

The Creeping Man

by Frances Shelley Wees

YESTERDAY, Murder, not suicide, is Michael's verdict. Also, Mrs. Murchison is a bigamist, because her first husband, Murchison, bought the diamonds to cover Marie's theft of them. War-wetener Smith tells Michael he saw Murchison buying an oar-lock.

Chapter 42 The Hairpin

SEVERAL hours later, on the afternoon of the same day, Tuck stood looking out of a window in the living room overlooking the Horseshoe. A car drove up to the Devoe door, and Mrs. Murchison accompanied by Jared Devoe came out of the house and drove away. "Bunny," she exclaimed, "He's gone. Jared Devoe, I mean."

Bunny looked up from the needlepoint chair cover she was working at. "Well, Tuck?"

"Don't you see? It's all right—let's go out and hunt for your Creeping Man, Bunny! Out where you saw him, the other night! Maat he be a ladder, and came up over the cliffs. We could find the mark, perhaps. You know Michael hasn't paid any attention to that story, because he seemed to have his mind just set on Duncan being guilty. Do you believe Duncan is guilty, Bunny?"

Bunny laid down her work and crossed her hands over her knee. She looked up at Tuck with a hint of pain in the clear gray eyes. "I don't know what to think, dear. Michael's awfully clever, and awfully decent. He wouldn't talk that way to me about Duncan unless he had some basis for it. He never talks like that without a reason. But honestly, looking at Duncan, listening to him talk, can you believe that he is the... the fiend who is running wild here?"

"No," said Tuck promptly. "I cannot, I don't think Michael's telling fibs, but I think he's mistaken. I think he's prejudiced, for the first time since I've known him. So, let's go ourselves, Bunny, and find out what we can... if we can find out anything, I'll believe you're right with it if Michael won't listen."

"Michael would listen. He is fair-minded, lamb. I don't want to admit it, but I must."

"Bunny," Tuck said, her eyes on the geraniums blooming in the window boxes, "are you in love with Duncan?"

Bunny frowned. "I don't know," she said, as if they were discussing a remote question. "I don't honestly know. I could have been, I suppose, if I'd seen more of him. I'm all upset and sort of miserable these days because it seems as if it's no use having faith in human nature any longer if that nice boy turns out to be a dreadful criminal. I didn't see very much of him, Tuck."

"No, Well, I like him. I'd like you to marry him. You make a lovely looking couple, both of you so tall, and his eyes so blue, and his hair so wavy, and his shoulders so broad, and you slim and gray-eyed and black-haired and generally darling."

Bunny laughed in spite of herself. She jumped up to give Tuck a hug. "You are a lamb," she said. "I feel better. Do we go to the woods, then?"

"Feeling quite sure," said Tuck seriously, in a lowered tone, "that the real villain of the piece, as yet unmasked, has gone away—I'm not afraid to go. What could he do to us, anyway? Nothing."

"She could have let him in, that night, couldn't she?" Bunny asked. "It's all there. Motive, opportunity, everything. You know, Tuck, I think Duncan believes that too. He's afraid he can't prove it. He hates Devoe. It was Devoe he was threatening to kill, Tuck. It must have been. He didn't mean it, but you can't blame him for saying it. He doesn't know the truth, and he thinks that woman is his sister-in-law, and"—she paused—"he hates her too, in spite of what they're trying to make out. I'm sure of that."

They reached the garden gate, and stood hesitantly there; behind them the house and security; before them the dark woods, but, perhaps, the unraveling of a secret.

Dark Woods

AT THE moment, Charlotte Jean came running down the path. "Mrs. Forrester, what are you giving me quite a start, indeed you did," she said, wiping her hands on her apron. "Mr. Michael said that I was to keep my eye on you, and if you started off into the woods, like, I was to tell you to come back."

Tuck's eyes were round and innocent. "But why, Charlotte Jean? It's perfectly safe now."

sort of place, and we weren't looking for anyone to be here."

