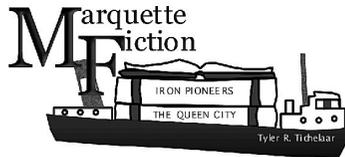


The Mysteries of Marquette

A Novel

Tyler R. Tichelaar

Author of *The Marquette Trilogy*, *Haunted Marquette*, and
Odin's Eye: A Marquette Time Travel Novel



The Mysteries of Marquette

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“The most hardened hearts find a solace in the thought that
their crimes are justifiable.”

— Eugène Sue, *The Knight of Malta*

“Be a pleasant rascal and the world is yours.”

— Ferenc Molnár, *The Devil*

Cast of Characters

Fictional Characters

The Blackmore Household

Richard Blackmore, a wealthy real estate agent

Judith Blackmore, Richard's wife

Lysander Blackmore, Richard and Judith's son, a teller at
Lake Superior Bank and Trust

Sarah Dalrymple, the Blackmores' maid

Ernestine, the Blackmores' housekeeper

The Melmotte Household

Felix Melmotte, a businessman

Claudine Melmotte, Felix's wife

Alice Melmotte, Felix and Claudine's daughter, a telephone
operator

Peter, Claudia, Michael, and Martha Melmotte, Alice's
younger siblings

Pierre Méchant, Claudine's father

The Hicks Household

Melanie Hicks, a young woman

Rutherford Hicks, Melanie's father

Millicent Hicks, Melanie's mother

The Newcomb Household

Eddie Newcomb, best friend of Lysander Blackmore and ex-
beau of Melanie Hicks

Mr. Newcomb, Eddie's father and a lawyer

Mrs. Newcomb, Eddie's mother

The Marquis and His Entourage

The Marquis de Marquette

Eugene Montague, the marquis' private secretary

Djalma, the marquis' bodyguard

Genevieve, the marquis' maid

A chauffeur

A chef

A valet

The Smith Household

Carolina Smith, a wealthy widow and snob

Emily, Carolina's maid

The O'Neill Household

Kathleen O'Neill, Carolina Smith's sister-in-law

Louisa May O'Neill, Kathleen's unmarried daughter

The Hampton Household

Jane Hampton, Carolina Smith's daughter

Tom Hampton, Jane's husband

Mark Hampton, Tom and Jane's eight-year-old son

Tom Hampton, Jr., Tom and Jane's four-year-old son

The O'Brien Household

Timothy O'Brien, a deceased entrepreneur

Rose O'Brien, Timothy's wife

Edmund O'Brien, Timothy and Rose's son

The Sidneys

Eliza Sidney, an orphan and heiress from Detroit

Ralph Sidney, Eliza's adoptive father

Mary Sidney, Eliza's adoptive mother, now deceased

Individuals

Ben Styles, reporter for *The Mining Journal*

Virginia Mordaunt, a seamstress

Roger, Mary, and Florence Mitchell, unmarried adult siblings

Hector Armitage, a fireman

Miss Pemble, Richard Blackmore's secretary
Frank Fenwolf, a shyster
Mary Purefoy, Frank's cousin
Arthur Markham, Mary's lover
Alma, an acquaintance of Frank Fenwolf

Lake Superior Bank and Trust Staff

Mr. Robb, manager at the bank's Marquette branch
Mrs. Robb, Mr. Robb's wife
Eulalie Robb, their daughter
Mr. Boyce, assistant manager, engaged to Eulalie Robb
Miss Eliot, a bank teller
Mr. Sands, a bank teller
Miss Collins, Lysander Blackmore's secretary
Chuck, a security guard

Telephone Company Employees

Mr. Parker, manager
Belinda, an operator

Ladies of the Evening

Lucinda Wragg, a madam operating a brothel under the
guise of a boarding house
Lily, Lucinda's niece who lives with her
Velma, Annie, and Sally, ladies of the evening at Lucinda's
boarding house
Laverne, Lily's mother, who operates a brothel in Sault Sainte
Marie

Police Officers

Patrick McCarey, a Marquette policeman
Officer Reilly, another Marquette policeman
Chester Billings, a policeman who went to school with
Lysander

Catholic Clergy and Lay People

Father Rodin, a priest at St. Peter's Cathedral
Mrs. Elizabeth Beaudry, housekeeper at the rectory at St.
Peter's Cathedral

Father Xavier Méchant, brother to Sister Carmella and Pierre Méchant, a priest in Sault Sainte Marie, deceased at time of novel

