

The Creeping Man

by Frances Shelley Wees

YES!... Michael tells his father that the unknown poison was injected into the meat with a syringe. The next Sunday, trying to make conversation at her difficult garden party, Tuck introduces the subject of the servant problem.

Chapter 29

Undercurrents
MARIE MURCHISON'S long, crimson tipped fingers played languidly with the pearls at her throat.

"I've heard that one can get maids at the residences very often," Tuck said directly to Mrs. Murchison. "They train them, and pay them very small wages, and the girls won't stay very long. Did you ever get one there?"

"No, I never did," she smiled swiftly with a flash of white teeth. "I get a French girl whenever I can. They are so capable and quick, and I can speak to them in their language. It is a great advantage to know another language really thoroughly."

There was something vaguely ill-bred in the lift of her chin as she spoke across Alice Lissey. Tuck no longer felt sorry for her.

"Had you a French girl just before you left here, then? I rather wondered—there was a French novel upstairs, a very battered and torn one. The kind a servant would read. I burned it."

She flushed a deep painful crimson. Her mouth tightened. "It must have been there some time," she said. "I had no maid for a month or two before we left the house."

That was what Tuck had been after. No maid? Then, this woman herself had cleaned the study the morning after her husband's disappearance. If anything had happened... Tuck remembered the pipe, fallen from nerveless fingers. If there had been marks of a struggle, anything of the sort... this woman knew all about them.

Charlotte Jean interrupted with the tea tray. At the same moment the McBains arrived, and Duncan Murchison came up the path through the woods and into the garden. His step was light and buoyant, and he smiled cheerfully at Tuck, who in moving back to the tea table had seen him and gone a few steps to meet him. His face fell as he saw the people behind her.

"Oh, it's a party?" he said in boyish disappointment.

"Yes. Did you know?"

"No. I thought it was just yourselves. But it was nice of you to have me, anyway," he said.

She laughed. "Sometimes it's dreadfully hard to be polite, isn't it? Will you come, sometime, when it's just ourselves, then? We'd love to have you."

His quiet face lit up. "You just ask me," he said. His glance went past her, over her shoulder. Tuck turned and walked back to the tea table.

Sinister Stress

AND then occurred that incident upon which so much stress was laid at a later and more sinister time. Alice Lissey, upon catching sight of Duncan, had sprung up with sudden animation, and had almost run to meet him. She reached him just as Tuck turned away, perhaps a dozen feet from the edge of the group. Her first words brought back that dark sudden look to his face. His blue eyes were black, and his mouth tight and hard. She took his arm, and led him off to the corner of the house, and there she spoke for several minutes with force and vehemence. No one could have heard her. Her voice, as was pointed out later, was kept suspiciously lowered. Duncan listened; and then he glanced quickly at the rest, spoke one sentence to her angrily, and left her.

The rest of the party had arranged itself in an attitude for tea. Tuck poured almost absently. The men passed the cups and the bread and butter, and later the little cakes. Afterward, in remembering, Tuck knew that Duncan Murchison had certainly helped with the rest. She would have been so happy to say definitely that he had not, that only Jared Devoe had. Jared Devoe was thoroughly objectionable in his oily, uncouth way. But he had not been the only one. All of them—Michael, Duncan, Mr. Deane, and Dr. McBain had helped.

Her mind was busy with conjectures as to the inner meanings of the facial expressions she saw of the words and tones she heard. Mrs. Devoe brooded all afternoon. Marie Murchison, for some not too obscure reason had fallen silent, and Devoe hadn't wanted her to fall silent. He sat down beside her and talked brightly, trying to draw her into the conversation. He spoke to her directly. He made little complimentary speeches that were meant for her.

Alice Lissey sat in her basket chair, a little withdrawn from the others. She, too, since her talk with Duncan, looked haggard and weary. Her eyes were dull and from time to time she rubbed her forehead nervously.

Mrs. Deane was her usual calm, self-contained self, save when Gordon's name came into the conversation. Then she sat up, and

became a little incoherent. Gordon was to his mother a quite unintelligible person. Mr. Deane was very subdued. His eyes behind their thick glasses darted from face to face quickly, and he drank his tea in quick gulps. He said almost nothing, and seemed not to be interested particularly in anything that was said.

