

## **QUIET, PLEASE**

Two episodes from the series

"Nothing Behind the Closed Door"  
and  
"The Thing on the Fourble Board"

Adapted and produced by

John F. Barber

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International

Re-Imagined Radio  
Season 14, Episode 05

Final draft

## **QUIET, PLEASE**

Creative thriller mysteries

Re-Imagined Radio  
Season 14, Episode 05  
Final Draft

Premier broadcast: May 18, 2026

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### **Synopsis**

*Quiet, Please*, written by Wyllis Cooper, narrated and starring Ernest Chappell, is often noted as the most creative in the crowded field of thriller mysteries. We curate two episodes, "Nothing Behind the Door" (the first episode of the series) and "The Thing on the Fourble Board" (among the most notable of the series). Together, they showcase the quiet, slow, suspenseful and engaging storytelling for which the series is noted.

Re-Imagined Radio explored Cooper's *Whitehall 1212* in a previous episode. A future episode will focus on *Lights Out*, also written by Cooper.

### **Credits**

"Nothing Behind the Door," June 8, 1947, is the pilot episode for the *Quiet, Please* series. It sets the tone, mood, and previews the styles of Wyllis Cooper (writer and director) and Ernest Chappell (narrator and star).

"The Thing on the Fourble Board," Episode 60, August 9, 1948, is the most highly regarded episode of the series.

### **Color Code**

**Yellow highlighted text** = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or live.

~~**Magenta highlighted text with strike through**~~ = text deleted for episode timing

**MUSIC** = pre-recorded

**MUSIC** = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

**SFX: QUIET, PLEASE, INTRO**

CHAPPELL Quiet, please. (PAUSE) Quiet, please.

**MUSIC: QUIET, PLEASE THEME**

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

**MUSIC: RIR THEME**

**ANNOUNCER** Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about sound-based storytelling. With each episode we explore how dialogue, sound effects, and music can engage your listening imagination and promote storytelling. Here to tell you about THIS episode is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN 1

HOST Hello everyone. Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio. This episode is "Quiet, Please," a series often called the most creative in the crowded field of thriller mysteries.

This episode is part of a multi-episode tribute to radio writer and director Wyllis Cooper. We began this tribute with our "Black Museum" episode. A planned future episode will focus on Cooper's *Lights Out* series.

It's an interesting episode and I hope you'll stick around and listen in.

For more information, and the episode script, visit our website, reimagedradio dot fm.

Thank you for listening as Re-Imagined Radio presents "Quiet, Please."

**MUSIC: SAMPLE FROM "QUIET, PLEASE"**

**THEME FOR TRANSITION**

HOST OPEN 2

HOST

In the episode "The Black Museum," we introduce *Whitehall 1212*, written and directed by Wyllis Cooper, 1951-1952.

*Whitehall 1212* is one of three great radio series created by Cooper. Working backward, with this episode we spotlight *Quiet, Please*, 1947 to 1949.

In a future episode we'll focus on *Lights Out*, a very popular thriller, 1934 to 1936.

With *Quiet, Please*, Cooper writes primarily for Ernest Chappell. They met while working for *The Campbell Playhouse*. Cooper was writing scripts. Chappell was narrating them.

Cooper wanted to create a non-traditional mystery series. He wanted Chappell to narrate and voice the leading character in each episode.

Working together, Wyllis and Chappell created episodes dealing with psychological situations, mysteries,

sometimes fantasies. They showcase the quiet, slow, suspenseful, and engaging storytelling for which the series is noted.

The pilot episode, first broadcast June 8, 1947, sets the tone for the series. Let's listen now to "Nothing Behind the Door."

**MUSIC: SAMPLE FROM "QUIET, PLEASE"  
THEME FOR TRANSITION**

ACT 1: NOTHING BEHIND THE DOOR

CHAPPELL

(FADING IN, NARRATING) ~~It's something like sixty-eight hundred feet above sea level;~~ a little house maybe twenty feet long, fifteen wide.

It's made of corrugated iron sheets, with a high peaked roof, and it sort of hangs over the edge of the mountain-top, with nothing but the spikes of pine-trees stretching all the way down to Pasadena, better than a mile below you.

**MUSIC: ORGAN, FOR TRANSITION**

CHAPPELL

Do you ever get out to California? Well, if you do, go up there sometime and take a look at the little house. But look at it through the fence that surrounds it. That's far enough. Through the fence.

You go out Foothill Boulevard toward Pasadena, but you turn off on Angeles Crest Highway at Lacañada. Just keep on

driving uphill and you'll get there.  
Just keep right on going. The top of  
Mount Wilson. The end of the highway.

Did you ever look through a big  
telescope? At the sky, at night? At the  
things up there? Things so far away you  
sprain your brain just trying to imagine  
how far away they are? With nothing  
between you and them? Billions and  
billions of miles of nothing? I don't  
know what it does to you but brother, I  
freeze.

Listen, do you know there are holes in  
the sky? No, I mean it. I've seen 'em.

There's a thing in the constellation  
Andromeda ... no, now wait a minute, I'm  
not going to get technical with you,  
just listen. There's this thing ...  
astronomers call it the Horse Head  
Nebula. You know what it is? It's a  
hole. It's a great big patch of nothing.  
Just nothing! There aren't any stars  
there, there's just a hole. No, nobody  
knows anything about it. Astronomers  
look at it, they take pictures of it,  
and there it stays. There it is now, and  
tomorrow, and the next day, and a  
million years from now, and it's been  
there always.

Yes, it has, it's so far away that what  
you see now is the way it looked a  
billion years ago. Before there was  
anybody to see it, friend. And there's  
lots more of those places.

So what's all this got to do with the little house up on top Mount Wilson? I'll tell you.

**MUSIC: ORGAN, FOR TRANSITION**

CHAPPELL

This was quite some time ago. I'd been living in California, see, for several years. I had a couple of bucks, had a nice little place near Van Nuys. That was before the Valley got to be so popular with movie people, radio comics, people like that. And it wasn't bad, living alone. Waking up in the middle of the night hearing the Southern Pacific Lark, whistle for a crossing out around Chatsworth Listening to a dog howling 'way out across the valley. Goin' back to sleep.

I don't get back to sleep so easy these days.

Well, these people from Cleveland were out there. Aldo Manucci and Hugh Grant. We used to be great friends, Aldo and Hugh and I, so nothing would do but they'd come to stay with me. It was all right. I had a Dodge convertible.

The boys got quite a kick out of California. That's how we came to go up to Mount Wilson that day. Aldo and Hugh had been ... you know ... looking around for odd places, they had some ideas. So one day we were having breakfast and they were looking at an Automobile Club bulletin, and Aldo said "Let's go to Mount Wilson." So we did.

So we did. I'd been up there once before. You know how it is in California: I knew everything.

I thought I knew everything.

I found out different.

We were inside the big dome where the Hundred-Inch telescope is.

**MUSIC: ORGAN, BEGINS TO FADE IN**

CHAPPELL

It's like being inside a giant's watch. The telescope is in the middle, a big spidery framework with ladders climbing all over it up under this dome.

