

GREEN FANCY

By **GEORGE BARR M'CUTCHEON**

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 his 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 "barnstorming" actors, headed by Lyndon Hushcroft, 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 Hushcroft 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 men, causes about the place, somewhat astrophishes 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 crown jewels of the devastated country and that she or "Loeb" have with them the crown jewels of enormous value, which Sprouse would recover.

Several minutes went by. There was not a sound save the restless patter of rain in the tree tops. At last the faraway thud of footsteps came to the ears of the tense listener. They drew nearer, louder, and once more seemed to be approaching the very spot where he crouched.

Then came the sound of a dull, heavy blow, a hoarse gasp, a momentary commotion in the shrubbery, and—again silence. Barnes' blood ran cold. He waited for the next footfall of the passing man. It never came.

A sharp whisper reached his ears, "Come here—quick!"

He floundered through the brush and almost fell prostrate over the kneeling figure of a man.

"Take care! Lead a hand," whispered Sprouse.

Dropping to his knees, Barnes felt for and touched wet, coarse garments, and gasped:

"My God! Have you killed him?"

"Temporarily," said Sprouse, between his teeth. "Here, unwind the rope I've got around my waist. Take the end—here. Got a knife? Cut off a section about three feet long. I'll get the gag in his mouth while you're doing it. Hangmen always carry their own ropes," he concluded, with grewsome humor. "Got it cut? Well, cut two more sections, same length."

With incredible swiftness the two of them bound the feet, knees and arms of the inert victim.

"I came prepared," said Sprouse, so calmly that Barnes marveled at the iron nerve of the man.

"By heaven, Sprouse, I—I believe he's dead. We—we haven't any right to kill a—"

"Don't be flincky," snapped Sprouse. "It wasn't much of a crack, and it was necessary." Straightening up, with a sigh of satisfaction, he laid his hand on Barnes' shoulder. "We've just got to go through with it now, Barnes. We'll never get another chance. Putting that fellow out of business quers us forever afterward." He dropped to his knees and began searching over the ground with his hands. "Here it is. You can't see it, of course, so I'll tell you what it is. A nice little block of sandalwood. I've already got his nice little hammer, so we'll see what we can raise in the way of wireless chit-chat."



"My God! Have You Killed Him?"

Without the slightest hesitation he struck a succession of quick, confident blows upon the block of wood.

"By gad, you are a wonder!"

"Wait till tomorrow before you say that," replied Sprouse, sententiously. "Come along now. Stick to the trail. We've got to land the other one."

Turning sharply to the right, Sprouse guided his companion through the brush for some distance, and once more came to a halt. Again he stole on ahead, and as before the slow, confident, even careless progress of a man ceased as abruptly as that of the comrade who lay helpless in the thicket below.

Barnes laid a firm, detaining hand on the man's shoulder.

"See here, Sprouse," he whispered, "it's all very well for you, knocking men over like this, but just what is your object? What does all this lead up to?"

Sprouse broke in, and there was not the slightest trace of emotion in his whisper.

"Quite right. You ought to know. I suppose you thought I was bringing you up here for a Romeo and Juliet tete-a-tete with the beautiful Miss Cameron—and for nothing else. Well, in a way, you are right. But, first of all, my business is to recover the crown jewels and parchments. I am going into that house and take them away from the man you know as Loeb, if he has them. If he hasn't them my work here is a failure."

"Going into the house?" gasped Barnes. "Why, my God, man, that is impossible. You would be shot down as an ordinary burglar and—the law would justify them for killing you. I must insist—"

"I am not asking you to go into the house, my friend. I shall go alone," said Sprouse coolly.

