

The MYSTERY of MARY by Grace Livingston Hill Lutz

AUTHOR OF "MARCIA SCHUYLER," "PROBIE DEANE" "DAWN OF THE MORNING" ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRAY WALTERS

personally responsible for that girl's honesty.

"Well, of course, Tryon, if you wish it," said his mother, with anxious hesitation.

"I certainly do wish it, mother. I shall take it as personal if anything is done in this matter without consulting me.

Tryon Dunham took his way to his office much perturbed in mind. Perplexities seemed to be thickening about him.

Ah, the ring! A sudden warm thrill shot through him, and his hand searched his vest pocket, where he had hastily put the jewel before leaving his room.

After the morning greeting, he handed over his ring.

"This belongs to a friend of mine," he said, trying to look unconcerned.

His friend took the ring and retired behind a curious little instrument for the eye, presently emerging with a respectful look upon his face.

"Your friend is fortunate to have such a beautiful stone. It is unusually clear and white, and exquisitely cut.

Meantime, the girl who was speeding along toward Chicago had not forgotten him. She could not if she would, for all about her were reminders of him.

There were a dress suit and a change of fine linen, handkerchiefs, neckties, a pair of gloves, a soft, black felt negligee hat folded, a large black silk muffler, a bathrobe, and the usual silver-mounted brushes, combs and other toilet articles.

By and by, she opened the suitcase, half doubtfully, feeling that she was almost intruding upon another's possessions.

There were a dress suit and a change of fine linen, handkerchiefs, neckties, a pair of gloves, a soft, black felt negligee hat folded, a large black silk muffler, a bathrobe, and the usual silver-mounted brushes, combs and other toilet articles.

She touched the electric button that controlled the lights in the little apartment, and lay down in the darkness to think out her problem of the new life that lay before her.

CHAPTER V.

Beginning with the awful moment when she first realized her danger and the necessity for immediate flight, she lived over every perilous instant, her nerves straining, her breath bated as if she were experiencing it all once more.

At length she shook off the pursuing thoughts and deliberately roused herself to plan her future.

The first necessity, she decided, was to change her appearance so far as possible, so that if news of her escape, with full description, had been telegraphed, she might evade notice.

Then she looked dubiously at the hat. With a girl's instinct, her first thought was for her borrowed luggage. A fine mist was slanting down and had fretted the window pane until there was nothing visible but dull gray shadows of the world that flew monotonously by.

As she surveyed herself in the long mirror of her door, the slow color stole into her cheeks. Yet the costume was not unbecoming, nor unusual. She looked like a simple school girl, or a young business woman going to her day's work.

But she looked at the fashionable proportions of the other hat with something like alarm. How could she protect it? She did not for a moment think of abandoning it, for it was her earnest desire to return it at once, unharmed, to its kind purveyor.

She summoned the newsboy and purchased three thick newspapers. From these, with the aid of a few pins, she made a large package of the hat. She decided to go bareheaded, and put the white kid gloves in the suitcase, but she took off her beautiful rings, and hid them safely inside her dress.

She sacrificed one of her precious quarters to get rid of the attentive porter, and started off with a brisk step down the long platform to the station. She followed a group of people into a car, which presently brought her into the neighborhood of the large stores, as she had hoped it would.

Well for her that she was an experienced shopper. She went straight to the millinery department and arranged to have the hat boxed and sent to the address Dunham had given her.

It had cost less to express the hat than she had feared, yet her stock of money was woefully small. Some kind of a dress she must have, and a wrap, that she might be disguised, but what could she buy and yet have something left for food? Lifting her eyes, she saw a sign over a table—"Lined Skirts, 75 cents and \$1.00."

Here was a ray of hope. She turned eagerly to examine them. Piles of somber skirts, blue and black and tan. They were stout and coarse and scant, and not of the latest cut, but what mattered it? She decided on a seventy-five cent black one.

Growing wise with experience, she discovered that she could get a black sateen shirtwaist for fifty cents. Rubbers and a cotton umbrella took another dollar and a half. She must save at least a dollar to send back the suitcase by express.

A bargain-table of odds and ends of woollen jackets, golf vests, and old fashioned blouse sweaters, selling out at a dollar apiece, solved the problem of a wrap. She selected a dark blouse of an ugly, purple blue, but thick and warm. Then with her precious packages she asked a pleasant-faced saleswoman if there were any walking near where she could slip on a pair of shoes.

Rapidly she slipped off her fine, silk-lined cloth garments, and put on the stiff sateen waist and the coarse black skirt. Then she surveyed herself, and was not ill pleased. There was a striking lack of collar and belt. She sought out a black necktie and pinned it about her waist, and then, with a protesting frown, she deliberately tore a strip from the edge of one of the fine hem-stitched handkerchiefs, and folded it in about her neck in a turn-over collar. The result was quite startling and unfamiliar. The gown, the hair, the hat, and the neat collar gave her the look of a young nurse-girl or upper servant. On the whole, the disguise could not have been better. She added the blue woollen blouse, and felt certain that even her most intimate friends would not recognize her. She folded the raincoat, and placed it smoothly in the suitcase, then with dismay remembered that she had nothing in which to put her own cloth dress, save the few inadequate paper wrappings that had come about her simple purchases. She folded the dress smoothly and laid it in the suitcase, under the raincoat.