The tourists stand on a kind of a catwalk around the edge while the astronomer explains as much as he thinks the appleknockers'll understand.

There was just a few of us that day, standing close to the little kind of pulpit listening with our mouths open. Yeah, it is like a pulpit.

I got to thinking that day how the astronomer looked like a priest up there. A nice old white-haired fellow like a priest. And I was thinking he was talking about the heavens, too. I'd seen it all before, but my mouth was as wide open as Hugh's and Aldo's.

ASTRONOMER

(RESONANCE, FADING IN) ... and the earth is moving through space, too. It moves

around the sun at the rate of about  
eighteen and a half miles per second.

~~SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. SMALL  
MURMUR FROM THE AUDIENCE AT THIS.~~

~~ASTRONOMER So therefore you see, we must, in order  
to keep this telescope focused  
accurately on the celestial objects we  
are observing, neutralize those motions  
mechanically.~~

~~The telescope itself, as you will  
observe, is controllable in any  
direction by this motor.~~

~~SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. MOTOR  
HUM, FAIRLY HIGH-PITCHED, BEGINS.~~

~~ASTRONOMER Watch it if you please.~~

~~SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. MOTOR  
HUM, ENDS.~~

~~ASTRONOMER Notice the motion of the telescope.~~

~~And the final movement, the rotation of  
the entire dome, exactly synchronized  
with the speed of the earth through  
space. Watch through the shutters above  
it.~~

~~SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. ANOTHER  
MOTOR STARTS; A DEEPER-TONED ONE  
NOW. ENDS.~~

~~MANUCCI (OVER THE MOTOR) Lookit. Lookit, Ross.~~

~~ROSS (CHAPPELL) I see.~~

~~MANUCCI Look outside. We ... we ain't movin'.  
The sky's going by! Lookit, Hugh!~~

~~GRANT I see it.~~

~~ROSS It's an optical illusion, Aldo.~~

~~ASTRONOMER No, it's not an optical illusion. In  
relation to space this spot we are on is  
standing still. Through these motions  
here in the dome, the mirror of the  
telescope is kept aimed exactly at one  
spot far out in space.~~

ALDO What's space, mister?

ASTRONOMER It's ... nothing.

GRANT What about the air?

ASTRONOMER There are a few miles of air, my friend  
... and then ... nothing.

MANUCCI Huh.

ROSS Well, stars.

ASTRONOMER Yes, stars.

ROSS Sure.

ASTRONOMER And the places where there are no stars.

**MUSIC: CUTS IN AND HOLDS FOR A  
MOMENT, THEN DUCKS UNDER THE  
FOLLOWING.**

ROSS

My skin twitched a little when he said that. The places where there are no stars. Did yours?

Well, the show was over, and we went outside into the sunlight. We walked across the long wooden bridge ... there's a deep gully in front of the dome ... and down a little path past a thing they call a coelostat. A small dome on legs about a hundred feet high ... a thing they study the sun and sunspots and things like that with.

It was quiet up there, along toward the middle of the afternoon, and there was a chill in the air.

~~We were just talking ... it's an odd place, and you get kind of impressed. The people impress you. The astronomers. They live up there, all by themselves, and they look at the sky, they see things. You always get the feeling they know a lot more than they're telling. Like they're doctors ... or like priests, I guess. Oh, I said that, didn't I? Well, that's what they're like.~~

The path leads through the woods ... the biggest live oaks you ever saw ... leads through the woods over to the old hotel. So I said, "Hey, how about a beer before we start down, huh?"

MANUCCI

A beer, that's for me.

GRANT                   Can you get any hard liquor up here,  
Ross?

ROSS                    No, I don't think so. Anyway, I wouldn't  
want a drink, not with all that mountain  
road ahead of me.

MANUCCI                No, sir, don't you take no drink, Ross.  
I don't want to ride that road with  
nobody's had a drink a liquor. Maybe you  
shouldn't have a beer even.

ROSS                    Now wait a moment, beer won't hurt me.

GRANT                   What's this fence for?

ROSS                    Huh. I never noticed that before.

GRANT                   That's quite a fence. Have a hard time  
getting over that.

MANUCCI                What would you want to get over it for?

GRANT                   I don't know. What you suppose is on the  
other side, they got this heavy fence?

ROSS                    I don't see anything. Except that little  
house out there, on stilts.

MANUCCI                Funny looking place.

GRANT                    Fence goes right around it.

MANUCCI                Ain't there a gate?

ROSS                    Oh, come on, let's get a beer.

GRANT                    No, I want to look at this, Ross.

MANUCCI Prob'ly they got something valuable in there.

ROSS Sure, scientific instruments or something. This place is all full of that stuff.

MANUCCI Hey, look. A sign.

GRANT Where?

MANUCCI (GOING AWAY) Here.

ROSS Ah, Come on.

GRANT Wait. What's it say?

MANUCCI (OFF) The public is forbidden to pass beyond this fence under severe penalty.

**MUSIC: ORGAN, SHORT DRAMATIC SINGER**

GRANT That all?

MANUCCI Yeah.

GRANT What you suppose they got in that place?

ROSS I don't know. I don't care.

GRANT Hey, there's a door up there at the end of that trestle. Maybe we could go back and get in through that other shed where the trestle starts, huh?

ROSS What you wanna go in there for? Come on. We got to get going.

GRANT I'm just curious. You know what I mean?  
That place might come in handy.

MANUCCI (THOUGHTFUL) Oh. Yeah.

GRANT See? 'Specially if they keep everybody  
out like this.

MANUCCI But the thing might be full of stuff,  
Hugh. Like Ross said: scientific stuff.

GRANT Might be, and might not be. Hey, here  
comes that fellow that made the spiel up  
there.

MANUCCI Well, ask him. He'd know.

ROSS He won't tell you.

GRANT Well, we'll find out. Hey, fella.

ASTRONOMER (COMING UP) How are you?

GRANT Hey.

ASTRONOMER (UP. STOPS) Were you talking to me?

GRANT Yeah. What's in that funny-looking  
building?

ASTRONOMER Over there? Nothing.

GRANT Yeah?

MANUCCI What's the idea of the fence then?

ASTRONOMER We don't want people to go in there.

GRANT I'd sure like to see what's in it.

ASTRONOMER I said there's nothing in there.

GRANT You sure, mister?

ASTRONOMER Yes, I'm absolutely sure.

ROSS Could we get a pass to go in there, maybe?

ASTRONOMER No. You saw the sign, didn't you?

GRANT Said something about penalty of the law.

ASTRONOMER You didn't read it very carefully.

MANUCCI He didn't read it. I did.

ASTRONOMER Read it again.

MANUCCI Wait. (HE MOVES OFF AND READS) The public is forbidden to pass beyond this fence under severe penalty. (HE MOVES BACK)

**MUSIC: ORGAN. SHORT, DRAMATIC STINGER**

MANUCCI See?

ROSS I see what he means. He didn't say anything about the law.

GRANT Oh.

ASTRONOMER That's right.

GRANT Well, then?

ASTRONOMER There are other penalties.

GRANT Oh. (A LONG PAUSE) Tough guy, huh?

