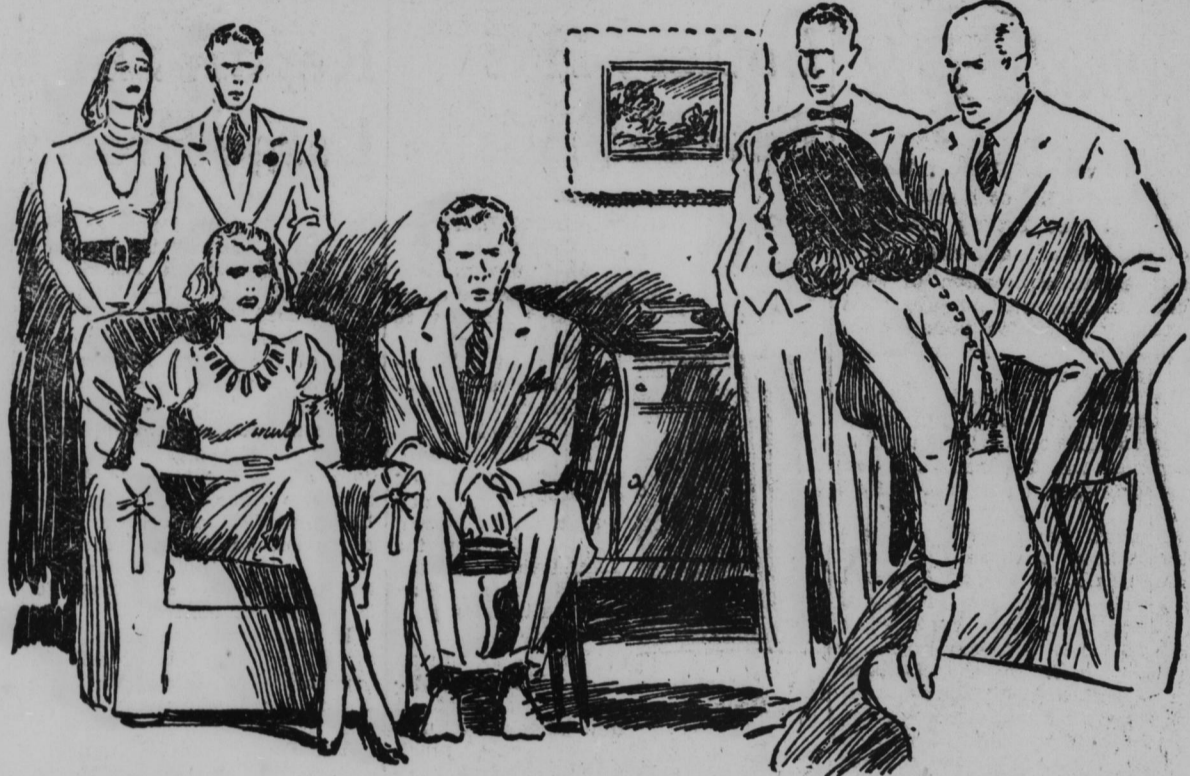


# DEATH AT THE MANOR

BY M. E. CORNE  
RELEASED BY CENTRAL PRESS ASSOCIATION



"Are you calling me a liar?"

### READ THIS FIRST:

Elsie Ritter, a beauty shop operator, taking the place of a friend for a week in the private salon of Mrs. Horace Witherpoon, Sr., finds herself involved in a murder mystery when first the eccentric old lady and later her middle-aged daughter-in-law are found dead under the same hair drier. Elsie was attending each at the time, though out of the salon for a few moments before discovering the old lady's death. A string of emeralds, belonging to Mrs. Witherpoon, Sr., are strangely missing. Certain members of the Witherpoon family, and some of the house guests, strike Elsie as queer. Phil Benson, newspaper reporter and close friend of Elsie, arrives as the police launch their investigation. He immediately phones for Mac McIntyre, head of the Chicago homicide squad, who happens to be in town. Meanwhile Richard and Daphne Witherpoon, children of the second victim, conduct themselves oddly during questioning. (NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY)

### CHAPTER TWENTY

CHIEF ELLIS grinned when Richard referred to him as a jack-ass. "Suppose," he suggested gently, "suppose you tell me what you know."

"Richard doesn't know a thing," Daphne cried. "He wasn't in the house this morning."

"No? And where was he?"

"I was in town," Richard informed him savagely, "and what I was doing is none of your business!"

"Richard is excited," his sister put in quickly. "He was doing some errands for me—at the drug store!"

"That right, son?"

"Yes," the boy admitted sullenly, "that's right."

"All right. We can check on that," Ellis waved him aside. "Now, Miss Witherpoon, you haven't told me where you went after leaving the salon."

"I went to Miss Westcott's room. I helped her pack."

"Pack?"

"She is leaving on the evening train."

"Oh, no, she isn't!" Ellis contradicted her. "No one leaves this house until I give the word."

"But, officer!" Glad Westcott protested this order. She rolled her big eyes in his direction. "I've simply got to catch the evening train. My mother's expecting me."

