

Mystery of the Scavenger Hunt Heist

~ A Curiously Comical Crime ~

Written by Brian Sylvia

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Detective Vic Torious is called to the ranch of Bill Yonnaire, the host of the Third Annual Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt. This year's event is to be televised for the first time. But the ultimate prize, a solid gold 12-inch laughing hyena worth a million dollars, has disappeared before it is officially "hidden." Who stole the high-priced hyena? Could it be Duane Pypes, the former teen idol from an '80s sitcom? Or perhaps it's the newly-crowned champion of the American Superstar TV series, Carrie Oakey. Add in a retired supermodel, a ruthless defending champion, a former Olympic gold medalist, a mysterious uninvited competitor, and a struggling TV producer, and this becomes a headline-grabbing mystery to solve. But leave it to Detective Vic Torious to find a way! After the suspects have been questioned, the audience can vote for the most likely thief. A second prologue, post-intermission, reveals the true culprit. But wait, there are multiple endings for multiple shows! Or you can simply select your favorite conclusion. An optional character, Ella Mentry, may serve as the mistress of ceremonies.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 m, 6 w - 1 optional)

DETECTIVE VIC TORIOUS: (M) detective who always gets to the bottom of it, while taking the audience on a pun-derful journey. *"True story."*

DUANE PYPES: (M) an '80s teen TV star from the hit series *Teen Meets Universe*.

MARSHA MELLO: (W) producer of the TV show version of the competition.

HOLLY DAYIN: (W) retired supermodel; just wants to be noticed again.

PHILIPPA BUCKETT: (W) defending champion of the event.

JACKLYN HYDE: (W) uninvited to the competition, very mysterious personality.

BILL YONNAIRE: (M) this year's host, owner of Mudtooth Ridge Ranch.

RANDY HOLEWEIGH: (M) former Olympic runner who plans on winning with his superior endurance.

CARRIE OAKEY: (W) recent winner of *American Superstar* singing competition; has a sneezing allergy.

ELLA MENTRY: (optional) the mistress of ceremonies. She wears very over-the-top outfit.

SETTING

The ranch of the very rich Bill Yonnaire. Amazingly, his rather messy ranch isn't indicative of a billionaire's lifestyle. It has a fireplace with a mantel USC. Just in front of the fireplace with room to walk behind is a large, out-of-style sofa. A wing chair sits USL. A serving cart is USR. A picture of Bill Yonnaire with Randy Holeweigh sits on the mantel.

Prologue

(AT RISE: ELLA enters and speaks directly to the audience.)

ELLA: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Ella Mentry, your hostess for the evening. Thank you so much for joining us for this spectacular, and, well, somewhat alarming, event. In just a little while you will meet a group of, let's just say, *interesting* individuals. Eight of these individuals all end up being suspects in a crime at the famous Mudtooth Ridge Ranch owned by none other than Bill Yonnaire. Bill Yonnaire has taken his Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt and turned it into a media centerpiece. You see, this year he arranged for it to be televised – nationally! And he's planned it to be right here at Mudtooth Ridge, with some high-profile competitors. But something quite dramatic has happened at this iconic venue. It appears there has been a tragedy involving the solid gold laughing hyena that is the most valued of all of the items in the hunt. I am still not too sure exactly what has happened. Now before you assume too much, I think it's important to let you know that you're about to go on a journey of uncovering evidence. Pay close attention, because later on we'll be asking *you* to decide who you think is the guilty party. And remember, out of respect for the other amateur sleuths around you, *do not*, under any circumstances, use your cell phone. The recording of evidence is not allowed. You are to do all of this from memory. So, from me, Ella Mentry, and everyone at Mudtooth Ridge Ranch, welcome to what we hope will be a memorable and peaceful outcome. Oh, and please help us get to the bottom of our little problem. Get ready, because the cast of characters are about to make their way out into the main room at the Mudtooth Ridge Ranch's lodge. Have a good evening, and I'll see you later.

(LIGHTS shift as ELLA exits and VIC enters.)

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VIC: *(Downstage, directed toward the audience.)* It was just a few days before the world's most extreme scavenger hunt, and I had just arrived in Mudtooth Ridge. Ironically, I arrived just prior to the opening ceremonies to this Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt sponsored by the eccentric benefactor, Bill Yonnaire. Of all of the scavenger hunts across the country, none could surpass the extreme nature of the contest sponsored by him. It attracted an elite group of competitors. I typically don't go for all of the fanaticism surrounding reality shows. My friends convinced me to come and observe this Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt. It was better than staying home and doing my spring cleaning. Those darn things bounce all over the place. My name is Vic, *(Pause.)* Vic Torious. Indeed, I have quite a reputation in this part of the country as the sleuth who almost always gets to the bottom of the mystery. Yes, I don't like to say it about myself, others say it about me.

I hadn't had a legitimate case since I was called to the candy shop in Sugartree Heights. There had been a robbery there. Turns out it was a repeat offender. Yes, he was up to his old Twix. *(Aside. Matter-of-fact.)* True story. And, just like Quasimodo, I always have a hunch. But today was different. I received a call from Bill Yonnaire. The prized solid-gold laughing hyena had been stolen, apparently by a competitor in his annual Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt.

So, here I was just days before the hunt and that call came in. I was summoned to Mudtooth Ridge Ranch. The guests were all asked to remain and were cooperating so far. I wasn't sure what I would encounter. The rich entrepreneur's call was so brief that I failed to ascertain what the value was on the missing solid gold laughing hyena. I was hoping this wasn't like when I received an emergency call regarding a reckless thief who was only stealing cooking utensils. That thief was quite a whisk taker. *(Aside. Matter-of-fact.)* True story. *(Exits.)*

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The Mudtooth Ridge Ranch living room. VIC enters.)

VIC: Curious. No one is here. The front door was unlocked. That's a little concerning. I was wondering if this was like the time the youth soccer team won gold at a tournament. They managed to stop a thief on the very same day as their gold medal performance. And that thief would have gotten away with it if it weren't for those medaling kids. (Aside. Matter-of-fact.) True story.

(BILL enters.)

VIC: (Cont'd.) I have actually never personally met Bill Yonnaire. He's probably like most rich folks and he can't even bake bread.

BILL: You're absolutely correct. Why is it that I cannot bake bread?

VIC: Probably because you don't knead the dough. (Beat.) You must be Bill Yonnaire. I recognize your face from all of the TV ads about the Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt. Pardon me if I'm a little uncomfortable around you. I always seem to be uneasy around wealthy people since I dated the rich daughter of an affluent sausage tycoon. That spoiled *brat* was the (Slight pause.) *wurst!*

BILL: Well, hopefully you will find that I'm not your average tycoon.

VIC: That's good. Because I knew a woman who was married four times: to a tycoon, an actor, a preacher, and an undertaker. One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go. (Aside. Matter-of-fact.) True story.

BILL: And rather irrelevant.

VIC: You're welcome.

BILL: Are you detective Vic Torious?

VIC: Yes, I am.

BILL: Troubling.

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VIC: Pardon me?

BILL: Oh, I said bubbling. I think my tea is bubbling in the kitchen.

VIC: Ah, a tea drinker. I prefer coffee myself. The whole tea culture has a *(Slight pause.)* steep learning curve.

BILL: Well, you are quite the witty sleuth, aren't you?

VIC: Witty? Do you think so? When I was a teenager, I told my father that I wanted to be a comedian. You won't believe his response.

BILL: What was it?

VIC: He told me to stop joking. *(Beat.)* So, I became a detective. My first assignment was at the beach. My lieutenant said I was assigned there because they were expecting a crime wave. *(Aside. Matter-of-fact.)* True story. Well, Mr. Yonnaire, where are the suspects?

BILL: They are in the library. I thought it would be best for them to remain there until you arrived.

