



Evelyn's Husband

Charles W. Chesnutt

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The critique of white male society that Charles W. Chesnutt launched in *A Marrow of Tradition* continues in *Evelyn's Husband*, one of six manuscripts left unpublished when this highly regarded African American innovator died.

Set in Boston society, on a deserted Caribbean island, and in Brazil, *Evelyn's Husband* is the story of two men—one old, one young—in love with the same young woman. Late in his career Chesnutt embarked on a period of experimentation with eccentric forms, finishing this hybrid of a romance and adventure story just before publishing his last work, *The Colonel's Dream*.

In *Evelyn's Husband*, Chesnutt crafts a parody examining white male roles in the early 1900s, a time when there was rampant anxiety over the subject. In Boston, the older man is left at the altar when his bride-to-be flees and marries a young architect. Later, trapped on an island together, the jilted lover and the young husband find a productive middle ground between the dilettante and the primitive.

Along with *A Business Career*, this novel marks Chesnutt's achievement in being among the first African American authors to defy the color barrier and write fiction with a white cast of main characters.

Matthew Wilson, Bainbridge, Pennsylvania, introduces both *A Business Career* and *Evelyn's Husband*. He is associate professor of humanities and writing at Penn State University, Harrisburg. Marjan van Schaik, Bainbridge, Pennsylvania, edited both novels along with Wilson and is a part-time instructor at Millersville University.

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