

The HIDDEN DOOR

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

SYNOPSIS: Colin Hewitt, writer of detective fiction, sits in Germaine Tremblay's house, catching her movements with interest, and reflecting. He has come to Cap & O'rage, on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to escape the heat. New York killer, and to deliver a mysterious letter to one Joe Lazarre. Colin calls himself Donald Howard, and though he lies to Germaine's friend, he is much with the Tremblays. Germaine thinks Lazarre may be at a fishing club nine miles from Cap & O'rage.

Chapter 14 THE FOG

EVEN from upstairs in his room at the Hotel du Canada, owing to numerous stovepipe holes and the thin sheathing between the rooms, Colin could hear everything that was going on in all parts of Madame Frérier's establishment.

He could hear them talking down in the general store, which also embraced the post office. Swapping gossip, asking for peas, or flour, or whatever the need of the moment might be—but he had never heard anyone asking for a letter for Joe Lazarre. Discreet inquiries had convinced him after three days that no one in Cap & O'rage either knew or had heard of Joe Lazarre.

The club therefore was the only remaining hope in this neighborhood. Dr. Tremblay had stated that on the occasion when he had visited the club, he had seen only his patient, a man named Gregg, and Mr. Kenniston. He had not heard the name of Lazarre mentioned; but that really meant nothing. This had been several weeks ago, just before Dr. Tremblay had taken ill.

Colin drew deeply on his cigarette. Failing the club, what was he to do? Wander from place to place along the coast? That had been his original plan, but somehow now he did not want to wander—from Cap & O'rage. But Lazarre must be found.

It was not merely a matter of delivering the letter in the inside pocket of his coat. It was what the possibilities of direct contact with Lazarre might mean. Colin did not like this assumed-name business—he liked it less day by day, and hour by hour. The urge grew to be Colin Hewitt again, to resume his normal life. And the Maak stood between! Lazarre might well prove the "open sesame."

He looked up. She was laughing at him. "What a brown study!" she exclaimed. "And, really, we're not going across the Gulf to Gaspe, you know. You are steering very badly, sir!"

"So I am," he admitted as he set the boat on its course again. "I'm sorry."

"I'm not going to offer you the proverbial penny," she said. "I'm going to give you something else to think about. Look over there! Out beyond the end of the point that we're heading for."

A thin, white mist was creeping in from seaward, but there did not seem to be anything at all ominous about it. He glanced overhead. It was cloudy, of course. But it had been the first opportunity of making the trip to the club, and Germaine had certainly had no misgivings about the weather for it was she, in fact, who had proposed that they should go this afternoon.

"You don't think it amounts to anything, do you?" he asked. She shook her head cheerfully. "It's awfully hard to tell," she answered. "You know what I told you about fogs coming up around here. And a fog, one of our really, truly fogs, I mean, isn't nice."

COLIN thought he had detected a hint of uneasiness in her voice. It disturbed him. He did not need to be told that it would be an emphatically unpleasant experience for her to be lost out here in a fog. It would be far better to leave the question of Lazarre and the club until tomorrow or even the next day.

"So a really, truly fog isn't nice, eh?" he grinned. "Well, then, let's forget the club. I suggest that we turn back."

"Suggestion overruled!" She was very firm, regarding him sternly—laughter twitching at her lips. "But I only meant to case you thought we were in for it," he explained. "I know." She nodded her head. "And that's just exactly the point. If we're in for a real fog, the very last thing to do is to turn back now, for the simple reason that we wouldn't get back. We'd be blanketed in no time with all sense of direction lost, and as likely to be

heading out into the Gulf or into the transatlantic steamer tracks as any where else. Do you know what the Bonaventure does in case of fog?"

"No," Colin admitted. "I'm afraid I don't."

"I'll tell you, then. She anchors and waits. The Gulf produces the genuine article in fogs, and we yield to no one, not even London, in that respect."

"Quite! I see!" he agreed. "But not being able to drop anchor in deep water, and not being the Bonaventure, what do we do under such circumstances? Wend our way homeward by skirting the shore, and—"

"And almost certainly wrecking our boat!" she interjected. "For the coastline to be of any use as a guide, don't you see how close in we would have to keep? And there are tides here, and half-covered rocks, and shoals."

"Well, then?" he challenged a little helplessly.

"Well," she smiled at him, "we go ashore before it is too late—and, like the Bonaventure and Captain Rainville, wait."

Colin touched his cap. "All right, skipper!" he said humbly. "What's the course?"

"No change," she said. "Straight for the point. We're nearer there than anywhere else now anyhow. It will take us about fifteen minutes, and by that time we'll know. These thin mists often disappear almost as quickly as they come, and if that proves to be the case in this instance, we'll continue on around the point and make for the club just as we intended to do. If it gets bad, we'll land."

