

Sample chapter from "Billy Barker" by Greydon Moore

*"I'm blown away by the vision of the author" -Bob Hunter, Vancouver Sun*

People tell me their jaws drop in astonishment when they first read "Billy Barker". The Vancouver Sun dedicated a full 1/3 of an editorial page to it on first publication in 1967.

Some readers think of "Billy Barker" as a novel. Some as a play. Some students of Simon Fraser University planned it as a movie until government slashed funding. In 1996 a 'well thumbed' original copy of "Billy Barker" was listed on a San Francisco book seller's internet site for \$49.00 US, and sold at once. This is the first re-printing of this classic counter-culture Canadian story.

I have presented my writing with stage appearances in front of throngs of 50,000 and more at be-ins and rock festivals from 1968 to 1971. My creative writing (poetry) recordings with music collaboration were played at times daily on air on top FM stations on the west and east coasts of North America. Onstage as filler between acts at the John Lennon Peace Festival at Varsity Stadium in downtown Toronto in 1969, I stepped out alone on stage to bedlam of an overflowing throng. Moments after my brief poetic passage, not another voice could be heard. At the height of his fame, Marshal McLuhan invited me to 'conduct a few of his seminars for him' at Coach House at the University of Toronto. I declined that to finish an elaborate effort, involving work from many west coast artists collaged around a long poem called 'The Proton People' which went up, the moment finished, in a four wall walk around in Vancouver's art gallery.

In the early 90s my user-friendly anti-virus 'Virus Alert' (Look Software), written with my twin brother, achieved Editor's Choice in PC Magazine (European edition). In the later 1990s I created the largest privately-owned and administered online astronomy site, analyzing and interpreting astronomy objects and galaxies, featuring images publicly available from major telescopes. In unheard of traffic for non government astronomy, Cosmicastronomy.com is averaging more than two million files viewed per year. (Not hits, or unique visitors, the stats are of those who actually read). Always at work on one or another project and venue, I have never taken time off nor ever taken a holiday away from creative pursuits.

The Barker story was a hiccup captured in time in the latter 60s back when times were changing rapidly and many were confused about their fundamental purposes. The same flux is underway again, however, this time planetary survival is the keynote.

The story of Billy Barker will help lost individuals realize how easy it is to wallow in the old oceans of the Piscean Age based on lesser motives of ambition and greed, fueled by dementing carnal purposes. Reading between the lines exposes an eon's cross-section of strong negatives illuminated by strong positives. What does this mean? open the book and read any paragraph. See for yourself. Enjoy!



## AN ALLEGORY ON THE END OF THE PISCEAN ERA

-Those ideas which were thought to make Billy Barker and its author important are also at an end - The whole world, not the swimming individual, is now the stage for the Aquarian Age. - Greydon Moore. 2005.

## PART ONE

On a balcony which overlooks San Francisco in the late eighteen sixties are two strange people. The woman stooping to wipe her coffee

Orders:

1 [www.commonerspublishing.com/billybarker](http://www.commonerspublishing.com/billybarker)

table can be described with one word- nightmarish. Everything about her is gross and grotesque

The overall effect is upped by heavy makeup, weird dress, bizarre hairdo. Tom nervously brushes lint off his faggotty clothes. He is a San Francisco actor who specializes in the style of the well-made play.

A large crucifix six feet high dominates one wall of the apartment. The head of the image looks out to the balcony. Trappings of the apartment are unpredictable. Colors are gaudy and bright, concentrating in the bright greens and orange. The furnishings are highly ornate being made of wrought iron. The artificiality of this home is blighted partially by a giant philodendron plant which grows hungrily almost to the ceiling near the door, plus a box of red geraniums on the balcony.

These two low beasts of humanity are Billy Barker’s family. They wait now for the arrival of Billy and Mary his wife. Meanwhile the mother occupies herself with her regular housework, working her routine so perfunctorily that it seems to have a beat, a rhythm of its own.

The Mother: Nice that they’re going to make him a judge. Billy’s a good man. A little odd, perhaps, you know, hard to understand, But ideal for Mary. Lucky lucky Mary ... (trying it at different pitches) Lucky lucky lucky lucky lucky ...

Tom: (Peering over the balcony) Mother, you should come and see the seagulls out there. They’re such beautiful birds. One should feel inspired by their grace and freedom, I suppose, One shat in my eye as I was coming home this afternoon. I hate them. Such crude toilet training.

The Mother: What on earth is keeping those darling children of mine. It’s almost time ... it’s almost time ... (eating a jar of grapes before picking up again her rhythm of housecleaning, advancing now upon the giant philodendron by the front door).

