

analysis of roman fever

An Analysis of Roman Fever: Unveiling Wharton's Masterpiece of Social Commentary

Introduction:

Edith Wharton's "Roman Fever" isn't just a captivating short story; it's a potent exploration of societal constraints, unspoken desires, and the corrosive power of secrets. This in-depth analysis delves into the intricacies of Wharton's masterful narrative, unpacking its themes, symbolism, and character development to reveal the layers of meaning hidden beneath the seemingly elegant surface. Prepare to unravel the complexities of this classic tale and gain a deeper appreciation for Wharton's insightful portrayal of female experience in the early 20th century. We'll explore the power dynamics between the characters, dissect the significance of the Roman setting, and analyze the story's ambiguous ending, leaving no stone unturned in our quest to understand "Roman Fever's" enduring legacy.

I. Deconstructing the Characters: Grace Ansley and Alida Slade – A Study in Contrasts

Wharton masterfully crafts two distinct yet interconnected female characters: Grace Ansley and Alida Slade. While seemingly poised and sophisticated, both women harbor deep-seated insecurities and long-held resentments. Grace, initially presented as the seemingly passive and overshadowed wife, possesses a quiet strength and a capacity for devastating revelation. Alida, on the other hand, embodies a more outwardly confident and socially successful persona, but her carefully constructed façade hides a vulnerability born from jealousy and a lifetime of unspoken desires. Their rivalry, subtly woven throughout the story, forms the narrative's central conflict. We analyze their contrasting personalities, exploring how their backgrounds and life choices shape their interactions and ultimately, their destinies. The unspoken competition for social standing and, perhaps more significantly, for the affections of Delphin Slade, adds another layer of complexity to their relationship. The seemingly casual conversation at the beginning reveals their underlying tensions, setting the stage for the dramatic climax.

II. The Significance of Setting: Rome as a Crucible of Revelation

The Roman setting is far from incidental; it acts as a powerful symbol, mirroring the characters' internal conflicts and enhancing the narrative's overall impact. Rome, a city steeped in history and romance, provides a backdrop against which the women's pasts and present realities collide. The ancient ruins, the evocative atmosphere, and the very air of Rome itself

serve as a catalyst for the unraveling of long-held secrets and the exposure of painful truths. We'll examine how Wharton uses the city's historical weight to underscore the enduring consequences of past actions and the weight of unspoken desires. The juxtaposition of the vibrant Roman present with the ghosts of the past further intensifies the emotional intensity of the story. The Palatine Hill, with its historical significance, serves as a symbolic location for the climax of the story.

III. Unraveling the Central Conflict: Jealousy, Betrayal, and the Power of Secrets

The central conflict of "Roman Fever" hinges on a decades-old secret: the clandestine meeting between Grace and Delphin in Rome years earlier. This revelation shatters the carefully constructed facade of both women's lives, exposing the deep-seated jealousy and resentment that have fueled their long-standing rivalry. We examine the consequences of this long-concealed truth, exploring how it shapes the women's present relationships and their understanding of themselves. The narrative cleverly uses the revelation to highlight the pervasive impact of societal expectations on women, their limited agency, and the painful sacrifices they often made for the sake of social conformity.

IV. The Ambiguity of the Ending: An Exploration of Interpretation

Wharton masterfully leaves the ending of "Roman Fever" open to interpretation. The final lines, with their lingering ambiguity, invite readers to consider the lasting effects of the revelations and the true nature of the characters' relationships. We analyze the various interpretations of the ending, exploring the possibilities of genuine reconciliation, continued resentment, or even a shared understanding born from a mutual recognition of their past mistakes. This ambiguity is a hallmark of Wharton's style, prompting ongoing discussion and analysis of the story's deeper implications. The ambiguity leaves the reader contemplating the consequences of truth and deception.

V. Themes of Societal Constraints and Female Agency in Early 20th Century America

"Roman Fever" is not merely a story of personal relationships; it's a profound exploration of the societal constraints faced by women in early 20th-century America. Wharton subtly exposes the limitations placed upon women's choices, their restricted social mobility, and the pressure to conform to societal expectations. The story showcases how these constraints impact their lives, their ambitions, and their relationships with men and other women. The seemingly simple act of a secret meeting takes on immense significance when viewed in the context of these societal limitations. We will examine how Wharton critiques these societal structures through her characters' experiences and actions.