"On the other hand, I came up here to rescue a helpless—"

"Keep cool! It's the only way. Now listen. She has designated her room and the windows that are hers. She is lying awake up there now, take it from me, hoping that you will come tonight. I shall lead you directly to her window. And then comes the only chance we take—the only instance where we gamble. There will not be a light in her window, but that won't make any difference. This nobby cane I'm carrying is in reality a collapsible fishing rod. First we use it to tap gently on her window ledge or shade or whatever we find. Then you pass up a little note to her. Here is paper and pencil. Say that you are below her window and—all ready to take her away. Tell her to lower her valuables, some clothes, etc., from the window by means of the rope we'll pass up on the pole. There is a remote possibility that she may have the jewels in her room. For certain reasons they may have permitted her to retain them. If such is the case our work is easy. If they have taken them away from her she'll say so, some way or another—and she will not leave! Now I've had a good look at the front of that house. It is covered with a lattice work and huge vines. I can shin up like a squirrel and go through her room to the—"

"Are you crazy, Sprouse? You'd take your life in your hands and—"

"See here," said Sprouse shortly, "I am not risking my life for the fun of the thing. I am risking it for her, bear that in mind—for her and her people. And if I am killed they won't even say 'Well done, good and faith-

ful servant.' So let's not argue the point. Are you going to stand by me or—back out?"

Barnes was shamed. "I'll stand by you," he said, and they stole forward. There were no lights visible. The house was even darker than the night itself; it was vaguely outlined by a deeper shade of black.

At last they were within a few yards of the entrance and at the edge of a small space that had been cleared of shrubbery. Here Sprouse stopped and began to adjust the sections of his fishing rod.

"Write," he whispered. "There is a faint glow of light up there to the right. The third window, did you say? Well, that's about where I should locate it."

The tiny metallic tip of the rod, held in the upstretched hand of Barnes, much the taller of the two men, barely reached the window ledge. He tapped gently, persistently on the hard surface. Just as they were beginning to think that she was asleep and that their efforts were in vain their straining eyes made out a shadowy object projecting slightly beyond the sill.

After a moment or two of suspense Barnes experienced a peculiar, almost electric shock. Someone had seized the tip of the rod; it stiffened suddenly, the vibrations due to its flexibility ceasing. Someone was untying the bit of paper he had fastened to the rod, and with fingers that shook and were clumsy with eagerness.

He had written: "I am outside with a trusted friend, ready to do your bidding. Two of the guards are safely bound and out of the way. Now is our chance. We will never have another. If you are prepared to come with me now write me a word or two and drop it to the ground. I will pass up a rope to you and you may lower anything you wish to carry away with you. But be exceedingly careful. Take time. Don't hurry a single one of your movements." He signed it with a large "B."

It seemed an hour before their eyes distinguished the shadowy head above. As a matter of fact but a few minutes had passed. During the wait Sprouse had noiselessly removed his coat, a proceeding that puzzled Barnes. Something light fell to the ground. It was Sprouse who stooped and searched for it in the grass. When he resumed an upright posture he put his lips close to Barnes' ear and whispered:

"I will put my coat over your head. Here is a little electric torch. Don't flash it until I am sure the coat is arranged so that you can do so without a gleam of light getting out from under." He pressed the torch and a bit of closely folded paper in the other's hand and carefully draped the coat over his head.

Barnes read: "Thank God! I was afraid you would wait until tomorrow night. Then it would have been too late. I must get away tonight but I cannot leave—I dare not leave without something that is concealed in another part of the house. I do not know how to secure it. My door is locked from the outside. What am I to do? I would rather die than to go away without it."

Hastily he wrote: "If you do not come at once, we will force our way into the house and fight it out with the men. My friend is coming up the vines. Let him enter the window. Tell him where to go and he will do the rest. He is a miracle man. Nothing is impossible to him. If he does not return in ten minutes, I shall follow."

There was no response to this. The head reappeared in the window, but no word came down.

Sprouse whispered: "I am going up. Stay here. If you hear a commotion in the house, run for it. Don't wait for me. I'll probably be done for."

"I'll do just as I please about running," said Barnes, and there was a deep thrill in his whisper. "Good luck. God help you if they catch you."

"Not even that could help me then, Good-by. I'll do what I can to induce her to drop out of the window if anything goes wrong with me downstairs."

A moment later he was silently scaling the wall of the house, feeling his way carefully, testing every precarious foothold, dragging himself painfully upwards by means of the most uncanny, animal-like strength and stealth.

Barnes could not recall drawing a single breath from the instant the man left his side until the faintly luminous square above his head was obliterated by the black of his body as it wriggled over the ledge.

We will follow Sprouse. When he crawled through the window and stood erect inside the room, he found himself confronted by a tall, shadowy figure, standing half-way between him and the door.

