

THE THING ON THE DOORSTEP

Written by

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Based on "The Thing on the Doorstep" by H.P. Lovecraft

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SFX: static, radio tuning, snippet of '30s song, more tuning, static dissolves to:

Dark Adventure Radio THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER

Tales of intrigue, adventure, and the mysterious occult that will stir your imagination and make your very blood run cold.

MUSIC CRESCENDO.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

This is Dark Adventure Radio Theatre, with your host Creighton Cobb. Today's episode: H.P. Lovecraft's "The Thing on the Doorstep".

THEME MUSIC DIMINISHES. A CREEPY AND MALIGN UNDERSCORING CASTING A VERY DARK TONE. Creighton Cobb ushers in the house with a slightly Vincent Price-ian tone.

CREIGHTON COBB

Screams ring out in a madhouse as a man shoots his best friend in cold blood. What drives him to such a desperate act? Greed? Jealousy? Madness? Or a woman? A woman said to have mystical powers, in league with the darkest forces of the cosmos? Is the gunman's testimony the invention of a calculating killer, or is he another victim of a supreme evil that lurks unseen among us?

MUSIC PUNCTUATION

CREIGHTON COBB (CONT'D)

But first, a word from our sponsor.

A few piano notes from the GRIP-U-RYTE JINGLE.

CREIGHTON COBB (CONT'D)

Say, Milt, you're looking fine today. Have you lost a few pounds?

MILT

Looks that way, doesn't it?

CREIGHTON COBB

You bet. You're looking dapper and you've got a spring in your step. And your posture! What's the dope?

MILT

You know, Mr. Cobb, I've found this great new product. I put it on and it keeps me energized and looking great all day.

CREIGHTON COBB

It'd be mighty keen to slenderize and feel invigorated at the same time. What's this product called?

MILT

It's a Grip-U-Ryte.

CREIGHTON COBB

Grip-U-Ryte?

MILT

You've got it! It uses the power of electricity to help a man keep his shape with firm support and gentle stimulation.

CREIGHTON COBB

Electricity? Sounds dangerous.

MILT

Not a bit! This scientifically designed truss gives you the support you need, right in the places where you need it most. And the discreet dry-cell batteries are perfectly safe. Grip-U-Ryte is lightweight and waterproof to boot!

CREIGHTON COBB

I'm convinced. Where can I get one?

MILT

For your free informative booklet, write to Department G, Grip-U-Ryte Medical Supply Company, Box 402, Toledo, Ohio.

CREIGHTON COBB

I'll do it right away!

MILT

Look ten years younger and feel
your manly best with Grip-U-Ryte.
Order yours today!

Dark Adventure LEAD-IN MUSIC.

CREIGHTON COBB

And now, Dark Adventure Radio
Theatre presents H.P. Lovecraft's
"The Thing on the Doorstep".

2

INTERVIEW

2

A busy police station. O'DONNELL, a bluff Arkham police lieutenant, is approached by MADELINE CRENSHAW.

CRENSHAW

Lieutenant O'Donnell?

O'DONNELL

Can I help you, Miss?

CRENSHAW

I'm Madeline Crenshaw. I'm here to
interview the prisoner in the Derby
murder.

O'DONNELL

(a bit patronizingly)

Are you now? You must be that new
lady prosecutor I've heard of.

CRENSHAW

Yes, that's me.

O'DONNELL

Well I suppose it was only a matter
of time. Ever since you gals got
the vote, I expect one of you'll be
president some day.

CRENSHAW

(patiently)

Yes, the world's turned upside
down. Now may I speak with the
prisoner?

O'DONNELL

Look, Miss, I'm sure you're...
qualified, but I don't know if
you're the man for this job. Er,
woman.

CRENSHAW

Why is that, Lieutenant?

O'DONNELL

It's too dangerous. He's half a nut
case!

CRENSHAW

That's why the D.A. sent me to
speak to him. I have training in
psychology. I can handle him. Are
the forensics back yet?

O'DONNELL

Should be here any time. But
listen, Miss....

CRENSHAW

A.D.A. Crenshaw.

O'DONNELL

Yeah sure, but I mean... a lady
shouldn't--

CRENSHAW

If it makes you feel better you can
wait outside the door. I'll let you
know if I need any help.

O'DONNELL

I'll station one of my men in the
room with you.

CRENSHAW

We don't want to spook him,
Lieutenant. To a woman, he'll admit
things that he wouldn't say in
front of another man. Give himself
away. We need to find out how crazy
he really is to head off any kind
of insanity defense.

O'DONNELL

Well... just don't go soft on him.

CRENSHAW

You might be surprised how tough a
woman can be. Let me do my job.

A heavy METAL DOOR SLAMS. Crenshaw enters the room where Daniel Upton awaits. He's a middle aged architect. He is maybe a little edgy.

CRENSHAW (CONT'D)

Mr. Upton, I'm Assistant District Attorney Crenshaw. How do you do?

UPTON

(a little surprised)

Oh, I... Hello. No more policemen?

CRENSHAW

You'll be arraigned tomorrow, and I'm going to ask you some questions. Your answers will determine how we proceed. The best thing you can do is tell me the truth.

UPTON

I didn't kill him, Miss Crenshaw.

CRENSHAW

(as gently as possible)

Mr. Upton, you put six bullets in his head.

UPTON

I was not his murderer. I was his.... He was my best friend.

CRENSHAW

I'm sorry, but that doesn't make much sense.

UPTON

I know it sounds mad, but it's the truth. I never wanted to hurt him.

CRENSHAW

All evidence to the contrary.

UPTON

The evidence? Tell me, what has the D.A.'s office been able to make of Derby's basement, of those footprints, and of that... thing on the doorstep?

CRENSHAW

The men in the police lab are still looking into that.

(MORE)

CRENSHAW (CONT'D)

I'm confident it will have a perfectly rational explanation.

UPTON

Let me tell you the story, and maybe you'll understand *why* I....

CRENSHAW

The whys and wherefores will be considered later, Mr. Upton. Tomorrow we'll be establishing that you murdered Edward Derby.

UPTON

No! No, I avenged him! And in so doing purged the earth of a horror whose survival might have loosed untold terrors on all mankind. There are black zones of shadow close to our daily paths, and now and then some evil soul breaks a passage through. When that happens, the man who knows must strike before reckoning the consequences.

CRENSHAW

But there are consequences, and now is the time of reckoning. Tell me the truth about what happened and I can help you.

UPTON

(a bitter laugh)

You want to help me? I tried to help Edward. From the very first. What you have to understand about Edward is that he had one of the finest minds I've ever known, but a terribly weak will. That's what doomed him, in the end.

A MUSICAL TRANSITION begins.

CRENSHAW

Is that so?

UPTON

Oh yes. He was a phenomenal child scholar. Truly brilliant. I first met him when he was just eight years old. He was an only child, and was privately educated by tutors at the school where I myself was enrolled in the eleventh grade.

(MORE)

UPTON (CONT'D)

Other children were not kind to
him. Not kind at all...

3

BULLIES

3

Crossfade into a schoolyard reminiscence. HOYLE, a twelve-year-old punk, is leading a group of middle-school bullies who are taunting young Edward.

HOYLE

Hey kid, what's yer name?

YOUNG DERBY

Edward. Edward Pickman Derby.

HOYLE

"Edward Pickman Derby!" What are
you supposed to be, some kind of
little prince?

YOUNG DERBY

No. I just---

HOYLE

What are you doing here?
Kindergarten is in that building.

YOUNG DERBY

Studying.

HOYLE

Studying? Studying what?

YOUNG DERBY

Poetry. Mr. Barlow tutors me.

HOYLE

Poetry? This drip's writing love
poems! Gimme that.

Hoyle takes young Edward's books away and starts TURNING THE
PAGES.

YOUNG DERBY

Please don't---

SLAP.

HOYLE

(mockingly)

I'm studying poetry!

He begins to read with difficulty from Edward's notebook.

"One with his fervor shall inform
The world, and one with all his
sorrow:
One sees a glad, unsetting morrow,
One hears the whisper of the worm."

HOOTS & JEERS from the other punks.

HOYLE (CONT'D)
Whispering worms? What are you,
some kind of freak?

PUNK #2
He's freaky, Hoyle!

YOUNG DERBY
Please, give it---

HOYLE
Say it!

YOUNG DERBY
What?

HOYLE
Say you're a freak!

YOUNG DERBY
I... I'm a freak.

The sound of TEARING PAPER as Hoyle rips a page out of Edward's notebook.

HOYLE
Let's see you eat it, you little
freak! Hold him still--

The punks grab young Edward and are about to force the torn page into his mouth when YOUNG UPTON appears.

YOUNG UPTON
Hey! Leave him alone! Get out of
here, Hoyle!

PUNK #2
A high schooler! Let's beat it!

The bullies run away.

HOYLE
(thrown back)
You're both freaks!

YOUNG UPTON
Are you all right?

YOUNG DERBY
(weeping)
They tore my book.

YOUNG UPTON
Here.

The sound of CRUMPLED PAPER BEING SMOOTHED OUT.

YOUNG UPTON (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Fine gold to iron corruptible
I turn, and paradise to hell;
In winding-sheets of cloud and
levin
A dear cadaver I descry;
And build upon the shores of heaven
Towering proud sarcophagi."
Did you write this?

YOUNG DERBY
Uh huh.

YOUNG UPTON
It's... amazing.

YOUNG DERBY
They said I was a freak.

YOUNG UPTON
They're idiots; ignore them.

YOUNG DERBY
But they hit me. Mother will be
very upset. She won't let me come
back.

