

The Creeping Man

by Frances Shelley Wees

YESTERDAY, Gordon had heard a boat on the river at night, coming from upstream and never reaching. Michael swears Gordon is his assistant. Going through the woods, someone shoots at Michael. Charlotte Jean sees Devoe in the vicinity.

Chapter 36

The Inquest

THE tension at Tuck's garden party had been unbearable, that at the inquest was beyond words. The announcement that there would be an inquest on the body of Miss Lissey had thrown the campus into turmoil, or rather, those of the group who did not already expect it.

The day was very hot. The inquest had been called in the corner of the office, a stuffy little room in the court house. The windows were dusty and streaked, and the varnish on the heavy plain chairs and tables was sticky in the heat. But no one seemed to notice. They filed in silently, and sat down without murmuring about the weather or the discomfort.

Alix Lissey, Spinster, was dead. She had died of the effects of poisoning on Sunday, at the age of fifty-two. Only Mrs. Deane showed any interest as that fact was read out.

The coroner was an apple-cheeked little man with a figure like a robin's, and a high chirping voice quite out of keeping with death, and death by violence in particular. He put his questions cheerfully, with no apparent realization of the dreadful meaning that might lie behind the answers. Yet he let no single point escape him, and once or twice let his gaze wander as if by accident to the District Attorney and the Police Commissioner, sitting quietly at the back of the room.

Tuck was the first witness called. "Mrs. Forrester, the deceased was your guest on the afternoon of the day she died?"

"She was."

"At what time did she arrive at your house?"

"About quarter after four, I think."

"Just what do you mean? Ten minutes after four or twenty-five minutes after?"

"Almost exactly quarter after. I had been watching the time."

"Why had you been watching the time, Mrs. Forrester?"

"I..."

"The exact reason, please."

"The conversation wasn't going very well," Tuck said bravely. "I was hoping for a diversion, when I saw Miss Lissey coming."

"That does not place the time."

"The Devoes had come exactly at four o'clock," Tuck explained. "They had been there about fifteen minutes. I remember looking at my watch at twelve minutes after, and in just a minute Miss Lissey came."

"So it was with the Devoes that the conversation lagged?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Just what was this conversation that lagged, Mrs. Forrester? Can you repeat it?"

"Why—it wasn't really a conversation at all, Mr. Devoe, I think, was talking to Miss Temple. I said something to Mrs. Devoe about the sundial and he broke in. His mother didn't seem to hear me, and he explained to her."

"Had you noticed that Mrs. Devoe was deaf before that time?"

"Preoccupied."

"No, I didn't think she was deaf then. It was just—just that she was preoccupied."

"There was more to the conversation?"

"No, Miss Lissey came just then. Seating the Devoes and greeting them and Mrs. Murchison had taken the rest of the time."

"Then Mrs. Devoe was preoccupied when she first came to the party?"

"She seemed to be."

"Did you note signs of preoccupation in any other of your guests?"

"No."

"Did this preoccupation of Mrs. Devoe's continue all through the afternoon?"

"Perhaps I shouldn't have called it preoccupation, Dr. Mayhew. Tuck said honestly, 'Mrs. Devoe is always very quiet and self-contained.'"

"What do you mean by always?"

"Since I have known her."

"That is, within the last ten days?"

"Yes."

He paused. His round little blue eyes regarded her seriously. "Mrs. Forrester, you are ready to swear that there was originally no poison in any of the food served at your house on Sunday?"

"Certainly, Dr. Mayhew."

"Your servant—would you consider her to be capable of putting poison in anyone's food?"

Charlotte Jean, at the side of the room, gasped audibly. Tuck gave her a little reassuring smile.

"Most certainly not. She is the last person in the world who would do such a thing."

"She had worked for you for some time?"

"Two years."

"You were with Miss Lissey when she died, Mrs. Forrester. Did she advance any statement there that might throw light on her death?"

"Just what do you mean, Dr. Mayhew?"

"Did she suggest that she knew that she was dying, or that she knew she had been poisoned?"

"Yes," Tuck said quietly, with a quiver in her lip. "She said, 'I know too much.'"

"The clock suddenly ticked loudly, clearly, in the room."

"You understood her, Mrs. Forrester? Do you know what she meant?"

"Yes—I do."

"Does that not suggest to you that she knew she was dying?"

"Yes, I think she knew. Before we did."

"And she knew why she was dying? Why someone, let us say, wanted her to die?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Forrester, did you get the impression that Miss Lissey had committed suicide?"

"No," Tuck said clearly. "No."

"Thank you, Charlotte Jean Soames."

