

The HIDDEN DOOR

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

SYNOPSIS: Colin Hewitt, writer, at last picked up the trail of the Mask, chief of New York's underworld. The Mask has threatened Colin's life; now, by luck, Colin finds himself disguised as Clark Lunn, a crook, admitted into one of the Mask's own gangs. He learns from Buck O'Mara, in command of Colin's group, that the gang will be used against the Condon run runner who was responsible for wrecking the Mask's bus counterfeiting plant on the St. Lawrence. Buck does not know that Colin saw the fight on the St. Lawrence, and rescued Joe Lawrence, one of the Mask's men, in the house that he would prove useful. But he did not, and Colin had been forced to leave him.

Chapter 37

SURPRISE FOR DOLLAIRE

THE storm, though still hesitant, was as threatening as ever. The banked clouds, with no sign of moon or stars, were like a dead black ceiling overhead. There was a slight sea on, but not enough to impede progress—the boat was making near to thirty knots.

To port and to starboard, one on either side, were the dark shapes of two other boats, running without lights, and mostly discernible by reason of the flying spray flung from their bows as they cleaved through the water.

Colin stood in the shelter of the

minute that passed, bringing the end that much nearer, he liked it less.

This wheelhouse against which he leaned was steel, bullet-proof out of compulsion to the marksmanship of any revenue boat that might at any time be inquisitive enough and inconsiderate enough to stage a pursuit. A rum-running craft—like those others to port and starboard.

Ahead, somewhere beyond the 12-mile limit, lay Dollaire's schooner, the Alouette. The aim was to repay Dollaire in his own coin, only in this case neither Dollaire nor any one of his men would escape. A massacre—and the men down there in the cabin, fingering sub-machine guns, had flicked their lips and blasphemed in glee at the thought of it!

There had been, no thought of putting Dollaire on the spot at Spinell's last night. That would have been, it now seemed, neither subtle enough nor, in retribution, adequate enough to quench the Mask's thirst for revenge.

Benny Malone and Harry the Lynx had been detailed there, not to watch Dollaire, but as bodyguards for Helmie Schwarm—and Helmie Schwarm had been there to bait the trap that would write a gory finish to the careers of Dollaire and his entire crew.



Colin stood in the shelter of the wheelhouse.

wheelhouse out of the sweep of the wind—the only superstructure that the craft possessed. There was a small cabin aft below deck where some seven or eight men were gathered—several of whom had been engaged in assembling a number of sub-machine guns, while the rest, with blasphemous and obscene comments, looked on. It had been stuffy and hot in the cabin—and something about it, a fogginess not merely of field air, had driven him on deck.

His face was hard and set. He was in a situation that revolted him in every fiber of his being, that turned his heart sick with dread—but from which there was no escape. As Benny Malone had said: "You got the okay today. You said you wanted it. Well, you're in. You're on the payroll now."

It was quite true. He had asked for it—and he had got it. Where had he expected Clark Lunn to draw the line? Nowhere—if he harbored any hope of running down the Mask! Well, the end justified the means, didn't it? His hands tightened, clenched. He was not so sure. For the moment he was mentally off-balance.

Tonight it was murder and pillage—at thought of which his soul reeled. And tonight he was sailing under the Mask's colors, one of Buck O'Mara's mob, one of those that Reddy had termed the "little murder organization" that the Mask always kept on tap.

THEY, Buck O'Mara, Benny Malone, and himself, had picked up a waiting car a block away from the Wine Press, and had driven to somewhere on Long Island—just where, he did not know. There a small army of men had embarked, and these three fast motor cruisers had put to sea.

That had been considerably less than an hour ago, but in that time, both through the talk that had gone on around him, and because Buck O'Mara, once well started on his way, had been more communicative, he had acquired a very sure and certain knowledge of what was afoot. He did not like it—and with every

HEIMIE SCHWARM, haggling patiently and craftily, had at last agreed to Dollaire's greedy and somewhat exorbitant price for the Alouette's cargo; and Dollaire had fixed a rendezvous—given Heimie Schwarm a position out here where the schooner would be waiting at ten o'clock tonight—the position that Buck O'Mara in turn had handed on to Klengel, Smudge Kilrea, and George Napp, the skippers of the three boats that were speeding abreast of one another now in eager haste to keep the last rendezvous that Dollaire would ever make.

