

# The HIDDEN DOOR

BY FRANK L. PACKARD

...SPY: The Mask has killed Reddy Turner in Colin Hestit's apartment, and wounded Colin, a writer of detective fiction. Reddy had executed a promise from Colin that should Reddy be "put on the spot" Colin would try to deliver a letter Reddy had left hidden in his room. Reddy had hoped to "get" the Mask, who was responsible for the death of Reddy's sister. Now the Mask telephones Colin on his first day out of the hospital to say that the writer has nothing to fear, provided he does not meddle. Detective Sergeant Tom Mulvey is in the room at the time.

## Chapter Six DANGEROUS QUEST

DETECTIVE SERGEANT MULVEY jerked his hand toward the telephone instrument.

"Why don't you do what you'd do in a story?" he inquired with a short laugh.

"What's that?"

"Some of us trying frantically to trace the telephone call."

Colin shook his head.

"I wouldn't do that in a story," he said. "Granting the Mask even a modest degree of intelligence, and I rank him far above that, it would be obviously useless. The call came from some place like the Grand Central where there are a number of public booths—not from a drugstore where there is only a single booth and where he might have been noticed and a description of him obtained."

"Check!" grinned Detective Sergeant Mulvey. "Fair enough! Well, what did he say?"

"He complained about my intimacy with you," replied Colin dryly. "He said the reason he shot me was due to the possibility that Reddy might have given me some inside information which I in turn would hand over to the police, but that the police work on the case had been so ridiculous that he was convinced I knew nothing that would be of any value to you."

"I'll remember that when I get my hands on him!" snapped Sergeant Mulvey. "What else?"

"He said I had nothing more to fear from him providing I did not meddle, but that otherwise I would not live twenty-four hours. He suggested that instead of spending my time with you I go away somewhere—for my health."

"Anything more?"

Colin smiled a little provocatively. "Only a personal fling at you," he said. "He seems to be keeping pretty close tabs on what is going on. He knew you were here tonight, and he knew where we were and what we were doing this afternoon. He said that even Detective Sergeant Mulvey might have known he had never had his picture taken as Colonel Hargreaves."

SERGEANT MULVEY, pricked, bit violently on the stub of his cigar.

"Oh, yeah?" he drawled. "Well, I've known of an identification or two being pulled off that way with less to go on. But forget that! So he warned you to lay off, did he?"

Colin nodded.

"Well, that's one point on which I agree with him," announced Sergeant Mulvey decisively. "From tonight you're through. This is a police job."

"Reddy said it wasn't."

"Yes—and you know what happened to Reddy! Well, it's not going to happen to you if I can help it. Look here, I know how you feel about both Reddy and the sister you knew as a kid, to say nothing of anything on your own account, and that you'd let everything go to hell, yourself included, to get the bird that did it."

"But there isn't anything more you can do. You've done all you can. You've told us all you know. You're out of the picture from now on. It ain't going to be healthy for you to hobnob around with me—and you're not going to get a chance to, anyway, until this case is cleaned up."

"Whatever I think of this Mask swine, I'm not kidding myself on one point. He's a killer. You get away from here—take a good long trip."

"Run away, you mean?" inquired Colin thinly.

"Run away nothing!" snorted Sergeant Mulvey. "It ain't as though you were shirking anything by going, or could accomplish anything by staying. And, besides everything else, you need a change, and you need it bad. You ain't at a long way yet."

Colin was silent for a moment.

"It's human nature," he said

anally with a queer smile. "to be afraid of appearing to be afraid. And I have now been threatened. As a matter of fact, however, I have been thinking for some time of going away as soon as I got out of the hospital."

"The first part of what you say," declared Sergeant Mulvey forcibly, "is the bunk where you are concerned. What do you care if this Mask guy thinks he's put one over on you—there's nobody else to make a chorus of it. As for the second part, it's the best news I've had since I heard the depression was



He found a bunch of skeleton keys. over. Don't weaken, but where were you thinking of going?"

Colin was thinking of a certain pole.

"I haven't the faintest idea," he said.

