## The Golden Hoard

## By Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie

Linda Telfair, young and beautiful, has been living in obscurity on what remains to her family in their Georgia plantation. Now, because Horace Denslow, New York multi-millionaire, brings quannies of gold to hoard in the hunting lodge he has bought from the Teltairs, and is murdered there, Linda comes into national prominence. It is Linda who, in response to a phone call from Prescott, New York manager for Denslow, rushes to the lodge and there finds Denslow dead. Linda also finds, to her horror scraps of paper that pieced together, form a letter that may be incriminating to Gregory Denslow estranged son of the mur dered man. A Savannah reporter tells Linda that three millions in gold are missing from the Denslow coffers, that Gregory is nowhere to be found, and that Allan, pilot of the plane which bore Denslow and his boarded gold to Georgia, is also undiscovered. Linda is silent. She does not speak of the masked man who locked her into a gun closet at the lodge, of her rescue by her brother, Daniel, of the scraps of paper, nor of the fear of old Lucius, the family retainer, who saw by moonlight the previous night, men digging in a nearby swamp — men digging possibly for hoarded gold. Linda later walks out to an abandoned cottage near the spot where old Lucius saw the men digging and there she finds . . . Gregory!

TE WORE city clothes. His felt hat was in his hand. The sun glittered on his I reddish hair. O!" she said. "O!"

I'm sorry I frightened you." He stood under the shade of a wide tree. She moved toward him.

'And you're you. Good Lord, Linda, the years have given you a lot of pretty presents." She blushed. "This is no time to talk about

me. What are you doing here?" "I was going to go up to dad's place by the back way."

There was silence. "I'm sorry about-your father." Linda said at last.

He looked at her. "You found him."

"And now you're out here trying to find out where-whoever killed him came from?"

'More or less. The sheriff is so inefficient. My brother, Dan, is farther up the road." "You were the first person there?" he said

She knew what he meant. He must be wondering about that letter which he had left with his father and which had been discovered-or which was sure to be discovered-by someone. 'Why didn't you go to the house by the front way?" she asked.

He looked at her more earnestly than before, as if he were weighing some inward elements of thought. "I'll tell you, Linda, but you mustn't tell anyone else."

Her heart contracted. Now he would either lie to her or tell the truth-and if he told the truth to the end she would defend him; "I won't tell," she said.

He paused a moment. "Look. You were there this morning. You mustn't mind my having been --estranged from my father. You don't know what he did, and about my mother. But that's away from the point. The point is, I was there last night, Linda-before he was killed."

CHE was breathing again and her heart was nacing in her excitement. She wanted to through the treetops a great monoplane was visseize his hands, to hold him, but he stood straight ible in the sky.

I knew it, Gregg," she told him now. He started. "You knew it? How?" Only I knew it, Gregg!" she cried. "Nobody

else, not even Dan."

"How did you know?" "Tell me first what you did; then I'll tell."

"All rights I came up to see dad on a personal matter at nine last night and I left at ninethirty. I delivered a letter from mother, for she didn't want me to come. She did not agree with alone. We'll all come back later. Now we'll go what I was trying to do. She wanted to tell with you, Gregg, when you report to the police."

"I know," said Linda. "I have the letter. I youd the trees; its motor and propeller noises read it."

"You have the letter?" "Go on, please."

"Father and I had an argument-but no more.

You believe that, don't you? ' "Of course. He was alone, then."

"We talked alone, but Allan was in the house with him. I left, I say, about half-past nine. Father was as usual-perfectly well-then." "Did he tear up the letter while you were

"Mother's letter? No. Was it torn up?" "When Dan and I entered the room where

your father was there were scraps of a letter all over the floor. I don't think Dan noticed, in his excitement; I did. I saw handwriting-and your name. I picked up all the scraps in sight when Dan wasn't looking."

"Linda!" hid them, and never told a soul."

"Why not?" "Why didn't you tell you were there, Greg-

"Because it would be sure to turn them on me,

and I didn't do it. Of course, I knew I didn't

"I knew, too, Gregg!"

"You dear!" "Linda, I got the news first on the radio this morning. I'd driven half the night and stopped was a radio there. Then in the first town, I got descend. the newspaper. I thought first I'd come back here and tell everything; I started with that idea. Prescott turned to him. "You may or may not Then I saw they'd take me and not do anything want to go inside. Things have been left more there have been anything special on the floor?" against anyone else until too late But I had to come back. So I came here. I don't know what I thought I could do-something, perhaps, Anyway. I came; and the first soul I set eyes on is

you How were you here, Linda?" She recollected her errand, which, before she between here and St. Augustine."

sighted him, had absorbed her. "I came here looking for the gold."

"The gold?"

"Old Lucius-one of our servants-saw men digging back beyond here in the light of the over here? moon last night, Gregg!" " Digging?"

"He was so scared he ran away, but Dan got some sense out of him today. Last night-it must have been after your father was killedmen came here digging with spades."

"Where did you say?

