

FOES



MARY
JOHNSTON



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FOES

CHAPTER I

Said Mother Binning: "Whiles I spin and whiles I dream. A bonny day like this I look."

English Strickland, tutor at Glenfernie House, looked, too, at the feathery glen, vivid in June sunshine. The ash-tree before Mother Binning's cot overhung a pool of the little river. Below, the water brawled and leaped from ledge to ledge, but here at the head of the glen it ran smooth and still. A rose-bush grew by the door and a hen and her chicks crossed in the sun. English Strickland, who had been fishing, sat on the door-stone and talked to Mother Binning, sitting within with her wheel beside her.

"What is it, Mother, to have the second sight?"

"It's to see behind the here and now. Why're ye asking?"

"I wish I could buy it or slave for it!" said Strickland. "Over and over again I really need to see behind the here and now!"

"Aye. It's needed mair really than folk think. It's no' to be had by buying nor slaving. How are the laird and the leddy?"

"Why, well. Tell me," said Strickland, "some of the things you've seen with second sight."

"It taks inner ears for inner things."

"How do you know I haven't them?"

"Maybe 'tis so. Ye're liked well enough."

Mother Binning looked at the dappling water and the June trees and the bright blue sky. It was a day to loosen tongue.

"I'll tell you ane thing I saw. It's mair than twenty years since James Stewart, that was son of him who fled, wad get Scotland and England again intil his hand. So the laddie came frae overseas, and made stir and trouble enough, I tell ye!... Now I'll show you what I saw, I that was a young woman then, and washing my wean's claes in the water there. The month was September, and the year seven-teen fifteen. Mind you, nane hereabouts knew yet of thae goings-

on!... I sat back on my heels, with Jock's sark in my hand, and a lav'rock was singing, and whiles I listened the pool grew still. And first it was blue glass under blue sky, and I sat caught. And then it was curled cloud or milk, and then it was nae color at all. And then I *saw*, and 'twas as though what I saw was around me. There was a town nane like Glenfernie, and a country of mountains, and a water no' like this one. There pressed a thrang of folk, and they were Hieland men and Lowland men, but mair Hieland than Lowland, and there were chiefs and chieftains and Lowland lords, and there were pipers. I heard naught, but it was as though bright shadows were around me. There was a height like a Good People's mount, and a braw fine-clad lord speaking and reading frae a paper, and by him a surpliced man to gie a prayer, and there was a banner pole, and it went up high, and it had a gowd ball atop. The braw lord stopped speaking, and all the Hielandmen and Lowlandmen drew and held up and brandished their claymores and swords. The flash ran around like the levin. I kenned that they shouted, all thae gay shadows! I saw the pipers' cheeks fill with wind, and the bags of the pipes fill. Then ane drew on a fine silken rope, and up the pole there went a braw silken banner, and it sailed out in the wind. And there was mair shouting and brandishing. But what think ye might next befall? That gowden ball, gowden like the sun before it drops, that topped the pole, it fell! I marked it fall, and the heads dodge, and it rolled upon the ground.... And then all went out like a candle that you blaw upon. I was kneeling by the water, and Jock's sark in my hand, and the lav'rock singing, and that was all."

"I have heard tell of that," said Strickland. "It was near Braemar."

"And that's mony a lang league frae here! Sax days, and we had news of the rising, with the gathering at Braemar. And said he wha told us, 'The gilt ball fell frae the standard pole, and there's nane to think that a good omen!' But I *saw* it," said Mother Binning. She turned her wheel, a woman not yet old and with a large, tranquil comeliness. "What I see makes fine company!"

Strickland plucked a rose and smelled it. "This country is fuller of such things than is England that I come from."

"Aye. It's a grand country." She continued to spin. The tutor looked at the sun. It was time to be going if he wished another hour

with the stream. He took up his rod and book and rose from the door-step. Mother Binning glanced aside from her wheel.

"How gaes things with the lad at the House?"

"Alexander or James?"

"The one ye call Alexander."

"That is his name."

"I think that he's had ithers. That's a lad of many lives!"

Strickland, halting by the rose-bush, looked at Mother Binning. "I suppose we call it 'wisdom' when two feel alike. Now that's just what I feel about Alexander Jardine! It's just feeling without rationality."

"Eh?"

"There isn't any reason in it."

"I dinna know about 'reason.' There's *being* in it."

