

THE FATAL MOVE

Conall Cearnach

"I cannot endure these frequent fits of terror much longer."

Written in Belfast and Bangor during the partition of Ireland, the six strange stories comprising Conall Cearnach's *The Fatal Move* are unusual documents of the time. "Cearnach" was the pseudonym of F. W. O'Connell, a peculiar Protestant divine, linguist and Irish language scholar, oddball essayist, and early national broadcaster. His sole fiction collection showcases a wide scope: the conte cruel, the ghost story, the locked-room mystery, and the science-fictional satire. What unifies the stories is O'Connell's playful, outward-looking perspective, inspired by his love of the diverse cultures and languages of the world and his home country in equal measure. A unique figure in Irish life, Cearnach's character is perhaps more present in these stories than the anxieties of the time in which they were written. For this volume, Reggie Chamberlain-King provides an extensive introduction examining O'Connell's life and works.

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PRaise FOR *THE FATAL MOVE*

*"Of the weird and creepy genre,
and very successful example of it, too."*

– The Irish Monthly

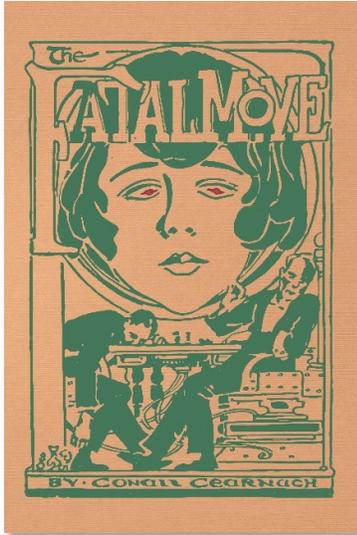
*"Conall Cearnach comes to us as a species of Allan Poe
with a touch of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle"* – Studies

"It is questionable whether morbid stories are wholesome.

One feels that when in the grip of Poe, and here

*'The Fiend That Walks Behind' cannot be recommended to
the neurasthenic, to whom the 'terror' is only too constant a reality."*

– The Irish Times



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CONALL CEARNACH (1876-1929)—
F. W. O'Connell—was a polyglot and
scholar born in Clifden, Co. Galway.
After serving as an Anglican priest, he
became the first lecturer of Celtic
Languages and Literature at Queen's
University, Bel-fast. Interested in
strange literature, O'Connell made the
first translation into Irish of Robert
Louis Stevenson's *Cás aduain an Dr
Jekyll agus Mhr Hyde* in 1929.
O'Connell died trag-ically when he
was struck by a bus in October of that
year.