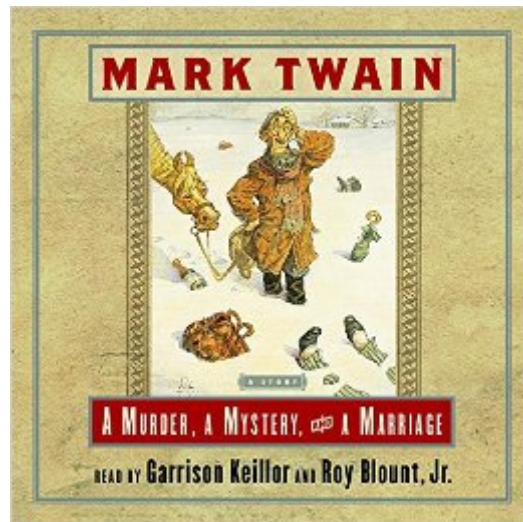


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# A Murder, A Mystery, And A Marriage



## Synopsis

"Upon the border of a remote and out-of-the-way village in south-western Missouri lived an old farmer named John Gray..." In 1876, the same year *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was published, Mark Twain wrote a story for *The Atlantic Monthly*. He meant it as a "blind novelette"--a challenge to other writers to submit their own ending of the story in a national competition. Twain asked his editor at *The Atlantic* to request submissions from leading authors of the day, including Henry James. Perhaps because few writers could write as well as Twain, no one responded, and Twain's original complete manuscript languished in literary hibernation. It was rediscovered in 1995 and will appear in *The Atlantic Monthly* in summer 2001, having come full circle. Set in the fictional town of Deer Lick, Missouri, *A Murder, a Mystery, and a Marriage* chronicles the fortunes of a farmer determined to have his daughter marry the son of a wealthy man. It's a charming story in the Twain tradition and a delightful addition to his legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Those who read *The Atlantic Monthly* will probably be curious about how this book compares with the material that appeared in the August 2001 issue. As best I can tell, the primary differences are in the illustrations. The book has four larger facsimile pages of the manuscript while the magazine material had two smaller ones. The book has 9 water color illustrations while the magazine has three. Obviously, a bound book is a more handsome item than part of a magazine. But anyone who is interested in this book might want to examine the magazine version first. The "Skeleton Novelette" will probably seem to most people like just a slightly more developed version of a short story. Its text

encompasses 8 magazine pages. By itself, this work would attract relatively little attention except for its newness to the reader. What makes the story appealing are the foreword and afterword by Roy Blount, Jr. Combined, these essays are longer than the story. The foreword explains the history of how the work came to be written and published. Of particular relevance is the reference to Mark Twain's "How to Tell a Story." Mark Twain (or Samuel Clemens, depending on your preference) wrote that "the rambling and disjointed humorous story finishes with a nub, point, snapper, or whatever you like to call it." Mr. Twain warns that "the listener must be alert, for in many cases the teller will divert attention from that nub by dropping it in a carefully casual and indifferent way . . . ." The risk, naturally, in using this approach is that the reader will fail to grasp or appreciate the snapper.

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