GREEN CHARTREUSE
by
HEYWOOD
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Dramatic Club

March 1928
GREEN CHARTREUSE

A One-Act Play

By

CHESTER D. HEYWOOD
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By Chester D. Heywood
“Green Chartreuse” by Chester D. Heywood, was presented by the Players’ Club of Worcester, Massachusetts, for the first time on any stage, on the night of April 19, 1923, with the following cast:

Sir George Packenham, Mr. Roland F. Andrews
Brooke, Mr. Eugene L. Caton
The Man, Mr. Chester D. Heywood
The Woman, Mrs. Maxwell Savage

Play staged by the author.
Directed by Mr. J. L. Leigh.

For permission to produce this play, address the author at 70 Winter St., Worcester, Massachusetts.
CHARACTERS

SIR GEORGE PACKENHAM.
BROOKE, HIS MAN SERVANT.
THE MAN.
THE WOMAN.

Time: About eight-thirty in the evening, late summer. Present day.

GREEN CHARTREUSE

Note: In this description of the stage setting right and left are the right and left of the audience as they face the stage.

Before the curtain rises there is heard off stage the sound of a summer storm; the crash and roll of thunder, the whistling of the wind and the beating of the rain. A pause—the curtain rises.

You are looking into a rather small, attractive study. In the center of the back wall is a door leading into a hall-way. On either side of this door, the full width of the back wall, are book cases extending half way to the ceiling. Over the left hand book case is a half sliding window with red draperies. In the left hand back corner is a round table and chair and a lighted standing lamp with a red silk shade.

In the right wall near the rear a door leads out to a butler's pantry and down stage from this door is a small serving table with a low screen in front of it on which burn two candles under red shades. A few feet in front of the table toward the foot lights, a large easy chair faces a grate fire. There is a small table at the right and a long one at the back of the easy chair. On the long table is a lighted reading lamp with a red silk shade.

On the left side of the room a door leads into a bed chamber and midway between this door and the
easy chair is a small table set rather well forward toward the foot-lights. This table is covered with a white cloth and two lighted but unshaded white candles in low silver candle-sticks stand on the right and left front corners. The room is not brightly lighted. It appears to be illuminated by the lamps and candles.

At the table between the lighted candles, facing the audience, sits Sir George Packenham, a man about 35 years old, lean and active looking with a healthy tan which makes his bright eyes even brighter. He is dressed in dinner clothes and is finishing, with deliberation, the salad course of his dinner. Behind him at his left shoulder is his servant Brooke—sleek and neat but rather shifty looking. He stands motionless but follows with his eyes every movement of his master.

It is absolutely quiet except for the distant roll of the thunder and the click of silver against the plate as Sir George eats his salad. Suddenly the handle on the bedroom door clicks, turns, seemingly unaided, and the door swings slowly open. Sir George starts, looks at the door and then at Brooke in a questioning way. The man moves quietly over to the door, shuts it, and returns to the table, removes the salad bowl and plate and goes with them to the pantry. Sir George watches him out of the corner of his eye. Brooke returns with fruit and a
plate, placing them in front of Sir George who helps himself and begins to eat.

There is now heard off stage a peculiar whistle. Brooke starts—Sir George raises his eyes but does not let the man see that he has heard anything. In a moment Brooke picks up a plate from the table and moves deliberately toward the pantry, places the plate on the serving table and makes a quick, silent exit through the **HALL** door.

Sir George is eating mechanically but listening intently. There is a pause. The window over the book case suddenly slides open and the curtains blow into the room. There is the distant mutter of thunder and the whistle of the wind. Sir George looks up with a momentary expression of fear, rises from the table and goes quickly to the window which he shuts and fastens. He looks intently toward the pantry, listening, then slowly turns toward the table. As he turns, Brooke silently and cautiously enters from the **HALL**, makes a quick movement to the serving table, picks up a plate as if he had just come from the pantry and starts toward the center. Sir George wheels and looks at him. He stops dead, plate in hand, and they face each other, for a moment, in silence. Brooke shows his astonishment that Sir George is up from the table.

Sir George returns to his seat and Brooke clears the fruit and goes to the pantry. Sir George
seemingly pays no attention to him but in reality is alive to everything he does.

Brooke returns with a tray on which are cigars, cigarettes and a small lighted spirit lamp. Sir George takes a cigarette and a light as it is offered. He smokes in silence for a moment then rises, as Brooke pulls out his chair, and saunters slowly to the easy chair in front of the fire, seats himself, picks up his paper from the small table and begins to read.

Brooke clears the table and retires to the pantry. Sir George while apparently reading, is listening intently as Brooke moves about the room, and when he has gone rises and moves quietly up to the pantry door. He then goes to the table back of the easy chair, opens the center drawer and takes out an automatic pistol, which he hastily examines, and puts into his right coat pocket. He returns quickly to his chair and is reading as Brooke enters with a tray on which is a small coffee urn, an after dinner coffee cup, two decanters of liqueur, one of green and one of yellow chartreuse and 'TWO' liqueur glasses. He places the tray on the small table at Sir George's right and pours a demi-tasse. He then picks up the decanter of 'YELLOW' chartreuse and in a moment when Sir George does not seem to be aware of him he speaks:
BROOKE. Liqueur, sir? (pause.)

Brooke. [Repeating] Liqueur, Sir?

Sir Geo. [Not looking up] Please.

Brooke. What kind, sir?

Sir Geo. Chartreuse.

Brooke. Green or yellow, sir?

