

Laura Stevenson

By Zoe, aged 9

Prologue

Laura Stevenson lived in London, England with her mother and father. She was nine years old.

One afternoon, Laura was sitting with her nanny when her mother came home, looking depressed. She asked her what the matter was. Her mother said that the hat shop she worked at was not doing well and she had to sell it.

Bad luck seemed to ruin that day because, when her father came home, he was very sick. The doctor said they should move to a warmer place. They decided that they would.

I looked out to sea. I saw something more than a wave or a gull. I saw land! Beautiful land! The New World. I was excited but scared. The ship I was on was called The Marline. She was a good-sized, beautiful ship made of oak wood. My father said it was the sturdiest ship we could afford to sail on to the New World. My parents' jobs had collapsed and my father had gotten ill, so we had to move to somewhere with less rain and dampness.

It had taken us a year and six months to pack and sell our stuff and find an affordable and sturdy ship to sail to the New World.

I heard someone calling my name, "Laura! Laura Stevenson!" It was my mother. She was calling me to help her gather our things for the next morning. But the next morning, the land was not in sight. A thick fog had rolled in.

The people on the ship waited all morning. By the afternoon, the fog rolled away! But we had drifted south.

Two days after the fog, we were ready to land again. We were to land in Halifax and I was excited and scared.

We had been in Canada for two years now and father was much better. I loved it here. We had met new friends and I was looking forward to spending the rest of my life here.

But one day, a letter arrived from England. It was from a lady named Mrs Montague. She had bought a hat at my mother's shop and she was not happy because the hat she had bought had fallen apart. She wanted the money back. It was a very expensive hat. Paying her back the money would ruin us for a long time. We would have nothing – just enough left to support us for one month. I was very worried.

Two weeks after the letter arrived, my mother sent a letter back to the woman. Here is what it read:

*Dear Mrs Montague,
Here is the money. I am sorry your hat fell apart.
Signed, Mrs Stevenson*

After my mother wrote the letter, my father, my mother and I worked extra hard on our jobs and tried to find extra work, but it just didn't pay enough. Life got harder. We also tried to grow our own food, but our house didn't have a big enough yard.

Our days in our house were numbered. We were ruined.

One evening, my father came home carrying a newspaper, looking happy. Very happy. He smiled and said, "I think I have found a way to fix our problems!"

My mother and I shrieked, "What is it?" at the exact same time.

“Gold has been found in the Yukon. We could go and stake a claim, find some gold then we would be rich!”

My mother said, “Not so fast. We must talk about it first.”

By the end of the evening we had made a plan. We were going to the Yukon Goldrush!

Afterword

Three weeks after my father came home with the newspaper we excitedly set off to the Yukon!

The End

Zoe’s favourite author is E.D. Baker. Zoe loves reading and writing. Her favourite thing about writing is getting inspired. Her inspiration for this story came from the gold rush exhibit at the museum.