Nuns at the Sisters of St. Joseph's Convent

Sister Carmella, formerly Philomene Méchant, sister of Pierre and Xavier Méchant

Sister Scholastica, who teaches at the Bishop Baraga School

Sister Agnes, the convent cook

Sister Veronica

Sister Theresa

Sister Anne

Historical People

Peter White, Marquette city father, businessman, founder of the First National Bank

John Robertson, Mayor of Marquette

James Russell, warden at the Marquette Branch Prison and owner of *The Mining Journal*

Frank Russell, son of James Russell

Louis G. Kaufman, President of the First National Bank

Marie Young Kaufman, wife of Louis G. Kaufman

Harry Kaufman, younger brother of Louis G. Kaufman

Robert Hume, former Marquette police officer and caretaker of Presque Isle Park

Winthrop Allen, son of Ephraim Allen

Philip Allen, brother of Winthrop Allen

George Shiras III, son-in-law of Peter White

Frances Shiras, daughter of Peter White

George Shiras IV, son of George and Frances Shiras

Elizabeth Mather, sister-in-law of Peter White

Rev. Juho Kustaa Nikander, President of Suomi College, the "Finnish College," in Hancock, Michigan

Pinkerton Detectives McCaffrey and Forsee

D. Frederick Charlton, Marquette's premier architect

Bishop John Vertin, Bishop of the Diocese of Marquette (1879-1899)

Bishop Frederick Eis, Bishop of the Diocese of Marquette
(1899-1922)

Mother Rose Vincent, Mother Superior of St. Joseph's
Convent

Mr. Oates, owner of Oates Furniture and Undertaking

Rev. Bates Burt, priest of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Dr. James Dawson

Dr. O. G. Youngquist

Preface

THE MYSTERIES OF MARQUETTE WAS inspired by the popular nineteenth-century City Mysteries genre. In June 1842, French novelist Eugène Sue took the literary world by storm when he began to serialize his mammoth bestseller *The Mysteries of Paris* in a Paris newspaper. The tale of mystery and intrigue mesmerized readers, causing them to eagerly await each installment. The novel's success quickly inspired French novelist Paul Féval to write *The Mysteries of London* (1844), and soon after, British author George W. M. Reynolds began writing his own novel also titled *The Mysteries of London* (1845). Wanting to compete, Alexandre Dumas wrote *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844) in the same vein, though not using the same title pattern.

The popularity of the City Mysteries genre soon reached the United States, resulting in *The Quaker City, or The Monks of Monk Hall: a Romance of Philadelphia Life, Mystery and Crime* (1844) by George Lippard, *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York* (1848) by Ned Buntline, and most recently, *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* (1988) by Michael Chabon.

Internationally, titles included *The Mysteries of Marseille* (1867) by Émile Zola, *The Mysteries of Naples* (1869-70) by Francesco Mastriani, *The Mysteries of Berlin* (1844) by August Brass, *The Mysteries of Hamburg* (1845) by Johann Wilhelm Christern, *The Mysteries of Amsterdam* (1844) by L. van Eikenhorst, *The Mysteries of Lisbon* (1854) by Camilo Castelo Branco, the nonfiction work *The Mysteries of Montreal* (1881) by Charlotte Fuhrer, *The Mysteries of Melbourne* (1873) by Donald Cameron, *The Mysteries of Lyon* (1933) by Jean de La Hire, and *The New Mysteries of Paris* (1954-9) by Léo Malet.

Only a few of these books, those of Marseilles, Melbourne, and Montreal, have alliterative titles. As a fan of the City Mysteries genre (I have written extensively about it in my book *Vampire Grooms and Spectre Brides: The Marriage of French and British Gothic Literature, 1789-1897*), I could not resist writing a novel in a similar vein about my hometown, thereby adding to the group of more alliterative titles.

The Mysteries of Marquette is a stand-alone novel written in the style of Eugène Sue and his imitators, but it is also a companion to the many historical novels I have written and set in Marquette. Readers of my past novels will recognize many familiar characters and historical people, plus they will meet many new characters. This novel may also expose a side of Marquette that readers do not expect. While the main plot is fantastic, I assure the reader I have done the research to treat the places, events, and people in as truthful a manner as a novelist can do. In the author's note at the end, I discuss the historical facts that inspired this work.

Now, prepare yourself for a story of intrigue, crime, sensation, and melodrama that our Victorian ancestors would have loved.

Tyler R. Tichelaar
Marquette, Michigan
October 31, 2024

Chapter 1

NO ONE COULD HAVE BEEN more surprised than Richard Blackmore when the following letter came across his desk that momentous morning.