YOUNG UPTON
You want to come back?

YOUNG DERBY
Of course. I love poetry and art.

YOUNG UPTON
Don't tell anyone, but I love it
too. Your poem reminds me of a
writer named Justin Geoffrey....

YOUNG DERBY
I love his work. Mother says I'm
gifted like him.

YOUNG UPTON

She may be right. Hey, what's your name?

MUSIC transition starts.

YOUNG DERBY

Edward.

YOUNG UPTON

I'm Dan. Nice to meet you.

YOUNG DERBY

Glad to be acquainted with you.

4

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

4

UPTON

Edward and I became the best of friends. We had very similar tastes, but Edward was always smarter than I was. His odd genius developed remarkably. In fact, when he was just eighteen he published a collection of poems - "Azathoth and Other Horrors".

CRENSHAW

That sounds... impressive. I'll stick with Edna St. Vincent Millay.

UPTON

I was going to illustrate Edward's book, but as time went by I turned to architecture and gave up the plans. He lived in his imagination. His over-careful parents made sure that he never travelled alone, made independent decisions, or assumed any real responsibilities. He never learned how to defend himself. He was not up to a life in the business or professional arenas, so it was lucky for him his father was wealthy.

CRENSHAW

Yes, Mr. Derby owned the bank, didn't he? Edward must have been a good friend to have.

UPTON

He was. Edward outgrew me artistically, Miss Crenshaw, but in many ways he remained a boy.

(nostalgically)

We had great discussions in those days, though. I had been through Harvard, studied in a Boston architect's office, married, had a son, and finally returned to Arkham to practice my profession. I had a house on Saltonstall Street. Edward used to call almost every evening.

MUSIC transitions us into another flashback.

UPTON (CONT'D)

He had a characteristic way of ringing the doorbell or sounding the knocker...

5

THE VISIT

5

FADE into SFX of Derby's DISTINCTIVE 3 and 2 KNOCK upon the door of the Upton household, which is ECHOED IN THE MUSIC. We hear Upton as a younger man without the weight of profound horrors weighing on him. His wife, SHIRLEY, is young and delightful. Upton's son EDDY is even younger and more delightful - he's about six.

UPTON

(young and bright)

Shirley, can you get that? It's Edward!

EDDY

(running to the door)

Uncle Edward!

She opens the door. Derby is a shy and rather awkward young man with a soft voice.

SHIRLEY

Good evening, Edward.

EDDY

Hi Uncle Edward!

DERBY

Hello, Eddy! Shirley. I'm not interrupting, catching you at dinner or--

SHIRLEY

No, no. We could set our clocks by you, Edward.

EDDY

Whatcha got there? Is that a storybook for me?

DERBY

Afraid not, champ. This book's for your dad.

EDDY

Aww...

DERBY

But this licorice stick is for you.

EDDY

Thanks, Uncle Edward!

DERBY

(to Shirley)
You don't mind?

SHIRLEY

Since when do I mind? Dan's in the study.

(a practiced question)
Can I bring you a coffee?

DERBY

(his standard response)
I can't say no to that!

DERBY AND SHIRLEY

(a practiced phrase)
Lots of milk, even more sugar.

They LAUGH as they walk into the study.

UPTON

Edward, me lad, how are you tonight?

DERBY

Grand, Dan. I brought over that book I was telling you about last night.

UPTON

The German one?

DERBY

This is just the French translation. Armitage won't let anyone remove the original German edition.

UPTON

Still, *Cultes Anonymes*. I'd imagine this is some heavy reading. Especially in French.

DERBY

There's nothing to it, but von Junzt has some pretty shocking notions of the ability of ritual magic to reshape the fabric of time.

Transition MUSIC starts under, as the dialogue crossfades out:

DERBY (CONT'D)

We tend to think of time as a fixed and linear thing, like an arrow that points in only one direction, but to von Juntz, it's more like a circle, or even a sphere, radiating....

6

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

6

CRENSHAW

Aha - an occult angle! I can't say I'm surprised. Arkham seems to get more than its share--

UPTON

No, no, no, you're getting ahead of yourself. These were only *theoretical* discussions of conceptual metaphysics. I found Edward an inexhaustible mine of fascinating philosophies. And he relied on me for advice in more practical matters he did not wish to refer to his parents....

CRENSHAW

Mmm. Do you mean women?

UPTON

(embarrassed)
Well....

CRENSHAW

It's quite all right. Why do men have such difficulty talking about women? You can tell me.

UPTON

Well, Edward hoped to find the right girl and marry one day, but he was terribly shy and awkward, and his parents were overly protective. Shortly after the war, Edward's mother died. He must have been about thirty-four at the time and he took it hard.

CRENSHAW

They say a boy's best friend is his mother.

Ominous, titillating MUSIC begins under:

UPTON

Perhaps. After her death he seemed to feel a sort of grotesque exhilaration, as if released from some unseen bondage. Edward began to mingle in the more "advanced" college set at Miskatonic. Let me see now... Edward was thirty-eight when he met Asenath. She was about twenty-three at the time.

CRENSHAW

She was one of these college bohemians?

UPTON

She was a student of medieval metaphysics and a key figure in their social circle. They were introduced by a mutual friend.

CRENSHAW

Who's that?

UPTON

Darla Kent. She was an aspiring pseudo-occultist and she took Edward to one of their gatherings one night....

MUSIC continues into transition.

7

PARTY GOERS

7

Fade up on Derby and DARLA walking together across the M.U. campus. Darla is a bubbly coed who hangs with the metaphysical crowd purely to meet exciting boys.

DARLA

(laughing)

....so I told her I'd just gotten it back from the Chinese laundry!

DERBY

Ha! You can chase the dragon all you want, I guess. It's catching him you have to worry about!

DARLA

Part of the price to undergo a truly transformational process, Ned. But tonight there's someone you just *have* to meet! She's fabulous!

DERBY

Who's this?

DARLA

Her name is Asenath. Asenath Waite.

DERBY

Waite... She's not from Arkham?

DARLA

No, no. She's... oh, I don't know if I should say.

DERBY

Out with it.

DARLA

She's an Innsmouth girl.

DERBY

(repulsed and intrigued)

Really?

DARLA

(eager to share the scandal)

Yes. I've heard stories about Innsmouth and its people. Jasper told me horrible things happened there back in 1850. He says they have their own secret church.

(MORE)

DARLA (CONT'D)

And there's talk of something "not quite human" in the old Innsmouth families, and--

DERBY

Please, Darla, I'm not a tourist. I know the town's reputation.

DARLA

But Asenath's not like that at all. There's more to her. Lots more.

DERBY

Such as?

DARLA

Her father - old Ephraim Waite. Here, let's cut across campus behind the library.

Distant DOGS BARK about the time she mentions his name.

DERBY

The name sounds familiar, but--

DARLA

He was old when she was born. She grew up in this crumbling old mansion. They say he was very accomplished in the metaphysical arts. He could raise or quell storms at sea whenever he wanted! I wish I could do that.

DERBY

I remember now! I saw him once or twice in the library. Professor Armitage said he'd come to consult some of the more obscure volumes in the special collection. Wolfish face, iron gray beard?

DARLA

Oh yes. I wish I could have met him. Asenath says he was a great man.

DERBY

What became of him? I haven't seen him for--

DARLA

Oh, no, he died. Insane! Just before Asenath entered the Hall School in Kingsport. She showed me a picture of him. You could see she's his daughter all right!

DERBY

Hm, that doesn't sound promising. And surely I'm too old for her.

DARLA

Don't you want to deepen your mastery of mystical forces?

DERBY

Yes, so?

DARLA

Asenath is a true magician. The real McCoy. Oh, she's fabulous. She can raise thunderstorms at will. She can! I've seen her do it!

DERBY

Hmph.

DARLA

Animals don't like her, but she can make any dog howl just by moving her right hand in a certain way.

DERBY

That hardly makes her Madame Blavatsky.

DARLA

No, no, there's more. She used to shock me and the other girls at school.

DERBY

How?

DARLA

We'd be talking and she'd suddenly blurt out something in Greek. Or Arabic or some other language. Ned, these weren't languages she'd ever studied. She just *knew* things.

DERBY

That is odd.

DARLA

There were other times, she'd...
(sotto voce)
Look at me and the other girls.
She'd leer like some kind of dirty
old man.

DERBY

Oh my.

DARLA

If we'd say something to her, she'd
just make this obscene little
laugh...

DERBY

I'm not sure she's the girl for
me...

DARLA

But Ned, she's a mesmerist! Not
like a stage show or something.
It's like she can look at you and
her mind and yours, well... Oh,
here we are. Ready?

DERBY

I'm not quite sure I am, after that
setup.

DARLA

Relax. You'll hit on all sixes.

8

BOY MEETS GIRL

8

The DOOR OPENS and they enter a Bohemian soiree of aspiring
Miskatonic occultists. A gramophone plays WEIRD JAZZ.
GREETINGS are flung out to Darla and Derby.

DARLA

Hello, everyone! We're here!

Lots of feisty and obscure AD LIBS ring out. Cocktails and
hash pipes are passed around.

DARLA (CONT'D)

This way, Neddy.
(to Asenath)
Asenath! There you are! I should
have known I'd find you on the
chaise...

Asenath's tone and manner are sensuous, alluring and slightly masculine. She's quite literally not like other girls.

ASENATH

Darla, my precious. Mmm, tell me, who is this cake-eater you've brought me?

DERBY

Oh, gee...

DARLA

May I introduce Edward Derby.

DERBY

(a nervous effort at suave)
Enchanté, mademoiselle.