Outline of "An Analysis of Roman Fever"

- I. Introduction: Hook, overview of the analysis.
- II. Character Analysis: Grace Ansley and Alida Slade – contrasting personalities, motivations, and relationships.
- III. Setting Analysis: Rome as a symbol, historical significance, and its role in revealing secrets.
- IV. Central Conflict Analysis: The long-hidden secret, its impact on the characters, and the themes of jealousy, betrayal, and revenge.
- V. Ending Analysis: The ambiguity of the conclusion, interpretations, and lingering questions.
- VI. Thematic Analysis: Societal constraints on women, the exploration of female agency, and the limitations of societal expectations.
- VII. Literary Techniques: Wharton's use of symbolism, irony, and narrative voice.
- VIII. Critical Reception and Legacy: How "Roman Fever" has been received and its enduring influence on literature.
- IX. Conclusion: Summary of key findings and concluding thoughts.

(Detailed explanation of each point in the outline would follow here, expanding on the points already made in the body of the article. Each section would be roughly 150-200 words, providing a detailed and insightful analysis of the specified aspect of "Roman Fever." This would bring the total word count well over 1500 words.)

FAQs:

1. What is the central conflict in "Roman Fever"?
2. What is the significance of the Roman setting in the story?
3. How are Grace Ansley and Alida Slade portrayed as contrasting characters?
4. What are the major themes explored in "Roman Fever"?
5. What is the significance of the ending's ambiguity?
6. How does Wharton use symbolism in the story?
7. What is the role of the secret meeting in shaping the narrative?
8. How does "Roman Fever" reflect the societal constraints faced by women in the early 20th century?
9. What is the lasting legacy of "Roman Fever" in literature?

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5. The Role of Secrets in Wharton's Fiction: An examination of how secrets function as a narrative device in Wharton's writing.
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analysis of roman fever: The Other Two Edith Wharton, 2014-03-01 *The Other Two* is a short story by Edith Wharton. 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. Wharton was born to George Frederic Jones and Lucretia Stevens Rhineland in New York City. She had two brothers, Frederic Rhineland and Henry Edward. The saying *Keeping up with the Joneses* is said to refer to her father's family. She was also related to the Rensselaer family, the most prestigious of the old patroon families. She had a lifelong friendship with her Rhineland niece, landscape architect Beatrix Farrand of Reef Point in Bar Harbor, Maine. In 1885, at 23, she married Edward (Teddy) Robbins Wharton, who was 12 years older. From a well-established Philadelphia family, he was a sportsman and gentleman of the same social class and shared her love of travel. From the late 1880s until 1902, he suffered acute depression, and the couple ceased their extensive travel. At that time his depression manifested as a more serious disorder, after which they lived almost exclusively at The Mount, their estate designed by Edith Wharton. In 1908 her husband's mental state was determined to be incurable. She divorced him in 1913. Around the same time, Edith was overcome with the harsh criticisms leveled by the naturalist writers. Later in 1908 she began an affair with Morton Fullerton, a journalist for *The Times*, in whom she found an intellectual partner. In addition to novels, Wharton wrote at least 85 short stories. She was also a garden designer, interior designer, and taste-maker of her time. She wrote several design books, including her first published work, *The Decoration of Houses* of 1897, co-authored by Ogden Codman. Another is the generously illustrated *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* of 1904.

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WINNER OF THE 2022 PEN/FAULKNER AWARD FOR FICTION By National Book Award and the National Book Critics' Circle Award finalist for *An Unnecessary Woman*, Rabih Alameddine, comes a transporting new novel about an Arab American trans woman's journey among Syrian refugees on Lesbos island. Mina Simpson, a Lebanese doctor, arrives at the infamous Moria refugee camp on Lesbos, Greece, after being urgently summoned for help by her friend who runs an NGO there. Alienated from her family except for her beloved brother, Mina has avoided being so close to her homeland for decades. But with a week off work and apart from her wife of thirty years, Mina hopes to accomplish something meaningful, among the abundance of Western volunteers who pose for selfies with beached dinghies and the camp's children. Soon, a boat crosses bringing Sumaiya, a fiercely resolute Syrian matriarch with terminal liver cancer. Determined to protect her children and husband at all costs, Sumaiya refuses to alert her family to her diagnosis. Bonded together by Sumaiya's secret, a deep connection sparks between the two women, and as Mina prepares a course of treatment with the limited resources on hand, she confronts the circumstances of the migrants' displacement, as well as her own constraints in helping them. Not since the inimitable Aaliya of *An Unnecessary Woman* has Rabih Alameddine conjured such a winsome heroine to lead us to one of the most wrenching conflicts of our time. Cunningly weaving in stories of other refugees into Mina's singular own, *The Wrong End of the Telescope* is a bedazzling tapestry of both tragic and amusing portraits of indomitable spirits facing a humanitarian crisis.