"Back beyond here. I'll go on now and look." "I'm going with you, of course." He stepped toward her. He took her arm in an abnormally tense grip. "Linda," he said softly, "I don't know you very well. I remember you as a terribly pretty kid who lived near dad's fodge. You don't know much of me, but you've done the whitest thing anybody on earth ever did for me.

Father didn't mean a lot to me when he was alive He was someone who'd hurt my mother and had made her suffer and hadn't suffered himself; somebody who had everything all his own way, did whatever he liked and never paid for it. That's what father, alive was to me. But my father, dead, is someone else altogether. It's funny, isn't it? He's-my father, you see. And somebody killed him, shot him down sav- story in a rapid voice.

"At Albemarle. In a hotel. She came by abouts. You and he were friends."

"You said you met Miss Telfair on the way

"I offered her a lift."

want you at the inquest. You won't mind if we father. He gazed at Linda mutely; to Prescott check up a bit? We'll be compelled to look into the movements of everyone connected with your

Gregory's eye was calm as it met the New Yorker's. "Not a bit." He turned and walked toward the house, followed by Clay, who walked

Prescott reverted to Linda. "I'd like a little minute with you in private. Do you mind?"

"Of course not." "Suppose we just stroll through the grounds,

He began to speak casually. "You were certainly a marvel of coolness this morning." "I wasn't-really. I was terrified."

"Suppose we get to the point. Suppose you tell me precisely what took place."

Linda decided to give him a lesson in brevity and taste. She collected herself and told her

ployer-

" No."

"Eh?"

'Yes, of course. You did not tell me this man

"Well! The sheriff didn't mention that point.

She nodded. "I saw your plane come down."

presently, "How well do you know Dens-

"I see. The Denslows were supposed to have

The lawyer laughed. 'Anyway-he's a red-

She controlled her uneasiness. "What does

head And red hair is usually the storm signal."

Mr Denslow's temper have to do with his fath-

"Nothing. Only-if he had happened to be

here—and if he had quarreled with his father,

which I believe he often did-then he might have

"If you are trying to suggest that the man who

locked me in a closet was Gregory Denslow, you

are sadly mistaken. That man had black hair."

She realized, with a start, that she could not re-

member what color hair had stood above the

Prescott again regarded her for some time

want you to think hard. You were the first on

the ground after the murder. I asked you to

make note of every little detail. Have you for-

gotten anything-have you reported everything

She pondered. "There was a prayer book open

"It was open at page seventy-nine. The sheriff

Prescott studied her. "What do you make of

"I don't know You asked me to notice all de-

"What was another that might have been

"There was a bullet hole in the door-the

"Was there also," asked Prescott, "a bullet

hole in the floor, or anything else on the floor

Linda's heart was beating fast. "Why should

"I meant." said Prescott, "the first observer

has an especial advantage in inspecting the floor.

Afterwards it is walked on: traces are obliter-

ated You did not, by any chance, see Gregory

and faced down on the desk before Mr. Denslow."

shut it and flung it aside, but originally it was

had one of those seizures of temporary insanity-

"I've seen Mr. Allan. He is

Prescott accepted the implied reprimand of her "And that is that?"



"He was."

a few minutes"

this morning."

er's murder?"

mask.

"Very slightly."

violent tempers, weren't tney?"

and-and he is, unlike Allan, tall."

of however small consequence?"

"Yes, I know of that."

open at page seventy-nine."

tails. That was one!"

missed-but for you?"

"No, how could 1?"

bullet fired from inside the room."

that others might have missed?"

that detail?"

I never heard of it."

this morning! I'm glad you came. I was on the point of sending for you."

agely, emptied a pistol into him without mercy, a little man-comparatively. just after I'd left him. And last night, do you know, though I expected more of an argument than usual on my hands, he was almost friendly with me. But that makes no difference. Somebody murdered my father. . . . What airplane

is that, Linda?" A hum overhead was growing louder and

Mr Prescott, I guess," said Linda, "He said he was flying down with some New York detectives, and he ought to get here about now."

"O. yes. Prescott. Linda, shall we look in the woods now, or shall I report myself to the sheriff and the New York detectives? No danger in doing it now. More danger if I don't. Wherever I was. I must have heard the news and I ought

to have come on What'll it be, Linda?" "I'll find Dan; he shouldn't search the woods The airplane dropped to the landing field be-

Linda picked up Dan on the path he had taken and brought him to the cabin near which Gregory Denslow had hidden his car.

They detoured the swamp, turned on to the main road and up the long driveway that led to

A dozen men, including Clay, Henry Prescott, and two detectives, were approaching the lodge. They turned in a body at the advent of the road-

Prescott stepped forward. "Denslow, old fellow! Terribly shocked. All my sympathies. You just arriving?"

REGORY nodded to the lawyer. "Thanks. Yes. I've just come. I found Miss Telfair and her brother on the road."

"Where were you," asked the lawyer, "when "I pieced them together and read them, and you heard the news? I phoned your mother; couldn't get you.'

"I was in an auto tourist camp. Was driving around till I got tired. The radio told me, Mr.

And you were all day driving here?" said the lawyer, but, after suggesting this discrepancy in Gregory's account of himself, Prescott did not push it further. He turned to Linda.

