

the GOLD BUG

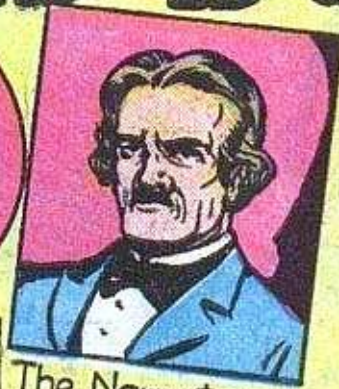
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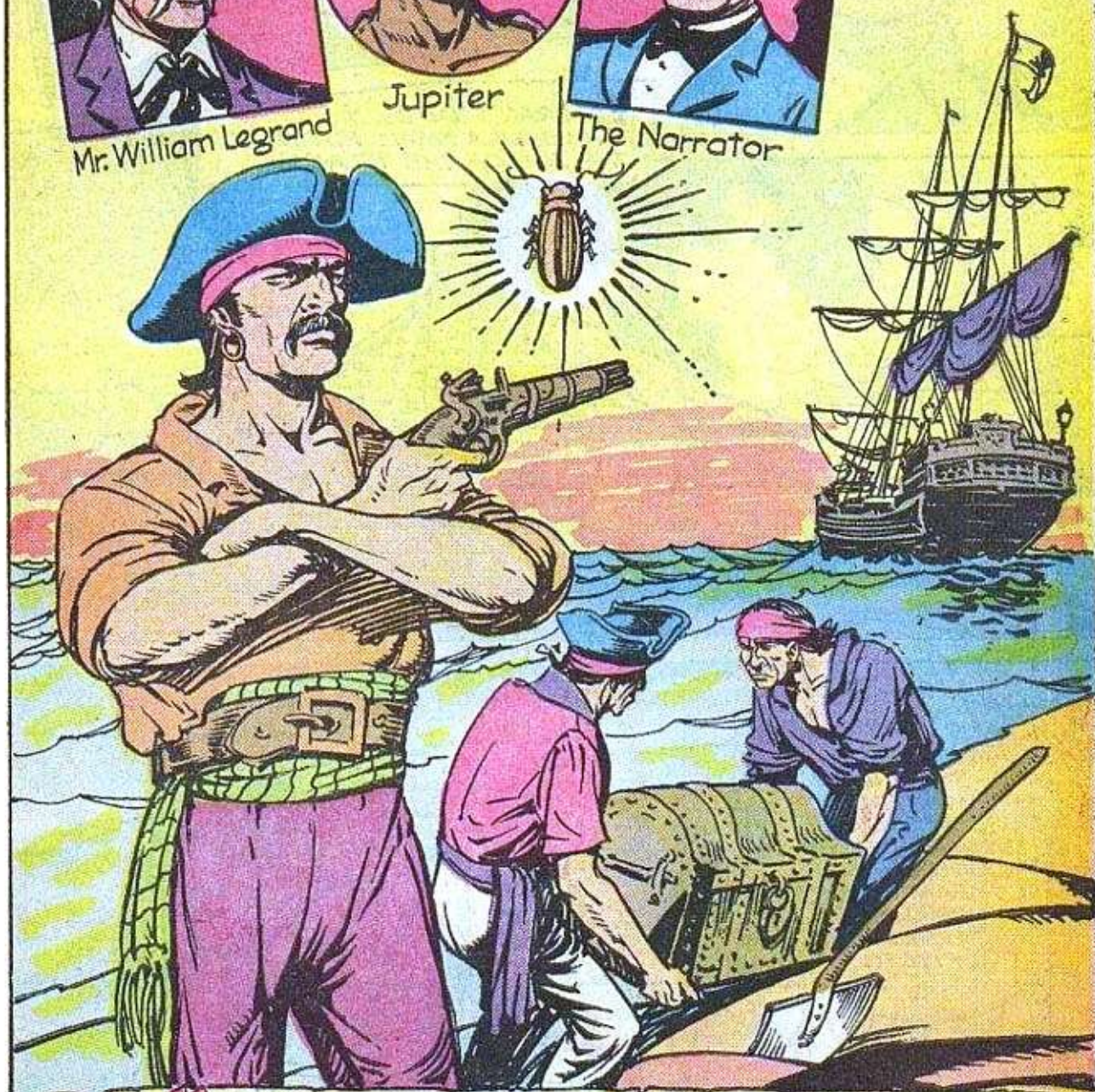
Mr. William Legrand