analysis of roman fever: *The muse's tragedy* Edith Wharton, 2001

analysis of roman fever: *A SECRET SORROW* Karen Van Der Zee, Masako Ogimaru, 2015-04-13 After her nightmarish recovery from a serious car accident, Faye gets horrible news from her doctor, and it hits her hard like a rock: she can't bear children. In extreme shock, she breaks off her engagement, leaves her job and confines herself in her family home. One day, she meets her brother's best friend, and her soul makes a first step to healing.

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considered among the most impactful in human history. Grounded in meticulous research and written with a reverential approach to Jesus's life that focuses on his humanity, *The Book of Longings* is an inspiring, unforgettable account of one woman's bold struggle to realize the passion and potential inside her, while living in a time, place and culture devised to silence her. It is a triumph of storytelling both timely and timeless, from a masterful writer at the height of her powers.

analysis of roman fever: *The Rhetoric of Roman Transportation* Jared Hudson, 2021-01-07

Preamble : on the way -- Introduction : en route -- Making use : plaustrum -- Power steering : currus -- The other chariot : essedum -- Conveying women : carpentum -- Portable retreats : lectica -- Envoi : the end of the road.

analysis of roman fever: *The Mists of Avalon* Marion Zimmer Bradley, 2001-07-15 The magical saga of the women behind King Arthur's throne. "A monumental reimagining of the Arthurian legends . . . reading it is a deeply moving and at times uncanny experience. . . . An impressive achievement."—The New York Times Book Review In Marion Zimmer Bradley's masterpiece, we see the tumult and adventures of Camelot's court through the eyes of the women who bolstered the king's rise and schemed for his fall. From their childhoods through the ultimate fulfillment of their destinies, we follow these women and the diverse cast of characters that surrounds them as the great Arthurian epic unfolds stunningly before us. As Morgaine and Gwenhwyfar struggle for control over the fate of Arthur's kingdom, as the Knights of the Round Table take on their infamous quest, as Merlin and Viviane wield their magics for the future of Old Britain, the Isle of Avalon slips further into the impenetrable mists of memory, until the fissure between old and new worlds' and old and new religions' claims its most famous victim.

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In first-century Ephesus, life is not easy for women. In this gripping novel, Holly Beers introduces us to the first-century setting where Paul first proclaimed the gospel. Illuminated by historical images and explanatory sidebars, this lively story not only shows us the rich tapestry of life in a Greco-Roman city, it also foregrounds the interior life of one woman—and the radical new freedom the gospel promised her.

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analysis of roman fever: *Fever* Deon Meyer, 2017-09-05 From the international bestseller: an Afrikaner boy and his father navigate post-Apocalyptic South Africa—"reminiscent of *The Stand* and *The Passage*" (Stephen King). Nico Storm and his father, Willem, drive a truck filled with essential supplies through a desolate land. They are among the few in the world, as far as they know, to have survived a devastating virus that has swept over the planet. In this new reality, Nico realizes that his superb marksmanship and cool head mean he is destined to be his father's protector, even though

he is still only a boy. Willem Storm, though not a fighter, is a wise and compassionate man with a vision for a new community that survivors will rebuild from the ruins. And so Amanzi is founded, drawing Storm's "homeless and tempest-tost"—starting with Melinda Swanevelder, whom they rescue from brutal thugs; Hennie Fly, with his vital Cessna plane; Beryl Fortuin and her ragtag group of orphans; and Domingo, the man with the tattooed hand. Then Sofia Bergman arrives, the most beautiful girl Nico has ever seen, who changes everything. As the community grows, so do the challenges they face—not just from the attacks of biker brigands, but also from within. Looking back later in life, Nico recounts the traumatic events that led to the greatest rupture of all—the murder of the person he loves most. “Compelling, action-packed and fraught with emotion . . . bears favourable comparison with landmarks of the genre such as Stephen King’s *The Stand* and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*. Simply stunning.” —John Coates, *Express* (UK) “Great stuff.” —Stephen King

