

Why you should read My Antonia...

1. Readers who loved the Little House on the Prairie series will particularly enjoy the first book (The Shimerdas).
2. **Nebraska!** Cather writes a love story to the prairie that is nostalgic and memorable, especially her descriptions of how the land is affected by the seasons.
3. Readers are left indebted to and in awe of those first pioneers who forged a country out of untamed land.
4. Cather weaves a number of her previously published short stories into the novel and they become dark, quirky gems within the greater narrative.
5. In light of modern struggles with immigration, My Antonia offers an interesting perspective on how these struggles began.

Why you may struggle with My Antonia...

1. Jim's glorification of the past and failure to fully live in the present can be irritating, if not instructive.
2. As Jim states in the introduction, the novel feels formless and this slows down the momentum of the narrative at times.
3. Her portrayal of the African American character is dated; however, this is not as true for the immigrants.

Still interested? A few suggestions before you begin...

- **Be sure to read the introduction! It is part of the novel and not a prologue.**
- **Antonia's name is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable – AN toe nee uh**
- **The Shimerdas are called "Bohemian," which is a region we would now consider the Czech Republic**
- **The novel is available on-line at:**
<http://www.amlit.com/antonia/chap0.html>