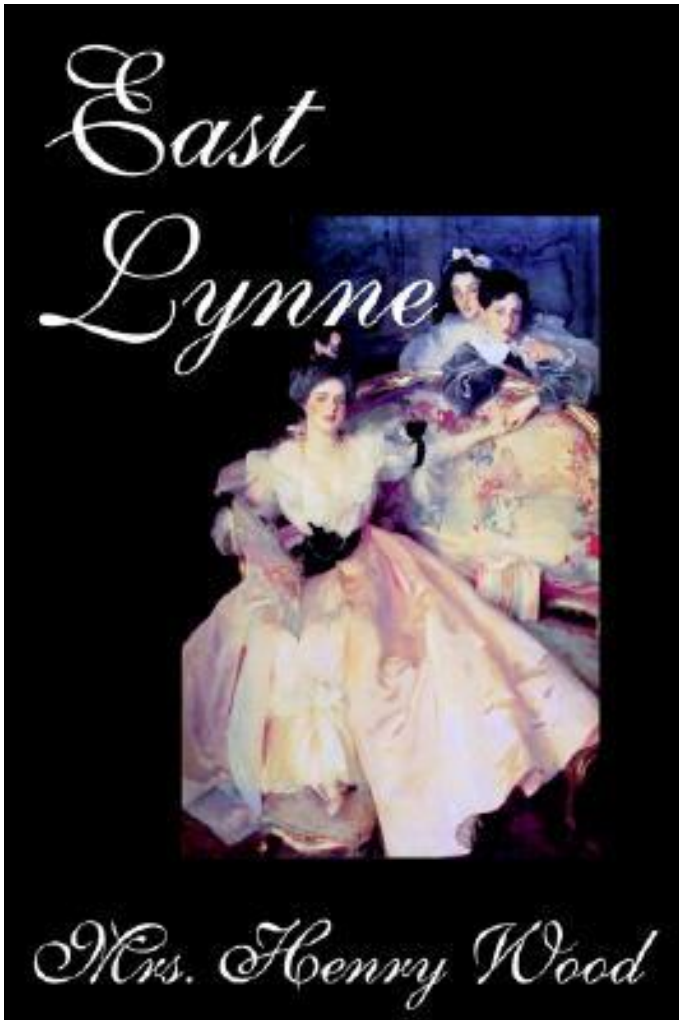

Mrs. Henry Wood

East Lynne



Title: East Lynne

Author: Mrs. Henry Wood

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Description

East Lynne was first written as a serial, and appeared in the New Monthly Magazine from January 1860 through September 1861. Its combination of suspense, doomed love, scandal and tragic remorse made it immensely successful, and it has remained the most famous and widely read of Mrs. Henry Wood's novels. Although no more melodramatic than others of her books, at the center of East Lynne is a development that strains credulity more severely than her other works; but the situation that transpires when Isabel Vane returns to East Lynne was one that readers found unforgettable. . . .

Insightful reviews

Emily: West Lynne is a modest town (considering that the population of England was only 500 at the time, I can assure you that West Lynne has at least twelve residents) and is adjacent to a country estate called East Lynne. East Lynne begins the book as the property of the Earl, Lord Mountsevern, but in the first chapter he quietly sells it to a respectable lawyer called Mr. Carlisle. Lord Mountsevern was a profligate cad in his youth and now he has severe gout and one beautiful eighteen-year-old daughter, to whom, even with the sale of East Lynne, he is unable to leave a single penny. Mrs. Henry Wood says, in that first chapter, after Mr. Carlisle has gazed at Lady Isabelle Vane and departed and she is alone with her dotting father Lord Mountsevern that "If he had known what was to come, he would have struck her down dead in an instant," and I thought, "Is she going to be a murderer or something?" But, no, she just has some sex. And, boy, is she punished for it.

Being gouty, Lord Mountsevern dies and is buried, leaving his daughter to her fate. Lady Isabelle finds that the house she has been living in has not belonged to her father for several months now and she is ruined, ruined! "I'll make my own way," she says, but her uncle, the new Lord Mountsevern, and Mr. Carlisle explain pointedly that even if she knew how to work, the shame of working for a living would be unbearable to a woman of her rank, so she is packed off to live at Castle Stupid, the other ancestral home of the Mountseverns. She lasts ten months. Some very important things happen here: Lady Isabelle's uncle is married to her second cousin Irene, and Irene and Isabelle's other second cousin Frances Levison is visiting. Unlike in healthy nations with large breeding pools and incest taboos, Isabelle falls in love with Levison because he's a sexy, rakish man. Cousin Irene accuses Isabelle of flirting, and Cousin Isabelle, the innocent, accuses Cousin Irene of flirting, and Cousin Irene caps ten months of verbal abuse by slapping Isabelle across the face.

