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AudioBooks

COMPLETE
CLASSICS
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Georgette Heyer

Farô's Daughter

Read by **Laura Paton**

1	Faro's Daughter	6:25
2	Mr Ravenscar was unmoved.	8:21
3	Lady Mablethorpe followed the direction of her nephew's gaze...	5:59
4	He took his leave of her, and departed.	7:57
5	Two	6:57
6	Miss Deborah Grantham, encountering Mr Ravenscar's hard grey eyes...	7:02
7	Ravenscar walked forward.	9:24
8	It was soon seen that Mr Ravenscar...	9:51
9	Three	8:41
10	'Admirable!' murmured his lordship.	8:16
11	There was nothing Mr Ravenscar wanted less than to hear his cousin..	7:23
12	'I see,' said Ravenscar.	6:12
13	Four	6:37
14	Lady Bellingham's mouth drooped pathetically.	8:24
15	Miss Grantham hung her head.	8:25
16	At the outset, it had been no part of Lady Bellingham's plan...	8:31
17	Five	6:24
18	'Are you comfortable, Miss Grantham?'	9:11
19	She had the satisfaction of knowing that she had succeeded...	7:17
20	The door of the house was opened to Miss Grantham...	9:36

21	This announcement roused Lady Bellingham to open her eyes again...	3:10
22	Six	8:35
23	Mr Ravenscar, meanwhile, had driven away in a towering rage...	8:33
24	Her call followed hard upon the arrival from Tunbridge Wells...	9:18
25	Seven	8:24
26	There were quite a number of fashionable people...	9:35
27	He received this information with raised brows...	8:24
28	Over her head Adrian's and Deborah's eyes met.	9:07
29	Eight	5:05
30	Lady Bellingham, coming into the room presently...	8:09
31	Mr Ravenscar accepted this invitation...	6:57
32	Ravenscar came back to the table, and sat down...	7:07
33	Nine	8:28
34	'I shall go distracted!' said Lady Bellingham...	7:17
35	He read it with lifting brows of astonishment.	7:43
36	Ten	7:46
37	Miss Grantham, finding herself quite unable to explain her conduct...	8:01
38	Lady Bellingham's thoughts were diverted...	8:21
39	Lady Bellingham was quite crushed by this severity...	6:53
40	Eleven	4:16

41	Silas somewhat sulkily produced two lengths of whipcord...	6:10
42	She fetched one of the branches of candles from the supper-room...	7:35
43	Mr Ravenscar drank the wine which was being held to his lips...	7:31
44	Mr Ravenscar, on whom the first part of this speech...	7:19
45	Twelve	6:31
46	She stared at him for a moment in the blankest astonishment...	7:15
47	Kit swallowed, and said with what dignity he could summon up...	8:13
48	Her eyes flew to his wrist...	6:52
49	Thirteen	8:29
50	If the truth were told...	9:09
51	'Who bound up Ravenscar's hands?'	8:58
52	There was no card-party that evening.	8:33
53	Fourteen	7:01
54	Lord Mablethorpe and Miss Laxton exchanged stricken glances.	7:35
55	Miss Grantham was silent for a moment.	6:56
56	This suggestion found no favour at all with Miss Grantham.	7:20
57	Miss Laxton, however, refused to be comforted.	7:56
58	Fifteen	8:31
59	Ravenscar had had his perch-phaeton brought round to the door...	8:03
60	Miss Ravenscar thought this over.	7:56

61	Sixteen	7:15
62	He looked down at her with misgiving.	7:06
63	Lady Bellingham sighed.	6:38
64	Miss Grantham blinked and gasped under this hail of words...	8:46
65	Seventeen	7:48
66	'Good God!' exclaimed Ravenscar...	8:28
67	From the head of the stairs an arctic voice said...	8:44
68	In a very short time the door opened again.	8:48

Total time7: 8:46:14

Georgette Heyer

(1902–1974)

Faro's Daughter

Though Georgette Heyer's name is synonymous with the Regency romance, she also wrote numerous novels set somewhat earlier in the Georgian era, including *Faro's Daughter*. The events of the novel take place during or shortly after the year 1795, while King George III was still on the throne. Though the historical context of the period does not play such a foreground role here as it does in much of her other work, like *The Grand Sophy* or *Venetia*, it provides an ever-present backcloth to the escapades of the characters. As is so often the case with Georgette Heyer's work, historical references are woven so deftly into the fabric of the book that they pass almost unnoticed – although her knowledge of the Georgian period was extensive, she wore her erudition lightly.

Our first clue as to when the events take place appears early on in the book, when the old-fashioned Lady Mablethorpe reacts with horror to Max Ravenscar's hair, observing that it is 'cut into something perilously near a Bedford crop'. The Bedford Crop was a hairstyle devised and made popular by Francis Russell, 5th Duke of Bedford (1765–1802) in 1795. Prior to this date, most men wore their hair powdered and tied back, but when the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806) passed a tax on hair powder on 23 February 1795, one of several emergency taxes brought in to mitigate the severe financial consequences of war with the French, Bedford organised a protest, the results of which were reported in the *London Chronicle*:

The noblemen and gentlemen who agreed to the Duke of Bedford's cropping proposal a few days ago at Woburn Abbey, when a general cropping and combing out of hair took place, were Lords William Russell, Villers. Paget, Sir H. Featherstone, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Ant. Lee, Mr. R. Lee, Mr. Trevers, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Day, and Mr. Vernon. They entered into an engagement to forfeit a sum of money if any of them wore their hair tied or powdered within a certain period. Many noblemen and gentlemen in the County of Bedford have since followed the example. It has become general with the gentry in Hampshire, and the ladies have left off wearing powder.

