



The Turret

Margery Sharp , Garth Williams (Illustrator)

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(From the back cover)

The fabulous Miss Bianca has resigned, perhaps prematurely, as Madam Chairwoman of the Mouse Prisoners' Aid Society. In her honor an enchanting water picnic is held at the lily moat beneath a ruined turret in the park outside the city. While the band plays Handel's Water Music, the ever observant Miss Bianca discovers that someone is being held prisoner in the old turret.

It turns out to be the wicked Mandrake. No one, not even her dear friend Bernard (who in the course of events may be forced into a most unfortunate marriage), is the slightest bit inclined toward rescuing that scoundrel--in spite of Miss Bianca's conviction that he has reformed. Adventures fraught with danger follow as Miss Bianca, alone, pays a midnight visit to the turret to ponder Mandrake's penitence and make plans. Her plans come to include one boy scout, a precocious mouse named Shaun, and the magnificent stallion Sir Hector.

The Turret Details

Date : Published July 7th 1994 by Diamond Books (first published 1963)

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Author : Margery Sharp , Garth Williams (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Turret for online ebook

Trilby Forrest says

This was the first of the series that I read, probably about 50 years ago. My parents gave me "The Turret" for Christmas, I imagine because of the cover art -- I had already read "Charlotte's Web" and a couple of the "Little House" books and adored both, including the Garth Williams illustrations; it's my guess that Mom recognized the artist on the cover and counted on "The Turret" being a hit. If that's how it happened, Mom was dead right. I loved the book, and badgered them relentlessly till they bought "The Rescuers" and "Miss Bianca" for me as well. I remember being completely enchanted with all three. As with all good children's books, it planted at least one principle or standard of behaviour that has always stayed with me, though after 50 years, I may be misquoting: To this day, I abhor the feminine argument of tears.

The proper and mannered world of Miss Bianca is much farther away from us today than it was in the 60's; but I still appreciate a feminine character who doesn't have to carry an assault rifle, a broadsword, or a light-saber to be brave and heroic.

Jane says

Miss Bianca's unlikely partner in this adventure is the cocky half-Irish Boy Scout Sean. British cultural assumptions about the Irish aside, this proves to be another excellent adventure, in which Miss Bianca rescues the reformed Mandrake, The Duchess's evil major domo, and has a mild flirtation with Sir Hector, the champion race horse. Poor Bernard!

Sarah Sammis says

The Turret is the third book in the series, coming two books before Miss Bianca in the Orient which I reviewed yesterday.

The Turret would have made the perfect ending for a trilogy. Miss Bianca meets her arch enemy again. Only this time, she has to rescue him.

The book is also a turning point for the series. The books through The Turret stay close to home (England) and involve a tight set of characters. It seems with book four onwards, the emphasis moves more towards exotic locations and big adventure style rescues.

Lois says

Sweet and funny. Great details. And wonderful illustrations by Garth Williams. I happened on this one and bought it used years ago, most likely because of the illustrator. The mouse sized dynamics of a non profit volunteer led organization were very real - and made me laugh out loud.

Rachel says

My original school record reading review

I thought this was quite a good book although it was a bit to young for me.

Lisa says

I adore Margery Sharp and Miss Bianca and all the silliness therein. This isn't my favorite of the series, but it's still sweet and hilarious and the illustrations by Garth Williams are fantastic. If you haven't ever read any of these and only know the movies do yourself a favor and try them out - they read fast but have great jokes for adults as well as kids (would sail right over most kids' heads) and are sweet good fun.

WndyJW says

My first favorite book as a child. I re-read this with my children and was surprised to find that this was not really an easy read for a young child.

Jennifer says

Wonderful! I had no idea how charming and engrossing this series was!

Shasta Bos says

Another great book about Miss Bianca and Bernard! Not better than the last but I still enjoyed it more than the first. Great read!

Caroline says

A gift from Toni Lee, for the charming Garth Williams illustrations.

Jewels says

I am really sorry that this series has ended, along with the delightful descriptions of such things as the water picnic and Miss Bianca's porcelain pagoda. The lesson involved was a bit high handed, but mercy in all

aspects is a good thing so perhaps other, younger readers will be influenced by it -- unlike old cynics such as myself. This really was an excellent series, and I look forward to sharing it with my daughter.

Rubi says

One of my favorite adventures yet :)

Poor Bernard almost married a crazy "woman" haha

I hope Miss Bianca opens up to him later.

anyhow, her using a kid's creativity and bravery (admitting it was better than her's at the time) was awesome.

It shows what kids and women can do even without support if we just set our minds to it ;)

and that the people left behind love them just the same.

Miss Bianca 's and Bernard's care for each other were cuter than ever ;)

Lucky says

cute.

Tracey says

Thanks to a thoughtful Valentine's Day gift, I've been revisiting one of my favorite childhood book series - the Miss Bianca series by Margery Sharp. After seeing the 1977 Disney film based on these books (The Rescuers), I got the first 5 books as Christmas and birthday gifts and nearly read the words off the pages. While my original copies are probably long gone, my husband found copies of the Dell Yearling paperbacks with the Garth Williams illustrations, and I spent a couple pleasant hours reacquainting myself with the stories.

This, the third book in the series, actually features the Diamond Duchess' major-domo Mandrake as the prisoner in need of aid; and Miss Bianca (with the help of the local troop of the Mouse Scouts) goes on the rescue without Bernard's help; as he doesn't believe that Mandrake is worth saving. Miss Bianca also recruits a star racehorse, Sir Hector, in her plans to secure Mandrake's escape, and during the attempt, Mandrake proves that he has reformed.

Yes, there's definitely a formula to these books; but the details of each prisoners' situation, along with the trials and tribulations the two mice face, manage to keep things somewhat fresh. Miss Bianca is easily the star of these novels, with Bernard playing the (usually) loyal sidekick. The supporting cast of characters vary from book to book, but are sufficiently well-drawn to fulfill their roles. The objects of rescue are a little less-well-defined; and the villains are also somewhat two-dimensional. The Garth Williams illustrations are utterly charming; although I enjoy Erik Blegvad's interpretations of the characters as well.

The style of writing is a bit dated, and rather British at times; but its gentle humour and generally engaging plotlines make these books good candidates for late elementary readers who enjoy "talking animal" stories with a bit of adventure thrown in. Miss Bianca is a fairly good role model; despite being a mouse of class and breeding, she demonstrates intelligence, loyalty and bravery throughout the series. I quite enjoyed revisiting this series and may pass them along to my nieces (and/or nephews) at some point.

pati says

Miss Bianca saves Mandrake with the help of a pompous little scout mouse. Bernard has dropped the ball and thus will never stand a chance to be anything more than a friend to Miss Bianca.