Charlotte Jean, with a very white face and a nose red from crying, turned in her excitement, curled a little as she made her answers.

"Miss Soames, did you put poison in any food or drink that was served in Mrs. Forrester's house on Sunday?"

"No, sir. I should say not. I don't know anything about poison, sir."

"Well then, did anyone come into your kitchen on Sunday and tamper with the food?"

"No, sir. Nobody came into my kitchen on Sunday for anything whatever, except that Gordon or Deane, eating of all the cookies, but that was after the rest had had their tea, sir. Unless you mean Mr. Devoe, and he only came for a glass of water."

"Hardly herself."

"A GLASS OF WATER?"

"Yes, sir. For his mother, he said. She was feelin' faint like."

"I see. Did he touch anything except his glass of water?"

"He carried out a tray for me, sir, but there wasn't no food on it."

"An empty tray?"

"No, sir, it was a tray of teacups."

"Full, or empty?"

"Full, sir. Mrs. Forrester had been pouring in the garden, but some of them wanted their cups filled again, and the tea she had wasn't hot enough so she sent me in with the cups on a tray to fill them in the kitchen. That was the tray Mr. Devoe carried out, sir."

"Can you remember whether or not Miss Lissey's cup was on that tray?"

"No, sir. I never knew whose cups they was."

He turned aside for a moment to Tuck. "Mrs. Forrester, can you answer the last question?"

"No, Dr. Mayhew, I didn't know that Mr. Devoe had carried out a tray of cups."

"You don't remember whether Miss Lissey's cup went into the house to be filled or not?"

"I'm sorry, Dr. Mayhew, I can't remember."

He turned back to Charlotte Jean, now rubbing her nose frantically.

"None of the other guests were in your kitchen at all, then?"

"No, sir."

"That will do, then."

Mr. Deane was called next, but he had nothing to do to the evidence. However, his wife had.

"No, I didn't notice a single thing at all out of the ordinary on Sunday afternoon," she said, fumbling with her belt and pulling at the side of her strange hat. "That is, nothing that might explain at all the terrible thing that happened there—if it really did happen, which I simply can't credit for only ourselves were there, and I'm sure."

"I gather that you did observe something a little out of the ordinary, Mrs. Deane?" Dr. Mayhew broke in rather severely.

"Well, it wasn't particularly important, and I really don't like to speak of it. Poor Miss Lissey is dead, and I'm sure it seems almost sacrilegious."

"What is it, Mrs. Deane, may I ask?"

"Must I answer, then? Somehow it seems hardly delicate. It was just something that indicated to me that poor Miss Lissey was hardly herself that afternoon. She was so particular about her clothes, you know, so particular, and had such good taste. I used to marvel at the beautiful costumes she had—but of course she had the leisure to think about those things—well, I must go—it was just that she wore a beautiful mauve flowered chignon dress on Sunday with a horsehair hat to match, and I happened to notice—you will pardon the intimacy, of course—I happened to notice that she wore a white slip underneath it. Now she has a simply lovely mauve slip that was made with that dress. I've seen it several times, and I'm quite sure she couldn't have been thinking at all when she dressed or she would never have appeared in the white one. Why, the difference one made simply all the difference in the world."

Continued tomorrow

On the RADIO CHAINS

Where to Find Them or the Dial. Kes, Portland, 1180; KFI, 640 Los Angeles; KGIA, 1470, Spokane; KGO, 790, San Francisco; KJW 620, Portland; KJR, 970, Seattle; KNX, 1050, Los Angeles; KOA, 830, Denver; KOIN, 940, Portland; KOMO, 920, Seattle; KPO, 630, San Francisco; KSL, 1180, Salt Lake.

SUNDAY
5:00—Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Festival of Music, KGO, KJR, KEX, KNX, KSL.
6:00—Madhattan Merry-Go-Round, KPO, KGW, KFI; Sunday Evening Hour, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Note Book, KGO.
7:00—William Hillman, KGW; Playhouse, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Sleep Serenade, KPO; Hour of Charm, KGO, KEX, KJR, KFI.
7:30—Carnival, KPO, KFI, KGW; Cheerio, KGO, KJR.
8:00—Messner's Orch., KGO; Hobby Lobby, KNX, KOIN; Night Editor, KPO, KGW, KFI; News, KEX, KSL.
8:15—Drama, KPO, KFI, KGW.
8:30—Sweet and Low, KGO, KJR; Jack Bonny, KPO, KGW, KFI; March of California, KNX.
9:00—Walter Winchell, KPO, KFI, KGW; Ben Bernie, KNX, KOIN; Mr. District Attorney, KGO, KJR, KEX.
9:30—Buddy Rogers' Orch., KNX.

