

The Creeping Man

by Frances Shelley Wees

YESTERDAY. At the inquest Charlotte Jean denies poisoning the food served. Mrs. Devoe reports that Miss Lissey was not herself, because she wore a slip that did not match her dress.

Chapter 37

Testimony

"THANK you, Mrs. Deane." The coroner's eyes were very grave, and his lips firm. "I realize that this is a very important piece of evidence indeed. You offer it to show that Miss Lissey was disturbed in her mind before she came to the party at all?"

"Yes, Dr. Mayhew."
"Thank you, Mrs. McBain, please."
Mrs. McBain in a dark dress that emphasized her pallor, took the chair he indicated. Her hands shook a little, and she laid them together in her lap. Dr. Mayhew looked at her sharply.

"This has been a shock to you, Mrs. McBain?"
"Yes." Her lips trembled.
"Miss Lissey was an intimate friend of yours?"
"I knew her—well."
"You were her confidant in her personal affairs, perhaps?"
"To a very slight extent."
The coroner leaned back, and folded his hands together under his chin. "You have not been sleeping very well, Mrs. McBain?"
She moved a little, restlessly. "You would not expect me to, Dr. Mayhew."

"No, no, I should hardly expect you to. Tell me—is there some particular thought in your mind which keeps you from sleeping?"
Did Miss Lissey tell you something, or did you, perhaps, see something last Sunday afternoon, which is troubling you greatly?"
She put a hand to her eyes suddenly. "No," she faltered.
The clock ticked again.
"You are certain?"
"—no."
"You mean, you are not certain?"
"Must I tell—here—in front of everyone?"

The coroner glanced around slowly at the tense expectant faces before him. Dr. McBain glared at him openly as if to compel him to allow his wife to go; the coroner's glance passed him blandly, past the Deanes, past Michael and Tuck and Bunny, past Charlotte Jean sitting wide eyed on the edge of her chair—to Jared Devoe, upon whose upper lip the tiny beads of perspiration stood plainly.
"I'm afraid you must, Mrs. McBain."
She sighed. Her husband rose suddenly, went to the water cooler in the corner of the room, and brought her a drink. She took it, and held it in her hands as she talked.

"Sunday afternoon—I was sitting beside her. On the wicker couch. She thought no one was near us. Suddenly she said to me—
"If he pays attention to that girl, I'm going to tell her exactly what I know about him, it's enough to—put him out of the sight of all decent people."
She stopped.
"He heard," she said dully. "He had been right behind us. I saw his eyes."
"To whom are you referring, Mrs. McBain?"
"Yes, sir."

"You took care of Miss Lissey's garden?"
"Yes, sir. All them gardens, sir."
"So that you were frequently employed where you could observe unobtrusively what might be going on out there?"
"Beg pardon, sir?" Higgins shifted uncomfortably from one foot to the other.
"You often worked where you could see what was going on without anyone noticing you?"
"Yes, sir. Not as 'ow I ever watched 'em, sir."
"No, Mr. Higgins. Of course not. We can understand that you couldn't avoid seeing whatever there was to see, under the circumstances."
"No, sir. Higgins straightened his shoulders, and darted a swift glance at Michael.
"Then, now that we understand each other, let us come to the point, Mr. Higgins, did you ever see anything that would lead you to believe that Miss Lissey had any enemies?"

"Far as that goes," Higgins said loftily, "I shouldn't 'ave been at all surprised if everybody was 'er enemies. She was that snoopin' and sneakin' all the time. Always standin' behind a 'edge to 'ear somethin' wasn't none of 'er business, sir. She was an awful curiosity box, sir."
"You have seen her at such times, Mr. Higgins?"
"Yes, sir. I'd be weedin' of the garden, maybe, when I'd see 'er slippin' 'ere and there listenin'. She knew as 'ow I'd see her, too, sir, and she didn't like me a bit. We used to quarrel somethin' awful over her garden and flowers."
"So you were an enemy of hers too, Higgins?"
The pale little eyes widened with alarm. "Oh, no, sir. I never said nothin' like that. I wasn't a henemy, sir. I just didn't like her."

