

About the Author

Willa Sibert Cather was born December 7, 1873, near Winchester, Virginia. When she was about ten years old, her family moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska, where many of her novels and short stories are set. "I felt a good deal as if we had come to the end of everything," she told an interviewer many years later. "It was a kind of erasure of personality."

Cather first studied medicine at the University of Nebraska. She then became a newspaperwoman and teacher in Pittsburgh. In 1906, she moved to New York City to work as an editor on *McClure's Magazine*. She eventually left journalism to devote herself to writing fiction full time. Her novels include *Alexander's Bridge* (1912), *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), *My Ántonia* (1918), *One of Ours* (1922), for which she won the Pulitzer Prize, *A Lost Lady* (1923), *The Professor's House* (1925), *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), *Death Comes For the Archbishop* (1927), *Shadows on the Rock* (1931), *Lucy Gayheart* (1935), and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940).

Willa Cather died on April 24, 1947, in New York City.

(readinggroupguides.com)

Reviews

Read this beautiful book. I should just stop here. So I will. Well...no. On second thought, I'd better not. But truth is there's not much more to say about this American classic than what H.L. Mencken said in 1918: No romantic novel ever written in America, by man or woman, is one half so beautiful as *My Antonia*. - *A LitLovers Pick* - Dec. 07

A masterful story of primitive themes told with elegance and affection, this novel depicts the violent yet inspiring existence of the foreign and native-born settlers to Nebraska in the early years of this century. It is considered by the author to be her best work. – barnesandnoble.com

Further Reading

The Country of the Pointed Firs by Sarah Orne Jewett

The Portrait of a Lady by Henry James

Plainsong by Kent Haruf

So Big by Edna Ferber

The Living by Annie Dillard

BOOK CLUB To Go!

My Antonia

By Willa Cather

Possible Discussion Questions

1. What's the purpose of the Introduction?
2. So is the novel about *Ántonia* or Jim?
3. Is either character a stand-in for Willa Cather?
4. What do feminists think of this book?
5. The novel seems to contrast rural, town, and city life. How does Cather view these different settings?
6. So does this novel lack "any form," as Jim Burden claims in the Introduction?
7. Some scholars see seasons as playing a large role in the book's structure. Pay attention to nature's cycles and corresponding human events. Can you draw any correlations? Can you identify a larger pattern?
8. How historical is the novel?
9. Cather wrote *My Ántonia* while the Great War was being fought. What traces of the war can you see in the novel, especially in the attitudes "Americans" and immigrants from Eastern Europe hold toward one another?

(NoveList.com)