MONDAY
5:00—Party, KPO, KFI, KGW; Frank and Archie, KJR; Sunset Shadows, KGO.
5:30—Time and Tempo, KGW, KFI; True or False, KOMO; Kelsey's Orch., KGO, KJR; Master Singers, KPO, KEX, Radio Theater, KSL, KNX; Quiz Program, KPO, KGW, KFI.
6:30—Rochester Civic Orchestra, KGO, KEX; Templeton Time, KPO, KGW, KFI, KMED.
7:00—Hall of Fun, KGO, KJR, KEX; Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Lombardo's Orch., KSL, KNX, KOIN.
7:30—Blondie, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Sensations and Swing, KGO, KGW, KFI; Radio Forum, KGO, KJR, KEX.
8:00—Amos and Andy, KNX, KOIN, KSL; Doe's Music, KEX; Fred Warline, KPO, KGW, KFI; Aloha Land, KGO.
8:15—I Love a Mystery, KPO, KFI, KGW; Lum and Abner, KNX, KSL, KOIN; Doe's Music, KGO; Courtney's Orch., KEX.
8:30—Voice, KPO, KFI, KGW; Breeze's Orch., KEX, KFI; Potato Bug Band, KGO; Model Minstrels.

TUESDAY
9:00—Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KFI, KGW; Tune Up Time, KNX, KSL, KOIN; True or False, KGO, KEX, KJR.
9:30—Hawthorne House, KPO, KGO, KFI; Hawkins' Orch., KGO; Wain's Orch., KSL, KNX; News, KJR.
10:00—News Reporter, KPO, KFI, KGW; Held's Orch., KGO; News, KSL, KNX, KOIN.
10:30—Music by Woodbury, KPO, KGW; Prim's Orch., KOIN, KSL, KNX; Foster's Orch., KGO, KJR, KFI.
11:00—Havazza's Orch., KPO, KFI; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Organist, KOIN, KSL; News, KGO, KNX, KGW.

Radio Highlights

New York, Dec. 16. —(P)—Charles Boyer, French movie star back in this country after a brief army career, will rejoin on January 3 the broadcast in which he appeared last season. The program, Hollywood Playhouse, on WEAF-NBC Wednesday night, now has Jim Ameche, brother of Don, in the leads in 30-minute dramas. The Court of Missing Heirs, taking over the Tuesday night time on CBS formerly occupied by Walter O'Keefe, is a dramatic feature in which stories of unclaimed fortunes are re-enacted.

The time used competes with the Information Please and the Horace Heidt Telephone programs. Sunday brings: Pre-Christmas—WEAF-NBC 10 a.m.—Hull House festival concert; WABC, CBS 9:30 a.m. Salt Lake choir "Messiah"; Talks—WEAF-NBC, 11:30 a.m. Round-table "Government and Business"; WJZ-NBC, 12:15 p.m. Foreign Policy program; WOR-MBS, 5 p.m. American Forum, "Military Training and the CCC." Europe—NBC 5 a.m. WABC-CBS 6 a.m., 4, 8 p.m. WEAF-NBC 12:30, p.m., 8; WJZ-NBC 2:15, 4:15, 7; MBS 4:45. WJZ-NBC, 5, salute to Sugar Bowl game.

German Borders Closed at Night
Berlin, Dec. 15.—(P)—Germany tonight announced the closing of the Netherlands, Danish, Belgian, Swiss and Luxembourg borders between 8 p. m. and 7 a. m. daily, beginning December 18. The closings were described as an effort to prevent "such elements as smugglers and foreign espionage agents from trying to cross illegally." Trains will not be affected. Closing time for Too Late to Clap-Ad is 1:30 p. m.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