"Right!" Colin responded. "It wasn't getting any better out there to seaward. His eyes swept the coastline in turn. They were a longish way out. His lips tightened a little. He did not like the way she was speeding up the engine.

Five minutes passed. A fleecy patch of mist drifted across the bow of the boat. It was growing thick out over the Gulf—gray-white, eerie-looking. The point, though they had been approaching it rapidly, was less distinct.

"I fancy we're in for it," Colin observed seriously.

"Yes," she said, "and for one of those real ones I was speaking about. I'm afraid. We'll have to land."

The boat sped on. The shore line began to lose its character—to seaward, nothing but that gray-white wall. It grew thicker still—a pall settling down remorselessly everywhere around them. The point itself, their objective, while still visible, was, close though they were to it now, only a hazy outline.

Germaine throttled down the engine to half speed.

"You called me 'skipper' a little while ago, I believe?" she questioned with mock austerity.

"Absolutely!" he affirmed. "Very well, then," she commanded, "up forward with you! It's just about low tide, so keep your eyes open for partly covered rocks, and also for a sandy spot to beach the boat. Let me know when you have way enough on to make the shore."

"Aye, aye, sir!" he said heartily, and making his way forward, took up his allotted station in the bow. It was incredible, the opaqueness of this cursed fog and the suddenness with which it had descended upon them! He strained his eyes ahead. The boat's length seemed to be about the limit of visibility; but that looked like a sandy stretch over there a little to the left. He steered for it.

"All right!" he called out. "Shut her off! Way enough!"

And then the boat struck—struck with an impact that caused her to quiver from bow to stern. One of those internal rocks, half covered, that Germaine had warned him about! However, it had only been a glancing blow. The boat slipped off now into deep water again, and still with some way on her forged on toward the beach.

"All right," he called out again. "Just a bump! No harm done!"

There was no answer. No good-natured quip such as he had expected. He jerked his head around, looking over his shoulder.

He could see the length of the boat well enough—the fog, dense as it had become, did not preclude that. She was lying there motionless on the bottom of the boat beside the engine.

Beagle

BEAGLE, Aug. 11.—(Special)—Boy Scouts and their scout master, Mr. Lucas, spent July 30 swimming in Evans creek at the old mill dam. Over one hundred relatives, friends and neighbors gathered at the new

home of Mr. and Mrs. Boyles July 29 and enjoyed dancing. The music was furnished by Mr. Brown and Mrs. Richardson of Medford and Joe Sproule of this place. Refreshments were served at midnight. There were relatives from Portland and Medford and friends from Sams Valley and Table Rock present. All welcome Mr. and Mrs. Boyles and family to the neighborhood.

Freddy Stephens of Medford returned home after spending a week visiting at the Nelson home. Ray Blaine is binding his grain this week. Mr. and Mrs. Davis are selling their stock and farm implements as they expect to return to California. July 30, Mr. and Mrs. Marion Young and family of Willow Springs and the Sanderson family picnicked

on Rogue river at the Dodge bridge. Charles Mulholland and family and Mrs. Dennison and baby daughter were among those who attended the barbecue Wednesday at Medford. Del Norte Cream company was making a canvass here the last of the week. Mr. Satter has been working at the Dodge ranch the past few days putting up hay.

Milton and Lawrence Sanderson attended Sunday school and called on friends in Beese Creek Sunday. Scouts of Troop 14 and their quarter, E. B. Lucas, hiked to near Morrison creek on Evans creek and spent Saturday night and Sunday in their camp. They improved the camp by building tables and benches and enjoyed cooking their meals over a campfire, also swimming.

Ina Pearl Lucas spent the week end at the Seemiller home visiting Claudia Stalling. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sanderson and daughter, Thelma, went to Huckleberry mountain Sunday. They found the berries would not be ripe for two or three weeks. They returned via Derby and called on Mr. and Mrs. Ed Eldrid and Mrs. French.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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ONE ARMFUL

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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TAILSPIN TOMMY—The "Jinx" Of Buried Treasure

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Not Licked Yet!

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Oh, How De Do

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



FEW FRATERNITIES PROTECT INSIGNIA

SALEM, Ore. (UP)—Last winter, responding to supposed public pressure, the Oregon legislature passed

a law providing for registration of fraternal insignia. The registration gives organizations protection similar to that afforded by a trade mark. The secretary of state's office, to handle the work, prepared for heavy business, purchased an enormous \$13.50 record book. So far two insignia have been registered, with fees of \$2.50 each.

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