VIC: The library. Interesting. I once thought my local librarian had a crush on me. But then I wasn't sure if I was just reading too much into it. Why don't you go to the library and send in the suspects.

(BILL begins to exit.)

VIC: *(Cont'd.)* Oh, and one more question. What was the worth of this solid gold laughing hyena?

BILL: It was worth roughly one million dollars.

(SFX: Sinister minor chord progression. THEY look around.)

BILL: *(Cont'd.)* Well, detective, it seems that you bring with you quite a perplexing atmosphere. I will go and get the suspects. *(Exits.)*

VIC: That is quite the expensive hyena. One million dollars! I remember hearing about the guy who hid a million dollars in his washing machine. We arrested him for money laundering. This place isn't exactly what I'd expect from a wealthy tycoon. This looks like the home of the rich European architect who went bankrupt.

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VIC: *(Cont'd.)* He was completely Baroque. *(Notices the picture of Bill and Randy.)* Well, isn't this interesting.

(RANDY enters.)

VIC: *(Cont'd.)* This appears to be a picture of, why yes, it is Bill Yonnaire and...

RANDY: Me. Randy Holeweigh.

VIC: Yes, the famous Olympic gold medalist. You won gold in the...

RANDY: Marathon. That was some years ago, but I still pride myself in being in tip-top shape. Which is why I was invited to compete in this Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt.

VIC: I tried running for a while. I would jog behind my friend's car. I gave up on that because I was always totally exhausted.

RANDY: *(Slight pause.)* Okay then, and you are the detective, I presume.

VIC: I am. *(Puts arm out to shake hands.)* It's great to meet the legendary Randy Holeweigh.

(MARSHA enters.)

VIC: *(Cont'd.)* Having an Olympic runner in this event is quite a big deal.

MARSHA: And you can thank me for that. *(Grabbing VIC's hand to shake it.)* I'm Marsha Mello, the producer of the TV event. Getting Randy Holeweigh as a participant was important. Plus, to be frank, Mr. Holeweigh needed the exposure that this show would give him. *(VIC writes in his notebook.)* This Super Spectacular Scavenger Hunt was about to be nationally televised. We'll lose unspeakable amounts of money if it doesn't go forward.

VIC: Well, though I'm not sure whether your name is Marsha or Frank, I do have a question for you. What network are you with?

MARSHA: I'm a producer with Victorious Broadcasting System.

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VIC: So, you work for VBS, do you?

MARSHA: Didn't I just say that?

VIC: And isn't VBS struggling a bit these days?

MARSHA: We're not a top network anymore, but we're on our way back up there. Not like my previous network experience. Oops, I mean, if VBS can sign names like Randy Holeweigh to this event it certainly helps us.

RANDY: Thank you, Marsha.

VIC: Previous network experience?

MARSHA: That is irrelevant to this moment.

(PHILIPPA and JACKLYN enter.)

PHILIPPA: *(To JACKLYN.)* And I have no clue who you are. You just appeared out of nowhere.

VIC: Well, if it isn't Philippa Buckett. Aren't you the defending champion of this event?

PHILIPPA: Indeed I am. No one is quicker than me at rounding up the high money scavenger hunt items in this event.

VIC: I read the article last year in *Sports Globe USA*.

PHILIPPA: No one came close to beating me. *(To RANDY.)* And no one will this year either.

RANDY: We'll see about that.

JACKLYN: Yes, we'll see about that.

VIC: And who are you?

PHILIPPA: That's what I've been asking. She just showed up, completely uninvited.

JACKLYN: My name is Jacklyn Hyde.

MARSHA: She is not on the list of participants. Though the name is sounding a bit familiar.

PHILIPPA: Well, Jacklyn Hyde, you'll never beat me.

JACKLYN: That's what you think. *(Turning away.)* To a certain degree, I already have.

PHILIPPA: What in the world does that mean?

(DUANE, HOLLY and CARRIE enter.)

End of Freeview

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