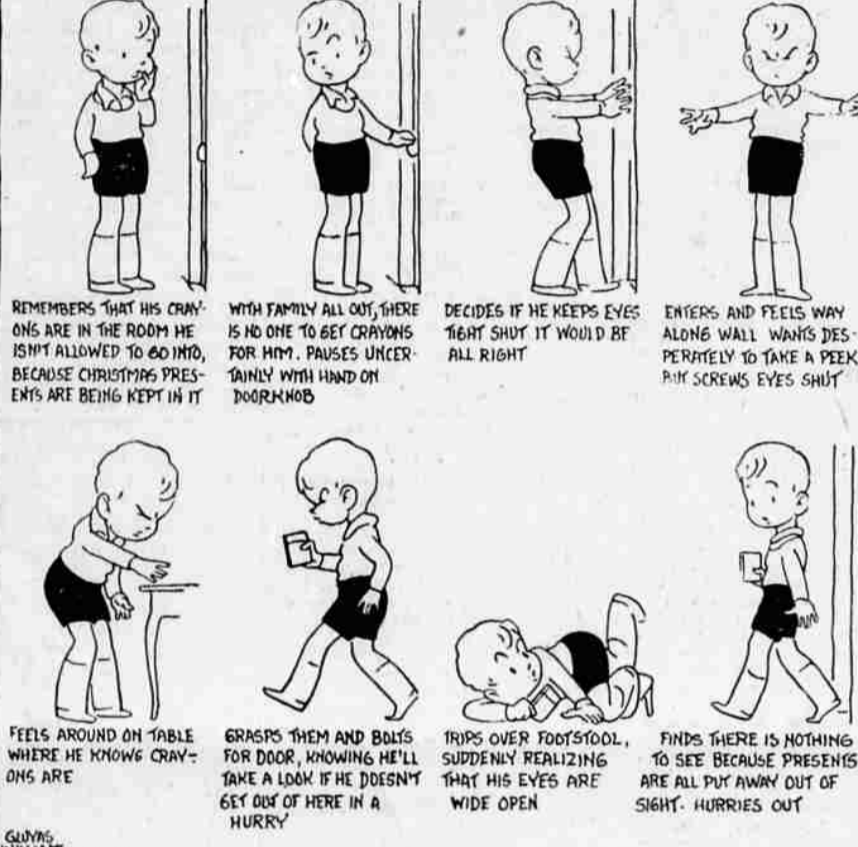
EAMON DE VALERA—
Irish Free State Premier
WAS SAVED FROM EXECUTION IN 1916 BECAUSE HE WAS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN!
(During the Easter Rebellion)

JOHN STRICKER—
Truck driver,
RAN OUT OF GAS WHILE CARRYING 1500 GALLONS!
—Baltimore—

A HOMING PIGEON FLEW 500 MILES FROM THURGOTO LONDON, 1876, IN A SINGLE DAY, IN A (Averaging 24 yards per second)

BEAUMONT HIGH, St. Louis, Mo., MADE 3 TOUCHDOWNS BUT ONLY ONE FIRST DOWN!
(Vs. Soldan High, 1939)

IN FORBIDDEN TERRITORY



REMEMBERS THAT HIS CRAYONS ARE IN THE ROOM HE ISN'T ALLOWED TO GO INTO, BECAUSE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS ARE BEING KEPT IN IT

WITH FAMILY ALL OUT, THERE IS NO ONE TO GET CRAYONS FOR HIM. PAUSES UNCERTAINLY WITH HAND ON DOORKNOB

DECIDES IF HE KEEPS EYES TIGHT SHUT IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT

ENTERS AND FEELS WAY ALONG WALL WANTS DESPERATELY TO TAKE A PEEK BUT SCREWS EYES SHUT

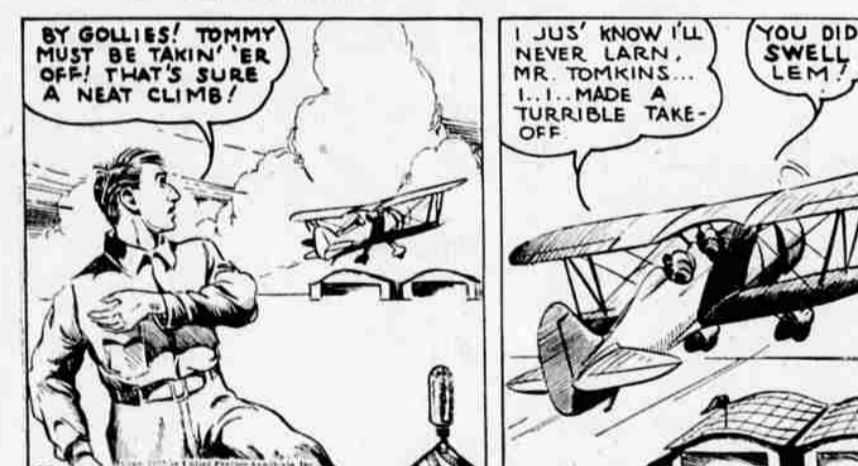
FEELS AROUND ON TABLE WHERE HE KNOWS CRAYONS ARE

GRASPS THEM AND BOLTS FOR DOOR, KNOWING HE'LL TAKE A LOOK IF HE DOESN'T GET OUT OF HERE IN A HURRY

TRIPS OVER FOOTSTOOL, SUDDENLY REALIZING THAT HIS EYES ARE WIDE OPEN

FINDS THERE IS NOTHING TO SEE BECAUSE PRESENTS ARE ALL PUT AWAY OUT OF SIGHT. HURRIES OUT

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Lem Goes It Solo



BY GOLLIES! TOMMY MUST BE TAKIN' 'ER OFF! THAT'S SURE A NEAT CLIMB!

