

# **Beatrice**

A Victorian Classic

*Anonymous*

**A Victorian Classic Beatrice**

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# Foreword

I first discovered *Beatrice* many years ago, and was immediately fascinated. It was exotic and sexy, of course, and I liked that. It gave a study of human relationships in an England long ago, and I liked that too.

There was a historical mystery hidden in its pages - who had written it, and when?

Much more important than all that, the figure of Beatrice herself.

Let us deal with the mystery first. Picking up clues from the text, we can place the novel in England at the very end of Victoria's reign or at the start of Edward VII's. That is, roughly between 1895 and 1905. It is set in the countryside just outside London, at a time when the British Empire ruled much of the world and had yet to show signs of future collapse.

The society portrayed was class based. The large working class, that we meet only as servants, supports the gentry who do not seem to trouble with working for a living. Perhaps they were country landlords and lived from their rents.

Beatrice is married but separated, and she and her sister have been left under the guidance of their aunt and uncle, while their father visits his plantation in Madras.

All of these things are perfectly plausible, and the story seems to have been written by someone who belonged to that society at that time. But who?

I am guessing that the novel was written by a man. Why? Firstly, men of the period wrote more often than women. Secondly, the story does not *feel* feminine to me. Call it intuition, but I would bet that Anonymous was male.

Whoever he was, the author has covered his trail well. I can find no record of an edition published before 1923, but it is quite possible that the author set the story a decade or two before he was writing and that would fit with a 1923 publication date.

On the other hand, I have read that the first edition was produced by Charles Carrington, a famous publisher of erotica who worked mostly from Paris, and in our target period. I have not found *Beatrice* on the list of books he is known to have published, but the absence of evidence is not proof of anything.

No convincing candidate for author has been offered, but that does not stop the conspiracy theorists. I have even seen the Scottish writer of children's books Catherine Sinclair assigned the role. She would seem unlikely and, as she died in 1864, she is definitely out of the running.

Then there is the free-form English used in the book. At first sight, it seems far too modern. English literature of the time is typified by Conrad, Shaw, Forster all of who wrote modern stories in more or less standard English. Those are the people we remember, but there were many other writers experimenting with Modernism as the new century dawned. The Futurist movement advocated the abandonment of conventional syntax and the uninhibited and often bizarre use of images, and this book is firmly in that camp.

I do not care who wrote the book, I am simply grateful that they did so. The fear of exposure as a writer of sexy books is something modern writers can only try to imagine.

I have been delaying talking about Beatrice herself. Recently, *Fifty Shades of Grey* has had amazing success. It has been bought in its millions, even more than all the Harry Potter books

combined, and mostly by mature women. They seem to like its blend of hopeless romance, introspection and sexual submission. The book may even represent a new literary sub-genre - Mommy Porn.

Personally, I think that is terrible. Grown women fantasising about long term sexual submission? What are they thinking of? Don't they have any pride, or political sense?

Beatrice is the antidote. She believes in sexual submission - as applied to her friends and acolytes. Not to her, except for brief interludes she will choose herself.

Beatrice has a spine. She is strong, female and sexy. The author is in love with her, and so am I. I am sure you will be too.

*Jacqueline George, Cooktown, 2013*

I do not like old rooms that are brown with the smell of time.

The ceilings in my husband's house were too high. They ran away from me. In the night I would reach up my hands but I could not touch them. When Edward asked me what I was doing I said I was reaching my hands up to touch the sky. He did not understand. Were we too young together?

Once a week he would remove my nightdress and make love to me.

Sometimes I moved, sometimes I did not. Sometimes I spoke, sometimes I did not speak. I did not know the words to speak. We quarrelled. His stepmother would scold us. She could hear. In the large, high-ceilinged rooms voices carried as burnt paper flies, rising, tumbling, falling, drifting.