The tutor made as if to speak further, then, with a shake of his head, thought better of it. Thirty-five years old, he had been a tutor since he was twenty, dwelling, in all, in four or five more or less considerable houses and families. Experience, adding itself to innate good sense, had made him slow to discuss idiosyncrasies of patrons or pupils. Strong perplexity or strong feeling might sometimes drive him, but ordinarily he kept a rein on speech. Now he looked around him.

"What high summer, lovely weather!"

"Oh aye! It's bonny. Will ye be gaeing, since ye have na mair to say?"

English Strickland laughed and said good-by to Mother Binning and went. The ash-tree, the hazels that fringed the water, a point of mossy rock, hid the cot. The drone of the wheel no longer reached his ears. It was as though all that had sunk into the earth. Here was only the deep, the green, and lonely glen. He found a pool that invited, cast, and awaited the speckled victim. In the morning he had had fair luck, but now nothing.... The water showed no more diamonds, the lower slopes of the converging hills grew a deep and

slumbrous green. Above was the gold, shoulder and crest powdered with it, unearthly, uplifted. Strickland ceased his fishing. The light moved slowly upward; the trees, the crag-heads, melted into heaven; while the lower glen lay in lengths of shadow, in jade and amethyst. A whispering breeze sprang up, cool as the water sliding by. Strickland put up his fisherman's gear and moved homeward, down the stream.

He had a very considerable way to go. The glen path, narrow and rough, went up and down, still following the water. Hazel and birch, oak and pine, overhung and darkened it. Bosses of rock thrust themselves forward, patched with lichen and moss, seamed and fringed with fern and heath. Roots of trees, huge and twisted, spread and clutched like guardian serpents. In places where rock had fallen the earth seemed to gape. In the shadow it looked a gnome world—a gnome or a dragon world. Then upon ledge or bank showed bells or disks or petaled suns of June flowers, rose and golden, white and azure, while overhead was heard the evening song of birds alike calm and merry, and through a cleft in the hills poured the ruddy, comfortable sun.

The walls declined in height, sloped farther back. The path grew broader; the water no longer fell roaring, but ran sedately between pebbled beaches. The scene grew wider, the mouth of the glen was reached. He came out into a sunset world of dale and moor and mountain-heads afar. There were fields of grain, and blue waving feathers from chimneys of cottage and farm-house. In the distance showed a village, one street climbing a hill, and atop a church with a spire piercing the clear east. The stream widened, flowing thin over a pebbly bed. The sun was not yet down. It painted a glory in the west and set lanes and streets of gold over the hills and made the little river like Pactolus. Strickland approached a farm-house, prosperous and venerable, mended and neat. Thatched, long, white, and low, behind it barns and outbuildings, it stood tree-guarded, amid fields of young corn. Beyond it swelled a long moorside; in front slipped the still stream.

There were stepping-stones across the stream. Two young girls, coming toward the house, had set foot upon these. Strickland, halting in the shadow of hazels and young aspens, watched them as

they crossed. Their step was free and light; they came with a kind of hardy grace, elastic, poised, and very young, homeward from some visit on this holiday. The tutor knew them to be Elspeth and Gilian Barrow, granddaughters of Jarvis Barrow of White Farm. The elder might have been fifteen, the younger thirteen years. They wore their holiday dresses. Elspeth had a green silken snood, and Gilian a blue. Elspeth sang as she stepped from stone to stone:

"But I will get a bonny boat,
And I will sail the sea,
For I maun gang to Love Gregor,
Since he canna come hame to me—"

They did not see Strickland where he stood by the hazels. He let them go by, watching them with a quiet pleasure. They took the upward-running lane. Hawthorns in bloom hid them; they were gone like young deer. Strickland, crossing the stream, went his own way.

The country became more open, with, at this hour, a dreamlike depth and hush. Down went the sun, but a glow held and wrapped the earth in hues of faery. When he had walked a mile and more he saw before him Glenfernie House. In the modern and used moiety seventy years old, in the ancient keep and ruin of a tower three hundred, it crowned—the ancient and the latter-day—a craggy hill set with dark woods, and behind it came up like a wonder lantern, like a bubble of pearl, the full moon.

CHAPTER II

The tutor, in his own room, put down his fisherman's rod and bag. The chamber was a small one, set high up, with two deep windows tying the interior to the yet rosy west and the clearer, paler south. Strickland stood a moment, then went out at door and down three steps and along a passageway to two doors, one closed, the other open. He tapped upon the latter.

"James!"

A boy of fourteen, tall and fair, with a flushed, merry face, crossed the room and opened the door more widely. "Oh, aye, Mr. Strickland, I'm in!"

