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Mrs. Henry Wood

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MRS. HENRY WOOD

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Mrs. Henry Wood : Elster's Folly: A Novel, Volume 1... before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elster's Folly: A Novel, Volume 1...:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A mystery without a detectiveBy L-3Wood ensnared me with a central character (Val) whom really couldn't be resolute about anything. Life just kind of happens to him, and though he always meant well, things never seemed to go his way. Once you understand he is under this kind of cloud, Wood introduces the mystery described as being so horrible that it is life changing. The terrors and worry that then consumes Val during most of the rest of the book hooked me in. These worries were life changing for Val. I thought of all kinds of terrors, none of which were correct. I was surprised by the resolution at the end as good prevailed after all.I thoroughly enjoyed the story, even during the times I thought Val needed a good swift kick by his good friend (Carr). I would recommend this if you enjoy a mystery without violence or police being involved.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining villains, but unconvincing heroesBy CustomerElster's Folly by Mrs. Henry

Wood is about the youngest son in a noble family, Percival Elster. His folly is indecisiveness which, in the context of the novel, means that he is easily bullied. The novel is a domestic drama that shows the unfortunate consequences of Elster's indecisiveness. Having read Wood's novel *East Lynne*, I was prepared for more sensational tropes in the novel; however, its main focus is mainly a portrait of those who constantly manipulate Elster. In other words, it is far more domestic than sensational. Wood gives us some delightfully despicable characters, such as the Dowager-Countess Kirton and her daughter, Maude (although Maude is a more rounded and sympathetic character than her mother). The "baddies" are clearly described and act out in heinous, though entertaining, ways. The "good guys" are far less convincing, though. We are told many times how likable Percival Elster is, yet we constantly see him acting in morally weak and dis-likable ways. It felt as if the author was taking pains to make sure we did not hate her protagonist. In her descriptions of Elster, she does more telling ("he's likable") than showing (giving us a scene that shows his likability). Wood invests Elster with a terrible secret, and keeps readers' attention by waiting until the final pages of the novel to reveal it. Her tactic here was successful; I was itching to know what Elster had done despite the fact that I didn't really like his character. All in all, I'd say that this wasn't the best Victorian novel I've ever read, but its villains and its secret induced me to finish the story.

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About the Author Mrs. Henry Wood (Ellen Wood) was one of the leading novelists of the Victorian era, known for her sweeping, detailed plots full of secrets, sensation, and scandal. Her most famous work is *East Lynne*, a melodrama of seduction and hidden identity which was wildly popular both as a novel and as a play. An invalid from an early age, Wood was the author of nearly fifty other books, including *Verner's Pride*, *Edina*, *Roland Yorke*, *The Shadow of Ashlydyat*, and *Lord Oakburn's Daughters*. In addition to her career as a writer, she was editor of the magazine *The Argosy*. She died in 1887. Her books have never stopped selling, and she remains one of the most popular -- and sensational -- Victorian novelists.