Tom: Mother, Billy and Mary will NEVER get here in time. (Suddenly he turns to face his mother) If they don’t arrive soon I’ll have to leave house for the theatre and miss supper. But I feel good tonight, liberated, I’m going to have a great performance.

(The mother is polishing each leaf of the philodendron with a milk dampened cloth.) Now WHAT do you think could be keeping them - think - think - tock tock tick tick - (clicking her tongue).

Do you think he’s making love to her again? Do you think they could be at this very second in the ecstasy ... ugh! (repulsed).

(A seagull has dropped out of the sky, seems to hang in space out just beyond the balcony, peering oddly straight into the parlor: When Tom turns, confronting the gull head-on, with a startled screech it lifts and soars away) (Continuing) ... but for a man whose past is as vague as Billy’s, I suppose he could be capable of anything. Born illegitimate, you know ...

Suddenly the mother freezes. She presses her fingers to her temples. In this medianistic pose she cries) Stop! Beats! Yes. yes I hear them coming ...

Do you think he’s beating Mary, mother? Cousin Thurlow told me privately of that gentleman named De Sade who used to hang his girlfriends by their toes and try them that way. And he called it consciousness. Do you think Billy’s having his troubles right now trying to expand his consciousness by seducing Mary as he’s wriggling and screaming against her hot, steamy upside-down body?

The tea will get hot. They should come for tea when the tea is not hot. They should come for cold tea, properly. (Running to the balcony and peering over the edge to see if they are coming) Ohhhh it’s such a long way down ... it makes me feel disGUSTing, makes me feel like I’m swallowing myself, from the top of the head, inward ... suuuuuuuuuuucckkkkkkk!

What is it that makes Billy so special, and yet so terrifying, mother? (Turning her big eyes on him) Special?

I’ve studied that man from afar and I’ve watched him perform. Do you want to know what MY considered opinion is, I think he’s too good to be true. Remember at the wedding what I said to dearest Mary? Watch that man ... watch him closely with your wary morning glory eyes. He’s strange, off, something different, he’s too good to be true. He says that even as a boy they used to tell him he was too good to be true. And now he’s saying: oh boo hoo, oh boo hoo - I’m so full of life! Oh alas, Tom, what am I going to DO. I am so full of life, yet they won’t hear me ...

*The mother has been dancing on her feet again, fairly leaping the fervor of her housework from one part of the room to another: Her thick legs, exaggerated in their ugliness by the light terry cloth shift which swings about her knees, make dull but hurried thuds through the room. Fussing with her plants now she moves from the balcony to the table to the front door and back to the balcony carrying her plants)* Do you like - like them - do you - like the - do you like the plants better ... better this way ... or that way ...

I like them better the way they were in the first place. See those children playing down in the park? ... the teenaged sons and daughters of our

illustrious and illumined aristocratic families? WELLL the other day I was telling Billy how nice it is to see such clean-cut and healthy boys and girls for a change. And HE got that haunted look in his eyes, and said, yeah, half of them are already alcoholics. I don't know whether I like that remark or not. It reflects on our good breeding.

*(The famous actor rubs the genital that seems to weigh heavily in his tight pants, then spits angrily over the side of the balcony. In turning accidentally he knocks to the floor the cleaning cloth left behind on the ornate coffee table which has a glass top. Instantly the mother has pounced on the cloth, like an ever watchful vulture, throws it over the side. With gusto that is almost hideous she begins to manipulate the geranium plants, pruning them, moving the box from one poor location to another).*

The Mother: I think the plants should be thrown out altogether. Beastly inconsiderate things. They put oxygen into the air, and too much oxygen is bad for the brain.

Tom: Yep, Billy's a strange combination, a strange flower. But we'll fix him soon enough, won't we, mother? You and I. I want you to have a flower. *(Picking a flower which he puts in her hair.)* I want you to have my bath ready in twenty minutes. Don't forget the salts, Mother. I'm glad we're able to give Billy this rich full life of ours. He should learn to keep his opinions to himself. He had nothing, you know, before he seduced Mary into marrying him. Yesterday morning, at breakfast no less, he asked me if I knew what the term 'aesthetic man' meant, then smiled that maddening smile of his because he KNEW I didn't know what he meant. But we'll fix him soon enough, won't we, Mother, you and I ...