He advanced a step or two and uttered a soft hiss of warning.

"Not a sound," he whispered, drawing still nearer. "I have come four thousand miles to help you, countess. This is not the time or place to explain. We haven't a moment to waste. I need only say that I have been sent from Paris by persons you know to aid you in delivering the crown jewels into the custody of your country's minister in Paris. We must act swiftly. Tell me where they are. I will get them."

"Who are you?" she whispered tensely.

"My name is Theodore Sprouse. I have been loaned to your embassy by my own government. I beg of you do not ask questions now. Tell me where the prince sleeps, how I may get to his room—"

"You know that he is the prince?" "And that you are his cousin."

She was silent for a moment. "Not only is it impossible for you to enter



"Not a Sound," He Whispered.

his room but if is equally impossible for you to get out of this one except by the way you entered. If I thought there was the slightest chance for you to—"

"Let me be the judge of that, countess. Where is his room?"

"The last to the right as you leave this door—at the extreme end of the corridor. Across the hall from his room you will see an open door. A man sits in there all night long, keeping watch. You could not approach Prince Ugo's door without being seen by that watcher."

"You said in your note to Barnes that the—er—something was in Curtis' study."

"The prince sleeps in Mr. Curtis' room. The study adjoins it, and can only be entered from the bedroom. There is no other door. What are you doing?"

"I am going to take a peep over the transom, first of all. If the coast is clear, I shall take a little stroll down the hall. Do not be alarmed. I will come back—with the things we both want. Pardon me." He sat down on the edge of the bed and removed his shoes. She watched him as if fascinated while he opened the bosom of his soft shirt and stuffed the wet shoes inside.

Then he said: "You are not dressed for flight. May I suggest that while I am outside you slip on a dark skirt and coat? You cannot go far in that dressing gown. It would be in shreds before you had gone a hundred feet through the brush. If I do not return to this room inside of fifteen minutes, or if you hear sounds of a struggle, crawl through the window and go down the vines. Barnes will look out for you."

"You must not fail, Theodore Sprouse," she whispered. "I must regain the jewels and the state papers. I cannot go without—"

"I shall do my best," he said simply. Silently he drew a chair to the door, mounted it and, drawing himself up by his hands, poked his head through the open transom. An instant later he was on the floor again. She heard him inserting a key in the lock. Almost before she could realize that it had actually happened, the door opened slowly, cautiously, and his thin wiry figure

slid through what seemed to her no more than a crack. As softly the door was closed.

For a long time she stood, dazed and unbelieving, in the center of the room, staring at the door. She held her breath, listening for the shout that was so sure to come—and the shot, perhaps! A prayer formed on her lips and went voicelessly up to God.

Suddenly she roused herself from the stupefaction that held her. With feverish haste she snatched up garments from the chair on which she had carefully placed them in anticipation of the emergency that now presented itself. A blouse (which she neglected to button), a short skirt of some dark material, a jacket, and a pair of stout walking shoes (which she failed to lace), completed the swift transformation. As she glided to the window, she jammed the pins into a small black hat of felt. Then she peered over the ledge.

She started back, stifling a cry with her hand. A man's head had almost come in contact with her own as she leaned out. A man's hand reached over and grasped the inner ledge of the casement, and then a man's face was dimly revealed to her startled gaze.

(Continued next week.)

TO SELL AT RETAIL IN MANY CENTERS

U. S. to Dispose of Surplus Household Commodities.

BUSINESS STARTS SEPT. 25

Government to Purchase Certain Necessaries and Keep Open Indefinitely as Part of War on High Prices.

Washington, Aug. 27.—Retail stores for the sale of household commodities included in the surplus stocks of the war department will be established September 25, it was announced here. The stores will be in depot centers and large cities and they will accept and fill mail orders. Continued purchase by the department of certain necessities so that these stores may be continued indefinitely as a part of the government campaign against the high cost of living is understood to be under consideration.

Many Articles to Be Sold.
Huge quantities of socks, underwear, shirts, raincoats, blankets, gloves, tobacco, soap and other articles will be sold at the stores.

