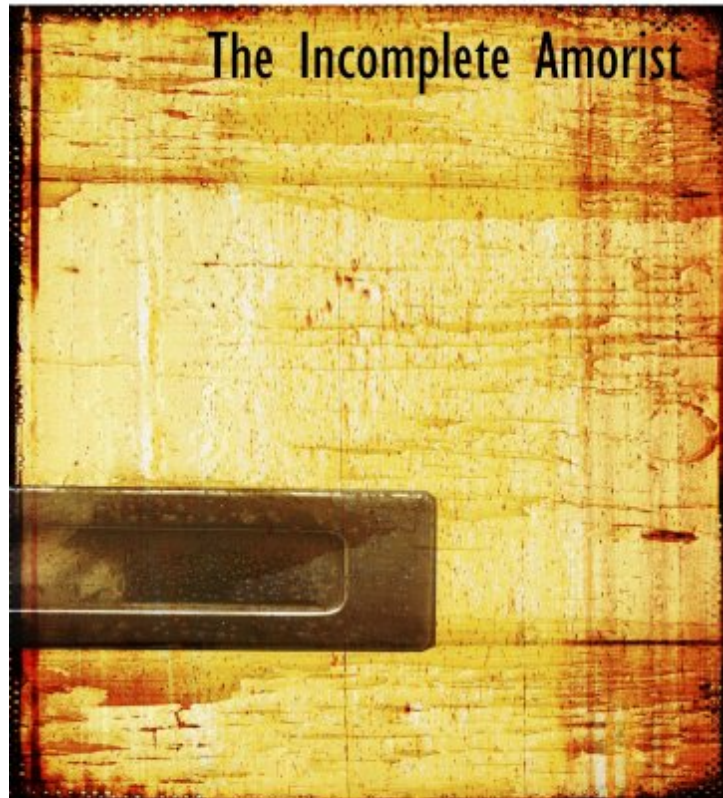


The Incomplete Amorist

Edith Nesbit

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Edith Nesbit : The Incomplete Amorist before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Incomplete Amorist:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Life in Edwardian TimesBy Meks Librarian"The Incomplete Amorist" is the first adult novel by Edith Nesbit I have ever read, and I must say it did nothing to make me want to read more. I love her children's books - they are, along with Astrid Lindgren's works and the Narnia books, my all-time favourites.Young Betty grows up an orphan with her strict stepfather, a vicar in rural England in Edwardian times. She dreams of being an artist, and one day, while she is out sketching, happens to come across a man who really is an artist. Predictably, the two of them embark on something we today would certainly not call an affair (they never even kiss or hug), but what was deemed improper from society's point of few back then.Her stepfather finds out, and to make Betty forget the man (Vernon), he sends her to Paris, where she is to study art. In Paris, very predictably, she

runs into the man again. And when the lady who is supposed to chaperon her dies, Betty grabs the chance to take her life into her own hands without anyone back home knowing about it. She has enough money (originally intended for the chaperone) to rent her own rooms and does indeed study art, making friends among her fellow students, and meeting Vernon regularly for meals. The two of them think they are in love with each other, but neither tells the other what they believe to be feeling. There are another woman and another man to complicate matters, leading to Vernon leaving Paris, and Betty going away, too. Still, nobody at home knows about any of this, but finally, Betty's aunt and her stepfather decide to go visiting the girl in Paris, where they find out that she never lived with the chaperone and spent the past months all on her own. They follow Betty, who finally learns the truth about her stepfather, and returns to England with him. She does get married to the man who loves her in the end, but I must admit that the "happy ending" left me quite flat; I never cared for Betty throughout the book, or for any of the men. The character I felt most for was her stepfather, and you just have to like the aunt. Do not read it if you expect a typical Edith Nesbit book; the Edith I love shows herself in only very few instances in this story. Still, it makes an interesting picture of life for a young woman in Edwardian times, and how that life (and that of those around her) was restricted in so many ways by society's conventions.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Pleasant but surprisingly conventional novel
By Ann FE. Nesbit was so inclined to flout convention in her personal life and in her writing for children that I wouldn't have been at all surprised, after reading it, to find that another person entirely had written this book. Betty is the stepdaughter of a very dry vicar who does not show her the least affection. She channels all of her frustration and yearning for a more interesting life into art, so is emotionally very susceptible to the flirtations of Robert Temple, a visiting artist. After a near-indiscretion, her stepfather sends her to Paris to study art. Due to circumstances she ends up on her own and leading a far more adventurous life than she could have imagined. The story of how Betty develops her sense of independence and purpose and the depictions of her life as a young artist in Paris are pleasant reading. Nesbit barely touches on the social ills of the time, rather surprisingly, though Betty's encounters with a prostitute (with a heart of gold, of course) hints at these. While the characters are all standard stock (naive but strong country girl, a fashionable lady of the world, a roue who finds himself attracted to said country girl, a stalwart gentleman with all the English virtues), Nesbit treats them with a certain sincerity and warmth that makes them more alive than many have and Betty is an endearing heroine.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. a comedy of manners that relies more on charming characters than witty ones
By F. Orion Pozo Edith Nesbit was a social and political liberal who wrote some of my favorite children's novels. So I looked forward to reading this adult novel. It was published in 1906 and tells the story of naive Betty Desmond who, after her mother died, grew up with her unemotional vicar stepfather in a rural parish. Bored with country life and the chores of a parsonage, she is out drawing one day when she meets Mr. Vernon, a painter who courts women as a harmless game. Vernon also has little to do, and they start meeting with their art supplies in the forest. He paints her portrait and helps her with her artistic skills. Their attraction to each other alarms her prudish stepfather who sends her off to a French boarding school. Mr. Vernon and Betty meet again in Paris where a complex love quartet forms with a former lover of Vernon's and his best friend. Each of the four people think they are in love with the two people of the opposite sex and must make up their mind which is their true love. Intrigue, miscommunication, love, guilt, and jealousy all mix with Nesbit's charming writing style to produce enjoyable characters in a dilemma that kept this reader interested to the last page. The novel is a comedy of manners that relies more on charming characters than witty ones. The general good will gives the book an innocence that comes easily to an author who wrote primarily for children.

About the Author She was born in 1858 at 38 Lower Kennington Lane in Kennington, Surrey (now part of Greater London), the daughter of a schoolteacher, John Collis Nesbit, who died in March 1862, before her fourth birthday. Her sister Mary's ill health meant that the family moved around constantly for some years, living variously in Brighton, Buckinghamshire, France (Dieppe, Rouen, Paris, Tours, Poitiers, Angouleme, Bordeaux, Arcachon, Pau, Bagnères de Bigorre, and Dinan in Brittany), Spain and Germany, before settling for three years at Halstead Hall in Halstead in north-west Kent, a location which later inspired *The Railway Children*.