"Is Alexander?"

"Not yet. I haven't seen him. I was at the village with Dandie Saunderson."

"Do you know what he did with himself?"

"Not precisely."

"I see. Well, it's nearly supper-time."

Back in his own quarters, the tutor made such changes as were needed, and finally stood forth in a comely suit of brown, with silver-buckled shoes, stock and cravat of fine cambric, and a tie-wig. Midway in his toilet he stopped to light two candles. These showed, in the smallest of mirrors, set of wig and cravat, and between the two a thoughtful, cheerful, rather handsome countenance.

He had left the door ajar so that he might hear, if he presently returned, his eldest pupil. But he heard only James go clattering down the passage and the stair. Strickland, blowing out his candles, left his room to the prolonged June twilight and the climbing moon.

The stairway down, from landing to landing, lay in shadow, but as he approached the hall he caught the firelight. The laird had a London guest who might find a chill in June nights so near the north. The blazing wood showed forth the chief Glenfernie gathering-place, wide and deep, with a great chimneypiece and walls of black oak, and hung thereon some old pieces of armor and old weapons. There was a table spread for supper, and a servant went about with a long candle-lighter, lighting candles. A collie and a hound lay upon the hearth. Between them stood Mrs. Jardine, a tall, fair woman of forty and more, with gray eyes, strong nose, and humorous mouth.

"Light them all, Davie! It'll be dark then by London houses."

Davie showed an old servant's familiarity. "He wasna sae grand when he left auld Scotland thirty years since! I'm thinking he might remember when he had nae candles ava in his auld hoose."

"Well, he'll have candles enough in his new hall."

Davie lit the last candle. "They say that he is sinfu' rich!"

"Rich enough to buy Black Hill," said Mrs. Jardine, and turned to the fire. The tutor joined her there. He had for her liking and admiration, and she for him almost a motherly affection. Now she smiled as he came up.

"Did you have good fishing?"

"Only fair."

"Mr. Jardine and Mr. Touris have just returned. They rode to Black Hill. Have you seen Alexander?"

"No. I asked Jamie—"

"So did I. But he could not tell."

"He may have gone over the moor and been belated. Bran is with him."

"Yes.... He's a solitary one, with a thousand in himself!"

"You're the second woman," remarked Strickland, "who's said that to-day," and told her of Mother Binning.

Mrs. Jardine pushed back a fallen ember with the toe of her shoe. "I don't know whether she sees or only thinks she sees. Some do the tane and some do the tither. Here's the laird."

Two men entered together—a large man and a small man. The first, great of height and girth, was plainly dressed; the last, seeming slighter by contrast than he actually was, wore fine cloth, silken hose, gold buckles to his shoes, and a full wig. The first had a massive, somewhat saturnine countenance, the last a shrewd, narrow one. The first had a long stride and a wide reach from thumb to little finger, the last a short step and a cupped hand. William Jardine, laird of Glenfernie, led the way to the fire.

"The ford was swollen. Mr. Touris got a little wet and chilled."

"Ah, the fire is good!" said Mr. Touris. "They do not burn wood like this in London!"

"You will burn it at Black Hill. I hope that you like it better and better?"

"It has possibilities, ma'am. Undoubtedly," said Mr. Touris, the Scots adventurer for fortune, set up as merchant-trader in London, making his fortune by "interloping" voyages to India, but now shareholder and part and lot of the East India Company—"undoubtedly the place has possibilities." He warmed his hands. "Well, it would taste good to come back to Scotland—!" His words might have been finished out, "and laird it, rich and influential, where once I went forth, cadet of a good family, but poorer than a church mouse!"

Mrs. Jardine made a murmur of hope that he *would* come back to Scotland. But the laird looked with a kind of large gloom at the reflection of fire and candle in battered breastplate and morion and crossed pikes.

Supper was brought in by two maids, Eppie and Phemie, and with them came old Lauchlinson, the butler. Mrs. Jardine placed herself behind the silver urn, and Mr. Touris was given the seat nearest the fire. The boy James appeared, and with him the daughter of the house, Alice, a girl of twelve, bonny and merry.

"Where is Alexander?" asked the laird.

Strickland answered. "He is not in yet, sir. I fancy that he walked to the far moor. Bran is with him."

"He's a wanderer!" said the laird. "But he ought to keep hours."

"That's a fine youth!" quoth Mr. Touris, drinking tea. "I marked him yesterday, casting the bar. Very strong—a powerful frame like yours, Glenfernie! When is he going to college?"

