

**GREEN FANCY**  
 BY **GEORGE BARR**  
**MC CUTCHEON**  
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Miss Thackeray put an end to the discussion in a most effectual manner. "Oh, for the Lord's sake, cut it out! Wait till he's dead, can't you?" she whispered fiercely. "You've got all the time in the world to talk, and he hasn't more than ten minutes left to breathe unless that ruble doctor gets here pretty soon. I think he's going



"I Think He's Going Now," She Whispered.

now. Keep still, all of you. Is he breathing, Mr. Barnes? That awful cough just now seemed to— Her eyes were fixed on the still face. "Why—why, how tightly he holds his hand! I can't get it away—he must be alive, Mr. Barnes. Where is that silly doctor?"

Barnes unclasped the rigid fingers of the man called Andrew Paul, and, shaking his head sadly, drew her away from the improvised bier. He and the silvering Mr. Dillingford conducted her to the dining room, where a single kerosene lamp gave out a feeble, rather ghastly light.

"Would you like a little brandy?" inquired Barnes, as she sat down limply in the chair he pulled out for her. "I have a flask upstairs in my—"

"I never touch it," she said. "I'm all right. My legs wobble a little but— Sit down Mr. Barnes. I've got something to say to you and I'd better say it now, because it may come in pretty handy for you later on. Don't let those women come in here, Dilly."

"This afternoon I walked up in the woods back of the tavern to go over some lines in a new piece we are to do later on—God knows when! I could see the house from where I was sitting. Roon's windows were plainly visible. I saw Roon standing at a window looking toward the cross-roads with a pair of field-glasses. Every once in awhile he would turn to Paul, who stood beside him with a notebook, and say something to him. Paul would write it down. Then he would look again, turning the glasses this way and that. Suddenly my eyes almost popped out of my head. Paul had gone away from the window. He came back and he had a couple of revolvers in his hands. They stood there for a few minutes carefully examining the weapons and reloading them with fresh cartridges. Just as I was about to start down to the house—it was a little after six o'clock, and getting awfully dark and overcast—Roon took up the glasses again. He seemed to be excited and called his companion. Paul grabbed the glasses and looked down the road. They both became very much excited, pointing and gesticulating, and taking turn about with the glasses."

"About six o'clock, you say?" said Barnes, greatly interested.

"It was a quarter after six when I got back to the house. I spoke to Mr. Bacon about what I'd seen and he said he believed they were German spies, up to some kind of mischief along the Canadian border. Then about half an hour later you came to the tavern. I saw Roon sneak out to the head of the stairs and listen to your conversation with Jones when you registered. That gave me an idea. It was you they were watching the road for."

Barnes held up his hand for silence. "Listen," he said in a low voice. "I will tell you who they were looking for." As briefly as possible he recounted his experience with the strange young woman at the cross-roads. "From the beginning I was connected this tragically with the place called Green Fancy. I'll stake my last penny that they have been hanging around here waiting for the arrival of

that young woman. They knew she was coming and they doubtless knew what she was bringing with her. What do you know about Green Fancy?"

He was vastly excited. His active imagination was creating all sorts of possibilities and complications, deceptions and intrigues.

Bacon was the one who answered. "People live up there and since we've been here two or three men visitors have come down from the place to sample our stock of wet goods. I talked with a couple of 'em day before yesterday. They were out for a horseback ride and stopped here for a mug of ale."

"Were they foreigners?" inquired Barnes.

"If you want to call an Irishman a foreigner, I'll have to say one of them was. He had a beautiful brogue. The other was an American, I'm sure. Yesterday they rode past here with a couple of swell-looking women. I saw them turn up the road to Green Fancy."

The arrival of four or five men, who stamped into the already crowded hallway from the porch outside, claimed the attention of the quartette. Among them was the doctor who, they were soon to discover, was also the coroner of the county. A very officious deputy sheriff was also in the group.

Mr. Jones called out from the doorway: "Mr. Barnes, you're wanted in there."

"All right," he responded.

The doctor had been working over the prostrate form on the tables. As Barnes entered the room, he looked up and declared that the man was dead.

