ethan survived the suicide plot and why he perseveres. In the final scene, the reader, like the unnamed engineer from the power house, is unprepared for arrival at Ethan's parlor and the harsh scene of two crippled, withered women forming the rest of the Frome household. The falling fire and the service of an unappetizing "cold mince-pie in a battered pie-dish" that Zeena sets out introduces the reader to the last stage of Ethan's life, which is dominated by two complainers. By allowing Mrs. Hale to carry out the final commentary, Wharton satisfies the reader's curiosity as surely as whispers confide gossip about a local family.)

Structure

10. What is the role of transportation in the story?

(Wharton plots the novel with frequent reference to transportation, including the lateness of the train to the junction and the difficulty the powerhouse engineer faces in getting to and from work. Flashing back to Mattie's last days as Zeena's caretaker, Wharton emphasizes Denis Eady's dashing cutter and Ethan's wish to buggy-whip the overconfident son of the local grocer. The day-to-day operation of the Frome farm and sawmill grow complicated by the cut on Ethan's horse's knee, diminished sawmill business, and the effect of sleety rain on a wagon-load of lumber.

At a climactic moment in the novel's action, Wharton depicts Zeena's trip out of town by train to visit Dr. Burke. The arrangements of getting Zeena to the doctor and the post-diagnosis decision to send Mattie away and pick up the new maid force Ethan to assert his disapproval and drive Mattie personally to her train so she won't have to wait in the cold for an hour. Contributing to Ethan's precipitate attempt at suicide are the cost of the journey West, which he can't afford, and the promised sled ride, which Mattie escalates into a final ride downhill into the big elm. Ironically, Wharton returns to the theme of transportation by commenting on Ethan's fogged mind after the accident and his automatic impulse to feed his horse.)

HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

Wharton characterizes rural and town-bred New Englanders by their education and dialect:

1. Harmon speaks the dialect of the native New Englander, "Well, matters ain't gone any too well with him. When a man's been setting round like a hulk for twenty years or more, seeing things that want doing, it eats inter him, and he loses his grit."
2. Mrs. Hale, the kindly neighbor and altruist, summarizes in vernacular speech her views on the Frome tragedy: "Yes: it's pretty bad. And they ain't any of 'em easy people either."
3. Contrasting Ethan's direct speech is the self-confident banter of Denis Eady, who flirts with Mattie and tries to force her into his cutter: "Come along! Get in quick! It's as slippery as thunder on this turn."
4. Zeena's cadenced nastiness reaches its height with her anger over the broken pickle dish. Zeena lashes out, "You're a bad girl, Mattie Silver, and I always known it . . .

ETHAN FROME

I was warned of it when I took you, and I tried to keep my things where you couldn't get at 'em—and now you've took from me the one I cared for most of all—"

5. Ethan, who lacks Zeena's skill at deception and manipulation, faces his fears directly: "You can't put her out of the house like a thief—a poor girl without friends or money. She's done her best for you and she's got no place to go to."
6. Mattie, who is as artless as Ethan in expressing deep feeling, summarizes the aspect of her service to the Fromes that was most memorable: "I don't know how to get along alone. Nobody but you was ever good to me."

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Art

1. Create a bulletin board contrasting settings described or mentioned in the text.
2. Design a seed catalog for a New England planter, a business card for Andrew Hale or Michael Eady, office hours for Dr. Buck, a welcome sign for Starkfield or Corbury Flats, a map of the two routes to the power-house, a chart of diseases of the kidney, invitations to the youth social in the church basement, a placard naming hours for the widow Homan's store, a chart of costs for trips west, a train schedule from Massachusetts to Florida, rates at the livery stable, a chart detailing the number of women who become family care-givers, and a newspaper headline about women who must subsist on alimony.

Cinema

1. Draw settings for a movie version of *Ethan Frome*.
2. View the films *The Color Purple*, *The Remains of the Day*, *Daughters of the Dust*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Farewell to Manzanar*, and *Places in the Heart*. Discuss why women like Mattie and Ruth need opportunities to actualize talents and aspirations.

