



Master of the Vineyard

Myrtle REED (1874 - 1911)

"Why don't you sell the vineyard?" she asked, though her heart sank at the mere suggestion. "Sell it? Why didn't the Ancient Mariner sell his albatross and take a nice little trip around the world on the proceeds? Mother would die of a broken heart if I mentioned it to her. The Marsh family have been the slaves of that vineyard since the first mistaken ancestor went into the grape business. We've fertilised it, pruned it, protected it, tied it up, sat up nights with it, fanned the insects away from it, hired people to pick the fruit and pack it, fed the people, entertained them, sent presents to their wives and children—we've done everything! And what have we had for it? Only a very moderate living, all the grapes we could eat, and a few bottles of musty old wine. "Mother, of course, has very little to do with it, and, to her, it has come to represent some sort of entailed possession that becomes more sacred every year. It's a family heirloom, like a title, or some very old and valuable piece of jewelry. Other people have family plate and family traditions, but we've got a vineyard, or, to speak more truthfully, it has us."

Read by Celine Major. Total running time: 08:09:13

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