

**ANTONIA, PP. 1-  
250, PP. 1-24**

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Antonia, pp.1- 250, pp. 1-24 by George Sand

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**GEORGE SAND**

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1727



ANTONIA

BY  
GEORGE SAND

BOSTON  
LITTLE, BROWN  
AND COMPANY



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## Dedication.

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**T**O M. EDOUARD RODRIGUES, the father of the fatherless, and friend of the friendless; who does good for its own sake, with the same simplicity, the same freedom and readiness, with which he interprets Mozart and Beethoven.

GEORGE SAND.

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



THE WIFE  
AND HUSBAND



## ANTONIA.

## I.

IT was the month of April, in the year 1785, in Paris; the spring that year was a genuine spring. The gardens were in holiday dress, the grass was enamelled with daisies, the birds were singing, and the lilacs were growing in such profusion near Julien's window, that their full-blown thyrsi bent over into his very room, and scattered their little flowerets over the great white squares of the floor of his studio.

Julien Thierry was a flower-painter, like his father, André Thierry, who had been very famous in the time of Louis XV. as a decorator of friezes, panels of dining-rooms, and ceilings of boudoirs. In his skilful hands these graceful ornaments became real works of art; so much so, indeed, that he ceased to be an artisan, and gained a great reputation as an artist; he was highly esteemed by persons of taste, his work commanded great prices, and he was a person of consideration in society. Julien, his pupil, devoted himself to painting upon canvas. In his generation, the light and charming decorations in the Pompadour style had ceased to be fashionable. The severer taste of the Louis XVI. era no longer scattered flowers over ceilings and walls, it framed them. Julien, therefore, painted flowers, fruits, pearl-shells, brilliant butterflies, green lizards, and drops of dew, in the manner of Mignon. He had a great deal of talent, he was handsome, he was twenty-four years old, and his father had left him nothing but debts.

The widow of André Thierry was with Julien, in this studio where he was at work, and where the bunches of

TO VIVU  
ANTONIA.

lilac were being despoiled by the caresses of the warm breeze. Although a woman of sixty, she was well preserved: her eyes were still beautiful; her hair was almost black, and her hands were delicate. Small, slender, fair, and dressed with exquisite neatness, although with extreme simplicity, she was knitting, and every now and then looked up at her son, absorbed in studying a rose.

"Julien," she said, "why is it that you do not sing any longer at your work? You might, perhaps, persuade the nightingale to let us hear its voice."

"Listen, mother, he is beginning now of his own accord," replied Julien; "he does not require a leader."

In fact, the nightingale, for the first time in the year, began at this very moment to pour forth his pure and resounding notes.

"Ah! it is really singing!" cried Madam Thierry. "A year has gone by. Do you see it, Julien?" she added, as the young man, interrupting his work, gazed into the thick grove before the window.

"I thought that I saw her," he replied, with a sigh; "but I was mistaken."

He returned to his easel. His mother looked at him anxiously, but asked no further questions.

"It is the same thing," she continued, after a pause, "you have a beautiful voice also, and I love to hear the pretty songs that your poor father sang so well — only a year ago, at this time!"

"Yes," said Julien, "you want me to sing his songs, and then you weep. No, I will not sing them."

"I will not shed a tear, I promise you! Sing me something gay, and I will laugh — as if he were here."

"No, do not ask me, mother! It pains me as well as you to hear those songs. Give me a little time. Let all come about gently. Do not let us do violence to our sorrow."

"Julien, you must not talk of sorrow any longer," said the mother firmly, although in an agitated voice. "I was weak at first, but you will pardon me! It was no light blow to lose forty years of happiness in a single day! But I should have remembered that your loss was