

NAXOS
AudioBooks

COMPLETE
CLASSICS
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The
**Black
Moth**

Georgette Heyer

Read by **Julian Rhind-Tutt**



CD 1

1	The Black Moth	3:51
2	Chapter I: At the Chequers Inn, Fallowfield	7:33
3	Six years drifted slowly by...	8:05
4	Mr Warburton wheeled and came back to the fireplace...	9:21
5	Mr Warburton stayed the night at the Chequers...	7:06
6	Chapter II: My Lord at the White Hart	7:35
7	It was not in Jim's nature to inquire...	7:44
8	Jack perceived that it was time he took a hand in the game.	7:44
9	'And now, Mr. Chilter, I have a grudge against you,'...	4:26
10	Chapter III: Introducing The Hon. Richard Carstares	8:41
11	For a long minute there was no word spoken.	5:23

Total time on CD 1: 77:35

CD 2

1	'Jack had played Milward before me...'	9:26
2	'Jack bowed to the room and again to Dare.'	7:45
3	Chapter IV: Introducing The Lady Lavinia Carstares	8:04
4	'But, Lavinia, you can control your passions,'...	7:12
5	He let go Richard's arm and flung himself down...	8:26
6	Chapter V: His Grace of Andover	6:30
7	'Tis only that we are so different,'...	7:56
8	He rose leisurely.	4:51
9	Chapter VI: Bath: 29 Queen Square	9:38
10	Understanding came to his grace...	7:49

Total time on CD 2: 77:43

CD 3

1	'Good God, Tracy!'	6:26
2	Chapter VII: Introducing Sundry New Characters	8:01
3	His Grace of Andover saw enough to guess...	7:47
4	He had been one of those who had tried to accost Diana...	7:20
5	In the course of the evening his Grace won...	9:03
6	Chapter VIII: The Biter Bit	5:59
7	Jack drained his tankard...	8:39
8	The man moved a little...	7:59
9	Chapter IX: Lady O'Hara Intervenes	8:23
10	For some time in lock-up Carstares had cudgelled his brain...	9:47

Total time on CD 3: 79:30

CD 4

1	Chapter X: Lady O'Hara Retires	7:37
2	Carstares never raised his eyes...	9:12
3	Chapter XI: My Lord Turns Rescuer and Comes Nigh Ending His Life	9:17
4	'Obey,' ordered the Duke.	8:53
5	Chapter XII: My Lord Dictates a Letter and Receives a Visitor	7:28
6	'Dear Miles... True to my promise... I write to you...'	7:55
7	Carstares turned his head quickly.	6:40
8	Chapter XIII: My Lord Makes his Bow	5:27
9	Jack gazed, and gazed again...	7:20
10	She rose to her feet.	9:36

Total time on CD 4: 79:30

CD 5

1	He looked towards the house...	4:06
2	Chapter XIV: Mistress Diana is Unmaidenly	8:14
3	'I crave your pardon.'	6:09
4	The slim hand against the tree trunk was clenched...	6:58
5	Chapter XV: O'Hara's Mind is Made Up	5:57
6	For a long while my lord sat silent...	9:21
7	Carstares sat down and started to pull on one boot.	8:51
8	Shortly after, Jim arrived...	9:39
9	Chapter XVI: Mr Bettison Proposes	5:21
10	For a full minute after the great front door had shut...	6:12
11	Miss Betty smiled reluctantly.	8:02

Total time on CD 5: 78:58

CD 6

1	Chapter XVII: Lady O'Hara Wins Her Point	5:43
2	Having satisfied herself...	7:11
3	As soon as they had rounded a corner...	6:17
4	Chapter XVIII: Enter Captain Harold Lovelace	9:16
5	Lady Lavinia went off on her gratified cavalier's arm...	9:50
6	They walked across the grass together...	7:06
7	Chapter XIX: The Reappearance of His Grace of Andover	7:11
8	Richard did not return until it was time to prepare...	7:40
9	In Clarges Street they were joined by Sir John Fortescue...	8:31
10	At that moment two late-comers entered the room...	7:21