*(There is a sudden commotion at the entranceway, with much giggling and snickering.)* Mary laughs brightly out in the hallway. Her laugh is exceedingly rich and exciting for those who enjoy life. Billy Barker now bursts through the door with Mary right behind. Mary, playing the game, has her hands in his back pockets, trying to hold him back. Mary is young, vivacious, with blond hair like the summer sun. This is how Billy sees her at this period of his crisis. She radiates, possessing no apparent hardness, contradiction, or searing spirit. This is a thrilling woman who, if so desiring, could arouse even the blackest hearts of man. Her husband Billy Barker is a noble figure, tall with all the right charisma, in his late twenties. He has recently formed a strong bond with Hardial but has not yet entered the struggle. He is vaguely aware at this time of the death and absurdities of

his life with Mary, even so, he still ignores the messages and accepts this without questioning.

The Mother: (*performing her ritual*) Children, How nice.

Yes, how nice ... (says Billy, hanging his loose coat in the hallway).

The Mother: Watch your dirty boots ... out! out! outside! There, that’s a good boy. Now Billy, will you come here, will you throw those plants over the balcony ... (*and warning him with a great rolling of her vulgar eyes*) ... watch out for those children down there.

Billy eyes her with faint amusement.

Tom, suddenly launching himself from the sofa: Mary, how lovely you look ... Mother see see ...

Stepping into the room Billy says: Sorry we’re late, we’ve just come from the tailors. So, what do you think of my tweed suit?

Tom: It stinks.

Billy: Oh, it does, does it? My, my, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, please regard how the EMPEROR’S new clothes speak for themselves!

The Mother speaks: Now isn’t that a shame, the tea is almost hot. We simply can’t have the tea hot. We must have tea cold, properly. (Filling teacups on the dining room table) Do you really like Tom’s clothes, Billy? Oh they’re SO expressive for an actor. I mean, I helped him select them and that’s important ... hot! ... how terrible. (*She leaves the room*).

Tom, suddenly turning to Billy: You don’t like me very much. (Tom never looks directly at Billy’s eyes, only at his body, or at the wall behind).

Billy: Awwwww don’t go away mad ... just go away ... tell him Mary.

Billy, you DON’T like my brother very much, do you.

He doesn’t like ME very much.

Tom: What do you mean, telling Lu-Ellen that I am ‘sensuous man’. I am an actor, one of the best in San Francisco.

Don’t ever forget it.

Billy, please. You simply have to give Tom the proper chance. How many times must I ASK you. He’s sensitive, and he IS my brother. And I’d like you to show a little more respect for other people from now on ... I know Tom has one or two peculiar ideas, but after all he is still human.

Human! Good Lord - He’s god, spelled backwards, with a capital D.

(Tom, of all incredible things, has been staring intently at the Shhhhh ... quiet! ... what’s that funny noise ...?)

(Mary, at the mirror, fixing her hair): What funny noise?

Billy: (Like a dog, baying to the moon) Awwoooo ... it is the howling of your consciousness -

Tom: I hear a strange noise ... the walls are coming in ...

*(Just then the door from the bedroom flies open and the mother enters, stopping before Mary to look enraptured up into her face).* Oh she has such an innocent face.

Tom: Ah yes, a beautiful innocent face. How nice. A beautiful face never hurt anyone.

Billy: Every day in the courtrooms I see beautiful innocent faces committing crimes against humanity. Every day I listen to their innocent faces and I see their lies and deceptions. It's an innocent face with a black heart, that's what fills me with horror.

Do you love me?

(The question is Mary's, to which Billy teasingly makes a grand announcement) And now for the big news ... Sunday, August 29 exactly one year ago today was my wedding day and I can't live without Mary. Yes I love you very much Mary. Without your love I'd probably die, flake off, wither on the vine, blow off on the harvest wind ...

Tom: Well I can't see that it matters whether or not a man has conviction. Now take me for instance, I'm not one to inquire indiscriminately into CRAP like aesthetic truths or a man's motives ... I'm a down to earth actor ... I'm a realist who goes by the rule of ...

Billy, cutting in: You're a bloody faggot.

Mother: (Like a rifle shot) What!

*(A heavy silence).*

Tom: And I suppose you're the epitome of ... of ...

Billy: (a simple statement) Yes I am.

Mother, something must be done about this man. He doesn't fit. His very presence in our house is a mockery of good taste. (Mollifying him) Tom, Tom, good brother Tom, how you have misunderstood me, HOW could I possibly threaten you, mother, or the hypocrites at court, or anybody ...

Tom: (as Billy goes to put an arm around his shoulder) Don't you-touch-me *(revulsed)*.

(Surprised, Billy with a mood of false gaiety, tries to regain some dignity by interjecting) It's too bad you haven't had a chance to meet Hardial. I think it would be a good idea if we could all I get together for dinner this week, then we can meet each other properly.