"Sorry." He refused to be vamped. "No one can leave. Where were you this morning when you weren't packing?"

She pouted, reproachfully: "I was in bed, officer," she drawled. "I never get up before ten o'clock."

"Did anyone see you there?"

"Why, officer!"

Chief Ellis' neck turned fiery red. "One up for Georgia," whispered Phil, and I giggled, but sickly.

"Quiet, please!" Ellis glared at us. "Now you, Miss—" he signaled

Della Craig. "What have you to say?"

The actress regarded him cockily. "Nothing whatsoever." She had evidently made up her mind not to forgive his earlier lapse.

"You were a friend of the deceased?"

"Naturally."

"She invited you here?"

"The family invited me."

"I see. You are Della Craig, the actress, are you not?"

"I am."

"And where were you this morning?"

"In my boudoir."

"So?" He regarded her suspiciously. "What were you doing there?"

"I was writing letters."

"Alone?"

Della's glance would have frozen an Eskimo. "Quite!"

"All right." His eyes rested upon Toots Lemoine, and that young woman twisted and untwisted her jeweled fingers in her lap.

"Miss Lemoine?" He consulted a scrap of paper in his hand.

"That's me," affirmed Toots, and crossed her legs so that her silken shafts were revealed above her knee.

"You are a guest here?"

"Yeah."

"A friend of the deceased?"

"Not exactly." She cocked her head to one side and exploded her bombshell. "I'm engaged to Richard Witherpoon!"

"No!" cried Daphne involuntarily. "No!"

"Say!" Toots forgot her role of lady and reverted to type. "Are you calling me a liar? Ask him! Ask your darling little brother! Go on, ask him!" She glared at Richard. The boy's eyes were glued to her face. Once at a street carnival I saw a snake the glazed eyes of which watched those of the Egyptian snake charmer who owned him as Richard's watched Toots. He was as if mesmerized; he bobbed his head jerkily at her command.

"It's true," he said, and he sounded as hopeless as a man can sound. "We're engaged."

"Oh, Dickie! Beneath her rouge Glad Westcott paled. "How could you?"

"I'm sorry, Glad."

"Sorry, eh?" Toots said shrilly. "Sorry for what? You asked me to marry you, didn't you? Didn't you?"

"No wrangling, please." Ellis stepped in and took over the reins. "Did Mrs. Witherpoon approve of your engagement, Miss Lemoine?"

"She—she didn't know."

"Secret, eh?"

"No, it wasn't!" Toots denied

quickly. "We just made up our minds this morning."

"While Richard was in town?"

Ellis demanded shrewdly.

"Never your mind when!" Toots was losing her temper.

"Well," he changed the subject, "maybe you can tell me where you were between eleven and eleven-fifteen this morning?"

"I was in bed," snapped Toots, and this time the chief let well enough alone.

It was Count Orsini's turn next. He answered promptly—too promptly, in my opinion—the questions put to him. He was, he explained smoothly, a guest in the house at the invitation of his fiancée, Miss Daphne Witherpoon. He had met Miss Daphne in Paris the winter before through mutual friends. Ellis got nothing from him save the fact that he had spent the morning in his room, and had been seen there as late as eleven o'clock by the maid who entered to change his bed.

"I'll get to the servants later," promised the chief, and then turned to Jeffrey Todington. "Are you also engaged to one of the ladies present?" he inquired sarcastically.

"I am not," Jeffrey's face flushed, and I guessed he was trying to remain cool and collected and refrain from punching the chief of police on the nose.

It turned out that Jeffrey was a house guest at the Manor at Mr. Richard's invitation. Mr. Richard and he were fraternity brothers and Jeffrey was a family friend of long standing. There was no mention made of his relations or former relations with Daphne, but, then, I guess a man naturally does not boast of being jilted by the girl he loves. And Jeffrey was in love with Daphne. Any fool could tell that by the way he looked at her.

"And where did you spend the morning?"

"I was in the auboretum, and as far as I know no one saw me there."

"Communing with nature, eh?" Ellis was losing his temper.

"That's my business!" Jeffrey's coolness threatened to rise to fever pitch.

"And mine," added the chief soberly. "Everything connected with this household is my business—now!" And at his words I had another shivering spell.

What secrets would this policeman unearth before he had finished with us? What skeletons would he drag forth from dark closets? I stole a quick glance about the room. Others, evidently, shared my fear and wonder.