May 1, 1908

Mr. Richard Blackmore, Esq.
Blackmore Real Estate Agency
Front Street
Marquette, Michigan

Dear Mr. Blackmore,

I am writing at the request of my employer, the Marquis de Marquette. Monseigneur recently learned of the existence of your fair city and wishes to visit it since he understands it was named to honor his notable relative, Father Jacques Marquette, the famous Jesuit missionary and explorer who helped discover the Mississippi River. He especially looks forward to seeing the statue of his illustrious relative, which he understands was recently erected in your fair city.

Monseigneur, who suffers from hay fever, has also heard how the clean fresh air blowing off Lake Superior in your northern climate provides relief to those who, like him, suffer from hay fever. Consequently, he is desirous of engaging a large private property where he and his staff can reside and entertain guests for the

summer. Several suites of rooms will be required. In fact, a large hotel would be desirable. Money is no concern. I have heard of a currently vacant property titled the Hotel Superior in Marquette that I think would well suit our needs. Please make the necessary arrangements for my employer to reside there during the summer months and possibly beyond. Monseigneur will arrive with his bodyguard, valet, chauffeur, chef, a maid, and myself, his private secretary, but we would appreciate any help you may provide to hire additional staff from the local population to do housekeeping as needed. We are currently staying in Chicago and expect to arrive in Marquette on Monday, May 25.

Due to monseigneur's high position in society and the tactlessness of the press, I must request that you keep this matter confidential until all arrangements have been finalized.

This remarkable letter concluded with an address and suite number at the Congress Hotel in Chicago, as well as contact information for making telephone calls or sending telegrams to the letter's author. It was signed "Eugene Montague, personal secretary to the Marquis de Marquette."

Richard Blackmore was not only astounded by this letter—he was overjoyed. He had never heard of the Marquis de Marquette, but that did not seem strange to him since he was not very knowledgeable about French history. He had thought all the French nobility had lost their heads during the French Revolution, but here was a real live French marquis, and not only did he plan to visit Marquette, but he was related to Father Marquette, the city's namesake. The Jesuit missionary had traveled the Great Lakes in the 1660s and 1670s. He had reputedly said a Mass and converted the Ojibwa on the very spot where Marquette was later founded in 1849. The residents of Marquette were very proud of their city's namesake, and consequently, they would all wish to meet the Marquis de Marquette. This secret would not be an easy one to keep.

But as impressive as a French marquis was, what mattered most to Richard Blackmore was that it sounded like the marquis

had extensive financial resources, and Richard needed all the financial resources he could acquire. At sixty-eight, he was no longer a young man. His only child, Lysander, at twenty-three, was a disappointment to him. Lysander had refused to have anything to do with the real estate business and taken a position as a bank teller at Lake Superior Bank and Trust. The boy had delusions of grandeur, thinking he might connect himself with Marquette's great banking families, the Kaufmans and the Whites. Worse, the real estate business had been in a slump since the Panic of 1907, and at his age, Richard was running out of energy. He believed himself as good as Peter White, J. M. Longyear, Louis G. Kaufman, or any of the other wealthy landowners and businessmen in the area. None of them had come from money; they had earned it for themselves just like him. But for whatever reason, the well-to-do in Marquette preferred to do business with White, Longyear, Kaufman, and the other bigwigs, leaving Richard to try to make his money off the working class, selling properties on the north end of Marquette to people building modest houses down the hill in the vicinity of Pine, High, or Front Streets or selling farmland in the surrounding area. Richard badly needed a well-to-do client, and this French marquis seemed ideal.

Richard quickly replied to the letter via telegram, but not so quickly that he did not carefully word his message to ensure a positive response.

Dear Mr. Montague,

Your message received. My pleasure to assist your employer. Will make inquiries and notify you at earliest possible date.

Sincerely, Richard Blackmore.

It was a lot of words for a telegram, and every word cost money, but it would be worth it to make this deal. Richard knew the Hotel Superior had been vacant for half-a-dozen years, and the owner would be eager to rent it out. Given the hotel's enormous size—100 rooms, complete with a ballroom, Turkish baths, and every modern amenity—Richard figured his commission would exceed what he'd likely make in real estate sales all summer. Just imagine wanting to rent an entire hotel! He would also assist in

finding staff to operate it. The details would be extremely complicated, but he could have his secretary, Miss Pemble, do most of the work while he hobnobbed with the marquis and enjoyed the commission.

Richard's only real problem was his uncertainty about who currently owned the Hotel Superior. It had changed hands so many times he had lost track. But Richard knew who would know. Peter White was Marquette's most prominent businessman; he had an interest in nearly every aspect of every industry in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. If Richard talked to Mr. White, no doubt he could begin the necessary arrangements.

