

Mary Hartman



Mary was the typical 1970's American housewife. She believed that the best way to manage her household was taught by the *Reader's Digest* and television commercials.

Mary was the obvious center of the program. She was friend, neighbor, wife, mother, daughter, or sister to the other major characters on the show. Her husband Tom and her daughter Heather treated her poorly. Her mother overreacted to any news. Her grandfather was the infamous "Fernwood Flasher." Still, she believed that the right floor wax would make her life shiny and worthwhile.

Mary's look was no accident. Her pig-tail braids and puffy-shouldered mini-dresses were Mary's attempt for symmetry in an otherwise imbalanced world.

Mary truly believed that a dinner at the House of Pancakes would make everything all right.

While storylines with Mary were endless, she notably had an impotent husband who was unfaithful (incongruous as this sounds), was kidnaped by a mass-murderer, had a local police officer (Dennis Foley, played by Bruce Solomon) lusting after her, and in one of the most famous episodes of the show, had a nervous breakdown on national television on the "David Susskind Show." She was then committed to a mental institution, where Gore Vidal contacted her about writing a book about her.

Mary once tried to work at the plant where Tom and Charlie worked. This storyline was abandoned by the writers, and Mary was once again in her most familiar setting, her kitchen.

Mary finally left Tom and Heather for Sergeant Foley at the end of season two. The show did not end here though. The remaining cast continued on for another season as the show became “Forever Fernwood.” As one could guess, without Mary, the center of the program was lost, and “Forever” was not.

Mary was played by Louise Lasser.

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