

Mr. Barnes, American

By
Archibald Clavering Gunter
A Sequel to
Mr. Barnes of New York

Author of "Mr. Barnes of New York,"
"Mr. Potter of Texas,"
"That Frenchman," Etc.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Burton H. Barnes, a wealthy American touring Corsica, rescues the young English lieutenant, Edward Gerard Anstruther, and his Corsican bride, Marina, daughter of the Paolis, from the murderous vendetta, understanding that his reward is to be the hand of the girl he loves, Enid Anstruther, sister of the English lieutenant. The four fly from Ajaccio to Marseilles on board the French steamer Constantine. The vendetta pursues and as the quartet are about to board the train for London at Marseilles, Marina is handed a mysterious note which causes her to collapse and necessitates a postponement of the journey.

CHAPTER II.—Barnes gets part of the mysterious note and receives letters which inform him that he is marked by the vendetta. He employs an American detective and plans to beat the vendetta at their own game. For the purpose of securing the safety of the women Barnes arranges to have Lady Chartris lease a secluded villa at Nice to which the party is to be taken in a yacht.

CHAPTER III.—Suspicion is created that Marina is in league with the Corsicans. A man, believed to be Corregio Danella, is seen passing the house and Marina is thought to have given him a sign. She refuses to explain to Barnes which fact adds to his latent suspicions.

CHAPTER IV.—Barnes plans for the safety of the party are learned by the Corsicans. The carriage carrying their party to the local landing is followed by two men, are supposed to be Corregio, and they try to murder the American. The cook on the yacht—a Frenchman—is suspected.

CHAPTER V.—The yacht is followed by a small boat. The cook is detected giving signals to the boat. Barnes attempts to throw him overboard, but is prevented by Marina and Enid.

CHAPTER VI.—The cook is found to be innocent of the supposed plot and is forgiven. The party arrive at Nice and find Lady Chartris and her daughter Maud domiciled in the villa rented with Barnes' money. Barnes is amazed to find that Count Corregio is at Nice and is acting the role of admirer to Lady Chartris.

CHAPTER VII.—Barnes and Enid make arrangements for their marriage.

CHAPTER VIII.—The net tightens about Barnes. He receives a note from La Belle Blackwood, an American adventuress and hears that Elijah Emory, his detective, has been murdered by the Corsicans. He learns that the man supposed to be Corregio, who followed the party on their way to the boat, was Sallcetti, a nephew of the count, and that Count Corregio had been in Nice for some time prior to the party's arrival. The count warns Barnes not to marry Enid unless he would have her also involved in the murderous feud.

CHAPTER IX.—Barnes and Enid are married. Soon afterward the bride disappears. Barnes discovers she has been kidnaped and taken to Corsica.

CHAPTER X.—The groom secures a fishing vessel and is about to start in pursuit of his bride's captors when he hears a scream from the villa and rushes back to hear that Anstruther's wife, Marina, is also missing. Barnes is compelled to depart for Corsica without delay, and so he leaves the search for Marina to her husband while he goes to hunt for Enid. Just before Barnes' boat lands on Corsica's shore Marina is discovered hiding in a corner of the vessel. She explains her action by saying she has come to help Barnes to rescue his wife from the Corsicans.

CHAPTER XI.—When Barnes and Marina arrive in Corsica he is given a note written by Enid informing him that the kidnaping is for the purpose of entrapping Barnes, so the vendetta may kill him.

CHAPTER XII.—Barnes and Marina have unusual adventures in their search for Enid. They come in sight of her and her captors in the Corsican mountain wilds just as night approaches. In seeking shelter from a storm the couple enter a hermitage and there to their amazement they discover Tomasso, the foster father of Marina, who was supposed to have been killed by De Bellio's soldiers, and for whose death Barnes had been vendettaded.

CHAPTER XIII.—Tomasso learns that Marina's husband did not kill her brother. Many wrongs are righted. Barnes is surprised in the hermitage by Rochini and Romano, the two detested bandits, who had been searching for him to murder him for his money. The bandits attempt to take away Marina. Barnes dashes out the door. The bandits start to pursue, but as they reach the door both are laid low by Barnes' revolver. Members of the Bellacoscia enter and Barnes is honored for his great service to the community in killing the hated Rochini and Romano. The release of Enid is promised.