(To Be Continued)

## "Thanks for Saving My Life"



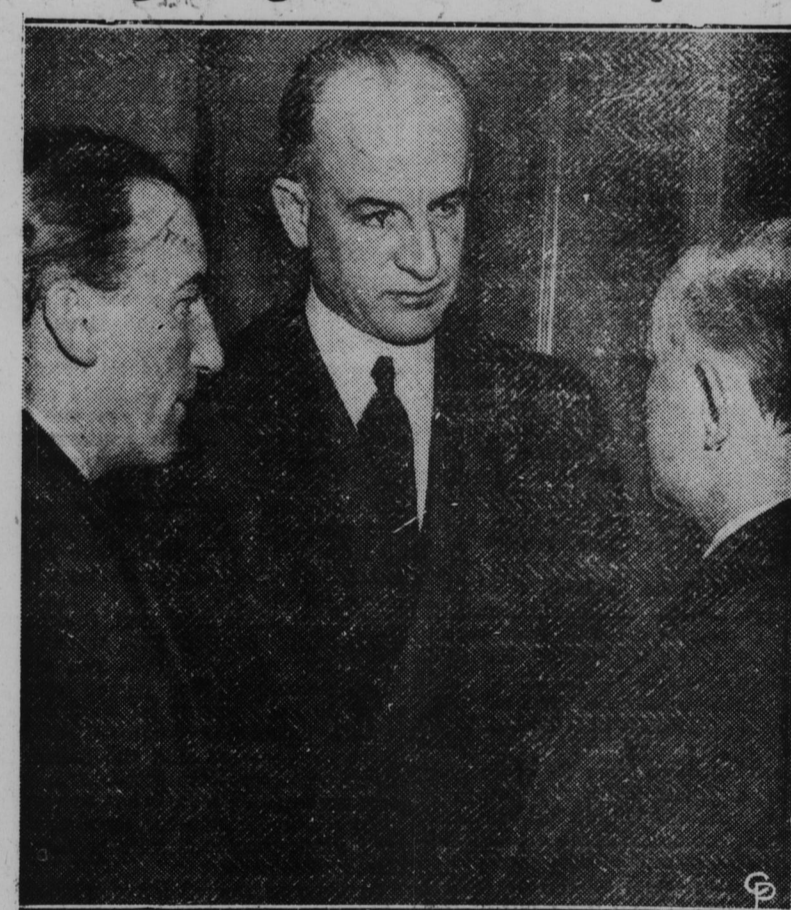
Seven-year-old Dickie Morrison, safe in bed at Waltham, Mass., thanks little Bobby Christenson, 5, for his heroic rescue. Dickie had crashed through the ice on the Charles River. While spectators gasped, Bobbie crawled out over the perilous ice and pulled Dick to safety. (Central Press)

## As Dewey Took G. O. P. Reins



New York's district attorney, Thomas E. Dewey (right) was acclaimed the leader of the Republican party in crucial New York State following his address at a state-wide party dinner in Albany, in which he pledged the G.O.P. to liberalism. He is pictured with the dinner host, Edwin F. Jaekle, chairman of the executive committee.

## "Digesting" President's Speech



John W. Hanes (left), Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Sumner Welles (center), Under-Secretary of State, and Harry Woodring, Secretary of War, are pictured in earnest consultation after hearing the President, addressing joint session of Congress, say that the nation is at the "deadline of danger."

## Police Rescue Police Dog



Policeman John Daley grabs a line from shore as he and Nick Fierro, a park attendant, rescue a big German police dog from New York's Central Park Lake. The dog had spied some ducks far out on the ice, raced joyfully toward them and plunged through thin ice one hundred feet from shore. (Central Press)

## Flames Frame a Picture



This remarkable spot-news study in light and shadow was shot by an alert cameraman who came upon sedan burning at Springfield, L. I., after it had crashed into a pole which toppled on the auto roof. A high-tension wire exploded the gas tank. Radio police rescued three occupants.

## Loretta Stands by Him



William P. Buckner is pictured in Hollywood with Loretta Young, screen actress. Buckner, accused in New York of defrauding investors in a \$1,000,000 Philippine railway bonds case, was given court permission to go to California on a two-week business trip. While denying they would announce their engagement at this time, Miss Young said her feelings for Buckner had not been changed by the charges against him.

## On Trial in Prison Deaths



Deputy Warden Frank A. Craven (right) of Holmesburg County prison, Philadelphia, confers with his attorney, John R. K. Scott, as they arrive at court for Craven's trial on charge of manslaughter. Four convicts were alleged to have been literally cooked to death in the Klondike section of the Holmesburg prison last summer when steam was turned on.

## Landon Back from Lima



Ex-Governor Alf M. Landon, of Kansas, flashed a big smile as the photographer snapped him at Fort Worth, Tex., when he alighted from an airliner. Landon was enroute home from the Pan-American Conference at Lima, Peru. (Central Press)

## TOPS IN MINORS - - - - - By Jack Sords

LISTEN TO THOSE OLD MEN TRYING TO UPSET ME!

FRED IS ONLY 19 YEARS OLD BUT HE HAS THE POISE AND COOLNESS OF A TRIED VETERAN

I HOPE HE'S WORTH IT!

DETROIT PAID SEATTLE \$50,000 AND FOUR PLAYERS FOR HIS CONTRACT

THERE IS ANTHING IN THE MAJORS IT IS A FASTER HARD ONE

IT AWAY HERE YET!

FRED HUTCHINSON, LEADING MINOR LEAGUE PITCHER WITH SEATTLE LAST YEAR, WILL BE GIVEN THE ONCE OVER BY DETROIT AT THEIR SPRING TRAINING CAMP

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