ASENATH

Oooh, vous parlez Français, pensez-vous?

DERBY

Pas parfaitement, mais assez bien pour embrouiller mon chemin à travers de Voltaire sans un dictionnaire.

ASENATH

C'est joli. Lire quoi que ce soit plus difficile?

DERBY

J'ai trouvé Cultes des Goules du Comte d'Erlette très impressionnant.

ASENATH

Vraiment? Darla, he's adorable. I could just eat him up.

DARLA

Well, I've got to go see a man about a dog....

(whispering to Edward)
Good luck.

ASENATH

Yes, do. Edward, sit here with me.

DERBY

Oh, maybe I should--

ASENATH
(a command)
Sit.

Musical STING and transition goes under.

9 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

9

UPTON
She had a hold on him from the moment they met, Miss Crenshaw. He rushed to tell me about her the next morning....

10 SMITTEN

10

Edward knocks at the Upton's door with his characteristic stroke and then comes bounding through.

DERBY
I've just met the most wonderful girl. I think I'm in love!

UPTON
Love? That was fast.

DERBY
I've never met anyone like her. She's smart and intense and oh, her eyes. The way she looks at me. I'm babbling, aren't I? I can't help it, Dan. So Darla took me to this party and I met Asenath. She hypnotized me. Literally! It was amazing!

UPTON
Hypnotized?

DERBY
We stood across the room from each other and she'd stare at me and the next thing I knew it was like I left my body. Like I was looking across the room and seeing myself! Me! It was exhilarating. You should have been there! She's just...

UPTON
Sounds like she's something else.

DERBY

We talked and talked and talked, straight through 'til morning. I've never known a girl like her. She's explaining her theories of the independence of consciousness and the life process from the physical frame. She railed about not being a man since, as she put it, "the male brain has certain unique and far reaching cosmic powers". She said that if given a man's brain, she could not only equal but surpass her father's mastery of unknown forces. Can you believe it?

UPTON

(troubled)

She sounds like quite a catch. You taking her home to meet your father?

DERBY

Well, no, not just yet... you know how he's like. Be a sport and don't mention it to him just yet, will you?

Transition music starts under.

11 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

11

UPTON

For the next few weeks I heard of little else other than Asenath.

CRENSHAW

You yourself didn't know this woman?

UPTON

No, but Edward was keen to remedy that.

12 GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

12

SHIRLEY

Here they come!

We hear Edward's familiar KNOCK on the Uptons' door. Young Eddy is older now - about ten.

UPTON
I'll get it. Everyone ready?

SHIRLEY
How exciting.

EDDY
I guess.

UPTON
Eddy, be polite.

The door opens.

UPTON (CONT'D)
Edward! Always a pleasure.

DERBY
Hello Dan. May I present Asenath
Waite?

UPTON
So happy to meet you, Miss Waite.

ASENATH
You may call me Asenath.

UPTON
Well come in, come in. Asenath,
this is my wife, Shirley...

SHIRLEY
Welcome to our home.

ASENATH
How do you do?

UPTON
And our son, Eddy.

EDDY
(reluctantly)
Hello.

ASENATH
Very nice to meet you, young man.
Edward has told me so much about
you all.

SHIRLEY
Has he? Good things, I hope.

ASENATH
(slightly creepy)
Oh, he tells me everything.

DERBY
Only good things to tell here.

ASENATH
(sharply)
The wine, Edward.

DERBY
Oh yes, we brought you a bottle of
wine.

SHIRLEY
Oh my!

UPTON
You shouldn't have!

ASENATH
Don't tell me you're worried about
Prohibition. It's just too tedious.

SHIRLEY
(flustered)
Here, let me take that into the
kitchen. I can't remember the last
time I saw the corkscrew....

MUSIC transition starts.

UPTON
Eddy, why don't you show our guests
into the parlor? Eddy?

EDDY
It's this way...

13 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

13

UPTON
We tried to enjoy Miss Waite's
company, but something about her
was disquieting. My wife and son
and I couldn't quite place it....

14 DISHING

14

Dan and Shirley are cleaning up after the dinner party.

EDDY

Miss Waite was creepy.

UPTON

Eddy, that's not a nice thing to say!

SHIRLEY

No. But it's not wrong either.

EDDY

What's the matter with her eyes? They're so... buggy.

UPTON

Well, son, a lot of folks from Innsmouth have that look to them. Not their fault.

SHIRLEY

And the crow's feet. Did you notice? I'd swear she looked older than Edward does. She is younger, isn't she?

UPTON

By fifteen years.

SHIRLEY

Hm. I wonder what he sees in her?

UPTON

His mother.

Shirley stifles a laugh.

EDDY

What does that mean?

SHIRLEY

Nothing, dear. Your father's being silly.

UPTON

At least she seems every bit as smitten as he is.

SHIRLEY

There's an understatement. Did you see the way she looked at him? She's got her hooks deep into him, like some kind of predator.

Transition MUSIC starts under.

UPTON

You're right dear, I don't think she's going to let him go. But, if they're happy together...

SHIRLEY

I don't think happy is the right word for those two.

15 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

15

UPTON

Soon afterward I had a surprise visit from Edward's father.

16 PARENTAL GUIDANCE

16

We join Edward's father, REGINALD DERBY, a patrician in his 60s, mid-conversation with Upton in his study. MUSIC crossfades into dialogue:

REGINALD DERBY

... with the lad and felt you were the sort of man I could turn to for help.

UPTON

I'm flattered, sir, but I don't quite follow you.

REGINALD DERBY

You needn't be coy with me, Daniel. I know all about the girl. I wormed the truth about their "friendship" out of the boy. I'd like to ask your help in getting him to break off this ill-advised affair before it's too late.

UPTON

I'm not sure I could, sir, you know what young love is like.

REGINALD DERBY

Young! He respects you, Daniel. You've always held a great deal of influence over him.

UPTON

Maybe not as much as you imagine...

REGINALD DERBY

My people tell me he's been looking at houses out in the suburbs. That can only mean one thing. We've got to act fast.

UPTON

Mr. Derby, if you'll forgive my saying it, Edward's always needed a strong figure in his life. Until she passed, your wife filled that role. Now... I fear it's Asenath.

REGINALD DERBY

(with a sigh)

He never did have much of a spine, try though I might to get him to buck up.

UPTON

I think it's just his nature, sir. And now, it's not just a question of Edward's weakness; Asenath is strong willed. If we push too hard against them, I fear we'll only drive Edward away from us. Infatuation thrives on opposition.

Transition music starts under, tinged with regret.

REGINALD DERBY

(saddened)

I suppose you're right. I just never imagined my family ever united with... *that* kind of family.

17

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

17

CRENSHAW

Mr. Derby objected to their... poverty?

UPTON

No, Asenath had a fortune of her own.

CRENSHAW

Then what was his problem?

UPTON

I had always respected Mr. Derby, but he held some rather prejudicial views.

(MORE)

UPTON (CONT'D)

I wonder sometimes what would have happened if he had prevented the marriage....

CRENSHAW

Hmmm. You had strong feelings about Asenath....

Transition music starts under:

UPTON

She had bought the old Crowninshield place in the country at the end of High Street, and they settled there after a short trip to Innsmouth. We had feared she might take Edward back there to live, but fortunately, she had a strong desire to be near the college, its library, and its crowd of "sophisticates". I didn't see Edward again until a short time after the honeymoon.

18

HONEYMOON'S OVER

18

Transition music segues into Derby's characteristic KNOCK on the door.

UPTON

Edward! How's married life treating you?

DERBY

(with difficulty)
It's been quite a change.

UPTON

I see you've shaved off your moustache.

DERBY

Oh, that. Yes, Asenath didn't like it.

UPTON

Well, I never thought it suited you. Are you all right? You look pensive.

DERBY

(tinged with depression)
Oh yes. I'm quite well.

UPTON

Asenath couldn't join you today?

DERBY

Oh heavens, no. She's overseeing some of the restoration work at the new house. We brought back a vast store of books and apparatus.

UPTON

I see! And did I hear you brought back some servants as well?

DERBY

(uneasy)

Yes, three, if you can imagine. I don't much care for them. There's this ancient couple who had worked for old Ephraim. And Asenath has this swarthy young wench... she's very strange looking. I try not to get near her - she's literally rather "fishy".

UPTON

(bemused)

Oh, dear me. Well, it's good to have you back in Arkham.

DERBY

Anything is better than being in...
(with a shudder)
Innsmouth.

UPTON

Well, it was your honeymoon. I'm sure you--

DERBY

(genuinely reviled by the
recollection)

Oh, Dan. *That...* it was... well, it wasn't at all like I was expecting. She was...

UPTON

(awkward)

Oh. Well. With time, it'll be... You stayed at her old family home there?

DERBY

It was genuinely disgusting. But there were certain objects there that taught me surprising things.

UPTON

What kind of things?

DERBY

I've made huge strides in my understanding of esoteric lore with Asenath's guidance. Whatever else she is, she's a gifted scholar. She's proposed some experiments that are... well, let's say very daring and radical.

MUSIC transition begins under:

UPTON

Well that's intriguing. What kind of--

DERBY

I... shouldn't say. No, I mustn't. But her powers are real, that I can assure you. Very real.

THRILLING and OMINOUS STING.

19

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

19

UPTON

I began to see less and less of Edward. Weeks might slip by without the familiar three-and-two strokes at the front door; and when he did call he rarely mentioned his occult studies and preferred not to talk of his wife at all. Apparently she had aged tremendously since the wedding.