The doors were always half open. Sometimes - lying in bed as if upon a huge cloud - I would play with his prick, his cock, his pintle. Pintle. I do not like the 'nt' in it. Sometimes I would turn and he would rub it against the groove in my bottom. I liked that. I lay with my nightgown up, my back to him, and had my dreams. The rubbing was nice. My cheeks squeezed tightly on his cock.

The night before I left we quarrelled. Our words floated about, bubble-floating. They escaped through the door. His stepmother netted them. She entered and spoke to us. The oil lamps were still lit.

"I will bring you wine - you must be happy," she said. Her nightgown was pale and filmy. I could see her breasts. Balloons. I could see the dark blur of her pubis, her pubic hair, her wicked.

"Wine, yes - 'twould be splendid," Edward said. He was pale and thin. Like his pintle. I had nursed it in my palm even while we quarrelled. It was the warm neck of a bird. I did not want it in my nest.

I heard his stepmother speaking to the maid downstairs. The maid was always up. There were clinking-bottle sounds, glasses sounds. We lay still, side by side. His stepmother returned and closed the door, bearing a tray. She poured wine. We sat up like people taking medicine.

"Angela, dear, lie down," Edward said. His father had married her when Edward was fourteen. During the past months then of his father's absence in India, she had encouraged him to use her Christian name. I judged her about forty. A woman in full bloom.

Wine trickled and spilled on the sheet as she got in.

Edward was between us - between the betweening of us. The ceiling grew higher. The sounds of our drinking sounded. The wine was suitably chilled. My belly warmed it. We were people in a carriage, going nowhere. We indulged ourselves in chatter. The bottle emptied quickly.

"We must sleep, we must lie down," Angela said. "I will stay with you until you sleep."

I heard her voice say that. The ceiling came down. It had never done that before. I passed my hand up into it and it was made of cloud. We lay down side by side on our backs. Our breathing came. There was warmth. Edward laid his hand on my thigh. He moved my nightgown up inch by inch. He touched. into my fur, my nest, he touched. The lips were oily, soft. I did not move. His hand on the other side of him moved. I could feel the sheet fluttering there.

Our eyes were all open. I did not look but I knew. Soft, wet sounds. I tried not to move my bottom. Would the maid enter to remove the tray? Edward's fingertips found my button. I felt rich, forlorn, lost. My legs stretched down and widened. My toes moved. On the other side of him the sheet fluttered still.

Edward moved. His finger was oily with my oily. He moved on his hip and turned towards me. I felt the pronging of his prong. His hand cupped my nest. "Kiss good-night, Beatrice."

His voice was above me, yet far away - a husk blown on the wind. I moved my face sideways to his. "Yes, kiss good-night," Angela said. Her voice was far away - a leaf floating on the sea. His mouth met mine. His charger quivered against my bared thigh. Fingers that were not my fingers ringed the stem of his cock. His finger entered me. I moved not. Our mouths were pasted together, unmoving. I was running through meadows and my father was chasing me. My

mother and my sister, Caroline, were laughing. I screeched. Their voices drifted away on to the far horizon and waved there like small flags. Moving my hand I encountered Angela's hand - the rings upon her fingers that ringed around his cock. I moved my mouth away from Edward's and stared up at the ceiling. It had gone high, gone high again. Birds drifted through it. Edward's hand eased my thighs wider. I lay limp, moist in my moistness. The bed quivered as if an engine were running beneath it. I found my voice. "Kiss good-night," I said. My mind was not blank.

There was coloured paper in it. A kaleidoscope. I watched the swirling, the patterns. Would love come? Edward turned. His knob burned in his turning against my thigh. His nightgown was fully raised. His lips fell upon Angela's. Her hand held his cock still. At first she lay motionless. The sheet moved, tremored, rippled up and down. In her breathings were the secrets of the passageways at night. Edward groaned in his groaning. The meshing of their lips. I heard their tongues. Voices. "Edward - no, not now!" They were speaking in ordinary speech. "Oh, you bad boy!"