CHAPTER XIV.—Barnes is conveyed in triumph to Bocognano. Marina acquaints the Bellacoscia with Sallcetti's plot against her husband and the people are instructed to vote against him at the coming election. Barnes is taken to the mansion of the Paolis to meet Enid. Marina receives a telegram and starts for Bastia to meet her husband.

CHAPTER XV.—Entering the room to greet his wife Barnes is bewildered to find the adventuress La Belle Blackwood, but not Enid. She had been substituted for the American's bride by a shrewd plot. Lieut. Anstruther arrives to find Marina and learns that she has been fired away by the telegram which had been sent by another without his knowledge. The two start in search of Marina.

CHAPTER XVI.—Barnes and Edwin take different roads in their search. Edwin is trapped in a tower where he is made prisoner. In endeavoring to escape he opens a trap door where he finds Emory, the detective, who had been imprisoned there previously. In another secret chamber Tomasso is found imprisoned. Edwin in climbing down a wall sees upon the portico of a farm house Marina and Count Danella sitting and talking together.

"But it may have something to do with his death," observed Danella. "For the blasting of the rock is used much dynamite. I have robbed the



"Edwin, My Husband—My Flowers Brought You to This!"

quarries and have mined the base of yonder turret with the explosive. In it are three men: one, old Tomasso, whose knife entered my brother's heart; the other, an American detective who has placed his Yankee nose into this vendetta, unfortunately for himself. Emory is in that turret. You will give something for these men's lives?"

"For Emory and dear old Tomasso? Certainly—anything in reason." The lovely eyes are filled with a strange alarm.

"Ah, but it must not be in reason—it must be in a passion as exalted as my own—for you. When I direct my nephew, who is bound to me not only by ties of blood, but of gratitude, and who is inflamed against you all by his oath of vendetta for the murdered Musso, he will light the fuse leading to the mine, and puff!—that tower, with every man who's in it, goes into the air!"

"Murderer!" shudders Marina, who has listened astounded.

"Ah, you have sympathy for these poor fellows! That is well; I shall love you more for your tender heart," continues Cipriano softly.

"But the law!" half screams the lady.

"Pah—in Corsica—in a vendetta. Besides, the blown-up tower will be thought but another outrage of the rioting 'Lucchese.' Oh, this is no worse than dagger thrusts or blows from bullets which always come in a blood feud. And in that mined turret," Cipriano's voice is low but terrible, "there is another man, who following the cyclamen flowers you dropped in the road and a few more we added to lead him into that fatal tower—"

"Edwin!" Marina's limbs hardly uphold her.

"The man you foolishly call husband." The finger of the suave wooer points to the turret's upper floor.

Then the game is on! Her eyes following his gesture, a shuddering cry, low, broken, despairing yet full of tenderest love, issues from the girl's lips that have now become white as death itself: "Edwin, my husband—my flowers brought you to this—following for love of me—"

"He is caught like a rat in my trap!" smiles the count.

"Not without warning, wretch!" She would spring from the veranda and run over to the base of the tower and call up to the man whose face she sees outlined against the grillage of the upper window, through whose iron bars he is struggling to force his way.

But Cipriano's strong hand clutches her white arm; he pulls her back into the seat and commands: "Not until you've heard my words, which may save his life!"

"His life? Tell me!"

"I have explained you are not legally this man's spouse," Cipriano's voice is trembling with desire. "Become mine! I had purposed in Nice to give you a very cruel death for what you had to do with my brother's killing, but when I saw your beauties and knew that the little child I had once seen had grown into a Venus, but no marble one, to myself I said: 'Corpo di Baccho, 'tis in the blood of the Danellas to love this woman. I am enamored of her as wildly as poor dead Musso. 'Tis a medieval idea; instead of slaying her, I'll have revenge in winning her—against herself, the wife—also against the husband.'"