"Eerie? I'm afraid I hadn't noticed it. I come here frequently to think out any problem that comes up." He looked at them kindly, and yet inquiringly. "You're both pale," he said sharply. "I suppose it's this air of mystery and terror surrounding us. My wife is really ill with it all."

"It's been awful, hasn't it?" Tuck said. "I thought Mrs. McBain couldn't be well. She looked dreadfully pale yesterday."

"I'm glad she isn't living as close to it as you are," he said, tapping his pipe on his boot heel. "Your husband is working hard, I suppose? I haven't had a long talk with him for several days. He dropped his voice. 'I sincerely hope he is making headway,' he said."

"I think he is. He's down town working the morning shift. It doesn't tell us very much, you know. It's a very complicated business."

McBain's face was stern. "It is that," he agreed hastily. "We shall be more than glad when it is cleared up. It is terrible—terrible. I do not... oh, I shouldn't say that. I did not believe that Dr. Murchison could possibly be dead. I am beginning to change my opinion. He drew a deep breath. "Oh, well, I mustn't burden you with my feelings. I'm thankful that it's Mr. Forrester, and not I, who has to deal with it. He is a very keen lad. I noticed how very cleverly he concealed his real knowledge at the inquest, regarding Miss Lisey's last talk with you. No one who didn't know... or who hadn't suspected the truth... would have guessed that he didn't tell all he knew."

"No, I don't believe they would. Of course he couldn't possibly tell everything she told us."

"No, poor soul! I detested her heartily in life, but it seems a very small thing to cost one one's life. However... I must be off." He looked at his wrist watch. "I have a lecture. Good afternoon... and a pleasant walk."

Big Log

THE two girls went on only a few steps until they came to the end of the path, or, rather, to the edge of the wood. Perhaps it was some time that the water had extended to the water's edge, but they had been cleared for a distance of an eighth of a mile along the river and perhaps twenty feet back from the edge. This was the rocky stretch of ground... although Michael had not told them... where he had seen Miss Lisey with her reading glass. This also was the place, just at the end of the path, where Mrs. Devoe's body had been found. Not knowing the exact spot, they did not shiver, and avoid it, but went on, slowly, up the bank.

"Do you see that big log, about half way up the clearing?" Bunny asked quietly. "It's just under the overhang of the trees. Look... that big stump is almost directly between it and the water. Tuck, that's where we were sitting the night we saw him, the Creeping Man. On that log, you know... she stopped suddenly, and turned to Tuck. "It never occurred to me before. How stupid we were! That man... he could perfectly well have been hidden on the other side of the stump. Perhaps not hidden at all, Tuck. Perhaps just somebody sitting there enjoying the sunset. And then we came along, and sat down, and perhaps he didn't like to startle us by getting up suddenly. So he just crept away quietly when it got dark. Oh, Tuck, of course that's the explanation!"

Tuck said nothing, although her face betrayed her feelings. They had reached the stump, now, and leaned against it. Bunny looked behind her swiftly to the fallen log, where she and Duncan had sat. "Tuck, you slip down on the other side of the stump," she commanded. "I'll go and sit on the log. Then, we'll see if that idea would be possible. It would certainly answer a big question in my mind."

"No, we better trade places. You're bigger than I. This stump isn't so awfully tall, Bunny. You come. A man would be more your size."

So Bunny went over and dropped down behind the stump as if she were a man smoking his after-dinner pipe. Tuck surveyed her from the log.

"I can almost nearly see the top of your head, but not quite," she said. "But it might have been done. Still... I don't see how you and Duncan could possibly have come all along the bank and not seen him, if he were sitting there all the time. There's no underbrush around at all."

Bunny got up and came over to her. She bent down and picked up something from the ground. "This must be yours, Tuck, this hairpin," she said.

"Pearl gray shell! Who in the world wears pearl gray shell hairpins in this day and age?"

The answer came to both of them at once. "Mrs. Devoe did," Bunny said quietly. "She must have walked along here just before..."

Tuck jumped up. "Hush, Bunny. Don't say it."