Total time on CD 6: 76:12

CD 7

1	The heavy curtain swung noiselessly aside.	6:25
2	Chapter XX: His Grace of Andover Takes a Hand In The Game	9:02
3	'It is, my child, unwise to play with fire.'	9:48
4	Chapter XXI: Mrs Fanshaw Lights a Fire and O'Hara Fans the Flame	8:06
5	Richard rose to his feet and walked away to the window...	9:45
6	Chapter XXII: Developments	9:08
7	His Grace of Andover, meeting his sister...	7:43
8	Lovelace called nearly every day at Wyncham House...	5:30
9	She sprang up, clutching at his arm...	6:08
10	Chapter XXIII: Lady Lavinia Goes to the Play	5:59

Total time on CD 7: 77:39

CD 8

1	As the curtain fell...	5:14
2	She felt a mad desire to cling to his hand...	9:25
3	His Grace's expression was quite indescribable	6:59
4	Chapter XXIV: Richard Plays the Man	9:44
5	His Grace of Andover arose betimes...	5:54
6	'Mr Warburton, sir.'	5:26
7	Chapter XXV: His Grace of Andover Captures the Queen	5:08
8	The hedges retained their greenness...	8:28
9	Never had she seemed more beautiful...	5:09
10	His Grace leaned towards her...	7:24
11	Chapter XXVI: My Lord Rides to Frustrate His Grace	8:39

Total time on CD 8: 77:38

CD 9

1	He emerged and tossed a heavy, many-caped coat...	9:35
2	Chapter XXVII: My Lord Enters by the Window	9:05
3	Diana started at the mode of address...	9:31
4	Chapter XXVIII: In which what Threatened to be Tragedy...	7:03
5	O'Hara very gently slipped one arm beneath...	8:03
6	"'Twas for that ye wanted to see me on Friday?"	7:12
7	For a moment there was silence in the room.	6:15
8	Chapter XXIX: Lady O'Hara is Triumphant	4:48
9	Molly ran straight into her husband's arms.	6:13
10	Epilogue	5:33

Total time on CD 9: 73:24

Total time on CDs 1–9: 11:38:09

Georgette Heyer

(1902–1974)

The Black Moth

The Black Moth is set significantly earlier than most of Georgette Heyer's novels. While most of her books take place during (or just prior to) the Regency era, the events of *The Black Moth* occur around the middle of the eighteenth century, during the reign of George II. Published in 1921, and written to entertain her sick brother when she was just seventeen, it was Heyer's first novel. Though there is an occasional roughness and immaturity to it that betrays her inexperience as a writer, it bears many of the hallmarks of her later romances, being dramatic (it features not one, but two kidnappings), witty and peppered with historical insight. It presents a number of soon-to-be-familiar characters, including a beautiful, fiery heroine, a dashing noble hero and an almost cartoonishly wicked villain (the eponymous Moth).

As with so much of Heyer's later work, it is possible to date the novel quite precisely through her habit of incorporating real people and events into her narrative. For instance, the real-life sisters Elizabeth and Maria Gunning, celebrated society beauties, appear in *The Black Moth* as marginal characters. They arrived in London from Ireland in 1750, taking the town by storm. Both sisters, though from relatively humble origins, married into the nobility – Elizabeth in January 1752 to the Duke of Hamilton and Maria in March of the same year to the Earl of Coventry. Lady Lavinia Carstares, the beleaguered hero John's sister-in-law, makes reference to this when she discloses that 'Twill interest you to hear that Miss Gunning is to marry Coventry. 'Tis all over Town this last Week.' Her remark puts the story around 1751–52. Heyer's penchant

for weaving together fact and fiction is already much in evidence, even in this early novel, and as with her subsequent books the historical references are integrated so cleanly into the narrative that they pass almost unnoticed – although her knowledge of the period became increasingly extensive, she always wore her erudition lightly. Her command of period vocabulary and spelling (in the characters' correspondence) is astonishing and conjures up a convincing atmosphere.

Another classic Heyerism reveals itself in the close attention she pays to the fashions of the day. She devotes many pages to a discussion of her characters' clothing, which becomes an integral part of their identities. Jack Carstares, the male protagonist, sets the mould for so many of his later counterparts by dressing with exquisite taste and grace – coats, shirts, shoes and wigs are described in loving detail. By contrast, the not-so-honourable Hugh Tracey Clare Belmanoir, Duke of Andover (the villain of the piece, naturally) dresses in simple black and silver – hence his designation as the ominous 'black moth'.