CRENSHAW

She wouldn't be the first to let go of the rouge and lipstick after marriage. It can be quite tiring.

UPTON

No, it wasn't that. Her face held the most determined expression I had ever seen, and her whole aspect became increasingly... exotic.

Transition MUSIC begins under:

UPTON (CONT'D)

But after the first year, the
change people were talking about
was the one in Edward himself....

20

DINNER TALK

20

The Uptons sit around the dinner table. Eddy's now about
twelve.

SHIRLEY

Dan, do you know who I saw when I
went to the store today? Edward
Derby.

UPTON

Ah. He hasn't been round for a
while now.

SHIRLEY

Marriage has certainly changed him.
Remember how he used to tell us his
weak nerves would never allow him
to drive a car? Today I saw him
tear out of the Crowninshield
driveway in Asenath's Packard like
some kind of race driver.

UPTON

Really? I didn't think he even knew
how to drive. I saw him last week
sprawled on the rear seat of the
car and being driven by a
chauffeur.

SHIRLEY

Sometimes I see him and he's so
intense and focused, just like her.

UPTON

Maybe it's good for him. Maybe he's
finally turning into an adult.

EDDY

He seems sad to me.

SHIRLEY

What do you mean, dear?

EDDY

I don't know. When he came over last month he seemed like he'd just heard bad news or something. Or like he just saw something he knew he couldn't have.

SHIRLEY

Oh, Eddy.

EDDY

He used to be fun. If that's what it means to grow up - I don't want to.

Transition music under:

21 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS 21

UPTON

At about this time Edward did get some bad news. He stopped by one day, in a very agitated mood....

22 CONDOLENCES 22

The familiar DERBY-KNOCK again sounds on the Upton's door. Dan opens it.

UPTON

Hello, Edward, I didn't expect... what's wrong? Here, come in.

Edward enters. He is very upset.

UPTON (CONT'D)

Is everything all right?

DERBY

My father. He... he's dead, Dan.

UPTON

Edward, I'm so sorry. Here, sit down. How did it happen?

DERBY

They think it was a stroke. I haven't... I hadn't seen much of him since the wedding.

UPTON

Oh, Edward, I'm sorry. Why not?

DERBY

He didn't care for Asenath and she couldn't abide him, so... She wants me all to herself. It's gone too far.

UPTON

Too far? Sorry, I don't follow--

DERBY

Asenath.

(mumbling)

I need to regain my identity. She's taken it too far.

UPTON

Asenath? Edward, is this something with the hypnotism? You told me she could--

DERBY

I can't explain it all now - it's complicated. Some other time.

UPTON

Any time you like.

DERBY

I want to move back home, to my father's house. But she won't go. She insists on Crowninshield because of *her* father.

UPTON

Her father? But he's been dead for--

DERBY

(suddenly frightened)

I'm sorry I troubled you Dan. I have to... get back now.

UPTON

Edward, please don't--

Transition music starts under.

DERBY

Thank you. Maybe we can have that talk later. I have to-- goodbye.

23 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

23

UPTON

Not long afterward my wife heard a curious thing from a friend -- one of the few who had not dropped the Derbys.

24 GOSSIP

24

In a department store. MYRTLE approaches.

MYRTLE

Shirley Upton! You're looking well.

SHIRLEY

Hello Myrtle. I love that jacket on you.

MYRTLE

Oh thanks. Shirley, you know I'm not one to gossip, but I saw the strangest thing Thursday.

SHIRLEY

Oh, what's that?

MYRTLE

I went out to the end of High Street to call on the Derbys, you know.

SHIRLEY

Oh, aren't you brave!

MYRTLE

Well what do I see but the Packard flying out of their driveway, and it's Edward behind the wheel and he's got this crazed sneer on his face.

SHIRLEY

I know the look you mean.

MYRTLE

So I ring at the door and the maid answers that Asenath was also out.

SHIRLEY

Oh, that maid - a face like a halibut.

MYRTLE

Isn't that the truth! Anyway, I turn to leave when I happened to look up into the library window. And I see this face just about hiding behind a curtain.

SHIRLEY

You didn't! A face?

MYRTLE

I should hope to tell you. And it had the saddest expression. Just defeated and forlorn. It was tragic.

SHIRLEY

Who was it?

MYRTLE

Well that's the thing. It was Asenath!

SHIRLEY

It was not!

MYRTLE

It was Asenath Waite, as sure as I'm standing here!

SHIRLEY

Well that's a switch. I can't imagine it! I've never seen her without a scowl of determination.

MYRTLE

It seems like maybe old Edward finally laid down the law. About time he stood up to her, if you ask me.

SHIRLEY

Hmmm. Maybe.

MYRTLE

I certainly don't wish her ill, but I'd say Asenath had it coming. The way she treats him?

SHIRLEY

Yes... Poor thing.

MYRTLE

I wonder where Edward was off to.
You don't suppose there's...
another woman, do you?

Transition MUSIC starts under:

SHIRLEY

Another woman? Oh, I doubt it. He
can't even manage one.

25

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

25

CRENSHAW

Married couples have their
problems, Mr. Upton. Surely you
know that from your own marriage?

UPTON

I'm devoted to my wife.

CRENSHAW

Of course. But perhaps you were
upset at the way Derby treated his?

UPTON

Maybe Edward had asserted some
independence from Asenath, because
he began to drop by more
frequently. He was eager to share
secrets of the occult revelations
he was experiencing.

CRENSHAW

(more to herself)
Only in Arkham.

UPTON

What he said was not to be
believed, even here. He talked of
dark lore with a sincerity which
made me fear for his sanity. He
muttered about terrible meetings in
lonely places, of some kind of
ruins in the heart of the Maine
woods, with staircases leading
down, and complex angles that led
to other regions of space and time.
Edward talked like it was all real.

Transition music starts under:

CRENSHAW

Did you think he was going mad?

UPTON

It crossed my mind.

26

CRAZY TALK

26

FADE IN ON the boys in Upton's study.

DERBY

...permutations of invisible walls,
puncturing the space-time continua.

UPTON

Edward, these things... They're
pretty incredible.

DERBY

You think I'm making this up, Dan?
You think I could?

UPTON

I don't know. But "invisible walls"
and "space-time punctures"....
You've got to admit it sounds a bit-

DERBY

Loony? Is that what you think? Then
tell me, Dan, what do you make of
this?

MUSICAL STING.

UPTON

Good god! What is that thing?

DERBY

Take it. Hold it and feel it for
yourself!

UPTON

Is it some kind of... crystal? It
doesn't seem natural.

DERBY

You tell me.

UPTON

The color, it's.... I don't know
what it is. It seems to shift in
the light. And the texture.

(MORE)

UPTON (CONT'D)

It looks like it should be firm,
but it... the corners seem to fold
away from themselves.

DERBY

See what I mean? It's real Dan. As
real as the thing in your hand.

UPTON

But what is it? What is it for?

DERBY

I'm damned if I know.

UPTON

Where'd it come from?

DERBY

From the Outside. And Asenath knows
how to get them.

UPTON

The Outside?

DERBY

She brought it back with her. Her
father knows too.

UPTON

Ed, her father's been dead now for--

DERBY

(with intensity)

Is he? I'm not so sure.

UPTON

What do you mean?

DERBY

Dan, if we break down the vital
spiritual resonances of a man
through non-temporal self-
projection, death becomes a
suspension of only--

He stops suddenly. Pause.

UPTON

Ed?

DERBY

Shhhh! I think she can hear me.

UPTON

Asenath? She's not here, Ed.

DERBY

She doesn't have to be! It's like a telepathic mesmerism. From longer and longer distances. I don't understand it, but she knows I meet with you and tell you things and she doesn't like it. Somehow she can clog up my motions or force me to forget my destination. I've found myself in some very strange places. I can usually only make it over here to see you when she's away in her own body.

Foreboding MUSIC starts under.

UPTON

What does that mean?

DERBY

She hasn't done anything drastic yet, Dan, but she might. I mean she could. She will.

27

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

27

CRENSHAW

Wait a minute. You're saying Ephraim Waite is still alive?

UPTON

Edward believed he was. Somehow.

CRENSHAW

And that he was pulling the strings from some secret hiding place?

UPTON

At last we're getting to the heart of the matter, Miss Crenshaw.

CRENSHAW

Well, please do go on. Tell me how.

UPTON

Things really changed the day I got the telegram from Maine.

CRENSHAW

What did it say?

UPTON

The town marshal of Chesuncook
wired telling of a madman who
stumbled out of the woods and
screamed to me for protection. It
was Edward.

CRENSHAW

Chesuncook? I've never heard of it.

Transition music starts under:

UPTON

I hadn't either. It's close to the
wildest, deepest and least explored
forest belt in Maine. It took me a
whole day to drive there. I found
Edward in a cell at the town
farm....

28

CHESUNCOOK FARM

28

Edward can be heard RAMBLING INCOHERENTLY in the background,
calling out for Upton.

MARSHAL

Mr. Daniel Upton? This Derby is a
friend of yours?

UPTON

Yes, marshal, he is.

MARSHAL

I'd say he's been at the embalming
fluid. I didn't think a man could
get that drunk....

UPTON

He's been under some stress.

MARSHAL

Yeah, sure. Sign here.

UPTON

(signing a form)
Thank you. He's not being charged
with anything?

MARSHAL

Not this time.

UPTON

I understand. Thank you. It's getting dark. Is there some local inn where we can stay the night before I take him home?

MARSHAL

You can try Grover's out Millinocket way. But I want you both headed south by sun-up. Is that clear enough?

UPTON

Yes, absolutely.

