

**FRIENDS AND LOVERS:
A NOVEL. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. III**

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Friends and Lovers: A Novel. In Three Volumes, Vol. III by Annie Thomas

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ANNIE THOMAS

**FRIENDS AND LOVERS:
A NOVEL. IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. III**

FRIENDS AND LOVERS.

A NOVEL.

BY

ANNIE THOMAS

(MRS PENDER CUDLIP),

AUTHOR OF 'DENIS DONNE,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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FRIENDS AND LOVERS.



CHAPTER I.

HEARTSEASE.

IN consequence of the recent death of his father, Lord Timerton's marriage with Trixy was a very quiet one, only his mother and sister from his side of the house being present at it, and the Armingers limiting their invitations to Constance Fielding.

There had been a word or two said as to the advisability of Elinor being married

on the same day as her brother, but this word had been said by old Lady Timerton, not by Elinor herself. The question of the house not being settled yet, Elinor advanced two or three reasonable objections to the proposition. And Don did not oppose her.

But though she blew hot and cold in various ways about him, and her marriage with him, she took care when they went to the wedding at Clyst, that it should be seen by all of them that Don was in strict thrall to her; that he was in fact her property, and as such of far greater account than he had ever been before.

They were only thrown together for a day or two, but during that time Lady Elinor rather gave beholders the impression of wishing to be kind and friendly to Constance, as to one who had suffered, and whose suffering had been—innocently—partially caused by Lady Elinor herself.

Now this attitude was unquestionably an obnoxious one to Miss Fielding; but she went through the ordeal without flinching, and never once gave Don the additional pain of seeing that his betrothed had the power to hurt her.

Not that Lady Elinor did anything in a coarsely triumphant way, nor that she displayed anything so distinctly ill-bred as ill-nature or spite. But she quietly towered over Constance, and assumed a submissive and disappointed spirit in her which Constance did not possess.

'Trix is a lucky girl in every way,' Elinor said, when the bride and bridegroom had gone away. 'For one thing, she'll never have the sting of feeling that some other girl has wanted to marry Timerton; that's the hardest thing of all for a good-hearted girl to feel.'

'It's a feeling that would never sting me for a moment,' Constance said.