

# **THE GREY ROOM**

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The Grey Room by Eden Phillpotts

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**EDEN PHILLPOTTS**

**THE  
GREY ROOM**



## THE GREY ROOM

BY  
EDEN PHILLPOTTS

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- "Evander"
- "The Spinners"
- "Miser's Money"
- "Brunel's Tower"
- "Old Delabole"
- "The Three Brothers"
- "Storm in a Teacup"
- "A Shadow Passes"
- "The Banks of Colne"
- "Chronicles of Saint Tid"
- "Plain Song, 1914-1916"
- "Green Alleys: A Comedy"
- "The Human Boy and the War"

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EDEN PHILLPOTTS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE HOUSE PARTY

THE piers of the main entrance of Chadlands were of red brick, and upon each reposed a mighty sphere of grey granite. Behind them stretched away the park, where forest trees, nearly shorn of their leaves at the edge of winter, still answered the setting sun with fires of thinning foliage. They sank away through stretches of brake fern, and already amid their trunks arose a thin, blue haze--breath of earth made visible by coming cold. There was frost in the air, and the sickle of a new moon hung where dusk of evening dimmed the green of the western sky.

The guns were returning, and eight men with three women arrived at the lofty gates. One of the party rode a grey pony, and a woman walked on each side of him. They chattered together, and the little company of tweed-clad people passed into Chadlands Park and trudged forward, where the manor house rose half a mile ahead.

Then an old man emerged from a lodge, hidden behind a grove of laurel and bay within the entrance, and shut the great gates of scroll iron. They were of a flamboyant Italian period, and more arrestive than distinguished. Panelled

upon them, and belonging to a later day than they, had been imposed two iron coats of arms, with crest above and motto beneath—the heraldic bearings of the present owner of Chadlands. He set store upon such things, but was not responsible for the work. A survival himself, and steeped in ancient opinions, his coat, won in a forgotten age, interested him only less than his Mutiny medal—his sole personal claim to public honor. He had served in youth as a soldier, but was still a subaltern when his father died and he came into his kingdom.

Now, Sir Walter Lennox, fifth baronet, had grown old, and his invincible kindness of heart, his archaic principles, his great wealth, and the limited experiences of reality, for which such wealth was responsible, left him a popular and respected man. Yet he aroused much exasperation in local landowners from his generosity and scorn of all economic principles; and while his tenants held him the very exemplar of a landlord, and his servants worshipped him for the best possible reasons, his friends, weary of remonstrance, were forced to forgive his bad precedents and a mistaken liberality quite beyond the power of the average unfortunate who lives by his land. But he managed his great manor in his own lavish way, and marvelled that other men declared difficulties with problems he so readily solved.

That night, after a little music, the Chadlands' house party drifted to the billiard-room, and while most of the men, after a heavy day far afield, were content to lounge by a great open hearth