"This coming year. I have kept him by me late," said the laird, broodingly. "I like my bairns at home."

"Aye, but the young will not stay as they used to! They will be voyaging," said the guest. "They build outlandish craft and forthfare, no matter what you cry to them!" His voice had a mordant note. "I know. I've got one myself—a nephew, not a son. But I am his guardian and he's in my house, and it is the same. If I buy Black Hill, Glenfernie, I hope that your son and my nephew may be friends. They're about of an age."

The listening Jamie spoke from beyond Strickland. "What's your nephew's name, sir?"

"Ian. Ian Rullock. His father's mother was a Highland lady, near kinswoman to Gordon of Huntley." Mr. Touris was again speaking to his host. "As a laddie, before his father's death (his mother, my sister, died at his birth), he was much with those troublous northern kin. His father took him, too, in England, here and there among the Tory crowd. But I've had him since he was twelve and am carrying him on in the straight Whig path."

"And in the true Presbyterian religion?"

"Why, as to that," said Mr. Touris, "his father was of the Church Episcopal in Scotland. I trust that we are all Christians, Glenfernie!"

The laird made a dissenting sound. "I kenned," he said, and his voice held a grating gibe, "that you had left the Kirk."

Mr. Archibald Touris sipped his tea. "I did not leave it so far, Glenfernie, that I cannot return! In England, for business reasons, I found it wiser to live as lived the most that I served. Naaman was permitted to bow himself in the house of Rimmon."

"You are not Naaman," answered the laird. "Moreover, I hold that Naaman sinned!"

Mrs. Jardine would make a diversion. "Mr. Jardine, will you have sugar to your tea? Mr. Strickland says the great pine is blown down, this side the glen. The *Mercury* brings us news of the great world, Mr. Touris, but I dare say you can give us more?"

"The chief news, ma'am, is that we want war with Spain and Walpole won't give it to us. But we'll have it—British trade must have it or lower her colors to the Dons! France, too—"

Supper went on, with abundant and good food and drink. The laird sat silent. Strickland gave Mrs. Jardine yeoman aid. Jamie and Alice now listened to the elders, now in an undertone discoursed their own affairs. Mr. Touris talked, large trader talk, sprinkled with terms of commerce and Indian policy. Supper over, all rose. The table was cleared, wine and glasses brought and set upon it, between the candles. The young folk vanished. Bright as was the night, the air carried an edge. Mr. Touris, standing by the fire,

warmed himself and took snuff. Strickland, who had left the hall, returned and placed her embroidery frame for Mrs. Jardine.

"Is Alexander in yet?"

"Not yet."

She began to work in cross-stitch upon a wreath of tulips and roses. The tutor took his book and withdrew to the table and the candles thereon. The laird came and dropped his great form upon the settle. He held silence a few moments, then began to speak.

"I am fifty years old. I was a bairn just talking and toddling about the year the Stewart fled and King William came to England. My father had Campbell blood in him and was a friend of Argyle's. The estate of Glenfernie was not to him then, but his uncle held it and had an heir of his body. My father was poor save in stanchness to the liberties of Kirk and kingdom. My mother was a minister's daughter, and she and her father and mother were among the persecuted for the sake of the true Reformed and Covenanted Church of Scotland. My mother had a burn in her cheek. It was put there, when she was a young lass, by order of Grierson of Lagg. She was set among those to be sold into the plantations in America. A kinsman who had power lifted her from that bog, but much she suffered before she was freed.... When I was little and sat upon her knee I would put my forefinger in that mark. 'It's a seal, laddie,' she would say. 'Sealed to Christ and His true Kirk!' But when I was bigger I only wanted to meet Grierson of Lagg, and grieved that he was dead and gone and that Satan, not I, had the handling of him. My grandfather and mother.... My grandfather was among the outed ministers in Galloway. Thrust from his church and his parish, he preached upon the moors—yea, to juniper and whin-bush and the whaups that flew and nested! Then the persecuted men, women and bairns, gathered there, and he preached to them. Aye, and he was at Bothwell Bridge. Claverhouse's men took him, and he lay for some months in the Edinburgh tolbooth, and then by Council and justiciary was condemned to be hanged. And so he was hanged at the cross of Edinburgh. And what he said before he died was '*With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you*' ... My grandmother, for hearing preaching in the fields and for sheltering the distressed for the Covenant's sake, was sent with other godly women to the