MARSHAL

Come on, he's back here.

29 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

29

SFX underneath: Derby muttering, the sound of a jail cell being unlocked, the door creaking open, a car driving away.

UPTON

He was in bad shape. I took custody of him and booked us a room for the night. He vacillated between frenzy and apathy in the car, but at the inn....

30 STARK RAVING

30

As Edward tells his tale, a dreamy SOUNDSCAPE OF HORRORS underscored with SCARY MUSIC colors the telling.

DERBY

Dan, for God's sake! The pit of the shoggoths! Down the six thousand steps... the abomination... I never would let her take me, and then I found myself there - Ia! Shub-Niggurath! - The shape rose up from the altar, and there were five hundred that howled - The Hooded Thing bleated 'Kamog!

(MORE)

DERBY (CONT'D)

Kamog!' - that was old Ephraim's secret name in the coven - I was *there* - in the place of utter blasphemy, where the black realm begins and the watcher guards the gate - I can't stand it - I'll kill her if she ever sends me there again - I'll kill that entity - her, him, it - I'll kill it! I'll kill it with my own hands!

UPTON

Easy now, Ed. No one's killing anyone. It's me. You're here with me.

DERBY

Dan. Yes, it's you. Of course. Dan - I can't go on like this. It's too much, far too much.

UPTON

You don't need to worry now. We'll spend the night here. Tomorrow we'll make the drive back to Arkham.

DERBY

(exhausted)

Arkham... no, Dan, don't make me go back. Not to her.

UPTON

Don't worry. You can stay with us if you like. She can't get you there.

DERBY

Thank you, Dan. If only that were true.

UPTON

It was strange. Frightening really. But the following day we set off for Arkham. His fury spent, he was very quiet. It seemed Asenath had subjected him to some kind of hypnotic ordeal which was now fueling bizarre delusions.

(MORE)

UPTON (CONT'D)

Eventually he nodded off and I drove on, thinking I could help him secure a divorce, as it seemed his marriage was a kind of mental suicide for him.

We hear the sound of the automobile and snippets of Edward rambling and muttering in his sleep.

UPTON (CONT'D)

During our drive Derby's muttering commenced again, until finally he awoke in fear.

Transition music continues under:

32

CAR RIDE

32

The automobile motors down the parkway. The more he talks, the more unhinged Derby becomes.

DERBY

(jolting awake)

Where are we?

UPTON

Passing Portland. More than halfway home, Edward. How are you doing?

DERBY

Halfway back to that nightmare.

UPTON

You'll be all right, Ed. We'll figure it out.

DERBY

Hah. She's only tightening her hold. One day she won't let go. Even now she only lets go when she has to.

UPTON

What?

DERBY

She's getting stronger, Dan.

UPTON

Why did you go to Maine? Is old Ephraim hiding in the--

DERBY

I didn't go to Maine! She did! She can take hold of my body. She can crowd me out of my own brain, taking over my body and leaving me behind in hers.

UPTON

Edward, that's--

DERBY

She leaves me locked upstairs while she goes to nameless places, and does unspeakable things! But she can't always hold on, and suddenly I'm there! Stranded in some unknown far-off place with that damned car. Time and again I've had to find my way home from God knows where.

UPTON

It was her driving the Packard...?

DERBY

She's holding onto me longer and longer at a time. She wants to be a man, do you see? And to be... fully human!

UPTON

What do you mean, fully human?

DERBY

You've heard the stories about Innsmouth, Dan. That men there had trafficked with things from the sea to gain eternal life?

UPTON

Yes, but those are just--

DERBY

They're true. Old Ephraim knew the secret and he did a hideous thing to live forever. He took a... wife. Asenath's "mother".

UPTON

Are you saying the old man had--

DERBY

... I called it black magic and she just laughs.

(MORE)

DERBY (CONT'D)

But it is magic, Dan, she's tinkering with the forces of nature. It's Ephraim really, he's a thousand times worse than you could suspect.

UPTON

I'm sure he is, Edward.

DERBY

No, I'm not some child, dammit! I've looked upon the *Pnakotic Manuscript*, I've seen the unholy things it can call up. I've gazed into the pits of black N'kai and things -- horrid things -- have looked upon me. I will show you - a revelation that proves it's all true! Ghormeth! Alhazred knew!

UPTON

Show me, Edward. I want to know.

DERBY

You saw him, right? The wild eyes... His glare!

UPTON

I did. I saw old Ephraim at the library once or--

DERBY

Now she glares that way at me and I know why. It wasn't supposed to be a daughter. He had to find another way. He found the formula in the *Necronomicon*.

UPTON

Right.

DERBY

On, on, on, on -- body to body to body -- never dying. He knows how to break the link... life can flicker on a while even when the body is dead. As long as it lasts.... I could hint at things--

UPTON

No hints; just tell me!

DERBY

I can't just tell you! You have to see it for yourself. It's no good!

UPTON

I agree, Asenath's no good for you--

DERBY

Asenath -- ha, is there such a person?

UPTON

Ed--

DERBY

Why did they think there might have been poison in old Ephraim's stomach?

UPTON

What? Poison?

DERBY

They whisper about the way he shrieked when he went mad and Asenath locked him up in the padded attic room where -- the *other* -- had been? Do you get it, Dan?

UPTON

No!

DERBY

Was it old Ephraim's soul that was locked in? Who locked in whom? Why had he been looking for months for someone with a fine mind and a weak will? Stalking the students like a ghoul. Why did he curse that his daughter wasn't a son? Tell me!

UPTON

I...

DERBY

What diabolic exchange was perpetrated in that house of horror upon his trusting, weak-willed half-human child? Dan, you've got to--

MUSICAL STING and transition under:

Edward stops speaking abruptly. The car drives on through an unnerving silence.

33 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

33

UPTON

Edward's voice suddenly shut off with an almost mechanical click. I thought of those other occasions at my home when his confidences had abruptly ceased. When I had half-fancied that some telepathic wave of Asenath's mental force was silencing him. But this was something altogether different -- and infinitely more horrible. The face beside me was twisted almost unrecognizably while a shivering motion passed through his body -- as if all the bones, organs, muscles, and nerves were adjusting themselves to a radically different posture.

TRANSITION MUSIC starts and BED continues under:

CRENSHAW

He had a seizure. Wood alcohol--

UPTON

It was nothing like that! Yet, it wasn't the spasm that was so disturbing. It was what came after....

34 CAR RIDE - CONTINUOUS

34

When Edward speaks, his manner is fully changed. A lower voice, confident, assertive and terrifying.

DERBY

Pull over. I'm going to drive.

UPTON

Edward, are you--

DERBY

(a command)

Pull over, Upton.

UPTON

Um... very well.

DERBY

Now!

35 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

35

SFX under: we hear the car pull over and doors close as Dan and Edward switch positions. Edward drives fast. MUSIC BED continues.

UPTON

It seemed incredible that listless Edward Derby -- he who could never assert himself, and who had never learned to drive -- should be ordering me about and taking the wheel of my own car, yet that was precisely what happened. He did not speak for some time, and in my inexplicable horror I was glad he did not.

There swept over me such a swamping wave of sickness and repulsion -- such a petrifying sense of utter alienage and abnormality -- that my confidence in reality itself grew feeble and uncertain. The figure beside me seemed less like a lifelong friend than like some monstrous intrusion from outer space.

In the lights of Biddeford and Saco I saw his firmly set mouth and blazing eyes. I thought I might be imagining it, but I saw a hint of his wife in those eyes, and more than a suggestion of old Ephraim in his expression.

He did not speak until we were on a dark stretch of road....

36 CAR RIDE - CONTINUOUS

36

DERBY

I hope you'll forget my attack back there, Upton. You know what my nerves are, and I guess you can excuse such things. I'm enormously grateful, of course, for this lift home.

UPTON

Of course. You do seem... better.

DERBY

And you must forget any crazy things I may have been saying about my wife - and about things in general. That's what comes from overstudy in a field like mine. My philosophy is full of bizarre concepts, and when the mind gets worn out it cooks up all sorts of imaginary concrete applications.

UPTON

I understand.

DERBY

(bemused)

You do, do you? I think I need a holiday. You probably won't see me for some time, and you needn't blame Asenath for it.

UPTON

Of course not.

DERBY

This trip to Maine was a bit queer, but it's really very simple. There are certain Indian relics in the north wood -- standing stones, and all that -- which mean a good deal in folklore, and Asenath and I are following that stuff up. It was a hard search, and I seem to have gone off my head. I'll send for the car when I get home. A month's relaxation will put me on my feet.

UPTON

I all but babbled my responses, I'm sure, for the baffling change in my friend filled all my consciousness. With every moment my indefinable feelings of horror increased, till at length I was desperate for the end of the drive. Edward did not offer to relinquish the wheel, and I was glad of the speed with which he drove my car.

CRENSHAW

And he drove you back to Arkham?

UPTON

He did. We arrived before midnight,
and found the lights still on at
the old Crowninshield house....

38 CAR RIDE - FINALE

38

Upton's CAR SKIDS to a stop in the gravel driveway of
Crowninshield. They get out of the car and Edward steps
towards the door.

DERBY

(brusque and creepy)

Upton, thank you again for the
lift. I regret the inconvenience.

UPTON

Don't mention it.

DERBY

No, let's not.

Edward walks to his front door and Dan gets back in the car.

39 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

39

UPTON

I drove home alone with a curious
feeling of relief. Although
Edward's personality seemed to have
changed before my eyes, at least he
had stopped spouting paranoid
madness. I... I didn't know what to
think.

CRENSHAW

Did you ever think maybe you should
get out of it, and stay out?

MUSIC transition starts.

UPTON

If I did, Miss Crenshaw, it
wouldn't have mattered. Edward came
back to me. It was perhaps two
months later, we were having dinner
at home....

40

NOT LIKE OLD TIMES

40

The Uptons enjoy their evening supper. Eddy's now around thirteen.

EDDY

... but I haven't seen him.

SHIRLEY

Well I have. Twice now. Speeding about in Asenath's car, hellbent on some mission.

UPTON

What about her? Do you ever see her around town?

SHIRLEY

Asenath? Not any more. Myrtle tells me she's scarcely ever in to her callers.

There's a sudden knock at the door. It's not Edward's traditional three and two, but a VERY ASSERTIVE POUNDING.

UPTON

Who could that be?

EDDY

(jumping up)
I'll get it.

He runs to the DOOR and OPENS it up. MUSIC transition ends with the ECHO OF THE TRADITIONAL DERBY KNOCK.

EDDY (CONT'D)

(alarmed)
Uncle Edward! We were just talking...
(he shouts)
It's Uncle Edward!

DERBY

(in full-on creepy mode)
Where's your father, boy?

UPTON

Right here, Edward. This is a surprise. We haven't seen you for--

DERBY

You have some of my books. I require them.

UPTON

Oh. Of course. I'll be right back.

SHIRLEY

Good evening, Edward. We're just finishing up supper. Can I bring you a coffee?

DERBY

Coffee? I think not, thank you.

SHIRLEY

Oh... Are you sure?

DERBY

(after a pause)

Yes.

EDDY

How come you didn't do your regular knock? On the door?

Dan RETURNS with Edward's books.

UPTON

Never mind about that, Eddy. Here you are, Edward.

DERBY

Thank you. I should go.

He OPENS THE DOOR.

UPTON

Ah, I see you were able to get Asenath's car back. From Maine?

DERBY

I did. Good evening to you all.

The DOOR CLOSES behind him. TRANSITION MUSIC starts under.

EDDY

Dad, what's wrong with Uncle Edward?

UPTON

I don't know, son. I really don't know.

41 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

41

CRENSHAW

So there were others who witnessed this change? It wasn't just you?

UPTON

Heavens no. Everyone saw it. Rumors were everywhere.

CRENSHAW

What kind of rumors?

UPTON

That fall Derby was away for a week. His friend Darla told me he'd gone to New York to meet with a notorious British cult leader.

CRENSHAW

You don't mean Aleister Crowley?

UPTON

You've heard of him?

CRENSHAW

Everyone's heard of him. His visit was in all the newspapers.

UPTON

Then Myrtle Crane told my wife she'd heard sobbing coming from the old Crowninshield house and it sounded like Asenath.

Transition MUSIC starts under.

CRENSHAW

Hmmm.

UPTON

So my wife paid a call.

42 HOUSE CALL

42

Shirley walks across the gravel drive to the front door of Crowninshield. She KNOCKS. The DOOR OPENS.

ASENATH

Hello?

SHIRLEY

Asenath, you startled me.

ASENATH

Why would that be? It was you who
knocked at my door.

SHIRLEY

Yes, well, it's just I'd heard that
you'd been unwell. I brought you
some jam.

ASENATH

Jam? Most kind of you.

SHIRLEY

It's nothing. I'd heard... a friend
mentioned she'd passed by and
heard... sounds from inside and
thought perhaps you were...

ASENATH

(darkly)

Unwell? No, no, I'm fine.

(slightly overdoing it)

Oh, I know! I did have a friend up
from Boston. She was always prone
to be a bit hysterical and I'm
afraid she suffered a nervous
breakdown while she was with us.

SHIRLEY

That's terrible. Is she all right?

ASENATH

Oh yes, she just didn't have the
constitution for the journey. You
know how women are.

SHIRLEY

(flummoxed)

Yes. I rather suppose I do.

ASENATH

I am sorry that I haven't been
about much. I've just been spending
all my time with Edward.

SHIRLEY

And how is he?

ASENATH

He's just fine. Why wouldn't he be?

SHIRLEY

No, of course. I'm so glad to hear
it.

ASENATH

Yes, well thank you. As you can see, I am up and about and entirely well. You can tell anyone who asks.

Transition music starts under.

SHIRLEY

Well then... I will... see you about, I'm sure.

ASENATH

And thank you for the jam. You're such a dear. Bye bye.

The door closes.

43 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

43

CRENSHAW

So according to your wife, the Derbys had worked out whatever problems they might have been having.

UPTON

No, Asenath was lying! She said Edward was just fine, but he wasn't.

CRENSHAW

And you know this--

UPTON

Because the old Edward came knocking on my door! It was mid October. I was at home and heard the familiar....

44 CONFESSION

44

We hear the KNOCK and the door opens.

UPTON

(surprised)

Edward! Are you all right? Come in, come in.

The DOOR CLOSES.

UPTON (CONT'D)

Here, come into the study. Can I get you a coffee? You look--

DERBY

No, I'm jittery enough.

UPTON

Yes, yes, of course. Please, sit. What's going on?

We quickly hear in his voice and manner that the old Edward is back.

DERBY

Asenath has gone, Dan. We had a long talk last night while the servants were out, and I made her promise to stop preying on me. Of course I had certain -- certain occult defences I never told you about. She had to give in, but got frightfully angry. Just packed up and started for New York -- walked right out to catch the eight-twenty to Boston.

UPTON

Do you know where she's gone?

DERBY

She's probably going to stay with a gaggle of her horrid devotees. I hope she'll go west and get a divorce. I've made her promise to keep away and let me alone.

UPTON

I think that's for the best.

DERBY

You know what she was doing? I lay low and pretended to let her do it, but I had to be on the watch. I could plan if I was careful, for she can't read my mind literally, or in detail. All she could read of my planning was a sort of general mood of rebellion -- and she always thought I was helpless. Never thought I could get the best of her... but I had a spell or two that worked.

(chuckling grimly)

UPTON

Good for you, Edward!

DERBY

I paid off her damned servants. They were ugly about it, and asked questions, then laughed as they went. They're her kin.

UPTON

Innsmouth people...

DERBY

Maybe I can get some of Dad's old servants again -- like Chalvers -- and move back home.

UPTON

I think that's an excellent idea.

DERBY

Do you think.... Do you think I'm crazy, Dan?

UPTON

Edward. We've known each other since we were boys. You're like a brother to me.

DERBY

That's not an answer.

UPTON

You have changed these past years--

DERBY

Changed! Yes! You've seen one of the changes -- in your car that day coming home from Maine. That was when she got me - drove me out of my body. The last thing I remember was when I was all worked up trying to tell you what that she-devil is. Then she got me, and in a flash I was back at the house -- in the library where those damned servants had me locked up -- and inside that fiend's body. You know it was she you must have ridden home with - You had to have known the difference!

UPTON

Well, yes, you were changed that night.

DERBY

I was *her* that night!

(pause - quieter)

I had to save myself -- I had to, Dan! She'd have got me for good at Hallowmass -- they hold a Sabbath up there beyond Chesuncook, and the sacrifice would have clinched things. She'd have got me for good -- she'd have been I, and I'd have been she -- forever. My body'd have been hers for good -- She'd have been a man, and fully human, just as she wanted to be -- I suppose she'd have killed me, I mean killed her own ex-body with me in it, just as she did... or it did before...

UPTON

Is this about Ephraim Waite, Edward? Is he really still alive?

DERBY

(whispering)

Oh, Dan. It's *her*! She isn't Asenath at all, she's Ephraim! I suspected it a year and a half ago, and I know it now. He changed forms with her when he felt death coming-- she was the only one he could find with the right kind of brain and a weak enough will -- he got her body permanently, and then poisoned his old body he'd put her into. Haven't you seen old Ephraim's soul glaring out of her eyes dozens of times -- and out of mine when she has control of my body?

UPTON

Well, you clearly weren't yourself, that I could see. But the important thing is she's away -- you've got her out of your life.

DERBY

Yes. I'll tell you more later -- I'm so tired now. She's led me to forbidden horrors...

UPTON

They're all behind you now.

DERBY

Some people know things about the universe that nobody ought to know, and can do things that nobody ought to be able to do.

UPTON

You're safe now. We'll get you set up back at your father's old place.

DERBY

Yes, thank you, Dan. I can't go back to her accursed house.

UPTON

You won't have to.

DERBY

(increasingly exhausted)

Dan, There are certain groups, cults, you know -- that might misunderstand our breaking up... They might--

Transition MUSIC starts under.

UPTON

You know I'll stand by you.

DERBY

I do. I'm sorry, Dan. I have to tell you things, shocking things--

UPTON

Let's save that for another day.

45

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

45

CRENSHAW

I can see why his wife left. It sounds like the sanitarium was the right place for him.

UPTON

I hoped that he would move back to the Derby mansion, and that would help restore him. I encouraged him at every opportunity.

CRENSHAW

And what of Asenath? Or her servants? Did they come back?

UPTON

We avoided talking about them. He was sending checks regularly to a Moses and Abigail Sargent and a Eunice Babson in Innsmouth. They must have been extorting him somehow.

CRENSHAW

Yes, we're looking into them.

UPTON

Are you?

CRENSHAW

Of course. Not a lot of police cooperation comes out of Innsmouth, but we'll track them down.

UPTON

The old Derby house was ready by December, yet Edward constantly put off moving.

CRENSHAW

I'd think he'd have been eager to move.

Transition MUSIC starts under.

