

**A CHOICE AMERICAN  
NOVEL; ONLY A  
WOMAN'S HEART:  
OR BARBARA'S RIVAL**

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A Choice American Novel; Only a Woman's Heart: Or Barbara's Rival by Ernest A. Young

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**ERNEST A. YOUNG**

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A Choice American Novel.

"Thou art beautiful, young lady,  
But I need not tell you this,  
For few have borne unconsciously  
The spell of loveliness."

# ONLY A WOMAN'S HEART

-OR-

Barbara's Rival.

-BY-

ERNEST A. YOUNG,

AUTHOR OF

"FRED DANFORTH," ETC.

CHICAGO:

GEO. W. OGILVIE,

200 Lake Street.

1885

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# ONLY A WOMAN'S HEART.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE FIRST SHADOW.

"Going to-day, Arthur?"

"Yes, little Barbara. The train for Boston leaves in an hour, so you must say good-by now."

"I wish you were not obliged to go. It will seem so—so lonely."

The low, sweet tones contained a plaintive little quaver this time. But Arthur Clifton, handsome and debonair as a young prince, only laughed, in his careless, cheerful way.

"Why, you speak as though I were going to California instead of to a city only sixty miles distant," he exclaimed.

Then, seeing a bright tear glistening on the girl's cheek, he bent and kissed it away, gently adding:

"I shall come back again one of these days—come back after the little wild flower which I shall claim for my own. Then we shall never have to leave each other while we both live. Only a little while, Barbara."

His cheerfulness, his earnest assurance, and the bright hope for the future which they imparted, lifted for a moment the gloom of parting. The shadow upon Barbara's fair face was chased away by her brightest smile.

"I suppose you think I'm very silly, Arthur," she said, her earnest brown eyes meeting his laughing blue ones.

"No, no. Indeed, I'm glad you do feel a little like crying because I'm about to leave you. It is a way all true women have of showing real regret. But for me, the future seems too full of joy to admit of even momentary gloom."

A brief silence fell between them. The gentle September breeze murmured through the trees, whose great arms formed an arch over their heads.

Then the distant whistle of a locomotive came to their ears, terminating the pleasant reflections to which they had given their minds.

"The train is coming, and I must go," Arthur exclaimed.

He took both Barbara's hands in his own; he bent and kissed her lips.

"You will write to me?" she questioned.

"Yes, often."

"And you will return as soon as your uncle's affairs are settled?"

"Yes—perhaps sooner, and, in the meanwhile, you will prepare your bridal trossseau, little Barbara; for the holidays will soon be here and then—"

She reached up and placed one hand upon his lips.

"See that you are as punctual as the holidays," she cried, blushing, laughing, and half crying. And the next moment she stood alone, gazing through her tears after the straight, agile figure as it disappeared beyond the low swaying branches that overhung the path.

For several minutes she stood there, listening to the roar of the approaching express. Another hoarse, short whistle announced its nearer approach. Then the sounds ceased—but only for an instant. The train started away from the village station, and its noisy passage was resumed. Arthur Clifton had gone, and Barbara Grey became suddenly oppressed by a sense of loneliness such as she had never experienced before.



In vain did she strive to entertain the brighter hopes which were hers. A nameless foreboding banished anticipation. Arthur had gone to the great city. He would be occupied with its brisk life, its brilliant society, its constant whirl of business and gay activity. How could he be lonely or downcast amid such surroundings?

Barbara turned and slowly walked toward the cottage that nestled among the maples and elms. In that picturesque spot she had dwelt during the nineteen years of her life. Yet it was not like a home to this orphan girl. Granny Perkins and her crippled husband had never been like parents to her. They were harsh, exacting, uncultured in speech and tastes. They were selfish and ungrateful, too, for the cottage and the cultivated acres surrounding it belonged to Barbara, and they lived upon her bounty.

Toward this cottage she slowly bent her steps. As she did so, a shadow fell across her path and a gruff voice rudely broke in upon her reflections.

"So he's gone at last, Bab?" the voice said familiarly.

She recoiled with a little cry of alarm.

"You, Herman Brady?" she exclaimed in startled surprise.

The young man laughed loudly. He was a stalwart fellow of splendid physical development, yet so slouching in gait and attitude that one could not admire his height or breadth.

"Afeard of me, be you?" he asked, peering down at her from under the broad brim of his palmleaf hat.

He had stepped directly into her path, and stood with both hands sunk deep in his pockets. His head was bent slightly forward; his blue denim trousers were tucked in his boot-tops; his air was one of insolent familiarity.

"I'm not afraid, Herman. But I didn't know any one was near until you spoke," Barbara replied in her sweet, quiet tones.

The fellow shifted his feet awkwardly.

"Clifton's gone to Boston, has he?" he queried, cautiously.

"Yes, I suppose he has," she answered.

"And you've been out here bidding of him good-by?"

"How do you know that I have, Herman? You would not stoop to playing eavesdropper, I hope."

A flush, painfully vivid, dyed the fair cheeks of the girl as she said this.

The young man shifted his feet again and laughed in his rude fashion.

"I guessed that was what you was out here for," he said, evasively. Then, with a trace of eagerness in his tones:

"I ain't sorry he's gone, for my part."

"Why do you dislike Arthur Clifton, Herman?"

"He's too high-toned to suit me, for one thing. And he thinks nobody else has any rights but him, when he's 'round."

"I am sure he treated you civilly. But you were very rude toward him."

"Rude, was I?"

Bradly spoke angrily. Then, hastily modifying his tones, he added:

"I s'pose a feller that works on a farm and wears cheap clo'es, and can't talk Latin and Hebrew, seems rude to such as Arthur Clifton. But he didn't have to plant and dig potatoes when he oughter been going to school. I did. But you used to think I was all right before he come here to rusticate through the summer and put on city airs."

Barbara stepped to the side of the speaker and laid one hand gently upon his arm.

"Don't speak in that way, Herman!" she exclaimed.

"Why shouldn't I? It's true, and you know it."

"Have I given you cause to think me any the less your friend?"

"I don't know; maybe he's to blame for your not taking so much notice of me as common. He's kept so close to your heels that you haven't had a chance, I s'pose."

"Stop, Herman! You shall not talk to me like that. Mr. Clifton is a gentleman, and my friend."

"How do you know what he is, Barbary? I guess maybe I could tell you something 'bout him that you don't mistrust. Them city chaps have a high time in the country, making every good-looking girl think they're in love with 'em. But I thought you was sharp enough to see through his game. Has he been making love to you?"

Barbara drew back; one hand was flung outward impetuously; her fair cheeks flushed with indignation.

"You have no right to ask me that, Herman Bradley!" she cried.

The young man stared at her a moment in dumb surprise. Then he lifted one large, strong hand and pushed the palm-leaf hat back from his forehead.

"I hain't no right, eh!" he echoed, speaking with earnest deliberateness. Then, as she made no response, he went on:

"Didn't I promise to stick by you if ever you needed a friend? And didn't you say that I might be a brother to you, if nothin' more? That was only a year ago; and here you be flarin' up like I had been trying to abuse you. You think I'm jealous of that Clifton. Well, p'rhaps I be. But I wouldn't come in betwixt you and an honest chap. I've sworn to stick by you as a friend, though, and I'm going to do it, even if you hate me for it."