Jupiter



The Narrator



YOU UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE HEARD THE STORY OF CAPTAIN KIDD AND HIS FABULOUS TREASURE. BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT A GOODLY PORTION OF THAT TREASURE WAS AT ONE TIME BURIED NEAR CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA? MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE WHILE I TELL YOU THE STORY OF THE GOLD BUG AND CAPTAIN KIDD'S BURIED TREASURE.

MANY YEARS AGO, I CONTRACTED AN INTIMACY WITH A MR. WILLIAM LEGRAND. HE HAD ONCE BEEN WEALTHY BUT A SERIES OF MISFORTUNES HAD REDUCED HIM TO WANT.



WE LEFT NEW ORLEANS TO AVOID THE MORTIFICATION OF HIS DISASTERS AND TOOK UP RESIDENCE AT SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, NEAR CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. THIS ISLAND IS ABOUT THREE MILES LONG, AND AT NO POINT EXCEEDS A QUARTER OF A MILE IN BREADTH.



LEGRAND HAD BUILT HIMSELF A SMALL HUT NEAR THE END OF THE ISLAND.



HIS CHIEF AMUSEMENTS WERE GUNNING AND FISHING, OR COLLECTING SPECIMENS OF BUGS. IN THESE EXCURSIONS, HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A SERVANT CALLED JUPITER.



ONE UNUSUALLY CHILLY DAY, I CALLED AT THE HUT AND RAPPED AT THE DOOR. GETTING NO REPLY, I UNLOCKED THE DOOR AND ENTERED. A WELCOME FIRE WAS BLAZING UPON THE HEARTH.



SOMETIME LATER, MY HOSTS RETURNED! LEGRAND WAS IN ONE OF HIS FITS OF ENTHUSIASM. HE HAD SECURED, WITH JUPITER'S ASSISTANCE, A BUG WHICH HE BELIEVED TO BE TOTALLY NEW.

AH, IF I'D ONLY KNOWN YOU WERE HERE. COMING HOME, I MET AN OFFICER FROM THE FORT AND LENT HIM THE BUG. YOU'LL SEE IT TOMORROW.

IT'S A GOLD BUG; EVERY BIT OF HIM IS SOLID GOLD. NEVER FELT SO HEAVY A BUG IN MY LIFE.



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

I'LL SHOW YOU.



LEGRAND DREW FROM HIS WAISTCOAT A SCRAP OF DIRTY PAPER AND MADE UPON IT A ROUGH DRAWING.

AS I TOOK THE DRAWING, A GROWL WAS HEARD AT THE DOOR. AS JUPITER OPENED IT, LEGRAND'S DOG RUSHED IN. HE LOADED ME WITH CARESSES, FOR I HAD SHOWN HIM MUCH ATTENTION UPON PREVIOUS VISITS.



WHEN THE DOG HAD FINALLY QUIETED DOWN, I TURNED TO LEGRAND'S SKETCH...

THIS IS A STRANGE BUG. IT RESEMBLES A SKULL, OR A DEATH'S HEAD.

A DEATH'S HEAD? OH--YES--WELL, IT HAS SOME-THING OF THAT APPEARANCE ON PAPER, NO DOUBT.



PERHAPS SO, BUT LEGRAND, I FEAR YOU ARE NO ARTIST. I MUST WAIT UNTIL I SEE THE BEETLE MYSELF.

WELL, I DON'T KNOW--I DRAW FAIRLY WELL.



YOU ARE JOKING.



WHERE ARE THE ANTENNAE* YOU DESCRIBE THIS BEETLE AS HAVING ?

I MADE THEM AS DISTINCT AS THEY ARE IN THE ORIGINAL INSECT, AND I PRESUME THAT IS SUFFICIENT.



