



The Hand of Mary Constable

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Are the spiritual manifestations of Professor Constable's dead daughter Mary genuine or is someone trying to sabotage his work? The only hard evidence is a wax hand bearing a set of Mary's fingerprints, but the truth must be uncovered as the apparent spirit is sapping the Professor's will with each passing hour.

The Hand of Mary Constable Details

Date : Published January 1st 1976 by Ulverscroft (first published 1964)

ISBN : 9780854564033

Author : Paul Gallico

Format : Hardcover 489 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery

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From Reader Review The Hand of Mary Constable for online ebook

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

I read this after I saw the movie back in the '70s. Like his other book, Too Many Ghosts, this isn't a spine-chiller, full of horror, but a creepy, quiet little ghost story full of seances, hauntings, and the materialization of the hand mentioned in the title.

Tony says

THE HAND OF MARY CONSTABLE. (1964). Paul Gallico. **.

Gallico (1897-1976) was a very popular writer in the 1950s and 1960s. He never made any claim to being a literary writer – simply a story teller. His most famous book, mostly because of the movie adaptation made from it, was “The Poseidon Adventure.” In all, he wrote just over forty novels, and bunches of short stories. When I spotted this one at a library sale, I had never heard of it and thought I’d give it a try. In general, it provides a hum-drum plot with cardboard cut-out characters that lead to a disappointing ending. It is about spiritualism – or at least that plays a big part in the story. Dr. Hero is called from England by his American friend, a curator at the NY Public Library. He needs his expert help, urgently. Hero is an expert on the paranormal, and spends his spare time following up on reported instances of interactions between live people and shades from the other side. When he arrives in NY, he meets his friend, along with a General in the U.S. Army, and a man from the FBI who is a fingerprint expert. It seems that they are concerned with the activities of a Professor Constable, who is being – so they think – by a spiritualist who is trying to convince him to give up his work on a secret project. The secret project is one that has dire implications on the balance of world power. What is at issue is that the spiritualist has managed to bring the good Professor into contact with his dead daughter. She has recently died and was only ten years old. As part of the contact proof, his dead daughter has left behind a wax reproduction of her hand. What makes it a real puzzle is that the copy of hand was made in front of the Professor while at a séance; the daughter’s spirit dipped her hand in molten wax and then into cold water. What was left was the copy of the hand – with the girl’s verified fingerprints on the inside of the hand. How did anyone except a spirit get their hand out of the molded wax? How did the fingerprints get there? Our Hero (what a good name for a character) must attempt to get to the bottom of all this in order to keep the good professor on track with the development of his secret weapon, and keep him from being persuaded to defect to the other side (Russia). The hunt for clues into this obvious deception is on. If only this were better written, or, at least with more of a tongue-in-cheek approach!

Betty Dickie says

This is a wonderful "ghost" story. Alexander Hero is a wonderful character. I love the fact that he wants to find a ghost, but knows he probably won't. There is just enough spookiness and intrigue to keep you going. It's time for me to read it again.

Ricky says

I enjoyed this book and even though it was a bit dated in some respects with regards to the dialogue it kept my attention throughout. The characterisation was good and you got a good sense of the different personalities and how they operate. The main character, Hero was a good character and was also a likeable, honest investigator. The plot was interesting and evoked clear images in the minds eye. I was leaning towards 3 stars until the end of the book, but after I finished on reflection I felt it deserves 4. I changed my view for it's inventiveness and well thought out plot and Hero's summing up and personal thoughts at the end, which finished the book off nicely.

Elizabeth says

Well, I have been wanting to read more Paul Gallico books as my Mum liked his work. I am surprised by his diversity. He is not stuck in one genre. This book was unique and compelling.

Marilyn Mansfield says

This is the second book featuring the psychical investigator Alexander Hero. Like the first, Too Many Ghosts, this is an entertaining read and I really like the main character who is open minded and objective while maintaining a detached skepticism. You learn about how magicians and fake psychics fool their patrons it's an interesting howtheydidit instead of whodinit

Lynda says

This book was much better than the movie.

Brenda says

Another Alexander Hero book. This time, he is sent to New York, where a scientist is convinced that he is in touch with his dead daughter through a medium. The evidence is a cast of a hand, with the fingerprints of the dead girl in it. An exciting story set in the cold war era. I read this first about 45 years ago and always wanted to read Paul Gallico again as he was my favourite teenage years writer - read many of his books. Very cleverly done story

Melissa Hedges- Rankin says

This book was part of my inherited library and I enjoyed it. A mystery spy detective crime story, touching on the occult, tied into one storyline. Looked up other works by this author, he has dabbled in several different genres as well as screenwriting. The first 20% of the book was a little slow, but then got more interesting.

Thought the author did a great job with character development, as well as maintaining suspense until the end.

Jennifer Morefield says

I thought this was a very clever novel that combined mystery and intrigue with the occult. Hero is hired to investigate a medium and her husband because a scientist who is working on a project is being swayed to sell his secrets to the Russians. Hero's job is to find out and debunk how they created a hand of Constable's late 10 yr. old daughter after she had been cremated. A good story from beginning to end. I liked it.
