GREEN FANCY

By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

Author of "GRAUSTARK," "THE HOLLOW OF HER HAND," "THE PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK," ETC.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Thomas K. Barnes, wealthy New Yorker, on a walking trip through New England, is caught in a storm miles from his destination. At a crossroads point he meets a girl in the same plight. While they discuss the situation an automobile, sent to meet the girl, arrives and Barnes is given a lift to Hart's tavern, while the girl is taken on to her destination, which she tells Barnes is a place called Green Fancy.

CHAPTER II—At the tavern Barnes falls in with a stranded troupe of "barn-storming" actors, headed by Lyndon Rushcroft, and becomes interested in them.

CHAPTER III—As the storm grows, Barnes finds himself worrying over the safety of the girl, traveling over the mountain roads at what he considers dangerous speed. He learns that Green Fancy is something of a house of mystery. Two mounted men leave the tavern in a manner which arouses Barnes' curiosity.

CHAPTER IV—He meets "Miss Thackeray," leading lady of the stranded theatrical troupe, who is acting as chambermaid. That night he is aroused by the bringing of a dying man to the tavern, one of the two who had ridden away a short time before. They tell of finding the dead body of the other man. Both had been shot.

CHAPTER V—The wounded man, registered at the tavern as Andrew Paul, dies and Barnes is informed he must not leave until after the inquest. O'Dowd and De Soto, guests at Green Fancy, visit the tavern, apparently much mystified over the affair.

CHAPTER VI—Barnes advances Rushcroft money sufficient to release the company from its embarrassing position thereby becoming its official backer. He visits Green Fancy, and in the grounds meets his acquaintance of the night before, finding her a girl of surprising beauty.

CHAPTER VII—She seems not to be desirous of recognizing him, and turns away. O'Dowd appears and in apparently friendly fashion escorts Barnes (who feels he is unwelcome) from the grounds.

CHAPTER VIII—Miss Thackeray warns Barnes that a man stopping at the tavern, ostensibly a book agent, had searched his baggage in his absence. O'Dowd comes to the tavern and with Barnes and others goes over the scene of the previous night's shooting. Barnes is invited to dinner at Green Fancy.

CHAPTER IX—His acquaintance of the storm is introduced as Miss Cameron. The makeup of the house party, particularly a man introduced to him as "Loeb," and the number of menservants about the place, somewhat astonishes Barnes.

CHAPTER X—Miss Cameron informs him she is a prisoner in the house, appealing to him for aid and binding him to secrecy. In conversation with the chauffeur who drives him back to the tavern, Barnes becomes convinced there is a conspiracy of moment hatching at Green Fancy.

CHAPTER XI—At breakfast the supposed book agent introduces himself as Sprouse, a government secret agent. Sprouse tells Barnes he is there to watch the party at Green Fancy, describing them as refugees from a country overrun by the Germans. He asserts that "Miss Cameron" is a relative of the former ruler of the devastated country and that she or "Loeb" have with them the crown jewels, of enormous value, which Sprouse would recover.

CHAPTER XII.

The First Wayfarer Accepts an Invitation.

Barnes insisted that the first thing to be considered was the release of Miss Cameron.

"If we can't think of any other way to get her out of this devilish predicament, Sprouse, I shall apply to Washington for help."

"And be laughed at, my friend," said the secret agent. "It is not a matter for the government to meddle in at all."

"Well, something has to be done at once," said Barnes doggedly. "She is depending on me. If you could have seen the light that leaped into her glorious eyes when I—"

"Yes, I know. I've heard she is quite a pretty girl. You needn't—"

"Quite a pretty girl!" exclaimed Barnes. "Why, she is the loveliest thing that God ever created. She has the face of—"

"I am beginning to understand O'Dowd's interest in her, Mr. Barnes. He has probably fallen in love with her with as little difficulty as you have experienced, and almost as expeditiously. He has seen a little more of her than you, but—"

"Don't talk nonsense. I'm not in love with her."

"Can you speak with equal authority for Mr. O'Dowd? He is a very susceptible Irishman, I am told."

"I don't believe he will get much encouragement from her, Mr. Sprouse," said Barnes stiffly.

"If she is as clever as I think she is she will encourage him tremendously. I would if I were in her place. Mr. O'Dowd is only human. He isn't immune."

"I catch the point, Mr. Sprouse," said Barnes, rather gloomily. He did not like to think of the methods that might have to be employed in the subjugation of Mr. O'Dowd. "There is a rather important question I'd like to ask. Is she even remotely eligible to her country's throne?"

"Remotely, yes," said Sprouse.

"So remotely that she could marry a chap like O'Dowd without giving much thought to future complications?" he ventured.

"She'd be just as safe in marrying O'Dowd as she would in marrying you," was Sprouse's unsatisfactory response. The man's brow was wrinkled in thought. "See here, Mr. Barnes, I am planning a visit to Green Fancy tonight. How would you like to accompany me?"

"I'd like nothing better," said Barnes, with enthusiasm.

"Will you agree to obey instructions? I can't have you muddling things up, you know."

"The grounds are carefully guarded," said Barnes, after they had discussed the project for some time. "Miss Cameron is constantly under the watchful eye of one or more of the crowd."

"I know. I passed a couple of them last night," said Sprouse calmly. "By the way, don't you think it would be very polite of you to invite the Green Fancy party over here to have an old-fashioned country dinner with you tonight?"

"It would be useless, Mr. Sprouse. They will not come."