It was a relief, after all the wondering, to look at Mrs. McBain. Dressed all in white she was the most beautiful thing, Tuck decided, that she has ever seen. She didn't look like a Greek statue as much as like one of Rossetti's painted women; her lids over the violet eyes were like the petals of heavy white camellias. Her husband knew her beauty; often and often Tuck saw his eyes go to her, as she sat with consummate poise and turned Devoe's compliments off as lightly as if they had been made of nothing more solid than fog.

Tuck could not refrain from mentioning that loveliness to Mrs. Deane, who was at the moment beside her. "Isn't Mrs. McBain perfectly beautiful?" she asked. "Who was she before she was married?"

"I don't know, I'm sure, except that her people were very wealthy. It was a love match, as you can see, and McBain was still at Medical school and had no money at all. He was an orphan or something out of a home. It's remarkable how he's gotten along without any help, and they're so happy together."

Tuck was glad someone was happy. Nearly everyone else in the sunny garden was carrying, it seemed, a heavy secret burden.

I Know Who!

ONLY a few moments after the Devoes, who were the last to leave, had gone, the telephone rang. Michael lifted it from the desk and answered.

"Hello."

He shook the phone. "Hello! Oh... yes, it's Michael Forrester." He listened, said, "Yes, we will. Right away," and set it down.

"It's Alice Lissey." He turned to the two girls. "She wants us to come over. Right away. Her voice sounded queer."

"I wonder if she's sick?" Tuck said. "She looked so tired when she went home. I asked her if her head ached, and she said no."

"She didn't say she was sick," he replied as they went out the gate. "She just said she wanted to see us immediately. I rather think she wants to talk."

"Doesn't she always?" Bunny asked dryly.

Miss Lissey's door was open, and her voice called "Come in," from an inner room. Michael closed the door carefully behind him, just as she appeared in the archway to the right. She still wore the hat she had worn all afternoon, and she still clasped in her hand the chiffon handkerchief she had carried. It was twisted into a string. There was a high spot of color on each cheek, and her manner was strange, excited.

"Come in," she said, and turned to precede them into her living room. "Sit down."

She would not sit down herself, but paced the floor restlessly. "I've come to the conclusion it's time to talk," she said after a moment. "Don't know what's come over me. That creepy feeling at the tea—you felt it?" She looked directly at Tuck.

"I don't know what you mean, Miss Lissey."

"Don't beat around the bush. You know they were all hating each other—watching each other like cats and mice. Cats and mice! That's it."

"What do you mean, exactly?" Michael asked.

"I'll tell you what I mean. You know... she stopped in front of him. "You know Murchison is dead?"

Michael hesitated.

"This is no time for hesitation. I want to get this thing straight. It's driving me crazy!"

"I think he is," Michael said quietly.

"Think he is! I know. And I know he was murdered. And I know... she sank wearily into the chair behind her. "I know who murdered him," she finished tensely.

"What?"

She paid no attention to his exclamation. The handkerchief in her hand was still. Her eyes were fixed on some distant and terrible remembrance.

"Listen," she said more quietly. "I want to tell you all about it. Then you can do as you please. I can't do anything. I can't tell the police. These people—they have been my friends. It's a terrible position. It's—it's unnerving."

Bunny suddenly got up, walked across the floor, and put her hand on the older woman's shoulder. "We can understand that," she said softly. "It has been hard for you."

The woman leaned back, and looked up into Bunny's face. "I saw him look at you this afternoon," she said. "You won't be kind to me when I've told you what I've got to tell."

Bunny's hand dropped. There was a look of horror on her face. "Sit down," Miss Lissey said again. "I'll begin at the beginning." She drew a deep breath. "I was on the night school closed," she said.

Continued tomorrow

On the RADIO CHAINS

STATIONS Where to Find Them or the Dial:
Kex, Portland, 1180; KFL, 640; Los Angeles, KGA, 1470; Spokane, KGO, 790; San Francisco, KUN, 620; Portland, KJR, 970; Seattle, KXN, 1050; Los Angeles, KOA, 830; Denver, KOIN, 940; Portland, KOMO, 926; Seattle, KPO, 630; San Francisco, KSL, 1180; Salt Lake, KSL, 1180.