The sheet became tented. I felt the opening of her thighs - the warmth exuding from her thick-furred nest. Her bottom shifted, nicking the sheet, smack- bounce of flesh to flesh. Her knees bent. Between her thighs she encompassed him. Small wet sounds. Slithery sounds. I held my legs open. I was gone, lost. They did not know me.

The bed heaved, shook. I turned my head. I looked as one looks along a beach at other people. Did I know them?

Her nipples stood like tiny candles in brown saucers, laved by Edward's tongue. Her hands gripped his shoulders. Her eyes and lips were closed as if she were communing. Between her thighs his loins worked with febrile jerkings. Tiny squishing sounds. Her bottom began to move, jerking to his jerks. Expressionless I moved the sheet down with my foot. It wrinkled, crinkled, slid away, betraying the curves of her calves. His mouth buried her mouth beneath his mouth. Her hands clawed his back. Their movements became more frenetic. The pale pistoning of his pintle cock.

Moaning in the night. Bliss of it. Was there bliss of it? I wanted to be held down. I wanted a straw to chew or a piece of long sweet grass whose root is white.

Angela was panting. It was a rough sound. The squelching of his indriving, outsucking. His balls smacked her bottom. The sound pleased me. Through their puffing cheeks the working of their tongues. "Ah! dearest, let me come!"

Edward raised himself on forearms, loins flashing. Her hands clutched his arms. I was looking. Sideways along a cloud, a beach. The lamps were lit still. Had they forgotten the lamps?

"Oh, Edward!" Kiss good-night. He collapsed, he shuddered, in his quivering quivered. Her calves rose and gripped his buttocks. A final thrust, indriven to the root. He seep'd in his seeping, his jetting done. Like balloons bereft of air they collapsed. They were quiet. I could hear the ceiling. The floor creaked. Was the bed coming undone?

Edward rolled between us and was quiet. The night was done. The limp worm of his penis-pole lolled wet against my thigh. Sticky. It oozed. It was too small now for my nest.

In the night he stirred and mounted me. Drowsy in coils of sleep I did not resist. The oil lamps flickered low. Did she watch? From moment to moment I jerked my bottom in long memories of knowing. I wore drawers in my dreams. My bottom was being smacked. It was being smacked because there was a cock in me. In our soft threshings my legs spread. My ankle touched hers. She did not stir. Our feet rubbed gently together. Our toes were intimate.

Edward worked his work upon me and was done. The spurtings came in long, strong trills of warmth. Warm wet. Sperm trickled down my thighs. I lay inert. I had not come. He had not pleased me. My nipples were untouched.

In the morning I left. Was that the reason? No. I do not know. Angela smiled at me and said. "It was the wine. We must make him happy." Her bottom was large and round beneath her peignoir. Edward kissed us. We took breakfast with the windows open. I kissed them both when I left. I was kind to them.

Houses seem smaller when one returns to them after a long period.

The rooms shrink. They carry dead echoes. One looks for things one had left, but the drawers have been emptied. Furniture is moved. Even the small pieces of paper one had wished to keep have vanished. I like small pieces of paper. My notes to myself. Addresses, birthdays, anniversaries.

My notes to myself had all gone. Did I take them? Two reels of silk cotton that no longer matched my dresses lay in the back of a drawer in my dressing table. One was mauve and the other a pale blue. They were pretty. Once I used to keep biscuits in a jar on the top shelf of my wardrobe. Someone had eaten them. I told my sister Caroline.

“Beatrice, that was three years ago. You ate them,” she said. No one looked surprised. It was always a quiet house. We hate those who shout. They knew I would come back.

“You should never have married,” Father said. He looked at me sternly and added, “Did I not tell you? How old are you?”

“I am twenty-five,” I replied, as if I were addressing a stranger. Dust swirled in the sunlight as I drew back the blue velvet curtains and raised the sash of my window.