"Not against Edwin! You have no cause of hate against him."

"Vendettas are caused by love as well as hate! He dares to call you wife. Each moment my eye rests upon you increases my sweetness to me. You are Corsican—so am I—no foreigner should stand between us."

"Holy Virgin, you expect me to love you?" stammers the girl.

To this he answers with Machiavelian subtlety: "Of course not now, but that may come in time. At present you love Edwin! Because of this devoted love—to save this gentleman you adore—you give yourself to me."

At his hideous mathematics the girl utters a cry of horror.

"If you would save the life of this Englishman whom I should dispatch by my oath of the vendetta, at once your kisses."

you away to some far distant isle of Greece."

"My husband would follow us forever!"

"Not if he knew you were faithless! 'Tis not their English way. A woman who is dishonored is no more to them than a tainted orange."

"Dishonored in his eyes? Never!" cries the girl. "I'd sooner you killed him—sooner you killed me, much! I'm in your power; I'm alone here, helpless in your hands. Kill me. Let my darling go."

As Danella has clutched her, the old neck fastenings of the ancient gown have given way; she plucks its laces further apart over her dazzling bosom and begs: "Bury your stiletto here, but spare my husband."

Her pose only makes her the more alluring to his devouring eyes.

"What, kill the being I adore!" shudders Cipriano. "I have no stiletto and I have taken care no knife is near your desperate hands, my lady. Besides, I'll never let you go. If you will not leave your husband as his wife, leave him as his widow."

"Here, Enrico!" he calls.

The young cavalier with the scar above his eyebrow comes onto the veranda and says: "My uncle, I honor thee, you have decided to give this woman death?"

"No; life—life and love! and death to those who stand between me and her! The torch to the lone orange tree in the center of the lawn—you placed the fuse—when I give the signal to you, light it."

"He will be blown to atoms?" screams the girl.

"Certainly, then you are free to marry me and can say your prayers with a good conscience!" laughs the count.

"My uncle, I am bound to your orders by the oath of the vendetta and thy promise to pay my gambling debts and make me rich again," said the young man. Enrico passes from the veranda and Marina sees the flame of the torch moving to the orange tree. She raises her voice and shrieks with all her force: "Edwin, my husband, you have only a minute to save your life. In some way, descend from the tower! They are going to blow it up!"

And a cry comes to her: "My wife, impossible!"

And over it are frantic curses from the American detective, and the voice of old Tomasso, crooning: "It is the will of the Devil!"

Marina shouts: "I can only give you life by being this devil's!"

The answer of the young sailor comes, calm as the voice of an English officer should be facing death: "Not at that price, darling! Don't think of me!"

Then the tortured girl begins to wring her hands and sob as she sees the men in the tower struggling to break out, struggling as men in the turret of a sinking battleship. The face she adores is before her in its death agony—the weird music from the sea comes faintly to her, telling of woman's devotion, for the barbaric ballads have been selected with uncanny subtlety. For one dread moment, Marina wildly thinks: "I'll save my Edwin's life—then I'll keep myself from this crafty fiend by death in the waves from off the vessel on which he bears me away!" But the thought shoots through her: "My dear husband will believe I am a faithless and dishonored wife!"

To Cipriano, who is triumphantly murmuring: "I see, by your blushes, you're mine!" she shouts: "Never!" and desperately would run to the base of the tower and die with her husband.

But the arms of Danella encircle her, holding her firm as bands of steel, inflamed by the propinquity of her loveliness, the contact of the perfect figure he clasps, the subtle perfume of her waving hair that tosses in tresses about, Cipriano is whispering: "You have still time. Anstruther may yet live, I have not given the signal. Be mine! But one long, sweet kiss to prove it."

"And never dare to look on the face of any true man or woman? No, no!" Frantically she has broken from his arms; she is running towards the torch, desperately hoping to snatch it from the hands of the satyr holding it ready to apply it to the fuse.

After one unsuccessful step to overtake her swift feet, Danella cries savagely: "Fire the mine!"

Enrico, the fuse in one hand, the blazing torch in the other, is applying the flame to it.

There is a sharp whiff of the still night air like the faint snap of a distant whip and the man with the scar falls, as if struck from Heaven.

"Diavolo, what mystery is this? Myself to light the fuse!" cries Cipriano, and runs to the flambeau flaring on the ground.

But Marina, her eyes baneful with agony, mutters: "I am a Corsican," and as he picks up the torch, the desperate girl seizes him with her delicate hands and struggles with him frantically.

But her slight strength is naught to that of his wiry frame. Danella picks up the torch. "Take your choice," he whispers. "The Englishman lives and you are my mistress; he dies, and you are my honored wife!"

He is holding her down with one knee pressed on her. He is moving the torch slowly to the fuse; he is giving her a chance to save the life she loves by despairing surrender—he is giving himself just one more chance to win the beauty of the woman who loathes him—when, even as the flame is licking the fuse, another whiff rends the atmosphere, and from a spot midway between his longing eyes spouts something that is red in the torch flame, and with one shrill scream, "Morte!" Cipriano, springing high in the air, falls stark dead beside Ma-

rina's prostrate form.

The detective and Edwin are thundering at the tower door. Marina staggers to it, with a great effort turns the key and lifts up the steel bars, and stands faintly leaning against the stone masonry as Edwin, springing out, catches her in his arms.

"What did it? What wondrous thing wrought our deliverance?" he asks between kisses that make the girl wife think she is in heaven.

"By gum, was it lightning?" asks the detective, scratching his head. Then hearing a cry he runs down the chasm and moves the swinging bridge into place across the crevice.

Over this comes Mr. Barnes, leisurely walking, humming the sweet romantic tune the minstrels are sending up from the distant sea.

Looking at the two dead men, Tomasso, in his old-time Corsican way, is saying solemnly: "'Tis the hand of God!"

But Marina, running to the American, cries: "I know the 'hand of God!'" and sinks down uttering blessings on the great pistol shot.

"By Goliath, 'tain't possible to do that with a revolver in this light," mutters Emory, pacing off the distance. "Holy smoke, you should be proud of them shots."

"It was that wondrous Orezza water that did it. That toned up my nerves after two days of devilish misery," remarks Burton modestly.

"But grub's what I'm thinking about," says Emory; "you haven't been fed on spoon-victuals for two weeks!" and he dashes into the farmhouse.

Edwin, after slapping Barnes upon the back, has carried his wife, half-swooning now with joy, onto the veranda, when of a sudden, with a roar like that of a hundred-ton gun, the whole tower rises from its base and falls tumbling, a mass of ruined masonry, and on high there is a flight of rocks like fireworks. Fortunately the explosion has been so strong that the missiles nearly all fall into the sea, with great splashing of the water. They can hear the cries of terror from the minstrels in the boat as they hastily row away.

"My last shot wasn't quick enough," says the American dolefully. "Hang me, if Cip didn't get the torch to the fuse before he died." Then Barnes' waddling questions: "Where's my wife? Can't anybody tell me where is my wife?"

"She was not in that tower, anyway; that we know," answered Edwin. "We examined every portion of it, trying to escape."

"Your wife?" cries Marina. "You should know! I left you going up the stairs to her chamber in Bocognano." "She wasn't there?" mutters Burton. "Wasn't there? My servant said she was there. Who was the lady?"

Barnes doesn't answer, but says moodily: "Then I've got to find Enid. My horse is just on the other side of the crevice."

"But you are too tired."

"I'm never too tired to find my best girl," says the poor worn-out fellow, trying to be cheerful, and steps down toward the bridge.

But from a distance a pretty feminine voice is heard crying excitedly: "This is the way to the explosion, young Signore Bellacoscia."

Then Barnes' voice rings, really happy for the first time in twenty-four hours: "Enid, that you? This way, little girl. Look out for the crevice," and his long sought for bride comes cantering across the bridge followed by two young bandits, who announce themselves as Conrad and Rodrigo Bonelli. The next second Enid has been lifted in Barnes' arms from the

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

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