"Can you suggest any reason for her death by poisoning?"
"No, I cannot. It seems impossible."
"Most deaths of this kind do, Dr. McBain. Your attitude is that you are unable to understand her suicide, and unwilling to believe it anything more sinister?"
"I cannot conceive of such a possibility for a single moment."
"You know something of poisons, perhaps, Dr. McBain. Can you tell us how the poison which killed Miss Lissey might have been obtained?"
"If it is the one which was named here this afternoon, I may say that it is a common one, and can be obtained at any drug store."
"Without a certificate?"
"I am not sure of that. I am not in the habit of buying poisons in that way, Dr. Mayhew."
"No. Now—here is a point on which we need enlightenment, Dr. McBain. There are stocks of this poison on hand at the University, are there not?"
"Where are they kept?"
"In a laboratory."
"A laboratory open to the public?"
"No. Certainly not."
"Then, what laboratory? And who would have access to it?"
"Dr. McBain hesitated. "The poison cabinet is kept—in Edgar Murchison's laboratory," he said slowly.
"You are speaking of Professor Murchison now? Who is away at present?"
"You say the poison cabinet. Is it, then, kept locked?"
"Yes."

An Enemy, Too
"DR. McBAIN," the coroner's eyes were round again. "Who possesses the keys to that cabinet?"
"I do," he said flatly.
"No one else?"
"No one, except Professor Murchison himself."
"Yes, Professor Murchison is away, I understand. Did he take his keys with him?"
"There was more than one person in the row against the wall who held his breath at that question. But now it was on Duncan Murchison that the attention seemed centered. It was his face that drew all eyes, his deep slow breathing and nervous hands that compelled their interest. Conscious of that interest, he drew himself up in his chair, and locked his hands together.
"Did he take his keys with him, Dr. McBain?"
"I cannot answer that question, Dr. Mayhew," McBain swallowed hard.
"Do you know, or do you refuse to say?"
McBain looked at Michael fleetingly, but Michael's head was bent.
"I do not know," he said.
Higgins was called next. He had dressed himself for the occasion in a suit of brilliant blue, which set off the inadequacies of his figure rather pitifully; but he was chiefly concerned, not with his uncustomary costume, but with a lock of hair which persisted in falling into his eyes every few seconds. He brushed it back as he faced the coroner.
"Mr. Higgins, you are the campus gardener, I understand, having charge of all the gardens on the Horsehoe?"
"Yes, sir."

"You took care of Miss Lissey's garden?"
"Yes, sir. All them gardens, sir."
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On the RADIO CHAINS

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

Monday
8:00—Party, KPO, KFI, KGW,
Frank and Archie, KJR; Sunset
Shadows, KGO.
9:30—Time and Tempo, KGW, KFI;
True or False, KOMO; Kealey's Orch.,
KGO, KJR; Master Singers, KPO.
6:00—Library of Congress, KGO,
KEX; Radio Theater, KSL, KNX;
Quiz Program, KPO, KGW, KFI.
6:30—Rochester Civic Orchestra,
KGO, KEX; Templeton Time, KPO,
KOW, KFI, KMD.
7:00—Hall of Fun, KGO, KJR,
KEX; Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Lom-
bardeo's Orch., KSL, KNX, KOIN.
7:30—Blonde, KNX, KSL, KOIN;
Sensations and Swing, KPO, KEX,
KFI; Radio Forum, KGO, KJR, KEX.
8:00—Amos and Andy, KNX, KOIN;
KSL, 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,
KNX, KSL, KOIN.
9:00—Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KFI,
KOW; Tune Up Time, KNX, KSL,
KOIN; True or False, KGO, KEX,
KJR.
9:30—Hawthorne House, KPO,
KOW, KFI; Hawkin's Orch., KGO;
Welk's Orch., KSL, KNX; News, KJR,
Denver; KOIN, 940, Portland;
KOMO, 926, Seattle; KPO, 630, San
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Tuesday
5:00—Aldrich Family, KPO, KFI,
KOW; Frank and Archie, KJR;
Drama, KSL.
5:30—Sherlock Holmes, KGO, KEX,
KJR; Heidi's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW.
6:00—Little Ol' Hollywood, KGO,
KEX; From the Music Rooms, KPO,
KOW.
6:30—Fibber McGee, KPO, KFI,
KOW; Crosby's Orch., KNX, KSL,
KOIN; Human Side of Literature,
KPO, KEX; News, KJR.
7:00—Talk by Welles, KGO, KEX;
Variety Program, KPO, KGW, KFI;
Calling All Cars, KNX; News, KOMO.
7:30—Sports Huddle, KNX, KOIN;
Drama, KJR; Mammoth Minstrels,
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KGO; 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,
KNX, KSL, KOIN.
9:00—Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KFI,
KOW; Tune Up Time, KNX, KSL,
KOIN; True or False, KGO, KEX,
KJR.
9:30—Hawthorne House, KPO,
KOW, KFI; Hawkin's Orch., KGO;
Welk's Orch., KSL, KNX; News, KJR,
Denver; KOIN, 940, Portland;
KOMO, 926, Seattle; KPO, 630, San
Francisco; KSL, 1180, Salt Lake.

