

BARNABY RUDGE

By CHARLES DICKENS

To this, the novice made rejoinder that he would taste the vow, though it should choke him; and it was accordingly administered with many impressive circumstances...

My worths of broth and soup, and savory puddings, compounded of such scraps as were to be bought in the Market in the evening time...

CHAPTER IX.

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But Mr. Tappertit, who had a soul above the vulgar herd, and who, on account of his greatness, could only afford to be merry now and then, threw himself on a bench with the air of a man who was faint with dignity...

Miss Miggs, having undone her mistress, as she phrased it (which means assisted to undress her), and having seen her comfortably to bed in the back room on the first floor, withdrew to her own apartment, in the attic story...

Mr. Tappertit drained the proffered goblet to the dregs; then thrust his hands into his pockets, and with a lowering visage walked among the skittles, while his followers (such is the influence of superior genius) restrained the ardent 11, and held his little shins in dumb respect...

Perhaps she wondered what star was destined for her habitation when she had run her little course below; perhaps speculated which of those glimmering spheres might be the natal orb of Mr. Tappertit; perhaps marvelled how they could gaze down on that perfidious creature, man, and not sicken and turn green as chemists' lamps; perhaps thought of nothing in particular...

"The novice," pursued Mr. Tappertit, not exactly in a voice of thunder, for his tones, to say the truth, were rather cracked and shrill, but very impressively, notwithstanding—"where is he?"

That he was not dreaming now, unless he was taking a walk in his sleep, was clear, for every now and then there came a shuffling noise, as though he were engaged in polishing the whitewashed wall, then a gentle creaking of his door; then the faintest indication of his stealthy footsteps on the landing-place outside...

"Have you," said Mr. Tappertit, letting his gaze fall on the party indicated, who was indeed the new knight, by this time restored to his own apparel...

Miss Miggs' sense of hearing, however, having as sharp an edge as her temper, and being of the same snappish and suspicious kind, very soon informed her that the footsteps passed her door, and appeared to have some object quite separate and disconnected from herself...

"And so," he said, when he had taken a few turns up and down, "you—you love your master's daughter?"

Looking out accordingly, and stretching her neck over the handrail, she cried, to her great amazement, Mr. Tappertit completely dressed, stealing down-stairs, one step at a time, with his shoes in one hand and a lamp in the other...

"It is enough," cried Mr. Tappertit hastily, "we understand each other. We are observed. I thank you."

"Here's my mystery!" said the dame, when she was safe in her own room again, quite out of breath. "Oh gracious here's my mystery!"

"Having relieved his mind by this energetic proceeding, he condescended to approach the festive board, and warming himself, at length deigned to preside, and even to enchant the company with a song. After this he rose to such a pitch as to consent to regale the society with a hornpipe, which he actually performed to the music of a fiddle (played by an ingenious member)...

Miss Miggs was back in her room, and had her head out of the window, before an elderly gentleman could be winked and recovered from it. Out he came at the street door, shut it carefully behind him, tried it with his knee, and swaggered off, putting something in his pocket as he went along...

"Good-night, noble captain," whispered the blind man as he held it open for his passage out. "Farewell brave general. Bye, bye, illustrious commander. Good luck go with you for a conceited, bragging, empty-headed, duck-legged idiot."

This conclusion was not arrived at without consideration, and much peeping and peering about; nor was it unassisted by the recollection that she had on several occasions come upon the 'prentice suddenly, and found him busy at some mysterious occupation. Let the fact of Miss Miggs calling him, on whom she stooped to cast a favorable eye, a boy, should create surprise in any breast, it may be observed that she invariably affected to regard all male beings under thirty as mere chits and infants...

forge, she approached the door, and dropping on one knee before it, dexterously blew into the keyhole as much of these fine ashes as the lock would hold. When she had filled it to the brim in a very womanlike and skillful manner, she crept up-stairs again, and chuckled as she went.

"I knew I should quench her," said Sim, rather embarrassed by the circumstance. "Of course I was certain it would come to this, but there was nothing else to be done—if I hadn't eyed her over, she wouldn't have come down. Here keep up a minute, Miggs. What a slippery figure she is! There's no holding her, comfortably. Do keep up a minute, Miggs, will you?"

"I don't go to bed this night!" said Miggs, wrapping herself in a shawl, and drawing a couple of chairs near the window, frowning down upon one, and putting her feet upon the other, "till you come home, my lad. I wouldn't," said Miggs viciously, "no, not for five and forty pounds!"

It was on one of those mornings, common in early spring, when the year, nickle and changeable in its youth, like all other created things, is undecided whether to step backward into winter or forward into summer, and in its uncertainty inclines now to the one and now to the other, and now to both at once—wowing summer in the sunshine, and lingering still with winter in the shade—it was, in short, one of those mornings, when it is hot and cold, wet and dry, bright and lowering, sad and cheerful, withering and genial, in the compass of one short hour...

With that, and with an expression of face in which a great number of opposite ingredients, such as mischief, cunning, malice, triumph, and patient expectation, were all mixed up together in a kind of physiognomical punch, Miss Miggs composed herself to wait and listen, like some fair ogress who had set a trap and was watching for a nibble from a plump young traveller.

He was none of your flippant young fellows, who would call for a tankard of mullied ale, and make themselves as much at home as if they had ordered a hoghead of wine; none of your audacious young swaggers, who would even penetrate into the bar—that solemn sanctuary—and, smiting old John upon the back, inquire if there was never a pretty girl in the house, and where he hid his little chambermaids, with a hundred other impertinencies of that nature...

When this crisis had arrived, Miss Miggs, affecting to be exhausted with labor, and to cling to the window-sill for support, put out her night-cap, and demanded in a faint voice who was there.

It must not be supposed that John observed these several characteristics by other than very slow degrees, or that he took in more than half a one at a time, or that he even made up his mind upon that, without a great deal of very serious consideration. Indeed, if he had been distracted in the first instance by questionings and orders, it would have taken him at the least a fortnight to have noted what is here set down; but it happened that the gentleman, being struck with the old house, or with the plump pigeons which were skimming and courtesying about it, or with the tall maypole, on the top of which a weathercock, which had been out of order for fifteen years, performed a perpetual walk to the music of its own creaking, sat for some little time looking round in silence...

"I don't do it, Simmun," cried Miggs—for that was her pronunciation of his Christian name. "I dursn't do it, indeed. You know as well as anybody, how particular I am. And to come down in the dead of night, when the house is wrapp'd in 'sumbers and weiled in obscurity. And there she stopped and shivered, for her modesty caught cold at the very thought."

"You can give me horse good stabling, can you, and me an early dinner (I am not particular what, so that it be cleanly served), and a decent room—of what there seems to be no lack in this great mansion," said the stranger, again running his eyes over the exterior.

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Table with 4 columns: DAY OF MONTH, DAY OF WEEK, COLOR OF VESTMENTS, and names of saints or events. Includes 'FIFTH MONTH 31 DAYS', 'May', 'THE BLESSED VIRGIN', and '1905'.

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apology for all three. Having set this before him, the landlord was retreating when he motioned him to stay. "There's a house not far from here," said the guest when he had written a few lines, "which you call the Warren, I believe?"