“The maid does not clean,” Father said. Did he see reproach in my eyes? He stood close to me and I could feel his bigness. The gold chain of his watch gleamed in the pale sun. There was a silence because we like silences. A baker’s cart trundled down the street. From the side entrance of the house opposite a maid appeared, her white cap askew on her head. She raised her hand and the baker’s man reined in his horse. A cat prowled by the railings. Father stirred. He moved past me. His thighs brushed my bottom. “I must return soon to Madras, Beatrice. You will have comfort here.”

His finger traced dust on the top of the rosewood cabinet by my bed.

“I shall be comfortable, Father. You will be gone long? Madras is so far.”

“A year, my pet, and no more. Your Uncle Thomas will afford protection to you and your sister. Had you but returned before we might have walked with the early summer sun in the meadow.”

“Yes, Father.”

My uncle and my Aunt Maude lived close by. They had done so for years. We were close. Father’s hand was upon my shoulder. I felt smaller. He stood behind me like a guard, a sentry. Did I like Uncle Thomas? I asked with my mind but not my mouth. They were brothers. There was kinship.

“Shall Jenny be there, too?” I asked. In my unmoving I asked. The baker’s cart had rolled on with a tinkling of harness. The street lay quiet again as in a photograph. The maid had gone, loaf-clutching in her maidness, her maidenhood. Into a darkness of scullery, a glowering of gloom behind windows. Fresh smell of fresh bread.

“Jenny has grown as you have. You will like her more. She is fuller of form and pretty. In his guardianship of her your uncle has moulded her well,” Father replied.

My buttocks moulded. Beneath my long silk dress they moulded. Proud in their fullness they touched his form lightly, gracing his grace with their curves. I felt the pressure of his being. There was comfort between us as in the days before my marriage. We had lain in the meadow and seen the flashing of wings, birds’ wings, the butterflies. I leaned back. Father’s hands touched my hair, the long gold flowing of my hair. The moulding of my bottom, ripe with summer.

“We shall drink wine. Come let us celebrate your return,” Father said.

I followed the first touch of his hand. We descended. The polished banister slid smooth beneath my palm. Caroline waited on us, neat on a chaise-longue. At father's bidding she drew the bell-pull. The maid Sophie appeared. Wine was ordered. In the coolness of its bottle glass it came. Father poured. The sofa received us. Like two acolytes we sat on either side of him. Sophie had gone. The door closed. In our aloneness we sat.

"We shall French-drink," Father said. It was a pleasantry we had indulged in before. I was but twenty-one then, Caroline seventeen. The wine glistened now again upon our lips. Our heads lay upon his shoulders. We sipped our sips while Father filled his mouth more deeply and turned his face to mine. His beard and moustache tickled. My parted lips received wine from his mouth. There was warmth. His hand lay on my thigh.

Father turned to Caroline. Foolishly shy she hid her face until her chin was raised. I heard the sounds, small sounds - the wine, the lips. A wasp buzzed and tapped against the window as if seeking entry, then was gone. The gardener chased the long grass with his scythe. I waited. The wine came to my mouth again. A whispering of lips. The ridging of my stocking top through my dress, beneath his palm. The tips of our tongues touched and retreated. Did the French drink this way? Father had been to Paris. In his knowing he had been.

Long did we linger. Caroline's dress rustled. I could not see. Across his form I could not see. The bottle emptied but slowly like an hour-glass. The wine entered my being. As through shimmering air, Caroline rose at last, her face flushed. She adjusted her dress. Her eyes had a look of great foolishness. "Go to your room, Caroline," Father said. There was yet wine in his glass. Silent as a wraith she was gone, her blushes faint upon the air like the smoke from a cigar.

"She is yet young," Father said. His tone was sombre. There was wine on my breasts once when I was eighteen and he had kissed it away. The wine made pools of goodness and warmth in me. It journeyed through my veins and filled my head.

