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The Fruit of the Tree (Literary Classics)

Edith Wharton

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The Fruit of the Tree (Literary Classics)

Edith Wharton

The Fruit of the Tree (Literary Classics) Edith Wharton
Originally published in 1907, this little known novel by the author of The Age of Innocence and Ethan Frome was considered controversial for its frank treatment of labor and industrial conditions, drug addiction, mercy killing, divorce, and second marriages.
John Amherst, an idealistic middle manager in a New England textile mill, is committed to improving the deplorable working conditions of the laborers in his charge. But upper management, whose only concern is maximizing profits, frustrates his efforts. When Amherst eventually marries Bessy Westmore, the widow of the former mill owner, he is able at last to initiate an ambitious project of reform.
But happiness for John and Bessy proves to be short-lived. It becomes quickly clear that Bessy does not understand and cannot share her new husband's passion for just labor conditions and industrial reform. She even resents the time he devotes to his work and the way in which his expenditures impact her extravagant lifestyle.
Complicating the situation is the strong friendship that Bessy's old friend, Justine, develops with Amherst. Employed as a live-in tutor for Bessy's daughter, Justine eventually finds herself in an untenable position. How she reacts under pressure has lasting consequences for herself and those around her.
In The Fruit of the Tree, Wharton has created a gripping tale full of psychological insights, deft social portraiture, and profound ethical questions that remain challenging even today.

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