UPTON

Oh he hated Crowninshield, but at the same time he was queerly enslaved by it. His father's former butler, Chalvers, came back to work for him, and he told me a few things....

CHALVERS

...doing my very best, sir, but master Edward invents every kind of excuse to postpone action. He never was the most decisive lad.

UPTON

No, I know.

CHALVERS

He prowls around Crowninshield at all hours, sir. He lingers in the cellar at times. It's most peculiar.

UPTON

The cellar?

CHALVERS

Yes, it's one of a number of rooms he prefers not to have cleaned.

UPTON

Has there been any sign of Mrs. Derby? Any telephone calls or letters?

CHALVERS

None, sir.

UPTON

And his mood hasn't suddenly changed at any time?

CHALVERS

No, sir. He's rather dour most of the time.

Transition MUSIC starts under.

UPTON

Thank you, Chalvers. We must just keep trying to get him back to Derby house.

CHALVERS

I couldn't agree more, sir.

47 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

47

UPTON

He wouldn't move back to his father's old house, but he did spend quite a bit of time at mine. It was there, at Christmas, when we began to lose hope....

48 SHE'S BACK!

48

A Christmas CAROL PLAYS on a Victrola. The boys enjoy merry cups of eggnog.

SHIRLEY

...I thought we could all make the excursion from Florence over to Pisa for a day or two.

UPTON

You could see the leaning tower, Eddy!

EDDY

Gee, that would be swell, wouldn't it Uncle Edward?

DERBY

A splendid notion, I've always wanted to--

Edward SCREAMS and leaps up from his chair with shocking, uncontrollable fright - a cosmic panic and loathing such as only the nether gulfs of nightmare could bring to any sane mind. Shirley and Eddy are horrified. The NEEDLE SCRATCHES on the Victrola and the happy music ends abruptly.

EDDY

Dad! What's wrong with him?

SHIRLEY

Eddy, go to your room! Right now!

UPTON

Edward? What is it?

DERBY

My brain! My brain! God, Dan - it's tugging - from beyond - knocking - clawing - that she-devil--

UPTON

No, Edward, she's not here--

SHIRLEY

Dan, we can't--

UPTON

Shirley, get that wine!

She rushes out.

DERBY

Even now - Ephraim - Kamog! Kamog! - The pit of the shoggoths - Ia! Shub-Niggurath! The Goat with a Thousand Young!...

(MORE)

DERBY (CONT'D)

The flame - the flame - beyond
body, beyond life - in the earth -
oh, God!

UPTON

No, no, sit Edward. Here, it's
wine; drink some.

As he swallows, Edward's horrified rage cools to a dull
apathy.

SHIRLEY

Dan, he needs help we can't give
him. He needs an alienist!

UPTON

I won't consign him to a madhouse!
I can't!

SHIRLEY

But we--

Derby MUMBLES under his breath.

UPTON

Quiet, Shirley! I can't hear him!

Transition music starts under.

DERBY

(whispering)

She's trying again - nothing can
stop that force; not distance nor
magic, nor death...

49

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

49

UPTON

Soon he slumped down into a stupor,
and I propped him with pillows and
let him sleep.

CRENSHAW

Why didn't you listen to your wife?

UPTON

Maybe I should have. He waked
during the night and was gone by
morning. His butler, when called on
the wire, said he was at home
pacing about the library.

CRENSHAW

So he made a recovery?

UPTON

No, I'm afraid Edward went to pieces rapidly after that. He would always be sitting in his library, staring at nothing and having an air of abnormal listening. Sometimes he talked rationally, but any mention of his trouble or of Asenath would send him into a frenzy.

CRENSHAW

I thought you were avoiding those topics.

UPTON

It couldn't be helped. I had a long talk with his doctor, banker, and lawyer, and finally took the physician with two specialist colleagues to visit him. The spasms that resulted from the first questions were violent and pitiable, and that evening a closed car took him to the Arkham Sanitarium.

CRENSHAW

And not a moment too soon. I'm guessing you made sure to visit him?

Foreboding MUSIC starts under.

UPTON

I was made his guardian and called on him twice weekly.

50

ARKHAM SANITARIUM

50

FOOTSTEPS echo through the cement halls of the sanitarium corridor. A lunatic YELLS quietly in the distance.

UPTON

Have you seen any changes, Dr. Headrick?

DR. HEADRICK

I'm afraid not just yet, Mr. Upton. I'd encourage you to keep your expectations modest. A patient in his condition... well, it could be months before we see changes in his behavior, or longer.

UPTON

I understand.

DR. HEADRICK

He's prone to talk to himself. I don't yet fully understand the psychological meanings of -- oh, shh. Listen. You can hear for yourself.

DERBY

(crazy)

I had to do it-- I had to do it-- it'll get me-- it'll get me-- down there-- down there in the dark-- Mother! Mother! Dan! Save me-- save me--

UPTON

(to Headrick)

Should I tell him I'm here?

DR. HEADRICK

Better to let him vent his anxieties.

DERBY

No, Mother, you've got to send for Dan. She's coming. Dan will know what to do!

DR. HEADRICK

(intervening at last)

Mr. Derby? You're very safe here, Mr. Derby. Not to worry. The hospital will keep you safe. Your friend Mr. Upton stopped by to see you.

UPTON

Hello, Edward. I'm here. It's me, Dan.

Edward groans miserably.

DR. HEADRICK
(sotto voce to Upton)
It's best if you go now.

UPTON
Take care of yourself, Edward.

DERBY
(shouting)
She's coming! I know she is!

MUSIC bed starts.

DR. HEADRICK
Easy, Mr. Derby, you're all right
now.

Their exchange fades out with the sound of Dan WALKING AWAY.

51 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

51

UPTON
I tried my best to be optimistic.
Edward must have a home if he
emerged, so I transferred his
servants to the Derby mansion. I
couldn't decide what to do about
the Crowninshield place, so I just
left it untouched.

CRENSHAW
You must have been overwhelmed.
Your best friend gone mad. His wife
driven away. Disagreements with
your own wife. Two grand estates to
look after....

Transition MUSIC starts under.

UPTON
Yes, the final nightmare came
before Candlemas - heralded, in
cruel irony, by a gleam of hope.

52 ALL'S WELL

52

Dan sits in his study and his telephone RINGS.

UPTON
Hello?

DR. HEADRICK
(via telephone)
Mr. Upton? Hello, it's Dr. Headrick
from Arkham Sanitarium.

UPTON
Hello, doctor. What's wrong?

DR. HEADRICK
Well... I have some rather
extraordinary news. It would appear
that Edward's reason has suddenly
returned.

UPTON
What?

DR. HEADRICK
It took us quite by surprise. This
morning we found him cogent and
calm. He's shown a few memory
impairments, but beyond that...
well, it's quite an extraordinary
recovery. We'd like to continue to
observe him a few more days, but if
all goes well, we'll be ready to
discharge him by the week's end.

Musical THRILL, and bed continues under.

DR. HEADRICK (CONT'D)
Mr. Upton?

UPTON
(genuinely happy)
Yes. Yes, this is marvelous. Thank
you, doctor. I'll come right over.
Thank you!

CRENSHAW
This wasn't what you were
expecting, was it?

UPTON
Not at all. I hastened over in a
flood of delight, and a nurse took
me swiftly to Edward's room.

54

THE PATIENT

54

Daniel GASPS audibly. Edward speaks in the same cold, arrogant voice we last heard on the car ride back from Maine.

DERBY
Greetings, Upton.

UPTON
Good god, it's you.

DERBY
You were expecting someone else?

UPTON
(narrating)
I saw in an instant this wasn't the old Edward, my Edward. No, this was the being who had driven my car through the night five months before.

DERBY
(rich with malevolent irony)
They're going to let me out, Daniel. Isn't that wonderful?

UPTON
(reeling with horror)
Yes.

DERBY
Dr. Headrick tells me you've taken splendid care of my affairs. He says Crowninshield is just as I left it.

UPTON
You've been living at your father's house. For months now.

DERBY
Have I? I don't quite recall that. No matter. I can pick up where I left off. I've so very much to do.

UPTON
Edward? Is that you? Please!

DERBY
Whatever do you mean, Upton? Of course it's me. They tell me I'm sane.

UPTON

We had plans! Where were we planning to go at Christmas?

DERBY

Someplace fascinating, no doubt. Oh to savor early liberty earned by an especially close confinement!

UPTON

(panicky)

You're not him! What have you done?

DERBY

Careful, Upton, you're beginning to sound a little mad. Don't let the doctor hear you, or he might make us trade places!

MUSICAL STING and bed continues under. Edward LAUGHS as Dan hurries away. Laughter ECHOES through the asylum halls.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Where are you going, Upton? Leaving so soon?

55

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

55

CRENSHAW

Were you afraid of Derby's release, Mr. Upton? Was it not part of your plan?

UPTON

Of course I was afraid! The hospital called a day later to say that he was unchanged, and by evening I was close to a nervous collapse. But it was in the night -- after that second evening -- that stark, utter horror burst over me and weighted my spirit with a black, clutching panic from which it can never shake free.

CRENSHAW

What happened?

UPTON

It was late and Shirley and I were in bed....

56 THE CALL

56

CONTINUING MUSIC segues into telephone RINGS.

UPTON
(groggy)
Hello?

There is quiet on the other end of the line.

UPTON (CONT'D)
Hello? I say, can you hear me?

SHIRLEY
(groggy)
Dan, who is it?

UPTON
It's a bad connection.

A hint of a NOISE comes through the receiver. The sound is a half-liquid bubbling noise, but there is a disturbing sense of inarticulate speech beneath the sound. MUSIC transition starts under.