And then they heard, quite faintly, the murmur of voices. Bunny swung around and gazed into the woods, where all was still. Tuck, keener of hearing, perhaps, went forward cautiously and peered over the steep cliff. She gazed down incredulously for a moment, then lifted back to Bunny. "You know what it is?" she demanded. "It's that Michael Forrester, with Gordon Deane, drifting down-stream in a brand new gray boat. Cushions and everything. Isn't that terrible?" She looked at Bunny tragically. "Bunny, do you suppose he's lost his mind?"

On the RADIO CHAINS

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; KXN, 1050, Los Angeles; KOA, 830, Denver; KOIN, 940, Portland; KOMO, 926, Seattle; KPO, 630, San Francisco; KSL, 1180, Salt Lake.

Sunday
8:00—Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Festival of Music, KGO, KJR, KEX; Adventures of Ellery Queen, KOIN, KXN, KSL.
9:00—Manhattan Merry-Go-Round, KPO, KGW, KFI; Sunday Evening Hour, KXN, KSL, KOIN; Note Book, KGO.
9:30—Organist, KGO, KJR; Familiar Music, KPO, KGW, KFI.
7:00—Hillman, commentator, KGW; Playhouse, KXN, KSL, KOIN; Sleep Serenade, KPO; Hour of Charm, KGO, KEX, KJR, KFI.
7:30—Carnival, KPO, KFI, KGW; Musical Mosaics, KGO, KJR.
8:00—Christmas singing, KGO; Ayres' Orch., KOIN, KXN; Night Editor, KGO, KFI, KPO; News, KEX, KSL.
8:15—Drama, KPO, KFI, KGW; Community Sing, KEX.
8:30—Sweet and Low, KGO, KJR; Jack Benny, KPO, KGW, KFI; March of California, KXN.

9:00—Walter Winchell, KPO, KFI, KGW; Ben Bernie, KXN, KOIN; Mf. Dist. of Attorney, KGO, KJR, KEX.
9:30—Christmas Carol, KXN, KOIN; Martin's Orch., KGO, KEX; One Man's Family, KPO, KFI, KGW; News, KJR.
10:00—Martin's Music, KGO, KJR, KEX; News Reporter, KPO, KFI, KGW.
10:30—Tucker's Orch., KOIN; Noble's Orch., KGO.
11:00—News, KGO; Ross and Yeo, KOIN, KSL; Nottingham's Orch., KGW, KPO, KFI; News, KXN.

Monday
5:00—Party, KPO, KFI, KGW; Sunset Shadows, KGO.
5:30—Time and Tempo, KGF, KFI; Kelsey's Orch., KGO, KJR; Master Singers, KPO.
6:00—Rocheater Orch., KGO, KEX; Radio Theater, KSL, KXN, KOIN; Quiz Program, KPO, KGW, KFI.
6:30—News and Views, KOMO; Templeton Time, KPO, KGW, KFI, KXN; News, KJR.
7:00—Little Or' Hollywood, KGO, KJR, KEX; Hour, KPO, KGW, KFI; Lombardo's Orch., KSL, KXN, KOIN.
7:30—Blondie, KXN, KSL, KOIN; Serenations and Swing, KPO, KFI, KGW; Radio Forum, KGO, KJR, KEX.
8:00—Amos and Andy, KXN, KOIN, KSL; Doe's Music, KEX; Fred Waring, KPO, KGW, KFI; Aloha Land, KGO.
8:15—I Love a Mystery, KPO, KFI, KGW; Lum and Abner, KXN, KSL, KOIN; Doe's Music, KGO; Courtney's Orch., KEX.
8:30—Drama, KPO, KFI, KGW.