It must be almost ten o'clock now. At the speed the boats were traveling, it could not take long for them to reach their objective unless the Alouette was at some considerable distance up or down the coast from the point of their departure—which was not likely.

Colin drew his hand across his forehead. It came away wet—not with spray. The other two boats, carrying Heimie Schwarm's experienced run runners, were to look after the disposal of the Alouette's cargo and the schooner itself; this boat that he was on carried the Mask's murder squad, of which he was one, with Buck O'Mara in command.

The businesslike, snub-nosed automatic with which he had been supplied bulged in his pocket. The job of Buck O'Mara's mob had nothing to do with the disposal of the cargo—their job was merely to put Dollaire and all his crew on the spot and then return to shore. Hideous—even if it were by way of retaliation! Dollaire, suspecting nothing, would be taken by surprise, and he and his men mowed down. And he, Colin, must appear to take an active part in the killings. There was no way out of that. No bullet of his, of course, would find its mark anywhere; but if he were caught at that sort of thing, or the slightest suspicion was aroused that he was playing a passive rôle, his life would not be worth a second's purchase.

A hideous dilemma!

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Tomorrow, Colin is given his first assignment.

VACUUM CLEANER FIRES PAJAMAS

SALEM, Ore., Sept. 8.—(UP)—People who use a vacuum cleaner should

not wear pajamas in so doing, it was inferred here today.

A vacuum cleaner in operation at the home of Earl Downing of Westfir, Lane county, drew up a match head; a report to the fire marshal's office revealed. The match ignited, burning the cleaner bag and damaging a pair of pajamas. Insurance covered the loss of \$33.33.

however, and clearly indicate whether the pajamas were "in transit."

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M-W STOCKHOLDERS ELECT NEW LEADER

CHICAGO, Sept. 8.—(UP)—Joseph Cook, San Francisco industrialist, was

elect president last night of the new Montgomery Ward stockholders' association.

Cook immediately issued a statement in which he declared that the company's loss for the 13-month period ending January 31, 1933, totaled \$9,507,000, or \$3,820,216.25 more than the "so-called operating loss reported and thus actually were practically the same as in the previous 13-month

period, regardless of any changes in bookkeeping methods."

HEBRON, Neb.—(UP)—Recognizing the need for readjustment of educational costs in depression times, the administration of Hebron college here have announced that all text books will be provided students free of cost. Some fees have been lowered and others eliminated entirely.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GUYAS WILLIAMS



THE RETURN OF THE LAPPETS FROM THEIR VACATION LATE ONE EVENING CAUSED QUITE A STIR IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD BECAUSE THEY HAD LEFT THE KEY OF THEIR HOUSE WITH FRED PERLEY, WHO HAD HIDDEN IT IN SOME SAFE PLACE AND HAD COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN WHERE HE HAD PUT IT

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GUYAS WILLIAMS

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Down—But Not Out!

By WILLI CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Shoot The Works!

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—Blue Blood

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



Penn School Roll Up.
HARRISBURG, Pa.—(UP)—Average daily attendance in Pennsylvania schools has increased 20 per cent to 1,738,000 in 10 years, according to the department of instruction. Net enrollment increased more than 10 per cent in the same period, from 1,703,000 pupils in 1923 to 1,967,000 in 1932.

State Hen's Did Good Job.
HARRISBURG, Pa.—(UP)—The 10,122 laying hens kept on state institution chicken lots provided 1,772,834 eggs for inmates of the institutions last year, the department of welfare reported. The average production for the year was 173 eggs per bird, as compared with 163 eggs for the previous season.

LET'S PULL TOGETHER!

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NRA

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