

The HIDDEN DOOR

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

SYNOPSIS: Colin Hewitt, writer of detective stories, finds himself plunged into a far better thriller than any he ever imagined. Reddy Turner, his hoodlum friend who went wrong, is killed in Colin's apartment by the Mask, whom Reddy was trading because that master criminal was responsible for the death of Reddy's sister. Colin has promised to deliver a letter for Reddy; he goes to Reddy's old room, finds the letter, and turns to face one of the Mask's killers. He smashes the face of the man with a curtain pole, and now walks down Sixth Avenue knowing that if he goes home he is as good as committing suicide.

Chapter Ten REDDY'S LETTER

COLIN quickened his steps, unconsciously keeping pace with his thoughts. There was Reddy's letter. He couldn't come to any final decision anyhow until he had read that, and meanwhile the obvious thing to do was to keep his tracks covered. But in any case he couldn't stay out on the street all night. Obviously again, then, a hotel. The Crossmore, for instance. It was only a few blocks away and not far from the Grand Central. Whether or not he eventually spent the rest of the night at the Crossmore did not matter; he could at least digest Reddy's letter there undisturbed and at his leisure.



"We'll try to make you comfortable, Mr. Routh."

He traversed the intervening blocks rapidly and entered the hotel. The lobby was deserted. Only a sleepy bellboy and the night clerk appeared to be on duty. Colin crossed to the desk. "This commutator stuff isn't all it's cracked up to be," he grumbled, as he registered. "Second time this month I've missed the last train!" He took out his pocketbook. "I haven't any baggage, of course, so I'll pay you now."

The clerk nodded pleasantly. "Well, it's an ill wind, you know," he said sentimentally. "We'll try to make you comfortable, Mr."—he glanced at the register—"Routh. With bath?" "Please," said Colin—and a few minutes later was in his room with the door locked behind him. And suddenly he felt very tired. What was it the doctors had said about early hours and no excitement? Oh, well—he swung an approving glance around the room—there was solid comfort here for the time being anyhow! And a bed by and by—perhaps. But Reddy's letter first!

HE threw himself into an easy chair, took the envelope from his pocket, and tore it open. It contained, as Reddy had said, a plain, sealed envelope of ordinary commercial size and two sheets of paper folded together. He laid the envelope down on the arm of his chair, and unfolded the sheets of paper. Reddy's penmanship was clear and legible. He read the closely written sheets through to the end—read them in a sort of tense haste, as though at a single glance he strove to master their entire contents. Then, with a grim smile, he searched in his pocket for a cigarette, lighted it, and reread the letter slowly, as though almost he were committing it now word for word to memory. As Reddy had said, it began without preface:

The man to whom the enclosed letter is to be delivered is somewhere on the north shore of the lower Gulf of St. Lawrence, or on the Canadian Labrador coast. He was last heard of at a place called 'Cap à l'Orage'; but I'm sure he is still down there somewhere, and I think he has been there for about a

straight now—play safe or stay it how. The time came for you to tell me to tell you that Lasarre is working for the Mask; but you will be in no danger of being taken into the limit—only he wouldn't live long if it were known he ever got it. See? That's why it isn't to be mailed to Cap à l'Orage—where he may not be. If you've good luck, and a dead man's thanks; if you don't go, remember the bargain—the letter is to be destroyed unopened, and your mouth is shut. That's all.

COLIN stared unseeingly in front of him. Mechanically he tore the two sheets into bits, and mechanically he thrust the sealed envelope into an inner recess of his pocketbook. They spoke mostly French down there, of course. That was all right. So did he. A lonely, desolate stretch of coastline. He knew something about it by hearsay. Heston Boyce had been down there on a salmon trip last year, and had described it one night at the club. The North Shore, Boyce said they always called it. A gulp mill, or so; timber-cutting; fishing. And, separated by infinite miles, a few settlements that consisted of no more than a cluster of houses. No railroad. Coastal boats from Montreal and Quebec the only source of supplies and transportation in summer—dog teams in the winter. What the devil interest could the Mask have in a locality such as that?

He'd have to write a note to Mulvey. Tell Mulvey he'd taken his advice and was off for a trip—not sure himself where he was going. Also a note to Mrs. Hiddin to keep his diggings in order while he was away. He could write them both in the morning. Tom, Tom, the Piper's son, eh? Queer! He was already Mr. Routh in the hotel register downstairs. Colin Hewitt had already dropped out of sight. But to underrate the Mask would be fatal. The railway stations would be watched. Suppose he went via Boston? Got a car in the morning, drove as far as Stamford, say, and took the train there? Yes, that would do.

(Copyright, 1933, Frank L. Packard)
Colin begins his trip, tomorrow.

APOSHIAN DEATH HELD ACCIDENTAL

SAN DIEGO, Cal., Aug. 8.—(AP)—Accidental drowning was the theory advanced today for the death of Dalbert Aposhian, the child whose mutilated body was taken from San Diego bay, in a new surprising turn of investigation of the case conducted by the sheriff's office.

A playmate of the child, whose supposed slayer has been sought for weeks, yesterday told Sheriff Ed Cooper that Dalbert had fallen into the ocean from a catwalk under a pier. A group of medical experts who re-examined the body, said they believed the slayer's companion, Jackie Confar, nine years old, told. Three of the medical experts added that it was logical to believe that the slayer had pushed the child into the ocean from a catwalk under a pier.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works. ALBANY, Ore., Aug. 8.—(AP)—Lawrence Frank, 16, died in a hospital at Lebanon today from injuries received in the accidental discharge of a shotgun. The charge mangled his arm and he died from loss of blood and shock. He and a companion were hunting grouse, state police said. Young Frank tripped over a log. There will be no inquest. Real estate or insurance—leave it to Jones. Phone 698.

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S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



WHEN YOU'RE STARVING HUNGRY AND HAVE TO CARRY A BASKET LADEN WITH THE MOST DELECTABLE PICNIC PROVISIONS AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY SIMPLY CAN'T MAKE UP THEIR MINDS WHERE THEY WANT TO EAT

TAILSPIN TOMMY—They're Well Warned!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—The Captive Ben

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Look Out, Fish!

By SOL HESS



ARCHERY CHAMPION BESTS OWN RECORD

ST. LOUIS, Aug. 8.—(AP)—Homer B. Prouty, Portland, Ore., broke his national archery record for distance in the national archery tournament here today by sending an arrow 478 yards from regular (standing) stance. Prouty used a 68-pound bow. His old mark, made in 1931, was 436 yards, 2 1/2 feet. Shooters from all parts of the country were here today for the tourney.

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BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation