

# GREEN FANCY BY GEORGE BARR MC CUTCHEON

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

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"You haven't made one."  
"By suggestion, Mr. Barnes. It is quite impossible for me to get inside that house. You appear to have the entree. You are working in the dark guessing at everything. I am guessing at nothing. By combining forces we should bring this thing to a head and—"  
"Just a moment. You expect me to abuse the hospitality of—"  
"I shall have to speak plainly, I see." He leaned forward, fixing Barnes with a pair of steady, earnest eyes. "Six months ago a certain royal house in Europe was despoiled of its jewels, its privy seal, its most precious state documents and its charter. They have been traced to the United States. I am here to recover them. That is the foundation of my story, Mr. Barnes."  
"Without divulging the name of the house I will say that its sympathies have been from the outset friendly to the entente allies—especially with France. There are two branches of the ruling family, one in power, the other practically in exile. The state is a small one, but its integrity is of the highest. Its sons and daughters have married into the royal families of nearly all of the great nations of the continent. The present—or I should say, the late ruler, for he died on a field of battle not many months ago, had no direct heir. He was young and unmarried. I am not permitted to state with what army he was fighting, nor on which front he



"Six Months Ago a Royal House Was  
Despoiled of its Crown Jewels, Seal  
and Charter."

was killed. It is only necessary to say that his little state was gobbled up by the Teutonic allies. The branch of the family mentioned as being in exile lent its support to the cause of Germany, not for moral reasons but in the hope and with the understanding, I am to believe, that the crown lands would be the reward. The direct heir to the crown is a cousin of the late prince. He is now a prisoner of war in Austria. Other members of the family are held by the Bulgarians as prisoners of war. It is not stretching the imagination very far to picture them as already dead and out of the way. At the close of the war, if Germany is victorious, the crown will be placed upon the head of the pretender branch. Are you following me?"

"Yes," said Barnes, his nerves tingling. He was beginning to see a great light.

"Almost under the noses of the forces left by the Teutonic allies to hold the invaded territory the crown jewels, charter and so forth, heretofore mentioned, as they say in legal parlance, were surreptitiously removed from the palace and spirited away by persons loyal to the ruling branch of the family. As I have stated, I am engaged in the effort to recover them.

"Now we come to the present situation. Some months ago a member of the aforesaid royal house arrived in this country by way of Japan. He is a distant cousin of the crown, and in a way remotely looked upon as the heir apparent. Later on he sequestered himself in Canada. Our agents in Europe learned but recently that while he pretends to be loyal to the ruling house he is actually scheming against it. I have been ordered to run him to earth, for there is every reason to believe that the men who secured the treasure have been duped into regarding him as the avowed champion of the crown. Now, Mr. Barnes, without telling you how I have

arrived at the conclusion, I am prepared to state that I believe this man to be at Green Fancy, and that in time the loot—to use a harsh word—will be delivered to him there. I am here to get it, one way or another, when that comes to pass."

"What led you to suspect that he is at Green Fancy, Mr. Sprouse?"

"History. It is known that this Mr. Curtis has spent a great deal of time in the country alluded to. As a matter of fact, his son, who lived in London, had rather extensive business interests there. This son was killed in the Balkan war several years ago. It is said that the man I am looking for was a friend of young Curtis, who married a Miss O'Dowd in London—the Honorable Miss O'Dowd, daughter of an Irish peer and sister of the chap you have met at Green Fancy. About six weeks ago a former quarry in the royal household arrived in New York. Through him I learned that the daughter of the gentleman in whose house the senior Mr. Curtis was a frequent guest had been in the United States since some time prior to the beginning of the war. She was visiting friends in the States and has been unable to return to her own land, for reasons that must be obvious. I may as well confess that her father was, by marriage, an uncle of the late ruler."

"Since the invasion and overthrow of her country by the Teutonic allies she has been endeavoring to raise money here for the purpose of equipping and supporting the remnants of the small army that fought so valiantly in defense of the crown. These men, a few thousand only, are at present interned in a neutral country. I leave you to guess what will happen if she succeeds in supplying them with arms and ammunition. Her work is being carried on with the greatest secrecy. To bring the story to a close, I was instructed to keep close watch on the man O'Dowd. I traced him to this place. I was on the point of reporting to my superiors that he was in no way associated with the much-sought-after crown-cousin, and that Green Fancy was as free from taint as the village chapel, when out of a clear sky and almost under my very nose two men were mysteriously done away with at the very gates of the place. The killing of those two men changed the aspect completely. You will certainly agree with me after I have explained to you that the one known as Andrew Roon was no other than the quarry who had undertaken to find the—young woman."

Barnes drew a long breath. His mind was made up. He had decided to pool issues with the secret agent, but not until he was convinced that the result of their co-operation would in no way inflict a hardship upon the young woman who had appealed to him for help. He was certain that she was the fair propagandist described by Sprouse.

"And the young woman, what of her? She would, in any case, be held for examination and—"

"My dear str, I may as well tell you now that she is a loyal subject, and, far from being in bad grace at court, is an object of extreme solicitude to the ambassador. From what I can gather she has disappeared completely. Roon was sent over here for the sole purpose of finding her and inducing her to return with him to Paris."

"And to take the treasure with her, I suppose," said Barnes dryly.

"Naturally."

"Well," began Barnes, introducing a harsh note into his voice, "I should say that if she is guilty of receiving this stolen property she ought to be punished. Jail is the place for her, Mr. Sprouse."

Sprouse put down his coffee cup rather suddenly. A queer pallor came into his face.

"You do not understand the situation. Haven't I made it plain to you that she is innocent of any intent to do wrong?"

"You have said so, Mr. Sprouse, but your idea of wrong and mine may not jibe."

"There cannot be two ways of looking at it, sir," said Sprouse, after a moment. "She could do no wrong."

Whereupon Barnes reached his hand across the table and laid it on Sprouse's. His eyes were dancing.

"That's just what I want to be sure about," he said. "It was my way of finding out your intentions concerning her."

"What do you mean?"

"Come with me to my room," said Barnes, suppressing his excitement. "I think I can tell you where she is—and a great deal more that you ought to know."

In the little room upstairs he told the whole story. The little man listened without so much as a single word of interruption or interrogation. Somewhat breathlessly Barnes came

to the end.

"And now, Mr. Sprouse, what do you make of it all?" he inquired.

Sprouse leaned back in his chair, suddenly relaxing. "I am completely at sea," he said, and Barnes looked at him in surprise.

"By Jove, I thought it would all be as clear as day to you. Here is your man and also your woman, and the traveling bag full of—"

"Right you are," interrupted Sprouse. "That is all simple enough. But, my dear Barnes, can you tell me what Mr. Secretary Loeb's real name is? Why has he established himself so close to the Canadian line, and why the mobilization? I refer to his army of huskies."

"Heirs apparent usually have some sort of a bodyguard, don't they?"

Sprouse was staring thoughtfully at the ceiling. When he finally lowered his eyes it was to favor Barnes with a deep, inscrutable smile.

"I dare say the first thing for me to do is to advise the Canadian authorities to keep a sharp lookout along the border."

## 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 unwholy 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 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."

(To be continued next week)

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