ASTRONOMER No. (PAUSE) Not at all.

MANUCCI Well, what does it mean, then?

ASTRONOMER I'll give you a little friendly advice. I wouldn't try to find out if I were you.

GRANT Oh, is that so?

ASTRONOMER Yes.

ROSS Do you really know what's in there, mister?

ASTRONOMER Yes.

ROSS & GRANT What?

ASTRONOMER Nothing.

(A LONG PAUSE)

GRANT Okay, lads, let's go get that beer.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. TAKES THEM AWAY AND  
FADES.**

ROSS Well, of course, you know what was up. You're 'way ahead of me. My Cleveland pals weren't in California just for a vacation.

There was a bank I'd had my eye on for a while, out in Pacific Palisades, and it wasn't the first bank that Manucci and Hugh Grant and I had worked a deal on. I

didn't go much for this place up on Mount Wilson with nothing in it and a fence around it. Aldo and Hugh ... well, after all, could you find a better place to stash away some dough? Nobody could get in, they said ... and if we could, well ... so I bought the idea finally.

And, to make a long story short, we took, I think it was fifty-three thousand dollars out of the bank. Fifty-three, fifty-four, ahh, what's the difference? It's all gone now.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. UP, THEN DUCK UNDER  
THE FOLLOWING**

ROSS

It's a long drive from Pacific Palisades over Sunset Boulevard, then up Beverly Glen to the Valley, through Van Nuys to Sunland, and down past the Sanitarium on Foothill Boulevard to where you turn off on the Angeles Crest Highway.

A long drive 'specially at one o'clock in the morning. That was when we pulled out of Pacific Palisades. It was summer, and after you turn on to the mountain road you're not allowed to smoke. You see, a fire warden might come along, and those guys can tell somebody smoking in a car a half mile off. They throw you in the can for it. Forest fires. So we didn't want anybody stopping us ... it was risky enough anyway, because practically nobody ever drives up there late at night ... or early in the morning, I mean.

Well, we didn't meet anybody, and all three of us were jittery with no cigarettes, and road ... tough enough in daylight, boy in the dark!

**MUSIC: ORGAN. QUICK, OMINOUS  
STINGER.**

ROSS

It was half past four when we got to the top. The hotel was dark. The cabins were dark. But the sky! It was just like solid with stars. Why you could pretty near reach up and touch 'em. I remembered the old guy in the hundred-inch dome. Nothing between us and the stars.

And down below ... well, if you've ever been up there at night you know what I mean. Just like looking down at stars. The lights of seventeen, eighteen, nineteen towns ... Pasadena, Los Angeles, Hollywood, Van Nuys, San Fernando, Culver City, Santa Monica. Well, it makes my hair stand on end when I think of it ... and I haven't seen it for ... never mind how many years.

MUSIC: ORGAN. QUICK STINGER.

ROSS

Well. We stumbled through the pitch dark. We got off the path three times and nearly fell down hill. Brother, that'd be a fall. We still couldn't risk a cigarette. It was dark.

Hugh Grant was in front, then me, then Aldo. We each had brief-cases. Hugh had

a pair of those big spring wire-cutters that'll go through a steel cable.

And all of a sudden we bumped into the fence.

GRANT Ouch.

ROSS What's the matter?

GRANT The fence.

MANUCCI Where are you? (HE BUMPS INTO ROSS)

ROSS Stand still, will you?

MANUCCI It's dark.

GRANT Shut up. Listen for a minute.

(SILENCE)

GRANT Hear anything?

MANUCCI No.

ROSS No.

GRANT See anything?

ROSS (LOOKS AROUND) No.

MANUCCI Look.

ROSS What?

MANUCCI The dome over there.

GRANT                    You see somebody?

MANUCCI                No. (HE TRIES TO CHUCKLE) Them two big windows up there. With that big round dome looks like somebody watchin' us.

ROSS                    Yeah ... sure does.

GRANT                    Ah, cut it out. I'm going to try the fence with the cutters.

MANUCCI                Want the flashlight?

GRANT                    You chump! No!

ROSS                    I wish we ...(HE STOPS)

GRANT                    What?

ROSS                    Forget it. I just don't like that place.

GRANT                    Get out of the way.

MANUCCI                Want some help, Hugh?

GRANT                    Just keep out the the way. (HE STRAINS WITH THE CUTTERS.)

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. WOODS.  
THE CUT WIRE GOES "TWANG!"

GRANT                    Wait. (A PAUSE) Hear anything?

ROSS                    That wire made enough noise to ... (HE STOPS)

GRANT                    All right, all right. (PAUSE) I'll try another strand.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. WOODS.  
THE CUTTERS AGAIN.

GRANT                   That's better. (PAUSE)

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. WOODS.  
THE CUTTERS AGAIN. ANOTHER "TWANG"

GRANT                   See if you can slide under there, one of  
you.

MANUCCI                Me. (HE STRUGGLES) Nope, can't make it  
yet.

GRANT                   I'll try another. Look out for your arm  
there.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. WOODS.  
THE CUTTERS AGAIN. ANOTHER WIRE  
"TWANGS" WHEN CUT.

GRANT                   Now try.

MANUCCI                Wait'll I take off my coat. (A PAUSE)  
Now, let's see. (HE STRUGGLES)

GRANT                   How about it?

ROSS                   He's through.

GRANT                   All right, go ahead.

ROSS                   Me?

GRANT                   You.

ROSS                   Well, I ... cut another strand, Hugh.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. WOODS.  
THE CUTTERS AGAIN. ANOTHER WIRE  
"TWANGS" WHEN CUT.

GRANT                    Make it now?

ROSS                    I guess so. (HE STRUGGLES) Yeah. (OFF A  
LITTLE) Where are you, Aldo?

MANUCCI                (OFF A LITTLE) Right here. Come on,  
Hugh. Hey, slide the brief-cases through  
first.

GRANT                    Coming up. (PAUSE) Got 'em?

MANUCCI                Got 'em.

GRANT                    Here I come. All set?

MANUCCI                All set.

ROSS                    I'm all set.

(NARRATING) I'm as all set as I ever  
will be, I figure. I don't like any part  
of this place. I don't like the dark. I  
don't like the stars up above us. I  
don't like the lights down below. I  
don't like the silence. I don't like  
climbing around the top of a mountain  
with nothing under me but thin air for a  
mile or more.

All I can hear is Hugh and Aldo in front  
of me, crackin' through the weeds,  
cursing when one of them whacks a shin  
against a sharp rock.

All I can see is two black shapes in front of me, and a blacker shape that's the building, the little house with nothing in it. Aldo and Hugh are panting. It's sixty-eight hundred feet, you know, and your breath is pretty short.

It's tough going, especially when you're dragging a brief case full of money, too, and you're scared and sweating and tired. And then, all of a sudden, we're under the building, alongside one of the struts that hold up the little trestle.

GRANT Boost me up, Aldo.

ROSS And Aldo boosts him up. Hugh's a little guy. He's spry. A lot spryer than I am, up there a mile in the air, and I guess he's not as scared as I am. So I look up and he's sprawling on the trestle with nine million stars behind him, and he's reaching down to me.