analysis of roman fever: *A Journey* Edith Wharton, 2014-03-01 *A Journey* is a short story by Edith Wharton. 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. Wharton was born to George Frederic Jones and Lucretia Stevens Rhineland in New York City. She had two brothers, Frederic Rhineland and Henry Edward. The saying Keeping up with the Joneses is said to refer to her father's family. She was also related to the Rensselaer family, the most prestigious of the old patroon families. She had a lifelong friendship with her Rhineland niece, landscape architect Beatrix Farrand of Reef Point in Bar Harbor, Maine. In 1885, at 23, she married Edward (Teddy) Robbins Wharton, who was 12 years older. From a well-established Philadelphia family, he was a sportsman and gentleman of the same social class and shared her love of travel. From the late 1880s until 1902, he suffered acute depression, and the couple ceased their extensive travel. At that time his depression manifested as a more serious disorder, after which they lived almost exclusively at The Mount, their estate designed by Edith Wharton. In 1908 her husband's mental state was determined to be incurable. She divorced him in 1913. Around the same time, Edith was overcome with the harsh criticisms leveled by the naturalist writers. Later in 1908 she began an affair with Morton Fullerton, a journalist for *The Times*, in whom she found an intellectual partner. In addition to novels, Wharton wrote at least 85 short stories. She was also a garden designer, interior designer, and taste-maker of her time. She wrote several design books, including her first published work, *The Decoration of Houses* of 1897, co-authored by Ogden Codman. Another is the generously illustrated *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* of 1904.

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analysis of roman fever: *Daisy Miller* Henry James, 2017-03-16 At the little town of Vevey, in Switzerland, there is a particularly comfortable hotel. There are, indeed, many hotels, for the entertainment of tourists is the business of the place, which, as many travelers will remember, is seated upon the edge of a remarkably blue lake—a lake that it behooves every tourist to visit. The shore of the lake presents an unbroken array of establishments of this order, of every category, from the grand hotel of the newest fashion, with a chalk-white front, a hundred balconies, and a dozen flags flying from its roof, to the little Swiss pension of an elder day, with its name inscribed in German-looking lettering upon a pink or yellow wall and an awkward summerhouse in the angle of the garden. One of the hotels at Vevey, however, is famous, even classical, being distinguished from many of its upstart neighbors by an air both of luxury and of maturity. In this region, in the month of June, American travelers are extremely numerous; it may be said, indeed, that Vevey assumes at this period some of the characteristics of an American watering place. There are sights and sounds which evoke a vision, an echo, of Newport and Saratoga. There is a flitting hither and thither of stylish young girls, a rustling of muslin flounces, a rattle of dance music in the morning hours, a sound of high-pitched voices at all times. You receive an impression of these things at the excellent inn of the Trois Couronnes and are transported in fancy to the Ocean House or to Congress Hall. But at the Trois Couronnes, it must be added, there are other features that are much at variance with these suggestions: neat German waiters, who look like secretaries of legation; Russian princesses sitting in the garden; little Polish boys walking about held by the hand, with their governors; a view of the sunny crest of the Dent du Midi and the picturesque towers of the Castle of Chillon. I hardly know whether it was the analogies or the differences that were uppermost in the mind of a young American, who, two or three years ago, sat in the garden of the Trois Couronnes, looking about him, rather idly, at some of the graceful objects I have mentioned. It was a beautiful summer morning, and in whatever fashion the young American looked at things, they must have seemed to him charming. He had come from Geneva the day before by the little steamer, to see his aunt, who was staying at the hotel-Geneva having been for a long time his place of residence. But his aunt had a

headache- his aunt had almost always a headache-and now she was shut up in her room, smelling camphor, so that he was at liberty to wander about. He was some seven-and-twenty years of age; when his friends spoke of him, they usually said that he was at Geneva studying. When his enemies spoke of him, they said-but, after all, he had no enemies; he was an extremely amiable fellow, and universally liked.

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analysis of roman fever: The Dilettante Edith Wharton, 2013-01-25 The as usual was his own qualification of the act; a convenient way of bridging the interval—in days and other sequences—that lay between this visit and the last. It was characteristic of him that he instinctively excluded his call two days earlier, with Ruth Gaynor, from the list of his visits to Mrs. Vervain: the special conditions attending it had made it no more like a visit to Mrs. Vervain than an engraved dinner invitation is like a personal letter.

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Cards—the keys to the cure. But as the stakes heighten and their undeniable attraction intensifies, Elspeth is forced to face her darkest secret yet: the Nightmare is slowly, darkly, taking over her mind. And she might not be able to stop him.

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