Sir Geo. [Lowers paper and after a short pause] GREEN. [Brooke shoots a glance at him, puts down the YELLOW, picks up the decanter of GREEN, pours a glass slowly, looking intently at Sir George who has returned to his paper, puts the glass at Sir George's elbow beside the demi-tasse and starts to go.]

Sir Geo. Brooke.


Sir Geo. I shall not want anything more this evening—good night.

Brooke. Good night, sir. [He pauses near hall door on his way out, listening, and then looks intently at Sir George sitting before the fire. Sir George reaches for his coffee—Brooke quickly exits. Sir George glances right and left under his brow, starts to drink coffee, hesitates, makes sure that Brooke has left the room then rises and quietly moves to pantry door, looks out, crosses to bedroom door, listens, returns to small table back of easy chair, picks up liqueur glass, holds it up to light and looks through it (at this moment there is a clap of thunder and a lightning flash) Sir George starts then says in a low, tense distinct voice
“green chartreuse”—tips back head and is starting to drink when—KILL ALL LIGHTS—stage black—sound off stage of a slammed door—running steps, a woman’s shrill scream which is cut short by a revolver shot. Pause—(sound of liqueur glass smashing as he drops it. Pause—light on in hall so it shines on Sir George who is now standing at R of hall door, horrified.)

SIR GEO. [Yells] Brooke, BROOKE!

BROOKE. [Sound of light switch, lights on—Brooke enters from pantry to L of hall door facing Sir George]. Yes, Sir George?

SIR GEO. [Greatly agitated] Brooke, for God’s sake what was it?

BROOKE. [Very calmly] What was what, sir?

SIR GEO. Why—didn’t you hear anything?

BROOKE. No, Sir George.

SIR GEO. [Looking sharply at him] Where have you been the last few minutes, Brooke?

BROOKE. In the butler’s pantry, sir, with the second maid, sorting the silver.

SIR GEO. Sorting the silver, eh?—and you heard nothing?


SIR GEO. [After a pause] That will do—I am going to my room. [He moves toward door, stops and
turns quickly] Brooke. See that the doors and windows are tightly locked. [Brooke bows in acknowledgement of the order. Sir George exits. Brooke remains standing, perfectly motionless, for 30 seconds. He then becomes tense, moves center and quickly and deftly pulls an automatic pistol from his right hip pocket, looks at it then about the room as if wondering where to hide it. He suddenly spies the half open drawer from which Sir George has taken his automatic and hurriedly puts the gun in it, closes the drawer, moves to bed room door, listens, is returning with a cat-like tread to center as telephone rings. He hastily takes up receiver, and as he speaks, in a low tense voice, he keeps his eyes upon the bed room door].

Hello—yes—no—fifteen minutes [quickly hangs up as bed room door opens. Sir George enters. Brooke pretends to be busy at the table].

Sir Geo. Was that call for me?
Brooke. What call, sir?
Sir Geo. Didn’t the telephone bell ring?
Brooke. No, sir.
Sir Geo. Are you sure?
Brooke: Perfectly, Sir George.
Sir Geo. [Looks at him, then to front, turns toward bed room, faces Brooke] Have you been here all the time?
Brooke: Ever since you left the room, sir.
Sir Geo. And you heard nothing?
BROOKE: Nothing, Sir George. [Sir George shoots a look at him and then exits. Brooke watches him off, moves toward telephone, picks it up, is about to call—hesitates, puts it down—picks up liqueur glass, fills it with green chartreuse, holds it up and looks at the light through it—(a deep toned bell off stage tolls nine o'clock) Brooke starts—then says in a low, tense distinct voice "green chartreuse," tips back head and is starting to drink when—KILL LIGHTS—stage black—sound off stage of a slammed door—running steps—a woman's shrill scream which is cut short by a revolver shot. Pause—sound of liqueur glass smashing as he drops it. Pause—light on in hall to shine on Brooke, who is L of door. Sound of light switch—lights on. Sir George in dressing sack is moving hurriedly toward hall door—he stops R as he sees Brooke, he is grasping a pistol in his right hand. SUDDENLY THE HALL DOOR WHICH IS BETWEEN THEM OPENS AND A MAN STEPS QUICKLY IN. He has a black soft hat pulled over his eyes and a dark overcoat or cape buttoned up tight about his neck.

[the following is rapid but tense and distinct]

MAN. [Sharply to Sir George] Put that gun down [he does so] Don't move, either of you. Are you Sir George Packenham?

SIR GEO. I am.

MAN. Dine here alone this evening?
SIR GEO. I did.

MAN. Hear anything a few minutes ago?

SIR GEO. [Astounded] HEAR ANYTHING?—why I—

MAN. [Sharply] I said, did you hear anything!

SIR GEO. [Breathlessly] a slammed door—running steps—a woman’s scream—a shot. I—

MAN. [Quickly] How many times?

SIR GEO. TWICE—I was—

MAN. [Turning suddenly on Brooke] You the butler?

BROOKE. Yes, sir.

MAN. YOU hear anything?

BROOKE. Yes, sir, the same as Sir George, I—

MAN. [Sharply] How many times? [Brooke hesitates].

MAN. [More sharply]. I said, how many times!

BROOKE. ONCE, SIR.

MAN. ONCE, you heard it but once! [With passion] Great God, I’ve heard it a thousand times—day after day—night after night—the slammed door—the running steps—the woman’s scream—the shot—DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? [They stare—quickly but very distinctly] I AM THE AUTHOR OF THIS PLAY—IT WAS TO HAVE BEEN A MODERN MURDER MYSTERY—I NEVER COULD GET IT FURTHER THAN THIS!

Kill Lights—Curtain.
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