UPTON (CONT'D)
(loudly into the phone)
I can't hear you. Better hang up
and try Information.

The receiver goes on the hook at the other end and Dan hangs up.

57 INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

57

UPTON
This was shortly before midnight.

CRENSHAW
We know. We traced the call.

UPTON
Good. Then you know it was placed
from the Crowninshield house.

CRENSHAW
Correct.

UPTON
(increasingly neurotic)
And you know all the other things
the police found there.

CRENSHAW

What do you think they found there, Mr. Upton?

UPTON

I've heard all about it. The upheaval in the cellar storeroom. The tracks, the dirt, the hastily rifled wardrobe. Baffling marks on the telephone. The clumsily used stationery. The detestable stench everywhere. And the absurd theories!

CRENSHAW

Which theories are those?

UPTON

That it was the Innsmouth servants plotting some kind of revenge against me since I was Edward's friend. The police are idiots!

CRENSHAW

Some of my best friends are police, Mr. Upton.

UPTON

(increasingly edgy)
Could those brutish clowns from Innsmouth have forged that handwriting? Or brought what later came to my home?

CRENSHAW

We think *you* could have forged that handwriting. You were his best friend since childhood, after all. You could have staged everything in that basement. You had the run of the place. The butler could have placed that call under your instructions. *You* could have made that thing on the doorstep.

UPTON

But why would I--

CRENSHAW

Derby was rich, and you had charge of his estate - a considerable one at that. Maybe you had feelings for Asenath. Maybe you were jealous of her.

(MORE)

CRENSHAW (CONT'D)
(her hardest push yet)
It's time for the truth, Mr. Upton!

UPTON
(upset)
The truth is there are horrors
beyond life's edge that we do not
suspect, and once in a while man's
evil prying calls them just within
our range. Ephraim -- Asenath --
that devil called them in, and they
engulfed Edward as they are
engulfing me!

CRENSHAW
The only thing engulfing you is
your own web of preposterous lies.
We'll see what the autopsy and the
lab work have to say.

UPTON
(mad with fear)
No! No autopsy!

CRENSHAW
Let go of me!

UPTON
The body must be cremated
immediately. Until it's burned
we're all in danger! You may be
next! Or my Eddy! My will shall not
be undermined by these seething
terrors. I will not be driven out
of my body... I will not change
souls with that bullet-ridden lich
in the madhouse!

CRENSHAW
Watch it, Mr. Upton.

There is a KNOCKING at the door of the interview room.

O'DONNELL
(through door)
Everything all right, ma'am?

CRENSHAW
(loudly)
We're fine!
(more quietly)
Easy does it, Mr. Upton.
(MORE)

CRENSHAW (CONT'D)

You don't want the Lieutenant to come through that door. He thinks I'm much too soft on you.

UPTON

My god! How can you ignore all I've told you? You've got to believe it!

CRENSHAW

Ignore? Oh no, I'm fascinated. But tell me, why on earth would you think I'd ever believe it?

UPTON

(breaking down)

Because... Oh my god! It was horrible!

Underscore of scary MUSIC.

58

THE THING ON THE DOORSTEP

58

Shirley and Dan are asleep. There is a faint knocking - a three and two pattern. Shirley stirs.

SHIRLEY

(75% asleep)

Dan, Edward's at the door... coffee...

The door BUZZER sounds now, in Edward's 3-2 pattern. Suddenly Dan and Shirley are wide awake.

UPTON

(alarmed)

The three and two.

SHIRLEY

How can that be? I thought you said... Dan, I can't take it anymore...

UPTON

Shhhhh. Go to Eddy's room and stay there with him.

TENSE MUSIC starts under. Shirley dashes out. Dan hurries downstairs and goes to the door.

59

INTERVIEW - CONTINUOUS

59

MUSIC continues.

UPTON

It was my old Edward at the door.
But how? And why was he here in the
middle of the night? Had he been
released ahead of time, or had he
somehow...

(through door)

Edward?

The door CREAKS open and we hear the sound of night. Dan
SNIFFS a horrendous stench.

UPTON (CONT'D)

When I opened the door, a gust of
foetid wind almost knocked me down.
For a second I scarcely saw the
dwarfed, humped figure on the
steps. The summons had been
Edward's, but who was this foul,
stunted parody?

The caller had on one of Edward's
overcoats -- its bottom almost
touching the ground, and its
sleeves rolled back yet still
covering the hands. On the head was
a slouch hat pulled low, while a
black muffler concealed the face.
As I stepped forward I heard a
sound.

The thing on the doorstep speaks in a SAD BUBBLING IMITATION
OF SPEECH, just like that Dan heard earlier on the telephone.

UPTON (CONT'D)

The figure thrust at me a paper
impaled on the end of a pencil.
Still reeling from the horrible
smell, I seized it.

CRENSHAW

What was it?

UPTON

It was awkward and shaky, but it
was Edward's own handwriting. I
could make out nothing in the dim
half light, so edged back into the
hall.

CRENSHAW

Did you read it?

UPTON

I did. And as I read, my knees gave way under me and my vision went black.

DERBY

(starting in Upton's voice
and cross-fading to
Derby's at Italics)

Dan - go to the sanitarium and kill it. Exterminate it. It isn't Edward Derby any more. She got me - Asenath - and *she has been dead three months and a half*. I lied when I said she had gone away. I killed her. I had to. We were alone and I was in my right body. I saw a candlestick and smashed her head in.

I buried her in the cellar storeroom under some old boxes and cleaned up all the traces. The servants suspected next morning, so I sent them off, but God knows what they will do-- or others of the cult.

I thought for a while I was all right, and then I felt the tugging at my brain. I knew what it was. A soul like hers is half detached, and keeps right on after death as long as the body lasts. She was making me change bodies with her -- seizing my body and putting me in that corpse of hers buried in the cellar.

That's why I snapped and had to go to the asylum. Then I found myself choked in the dark -- in Asenath's rotting carcass. And I knew she must be in my body at the sanitarium -- permanently, for it was after Hallowmass, and the sacrifice would work even without her being there -- sane, and ready for release as a menace to the world. I clawed my way out.

I couldn't manage to telephone-- but I can still write. See that it is cremated.

(MORE)

DERBY (CONT'D)

If you don't, it will live on and on, body to body forever. Goodbye-- you've been a great friend. I'm truly sorry. I'll be at peace before long-- this thing won't hold together much more. Kill that thing-- kill it.

Yours - Ed.

MUSICAL denouement.

UPTON

(weeping)

I didn't want to do it! I never wanted to hurt him!

CRENSHAW

You're saying he asked you for it? Your best friend, Mr. Upton? That eight year old boy you rescued!

UPTON

Please, I didn't--

CRENSHAW

That weak-willed, defenseless rich boy with the occult obsessions and the hypnotic wife. He was asking for it!

UPTON

Please, Miss Crenshaw, don't--

CRENSHAW

With the unseen magical father-in-law pulling the strings! It was all his fault! Why not?

UPTON

I only wanted to--

CRENSHAW

You wanted Derby out of the way. So you went to the sanitarium and put six bullets into his head. Didn't you? Didn't you?

UPTON

(breaking)

Yes! Yes, God help me I did. It's... what he wanted.

CRENSHAW

Sure. You were just doing as you were told.

The SCRAPE of a chair as Crenshaw gets up and goes to the door. It SQUEALS open. Upton BLUBBERS.

CRENSHAW (CONT'D)

All right, Lieutenant. Take Mr. Upton here back to his cell. We're done.

O'DONNELL

Okay boys, get him out of here.

Some cops begin to drag Upton away.

UPTON

(fading into the distance)
He was my best friend! I avenged him! He wasn't Edward when I shot him! You're not safe!

O'DONNELL

How'd it go?

CRENSHAW

No jury will buy his act. Not even in Arkham. He'll get the chair.

O'DONNELL

(impressed)
Well, that's good work, A.D.A. Crenshaw.

CRENSHAW

Thank you.

O'DONNELL

Listen, we got the results back from the lab on that mess they found on Upton's doorstep.

CRENSHAW

Oh really? This should be good. What does it turn out to be?

O'DONNELL

Coroner says it was months dead, and fell to pieces in the lab. Most of it was little more than paste, but there were some bones, and a crushed-in skull.

Ominous MUSIC starts under.

CRENSHAW

Sure, Upton had to make it look good. What were they? Deer? Bear?

O'DONNELL

No, human.

CRENSHAW

Oh god.

O'DONNELL

Dental work positively identified the skull. It's Asenath Waite's.

Dramatic musical STING!

60

CONCLUSION

60

CREIGHTON COBB

You've been listening to H.P. Lovecraft's "The Thing on the Doorstep", brought to you by our sponsor, Grip-U-Ryte! Look and feel your manly best with Grip-U-Ryte. Order today!

I'm Creighton Cobb. Until next week, this is Dark Adventure Radio Theatre reminding you to never go anywhere alone; if it looks bad, don't look; and save the last bullet for yourself.

ANNOUNCER

"The Thing on the Doorstep" was adapted for radio and produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman. Original music by Troy Sterling Nies. The Dark Adventure Ensemble featured: Leslie Baldwin, Sean Branney, Kacey Camp, Hollie Hunt, Andrew Leman, Jacob Lyle, Barry Lynch, Grinnell Morris, David Pavao, Kem Saunders, Kevin Stidham, Josh Thoemke and Time Winters. Tune in next week for "The Sisters of the Black Convent" an exotic tale of forbidden rites.

(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

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Radio STATIC and fade out.