GRANT Grab my hand, Ross.

ROSS So I scramble up, and I'll never know how I made it, either. But there we are, and in a second, Aldo is up there with us.

GRANT Now keep quiet a minute and rest.

MANUCCI Yeah. (PANTING)

(PAUSE)

MANUCCI You hear anything, Hugh?

GRANT Just the wind. Ross?

ROSS I ... no, I thought I heard something, guess it's just the wind.

GRANT Listen.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. SLIGHT WIND.

GRANT It's the wind. (A SHORT PAUSE) Well?

ROSS So we stood up. So Hugh walked the rest of the way down the little trestle. We followed him, stumbling over the planks, and there was the door.

SFX: EXTERIOR. RATTLING A DOOR.

ROSS We rattled the bar on it. It was padlocked. So Hugh took the big cutters, and he wrenched away at the bar.

ROSS We shivered there in the cold, waiting to see if anybody heard us. There wasn't a sound, so Hugh tried again

ROSS And the bar fell off

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. ENTRY DOOR TO SMALL HOUSE. BAR FALLS OFF.

ROSS Kept still for a minute. (PAUSE) And then ...

GRANT Open the door.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. ENTRY  
DOOR TO SMALL HOUSE. THE DOOR RASPS  
OPEN.

GRANT                   Where's the flashlight?

MANUCCI                Wait.

GRANT                   Nobody can see us. Put your fingers over  
it and turn it in there.

MANUCCI                Okay. (A PAUSE) I don't see anything.

ROSS                    The guy said there was nothing in there.

GRANT                   I can't see a thing. Open up the light a  
little more.

MANUCCI                I got it open. It's all black in there.

GRANT                   There's something the matter with the  
light.

MANUCCI                No, there ain't. Look.

GRANT                   Turn that light off me!

MANUCCI                Well, look, now when I shine it inside.

ROSS                    Nothing.

GRANT                   Well, there's got to be something in  
there.

ROSS                    Nothing, the man said.

MANUCCI                Can't even see the floor.

GRANT Well, I'll find out if there's anything in there.

MANUCCI (HASTILY) No! Don't go in! You can't tell what's liable to be...

GRANT Well, look out. I'll toss the brief-case in.

ROSS No! Throw the wire-cutters in.

GRANT Where are they?

MANUCCI Here.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAIN SIDE. ENTRY DOOR TO SMALL HOUSE. HE DROPS CLIPPERS WITH A CLANG.

GRANT For the love o' ... look out, will you? Keep still! You'd wake up the dead ...

(THEY KEEP SILENT A MOMENT)

GRANT (RELUCTANTLY) Well, I guess nobody heard us. We're shot with luck tonight, no kidding. Gimme them cutters.

MANUCCI Here. Here.

GRANT Shine the light in there. (HE LOOKS) Sure can't see any thing, can ya?

MANUCCI Throw 'em in.

GRANT Get out of the doorway. Keep the light in there.

MANUCCI                    Go ahead. Throw 'em against the far wall.

GRANT                     All right. Look out.

(HE TOSSES THE HEAVY CUTTERS  
INSIDE. THERE IS NO SOUND AT ALL.)

MANUCCI                    (AFTER A PAUSE) Where'd they go?

GRANT                     I tossed 'em hard enough to have bounced. Move the light around. I can't see a thing.

MANUCCI                    I can't either. They ought to be ... (HE LOOKS HARD) ... the light just kind of seems to stop ...

GRANT                     Oh, cut it out. There's prob'ly some kind of stuff on the floor ... powdered. Maybe they fell into it ... here, stand to one side, Ross.

ROSS                      What are you going to do?

GRANT                     Why, I'm going in and look around. You got a gun, Aldo?

MANUCCI                    Just this little thirty-two.

GRANT                     All right, come on. Ross, you stay here and watch. And listen.

ROSS                      I wouldn't go in there, Hugh ...

GRANT                     Nobody asked you to. I'm going. Come on, Aldo.

MANUCCI                    Listen, Hugh.

GRANT                    You got the screamin' meemies, too? Come on, with that gun. There's nothing in there.

ROSS                     Look, Hugh, come on let's get out of here.

GRANT                    Ah, shut up. Here, might as well take the dough, too. We can stick it in there ... go ahead, Aldo, with the light.

MANUCCI                 You go first.

GRANT                    All right! Now stand there and keep your ears ... (HE IS CUT OFF)

MANUCCI                 Hey, Hugh, where are you? I can't see him.

ROSS                     Listen, Aldo, don't go in there ...

MANUCCI                 I got to ... hey, Hugh! (NO ANSWER)  
Hugh! Where are you?

ROSS                     Listen, Aldo ...

MANUCCI                 Keep your eyes and ears open, now. We'll be right back. Hey, Hugh, are you all right? I'm comin' in, Hugh! Hugh!

ROSS                     Aldo ...

MANUCCI                 What's in there? Hey, Hugh! Okay, Ross, something's the matter with him. Here I come. Hugh! I'm gonna ... (HE IS CUT OFF SHARPLY.)

(LONG SILENCE)

ROSS Hugh! Hey, Hugh! (NO ANSWER) Aldo! Hey, what's in there, you two? Hugh ...

**MUSIC: ORGAN. SUSPENSEFUL.**

ASTRONOMER I can see you. (THERE IS A LITTLE MOVEMENT FROM ROSS) You can stand up now. (NO ANSWER) They won't come out I assure you.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. NIGHT.  
ASTRONOMER WALKS A FEW STEPS AND  
CLANGS THE DOOR SHUT.

ASTRONOMER Come on, son. Stand up.

ROSS I've got a gun.

ASTRONOMER No, you haven't. Stand up.

ROSS When my friends come out ...

ASTRONOMER They're not coming out, my friend. Stand up.

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. NIGHT.  
ROSS LABORIOUSLY GETS TO HIS FEET.

ASTRONOMER You wouldn't believe me when I told you.

ROSS What's in there? (NO ANSWER) What's in there, I said?

ASTRONOMER I told you there's ... nothing behind that door.

ROSS My friends went in there ...

ASTRONOMER            They're not there now. (PAUSE) There's nothing in there. Do you understand me? There's NOTHING in there.

ROSS                    Listen.

ASTRONOMER            No. You listen. I ... No, I suppose, it will do no good to tell you.

ROSS                    Tell me what?

ASTRONOMER            I'd better show you.

ROSS                    Show me what?

ASTRONOMER            Come with me.

ROSS                    No.

ASTRONOMER            Come with me.

ROSS                    I won't! You've got to ... (HE STOPS)

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. NIGHT.  
THE ASTRONOMER WALKS SLOWLY AWAY.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. SUSPENSE BUILDS.**  
**DUCKS UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

ROSS                    Wait!

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. NIGHT.  
THE FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE AWAY.

ROSS                    Wait for me!

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. NIGHT.  
THE FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE, AND THE

MUSIC PICKS THEM UP ... HOLDS ...  
AND FADES BEHIND.

MUSIC: HOLDS ... DUCKS UNDER THE  
FOLLOWING.

ROSS                    Across the little trestle away from the  
door he closed on my friends. Through  
another door....

