

# **PIT-PROP SYNDICATE**

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Pit-Prop Syndicate by Freeman Wills Crofts

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**FREEMAN WILLS CROFTS**

**PIT-PROP  
SYNDICATE**





CRIME

**Freeman Wills Crofts**  
**The Pit-Prop**  
**Syndicate**



PENGUIN CRIME FICTION  
THE PIT-PROP SYNDICATE

Freeman Wills Crofts was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1879. He was educated privately and at the Methodist and Campbell Colleges, Belfast. In 1897 he joined the civil-engineering staff of the Belfast Counties Railway as a pupil, and after holding various positions in railway engineering, he became chief assistant engineer to the same railway—then the L.M.S. Northern Counties Committee. In 1929 he retired from railway work in order to give his whole time to writing. He wrote over thirty-nine books, including *The Cask*, *Death of a Train*, *The 12.30 from Croydon*, *The Loss of the Jane Vosper*, *The Groot Park Murder*, *Inspector French and the Starvel Tragedy*, *Fatal Venture*, *Golden Ashes*, *The Sea Mystery*, *Crime at Guldjord*, *Mystery in the English Channel*, *Inspector French's Greatest Case*, *The Cheyne Mystery* (the latter two titles are available from Penguin Books), and one religious book, *The Four Gospels in One Story*; several short stories; a play, *Sudden Death*; and a number of short plays for the British Broadcasting Corporation. In 1939 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He died in 1957.

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**PART ONE**  
**THE AMATEURS**