Education

1. Make an illustrated time line of the rise of American realists in the first half of the twentieth century, especially Sinclair Lewis, Pearl Buck, Sarah Orne Jewett, William Dean Howells, Hamlin Garland, Kate Chopin, O. E. Rolvaag, Henry James, Jack London, Ellen Glasgow, Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, and Edith Wharton.
2. Illustrate how to draw a genealogy by connecting Ethan, the elder Ethan and Endurance, Ethan's parents, Zeena, Aunt Martha Pierce, Philura Maple, Mattie, and Orin Silver and his wife.
3. Compare Ethan Frome to the historical Ethan Allan, a New England patriot and hero.

History and Social Studies

1. Divide the class into small groups to study the background elements of the story, particularly attitudes toward westering, New England's mills and water powered plants, puritanic gossip about single women and lovers, the burden of ailing parents and needy female relatives, New England's winter weather, early 20th-century village entertainment and female chaperones, farming and lumbering as careers, and the need for jobs for single women.
2. Compose an extended definition of family. Determine how Mattie's lack of family and security and Ethan's lack of love lead to a mutual yearning. Hypothesize how Mat-

tie and Ethan might have endured privation and poverty on a trip West.

3. Relate the local terrain, the lunchroom owner living on alimony, and the story of *Carmen* to Ethan and Mattie's doomed love. How do the *Bettsbridge Eagle*, "The Lost Chord," Shadow Pond, and "Curfew shall not ring tonight" symbolize Ethan's plight?
4. Join a group in studying the difference between employment, indenturing, and charity. How are Dan'l Byrne and Jotham Powell's work different from Mattie's? Why is Ethan's role as hired driver different from his work at the mill or on the farm? Why does Ethan think of Mattie's role as similar to indenturing? How would a maid's duties contrast with those of Mattie?
5. Discuss with a small group family patterns of behavior and expectations after serious financial and emotional setbacks. Explain why Ethan is always short of cash and why Zeena continues demanding medical care and a maid.

Language Arts

1. Explain to a small group why Ethan's brief conversation with Mrs. Hale forms the turning point of the story. How might Ethan's plans to elope with Mattie have changed if he had gotten \$50 from Andrew Hale? How would Zeena have survived alone? What kind of wife would Mattie have made for Ethan? What does Ethan's refusal of deception say about his character?
2. Describe aloud the difference between Ethan's lifestyle at the mill and farm and Denis Eady's bachelorhood in Starkfield. Mention the heritage Ethan receives from his parents as compared with the privileges of being the grocer's son. For what does Ethan spend his money? What does Zeena's demand for money indicate about her character? Why does she taunt Ethan with mention of the almshouse?
3. Contrast female characters in terms of action, unselfishness, and compassion. Include Mrs. Andrew Hale, Ruth Varnum Hale, Mattie Silver, Aunt Martha Pierce, the widow Homan, Ethan's mother, Endurance Frome, Aunt Philura Maple, the new maid, and Zeena.
4. Compose a first person account of life in Starkfield in the winter. Suggest activities the whole village can enjoy on cold nights, for example, a crafts sharing, cooking or baking contest, spelling bee, tutorials, games night, public readings, amateur theatricals, and musicales.
5. Draw a character web representing the interconnectedness between Ethan and his family and community. Mention his parents, Ethan and Endurance Frome, men who call him "old Ethe," the narrator, Mrs. Andrew Hale, Harmon Gow, Mattie Silver, Jotham Powell, Denis Eady, Orin Silver, Mattie's mother, and Zeena.
6. Write several conversations that are only implied, such as Ruth's visits with Zeena and Mattie, Ethan's friendship with Harmon Gow, Mrs. Varnum's interest in the narrator, Zeena's visit with Aunt Martha Pierce, the new girl's transaction with the depot clerk, Jotham Powell's discussion of the trunk with Zeena, Ethan's introduction to Mattie, Denis's request for the cutter, Ethan's purchase of glue from the widow Homan, Dr. Burke's diagnosis of complications, and Ruth's formation of wedding plans with Mattie.

ETHAN FROME

7. Compose a character sketch emphasizing Zeena's nursing of old Mrs. Frome, the decline of Zeena's health, and Zeena's miraculous recovery seven years later when her husband and cousin are injured. Comment on the contrast between physical and emotional health.
8. Explain in a theme how the author characterizes Ethan's moments of despair, self-evaluation, romantic fantasies, fear, distrust, persistence, deception, neighborliness, scientific curiosity, grief, loneliness, ambition, determination, confession, defiance, exuberance, logic, guilt, longing, resentment, and insecurity.
9. Apply three Greek terms to the novel: *philos* or belonging to or acceptance by a group or family, *eros* or passion, and *agape* or unconditional love and acceptance. Discuss how failure to achieve any of these three states produces tension and disappointment in human relationships.
10. With a group, create a web site of terms that express important words and phrases such as sorrel, rheumatism, kirchen dresser, and mince-pie.
11. Read aloud other descriptions of difficult marriages, such as Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*. Discuss common causes of mistrust, frustration, sexual incompatibility, infidelity, abandonment, and betrayal.

Law

1. Read aloud state laws governing the rights and responsibilities of a married person in light of abandonment or an adulterous mate. Explain the current attitude toward murder-suicide and crimes of passion.
2. Make a chart of advice to Zeena concerning the possibility of abandonment and the need to sell her farm and sawmill. What arguments would convince a judge that Zeena did her best to help Ethan and his mother?

Mathematics and Computers

Create a bulletin board illustrating current figures concerning single and married women, single women who work, invalidism by gender, population density of New England in summer and winter, men who desert their families, months with the greatest number of suicides, amount of snow experienced by individual states, and epidemics that affect horses.

Music

Select mood music for a stage version of the novel. Cover the elegaic atmosphere of Ethan's work day and his observation of the family cemetery plot, spirited tunes for the church social and picnic, and intense background for the sled ride and Mattie's invalidism.

Psychology

1. Describe aloud the drive for survival. Explain why Ethan expends his dwindling energy to touch Mattie's hand and face.
2. Lead a debate about the cause of Zeena's miraculous recovery. How does Mattie gain the upper hand over Zeena? How does Zeena maintain control over Ethan? What advantage does any character gain from the concluding menage?
3. Make an oral report on the importance of self-esteem. Discuss how Zeena subtly terrifies Mattie and destroys Ethan's dreams of education and a move to a large town. Explain how Mattie helps Ethan develop a new outlook and hopes of a new start in the West. Comment

on Mrs. Andrew Hale's sympathy for Ethan's hard luck.

4. Compose an extended definition of social and emotional isolation, including mention of Endurance Frome's delight in the daily stage. Explain how Zeena's querulousness, Ethan's hard work, and Mattie's love of fun create a love triangle based on escapism.

Science and Health

1. Create flash cards or posters explaining the importance of these terms to the novel: Aldebaran, Dipper, Orion, Pleiades, Sirius, and ice age.
2. Discuss first aid and local response toward failure of the suicidal sled ride into the elm on School House Hill. Why is Ethan doubly doomed when Mattie begins to improve? How does Ruth's wedding increase the despair of the Frome household? Why do local people conclude that Ethan and Mattie were in love? What is the local feeling about Zeena's behavior? her health? her nursing of Ethan after the accident?
3. Role-play Ruth and Zeena's care of the accident victims. Note the difference in Ruth's attitude toward suffering and Zeena's opportunity to turn nursing into another episode of manipulation and cruelty. Why does Zeena ridicule Ethan's attempt to care for his mother?

Speech

1. Organize a discussion of adultery. Account for Ethan's fantasies of intimacy with Mattie. Determine whether Zeena is at fault for the failure of the marriage.
2. Compose a short speech in which you describe the selection of names. Consider these: Endurance Frome, Bettsbridge, Mattie Silver, Dr. Buck, Aunt Philura Maple, Starkfield, Ned Hale, and Zenobia Pierce. Explain how names can set the tone of a passage or predict how a character will act or a town will appear to a stranger.
3. Describe in a short speech the effects of harsh weather on home-bound people. Explain what the daily stage meant to old Mrs. Frome. Discuss why Ruth and the doctor are Mattie and Zeena's only company. Suggest ways Ethan can escape wintertime claustrophobia, ominous silences, chill rooms, and domestic outbursts.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Compose a list of scenes for a mural or cartoon depicting Ethan's misery.
2. List items essential to a movie version of the book. Beside the items, explain how they fit into the action. For example, describe how Mattie winds a red ribbon through her hair before supper and how Zeena dresses and packs for her trip to Bettsbridge to see Dr. Buck.
3. List sense impressions that capture the misery of the Frome marriage.

ETHAN FROME

VOCABULARY TEST

Complete each of the following sentences with a pair of words from the list below. You will have answers left over when you finish.

adjunct/consolatory
exanimate/spume
inarticulate/intercourse
incredulous/roan
listless/secreted
poignant/allusion
rills/irresolutely
tentatively/conjectures

avowal/intolerable
exultantly/glee
incessant/meagre
instinct/apprenticeship
opaque/sallow
protuberances/querulous
siege/capitulating
utmost/innocuous

1. She seemed to possess by _____ all the household wisdom that his long _____ had not instilled in him.
2. By nature grave and _____, he admired recklessness and gaiety in others and was warmed to the marrow by friendly human _____.
3. It looked _____ enough, with its idle wheel looming above the black stream dash with yellow-white _____, and its cluster of sheds sagging under their white load.
4. She was no longer the _____ creature who had lived at his side in a state of sullen self-absorption, but a mysterious alien presence, an evil energy _____ from the long years of silent brooding.
5. It was only by _____ labour and personal supervision that Ethan drew a _____ living from his land, and his wife, even if she were in better health than she imagined, could never carry such a burden alone.
6. "Don't be scared, Matt!" he cried _____, as they spun safely past it and flew down the second slope; and when they reached the level ground beyond, and the speed of the sled began to slacken, he heard her give a little laugh of _____.
7. And the sweetness of Mattie's _____, the wild wonder of knowing at last that all that had happened to him had happened to her too, made the other vision more _____, the other life more intolerable to return to.
8. She had pale _____ eyes which revealed nothing and reflected nothing, and her narrow lips were of the same _____ colour as her face.
9. Mrs. Hale glanced at me _____, as though trying to see how much footing my _____ gave her.
10. I began to understand why Starkfield emerged from its six months' _____ like a starved garrison _____ without quarter.

ETHAN FROME

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Sentence Completion (30 points)

Supply a term to complete each of the following statements. Choose your answers from the list that follows. Place them in the blanks provided at left.

bay	eagle	lumber	Ruth	stenography
biochemistry	Endurance	pie-dish	saw mill	teeth
box-sofa	fascinator	powerhouse	sled	trunk
cream jug	key	ribbon	soap-box	wainscot
cutter	letter	rocker	stage	Zenobia

1. The narrator, who is an engineer, needs a ride to the _____ at Corbury Junction.
2. In revulsion, Ethan envisions Zeena asleep with her _____ in a tumbler.
3. The _____ to Zeena explains Ethan's plans to go west with Mattie.
4. According to the *Bettsbridge* _____, trips west are available, but require cash.
5. Ethan sleeps on his _____ in the cold and ponders how he can escape a grumbling, conniving wife.
6. Because of the remodeling job, Andrew needs extra time to pay for the _____.
7. Each day, Ethan's mother looks forward to seeing the _____ pass by.
8. The cat backs away from the _____ into the pickle dish, which smashes on the floor.
9. The missing volume of _____ convinces Ethan that he has lost touch with scholarship.
10. The red _____ indicates that Mattie wants dinner to be special for Ethan.
11. After the dance, Denis is eager to show off his father's _____.
12. Ethan worries about a tramp getting into the house as he hunts for the missing _____.
13. After selling her piano, Mattie studied _____ and worked in a store.
14. Opposite the Frome house are the graves of Ethan and _____ Frome.
15. The cat jumps into the _____, reminding the couple that Zeena will soon return and keep them apart.

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. suffers complications. | A. widow Homan |
| _____ 2. can make molasses candy. | B. Mattie |
| _____ 3. kisses Ned in front of Ethan. | C. Aunt Philura Maple |
| _____ 4. at one time drove the stage. | D. Ruth |
| _____ 5. locates a bottle of glue. | E. Denis Eady |
| _____ 6. receives an extra dollar. | F. Zeena |
| _____ 7. sends a pickle dish for a wedding gift. | G. maid |
| _____ 8. owns a brick store. | H. narrator |
| _____ 9. is the object of Ethan's jealousy. | I. Michael Eady |
| _____ 10. walks beside Ethan's horse in the snow. | J. Harmon Gow |

ETHAN FROME

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- ___ 1. Ethan had a chance to escape from Zeena when he worked in Florida.
- ___ 2. The last sled ride takes Ethan and Mattie into the big elm.
- ___ 3. Ruth and the doctor continue visiting Mattie and Zeena.
- ___ 4. Most of Ethan's wood-lot work takes him near Shadow Pond.
- ___ 5. Ethan is outraged that Mattie has to move her own trunk.
- ___ 6. Jotham refuses a free meal at the Frome house on the night that Zeena returns from Bettsbridge.
- ___ 7. The dance was Mattie's only break from waiting on Zeena every day for a year.
- ___ 8. At the post office, Ethan is angry that Zeena receives a pamphlet on kidney ailments.
- ___ 9. His study allows Ethan to read about the constellations in private.
- ___ 10. Mattie refuses to ask her other relatives to take her in.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

- 1. Explain how Zeena's trip changes Ethan's relationship with Mattie.
- 2. Describe Zeena's welcome after Mattie returns from the social.
- 3. Discuss evidence that Ethan will never be free.
- 4. Account for the creation of a minor plot involving an engaged couple.
- 5. Summarize local opinion of Ethan.

ETHAN FROME

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match the following quotations with names of speakers or writers from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left. You may use some answers more than once and some not at all.

- | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|----------|
| A. Harmon Gow | C. Zeena | E. Mrs. Hale | G. narrator | I. Denis |
| B. Ruth Hale | D. Aunt Martha Pierce | F. Mattie | H. Andrew Hale | J. Ethan |

- ____ 1. I just felt so mean I couldn't sleep.
- ____ 2. Don't trouble, Ethan.
- ____ 3. Ethan'll likely touch a hundred.
- ____ 4. I kinder knew I'd want to take a ride to-night.
- ____ 5. He was not the kind of man to be turned from his business by any commotion of the elements; and at the appointed hour his sleigh glided up through the snow like a stage-apparition behind thickening veils of gauze.
- ____ 6. I on'y just heard from Mr. Hale 'bout Zeena's going over to Bettsbridge to see that new doctor.
- ____ 7. He's that proud he don't even like his oldest friends to go there; and I don't know as any do, any more except myself and the doctor.
- ____ 8. Would you like to come in and coast with them some night?
- ____ 9. See here—you ain't in a tight place, are you?
- ____ 10. He's looked that way ever since he had his smash-up; and that's twenty-four years ago come next February.

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided.

- _____ 1. Who sent Zeena a pickle dish from Philadelphia?
- _____ 2. How much money does Ethan need from Andrew?
- _____ 3. What makes the twittering that Ethan hears after the crash?
- _____ 4. What does Ethan remove from the structure of his house?
- _____ 5. Which of Ethan's parents does cousin Zeena tend?
- _____ 6. How much does Aunt Martha Pierce pay the maid?
- _____ 7. What does Mattie sew on her evening alone with Ethan?
- _____ 8. To whom does Ethan give a stove?
- _____ 9. Who is accustomed to having heat from a furnace?
- _____ 10. What medicine is hidden in the china closet?
- _____ 11. How old is Ethan when he decides to leave Zeena?
- _____ 12. What dance does Denis lead?
- _____ 13. Who sits in front on the last sled ride?
- _____ 14. Who finds Ethan's farewell letter?
- _____ 15. Who tends Mattie immediately after the crash?

ETHAN FROME

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline a word or phrase to complete each of the following statements.

1. Ethan knows of a man who (opens a successful lunch room, abandons his wife, drives through the drifts to Corbury Junction, stays in the same room that Mattie occupied at the Varnum place).
2. A year after marriage, Zeena (sinks into ominous silences, visits Dr. Buck in Bettsbridge, studies a pamphlet on kidney ailments, asks Dr. Kidder about her lumbago).
3. When the narrator enters the kitchen, (Mattie serves cold mince pie, the cat jumps up on the table, Ethan refills the coal stove, Zeena ignores him).
4. At the picnic at Shadow Pond, (Ethan declines to stay, Denis stays past curfew, Mattie loses a locket, Zeena suffers shooting pains).
5. Ethan walks into Starkfield (to fetch the maid, to meet Zeena's train, to buy glue, to get \$50 to build a cupola).
6. Ethan is unused to (kindness from neighbors, Mattie's cooking, repairing the draw on a stove, hauling lumber in sleet).
7. Ethan conceals himself to watch (Zeena arrive from the depot, Mattie leave the church, Ruth's bridesmaids, Ned kiss his fiancées).
8. Zeena knows that (Ethan shaves daily, Mattie wrote a note to Ethan, Ruth visits Mattie regularly, Dan'l Byrne prefers not to come in for supper).
9. When the story opens, Ruth lives with (Mrs. Hale, Ned, the narrator, Mrs. Varnum).
10. In the kitchen, Ethan embraces Mattie before (telling her she must leave, placing the broken glass on the shelf, scolding the cat, looking for the lost key).

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Compare Ethan's youth with the years of his marriage to Zeena.
2. Discuss the importance of Ruth Hale in the narrator's understanding of the story.
3. Discuss the significance of winter to the novelette.
4. Account for Ethan's handicap.
5. Describe elements of Ethan's life that confine and dismay.

ETHAN FROME

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. instinct/apprenticeship | 6. exultantly/glee |
| 2. inarticulate/intercourse | 7. avowal/intolerable |
| 3. exanimate/spume | 8. opaque/sallow |
| 4. listless/secreted | 9. tentatively/conjectures |
| 5. incessant/meagre | 10. siege/capitulating |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Sentence Completion (30 points)

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. powerhouse | 6. lumber | 11. cutter |
| 2. teeth | 7. stage | 12. key |
| 3. letter | 8. cream jug | 13. stenography |
| 4. Eagle | 9. biochemistry | 14. Endurance |
| 5. box-sofa | 10. ribbon | 15. rocker |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. F | 6. G |
| 2. B | 7. C |
| 3. D | 8. I |
| 4. J | 9. E |
| 5. A | 6. H |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 4. T | 8. F |
| 5. F | 9. F |
| 6. T | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. E |
| 2. F | 7. B |
| 3. A | 8. J |
| 4. I | 9. H |
| 5. G | 10. A |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

- Aunt Philura Maple
- \$50
- Mattie
- L
- Ethan's mother
- a dollar
- a hem
- Mattie
- the maid
- stomach powders
- 28
- Virginia reel
- Ethan
- Mattie
- Ruth

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- abandons his wife
- sinks into ominous silences
- Zeena ignores him
- Mattie loses a locket
- to buy glue
- kindness from neighbors
- Mattie leave the church
- Ethan shaves daily
- Mrs. Varnum
- telling her she must leave

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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