"This is Mr. Barnes," said Putnam Jones, indicating the tall traveler with a short jerk of his thumb.

"I am from the sheriff's office," said the man who stood beside the doctor. The rest of the crowd evidently had been ordered to stand back from the tables. "Did you ever see this man before?"

"Not until he was carried in here an hour ago."

"What's your business up here, Mr. Barnes?"

"I have no business up here. I just happened to stroll in this evening."

"Well," said the sheriff darkly, "I guess I'll have to ask you to stick around here till we clear this business up. We don't know you an'— Well, we can't take any chances. You understand, I reckon."

"I certainly fail to understand, Mr. Sheriff. I know nothing whatever of this affair and I intend to continue on my way tomorrow morning."

"Well, I guess not. You got to stay here till we are satisfied that you don't know anything about this business. That's all."

"Am I to consider myself under arrest, sir?"

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that. You just stick around here, that's all I got to say. If you're all right, we'll soon find it out. What's more, if you are all right you'll be willin' to stay. Do you get me?"

"I certainly do. And I can now assure you, Mr. Sheriff, that I'd like nothing better than to stick around here, as you put it. I'd like to help clear this matter up. In the meantime, you may readily find out who I am and why I am here by telegraphing to the mayor of New York city. This document, which experience has taught me to carry for just such an emergency as this, may have some weight with you." He opened his bill folder and drew forth a neatly creased sheet of paper. "Read it, please, and note the date, the signature, the official seal of the New York police department, and also the rather interesting silver print pasted in the lower left hand corner. I think you will agree that it is a good likeness of me. Each year I take the precaution of having myself certified by the police department at home before venturing into unknown and perhaps unfriendly communities."

"Yes," said the sheriff dubiously; "but how do I know it ain't a forgery?"

"You don't know, of course. But in case it shouldn't be a forgery and I am subjected to the indignity of arrest or even detention, you would have a nasty time defending yourself in a civil suit for damages. I shall remain here, as you suggest, but only for the purpose of aiding you in getting to the bottom of this affair."

Standing on Jim Conley's front porch a little after sunrise, Barnes made the following declaration: "Everything goes to show that these men were up here for one of two reasons. They were either trying to prevent or to enact a crime. The latter is my belief. They were afraid of me. Why? Because they believed I was trailing them and likely to spoil their game. Gentlemen, those fellows were here for the purpose of robbing the place you call Green Fancy."

"What's that?" came a rich, mellow

voice from the outskirts of the crowd. A man pushed his way through and confronted Barnes. He was a tall, good-looking fellow of thirty-five, and it was apparent that he had dressed in haste. "My name is O'Dowd, and I am a guest of Mr. Curtis at Green Fancy. Why do you think they meant to rob his place?"

"Well," began Barnes dryly. "It would seem that his place is the only one in the neighborhood that would bear robbing. My name is Barnes. Of course, Mr. O'Dowd, it is mere speculation on my part."

"But who shot the man?" demanded the Irishman. "He certainly wasn't winged by anyone from our place. Why, Lord love you, sir, there isn't a soul at Green Fancy who could shoot a thief if he saw one. This is Mr. De Soto, also a guest at Green Fancy. He will, I think, hear me out in upsetting your theory."

A second man approached, shaking his head vigorously. He was a thin, pale man with a singularly scholastic face. Quite an unprepossessing, unsanguinary person, thought Barnes.

"Mr. Curtis' chauffeur, I think it was, said the killing occurred just above this house," said he, visibly excited. "Green Fancy is at least a mile from here, isn't it? You don't shoot burglars a mile from the place they are planning to rob, do you?"

"I'll admit it's a bit out of reason," said Barnes. "The second man could only have been shot by some one who was lying in wait for him."

"Bedad," said O'Dowd, "it beats the devil. There's something big in this business."



"Bedad," Said O'Dowd, "It Beats the Devil."

thing, Mr. Barnes—something a long shot bigger than any of us suspects."

"You'll find that it resolves itself into a problem for Washington to solve," said De Soto darkly. "Nothing local about it, take my word for it. These men were up to some international devilment. There'll be a stir in Washington over this, sure as anything."