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. CLANG  
AS DOOR SHUTS.

ROSS                    ... into a long shed in the dark. And I  
was glad I couldn't see the stars. Out  
another door at the end of the shed ...

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE.  
ANOTHER CLANG.

ROSS                    ... down the path past the coelostat  
reaching up into the sky, shining in the  
starlight, looking like one of those  
visitors from Mars you heard about on  
the radio. Across the little wooden  
bridge...

SFX: EXTERIOR. MOUNTAINSIDE. HOLLOW  
FOOTSTEPS.

ROSS                    ... with the two eyes of the hundred-  
inch dome staring down at me, and a cold  
wind coming up from the other side of  
the mountain. Up the ramp, into the dome  
itself. And up the iron stairs.

SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY.  
FOOTSTEPS UP THE IRON STAIRS.

ASTRONOMER (OFF) Follow me.

ROSS A little yellow light at the head of the stairs, and then out on the catwalk in the dark, with the floor forty feet below us. Up another ladder, my legs are getting tired. Up.

ASTRONOMER Follow me.

ROSS Up another dizzy ladder. And another. And across another spidery walk.

ASTRONOMER Here. Sit in this seat.

MUSIC: ORGAN. STOPS.

ROSS I can't speak. My throat is dry. My legs are trembling. I'm icy cold in that great dome, how far above the floor I can't tell.

ASTRONOMER Sit still, you won't fall.

ROSS Why did ...

ASTRONOMER Sit still, I said. You'll have to be shown. Wait.

SOUND: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. THE FIRST MOTOR STARTS.

ASTRONOMER Magnetic declination.

SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. THE SECOND MOTOR STARTS.

ASTRONOMER You can look now.

ROSS Look! At what?

ASTRONOMER Look through the telescope.

ROSS No!

ASTRONOMER Look, son.

ASTRONOMER What do you see?

ROSS Stars. Millions of stars.

ASTRONOMER Wait.

SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. THE  
MOTOR CHANGES PITCH.

ASTRONOMER Now look again. (PAUSE) What do you see?

ROSS (AFTER A PAUSE) Nothing. (PAUSE)  
Nothing!

ASTRONOMER Watch.

SFX: INTERIOR. OBSERVATORY. MOTOR  
LOUDER.

ASTRONOMER Now?

ROSS Stars again. Millions ... no ... a black  
cloud.

ASTRONOMER Now?

ROSS Nothing.

ASTRONOMER That nothing you see is a million light-  
years away.



ROSS (NARRATING) Yes, the little house is still there, on Mount Wilson. You can go look at it if you want to. But don't go too close. Maybe somebody'll tell you it's just a place where they store equipment. Maybe. Why do they keep the door locked, then? Well. Just one other thing. Don't you go around opening doors you don't know anything about. There might be nothing behind one of them.

ANNOUNCER You just heard "Quiet, Please," which is written and directed by Wyllis Cooper. The man who talked to you was Ernest Chappell.

CHAPPELL (NARRATING) And the man who played Aldo Manucci is Morton Lawrence. Pat O'Malley was Hugh Grant. And James Van Dyk, The Astronomer.

The music was composed and played by Eugene Perrazzo.

Until next week, then quietly yours,  
Ernest Chappell.

**THE FUSEBOX BREAK**

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "Quiet, Please," part of a multi-episode tribute to radio writer and director Wyllis Cooper.

We'll return to that in a moment, but first I want to tell you about "The Fusebox Show" podcast.

Produced by Marc Rose, Milt Kanen, and Jeff Pollard, each episode features unique conversation and commentary that goes in directions one could never predict. Listen to these examples.

**SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER**

HOST

Learn more wherever you get your podcasts, or at The Fusebox Show website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

**MUSIC: FUSEBOX THEME, FADE UNDER AND OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING**

ACT 2: THE THING ON THE FOURBLE BOARD

HOST

Time now for our second featured episode of *Quiet, Please*. Critics and radio historians rank this one among the most notable of the series. And with good reason. Chappell is in his highest form, telling his slow and suspenseful tale to an unsuspecting guest. This is a taut thriller. First broadcast August 9, 1948, enjoy listening to "The Thing on the Fourble Board."

**MUSIC: THEME UP, THEN OUT.**

PORKY

(NARRATES, IN CONVERSATION WITH AN UNHEARD GUEST) Me, I'm a roughneck. Well, I was a roughneck, I mean, twenty years ago ... a little too old, too slow now. Besides, I got a dollar now, I don't have to be a roughneck, y'see. Married, got a nice home. Hafta meet my wife.

(CALLS OUT) Hey, Mike!

(NARRATES) Her name's Maxine but she likes to be called Mike. (CALLS OUT) Mike!

(NARRATES) I guess she's busy out in the kitchen someplace. Besides, she doesn't hear very well. Shame, too ... she's so pretty and everything. Well, you'll meet her ... Sit down ...

I was sayin' I was a roughneck ... Well, no, that doesn't mean exactly what you think it means. A roughneck is an oil field worker, specifically, a guy on a drilling crew. Call 'em roughnecks like ya call a section hand on the railroad a gandy dancer or a garage hand a grease monkey. Same time, you work around a drilling crew for a while, you're gonna be a roughneck in every sense of the word, boy. The derrick floor or a fourble board's no place for a guy with a bow tie 'cause when you have to fool around with drillin' holes that go farther down in the ground than it is from the top of Pike's Peak down to sea level...

Yeah, sure they do. Time I was a roughneck, we got this one well down to seventy-three hundred and thirteen feet. That was a record. But last May, Pure Oil brought one in out in the Trona Valley in Wyoming at fourteen thousand three hundred and nine feet. That, friend, is almost three miles. Quite a hole that, huh?

**MUSIC: COMES IN.**

PORKY

(NARRATES) Sure, I don't think there's an oil man in the world that don't wonder one time or another what's down there besides rock and oil and gas. Oil that's made out of trees that died twenty million years ago. Oil that's made out of dinosaur bones. Oil that's maybe ... made out of the flesh and blood of men, maybe, that beat each other to death with a stone axe, ate saber tooth tiger for lunch. Yeah, get to wondering.

You look at the cores that come up from way down there and sometimes there's little shells, trilobites mostly, that was alive when Manhattan Island, where New York is, was under half a mile o' ice. We found somethin' once, me and Billy Gruenwald. And... something found us. I'll tell ya about it.

**MUSIC: OUT.**

PORKY

(NARRATES) We were down to around fifty-four hundred feet, we'd set casing that began to get water so we had to stop drilling and cement off. Well, you see, when water begins to seep in the hole, you pull your drill pipe, then you let down a cementing shoe inside the casing, and you plug up the bottom of the hole, casing and all, with quick-hardening waterproof cement. Then, when it's hard, you drill through the cement and go on down and the cement outside the casing at the bottom keeps the water out.

Well, we had the drill pipe all pulled and racked. The cement was setting, see? So we were shut down, waiting for it to harden. We'd been coring just before ...