"Well, no matter," said Detective Sergeant Mulvey. "Go somewhere! I've got to go home." He picked up his hat. "That's a go, eh?"

Colin walked with the other to the door.

"Well, perhaps," he said.

"Mix on the 'perhaps' stuff!" shot back Detective Sergeant Mulvey. "I'll run you out of town myself, if I have to!"

Colin laughed.

"We'll see," he said. "You're a good scout, Tim. Good-night."

"So are you—but don't play the fool!" returned Sergeant Mulvey. "Good-night."

Colin closed the door, and re-entering the room, pulled out one of the lower drawers of his desk, from which, hidden under a pile of odds and ends, he produced a bunch of skeleton keys. He looked at his watch.

It was twenty-seven minutes past twelve.

For a moment, his brows knitted, Colin stood there staring at the keys in his hand. Then, abruptly, he thrust them into his pocket, selected a soft felt hat from the stand, switched off the lights, opened the door, stepped out in the warm June night, and locked the door behind him.

And then for an instant he remained motionless.

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Monday, Colin starts on a dangerous mission.

and Mrs. F. C. Homes will have charge of the ladies' and group contests. Swimming will be a main attraction. H. E. committee named for next meeting is Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Homes, Mr. and Mrs. Val Inlow, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hash, A. Edwards and Floyd Carter.

It was decided for the program for next meeting that Mrs. Lois Thomp-

son and Miss Glenna Stevens would entertain with reading and music. This will be an open meeting and everyone is invited.

Grangers and friends enjoyed the following program: Song, Grange; talk, Ashland chief of police, C. P. Talent on work accomplished by his force, and assuring the Grangers they were willing to cooperate; violin duet

by Miss Ellen Galey and Miss Floy Young, accompanied by Miss Anderson; reading, Mrs. Wade Wallis; the Pool sisters, two songs; Mr. Pool entertained with two violin selections, with his daughter Lillian at the piano.

Refreshments were served and old-fashioned dancing enjoyed. Mr. Pool and daughter furnished the music.

Lake Creek Grange.

At the last meeting of Lake Creek Grange final arrangements for the joint picnic with Phoenix Grange, August 6, were made.

The picnic place is near the Henry Meyer cabin, situated directly below the Grange hall. Ample grounds have been procured for the kitchen ball game and other sports, and an in-

vised spot for lunch has been selected. Lake Creek Grangers will meet at their hall Saturday to make preliminary preparations for the picnic.

Members of the civilian conservation camp in Sequoia national park area inaugurated a contest to determine who could kill the greatest number of rattlesnakes.

Oregon Weather  
Unsettled tonight with lower temperature in next portion; Friday fair, but overcast on the coast; moderate southwest winds offshore, becoming northwesterly.

Gov. Miriam A. (Ma) Ferguson of Texas decided to do without a vacation this year, due to pressure of official business.

## S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Anybody Here Seen Father?

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



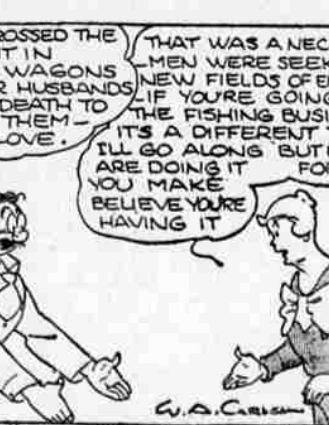
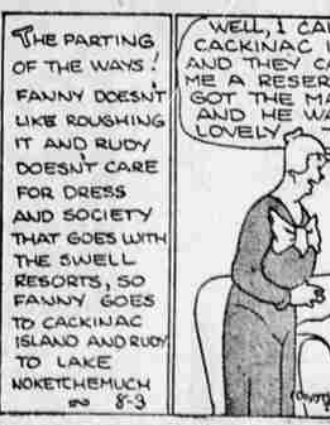
## BOUND TO WIN—An Exchange of "Pleasant" Words!

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—Two Sides To A Question

By SOL HESS



## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



## THE GRANGE

Bellview Grange. Bellview Grange met in the clubhouse August 1, with 53 members present. Executive committee, Wade Wallis, L. D. Meecey and F. C.

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