The short, cropped cut became symbolic not only of protest against the taxes, but of political allegiance to the Whigs. Lady Mablethorpe's horror, then, is more than simple personal preference, and in this one throwaway reference

Heyer is able to subtly impart a wealth of information about the two characters.

In general, dress is an important means of characterisation for Heyer. When Miss Grantham dresses herself up to look 'like some dreadful creature from the stage', she wears bright, clashing colours and heavy make-up, including patches. Patches – small pieces of black fabric that were attached to the face – and excessive rouge became unfashionable around 1790, and Miss Grantham deliberately uses them to suggest a lack of style and elegance.

The gaming house presided over by Deborah and her aunt plays a central role in the novel. The eighteenth century was seized by a passion for gambling, and such houses, often run by aristocratic women, were common – a 1796 estimate put the number of gambling clubs in London at forty-three, six of which were run by women. Faro was a popular game, as was E.O. (even/odd), a precursor of roulette. Lady Bellingham may have been modelled on such infamous real-life characters as Mrs. Albinia Hobart (1738–1816), who later became Lady Buckingham, and

Lady Sarah Archer (d. 1801). An influx of French aristocrats after the Revolution saw an increase in the number of gaming houses, but there was an immediate backlash, and the 1790s saw the so-called 'faro ladies', or 'faro's daughters', get an increasingly bad press. Lady Bellingham's comments on the 'absurd stuff written in the daily papers about the wickedness of gaming-houses' probably refer to the many articles written on the dangers of gambling. Women like Deb Grantham were routinely characterised in these moralistic screeds as lascivious, dissipated and predatory – precisely the qualities that Ravenscar assumes her to possess.

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. She showed promise from an early age, writing her first book, entitled *The Black Moth*, at the age of seventeen. It was published, with George Heyer's help, in 1921, initiating a

steady stream of novels. In 1926, Heyer had her first major success with *These Old Shades*. 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.

Faro's Daughter was published in 1941, as Heyer was reaching the height of her popularity. It bears all the hallmarks of her best romances, being witty, charming and brimming with historical insight. It features a number of familiar comic characters, including the kind-hearted, ineffectual Lady Bellingham, the bewildered *ingénue* Phoebe, and the dissipated, ageing rake Lord Ormskirk. Miss Grantham and Mr Ravenscar are flawed, though ultimately likeable protagonists, and their many misunderstandings and entanglements only make them more endearing.

Notes by Caroline Waight



Laura Paton trained at LAMDA where she won the St Philip's Prize for Poetry and the Michael Warre Award. She has toured the UK extensively in productions as varied as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. Among her other recordings for Naxos AudioBooks are Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, both volumes of *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, and *Anna Karenina*.

Credits

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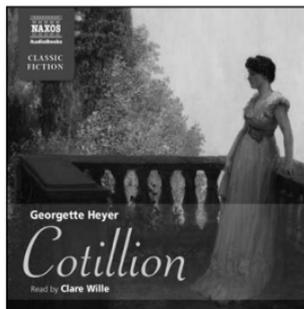
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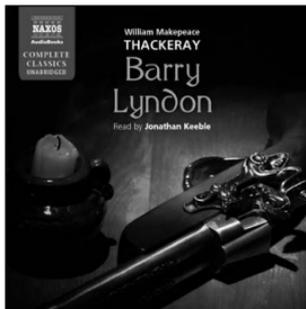
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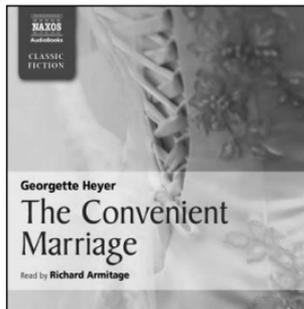
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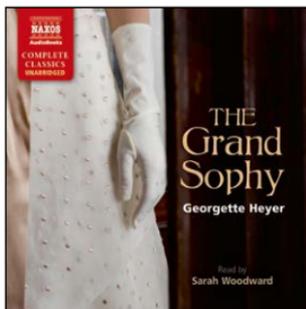
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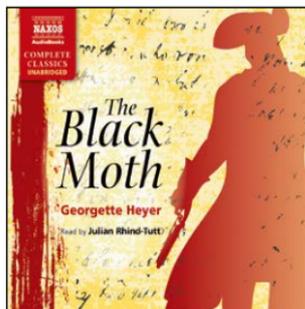
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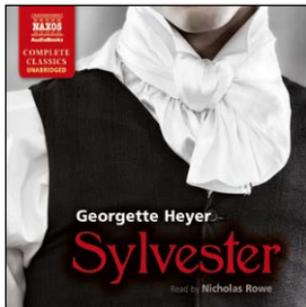
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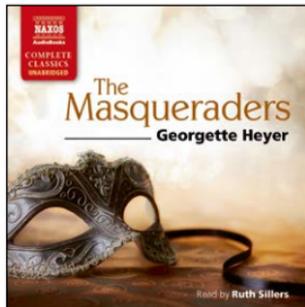
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Georgette Heyer

Faró's Daughter

Read by **Laura Paton**

Fiery, strong-willed Deb Grantham, who presides over a gaming house with her aunt, is hardly the perfect wife for the young and naive Lord Mablethorpe. His lordship's family are scandalised that he proposes to marry one of 'faro's daughters', and his cousin – the proud, wealthy Max Ravenscar – decides to take the matter in hand. Ravenscar always gets his way, but as he and Miss Grantham lock horns, they become increasingly drawn to each other. Amidst all the misunderstandings and entanglements, has Ravenscar finally met his match?



Laura Paton trained at LAMDA where she won the St Philip's Prize for Poetry and the Michael Warre Award. She has toured the UK extensively in productions as varied as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*. Among her other recordings for Naxos AudioBooks are Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, both volumes of *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, and *Anna Karenina*.

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