"We shall go to the attic," Father said. His hand held mine - enclasped and covered it. As we rose his foot nudged the bottle and it fell. A last seeping of liquid came from its mouth. We gazed at each other and smiled.

"You will come, Beatrice? It is for the last time." There was a sadness.

We ascended, our footsteps quiet. The door to Caroline's room stood closed, thick in its thickness. The patterned carpet on the curving stair drank in our steps. Above the first floor were the guest rooms. In the old days those who wished had passed from bedroom to bedroom at night, during the long weekend parties my parents held. I knew this though my lips did not speak. At night, I had heard the whisperings of feet - a slither-slither of secrets. Arrangements were made discreetly with my mother as to the placings in rooms. The ladies of our circle always arranged such things. The gentlemen took it as manna. Bed-springs squeaked. I had told Caroline, but she did not believe me.

There were moanings and hushed cries - the lapping sounds of lust. Small pale grey puddles on the sheets at morning. No one had ever seen me go to the attic with Father. It was our game, our secret. Our purity. In the attic were old trunks, occasional tables my mother had discarded or replaced, vases she disliked, faded flowers of silk. Pieces of unfinished tapestry lay over the backs of two chairs. Sunlight filtered through a dust-hazed window.

We entered by the ladder and stood. In the far corner near the dormer window stood the rocking horse, grey and mottled. Benign and handsome - polished in its varnished paint - it brooded upon the long gone days. Dead bees lay on the sill. In my kindness I was unhappy for them. Father's hand held mine still. He led me forward. My knees touched the brocaded cloth of an armchair whose seat had sagged. Upon it lay a mirror and a brush, both backed with tortoiseshell. They were as I had used of old up here.

Father turned his back to me and gazed out through the glass upon the tops of the elms. A trembling arose in me which I stilled. With slow care I removed my dress, my underskirt, and

laid them on the chair. Beneath I wore but a white batiste chemise with white drawers whose pink ribbons adorned the pale of my thighs. My silk brown stockings glistened. I waited. Father turned. He regarded me gravely and moved towards me. "You have grown. Even in three years you have grown," he said. "Where shall you ride to?"

I laughed. "To Jericho," I replied. I had always said that though I did not know where it was. Nodding, his hand sought the brush. I held the mirror. With long firm strokes of the bristles Father glossed and straightened my hair. Its weight lay across my shoulders, in its lightness. Its goldness shone and he was pleased.

"It is good," Father said, "the weather is fair for the journey. My lady will mount?"

We stepped forward. He held the horse's reins to keep it still. Once there had been a time when my legs could hold almost straight upon the horse. Now that I was grown more I had to bend my knees too much. My bottom slid back over the rear of the saddle and projected beyond the smooth grey haunches. Father moved behind me and began to rock the horse with one hand. With the other he smacked my outstretched bottom gently.

"My beautiful pumpkin - it is larger now," he murmured. My shoulders sagged. In the uprising of my bottom I pressed my face against the strong curved neck of the horse. It rocked faster. I clung as I had always clung. The old planked floor swayed and dipped beneath me. His palm smacked first one cheek and then the other.

"Oh! no more!" I gasped.

All was repetition.

"It is far to Jericho," my father laughed. I could feel his happiness in my head. The cheeks of my bottom burned and stung. My knees trembled. The bars of the stirrups held tight under the soles of my boots.

"No more, father!" I begged. His hand smacked on. I could feel the impress of his fingers on my moon. "Two miles - you are soon there. What will you do when you arrive?"

"I shall have handmaidens. They will bathe and perfume me. Naked I shall lie on a silken couch. Sweetmeats will be brought. Slaves shall bring me wine. There shall be water ices."