Sunday
5:00—Aldrich Family, KPO, KFI,
KOW; Frank and Archie, KJR;
Drama, KSL.
5:30—Sherlock Holmes, KGO, KEX,
KJR; Heidi's Orch., KPO, KFI, KGW.
6:00—Little Ol' Hollywood, KGO,
KEX; From the Music Rooms, KPO,
KOW.
6:30—Fibber McGee, KPO, KFI,
KOW; Crosby's Orch., KNX, KSL,
KOIN; Human Side of Literature,
KPO, KEX; News, KJR.
7:00—Talk by Welles, KGO, KEX;
Variety Program, KPO, KGW, KFI;
Calling All Cars, KNX; News, KOMO.
7:30—Sports Huddle, KNX, KOIN;
Drama, KJR; Mammoth Minstrels,
KGO; 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,
KNX, KSL, KOIN.
9:00—Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KFI,
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Denver; KOIN, 940, Portland;
KOMO, 926, Seattle; KPO, 630, San
Francisco; KSL, 1180, Salt Lake.

San Fran Relievers Start Stamp Plan
San Francisco, Dec. 18.—(AP) Federal food stamps were to go on sale in San Francisco today, inaugurating in California a system under which relief clients may buy \$1.50 worth of food for \$1.
After the plan is established here, it will be placed in operation throughout the state.
Relief officials here estimated the stamp plan would increase business in San Francisco by \$1,500,000 annually.
Boy Scouts Camp
Walla Walla, Wash., Dec. 18.—(AP)—Executive O. E. Hoover said today Boy Scouts of the Blue Mountain council will establish a new summer camp near Wallowa, Ore., as result of the gift of a tract to the district organization by the Pacific Power & Light company.
The Society of Hydraulic Force of Sila recently inaugurated a new hydroelectric plant capable of producing 70,000,000 kilowatt hours of power annually.

Fre. Ambulance Banned
Salem, Dec. 18.—(AP)—Under-takers are prohibited from operating free ambulances to solicit business, the attorney general ruled today.
Salem, Dec. 18.—(AP)—Ernest Teske, Salem taxi driver, told police today that he was robbed of \$20 Saturday night by a passenger who hired him to drive from Salem to Mt. Angel.

Suburban Heights
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

FRED PERLEY AMAZED EVERYONE WHEN, AFTER GREETING HIS WIFE, WHO HAD COME DOWN TO THE 5:15 TO MEET HIM, HE GAVE AN ANGUISHED CRY, LEAPED ABOARD THE MOVING TRAIN AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE NIGHT. NOT UNTIL HE MADE HIS WAY HOME, SOME HOURS LATER, COULD HE EXPLAIN THAT HE HAD LEFT ALL HIS CHRISTMAS SHOPPING IN THE RACK OVER HIS SEAT

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Customer Is Always Right!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Trickery Afoot!

THE NEBBS—My Partner?

RUBY M. MILLER TAKEN BY DEATH

Ships Released

Parliament, Ore., Dec. 18.—(AP) Twenty-two ships, most of them barbound inside the Columbia river during last week's severe storms, put to sea in a mass exodus yesterday as weather cleared. Six vessels crossed in.

SKULL ROCK--
weird stone formation in Hidden Valley, Joshua Tree Nat'l. Monument, Calif.

THE BRIDE AND GROOM--
ARE THE ONLY ONES NOT ALLOWED AMONG CEREMONY OF CENTRAL ASIA!

PARACHUTING DOG
A pioneer barnstormer in early post-war days, Arrigo Balboni, Los Angeles' "flying junkman," in 1925 formed a strange team with a little dog named Anna. Balboni rigged a small parachute for the dog, flew her up to 3,000 feet over Columbus, N. M., and let her go. Anna made 648 jumps with safety, in seven years.
"Anna was never hurt," Balboni says. "Once in Wisconsin she landed on a church roof and the fire department got her down. In Reno, Nev., I was warned by the dog catcher that I would be fined \$10 if I let Anna jump. Well, I got \$30 for the jump, paid the fine and left town."
Anna died in 1937. Airline pilots, who had long been her friends, attended the funeral. Tomorrow: The Soap-Bubble Scientist.

ANNAP
the barnstorming dog, MADE 648 PARACHUTE JUMPS IN 7 YEARS OF FLYING WITH ARRIGO BALBONI Los Angeles

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