

**EVE LESTER: A
NOVEL, IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Eve Lester: A Novel, in Three Volumes, Vol. II by Alice Mangold Diehl

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ALICE MANGOLD DIEHL

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NOVEL, IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

EVE LESTER.

A Novel.

BY
ALICE MANGOLD DIEHL,
AUTHOR OF "THE GARDEN OF EDEN," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.



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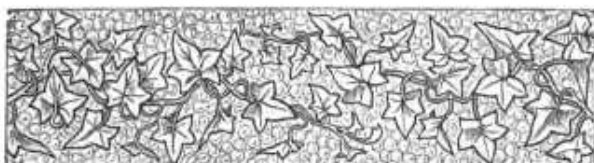


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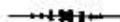


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EVE LESTER.



CHAPTER I.

A VISIT TO GRASSLANDS.

AT the sight of the beautiful girl crying in the moonlight, the tide of the Italian's variable emotion turned. He fell on his knees on the gravel path, uttering apologies in his broken English.

“Ah, Miss Lester, but you must pardon. I not mean to offend—we in Italy kiss the lady's hand. I do anything——”

Eve recovered herself, and conquered her rising anger. It was not alone the liberty Rinaldi had taken, that annoyed her. Her sympathies had been seized and held by David Ross's sad tale of his young life. She had meant to say more to him, when Mr. Marlowe and the Italian suddenly appeared.

"Never mind," she said severely; "only remember—*never* again." And she went into the house.

Rinaldi, rising from his knees and following, somewhat ruefully, found the Rectory drawing-room twinkling with lights and buzzing with the conversation of the young people who were sitting about. Eve stood by the open piano, grave and silent. The Rector was going from one to another—"preparing the ground," as he called it, for the concert. He had been at this congenial occupation since his guests arrived, casting a word here, a stray hint there.

“Mr. Marlowe seems to have this concert on the brain,” drawled Captain Rawson to Etta Watts. (He occasionally made a remark to her out of pity for her worship, as he might throw a bone to a starving dog.)

“Dear Mr. Marlowe!—it is his painted window,” said Etta incoherently, fluttered at being addressed by the great one. (This speech of his would be text for her maiden meditations for many a long hour.)

“I suppose this distinguished foreigner is to appear.”

“I suppose so,” said Etta, with an upward look of reverential passion, at which the Captain twisted his moustache and walked away, leaving Etta fatuously staring at vacancy, the bridge of her nose reddening in the candlelight. For the rest of the evening she knew nothing, but that he had spoken to her.

“‘The Evening Dream,’” declaimed the

Rector ecstatically, standing at the piano as if in his pulpit. "The Evening Dream,'—a little trifle of mine Signor Rinaldi has been so good as to propose to play at the concert" (dropping his voice as he was wont to do when giving forth the text of his sermon the second time).

The chatter stopped, and the young people composed themselves to listen. Mrs. Marlowe, who had been endeavouring to beguile the time to the majestic Mrs. de Smythe on a distant sofa, smilingly whispered Rinaldi's credentials.

"He was commanded to give a recital at the Palace, and they say that he gave such satisfaction that at its close he had the honour of an introduction," she glibly said behind her fan, at which Mrs. de Smythe calmly adjusted her glasses, and with her wonted dignity inspected Rinaldi sitting at the piano, as she might have inspected a