*FEELERS IN FRONT OF HEAD

5 RETURNED THE SKETCH TO HIM. LE-GRAND'S ILL HUMOR PUZZLED ME. AS FOR THE DRAWING, THERE WERE POSITIVELY NO ANTENNAE VISIBLE, AND THE DRAWING DID LOOK LIKE A DEATH'S HEAD.



6 LEGRAND WAS ABOUT TO THROW THE PAPER IN THE FIRE WHEN A CASUAL GLANCE AT THE DESIGN SEEMED SUDDENLY TO RIVET HIS ATTENTION.



7 HE TOOK A CANDLE FROM THE TABLE AND SEATED HIMSELF IN THE FARTHEST CORNER OF THE ROOM. AGAIN HE MADE AN ANXIOUS EXAMINATION OF THE PAPER, TURNING IT IN ALL DIRECTIONS.



8 PRESENTLY, HE DEPOSITED THE PAPER IN HIS WRITING DESK, WHICH HE LOCKED. AFTER A LITTLE WHILE, I TOOK MY LEAVE.





If you can in any way make it, come over with Jupiter. Do come. I wish to see you tonight upon business of importance.
Ever Yours,
William Legrand





I SENT FOR YOU THAT I MIGHT HAVE YOUR COUNSEL AND ASSISTANCE IN FURTHERING THE VIEWS OF FATE AND OF THE BUG--

MY DEAR LEGRAND, YOU'RE NOT WELL. YOU SHALL GO TO BED AND I'LL REMAIN WITH YOU UNTIL YOU GET OVER THIS. YOU'RE FEVERISH AND--

I'M AS WELL AS I CAN EXPECT TO BE UNDER THE EXCITEMENT WHICH I SUFFER. IF YOU WISH ME WELL, YOU'LL HELP RELIEVE ME OF THIS EXCITEMENT.

HOW IS THIS TO BE DONE?



VERY EASILY. JUPITER AND I ARE GOING UPON AN EXPEDITION INTO THE HILLS, UPON THE MAINLAND. WE SHALL NEED THE AID OF SOME PERSON IN WHOM WE CAN CONFIDE. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WE CAN TRUST.

I'LL GO ALONG ONLY IF YOU PROMISE THAT YOU WILL RETURN HOME AND FOLLOW MY ADVICE WHEN THIS BUG BUSINESS IS SETTLED.



I PROMISE.

ALL RIGHT... I'LL GO.

WE STARTED ABOUT FOUR O'CLOCK. JUPITER INSISTED UPON CARRYING THE SCYTHE AND SPADES, FOR FEAR, IT SEEMED TO ME, OF TRUSTING EITHER IMPLEMENT TO LEGRAND. I HAD THE LANTERN. LEGRAND TWIRLED THE BUG FROM A BIT OF WHIPCORD WITH THE ART OF A CONJURER.*



*A MAGICIAN

WE CROSSED THE CREEK AT THE HEAD OF THE ISLAND BY MEANS OF A SKIFF. ASCENDING THE HIGH GROUNDS OF THE MAINLAND, WE PROCEEDED IN A NORTHWESTERLY DIRECTION, THROUGH A TRACT OF COUNTRY EXCESSIVELY WILD AND DESOLATE...



THE SUN WAS JUST SETTING WHEN WE ENTERED A DENSELY WOODED REGION, INTERSPERSED WITH HUGE CRAGS THAT APPEARED TO LIE LOOSELY UPON THE SOIL, AND IN MANY CASES PREVENTED FROM FALLING INTO THE VALLEYS BELOW MERELY BY THE SUPPORT OF THE TREES AGAINST WHICH THEY RECLINED.



IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO FORCE OUR WAY THROUGH THE BRAMBLES BUT FOR THE SCYTHE.

JUPITER CLEARED A PATH FOR US TO THE FOOT OF AN ENORMOUSLY TALL TULIP-TREE... IT STOOD WITH SOME EIGHT OR TEN OAKS AND FAR SURPASSED THEM ALL IN THE BEAUTY OF ITS FOLIAGE AND FORM, IN THE WIDE SPREAD OF ITS BRANCHES, AND IN THE GENERAL MAJESTY OF ITS APPEARANCE.