Prices on all commodities offered for sale will be fixed to prevent discrimination between the purchasers who buy over the counter and those who purchase through the mail.

To Open Stores in 14 Cities.
All mail orders will be delivered by parcel post, but the policy of making these sales through the post office department is to be discontinued. All such orders will go directly to the stores.

To expedite the mail order sales the post office department has been asked to establish substations in each store. Catalogues quoting prices and giving the location of all stores are being prepared, and will be available at every post office in the United States.

The present plan is to open stores in the 14 zone supply cities—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Jeffersonville, Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, San Antonio, Omaha, El Paso, San Francisco and Washington. The chain will be extended to additional cities as rapidly as possible.

Takes Son to Jail.
Bloomsburg, Pa.—When George Gibson of Catawissa brought his sixteen-year-old son Alfred to the county jail he did it because he wanted to give the boy a lesson, but of the two the father was suffering the most and when the steel doors were closed behind the youth the father burst into tears. The boy confessed to taking \$5 from the store of H. E. Keatnes & Son at Catawissa and was held in default of \$300 bail for court.

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(Continued next week.)

MRS. MORTON F. PLANT



Mrs. Morton F. Plant, an active Red Cross worker who was married to Col. William Hayward, commander of the Fifteenth Infantry, the famous negro regiment.

LIVING MONUMENT TO DEAD

Town to Care for One French Orphan for Each of Its Dead Soldiers.

Chicago.—Twenty-one little French war orphans constitute a living monument which Clarinda, Ill., has planned for its soldier dead. A fund has been contributed by its citizens to care for one little war waif for each Clarinda boy who died in France, that their names may be kept alive, to be loved and honored on both sides of the water. The family of each dead hero will receive letters regularly from one small protegee who during its whole lifetime will hold the name of their boy in reverence.

The Clarinda citizens have paid \$36.50—10 cents a day—for each child's support for a year, through the Fatherless Children of France, an American organization with headquarters at 410 South Michigan avenue, Chicago, co-operating with a similar one in France, of which Marshal Joffre is the head. The organization will see that the adoption of each child is made in the name of and as a memorial to a dead soldier of Clarinda. The town plans to repeat this sum annually for each child until it is capable of caring for itself.

It has been demonstrated that 10 cents a day, to supplement the pension of the same amount which the French government, straining its resources, granted its war orphans at the time of the early disasters, will suffice to keep soul and body together in a little victim of the war and enable it to remain with its mother or other living relative instead of being placed in an institution. From the prayers of such a child the name of the brave American soldier who died for France and the world will never be absent.

HANDY LIGHT-HANDLED RAKE

Eggs Laid in Litter at Rear of House May Be Gathered Without Crawling for Them.

In most large poultry houses some of the hens will lay in the litter at the rear of the house beneath the dropping boards. It is a nuisance to have to crawl under after these eggs and it pays to have a light-handled rake in the poultry house to assist in gathering them. They can be slowly raked out of the litter with little danger of breakage.

Wednesday, September 10

10 O'CLOCK

I WILL SELL AT AUCTION

For Dr. J. B. Beck 71½ acres of good land. On Harrodsburg and Danville pike. Three miles from Harrodsburg, 7 miles from Danville. Three room house, 4½ acres tobacco, and stock barn. Fencing good, well at house, everlasting stock-water. Farm has long frontage of pike, with several fine building sites. Will be subdivided and sold in 3 tracts. Here is your opportunity to buy a small farm well located, and good land.

Buy your home now. Small farms are scarce and hard to find, and increasing in value. Come to this sale, you may get a bargain. Look at the land before sale day. Four acres in tobacco, 30 acres in corn, bal-ancin grass.

Remember we sell the crops, too
Terms and possession as announced at sale. Also will sell some farming implements, consisting in part of 2-horse wagon, disc harrow, mowing machine, riding cultivator, etc.
For further particulars see Dr. J. B. Beck, or W. T. Ewing, Harrodsburg, or

SWINEBROAD

The Real Estate Man

W. E. Moss Adv. Mgr. Lancaster, Ky.

Remember, the S. R. Wilder auction—500 acres near Burgin, September 9; 350 acres, lots and small farms, at Danville September 16 and 17. Watch for advertisements of other auction sales.