

4: Text excerpts, Edith Wharton's, "The House of Mirth," 1905, and Anzia Yezierska's "Bread Givers," 1925.

From Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*

She surveyed him critically. Your coat's a little shabby—but who cares? It doesn't keep people from asking you to dine. If I were shabby no one would have me: a woman is asked out as much for her clothes as for herself. The clothes are the background, the frame, if you like: they don't make success, but they are a part of it. Who wants a dingy woman? We are expected to be pretty and well-dressed till we drop—and if we can't keep it up alone, we have to go into partnership."

From Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers*

So, it wasn't character or brains that counted. Only youth and beauty and clothes—things I never had and never could have. Joy and love were not for such as me. Why not? Why not?...