



Aurora Floyd (Oxford World's Classics)

Mary Elizabeth Braddon, P. D. Edwards

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With *Lady Audley's Secret*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon had established herself, alongside Wilkie Collins and Mrs Henry Wood, as one of the ruling triumvirate of 'sensation novelists'. *Aurora Floyd* (1862-3), following hot on its heels, achieved almost equal popularity and notoriety.

Like *Lady Audley*, *Aurora* is a beautiful young woman bigamously married and threatened with exposure by a blackmailer. But in *Aurora Floyd*, and in many of the novels written in imitation of it, bigamy is little more than a euphemism, a device to enable the heroine, and vicariously the reader, to enjoy the forbidden sweets of adultery without adulterous intentions. Passionate, sometimes violent, *Aurora* does succeed in enjoying them, her desires scarcely chastened by her disastrous first marriage. She represents a challenge to the mid-Victorian sexual code, and particularly to the feminine ideal of simpering, angelic young ladyhood.

P. D. Edward's introduction evaluates the novel's leading place among 'bigamy-novels' and Braddon's treatment of the power struggle between the sexes, as well as considering the similarities between the author and her heroine.

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