I remembered all the words. I had made them up in my dreams and brought them out into the daylight. "I may visit you and share your wine?" Father asked. His hand fell in a last resounding smack. I gasped out yes. I fell sideways and he caught me. He lifted me until my heels unhooked from the stirrups. I sagged against him. My nether cheeks flared. In the pressure of our embrace my breasts rose in their milky fullness above the lace of my chemise. My nipples showed. I clenched my bottom cheeks and hid my face against his chest.

"It was good. I should bring the whip to you henceforth," Father murmured.

The words were new. They were not part of our play. Beneath my vision I could see my nipples, the brown buds risen. Had I forgotten the words? Perhaps we had rehearsed them once. In their smallness they lay scattered in the dust. Dried flecks of spokenness. "It would hurt," I said.

"No, it is small. Stand still." I did not know what to do with my hands.

He was gone to the far corner of the attic and returned. In his hands was a soft leather case. He opened it. There was a whip. The handle was carved in ebony, the end bulbous. There were carvings as of veins along the stem. From the other end exuded strands of leather. I judged them not more than twenty-five inches long. The tapered ends were loosely knotted. "Soon, perhaps. Lay it for now beneath your pillow, Beatrice."

So saying he cast aside the case and I took the whip. At the knob end was a silky smoothness. The thongs hung down by my thigh. A tendon stood out on my neck in my blushing. Father traced it with his finger, making me wriggle with the tickling. Broad trails of heat stirred in my bottom still. I could hear his watch ticking. The handle of the whip felt warm as if it had never ceased being touched.

I moved away from him. The thongs swung, caressing the sheen of my stockings. Father assisted me in the replacing of my dress. His hands nurtured its close fitting, smoothing it about my hips and bottom. His eyes grew clouded. I stirred fretfully. My hair was brushed and burnished anew. Father's mouth descended upon mine. His fingers shaped the slim curve of my neck.

"It was good, Beatrice. You are grown for it - riper, fuller. The smacks did not hurt?"

I shook my head, but then smiled and said, "A little." We both laughed. In the past there had been wine afterwards, drawn from a cooling box that he had placed beforehand in the attic. Now we had drunk before and it moved within us.

His fingers charmed the outcurve of my bottom - its glossy roundness tight beneath my drawers. We kissed and spoke of small things. I would never come to the attic again, I thought. In the subtle seeking of our fingers there were memories. At last we descended. Father took the ladder first. Halfway down he stopped and guided my feet in my backwards descent. His hands slid up beneath my skirt to guide me.

Caroline was reading when we re-entered the drawing-room. Her eyes were timid, seeking, brimmed with questions.

"There is a new summerhouse - come, I will show you, Beatrice," Father said. I shook my head. I must see to my unpacking with the servant. Father would forgive me. His eyes forgave me. They followed me like spaniels, loping at my heels.

"Your boots are repolished, the spare ones," Caroline called after me. It was as if she meant to interrupt my thoughts. Father went to her and drew her up. "Let us see if the workmen have finished in the summerhouse," he said.

Her eyes were butterflies on and on. I turned and stood of a purpose, watching her rising. Her form was as slender as my own. Her blue dress yielded to her springy curves. Through the window I watched them pass beneath the arbor. Three workmen in rough clothes came forward from where the new building stood and touched their caps. My father consulted his watch and spoke to them. After a moment they went on, passing round by the side of the house towards the drive and the roadway. Their day was finished, or their work was done. Father seemed not displeased. Caroline hung back but he drew her on. Her foolishness was evident to me even then. The sun shone through her skirt, offering the outlines of her legs in silhouette. She was unmarried, but perhaps not untried. I fingered the velvet of the curtains, soft and sensuous to my touch. The lawn received their footsteps. The door to the summerhouse was just visible from where I stood. Father opened it and they passed within. It closed.

I waited, lingering. My breath clouded the pane of glass. The door did not re-open. The shrubs and larches looked, but the walls of the summerhouse were blank.

Going upstairs to my room I fancied I heard a thin, wailing cry from Caroline.