Richard informed Miss Pemble that he would be out of the office for the next hour or two. Then he put on his hat and coat and headed out to find Mr. White. A matter of such importance could not be relegated to a telephone call. A personal meeting was required.

Chapter 2

A DECADE EARLIER, THE HOTEL SUPERIOR had been Marquette's premier hotel with aspirations to be the preeminent hotel in the Great Lakes region. The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island had opened in 1887, and it had quickly attracted the most prominent of high society, from Lady Astor's 400 to the European aristocracy. Not to be outdone, Marquette, hailing itself as the Queen City of the North, had decided to create its own luxurious hotel.

The Hotel Superior was the brainchild of Dr. R. C. Markham of Marquette, Dr. C. N. Morely of Detroit, and Dr. H. G. Ide of Oxford, Michigan. They wished to create a hotel that would attract the wealthy but also be a sanitarium, thus attracting hay fever sufferers and other guests who could benefit from the fresh air and cool climate of Lake Superior. With the aid of the Citizens Association in Marquette, a site had been purchased and a board of directors established. Once Marquette's most successful businessman, Peter White, agreed to be the hotel's treasurer, everyone was certain its success was assured.

The imposing hotel had been constructed to look like a towering Bavarian Castle, perched on top of a hill in South Marquette that rose up from Lake Superior. Visitors would take their carriages, and later the streetcar, up the hill of Blemhuber Avenue to this ornate and palatial resort. Designed by Colonel E. E. Meyer of Detroit, who had been the architect for the state capitol in Lansing, the Hotel Superior would boast 100 rooms, a 500-foot porch, six floors, not counting its towering tower and subterranean basement, and twenty-seven acres of grounds. At a cost of \$200,000, it was the largest building project to date in Marquette history.

Advertisements for the hotel described it as “Mountain Park” and Marquette as the “Naples of the New World” besides the metropolis’ more common praise as “the Queen City of the North.” Marquette’s scenery was said to rival Mackinac Island’s, its climate to be the healthiest in North America, and its mineral riches from the nearby iron mines in Negaunee and Ishpeming made it the wealthiest region in the United States. Who would not want to visit such a city and stay at the hotel that was its crowning jewel?

Approaching Marquette via the ship *India*, visitors could see from the lake the dazzling alabaster hotel rising up above the city. The sight was breathtaking. The fresh aromatic pine trees, the wafting smell of lilacs in June, and the crying of seagulls, like harbingers of happiness to come, caused many a nearly fainting society miss from Chicago or Cleveland—whose corset was probably too tight—to feel intoxicated by the romantic adventure she was bound to experience in this sandstone city where she might reside for a week, a month, or the entire season like a princess in an ivory tower.

Of course, the hotel had its detractors. Some dared claim it was a giant wooden eyesore. Such philistines did not comprehend the value of tourism to Marquette’s economy nor the importance of capitalistic ventures. As for the old biddies who thought the Turkish baths scandalous, they could just stay home with their noses stuck in their Bibles. Meanwhile, the hotel’s guests would enjoy the exotic delights of this luxurious palace far from the urban city’s madding crowd.

And yet, the Hotel Superior, for all its grandeur, had not attracted the number of guests desired. Only operating in the summer, even then it had difficulty finding enough guests to keep its doors open. By 1894, it had to be sold at auction.

In 1895, a Chicago firm leased the building, hoping to turn around the hotel’s situation. The new management no longer advertised it as part sanitarium but simply as a hotel with the thought that such a designation would attract more people. A grand opening ball was attended by five hundred guests, including the elite of Marquette. But before the century was over, the hotel again found itself struggling.

In 1900, it was leased to George Ross of Chicago for five years. But even the orchestra he brought up in the summer from Chicago only helped to sustain the hotel for two more years.

For six years now, the Hotel Superior had sat vacant. Speculation over its future continued. Some suggested it become a rest home, others a sanitarium or a girls school. The philistines suggested it be torn down, but no one wanted to listen to them. Many a Marquettian prayed to see it restored to its former or at least desired glory. Now Richard Blackmore believed he could be instrumental in making that happen.

Richard suspected the hotel's current owners, whoever they might be, were not good men of business. Had they been so, the hotel never would have failed, or they never would have bought the hotel in the first place. But Richard knew Peter White was a very good man of business. Even though he had been the hotel's original treasurer, Mr. White could not be blamed for the hotel's failure. After all, Peter White was one of the richest men in Marquette.