Well, you see, uh, a core drill is hollow. And, as the bit digs down, it stuffs the drillings up inside it so, when you pull it out, you've got a sample of the kind of stuff you're going through. And a geologist can tell a lot from that. So, there's nobody around the rig except me that night. The rest of the crew's gone into town. I was toasting some pork chops over the porch for myself when I heard a car pullin' up.

SFX: EXTERIOR. DRILL SITE.  
AUTOMOBILE ENGINE APPROACHES.

PORKY (NARRATES) Look out, it's Billy Gruenwald, the geologist, and I give him a hello.

(TO BILLY GRUENWALD) Hi, Billy! Come and have a pork chop!

BILLY (FROM A DISTANCE) All right, Porky!

SFX: ENGINE OUT.

BILLY (CLOSER) Where's everybody?

PORKY They all went to town. I'm the whole crew.

BILLY I had three blow-outs between here and Oxnard.

PORKY                    Yeah, I wondered where you was. Ted said you'd be in here about three.

BILLY                    Yeah, I would've been except for my tough luck. Aw, I'm dead.

PORKY                    Hungry?

BILLY                    Starved.

PORKY                    Here, I got six, no, seven pork chops. And bread. And some coffee, kind of.

BILLY                    Swell. Hey, I got a bottle in the car.

PORKY                    Heh heh. We're gonna have a banquet.

BILLY                    Hey, where's that core? That's what I came up here to look at.

PORKY                    Ah, back there on the bench. Look at it after supper.

BILLY                    Hey.

PORKY                    What?

BILLY                    Didn't you say you were all alone here?

PORKY                    Uh huh.

BILLY                    I thought I heard somebody talking.

PORKY                    I don't see anybody. Keep an eye on that pork chop, you won't have any supper.

BILLY                    Yeah, I'm watching it.

PORKY                    Here, lemme put the coffee on.

SFX: COFFEE POT CLINKS ONTO GRILL.

PORKY                    Like so.

BILLY                    When'd you finish cementing?

PORKY                    This morning. Last tower only made about ten feet of hole so Ted shut down before we'd get flooded out of house and home.

BILLY                    Funny about that water.

PORKY                    Mm? How?

BILLY                    Oughtn't to be any at that level, according to my figuring.

PORKY                    Well... there is.

BILLY                    Is it salt?

PORKY                    Sure, right out of the bottom of the ocean.

BILLY                    Hmm... that's funny. Well, maybe I'll be able to tell something from the core. Yeah, I hope so. Well, last core I looked at, I'd've sworn we were getting into shale.

PORKY                    Ain't seen none yet, from the cuttings.

BILLY                    'S' funny.

PORKY                    Here, your pork chop's done. Take some bread.

BILLY                    Yeah, thanks.

SFX: BILLY GRUENWALD EATS HIS CHOP.

BILLY Oh, man!

PORKY Good, huh?

BILLY Mmm hmm.

PORKY (LAUGHS) Put on another, I had two already 'fore ya come.

BILLY Yeah, much obliged ... Yeah. You know, you never can tell what's down there. You get it all mapped and plotted out, all the strata, and all ya know is what comes out of the hole.

PORKY Yup. I'd like to go down there sometime, if I was little enough.

BILLY (CHUCKLES) Never get you down a hole.

PORKY You'd fit. You're skinny.

BILLY I'll stay up here and look at the cores, bud. Where is that one?

PORKY Behind you. Over there.

BILLY Hm? Oh. Well, I'll have a look at it.

SFX: BILLY WALKS OFF.

PORKY Why don't you wait till you finish your supper?

BILLY (OFF) I'm just gonna look at it. Uh, put on another pork chop for me.

PORKY Okay.

BILLY (OFF) Wow, I wish those screech owls would keep...

PORKY What's the matter?

BILLY (OFF) Hey, wait a minute, Porky.

PORKY Well, what ...?

BILLY (OFF) Listen.

SFX: SOMEWHERE ABOVE, A PIECE OF METAL SCRAPES.

PORKY What's eatin' you?

BILLY (OFF) You know, I'd've sworn there's somebody up there on that fourble board.

PORKY Aw, you're crazy. There's nobody up there.

BILLY (OFF) Standin' against those stands of drill pipe.

PORKY Ah, they're just racked crooked. One of 'em slipped. Come on back and eat your pork chop.

BILLY (REJOINS PORKY) Yeah. Yeah, I ... I ... I guess so. Only, I ...

PORKY Aw, whatcha so jittery bout, Billy? Come on, eat your sandwich. Here.

BILLY Yeah, well... thanks, Porky. I don't know, I ... I'm just naturally that way

I guess. I'm always scared of the dark. Doggone it, I hate to be a baby but I can't help it.

PORKY Scared of the dark? Honest?

BILLY Stupid, ain't it?

PORKY Oh, I don't know. Everybody's scared of somethin'. Me, spiders scare the tar out of me. Black widows. (SHIVERS, LAUGHS) I know how you feel, Billy.

BILLY There another light over here?

PORKY Yeah. Here.

BILLY Ah. Oh, that's better. Hey, listen, um, Porky, go out to the car and look in the left-hand door pocket and bring back that bottle, will ya? That's what I need.

PORKY Okay, kid. Okay. (NARRATES) So, I picked up a flashlight, I turned around and went outside. I found the car. And I got the bottle. And the floor of the derrick was all lit up and when I saw a beam of light suddenly flash up toward the fourble board, I laughed. Ha ha ha. Billy Gruenwald and his ideas ... Sure, I looked up. There wasn't a darn thing up there. 'Cept the drill pipe racked against the fingerboard ...

Oh, this, uh, fourble board. Well, you've seen oil derricks or pictures of 'em? You know that little platform that

runs around the outside of the derrick about halfway up? Well, that's the fourble board. Well, you see, drill pipe comes in lengths and you handle them with several lengths screwed together so as to save time gettin' 'em in and out of the hole. Two lengths is a double, three is a treble, four is a fourble. When you pull the pipe, ya heist it up inside the derrick with a traveling block which moves up and down from the crown block at the top of the derrick. Then, when a fourble of pipe is pulled out, it's held in the rotary table. You break the joint with tongs, like a great big Stillson wrench, y'see. Snub a cable that's fastened to the handle over the cat head on the draw works and that breaks the joint. Then, you hold the tongs on the pipe, give the rotary table a few turns to unscrew it, you heist away with the traveling block and swing it over against the fingerboard, lean it against the derrick. The guy up on the fourble board takes off the traveling block. You do it all over again till you got all the pipe out. You see?

Well, there wasn't anybody up on the fourble board. Except a screech owl and it flew away. So, Billy turned his light off and I come on inside. And just as I come up the steps, he let out a yell.

BILLY

YIKE!

**MUSIC: ORGAN. BEGINS FADING IN.  
REMAINS UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

PORKY                   What's the matter? What's the matter,  
Billy?

BILLY                   Hey, come here! Look here!

SFX: PORKY'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH  
BILLY.

PORKY                   Well, what's it ...?

BILLY                   Look, Porky.

PORKY                   My ...! Where did you find that?

BILLY                   Now, listen, Porky, I give you my word.  
That was embedded in the core.

PORKY                   Oh, why, it couldn't be.