"What time was it that you heard the shots up at Green Fancy?" ventured Barnes.

"Lord love you," cried O'Dowd, "we didn't hear a sound. Mr. Curtis, who has insomnia the worst way, poor devil, heard them and sent some one out to see what all the racket was about. The man, it seems, made such a devil of a racket when he came home with the news that the whole house was up in pajamas and peignoirs."

"I think I have a slight acquaintance with the chauffeur," said Barnes. "He gave me the most thrilling motor ride I've ever experienced. God, I'll never forget it."

The two men looked at him, plainly perplexed.

"When was all this?" inquired De Soto.

"Early last evening. He picked up your latest guest at the corners, and she insisted in his driving me to the tavern before the storm broke. I've been terribly anxious about her. She must have been caught out in all that frightful—"

"What's this you are saying, Mr. Barnes?" cut in De Soto, frowning. "No guest arrived at Green Fancy last evening, nor was one expected."

Barnes stared. "Do you mean to say that she didn't get there, after all?"

"She? A woman, was it?" demanded O'Dowd. "Bedad, if she said she was coming to Green Fancy she was spoofing you. Are you sure it was old Peter who gave you that jolly ride?"

"No, I am not sure," said Barnes wearily. "She was afoot, having walked from the station below. I met her at the corners and she asked me if I knew how far it was to Green Fancy, or something like that. Said she was going there. Then along came the automobile, rattling down this very road—an ancient Panhard driven by an old codger. She seemed to think it was all right to hop in and trust herself to him, although she'd never seen him before."

"The antique Panhard fits in all right," said O'Dowd, "but I hanged if the woman fits at all. No such person arrived at Green Fancy last night."

"Did you get a square look at the driver's face?" demanded De Soto.

"It was almost too dark to see, but he was old, hatchet-faced, and spoke with an accent."

"Then it couldn't have been Peter," said De Soto positively. "He's old, right enough, but he is as big as the side of a house, with a face like a full

moon, and he is Yankee to his toes. By gad, Barnes, the plot thickens! A woman has been added to the mystery. Now, who the devil is she and what has become of her?"

CHAPTER VI.

Charity Begins Far From Home, and a Stroll in the Wildwood Fellows.

Mr. Rushcroft was furious when he arose at eleven o'clock on the morning after the double murder, having slept like a top through all of the commotion. He boomed all over the place, vocal castigations falling right and left on the guilty and the innocent without distinction.

"I don't see how you managed to sleep through it," Barnes broke in. "You must have an unusually clear conscience, Mr. Rushcroft."

"I haven't any conscience at all, sir," roared the star. "I had an unusually full stomach, that's what was the matter with me. I take out now, sir, never to eat again as long as I live. A man who cannot govern his beastly appetite ought to defy it, if nothing else."

"I gather from that remark that you omitted breakfast this morning."

"Breakfast, sir? In God's name, I implore you not to refer to anything so disgusting as stewed prunes and bacon at a time like this. My mind is—"

"How about luncheon? Will you join me at twelve-thirty?"

"That's quite another matter," said Mr. Rushcroft readily. "Luncheon is an esthetic tribute to the physical intelligence of man. If you know what I mean, I shall be delighted to join you. Twelve-thirty, did you say?"

"It would give me great pleasure if your daughter would also grace the festal board. I think it is too bad that she has to go about in the gown she wears, Mr. Rushcroft," said Barnes. "She's much too splendid for that. I have a proposition I'd like to make to you later on. I cannot make it, however, without consulting Miss Thackeray's feelings."

"My dear fellow!" beamed Rushcroft, seizing the other's hand. "One frequently reads in books about it coming like this, at first sight, but, damme, I never dreamed that it ever really happened. Count on me! She ought to leave the stage, the dear child. No more fitted to it than an Easter lily. Her place is in the home, the—"

"Good Lord, I am not thinking of—" And Barnes, aghast, stopped before blurring out the words that leaped to his lips. "I mean to say this is a proposition that may also affect your excellent companions, Bacon and Dillingford, as well as yourself."