Breeze's Orch., KEX; Bug Band, KGO; Model Minstrels, KXN, KSL, KOIN.
9:00—Osborne's Orch., KGO, KGW; Sherlock Holmes, KPO, KFI, KGW; Tune Up Time, KXN, KSL, KOIN; True or False, KGO, KEX, KJR, KGW; Hawthorne House, KPO, KGW, KFI; Hawkins' Orch., KGO; Welk's Orch., KXN, News, KJR.
10:00—News Reporter, KPO, KGW, KFI; Helix's Orch., KGO, KJR, News, KSL, KXN, KOIN.
10:30—Music by Woodbury, KPO, KGW; Tucker's Orch., KOIN, KSL, KXN; Foster's Orch., KGO, KJR, KFI.
11:00—Bavazza's Orch., KPO, KFI; This Moving World, KEX, KJR; Organist, KOIN, KSL; News, KGO, KXN, KGW.

Radio Highlights
(Pacific Standard Time.)
New York, Dec. 23. — Two days full of programs are the networks' holiday presents to listeners.
On Christmas eve, the networks will have President Roosevelt, a message from Rome, war front broadcasts, Shirley Temple, Lionel Barrymore, a special hour of greetings and midnight mass from St. Patrick's cathedral, New York.
On Christmas day, they will offer King George of Great Britain, Eamon De Valera of

NEW TOYS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

THINKS WHAT FUN IT IS TO HAVE NEW THINGS TO PLAY WITH AFTER CHRISTMAS. HARDLY KNOWS WHAT TO CHOOSE

DECIDES TO PLAY WITH THE TRAIN UNCLE GEORGE GAVE HIM

SETS TRACKS UP AND DECIDES TO PLAY WITH HIS BUILDING SET INSTEAD

DUMPS CONTENTS OF BOX OF BUILDING PARTS ON FLOOR AND STARTS CONSTRUCTION

DECIDES TO LOOK AT HIS NEW PICTURE BOOK INSTEAD

REMEMBERS HE HADN'T TRIED OUT HIS PAINT BOX YET. GETS GLASS OF WATER AND COLORS A PICTURE

OPENS UP THE GAME HE GOT AND TRIES TO FIGURE OUT HOW IT IS PLAYED

DECIDES TO GO OUT-OF-DOORS AND PICKS HIS WAY OUT AMONG TRACKS, BUILDING PARTS, CARS, PAINTS, ETC., WHICH SOMEONE ELSE WILL PICK UP

12-26 (Released by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Whoops!

LIS'EN, TOMKINS! I BEEN HERE SEVERAL DAYS NOW, AN' I AINT SOLED... I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT I PAID MY DOUGH FER.

IF I LET YOU SOLO BEFORE YOU'RE READY, CHUCK, YOUR MONEY WILL BE PAYING FOR A FUNERAL!

P'SST! HEY, LEM! C'MERE A MINUTE!

I KNOW WHY YUH AINT SOLED YET, LEM, YUH NEED SOME THINGS EXPLAINED THAT THESE INSTRUCTORS ARE TOO DUMB TO MAKE CLEAR...

UH-HUH?

TELL YUH WHAT, LEM... I'LL GO UP WITH YUH! BETWEEN TH' TWO OF US... WE OUGHTA GIT THINGS STRAIGHTENED OUT!

YEAH!

AND... IN THE WASH-ROOM

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Further Bulletins!

WOE IS ME! WOE IS ME!

NOW, WAIT A SECOND, MAYOR BALLINGER-I'LL BET EVERYONE HASN'T GONE CRAZY OVER OIL-

SEZ YOU! WANNA HEAR SOME NAMES? LEMME READ THESE! FLORENCE KERR, MARTIE LOGAN, GEORGE DURNO, NANCY CASEY, FRED MORRISON, HAROLD MARSH, JESSE KNIGHT-

RECOGNIZE 'EM?

EVERY ONE OF 'EM A LAST-DITCH FIGHTER FOR ME IN THE CAMPAIGN! BLESS THEM ONE AND ALL!

YEAH? AN' EVERY LAST ONE OF 'EM HAS LEASED THEIR LOTS TO OIL COMPANIES!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Prediction

WELL, I'VE TURNED EVERYTHING IN THE PLACE INSIDE OUT AND UPSIDE DOWN AND I CANT FIND YOUR HALF OF THE FORMULA. CANT YOU THINK HARD WHERE YOU PUT IT?

