“Ethan Frome” by Edith Wharton

Questions to answer as you read the novel:

**Introductory note**

Describe the speaking voice/narrator.
Describe the landscape of Starkfield.
Discuss how Wharton puts Frome into the landscape.

**Chapter I**

Draw up three columns (one each for Ethan Frome, Zeena Frome and Mattie Silver). List under each adjectives and phrases which describe each one.

What do we learn about the characters in this chapter?

**Chapter II**

Compare and contrast images of Zeena and Mattie.
Identify the clues that suggest what is to come.
How does Wharton present the character of Zeena?

**Chapter III**

What further do we learn about Zeena?
To what extent are either of the women’s characters attractive?

**Chapter IV**

How does the mood change when Zeena goes?
Why is the breaking of the pickle-dish a pivotal moment?
Are there any elements of hope in this chapter?

**Chapter V**

How is Ethan Frome’s inertia further explored in this chapter?
How does Wharton use Zeena in this chapter?

**Chapter VI**

Why does Zeena hold so much power over the other two characters?
Highlight the differences to what is seemingly the same scene as the evening before.

**Chapter VII**

What reasons does Zeena give for getting rid of Mattie? Are they her real reasons?
What reasons does Ethan give for keeping Mattie? Are they his real reasons? Whose reasons are the most valid?

**Chapter VIII**

Why do we know that Ethan won’t go with Mattie? What excuses does he give for staying?

**Chapter IX**

Who or what is responsible for the “accident”?

**Concluding Note**

What are you thinking at the end of this story? Is there any relief? Why does Wharton present such a relentlessly depressing narrative?