At twelve-thirty sharp Barnes came down from his room freshly shaved and brushed, to find not only Mr. Rushcroft and Miss Thackeray awaiting him in the office, but the Messrs. Dillingford and Bacon as well.

"I took the liberty, old fellow," said Rushcroft, addressing Barnes, "of asking my excellent co-workers to join us in our repast."

"Delighted to have you with us, gentlemen," said Barnes affably.

The sole topic of conversation for the first half hour was the mysterious slaying of their fellow lodgers. Mr. Rushcroft complained bitterly of the outrageous, high-handed action of the coroner and sheriff in imposing upon him and his company the same restrictions that had been applied to Barnes. They were not to leave the county until the authorities gave the word. One would have thought, to hear the star's indignant lamentations, that he and his party were in a position to depart when they pleased. It would have been difficult to imagine that he was not actually rolling in money instead of being absolutely penniless.

Barnes had been immersed in his own thoughts for some time. A slight frown, as of reflection, darkened his eyes. Suddenly—perhaps impolitely—he interrupted Mr. Rushcroft's flow of eloquence.

"Have you any objection, Mr. Rushcroft, to a more or less personal question concerning your own private—or—misfortunes?" he asked, leaning forward.

For a moment one could have heard a pin drop. Mr. Rushcroft evidently held his breath. There could be no mistake about that.

"It's rather delicate, but would you mind telling me just how much you were stuck up for by the—er—was it a writ of attachment?"

"It was," said the star. "A writ of injunction, you might as well substitute. The act of a polluted, leucopneumonic, parsimonious—what shall I say? Well, I will be as simple as possible—hotel keeper. Ninety-seven dollars and forty cents. For that pitiful amount he subjected me to—"

"Well, that isn't so bad," said Barnes, vastly relieved. He was covertly watching Miss Thackeray's half-averted face as he ventured upon the proposition he had decided to put before them. "I am prepared and willing to advance this amount, Mr. Rushcroft, and to take your personal note as security."

Rushcroft leaned back in his chair and stuck his thumbs in the armbolts of his vest. He displayed no undue elation. Instead he affected profound calculations. His daughter shot a swift, searching look at the would-be Samaritan. There was a heightened color in her cheeks.

"Moreover, I shall be happy to increase the amount of the loan sufficiently to cover your return at once to New York, if you so desire—by train." Barnes smiled as he added the last two words.

"Extremely kind of you, my dear Barnes," said the actor, running his fingers through his hair. "Your faith

in me is most gratifying. I—I really don't know what to say to you, sir."

"May I inquire just how you expect to profit by this transaction, Mr. Barnes?" Miss Thackeray asked steadily.

He started, catching her meaning. "My dear Miss Thackeray," he exclaimed, "this transaction is solely between your father and me. I shall have no other claim to press."

"I wish I—could believe that," she said.

"You may believe it," he assured her. "It isn't the usual course," she said quietly, and her face brightened. "You are not like most men, Mr. Barnes."

"My dear child," said Rushcroft, "you must leave this matter to our friend and me. I fancy I know an honest man when I see him. My dear fellow, fortune is but temporarily frowning upon me. In a few weeks I shall be on my feet again, zipping along on the crest of the wave. I dare say I can return the money to you in a month or six weeks. If—"

"Oh, father!" cried Miss Thackeray. "We'll make it six months, and I'll pay any rate of interest you desire. Six per cent, eight per cent, ten per—"

"Six per cent, sir, and we will make it a year from date."

"Agreed. Get up and dance for us Dilly! We shall be in New York tomorrow!"

"You forget the dictatorial sheriff, Mr. Rushcroft," said Barnes.

"The varlet!" barked Mr. Rushcroft. "It was arranged that Dillingford and Bacon were to go to Hornville in a hired motor that afternoon, secure the judgment, pay the costs, and attend to the removal of the personal belongings of the stranded quartette from the hotel to Hart's Tavern. The younger actors stoutly refused to accept Barnes' offer to pay their board while at the Tavern. That, they declared, would be charity, and they preferred his friendship and his respect to anything of that sort. Miss Thackeray, however, was to be immediately relieved of her position as chambermaid. She was to become a paying guest."