I JUS' KNOW I'LL NEVER LARN, MR. TOMKINS... I... MADE A TURBIBLE TAKE-OFF

YOU DID SWELL, LEM!

EASE UP ON THE GUN NOW AND CRUISE AT 1500 R.P.M.'S. YOU MADE THAT LEFT TURN BEAUTIFULLY! NOT ONE SKID!

YEWRE... UH... JUS' TRYIN' T' MAKE ME FEEL GOOD, MR. TOMKINS!

ALL RIGHT!... JUST TO PROVE YOU'RE FLYING THE SHIP... I'LL KEEP BOTH HANDS ON MY HEAD!

O-OH, G-GOSH... G-GEE! DON'T D-DO THEY! I... I... I'M AFRAID T-TO FLY ALONE!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Rusty's Bulletin!



A GUSHER'S BEEN BROUGHT IN?

YES!

I'M MAYOR NOW, SON! I'LL STOP THAT!

GOOD!

SWELL!

LISSEN, FOLKS! THIS TOWN HAS GONE NUTS OVER OIL!

THE NEBBES—Doubt



SAY, NEBB, I'D LIKE TO GAMBLE A LITTLE ON EMBERT'S PROPOSITION. I'LL TAKE PART OF YOUR FINANCIAL LOAD

AND IF THIS THING IS A FLOP YOU CAN SAY, 'WELL, SLIDER IS AS DUMB AS I AM.' HE WAS IN ON IT TOO?

I'LL LET YOU IN SO YOU CAN GO AROUND AND TELL EVERYBODY IT WAS YOUR IDEA

WHAT ARRANGEMENTS DID YOU MAKE? IS THIS A CORPORATION OR JUST A CO-PARTNERSHIP?

I OWN HALF... HE TORE HIS FORMULA IN TWO AND GAVE ME HALF. HE CAN'T GO ON WITHOUT ME

GAVE YOU HALF OF THE FORMULA? HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT HE HASN'T ANOTHER COPY OF IT OR THAT HE CAN'T REMEMBER IT. IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT TO SHOW FOR THE

DOUGH YOU ARE SHOOTIN' INTO THIS THING?

HE SAID WHEN HE GAVE IT TO ME THAT NEITHER OF US COULD GO ON WITHOUT THE OTHER AND THAT MAKES FOR A DEPENDABLE PARTNERSHIP

FLAPPING TURKEY FATAL TO FARMER

Roseburg, Ore., Dec. 16.—(P)—A turkey, flailing its wings in convulsive death throes, struck the hand of Forrest Edward Emmitt, 39, and inflicted a knife wound from which the Tyece district farmer died last night. Emmitt, employed in killing turkeys on the Hiram Powell place at Tyece, had just stuck a large turkey tom, Deputy Sheriff Clifford Thornton reported today. One of the turkey's thrashing wings apparently struck Emmitt's hand and drove

the keen blade of the sticking knife into the man's body in the region of the heart. Emmitt, Thornton reported, staggered from the killing shed and into the Powell house where he collapsed and died within a few minutes.

Bend Worker Hurt
Bend, Dec. 16.—(P)—William Beatty was injured yesterday when a theater marquee he was decorating collapsed.

Seek Pure Rivers
Portland, Dec. 16.—(P)—The state sanitary authority endorsed the Barkley bill to prevent water pollution through federal-state cooperation yesterday and decided to ask the state's attorney general how Portland might finance a sewage disposal system.

EAMON DE VALERA
Hardly more than 1,000 men took part in the famous Irish Rebellion of Easter Monday, 1916, but they managed practically to paralyze Dublin. However, surrender was inevitable and Eamon de Valera, last commandant to quit, was sentenced to die before a British firing squad. But his life was spared at the last minute because of his American birth. England needed the United States as a war ally and, to avoid censure, commuted de Valera's sentence to life imprisonment. De Valera was born in New York City in 1882. After 14 months de Valera was released. Eventually he became Prime Minister of the now legally independent nation of Eire.
MONDAY: Parachuting Dog.

By HAL FORRES

By EDWIN ALGER

By SOL HES