Mr. White had arrived in Marquette as a young man of eighteen in 1849, the year the city was founded. Like a boy out of a Horatio J. Alger novel, he had pulled himself up by his bootstraps, using his quick wit and ingenuity to establish his real estate business, the First National Bank, and the Peter White Insurance Agency. He had been a state representative, the friend of US presidents, and the acquaintance of industrial tycoons like Andrew Carnegie. Why, President Cleveland had offered to make him a US ambassador, but he had declined so he could stay in Marquette to help care for his wife's aging parents. That hadn't stopped him, though, from being in charge of the Michigan Pavilion at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago or going to Washington, DC to convince Congress to appropriate money to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the canal and locks at Sault Sainte Marie in 1905.

Beyond all his success and connections, Mr. White was best known now as Marquette's great benefactor. He had purchased Presque Isle, a beautiful peninsula jutting out into the lake north of Marquette, from the Coast Guard, given it as a gift to the city, and then built a road out to the park, lining it with Lombardy poplars. He had also led the fundraising effort to build the

statue of Father Jacques Marquette, a statue that had now won the attention of the Marquis de Marquette.

Peter White was a man who got things done. He was a man who knew people. If anyone in Marquette knew how to arrange for the Marquis de Marquette to stay at the Hotel Superior for the summer, it would be Peter White. Therefore, Richard Blackmore went in quest of Mr. White.

Richard called first at the First National Bank, which Mr. White had founded, but he was told Mr. White was likely at his real estate office. Richard walked there, only to be told when he arrived that Mr. White was likely at his insurance agency. He then walked there, only to be told Mr. White had left a few minutes before on foot to walk home for lunch.

Richard knew Mr. White was well into his seventies—a decade older than Richard—and though a spry old man, a bit on the portly side. Surely, Richard thought, if he headed in the same direction, he would overtake Mr. White, who would have to walk three blocks up Front Street’s hill and then another four blocks along Ridge Street to reach his home.

But Mr. White walked more swiftly than Richard expected. Richard did not enjoy walking, and he would not have walked at all if he had not thought he could catch up to Mr. White in a block or two. By the time Richard reached the top of the hill on Front Street, he could see Mr. White was already two blocks ahead of him, and by the time Richard had walked that far, Mr. White was turning up the walkway to his house. Richard was no runner, but he knew speaking to Mr. White in private would be best, given the marquis’ desire for privacy. Therefore, he picked up his pace and shouted, “Mr. White!” just as Mr. White was about to open his front door.

Mr. White stepped down from his front porch to look about him. Fortunately, Richard did not see the frown on Mr. White’s face when he saw him approaching. Richard Blackmore was no favorite of Mr. White’s. How could Richard expect to be when he had set up his own rival real estate company in a metropolis of 10,000 people? But Mr. White had not complained. Those with money knew to keep their business with him. Those without money—mostly working-class immigrants who had not been in Marquette long enough to hear the rumors about the

Blackmores—did business with Mr. Blackmore. Mr. White knew Mr. Blackmore sold them swampland and ill-constructed houses at prices they could ill afford, and Mr. White felt sorry for them, but he knew they never could have afforded the quality his real estate agency had to offer. And Mr. Blackmore was decidedly not a man of quality in any degree.

“Mr. White, I’m so glad I caught you!” said Richard, walking rapidly up the front walk of the White House.

“Hello, Mr. Blackmore. I was just about to go inside and have my dinner. Would you care to join me?” Whether he liked his guest or not, Mr. White was a gentleman to everyone.

“I have a matter of the most delicate importance to discuss with you,” Richard replied, not responding to the invitation because he was too busy trying to catch his breath.

“Indeed?” said Mr. White, raising his eyebrows and then re-climbing his front steps.

“Yes,” said Richard. “A most important person—in fact, an illustrious personage, perhaps the most illustrious ever to visit our fair city—has sent me a most unusual, most surprising request. You will scarcely believe it when you hear who has proposed to visit Marquette this summer or the request he has made of me to find him suitable accommodations.”

“Indeed,” said Mr. White. “Then I better be sitting down when I hear this declaration.” And he turned the doorknob to open his front door.

“Yes,” said Richard, “and I dearly need your assistance to make this noble personage comfortable during his stay.”

“Noble, no less,” said Mr. White, stepping into his front hall. “Well, I’ll be happy to help you if I can, but I certainly don’t want to discuss such momentous business on an empty stomach. Will you come in to dine?”

“Thank you, Mr. White. It’s most kind of you,” replied Richard, climbing the steps. Mr. White stepped aside to hold the door open for his guest, wishing the man would take his own decidedly unillustrious personage elsewhere, but he was too much of a gentleman to suggest it.