BILLY                   I tell ya, it was. Look where I dug it  
out. Do you know what? That rock there  
comes from a mile underground. And it's  
been a mile underground for a million  
years. Man, look at this.

PORKY                   (NARRATES) And I did look. And what he  
was holding was a gold ring. And it was  
all carved and filigreed just like  
jewelry. And there wasn't any kidding  
about it. It was real.

MUSIC: UP, THEN DUCK UNDER THE  
FOLLOWING.

PORKY                   (NARRATES) Now, now, now, wait a minute!  
Hang on! I ain't done. I poked at the  
core of rock that looked like a, uh,  
kind of ... petrified salami or  
something. And then it was my turn to

pretty near jump out of my pants. Because right alongside the place where Billy dug out the ring, there was a mud-covered but very unmistakable ... finger. I picked it up. And it was cold. And it was heavy. And ... it was solid rock. At least, it felt like solid rock. And I looked at Billy and Billy looked at me. He started to rub the mud off this here ... stone finger. And as he rubbed it, it begun to disappear ... No, he could-he could still feel it, he said, but when the mud was gone, neither one of us could see it. And he dropped it to the derrick floor. It went clunk and ... we couldn't find it anyplace. So, you know what we done? Well, we took that bottle and we took and finished it, Billy and me. We finished it in one slug apiece and it was a full pint of bathtub gin that tasted just like so much well water to me.

**MUSIC: UP, DRAMATIC, THEN DUCKS  
UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

PORKY

(narrates) And then we sat down on the derrick floor and we looked at each other. We didn't say a word. My eyes got heavier and heavier. The last thing I remember was I heard some kind of noise that seemed to be coming out from, well, the fourble board, eighty feet above us. I shut my eyes a minute.

**MUSIC: EFFECT TO INDICATE DREAMING.**

PORKY

(NARRATES) And I guess I went to sleep.

**MUSIC: DREAMING EFFECT INTENSIFIES.**

PORKY (NARRATES) And I had awful dreams. Black widow, spiders crawling all over me with gold rings on their legs. Things I could hear but I couldn't see ... up on the fourble board. Billy Gruenwald climbing up the ladder outside the derrick in the moonlight. Faces looking at me. I couldn't figure out who they were. Then I was waked up by a horrible scream. A crash alongside me that shook the whole derrick.

**MUSIC: EFFECT DOWN.**

PORKY (NARRATES) I opened my eyes to see Billy Gruenwald, lying on the floor, two feet away... with a broken neck.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. STINGER. DUCKS UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

PORKY (NARRATES) With a broken neck and his left hand ... Well, he put the gold ring on the little finger of his left hand and the way his arms were spread out ... His left little finger ... and the ring ... were gone.

**MUSIC: UP AND OUT.**

PORKY (narrates) Well, friend, I got out of there. I run down to where Billy had left his car and I got in. I stepped on the starter.

SFX: AUTOMOBILE ENGINE ... IT WON'T START.

PORKY (NARRATES) And then I couldn't get it to go. And I remembered after I pretty near run down the battery that Billy had taken a key. I wasn't going up there and go through a dead man's clothes to get it. So I sat there in the car, shivered all by myself till daylight.

**MUSIC: BRIDGE.**

PORKY (NARRATES) And then Ted and the crew came. Afterwards, a state cop, and everybody in the world was asking me questions.

TED Did you and Billy have a fight, Porky?

PORKY I told you we didn't, Ted.

TED But you had been drinkin'?

PORKY We had only had that little pint, Ted.

TED Ah, what was he doin' up on the fourble board?

POLICE OFFICER Did you threaten him? And did he run up there to get away from you?

PORKY Listen, cop, don't be a chump. Billy Gruenwald and I were good friends.

POLICE OFFICER Then why'd you push him off the fourble board?

PORKY I didn't, I tell ya! I ... I wasn't up there.

TED Well, what did he go up there for?

PORKY I don't know. I was asleep.

POLICE OFFICER How do you know he was up there?

PORKY I didn't say he was. You said so.  
Besides ... how would he break his neck  
if he didn't fall from way up there?

TED Well, look, Officer, I think it was just  
another accident. I mean, we haven't got  
anything on Porky and... personally, I  
don't believe he did it.

POLICE OFFICER Well, it's mighty mysterious.

TED So it is. But we got work to do. Now,  
how about it? That cement's hard down  
there and I want to start drillin' again  
and I'm short-handed. Will you let Porky  
stay here till I run in my pipe again?  
And, well, then you can take him and ask  
him questions till you're blue in the  
face.

POLICE OFFICER Well ...

TED Okay, let's get rollin'. You got steel  
up, Happy?!

HAPPY I'm all set!

TED All right. Porky. You go up on the  
fourble board.

PORKY What? Not me, Ted.

TED Aw, don't be such a boob. There's nobody  
up there to shove you overboard. Hey,

you can put a safety line around you if you want to.

SFX: MACHINERY CRANKS INTO GEAR.

TED And, besides, you're getting paid to do what you're told. I've lost too much time already! Come on, get going!

**MUSIC: ORGAN. BRIDGE. DUCKS UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

PORKY (NARRATES) So, okay, I go up on the fourble board. And you can bet I took a good gander around before I did anything else. I couldn't see a thing. So I signaled to the driller to let down the traveling block and he did. Came sailing down from up above. I was just reaching for it to pick up the first fourble of drill pipe ... gave a big jerk and the cable broke. And dropped and nearly pulled me off the fourble board.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. EFFECT.**

PORKY (NARRATES) And it landed ... right on top of Ted. And if you have any idea what a guy looks like after two tons of metal land on him from eighty feet up ... (SIGH) you keep your ideas to yourself.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. SOMBER BRIDGE.**

PORKY (NARRATES) Well, that was enough ... two accidents in a row. The whole crew quit. They ... they wasn't gonna wait for a

third. And it was Ted's money that was payin' off. There wasn't any more. And ... as far as I know, the abandoned derrick is still there. And that was twenty years ago. Oh. I forgot to tell you something. That traveling block was right in front of my face when it broke loose. It was hanging by steel cable, three quarter inch steel cable. And I saw that cable break right before my eyes. Looked just like a ... piece of string when you snap it between your fingers. I could almost see the... fingers. And you know what? There WAS something up there on the fourble board with me.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. BRIEF BRIDGE.**

PORKY

(NARRATES) And so a couple of days later, I came back. I-I don't know if there's anything in the world as desolate, as dismal, as dead-looking as an abandoned oil well rig. There it stands, like a skeleton off on a deserted side road in the bare yellow hills surrounding it and... it's the deadest thing you ever saw. I sat in my car for a long time, looking at it. Everything was just the way we left it. I looked in at the floor, the smashed traveling block was there alongside the rotary table. There was a little mutter of steam from the boiler. That was all. Then I heard a... tinkle of something as it hit the ground alongside me. I looked around. There wasn't a soul in sight. But, at my feet, was the gold ring that

Billy Gruenwald and I had found in the core of rock that came from a mile underground and from a million years ago in time.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. UP AND OUT.**

PORKY (NARRATES) And I heard a little sound, the sound of a kid crying.