Wednesday
5:00—Frank and Archie, KJR; Sunset Shadows, KPO; Waring's Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI.
5:30—Kelsey's Orch., KPO; We Present, KGO, KJH.
5:45—Bob Garred, KNX, KOIN; Organist, KGO, KEX; Two in the Balcony, KPO.
6:00—Beyond Reasonable Doubt, KGO, KEX, KJR; Star Theater, KSL, KOIN, KNX; Drama, KOMO; Safety First, KPO.
6:30—Horse and Bugzy Days, KGO; Hollywood Playhouse, KPO, KFI, KGW, News, KJR.
7:00—Sketch, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Kysar's Pgm., KPO, KGW, KFI; Shields' Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX.
7:30—Burns and Allen, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Adventures in Photography, KGO.
8:00—Waring's Orch., KPO; Johnny Presents, KGO, KJR, KEX; Amos and Andy, KNX, KOIN, KSL.
8:30—Whitman's Orch., KNX.

Thursday
5:00—Rhythm Factory, KPO, KGW; Frank and Archie, KJR; Sunset Shadows, KGO.
5:30—Kelsey's Orch., KGO, KEX, KJR; Army Band, KPO, KGW.
6:00—Major Bowes, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Good News of 1940, KPO, KFI, KGW; Sketch, KGO, KEX, KJR, KGW.
7:00—Workshop, KOIN; Music Hall, KPO, KFI.
7:30—Sports Huddle, KNX, KOIN; Vicki Chase, KGO; News, KSL.
8:00—Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KFI; Clinton's Orch., KEX, Aloha Land, KGO; Amos and Andy, KNX, KSL, KOIN.
8:15—Sam Hays, KNX; Clinton's Orch., KGO; I Love a Mystery, KPO, KGW, KFI.
8:30—Symphony Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Ask-It-Basket, KNX, KSL, KOIN.
9:00—Strange as It Seems, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Sketch, KGO, KJR, KOIN.
9:30—Those We Love, KPO, KFI.

KSL, KOIN: Quiz Program, KGO, KJR, KEX; Avion Time, KPO, KFI, KGO.
9:00—Pearce's Gang, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Fred Allen, KPO, KGW, KFI; Marriage Club, KGO.
9:30—Noble's Orch., KGO, KEX, News, KJR.
10:00—Martin's Orch., KGO, KEX, News, KNX, KSL, KOIN.
10:30—Madriguera's Orch., KGO, KEX; Ravazza's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW.
11:00—Gray's Orch., KOIN, KSL; Nottingham's Orch., KPO, KFI; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; News, KGO, KGW.

KGW: Rogers Orch., KGW, KSL; Madriguera's Orch., KGO, KEX; Operetta Series, KNX, KOIN; News, KJR.
10:00—News Reporter, KPO, KGW, KFI; Foster's Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX; Paul Sullivan, KOIN, KEX; News, KOIN.
10:30—Ravazza's Orch., KPO, KGW, KFI; Nottingham's Orch., KGO, KJR, KEX; Roland's Orch., KOIN, KNX.
11:00—Martin's Orch., KPO, KFI; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Gray's Orch., KSL, KOIN; Young's Orch., KOMO; News, KGO, KNX, KGO, KGW.

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8:00—Waring's Orch., KPO; Johnny Presents, KGO, KJR, KEX; Amos and Andy, KNX, KOIN, KSL.
8:30—Whitman's Orch., KNX.

Saturday
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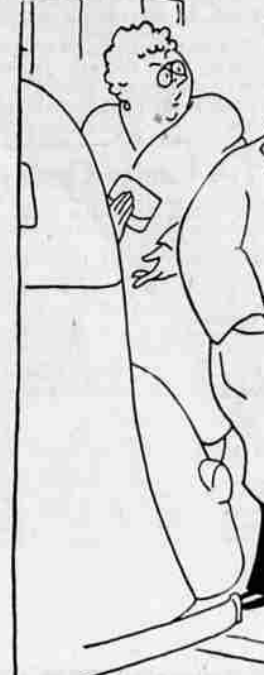
Germany Claims Sea Supremacy
Berlin, Dec. 13.—(AP)—Germany has placed British sea power distinctly on the defensive, the official German news agency, DNB, asserted today. DNB argued that in announcing shipping in certain territorial waters and river mouths had been placed under jurisdiction of naval authorities the British have admitted pure trade routes to Britain no longer exist. Even neutral shipping, DNB

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SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

