

# THE CREEPING THING

A Story of Gruesome and Haunting Mystery

By  
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The Well-Known  
Serial Writer

SYNOPSIS

A series of murders in the mysterious octagonal tower room of Selwyn House have been preceded by sounds as of some monstrous creeping reptile. These murders have been further complicated by the missing bodies of the victims. Ezra Selwyn and his Haitian serving woman have been found murdered, and when their bodies are about to be removed by the undertaker they are found to be missing.

His unknown Haitian nephew, Garland Selwyn, has appeared on the scene at about this time. The last person murdered is Alene Hardmore, mysterious and giant-sized woman detective. Her body, guarded by Tom Frederick and his friend Alec Jonas, two detectives who are engaged in clearing up the mystery, has been moved to the undertaking establishment of Al Jarton, Frederick's friend. Here, a peculiar reluctance of the coroner, Dr. Varant, to allow a close examination of the scalped head of the victim, had led Frederick to an attempt to make the examination secretly.

The presence of an Indian scalping knife on the floor by the body of an earlier victim has a very significant bearing on the case.

When Frederick attempts to examine the body of the murdered Alene Hardmore, he is blocked an every turn by Garland Selwyn, who claims that he has orders to prevent everyone, not excluding Frederick from such an examination.

—NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY—

INSTALMENT VII

WITHOUT stopping to reason about the matter, I was out and after Al Jarton before he had taken two steps across the space that divided us from the swinging door of the alley entrance to the morgue. My eyes travelled with the straight aim and the swift speed of an arrow to the one spot in that gloomy interior toward which the undertaker was striding two steps ahead of me—the cooling board on which not an hour before I had stood over the mutilated corpse of that strange black woman detective, Alene Hardmore.

The white covering gleamed eerily through the dusky light. It was drawn the length of the long narrow space, its uneven line weirdly suggestive of what lay beneath it. I heard the sigh of relieved anxiety as it hissed from Al Jarton's lips when his eyes rested on that undisturbed covering. I was at his shoulder as he lifted it. We both looked down and gasped. The body upon which we gazed was not that of the woman whom I had left there

so short a space of time before. It was the nude body of a man.

Both of us knew that cadaver. It was one that had been in the morgue now for over a month—one of the many unknowns that bob up from time to time at every undertaking establishment as the result of some accident. They are kept for varying intervals in the hope that some relative or friend may identify

them or that some provision may be made for their disposal to some agency, medical or other.

Sometimes, after a long time, these cadavers are claimed, at other times they are buried and the annals of some family bear forever in their records the name of a missing member who was never heard of after a certain time. This was just such a case. The body had been