She sat down at a writing-desk, in the waiting room, and wrote: "I am safe, and I thank you." Then she paused an instant, and with nervous haste wrote "Mary" underneath. She opened the suitcase and pinned the paper to the panel of the evening coat. Just three dollars and sixty-seven cents she had left in her pocketbook after paying the expressage on the suitcase.

At her first waking, in the early gray hours of the morning, she had looked her predicament calmly in the face. She had gone carefully over her own accomplishments. Her musical attainments, which would naturally have been the first thought, were out of the question. Her skill as a musician was so great, and so well known by her enemy, that she would probably be traced by it at once. The same arguments were true if she were to attempt to take a position as teacher or governess, although she was thoroughly competent to do so. A servant's place in some one's home was the only thing possible that presented itself to her mind. She could not cook, nor do general housework, but she thought she could fill the place of waitress.

With a brave face, but a shrinking heart, she stepped into a drug store and looked up in the directory the addresses of several employment agencies.

CHAPTER VI.

It was half past eleven when she stepped into the first agency on her list, and business was in full tide.

While she stood shrinking by the door the eyes of a dozen women fastened upon her, each with keen scrutiny. The sensitive color stole in to her delicate cheeks. As the proprietress of the office began to question her, she felt her courage falling.

"You wish a position?" The woman had a nose like a hawk, and eyes that held no sympathy. "What do you want? General housework?" "I should like a position as waitress." Her voice was low and sounded frightened to herself.

The hawk nose went up contemptuously. "Better take general housework. There are too many waitresses already."

"I understand the work of a waitress, but I never have done general housework," she answered with the voice of a gentleman, which somehow angered the hawk, who had trained herself to get the advantage over people and keep it or else know the reason why.

"Very well, do as you please, of course, but you bite your own nose off. Let me see your references."

The girl was ready for this. "I am sorry, but I cannot give you any. I have lived only in one house, where I had entire charge of the table and dining room, and that home was broken up when the people went abroad three years ago. I could show you letters written by the mistress of that home if I had my trunk here, but it is in another city, and I do not know when I shall be able to send for it."

"No references!" screamed the hawk, then raising her voice, although it was utterly unnecessary: "Ladies here is a girl who has no references. Do any of you want to venture?" The contemptuous laugh that followed had the effect of a warning to every woman in the room. And this girl scorns general housework, and presumes to dictate for a place as waitress," went on the hawk.

"I want a waitress badly," said a troubled woman in a subdued whisper, "but I really wouldn't dare take a girl without references. She might be a thief, you know, and then—really, she doesn't look as if she was used to houses like mine. I must have a neat, stylish-looking girl. No self-respecting waitress nowadays would go out in the street dressed like that."

All the eyes in the room seemed boring through the poor girl as she stood trembling, humiliated, her cheeks burning, while horrified tears demanded to be let up into her eyes. She held her dainty head proudly, and turned away with dignity.

"However, if you care to try," called out the hawk, "you can register at the desk and leave two dollars, and if in the meantime you can think of anybody who'll give us a reference, we'll look it up. But we never guarantee girls without references."

The tears were too near the surface now for her even to acknowledge this information flung at her in an unpleasant voice. She went out of the office, and immediately—surprisingly—two women hurried after her.

One was flabby, large and over-dressed, with a pasty complexion and eyes like a fish, in which was a lack of all moral sense. She hurried after the girl and took her by the shoulder just as she reached the top of the stairs that led down into the street.

The other was a small, timid woman, with anxiety and indecision written all over her, and a last year's street suit with the sleeves remodeled. When she saw who had stopped the girl, she lingered behind in the hall and pretended there was something wrong with the braid on her skirt. While she lingered she listened.

"Wait a minute, miss," said the flashy woman. "You needn't feel bad about having references. Everybody isn't so particular. You come with me, and I'll put you in the way of earning more than you can ever get as a waitress. You weren't cut out for work, anyway, with that face and voice. I've been watching you. You were meant for a lady. You need to be dressed up, and you'll be a real pretty girl."

As she talked, she had come nearer and now she leaned over and whispered so that the timid woman, who was beginning dimly to perceive what manner of creature this other woman was, could not hear.

But the girl stepped back with sudden energy and flashed eyes, shaking off the beringed hand that had grasped her shoulder.

"Don't you dare to speak to me!" she said in a loud, clear voice. "Don't you dare to touch me! You are a wicked woman! If you touch me again, I will go in there and tell all those women how you have insulted me!"

"Oh, well, if you're a saint, starve!" hissed the woman.

"I should rather starve ten thousand times than take help from you," said the girl, and her clear, horrified eyes seemed to burn into the woman's evil face. She turned and slid away, like the wily old serpent that she was.

Board of Supervisors

Board met Tuesday August 12, pursuant to adjournment of June 12, with all members present.

Minutes of last equalization meeting were read and approved.

