

**X Y Z: A  
DETECTIVE STORY**

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X Y Z: A Detective Story by Anna Katharine Green

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**ANNA KATHARINE GREEN**

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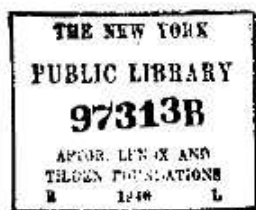
AUTHOR OF "THE LEAVENWORTH CASE," "A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE," ETC.

[Mrs. A.K. Rohlf's.]



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1883



## X. Y. Z.

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A STORY TOLD BY A DETECTIVE.

### I.

#### THE MYSTERIOUS RENDEZVOUS.

SOMETIMES in the course of his experience, a detective, while engaged in ferreting out the mystery of one crime, runs inadvertently upon the clue to another. But rarely has this been done in a manner more unexpected or with attendant circumstances of greater interest than in the instance I am now about to relate.

For some time the penetration of certain Washington officials had been baffled by the clever devices of a gang of counterfeiters who had inundated the western portion of Massachusetts with spurious Treasury notes. Some of the best talent of the Secret Service had been expended upon the matter, but with no favora-

ble result, when, one day, notice was received at Washington that a number of suspicious-looking letters, addressed to the simple initials, X. Y. Z., Brandon, Mass., were being daily forwarded through the mails of that region; and it being deemed possible that a clue had at last been offered to the mystery in hand, I was sent northward to investigate.

It was in the middle of June, 1881, and the weather was simply delightful. As I stepped from the cars at Brandon and looked up the long straight street with its double row of maple trees sparkling fresh and beautiful in the noonday sun, I thought I had never seen a prettier village or entered upon any enterprise with a lighter or more hopeful heart.

Intent on my task, I went straight to the post-office, and after coming to an understanding with the postmaster, proceeded at once to look over the mail addressed to the mysterious X. Y. Z.

I found it to consist entirely of letters. They were about a dozen in number, and were, with one exception, similar in general appearance and manner of direction, though inscribed in

X. Y. Z.



widely different handwritings, and posted from various New England towns. The exception to which I allude had these few extra words written in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope: "*To be kept till called for.*" As I bundled up the letters preparatory to thrusting them back into the box, I noticed that the latter was the only one in a blue envelope, all the others being in the various shades of cream-color and buff.

"Who is in the habit of calling for these letters?" I asked of the postmaster.

"Well," said he, "I don't know his name. The fact is nobody knows him around here. He usually drives up in a buggy about night-fall, calls for letters addressed to X. Y. Z., and having got them, whips up his horse and is off again before one can say a word."

"Describe him," said I.

"Well, he is very lean and very lank. In appearance he is both green and awkward. His complexion is pale, almost sickly. Were it not for his eye, which is keen and twinkling, I should call him an extremely inoffensive-looking person."

The type was not new to me. "I should like to see him," said I.

"You will have to wait till nightfall, then," returned the postmaster. "He never comes till about dusk. Drop in here, say at seven o'clock, and I will see that you have the opportunity of handing him his mail."

I nodded acquiescence to this and sauntered out of the enclosure devoted to the uses of the post-office. As I did so I ran against a young man who was hurriedly approaching from the other end of the store.

"Your pardon," he cried; and I turned to look at him, so gentlemanly was his tone, and so easy the bow with which he accompanied this simple apology.

He was standing before the window of the post-office, waiting for his mail; a good-looking, well-made young man, of a fine countenance, but with a restless eye, whose alert yet anxious expression I could not but note even in the casual glance I gave him. There appeared to be some difficulty in procuring him his mail, and each minute he was kept waiting seemed to increase his impatience almost be-

yond the bounds of endurance. I saw him lean forward and gasp out a hurried word to the postmaster, and was idly wondering over his anxiety and its probable causes, when I heard a hasty exclamation near me, and looking around, saw the postmaster himself beckoning to me from the door of the enclosure. I immediately hastened forward.

"I don't know what it means," he whispered; "but here is a young man, different from any who have been here before, asking for a letter addressed to X. Y. Z."

"A letter?" I repeated.

"Yes, a letter."

"Give him the whole batch and see what he does," I returned, drawing back where I could myself watch the result of my instructions. The postmaster did as I requested. In another moment I saw the young man start with amazement as a dozen letters were put in his hand. "These are not all for me!" he cried, but even as he made the exclamation, drew to one side, and with a look of mingled perplexity and concern, began opening them one after another, his expression deepening to amazement as he