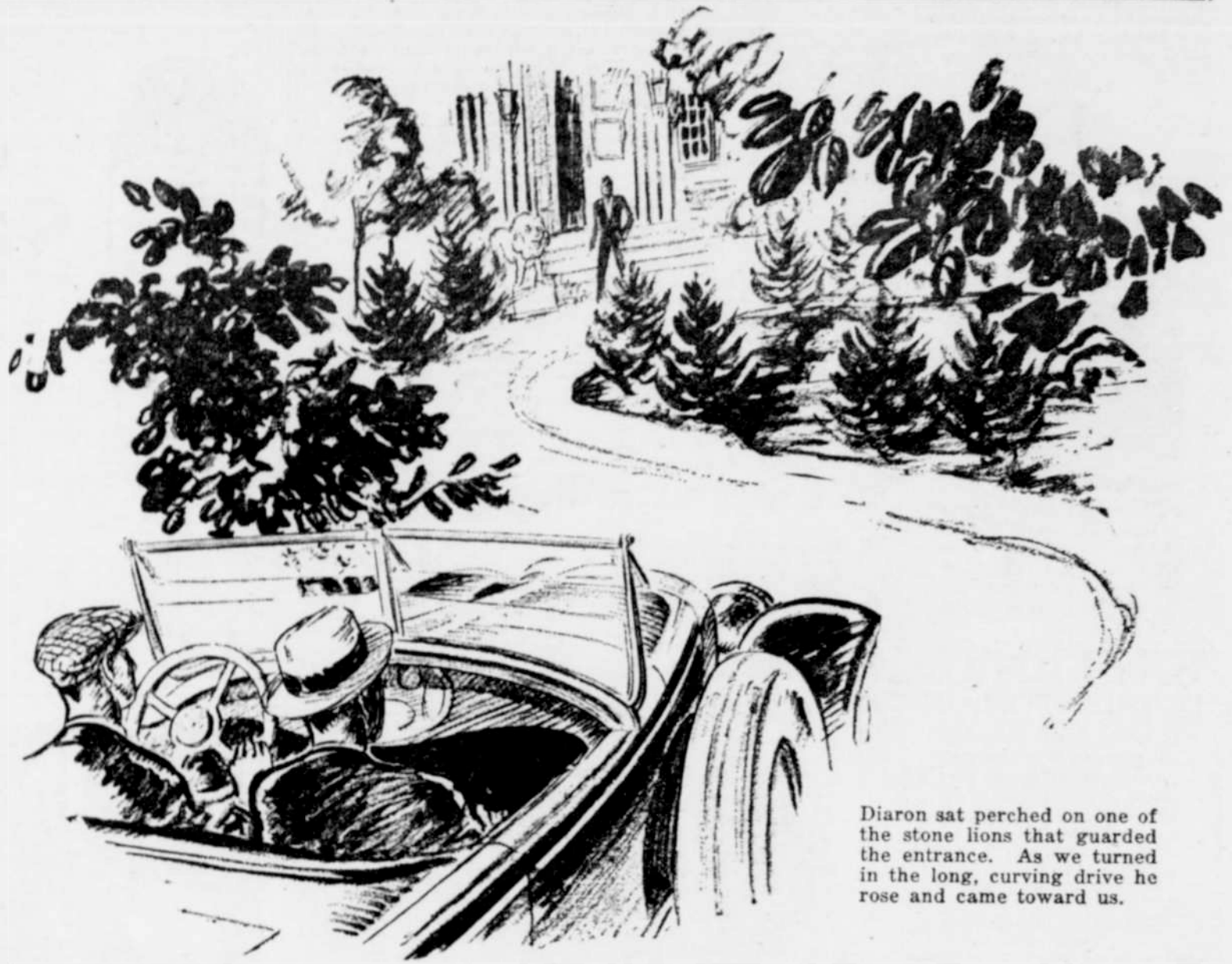
in a far dim corner and obviously its substitution for the other body was the work of someone who wished to gain time and knew that in all probability the change would go undiscovered for some time—which it would have done had it not been for the accidental coming of the proprietor and myself on the scene.

I looked across at Al; he was looking at me, a dazed expression of wondering surprise in his eyes.

"It looks like they had a lookout posted somewhere up the alley, Al" I said. "He must have been slow getting to them or maybe it was a matter of their delaying too long to trade cadavers, otherwise they would have had things all set before you got in and a casual look would have left everything O. K. I'll too late for a hot trail. But we've got that anyhow. Let's follow it."

"Where—Who—How?" The three questions tumbled over each other. Al looked at me as if he thought I was daffy. I grinned.

Garland Suspected  
"Why, it is very evident that our  
(Continued on page four)



Diaron sat perched on one of the stone lions that guarded the entrance. As we turned in the long, curving drive he rose and came toward us.

## THE LIFE OF BERT WILLIAMS No. 8 . . .

Text by BEN DAVIS, JR.  
Drawn by A. W. RENNEGARBE



NORMAN GATEWAY  
WINDSOR CASTLE

His Majesty, King Edward VII, became a great admirer of Bert, both personally and on account of his talent, and frequently sought him as guest at the Royal Palace.



THE  
"CAKEWALK"

Bert introduced his famous "cake walk" into London in 1903, at the behest of the Mother Queen, who having heard so much about this new step from America, was anxious to see the great actor perform it.



When the Queen saw the cake walk for the first time, she laughed and applauded very heartily, having intense interest in the clever manner in which Bert had perfected this original and internationally known step.



Bert was anxious to become a Mason, hence during this successful tour abroad accepted three degrees in Scotland joining Waverley Lodge 597 in Edinburgh. This took place in the Scottish Masonic Temple.