



Senhora: Profile of a Woman (Texas Archaeology & Ethnohistory)

José de Alencar

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"It is a truth universally acknowledged . . ." that a single woman in possession of a good character but no fortune must be in want of a wealthy husband—that is, if she is the heroine of a nineteenth-century novel. *Senhora*, by contrast, turns the tables on this familiar plot. Its strong-willed, independent heroine Aurélia uses newly inherited wealth to "buy back" and exact revenge on the fiancé who had left her for a woman with a more enticing dowry.

This exciting Brazilian novel, originally published in 1875 and here translated into English for the first time, raises many questions about traditional gender relationships, the commercial nature of marriage, and the institution of the dowry. While conventional marital roles triumph in the end, the novel still offers realistic insights into the social and economic structure of Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1800s. With its unexpected plot, it also opens important new perspectives on the nineteenth-century Romantic novel.

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