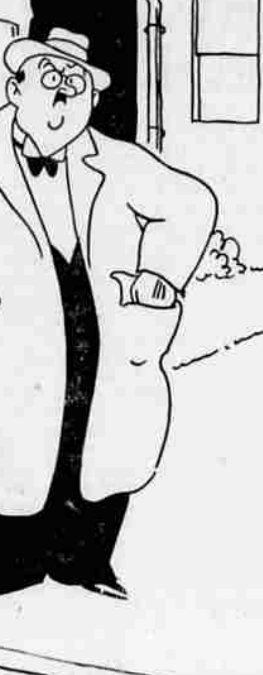
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



IT WASN'T UNTIL FRED PERLEY, THE LAST TO LEAVE THE PARTY, DISCOVERED STRANGE OBJECTS IN HIS POCKETS AND A CONSPICUOUS OLD WHERE THE KEY OF THE CAR OUGHT TO BE, THAT HE REALIZED THAT HE HAD SOME ONE ELSE'S COAT AND SOME ONE ELSE HAD GONE OFF WITH HIS

GRAVE PARTNER

By HAL FORREST



Strange as it seems, since 1835 the grave of the great English satirist, Dean Jonathan Swift, has held two skulls, one of which to this day remains unidentified. Legend, later disproved, said the mysterious skull was that of Stella, his wife. Swift's coffin was deposited in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, approximately 10 feet from that of Stella, in 1745. Ninety years later alterations were made in the church and Swift's coffin, with another adjoining his, was brought to view. A group of phrenologists examined the two skulls, but instead of returning one to its original repository, William Maguire, the sexton, placed it in Swift's coffin. In 1882, a second exhumation revealed the two skulls together, and to this day the identity of Swift's coffin-partner is a mystery. TOMORROW: Humanity's Benefactor.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Chuck Comes Down to Earth!

By HAL FORREST



O-OH, THANK GOODNESS! HE MISSED THOSE TREES!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—A Gusher!

By EDWIN ALGER



GEE, RUSTY, THE WHOLE TOWN'S OUT TO SEE MR. BALLINGER SWORN IN!

THE NEBBS—That's Right

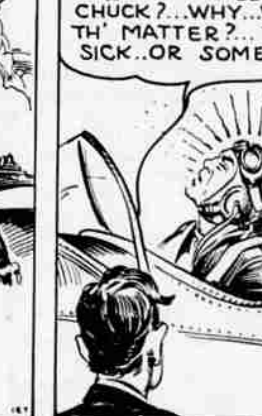
By SOL HESSE



WELL, EMBERT GAVE US A WONDERFUL DEMONSTRATION TODAY WITH AN OLD PIECE OF JUNK—OBIE DROVE IT

CONSTRUCTION ON THE LABORATORY IS PROGRESSING RAPIDLY AND RUDY'S ENTHUSIASM OVER THE POWER PILLS IS GETTING OUT OF CONTROL.

By SOL HESSE



IT LOOKS LIKE DAME FORTUNE HAS NOT ONLY SOUGHT ME OUT BUT WRAPPED ME IN HER ARMS—START PRACTISING ACTING LIKE A MILLIONAIRE'S WIFE—YOU'RE GOING TO BE ONE

WHITE BOOK PRESENTS GERMANY'S WAR CASE

By SOL HESSE



I'VE HEARD THAT KIND OF TALK BEFORE—I'M GOING TO SEE THIS FELLOW EMBERT—I'LL SHOW HIM THERE'S ONE MEMBER OF THIS FAMILY WHO CAN'T BE CONVINCED SO EASILY

FLU CLOSES SCHOOL

By SOL HESSE



OH, SO YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE BUSINESS END OF THIS FAMILY! YOU HAD SOME WORK TO DO YOURSELF! YOU WOULDN'T FIND SO MUCH TIME

WHITE BOOK PRESENTS GERMANY'S WAR CASE

Berlin, Dec. 13.—(AP)—The German government tonight issued a statement of Germany's case in the war in a lengthy white book covering European diplomacy from the Versailles conference down to the present and replying to the British blue book on war causes. The book contains 482 docu-

ments, some of them previously unpublished, beginning with an excerpt from David Lloyd George's memorandum to the Versailles peace conference on March 25, 1919. The former British prime minister was quoted as saying the Versailles creation of Poland would bring war eventually.

Flu Closes School.
Oregon City, Dec. 13.—(AP)—The rural Concord school near here closed until January 2 yesterday because of an influenza epidemic. Of the 136 pupils enrolled, 75 were absent.