Meanwhile back at East Lynne, Mr. Carlisle is forcibly reminded of the murder that happened in West Lynne ten years ago. Murder! His friends, the Hares, need his help. You see, ten years ago Richard Hare was courting Athie Hallijohn. Richard was there, at the Hallijohn cottage, the night of Athie's father's murder. Richard was, in fact, seen running from the cottage with a gun and then he scarpered off out of the county and no one's seen him in a decade. Until he comes back. His sister Barbara sees him lurking in the garden. He must hide, even at the home to which he is heir, because his own father, Justice Hare, has sworn to string him up if he ever lays eyes on him again. Barbara rushes out to talk to him and Richard Hare tells her that he is

innocent and needs help, for which Barbara enlists her discreet lawyer friend Mr. Carlisle and his sister Miss Carlisle enlists herself to help as well. Poor Miss Carlisle! She's the most tragic figure of the book. She is Mr. Carlisle's older half-sister, and she owns a house and gets some hundred pounds per annum, but she has nothing to do. Nowadays she would become a lawyer too, and probably a judge, possibly a Supreme Court Justice, but as a single woman in 1862, all she can do with her days is boss the servants around and meddle in her adult brother's affairs.

But back to Castle Stupid. Lady Isabelle is crying and wondering how to embark on the shameful career of governess when Mr. Carlisle happens to stop by randomly because he has business in the area. Seeing that Lady Isabelle is destitute with no friends in the world except her slappy second cousin, he proposes. Because that is the only good and honorable option. Lady Isabelle says she doesn't love him and doesn't know if she can learn to, but Mr. Carlisle says, "That's fine, let's go," and Lady Isabelle is whisked away from Castle Stupid to her childhood home at East Lynne, even though it's not so much her home anymore and Miss Carlisle moves in to boss Lady Isabelle around. Lady Isabelle warms up to Mr. Carlisle enough to bear him three children, but she has her doubts, especially about that Barbara Hare. She overhears a servant saying that Mr. Carlisle and Miss Barbara have a history, and she notices Mr. Carlisle and Barbara going on long walks together in the garden of an evening. But they're not having trysts! Richard Hare, the accused murderer, is back in town, telling of a man named Thorne who was also courting Athie Hallijohn, and who he believes murdered Athie's father. Lady Isabelle is sick with worry that her husband is cheating on her. She makes Mr. Carlisle swear never to marry Barbara Hare, no matter what happens, and he gives his word. As Lady Isabelle is recovering from the birth of her third child as well as being sick with worry, Mr. Carlisle sends her to France to breathe sea air, where she runs into Captain Levison. Being cousins, they promenade on the seashore together, and Lady Isabelle finds herself falling in love with him again. When Mr. Carlisle comes to collect her, he invites Captain Levison, who is hiding from his creditors in France, to stay at East Lynne while he settles his debts. Lady Isabelle says, "Please don't invite him, please!" and Mr. Carlisle pats her on the head and says, "Don't you worry about a thing." So you see, Lady Isabelle is at East Lynne with her husband and the man she loves, and her husband is nose deep in the Hare affair. Captain Levison even encourages Lady Isabelle to believe that her husband is straying. Then one evening, everything goes Gothic. Lady Isabelle is angry at Mr. Carlisle, Barbara Hare is saying goodbye to her brother Dick, Captain Levison is poisoning Lady Isabelle's mind while acting sexy, and then there is a meeting in the road. Dick Hare sees the murderer Thorne, and Thorne sees the accused, although he is concealed by a false beard of unruly Dick Hare. Later, in the moonlight, Levison convinces Lady Isabelle to run away with him and they thunder away in a carriage, Isabelle already regretting what she's done. That night, Lady Isabelle is presumed a suicide, before it's discovered that Levison is missing too. A few days later, the whole of West Lynne knows that the murderer Richard Hare was spotted on the road...