Rushcroft took the whole affair with the most noteworthy complacency. He seemed to regard it as his due, or



Rushcroft Took the Whole Affair With the Most Noteworthy Complacency.

more properly speaking as if he were doing Barnes a great favor in allowing him to lend money to a person of his importance.

"A thought has just come to me, my dear fellow," he remarked as they arose from table. "With the proper kind of backing I could put over one of the most stupendous things the theater has known in fifty years. I don't mind saying to you—although it's rather sub rosa—that I have written a play—a four-act drama that will pack the biggest house on Broadway to the roof for as many months as we'd care to stay. Perhaps you will allow me to talk it over with you a little later on. You will be interested, I'm sure. Egad, sir, I'll read the play to you. I'll—What ho, landlord. Have your best automobile sent around to the door as quickly as possible. A couple of my men are going to Hornville to fetch hither my—"

"Just a minute," interrupted Putnam Jones, wholly unimpressed. "A man just called you up on the phone, Mr. Barnes. I told him you was entertaining royalty at lunch and couldn't be disturbed. So he asked me to have you call him up as soon as you revived. His words, not mine. Call up Mr. O'Dowd at Green Fancy. Here's the number."

The mellow voice of the Irishman soon responded to Barnes' call.

"I called you up to relieve your mind regarding the young woman who came last night," he said. "You observe that I say 'came.' She's quite all right, safe and sound, and no cause for uneasiness. I thought you meant that she was coming here as a guest, and so I made the very natural mistake of saying she hadn't come at all. The young woman in question is Mrs. Van Dyke's maid. But, bless me, how was I to know she was even in existence, much less expected by train or motor or Shanks' mare? Well, she's here, so there's the end of our mystery."

Barnes was slow in replying. He was doubting his own ears. It was not conceivable that an ordinary—or even an extraordinary—maid's maid could

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have possessed the exquisite voice and manner of his chance acquaintance of the day before, or the timidity to order that sour-faced chauffeur about as if— The chauffeur!

"But I thought you said that Mr. Curtis' chauffeur was moon-faced and—"

"He is, bedad," broke in Mr. O'Dowd, chuckling. "That's what deceived me entirely, and no wonder. It wasn't Peter at all, but the rapscallion washer who went after her. He was instructed to tell Peter to meet the four o'clock train, and the blockhead forgot to give the order. Bedad, what does he do but sneak out after her himself, scared out of his boots for fear of what he was to get from Peter. I had the whole story from Mrs. Van Dyke."

"Well, I'm tremendously relieved," said Barnes slowly.

"And so am I," said O'Dowd with conviction. "I have seen the heroine of our busted romance. She's a good-looking girl. I'm not surprised that she kept her veil down. If you were to leave it to me, though, I'd say that it's a sin to carry discretion so far as all that. You see what I mean, don't you?" His rich laugh came over the wire.

"Perfectly. Thank you for letting me know. My mind is at rest. Good-by." As he hung up the receiver he said to himself, "You are a most affable, convincing chap, Mr. O'Dowd, but I don't believe a word you say. That woman is no lady's maid, and you've known all the time that she was there."

At five o'clock he set out alone on a tramp up the mountain road by which the two men had been taken down. His mind was quite busy. Roon and Paul were not dead, had been. They were, no doubt, somewhere. He would have said that the men. He would have said that the Green Fancy were if not for the disclosures of Miss Thackeray and the very convincing proof that they were not shot by the same man.

It was not beyond reason to suppose it was quite probable—that they were trying to cross the border; that they had their real operations confined to the Canadian side of the line. He could not free himself of the suspicion that Green Fancy possessed the key to the situation. Roon and Paul's companion could not have had the slightest interest in his movements, to the instant he encountered the young woman at the crossroads. His busy brain suddenly inferred the possibility of a distinct conclusion. Was she a fellow conspirator? Was she a side worker at Green Fancy in the laid plan to rifle the place?

Could it be possible that she was the confederate of those notorious agents who lurked with sinister presence outside the very gates of the place called Green Fancy?

(Continued next Saturday)

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