"I am perfectly aware of that, but it won't do any harm to ask them, will it?"

Barnes chuckled. "I see. Establishing myself as an innocent bystander, eh?"

"Get O'Dowd on the telephone and ask him if they can come," said Sprouse.

"But there is Jones to consider. The telephone is in his office. What will he think—"

"Jones is all right," said Sprouse briefly. "Come along. You can call up from my room." He grinned slyly. "Such a thing as tapping the wire, you know."

Sprouse had installed a telephone in his room, carrying a wire upstairs from an attachment made in the cellar of the Tavern. He closed the door to his little room on the top floor.

"With the landlord's approval," he explained, pointing to the instrument, "but unknown to the telephone company, you may be sure. Call him up about half past ten. O'Dowd may be up at this unholy hour, but not she. Now I must be off to discuss literature with Mrs. Jim Conley. The hardest part of my job is to keep her from subscribing for a set of Dickens. Conley's house is not far from Green Fancy. Savvy?"

Barnes, left to his own devices, wandered from taproom to porch, from porch to forge, from forge to taproom, his brain far more active than his legs, his heart as heavy as lead and as light as air by turns. More than once he felt like resorting to a well-known expedient to determine whether he was awake or dreaming. Could all this be real?

Ten minutes later he was in Sprouse's room, calling for Green Fancy over an extension wire that had cost the company nothing and yielded nothing in return. After some delay O'Dowd's mellow voice sang out:

"Hello! How are you this morning?"

"Grievously lonesome," replied Barnes, and wound up a doleful account of himself by imploring O'Dowd to save his life by bringing the entire Green Fancy party over to dinner that night.

O'Dowd was heart-broken. Personally he would go to any extreme to save so valuable a life, but as for the rest of the party, they begged him to say they were sorry to hear of the expected death of so promising a chap and that, while they couldn't come to his party they would be delighted to come to his funeral. In short, it would be impossible for them to accept his kind invitation. The Irishman was so gay and good-humored that Barnes took hope.

"By the way, O'Dowd, I'd like to speak with Miss Cameron if she can come to the telephone."

"Don't be surprised if you are cut off suddenly. The coast is clear for the moment, but— Here, Miss Cameron. Careful now."

Her voice, soft and clear and trembling with eagerness, caressed Barnes' eager ear.

"Mr. O'Dowd will see that no evil befalls me here, but he refuses to help me to get away. I quite understand and appreciate his position. I cannot ask him to go so far as that. Help

"Hello! How Are You This Morning?"

will have to come from the outside. It will be dangerous—terribly dangerous—"

"You say O'Dowd will not assist you to escape?"

"He urges me to stay here and take my chances. He believes that everything will turn out well for me in the end, but I am frightened. I must get away from this place."

"Then keep your eyes and ears open for the next night or two. Can you tell me where your room is located?"

"It is one flight up; the first of the two windows in my room is the third to the right of the entrance. I am confident that someone is stationed below my windows all night long."

"You still insist that I am not to call on the authorities for help?"

"Yes, yes! That must not even be considered. I have not only myself to consider, Mr. Barnes. I am a very small atom in—"

"All right! We'll get along without them," he said cheerily. "Afterward we will discuss the importance of atoms."

"And your reward as well, Mr. Barnes," she said. Her voice trailed off into an indistinct murmur. He heard the receiver click on the hook, and after calling "hello" twice hung up his own with a sigh. Evidently O'Dowd had warned her of the approach of a less considerate person than himself.

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Realizing that now since the war is over, the revival of country fairs on a scale in keeping with the progress made by agriculturalists during the war means more to farmers than heretofore, the directors of the Maryland State Fair, held annually at Timonium, Md., are planning to make the fair next September the best ever held.

The fair will be run both day and night, 2,500 arc lights being used to make the night as bright as day at Timonium.

Cattle, horse, sheep, swine and poultry exhibits on a larger scale than ever are projected. In addition a horse show which will combine the points of a metropolitan exhibition with the advantages of a real, old-fashioned horse fair, will be held. The exhibits of farm machinery and farm products will be more extensive than in past years.

A feature this year shared by but comparatively few fairs and which will mark a new era, will be the new cattle arena and exhibition hall. This building, the erection of which began June 1, is to be a fireproof structure of concrete. On the first floor will be the show, judging and sales arena with the most modern of stalls ringing it.

The second floor will be given over to offices, sales room and space for exhibits which, from their nature, must be sheltered in a permanent building.

Awards aggregating $10,000 will be offered exhibitors and the management of the fair authorizes the statement that the judging will be solely on merit and points. In the four recognized types of dairy cattle—Jerseys, Guernseys, Holstein-Freisians and Ayrshires—there will be awards of $1,000, making a total of $4,000. One thousand dollars is the value of the awards in the swine department for the best medium, bacon and lard hogs.

The poultry department this season will be a big success if the plans of the fair association are carried out. The increasing value of poultry and eggs is pointed to as one reason why interest in this "by-product" of the farm should be stimulated.

The farmer's wife has not been neglected in the plans, for in addition to the household and domestic science departments, under the management of skilled women, there will be a dwelling house erected on the grounds which will contain virtually every household article—from parlor furniture to time and labor saving kitchen utensils—that is to be found in the home.

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The officers of the Maryland State Fair and Agricultural Society are Louis McLane Merryman, president; John M. Dennis, vice-president; W. B. Kemp, secretary; Charles E. McLane, treasurer, and Matt L. Daiger, assistant secretary and treasurer.

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