Note, some of the names and spellings are wrong because I listened to the audiobook on Librivox. Thank you, Librivox.

<http://surfeitofbooks.blogspot.com/20...>

Terri Jacobson: This Victorian novel is a wonderful reading experience. It has everything you

might want in a book of this era: a murder blamed on the wrong person; seductions, marriages, betrayals and divorces; illnesses such as "brain fever" and consumption; women in elaborate dresses and bonnets; a society with strict standards for conduct and dire consequences for those who break these standards. I found it to be a real page-turner. I love the language and beautiful descriptions of the English countryside. I chuckled at the quaint ideas about the functions and abilities of women. There are words of prejudice against Jews and homosexuals, things that would absolutely not be acceptable in our time. This book is a real gem of a 19th century novel.

Peter: Known but unknown is the life of Mrs. Henry Wood. Wood is one of the best sensation novelists of Victorian Literature. Lesser known than Wilkie Collins, and yet as prolific as Collins, Mrs. Wood ventured into all the dark corners of Victorian life. In *East Lynne* there is adultery, murder, dual characters, bigamy, creepy characters, faithful husbands and overly flirtatious men and women. Not a chapter goes by but something is happening. Melodrama envelops the novel and the reader can almost hear the indignation of many proper households as her book ended up in the dust bin.

Mrs. Wood does not have the wide and wild range of characters as does Dickens, nor does she evoke the Gothic-like doom of a Wilkie Collins novel, but her work does hold up well.

Written in 1861, this novel is a contemporary of *Great Expectations*, but what Dickens only hinted at, in terms of love, lust and desire, Wood delivers with full throttle. It is interesting to centre her work within the shifting values of the Victorians. Wood certainly does not hide in the shade, or peek timidly from the wings of the stage. Her work is straight and bare. While I would not say this is a great novel, and hence only three stars, I would suggest this is a necessary book to read in order to grasp fully the range and the evolution of both the sensation novel and the changing nature of the Victorian writer and reader.

That Mrs. Henry Wood wrote under her married name points out the curious nature of the Victorian times. She writes by identifying herself as a married woman. The curious duality the woman writer is in full evidence here. No Acton, Ellis or Currier Bell, no George Eliot. Mrs. Henry Wood, indeed.

Rebecca: this can be the main action-packed Victorian novel I've ever read. whereas it isn't relatively the everyone-gets-what-they-want type of novel like Jane Austen, it has a few very poignant points, and the undesirable everyone is punished and the great people, if now not saved, locate a few demeanour of redemption. It is kind of a read, with over six hundred pages, however it was once worth it. a few tales converge; there's a murder, a love triangle, humor, and a good dose of tragedy. whereas your favourite personality won't get what you were hoping they would, it's a reasonable illustration of the truth of the times, and the truth that occasionally reliable humans make undesirable decisions. While I do not give some thought to myself a feminist in so much regards, the ladies can be a little too flighty. At each flip of occasions a few ladies had "a shaky voice" or "ashy lips". yet that may be a mirrored image of the period; ladies have been thought of even more tender (with, perhaps, the exception of leave out Carlyle). I'll go away you with certainly one of my favourite passages, which to me sums up the ethical of the publication really nicely: "The doings of the previous were coming domestic to her for a while

now: prior doings, be they good, or be they ill, are absolute to come home, someday or another, and to deliver their culmination with them. for those who sow wheat, it's going to arise wheat, gladdening you with its good: should you sow noxious weeds, noxious weeds spring forth, advert you need to do conflict with them as you most sensible can. it's the inevitable legislations of nature, and none can flee from it." (448)

Jessica: Generally, a negative book. yet type of fascinating? I mean... as a rule fairly predictable (duh, that lousy cad Levison who stole away girl Isabel is usually the assassin who framed Richard Hare! It simply took 800 pages to get there...)... yet this reads like a few ethical cleaning soap opera for these times. the woman Isabel makes a decision to run away simply because a bit of sizzling dude used to be like "hey, your husband's dishonest on you I bet," after which simply because obvs she made the inaccurate move, she's all of sudden the saddest individual at the planet, pregnant with the cad's baby, abandoned via acknowledged cad, after which in a terrible teach coincidence that kills the child and leaves her disfigured. every body thinks she's useless after which she tortures herself by way of disguising as a governess to be along with her kids. And the final a part of the ebook is simply a host of "isn't this crazy? That she has to witness all this? yet do not forget, she made the worst mistake a lady can make and now she's purchasing it." COOL. Also, omit Corny is the worst. i am so completely happy i haven't got to examine her again. the truth that Isabel exonerates her in spite of everything for now not being a part of the explanation she used to be pushed out was once overall bullshit. You know, completely low-brow fun.