SFX: A HIGH-PITCHED VOICE WAILS FORLORNLY.

PORKY (NARRATES) There wasn't any kid up there.

SFX: THE VOICE WAILS LOUDER.

PORKY (NARRATES) But I heard it again and it came from above my head and... and I ... I took out my revolver. I loaded it carefully. I started up the ladder to the fourble board. Well, there wasn't anything up there, nothing I could see.

SFX: THE VOICE WAILS EVEN LOUDER.

PORKY (NARRATES) There was a voice crying, the voice of a little kid. And there was a movement behind the rack of drill pipes and I saw the pipe move and I yelled: (CALLS OUT) Come out of there, whoever you are!

SFX: WHOEVER IT IS, IT LETS OUT A LONG, HORRIBLE HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK.

PORKY (NARRATES) Come out or I'll start shooting! Then the stand of pipes shivered and I thought, What can it be that it can handle a heavy pipe like ... like jackstraws? Then, there was a crash.

SFX: METAL PIPES CRASH AND ROLL  
AROUND THE FLOOR.

PORKY (NARRATES) The whole stand of pipe fell over and I just got out of the way in time. And I was alone ... on the fourble board ... with a ... Thing. I couldn't see it.

SFX: THE THING WAILS AGAIN.

PORKY (NARRATES) I felt the platform tremble under my feet again as something moved toward me ... I fired two or three shots.

SFX: THREE GUNSHOTS.

PORKY (NARRATES) And nothing happened. I started backwards. I knew it was following me because I could hear it meowing like a cat.

SFX: THE THING MEOWS LIKE A CAT.

PORKY (NARRATES) My feet tripped over something. I saw it was a big can of red lead that somebody had left up there. Without thinking, I picked it up and I threw it at the sound and it splashed.

MUSIC: PIANO GLISSANDO.

PORKY (NARRATES) And there it was ...

SFX: THE THING CRIES SOFTLY UNDER  
THE FOLLOWING.

PORKY (NARRATES) And I wish I ... I wish ...  
The face of a little girl, frightened.  
Crying with hunger and terror. Hands  
like a human being. And a finger...  
missing from the left hand. And a  
body... Well, I'll tell you about that.  
I told you how I'm scared of spiders.  
But I knew where it came from. It'd come  
from the bowels of the earth, come  
riding up on the drill pipe as we yanked  
it out of the well. Come to an alien  
world. And was lost.

SFX: THE THING CRIES SOFTLY UNDER  
THE FOLLOWING.

PORKY It stood there dripping with red paint,  
blood-red from head to foot, like some  
horrible dream. And it put its hand on  
my arm. Its hand was stone. Living,  
moving stone. And it looked into my  
eyes. And mewed like a lost kitten.

SFX: THE THING CRIES SOFTLY.

**MUSIC: ORGAN. BRIDGE.**

PORKY (NARRATES) Twenty years ago. I  
discovered many things about it. What it  
used for food. That it was deaf. That it  
was invisible and couldn't see people  
when it was invisible. That if you  
sprayed it with mud or paint or  
greasepaint ... make-up ... then it

could see people. And, believe me, I didn't want to see its body ... I can see that in my nightmares. But its face ... I can't help wanting to see that pathetic, little girl face. I'm afraid maybe I've fallen ... Ah, but it's very beautiful. And when it's well made-up, it's ... But making it up, rubbing greasepaint on a stone face that looks at ya and smiles and it makes sounds like a lost kitten yet. I can disguise the body in long dresses. She can't hear very well and when she's hungry, I have to stay out of her way. I found out what she likes to eat, remember? ... No, no, sit still ... (FIRMLY) Sit still, do ... (HARSHLY) Sit still or I'll have to shoot you. (LONG PAUSE) I want you to meet my wife. Or rather... my wife wants to meet you. (CALLS OUT) Mike? Mike?

SFX: THE KITCHEN DOOR OPENS.

PORKY (NARRATES) There she is.

SFX: MIKE CRIES LIKE A BABY WHO SEES THAT ITS DINNER IS READY.

PORKY (NARRATES) Come on in, dear.

MUSIC: ORGAN AND PIANO. QUIET, PLEASE THEME IN.

ANNOUNCER The title of tonight's "Quiet, Please" story is "The Thing on the Fourble Board." It was written and directed by Wyllis Cooper and featured Ernest Chappell.

ERNEST CHAPPELL And Van Sutter played Billy Gruenwald. Pat O'Malley was Ted. And Cecil Roy... was ... also a member of the cast. As usual, music for *Quiet, Please* is played by Albert Berman. Sound? Sound by our good friend Albert April. ~~Now for a word about next week, here's our writer-director, Wyllis Cooper.~~

~~WYLLIS COOPER Well, I'm reasonably sure that all the characters in tonight's story were completely fictional ... at least, I, for one, hope so. Next week, the story is called "Presto Change-O, I'm Sure".~~

ERNEST CHAPPELL And so, until next week at this same time ... I am quietly yours ... Ernest Chappell.

~~ANNOUNCER This program was heard in Canada through the facilities of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This is the Mutual Broadcasting System.~~

**MUSIC: THEME OUT.**

HOST That was "The Thing on the Fourble Board." Cooper's writing and Chappell's narration combine to produce an exquisite sense of psychological suspense. I hope you enjoyed listening.

**THE RIR BREAK**

**MUSIC: RIR THEME. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio, a program about the power and shared experience of

sound-based storytelling. With each episode, we explore classic and contemporary audio drama, reexamining radio's rich storytelling traditions and reintroducing listeners to forgotten or overlooked works that continue to resonate today. Here are some examples.

**SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO**

**TRAILER**

HOST

More information about listening opportunities is available at our website ... reimagedradio DOT fm.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN**

**DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

HOST CREDITS

HOST

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio features two episodes of *Quiet, Please*, "Nothing Behind the Door" and "The Thing on the Fourble Board." It's part of a multi-episode tribute to radio writer and director Wyllis Cooper. Thanks for listening.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, DUCK UNDER AND**

**CONTINUE.**

Re-Imagined Radio is produced in collaboration with The Electronic Literature Lab at Washington State University Vancouver.

Our programs are broadcast and streamed by partner independent community radio

stations like KXRW-FM (Vancouver, Washington), KXRY-FM (Portland, Oregon), KNOM-AM (Nome, Alaska), KAAD-FM (Sonora, California), and Galloway's Star 24 (Galloway, New Jersey).

THANKS to Marc Rose for sound design, original music, and post-production.

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FOLLOW Re-Imagined Radio on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, Blue Sky, LinkedIn ... and our YouTube channel ... [at sign] reimagedradio.

VISIT our website, reimagedradio DOT FM, for scripts and information about our episodes.

SUBSCRIBE to the Re-Imagined Radio podcast and we'll send you each new episode as soon as it's released.

I'm John Barber, producer and host. It's been a pleasure sharing this episode, with you. Thank you for listening.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK  
UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

**ANNOUNCER**

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. To learn more, visit our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) DOT fm.

Please join us for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio as we continue our exploration of sound-based storytelling.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.**