CAN YOU CLIMB IT, JUPITER?

I CAN CLIMB ANY TREE YOU EVER SAW, MR. LEGRAND.



THEN UP WITH YOU, FOR IT WILL SOON BE TOO DARK TO SEE WHAT WE ARE ABOUT.

HOW FAR UP MUST I GO?



GET UP TO THE MAIN TRUNK FIRST, AND THEN I'LL TELL YOU WHICH WAY TO GO-- AND HERE-- TAKE THIS BEETLE WITH YOU!



WHICH WAY, NOW?

GO UP THE LARGEST BRANCH-- THE ONE ON THIS SIDE!



FIVE!

HOW MANY LIMBS HAVE YOU PASSED?

GO ONE HIGHER! IF YOU SEE ANYTHING STRANGE, LET ME KNOW.



NOW I HAD NO DOUBT OF MY FRIEND'S INSANITY. I BECAME ANXIOUS TO GET HIM HOME. WHILE I WAS PONDERING WHAT TO DO, JUPITER'S VOICE WAS HEARD AGAIN...



WHOO! WHAT IS THIS UPON THIS TREE?



IT'S A SKULL; SOMEBODY LEFT IT UP HERE IN THE TREE.

WHAT IS IT?

LET THE BEETLE THROUGH THE LEFT EYE OF THE SKULL AND LOWER IT TO THE GROUND!



LOOK OUT BELOW; HERE IT COMES!



THE BEETLE WAS NOW VISIBLE AND GLISTENED LIKE A GLOBE OF BURNISHED GOLD IN THE LAST RAYS OF THE SETTING SUN, LEGRAND TOOK A SCYTHE AND BEGAN CLEARING A CIRCULAR SPACE ABOUT THREE OR FOUR YARDS IN DIAMETER JUST BENEATH THE INSECT.

HE ORDERED JUPITER TO LET GO OF THE STRING, DRIVING A PEG INTO THE GROUND AT THE SPOT WHERE THE BEETLE FELL. HE NOW PRODUCED A TAPE-MEASURE FROM HIS POCKET.



HE UNROLLED IT IN THE DIRECTION ALREADY ESTABLISHED BY THE TWO POINTS OF THE PEG AND THE TREE FOR THE DISTANCE OF FIFTY FEET.



THEN WE BEGAN TO DIG. WE DUG STEADILY FOR TWO HOURS. LITTLE WAS SAID. SUDDENLY, WE UNCOVERED A MASS OF HUMAN BONES, A LARGE SPANISH KNIFE AND SEVERAL LOOSE GOLD PIECES.



WE NOW WORKED IN EARNEST. TEN MINUTES LATER, WE UNEARTHED AN OBLONG WOODEN CHEST. THE ONLY FASTENINGS OF THE LID CONSISTED OF TWO SLIDING BOLTS.



TREMBLING WITH ANXIETY, WE THREW BACK THE BOLTS. IN AN INSTANT, A TREASURE OF INCALCULABLE VALUE LAY GLEAMING BEFORE US, THERE FLASHED UPWARD A GLOW AND A GLARE FROM A CONFUSED HEAP OF GOLD AND JEWELS THAT DAZZLED OUR EYES.





PRESENTLY, LE-GRAND BURIED HIS NAKED ARM UP TO THE ELBOW IN THE GOLD AND JEWELS AS IF ENJOYING THE LUXURY OF A BATH.

AND ALL THIS CAME FROM THAT GOLD BUG! THAT PRETTY GOLD BUG!

WE LIGHTENED THE BOX FOR CARRYING AND LEFT THE DOG TO GUARD THE ARTICLES WE LEFT BEHIND.



NOW MIND YOU, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, AND DON'T MOVE FROM THIS SPOT.

WE HURRIEDLY MADE FOR HOME WITH THE CHEST, REACHING THERE ABOUT ONE A.M. WE RESTED AN HOUR AND THEN STARTED BACK FOR THE HILLS TO BRING BACK THE REST OF OUR TREASURE.



THERE WASN'T A PARTICLE OF SILVER. ALL WAS GOLD OF ANTIQUE DATE AND OF GREAT VARIETY... IN COIN, ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS. THERE WAS NO AMERICAN CURRENCY. THERE WERE 110 DIAMONDS, 18 RUBIES, 310 EMERALDS, AND 21 SAPPHIRES. THESE STONES HAD ALL BEEN BROKEN FROM THEIR SETTINGS AND THROWN IN THE CHEST. WE ESTIMATED THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THE CHEST AT A MILLION AND A HALF DOLLARS, BUT WE FOUND LATER THAT WE HAD GREATLY UNDER-VALUED IT.

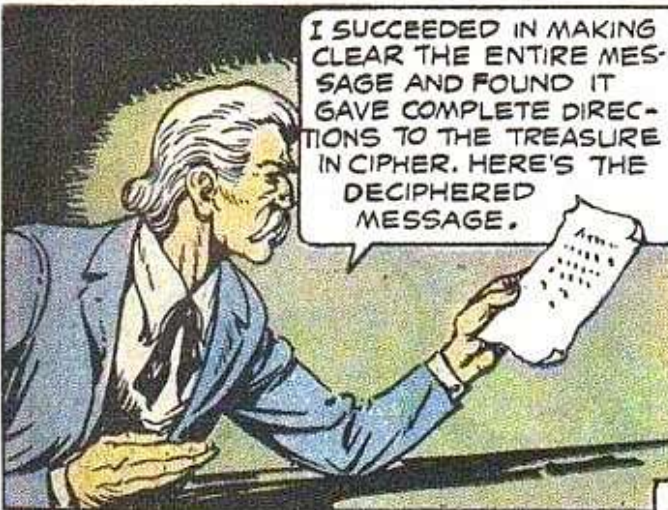
THE PARCHMENT ON WHICH LEGRAND HAD DRAWN THE FIGURE OF THE GOLD BUG THAT FIRST NIGHT HAD REALLY BEEN A PIRATE'S MAP TO HIDDEN TREASURE. JUPITER HAD FOUND THE PARCHMENT IN THE SAND AND USED IT TO HOLD THE BUG, SO IT WOULDN'T BITE HIM...

WHEN THE DOG LEAPED UPON YOU, AND YOU HELD THE PAPER NEAR THE FIRE, THE HEAT BROUGHT OUT THE FIGURE OF A DEATH'S HEAD DRAWN IN SECRET INK. IT WAS THIS DEATH'S HEAD YOU OBSERVED INSTEAD OF MY DRAWING OF THE BUG.



I SUCCEEDED IN MAKING CLEAR THE ENTIRE MESSAGE AND FOUND IT GAVE COMPLETE DIRECTIONS TO THE TREASURE IN CIPHER. HERE'S THE DECIPHERED MESSAGE.

A good glass in the Bishop's hostel in the devil's seat--forty-one degrees and thirteen minutes--northeast and by north--main branch seventh limb east side--shoot from the left eye of the death's-head--a bee-line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out.



LEGRAND EXPLAINED THAT THE "BISHOP'S HOSTEL" WAS A POINT OF ROCKS AND THE "DEVIL'S SEAT" A PARTICULAR STONE, SHAPED LIKE A CHAIR, FROM THIS PERCH, HE HAD SPIED THE "DEATH'S-HEAD" IN THE TREES THROUGH HIS "GOOD GLASS."

LEGRAND TOLD US THAT HE HAD EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE TREASURE WAS CAPTAIN KIDD'S.



AND WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE OF THOSE SKELETONS IN THE HOLE?

IT IS CLEAR THAT KIDD MUST HAVE HAD ASSISTANCE, BUT THIS LABOR ENDED, HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT IT WISE TO REMOVE ALL THOSE WHO SHARED HIS SECRET, PERHAPS A COUPLE OF BLOWS WITH A MATTOCK* WERE SUFFICIENT, WHILE THE MEN WERE BUSY IN THE PIT, WHO SHALL TELL?



*A SOIL LOOSENING TOOL