**SUMMER CHAPTER 15-18**

**Scholarly Perspective:**

Pascha A. Stevenson in the journal article “Edith Wharton's Noble Savages” observes that in *summer* “The ultimate incarnation of nature/civilization conflict is perhaps the union of Charity and Lucius. Nowhere is the damage done by the collision of these two worlds made more explicit. Lucius appears to have no more place in Charity’s world than she has in his, for it is implied that he would be done physical harm were he to go up the mountain without Charity who, Liff Hyatt reminds us, the mountain people will always receive as a member. Lucius Harney’s ultra-civilized world likewise holds no place whatsoever for a girl like Charity with her wild, uncultured ways. Thus, the two find themselves making a love-nest of the middle ground, a hide-away half way up the mountain. No good can come of such an ill-forged union and indeed no good does, but it is interesting to note that throughout all of this, Wharton directs our sympathies toward Charity into whose misery we have the most insight. We see her struggling and tormented as she wanders disavowed, while Lucius plans his wedding with Annabel Balch. By the end of Summer, civilization is no more redeemed than are the “bestial” mountain people, and our sympathies, as they often do in Edith”(427)

**Themes/issues:**

* **Sex outside marriage:**  In summer Edith Wharton writes about sex outside marriage. Mr. Royall spent his time with prostitutes in Nettleton; Charity and Harney, despite that he was engaged to another woman; there is Julia too, who got pregnant, as a result ran away to Nettleton for an abortion and also became a prostitute. Marriage does not seem to come first this novel but sex; Rose Coles fell pregnant before marriage (152). Also the mountain people “seemed to be herded together in a sort of passive promiscuity” (170).

These three communities though separated by class have a common behavior which they were Hypocritical about.

* **Hope in the midst of hopelessness:** Wharton supports this theme of hope by writing how Charity hoped that her lover would come back to her, but instead receives a letter from Harney thanking her for freeing him and also said “if ever there was any hope of realizing what we dreamed of you will see me back on the instant. I haven’t lost hope (149). Wharton writes about Charity’s hopelessness “she sat staring at the letter. A cold tremor ran over her and the hard sobs struggled up into her throat and shook her from head to foot” (150). When charity realized that she was pregnant she decided to flee to mountain, to her mother because she had hoped that her mother will comfort her. Chapters 17 and 18 are full incidences of hopelessness for charity.

**Discussion Question:** Harney did not know that charity was pregnant. Do you think if Harney knew about the pregnancy he would have married her?

* **Social class/Death:**  Wharton looks into the issue of social class and how it affects people lives including death. The Mountain people are portrayed as low lives and uncivilized. Due to their social class they received visits from Mr. Mile, the clergy from Dormer, only when death occurred in their midst so that he may bury the dead. Death had occurred and the clergy went to there for burial. The clergy asked for a coffin “but there was a moment of bewildered silence,” (163); Also the corpse of Mary “laid down like a dead dog in a ditch” with no honor (163). It is like the mountain people thought it was luxurious to bury the dead in a coffin(164).

**Discussion question**: Do you think the society was justified in the way they treated the mountain people (especially Mr. Miles)? Is there a possibility that the society may have misjudged the mountain people?

* **Marriage as an escape from shame:** The marriage proposal by Mr. Royall to charity is kind of weird. He said to charity “Now, then ... if you are a mind to go along, we can pick up the noon train for Nettleton if you say so” (176). When Wharton writes on Charity’s remarks on who Harney should marry; “Annabel Balch was, if not the girl Harney ought to marry, at least the kind of girl it would be natural for him to marry”(143). Rose Cole’s miserable marriage to Halston Skeff, to make things right” (152). Also Mr. Royall marriage first marriage was not a fairy one.
* **Discussion Question:** Why does Mr. Royall marry Charity?

**Literally Elements**

* **Ironic (or not) title:** Summer is the time of year when the birds chirp and the sun shines and the grass is green. It appears after spring, and makes everybody heart feels warm inside. Summer is the best time of year. The novel *Summer* does not depict the true meaning of summer season. Do you think Edith should have titled her novel differently?
* **Character trait:** passiveness( 167,170,180)
* **Simile**: crouching amount the rocks as if to brace themselves against the wind. (160)
* Rolled up against her like sleeping puppies” (169).
* “Two faint circles of light fell on the pale aguish heads that started out of the shadow like the heads of nocturnal animals”.(162)
* **Symbolic: “**For an instance the old impulse of flight swept through her; but was only the lift of a broken wing” (184).