The plot hinges on the revelation that Jack – disgraced six years earlier when he was unfairly accused of cheating at cards – is not, in fact, still living abroad, but has returned to England disguised as a highwayman. The highwayman was both a fiction and a reality in eighteenth-century Britain; mythologised and reviled, admired and feared, highwaymen were a serious problem on the lawless cross-country roads around London. Jack clearly belongs to the (almost entirely apocryphal) tradition of so-called 'gentlemen robbers', glamorous aristocratic criminals who supposedly lived by a strict code of chivalry – Heyer is careful to reassure us that he 'could not bring himself to terrorise women or old men'. Highwaymen appear more than once in Heyer's work, for instance in *The Convenient Marriage*, and they also held a powerful fascination for eighteenth-century readers; Thomas de Quincey called them 'the very noblest specimens of man', and they were the subject of countless popular biographies, novels and tall tales. In basing *The Black Moth* around this gallant figure, Heyer adopts some of the tropes and trappings

of the eighteenth-century gothic romance.

Born in London in 1902, Heyer inherited a love of books from her father, George Heyer, and two of her closest childhood friends, Carola Oman and Joanna Cannan, with whom she spent many hours discussing literature, both grew up to be authors. Heyer showed promise from an early age, though it was not until 1926 that she had her first major success, with *These Old Shades* (a kind of sequel to *The Black Moth*). By this time, she had been married for a year to a young mining engineer named Ronald Rougier and had already published five books.

From 1932 until her death in 1974, Heyer produced novels at the extraordinary rate of almost one a year, spawning a new literary genre – the Regency romance. Yet despite her undeniable success, she was frequently troubled by plagiarism and financial problems. Throughout the fifties and sixties, her company Heron Enterprises was a source of contention between her and the tax authorities, and a large chunk of the profits from books written around this time went towards

paying back money to the Treasury. Plagiarism also became a problem – from the 1950s onwards, several other writers traded on her popularity by writing novels using names, phrases and events from her books. She was even accused by some of her fans of publishing substandard work under a pseudonym. Although Heyer sought legal advice on several occasions, she never chose to sue.

The Black Moth, though a product of Heyer's adolescence, is a remarkably fully-formed work. Despite being somewhat more gothic and melodramatic than her later novels, it sparkles with vitality and humour, and features the same historical colour that would come to distinguish her authorial voice.

Notes by Caroline Waight



Julian Rhind-Tutt is a prominent British actor, working extensively in television, film, radio, and theatre. He is a familiar face on both British and American television, having had starring roles in cult comedies *Green Wing* and *Keen Eddie*, as well as appearing in *Marple*, *Black Books* and *Oliver Twist*. Film credits include *The Madness of King George* (1994), *Notting Hill* (1999), *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001) and *Stardust* (2007). In 1992 he received the Carleton Hobbs award and has since featured in more than fifty radio productions.

Credits

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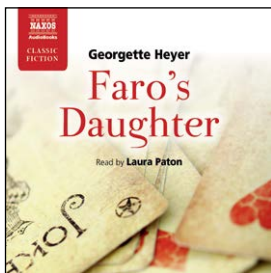
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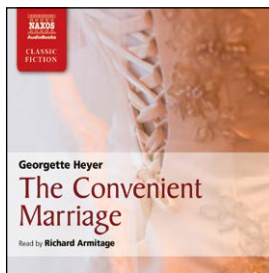
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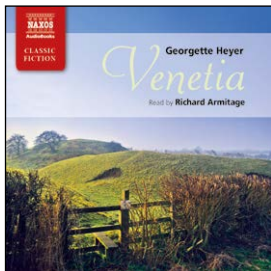
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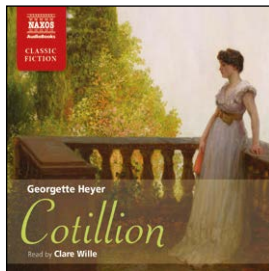
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