

Crime Literature

By W. E. Hill

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The newspaper interview. "Every one," said the alleged murderess, "here in the jail has been just lovely to me. Only this morning the police matron brought me a little poem her little girl had written me. It is really just like home here. For I am really a home girl and I can't believe that even if I had been temporarily deranged I could have poisoned all those people in my family. If I am acquitted of this terrible charge I mean to devote my life to writing about the birds and the bees—the dear little things!"



The tabloid photo of the suspect and as much of the personnel of the police force as could be grouped alongside artistically.



The mystery play. This is a big moment from "Clawing Fingers," which is packing 'em in nightly. There's an eccentric old man who stipulates on his deathbed that the will shall be opened one year hence in the library of his home in the Berkshires at 11 P. M., standard time. Enid, his niece, her faithful boy friend, Paul Pasmore, the lawyer, and a Chinese caretaker gather at the old homestead as specified. Suddenly the lights go out, a skeleton appears, lightning flashes from without, and there is a terrible pow-wow. Paul falls through a trap door and poor Enid is beside herself. Things look pretty dark when the Chinese caretaker is suspected of being a madman who chews his victims to little bits. However, just before the final curtain the Chinaman is discovered to be a good detective in disguise and the lawyer is shown to be a deep dyed villain who had murdered the old man for Enid's inheritance, and everything ends happily.



The souvenir hunters. "Yes, Seymour and I motored out to see the bungalow where the crime took place, and as there seemed to be no one home we pried this cellar window off for a memento! A woman and a little girl were just carrying a screen door away when we drove up and a lot of people had taken the bricks from the chimney for souvenirs, so we were really very lucky. I think you could get a shingle or a board from the porch if you care to drive out there!"



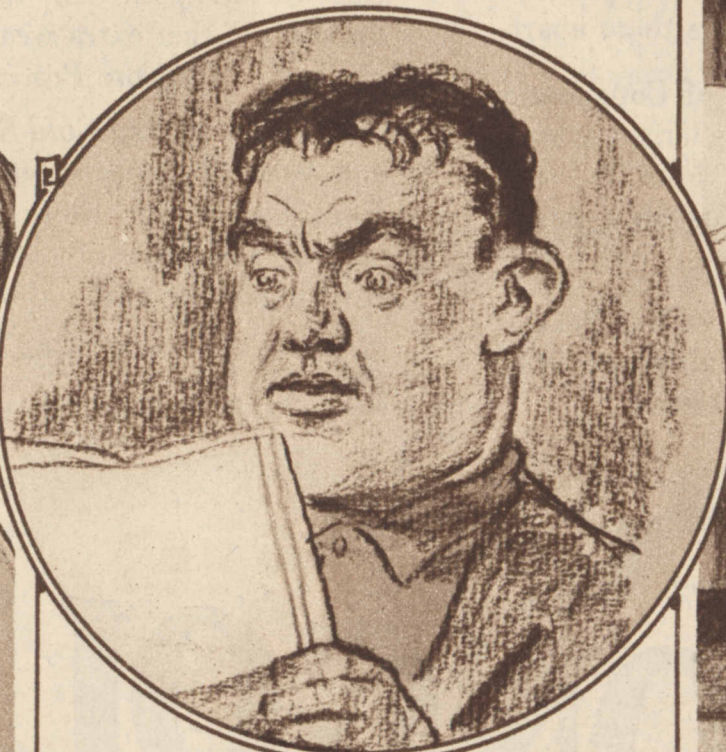
Three mystery story fans. At the left we have the lady who had never read Conan Doyle's "Hound of the Baskervilles" up to now, very much startled by the sudden entry of a family pet. In the center is the man who has been up most of the night finishing the latest S. S. Van Dine murder plot. To the right is an Edgar Wallace fan taking "The Face in the Night" where the members of the household will not interrupt.



"I want a good mystery story for my mother." "How about 'The Tittering Corpse'?" It's about a murdered man discovered by a girl detective at midnight in a deserted cemetery in Limehouse. While she's looking at the bloody knife, she hears the corpse titter—it's awfully exciting." "O, she'll love that—I'll take it!"



The ancient photo of the deceased retouched by the loving hands of the art department for publication in the evening edition. Caption reads: "Mrs. Hosmer Mutkin as she appeared before her marriage to Hosmer Mutkin, when, as beautiful Gracie Hackabout, when, as beautiful Gracie Hackabout, she was the reigning belle in Fleebite, N. J."



On trial for murder of the more bizarre sort, and consequently in the public eye, Hosmer Mutkin is publishing his memoirs in the "Evening Howl" at a slight remuneration which will enable Hosmer to sue a couple of insurance companies that are holding out. "I simply idolized Gracie," proofreads Hosmer, "and when I found her lifeless I could not bear to consign her to a common cemetery. She had always loved our coal cellar and so I laid her away 'neath the nut coal. Only mean, suspicious people would criticize me for so doing, as my lawyers will prove."



The slain gang leader's sweetheart. . . "Miss Lurine La Cafferty, beautiful night club entertainer, when interviewed in her apartment at the Hotel Rowdy, said, 'Yes, I and Bennie were engaged. I knew he had two wives, one in Marquette and one in Little Rock, for Bennie always told me everything, but he had promised to get both marriages annulled and then we was to be wed. Ours was a real romance—a regular story book love—and if my lawyer is the boy I think he is I expect to have my rights when Bennie's estate is settled!'"