(While he talks Billy casually gives the crucifix on the wall a gentle nudge, which tips it off balance. The figure executes a slow, almost deliberate roll, hangs upside-down with its head only a few inches from the floor, and quivers oddly. The most incredible thing is that no one seems to notice it but Billy)

Mother: Dinner? When?

Billy: Tomorrow night. Here, at your place. I figure around six o'clock should be a good o'clock.

Mary: (suddenly erupting) Arrrrggggue ... I can't make it. Oh gee Billy I'm awfully sorry but I can't go into details right now. You understand, don't you? ... Madame Yaaz down the hill, she promised to create my new hairstyling for Mavis' party Saturday night. I'm very lucky because EVERYbody wants her. (Noticing his face) Oh you CAN come to the party, darling? ... don't hurt me, you can come ... can't you?

Oh god, the whole thing is beginning to fill me with apprehension.

Mary, yesterday Hardial said an amazing thing.

He said that all my life I have been manipulated ...

You'd better come if you value your life! Famous or not we want you. Some of Mavis' girlfriends want to meet you - the illustrious Billy Barker, Mary's Billy Barker, that's what they're saying. Anyway, tomorrow mother and I have to go across the hill and we won't be back until Saturday. Well, don't look so pained, darling. Sleeping alone won't kill you.

Mother, I've married a greedy lion, but at heart my Billy is just an insatiable little brat.

Billy: (wounded) You bloody liar.

(Hot) No one calls me a liar.

Tom: (sarcastically) tsk ... tsk ... tsk ... love.

Mother: Oh for god's sake you've given me a headache, (agitated, she suddenly grabs one of the geranium plants and flings it over the balcony) ... lucky Mary ... lucky lucky lucky

lucky ...

Tom: Whatever do you waste your time, and our time, with such ... waste, as this Hardial man or whatever he is. Frankly I don't even think he exists.

Billy: How little you understand Tom. How poor you are. Hardial is a chemist, a philosopher, and a poet. But what does it matter? I give my love, my guts, my humanity to Hardial.

Mother: Tom is right. Tom is not poor. I hear such nasty stories ... dirty ... they're talking about you and Hardial ...

Awww come on you people give Hardial a chance. You’re just like relentless beasts, vultures (gestures) vultch ... vultch ... vultch What are you? ... You say nothing. You know nothing, You feel nothing. What are you? Vegetables?

Tom: I deeply resent that remark.

Mary: He came back. The significant thing is he came from someplace to see Billy, he came back. He came to see...

Tom: Billy:

Back, Mary? Back.

What difference does it make. He’s here. He’s visiting ... (at Tom) (angrily) Look, asshole, if you smirk once more I’ll ... Man what a bizarre family! fantastic ... god! Hardial was out visiting friends in Louisiana. When he got well enough to travel he left Louisiana and came straight here just to see me. You know why? Because I had become ‘alive’ to him. He loved me. And that alone makes me feel I’m still worth something in this miserable life. Did you know there are people who worship this man. There are others who hate his guts.



## PART TWO

November by the zodiac.

It is a strange place to find the woman, moving up the single rutted street of a worn town, to turn at last directly into the doorway of the one wooden hotel.

She strides defiantly into his room. The man softened lies unshaven and unwashed. He is sprawled on his back across the unmade bed, clad only in his undershorts. His clothes and his few other possessions are flung through the room.

Crossing to peer down at the sleeping figure, Mary, in an odd gesture of feeling, sadly passes her hand over the length of his near-nude body without touching him. Then her face turns hard. It is unfortunate that she is so attractive for she wears her beauty loudly which tends to degrade her in the environment of this cheap hotel room. Her clothes with their bizarrely sparking colors, are fashionable even in San Francisco. Her hair is now darker, her clothes however are quite clean, and her upswept hairstyle takes an hour to put in place.

As for Billy Barker, who was last seen seven months ago in San Francisco, his youthful face has become a mirror of the strange despair that is surely destroying him.

Now Mary begins to move angrily through the room, examining it with calculated contempt. She finds the letters on the dresser and begins to look through them, finding only a couple of bills of currency which she quietly slips into her blouse. She examines the letters again, this time more carefully.

Finally in silent fury she throws them on the floor. She now turns to his few belongings, picking them up one at a time, She picks up his boot, smells it - disgust. She finds his dirty pants in a heap under the chair and smells the crotch - again disgust. In disgust she starts to cram his dirty clothes into the wastebasket, then gives it up.

Crossing suddenly to the door, she opens it, and slams it with a resounding crash.

Billy: (violently sitting up in bed) What in hell. What the hell are you doing here!