Rob: East Lynne used to be some of the most renowned novels of the nineteenth Century, yet, as is mostly the case, its serious reception didn't fit its well known sales. definitely it really is moralistic, overly sentimental and Ellen Wood's writing kind seldom rises above the workmanlike. but it's also tremendous well-plotted, quickly and intriguing, and introduces us to anyone who to my brain is without doubt one of the extra fascinating heroines in Victorian literature. I completely loved examining it. First released in serial shape from 1860 to 1861, it truly is one of many books which helped outline the "Sensation Novel" of the 1860s, but - regardless of the heroine's adultery on the center of the unconventional and her next go back seriously disguised because the governess of her youngsters and the arrest of the corpse of her father- it truly is much less severe than many different books of this genre. it's because of what I deliberate to be the skilful dealing with of the vital character. Lady Isabel Vane's mom has died, and her deeply-indebted father, the Earl of Mount Severn, is compelled to promote his condo East Lynne to his legal professional Archibald Carlyle, who however retains the sale mystery and permits Lord Mount Severn to stay there, the place he inconveniently dies. Lady Isabel discovers that she is penniless and compelled to dwell together with her Uncle and his wife, who despises her for her seems and candy nature. Fortunately, she is rescued via Carlyle's provide of marriage, a lot to the disgruntlement of Carlyle's neighbour Barbara Hare. Carlyle is secretly supporting Barbara's brother, who's at the run following an accusation of murder, and his common shut discussions with Barbara arouse girl Isabel's jealous suspicions. those are exacerbated via the nefarious rake Sir Francis Levinson, who's staying incognito at East Lynne while Carlyle attempts to tackle his tangled affairs. Finally, Carlyle declines a dinner engagement pleading strain of work, yet woman Isabel sees him with Barbara Hare as she returns. She learns from Levinson that Carlyle has been along with her all evening, and in a jealous rage, she elopes to the Continent with Levinson, leaving Carlyle and her kids behind.

She isn't long gone lengthy prior to she realises that she has made a bad mistake. Wood's limitation is to make sure that girl Isabel keeps the reader's sympathy regardless of her being an adulteress who has deserted her children. This she does via very conscientiously developing the explanations for her jealousy. Carlyle is a heroic character, virtually too stable to be true, yet no longer given to nice introspection. He has no inspiration how his paintings to help his outdated associates the Hare family members may be perceived. Levinson notwithstanding guarantees that girl Isabel knows all his clandestine conferences with Barbara Hare. Crucially, woman Isabel deeply respects Carlyle, and hopes that she's going to come to like him, yet doesn't achieve this yet. She does not have mom and dad or any shut relative or buddy to supply ethical guidance, and he or she feels estranged in her personal family by means of the oppressive presence of Carlyle's opinionated sister. So she snaps, and regrets it for the remainder of her life. the remainder of the publication follows her look for expiation. Carlyle marries Barbara Hare, and, badly disfigured in a educate crash, woman Isabel returns as Madame Vane, a governess who has to suffer the torment of seeing her now-beloved husband being caressed via Barbara Hare, who's referred to as mom through her children. The intensity of her torment, and the information that she were manipulated by means of a foul man, guarantees that she is still a sympathetic character. Meanwhile, the opposite strands of the plot come together. Levinson ill-advisedly comes to a decision to face opposed to Carlyle for Parliament. the reality concerning the homicide of Hallijohn slowly emerges. Justice seems to be done. The luck of the unconventional will depend on Ellen Wood's skill to build a plausible set of purposes for woman Isabel to be pushed to elope with Levinson, and this she does with skill. To my brain the second one part is weaker due to the fact her go back unrecognised as a governess does stretch credulity a bit far. However, by way of this element a few real Victorian tear-jerking sentimentality has kicked in, and, coupled with fast moving satire at the electoral and judicial processes, conspires to hold the reader breathlessly to the end. Extracted from my weblog <http://roderick-random.blogspot.com/2...>

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