Certificate of state levy from the state board of equalization being on file which is as follows:

Total valuation.....\$3,203,498 Gen. fund, 5 mills on dollar.\$14 017 49 University fund..... 3,203 50 Special University fund..... 2,402 62 Normal school fund..... 2,722 97 State aid bridge fund..... 640 70 Total.....\$24,987 28

A motion to put on an emergency bridge fund was overruled.

The county levy was fixed at twelve mills, divided as follows: General fund, 4 1/2 mills.....\$13,620 00 Bridge fund, 4 mills..... 12,818 26 Road fund, 3 1/2 mills..... 801 14 Int. and bond fund 3 1/2 mills. 11,215 98 Total, 12 mills.....\$38,445 38

Clerk was instructed to make levies on the amounts certified to him by the different townships, school districts and villages and to spread the same on the taxable property of the said different divisions of the county.

Clerk was instructed to deduct book accounts from the assessments, of R. L. Arthur.

Board adjourned sine die. L. B. POLSKI, Co. Clerk.

Board met Aug. 13, pursuant to adjournment of July 17, 1913, with all members present.

Minutes of last meeting read and approved.

Nightingale road petition was laid over till next meeting.

Warrant No. 3527, issued to Amanda B. Hunt cancelled for the reason it had been previously paid.

In the matter of the dividing line between road districts 8 and 7, board on order allotted to 8 the east half and to 9 the west half of said dividing line, being three miles of road.

Board approved the following district treasurers' bonds: Anton Kosmicki, Richard Bausch, Arthur Minshull, C. E. Lang and J. W. Peters.

Board adjourned till after dinner, meet with all members present.

Smith road was disallowed and the Commercial Club road laid over till next meeting.

McDonald, Brown and Welty were appointed as a committee to confer with the Commercial Club relative to their standing a share of the damages on the Commercial Club road.

County Surveyor was ordered to survey the road running through the north half and along north side of section 29-13-15.

Claims committee reported they had allowed all claims, except deduction for taxes and clerk was ordered to draw warrants on respective funds.

GENERAL G H Gipe.....\$ 9 00 W T Owens..... 465 00 A S Main..... 5 00 L E Dickinson..... 1 00 C W Gibson..... 4 50 A Anderstrom..... 2 75 Klapp G Bartlett, 6 warrants..... 45 64 E E Tracy..... 3 00 State Journal Co..... 229 85 S C Thrasher..... 35 00 Mat Janulewicz..... 5 00 L A Williams..... 100 00 Swanson & Lofholm..... 143 59 L H Currier..... 122 56 Wm Graefe..... 8 75 A J Kearns..... 3 00 R A Mathew..... 3 00 Louis Rein..... 5 75 Will J Heapy..... 3 80 S H Robinson..... 3 80 Joe Cording..... 3 80 L B Polski, 2 warrants..... 155 60 A C Ogle..... 36 50 Times Independent..... 70 90 Thos Jensen..... 6 70 Hiyo Aden..... 10 10 W O Brown..... 8 20 Howard Lang..... 9 80 J H Welty..... 15 00 Dan McDonald..... 8 80 W Rewolinski..... 9 20 J W Burleigh..... 37 40 BRIDGE FUND Ashton Lumber Co..... 40 00 Wenzel Rewolinski..... 4 00 John Skibinski..... 1 00 Jos Kalkowski..... 2 00 John Kwiatkowski..... 2 00 ROAD FUND CW Conhiser..... 2 20 Mat Janulewicz..... 2 20 John Stanczyk..... 13 00 Frank Wagner..... 2 00 George Wagner..... 2 00 Conrad Koch..... 4 00 L G Gross..... 1 00 F J Ondrak..... 10 00 Frank Guzenski..... 1 00 John Hackbert..... 67 20 E B Corning..... 2 90 Dan McDonald..... 2 90 Board adjourned to the 17th day of September, 1913. L. B. POLSKI, Co. Clerk.

Road Notice Aufrecht Vacation To whom it may concern: The commissioners appointed to vacate the public road commencing at a point about 80 rods South of the Northwest corner of the Northeast quarter of Section 1 twp 18 North range 16 west of the 6th p. m. and running thence in an easterly, southeasterly, and southerly direction, known as a part of old road No. 142, and terminating at the southeast corner of said section. The commissioners have reported in favor of such vacation. Therefore all objections thereto and all claims for damages must be filed in the County Clerk's office on or before noon of the 25th day of October, 1913, or such road will be vacated without reference thereto. Dated at Loup City August 16, 1913. [SEAL] L. B. POLSKI, County Clerk. Last pub. Sept. 15

Don't Forget The SHERMAN COUNTY FAIR and Stock Show 3 BIG DAYS 3 SEPTEMBER 17, 18 and 19 Jenner's Park Loup City, Nebraska

There Will Not Be Any Races but numerous other attractions will help carry out our purpose to make OUR FIRST EXHIBITION A Grand Success Come to the First Sherman County Fair and bring ALL your friends

See the Secretary and get a Premium List which gives information in regard to Entries and Prizes Sherman County Agricultural Society A. E. CHASE, Secretary Loup City, Nebraska