THINK HARD?! I'VE DONE NOTHING ELSE-IT'S ON MY MIND SINCE I FOUND OUT ITS VALUE. I'VE GOT MY OLD THINKER ALMOST NUMB!!

NUMB? IT WAS NUMB WHEN IT WAS NEW

I DONT MEAN TO NAG BUT THAT HEAD OF YOURS IS AS MUCH USE AS A CUPOLA ON A BARN. ONLY ITS NOT ORNAMENTAL!

DONT! PLEASE!! YOU'RE RIGHT-THIS HEAD IS ONLY GOOD TO PASS FOOD THROUGH TO KEEP ME ALIVE. AND FOR NO GOOD REASON!!

12 19 (Released by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

Eire, observations in the war zones, including A.P. correspondents, "Pinocchio," a Grace Moore concert and other features.

WEAF-NBC—12:45 p. m., National Press club chorus; 8:30, "Christmas at Braebridge Hall," drama.

WABC-CBS—10:45 a. m., message by Commander Raymond Kelly, American Legion; 4:30 p. m., Shirley Temple in "The Bluebird"; 5 (west at 7), Lionel Barrymore's annual Dickens "A Christmas Carol"; WJZ-NBC—10:15 a. m., War Children's Christmas Overseas; noon broadcast from Siegfried line; 4:00, broadcast from Maginot line. Christmas Day: WABC-CBS, WJZ-NBC, MBS—King George to British Empire; WEAF-NBC, 10 a. m., Carols from Helsinki; WABC-CBS, 12:35 p. m., Eamon De Valera from Dublin; 1 p. m., Christmas at the War Fronts; WJZ-NBC, 9 a. m., Associated Press and other war correspondents greet the folks at home; MBS, 6:15 a. m., British Empire program, London, etc.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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

REMOVE 28 MATCHES FROM THIS SQUARE LEAVING ONLY 2 SQUARES OF EQUAL SIZE... (Answer Monday)

AN ELECTRIC ORGAN--INSPIRED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CIRCUIT FOR SENDING 96 TELEGRAPH MESSAGES OVER A SINGLE PAIR OF WIRES AT THE SAME TIME!

RAIN GUTTERS--ARE BUILT BY TERMITES OF SOUTH AMERICA TO DIVERT WATER FROM THEIR ARBOREAL NESTS

GRIDIRON GLAMOUR!
LOIS ROBERTS -- CAPTAIN OF A LOS ANGELES GIRLS' FOOTBALL TEAM, PUNTED 50 YARDS IN A REGULATION GAME -- BAREFOOTED! -1939-

GIRL GRIDDER
Strange as it seems, in a recent all-girl football game, pretty Lois Roberts of Los Angeles, newest west coast gridiron sensation, punted 50 yards barefooted—a distance commendable in any college game. Lois, team captain and triple-threat player, is 19 and weighs 125 pounds.

ORGAN INSPIRATION
An organ aided development of a circuit tripling the possible number of messages over a single pair of telegraph wires. Electric tone generator of the Hammond electric organ, adapted to telegraphic communication, boosted the possible number of multiple messages from 32 to 96.

MONDAY: Love Budget.

By HAL FORRESTER

WELL, I'VE TURNED EVERYTHING IN THE PLACE INSIDE OUT AND UPSIDE DOWN AND I CANT FIND YOUR HALF OF THE FORMULA. CANT YOU THINK HARD WHERE YOU PUT IT?

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By EDWIN ALGER

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By SOL HESS

Spreckels Wife Is Granted Divorce

San Diego, Cal., Dec. 23. — (U.P.)—Jane Turner Spreckels, San Diego socialite, won an interlocutory decree of divorce today from Claus Spreckels, Jr., Coronado, grandson of the late California sugar magnate, John D. Spreckels.

"He told me he no longer loved me," Mrs. Spreckels testified. "He said he didn't want to be tied to anyone in particular very long."

The Spreckels married at Coronado May 1, 1937 and separated last March, according to the complaint.