(First condemning the room with her eyes, then him) Mother would have a fit! ... mother would JUST have a fit! (They stare oddly at each other).

Whew, it smells like a pig sty in here. Oh boy what mother would say -

What are you doing here!

Why Billy, darling, whatever happened to your brand new exclusively tailored tweed suit. (Crumpled on the chair is a ragged suit coat. The pants she has already stuffed in the wastebasket. She takes the suit coat to the window to examine it.) Why darling you’ve been rolling in the gutter, haven’t you. How delightful. Have you been drinking darling?

(Grabbing the jacket) Shut up. (on the bedside table is a half bottle of cheap alcohol. She sees it and takes it and holds it sideways in the light, as if to look for fingerprints) You know I don’t drink.

Oh?

I have nothing to say to you. Leave me alone.

(As Billy fumbles into his pants) (tattlingly) Why Billy darling you’re not dressed yet for the opera. Oh don’t TELL me we’re going to become sensitive again. Haven’t we already had enough? Look at you - a tramp, a bum, unshaven and stinking, just like your foul smelling friend Hardial. (A sudden note of hysteria) Don’t look at me like that -

(With infinite patience) Mary, please, enough. You’ve done a terrible thing in following me here. Please go.

Go! Go! are you out of your mind? It’s only seven o’clock.

It’s not even time for our hot tea. Some like it HOT, you know. YOU know. (Crossing to the chair she flings his suit coat to the floor and plants herself in the chair She stares rigidly ahead, on the verge of tears, she may at any moment start bawling like a child).

(He studies her silent crying in the chair) Drink?

Where are the letters?

There are none.

You are my husband and I have pursued you for seven miserable months. At least you could have answered one of my letters.

Please go.

But, Billy, what exactly do you want?

But how can I think of wanting when ten different people want me to be ten different things? Isn’t it simply enough that I want to be left alone and I want to be what I am? (When she regards him - silent and intractable) You’ve taken just about everything I’ve got. Do you want more? Have you so much avarice? Here - (taking a six-inch knife from the dresser and deliberately opening his fly, pulling out his genitals) - here, why don’t you take my sex organs too and be done with it. Here (offering her the knife) you want them so badly, take them, and go away.

(Smiling suddenly) Billy that was very good, yes, you’re really coming along very nicely. (Then in sudden defence) Well how do you think I felt. Him coming to the house all the time and shouting about the people he met, and accusing them of being so WRETCHedly ignorant. Masturbation! OH that vulgar word! And he’d call them masturbators. and sit there drinking our best whiskey, moaning about them. I came home one night, and he was there, throwing my best cut glass pieces into the fireplace. (With scorn) Oh it was SO sweet, he wanted to hear the different sounds of the glass shattering in the fireplace.

*(By now he realizes that she isn’t going to leave willingly There is a futility in his subdued voice)* What do you want?

I want you to become my proper husband again. I want you to come back home to San Francisco where you belong. Properly.

That’s impossible.

Shit.

Please, Mary, it hurts ... it hurts ... you don’t know how your presence here is killing me ... please go.

Well aren’t we the magnificent tower of tom soul. And just what do you think we women do, when our husbands walk out and leave us laughing it up with the hags in San Francisco. I don’t mean to get banal and prosaic at a time like this, our big dramatic moment together, but, yes, mother was right, yes she was, didn’t she say it ... didn’t she say it ...

Oh yes ... your mother ... the bag of Baghdad ...

*(Smiling - smirking more - lewdly from the side of her mouth, having enjoyed the pun)* Very good pun ...

But don’t you see, all of this is nothing. Tomorrow I’m leaving for Horsefly, and then that will be the last you’ll ever see of me.

What! Again! Haven’t you yet learned your lesson? Now don’t tell me, surely you don’t mean ... oh darling oh no don’t tell me you’re going to find us a pot of gold? Oh Billy how beautiful ... (laughing) ... how beautiful!

(So he contemplates her in dead silence. Whar else can he do) .

Billy I was crushed, I was - to use your word - ‘horrified’ when you left me like that, I mean, didn’t we build something nice together, All you said was ‘I’m going to join the gold rush.’ You didn’t even say sorry.

Why not? Why not the gold rush? Do you think for one minute I like this? (indicates the room) Did you think, for instance, I like standing rooted in vigorous masturbation in that courtroom defending those ethical monsters

of San Francisco, because they could PAY me?

But what about ME? It wasn't easy coming all that way eighteen hundred miles looking for you. The Cariboo Trail is pretty hard on a woman, you know. Man, I mean I even walked over the top of a mountain, over seventy miles, in bare feet, with blisters, looking for my husband.