"So this is Miss Telfair!" Prescott opened the door of the car. "You're the girl I talked to this morning? I'm glad you came, I was on in one of those tourists' camps to sleep. There the point of sending for you." He helped her to

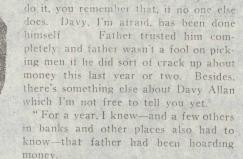
Gregory looked calmly at the cluster of men. or less as they were found."

"I'll go in" "Good enough. You've just come up fromwhere did you say?"

The young man glanced at Linda. "Half way

The lawyer shook his head positively. "We'll

and even breathed suspiciously.



"I had not seen him for almost three years!"

They approached the men who stood outside

mously sobered by the sight of the body of his

"Allan never would have done that. Dismiss

the idea. I have private knowledge about Allan

slaughtered my father in such a fashion. If Al-

"Then he is dead, too, or in the hands of the

LAY thrust into the interchange. "I got men

arrest any suspicious or murderous looking indi-

One of Prescott's two New York detectives, a

man whose name presently appeared as Yerkes,

stepped forward and addressed the lawyer. "I've

Gregory spoke to Linda. "May I drive you

Strange to see father-that way," he

said. "And I was the last to see him

as he was before they came - unless

Davy Allan saw him again. Davy didn't

ordered a general alarm for Allan, the pilot."

viduals. I threw out a net, that's what I did."

"Indeed!"

lan was here-

" Good."

'He was," said Prescott.

"These last months he's given all his time to hoarding it and hiding it, with stairs--the man with the hand- just Davy Allan helping him. No one else; they kerchief over his face-was did it secretly together. . Maybe they had time possibly David Allan - Mr. to hide some of it in the woods back of that old cabin last night before father was killed. Maybe about the gold-killed his em- they were seen by your old Negro doing it."

"No," said Linda, "unless Lucius was entirely off on his reckoning of the time, your father was dead then."

"Yes, so maybe Lucius saw the men who killed father looking for the gold to dig it up." "That's what I think."

"Then either they got it and the gold's gone, or they didn't get it-and they'll come back and try again tonight, Linda. . . . When I was in Perhaps he hadn't had time I've been here only there with father I got to thinking maybe I could catch them there tonight.'

"Not alone, Gregg!" said Linda. "You would Remarkably fast flight. I left New York only not try it alone!"

"I certainly wouldn't look for any sensible help from Sheriff Clay, and I won't ask Prescott. But HEY walked a little distance. Prescott said maybe you've a friend who would help me. Dan's saw another thing about the man in the tree. too young.'

"Dr. Ames might," said Linda.

At last, with night, a reaction to her fantastic day set in for Linda-not a relapse into fatigue, but a heightening of her nervousness. Her mother was in bed Andy had been sent to a neighbor's. Lucius and his wife had finished the kitchen. There was nothing to do.

Finally, she went to her room and, after reassuring herself that the fragments of the letter that implicated Gregory were intact and in their place behind the light bracket, she decided to try to sleep.

She put on a nightgown and went to bed. Sleep was impossible. Light from three-quarters of a waning moon made a pale pattern on her bedroom floor.

Linda sat up in bed and stared out of her window. On the opposite site of the broad, moonlit fields was the dark blur of the forest. Through it ran the lane to the Sutter cabin. She sat there, in her night dress, bathed in moonlight. And, while she looked, a light winked in the black without speaking. "Now," he said at last, "I tangle.

Linda heard her breath drawn in. She felt her hands go cold. Dr. Ames and Gregory were there -on the road or in the woods. Perhaps they were in danger. That must have been Gregory's light. Or-was it the murderers'?'

HILE she made those speculations she was rising from her bed. She put her hand on the light chain-and did not draw it down. A light suddenly appearing in the Telfair house might warn those in the woods that their own brief spark had been seen.

Linda dressed in the clothes she had worn that afternoon. She slipped out the back door. She went across the fields like a ghost-rapidly and soundlessly. She made her way diagonally to the place where the Sutter lane joined the highwaya spot that could not be recognized by a casual passerby as a road juncture at all. She came closer and closer, keeping in the shadows of the trees that now shrouded the sky She was terrorized by her danger, by the night, by countless natural sounds.

The moon descended. It outlined the top branches of a gnarled and gigantic oak that grew still leafless a few yards inside the forested edge of the clearing. Its shape was grotesque and startling in the moonlight. Occasionally her gaze rose to it and she shivered. Through her mind (Copyright: 1933: By Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylic.) flashed the thought that they hanged people from

"He seems indefinite regarding his where- trees like that, and for several minutes she frantically fought back the resultant panic. She sweated coldly with the fear of the results of an imagination out of control. She decided not to look at the oak. the lodge. Gregory Denslow had been enor-

With that decision, her eyes were drawn to it again, unwillingly. She scanned it, telling herself that she was looking at the moon and not the tree-for the moon was now descending into the filigree of its upper branches. It glistened on the bark and silhouetted the crotches and thick which would make it impossible for him to have elbows against its pale face.

Then, in its entirety, quite suddenly and as if she had expected it all the time, she saw the man. He sat in a crotch of that oak tree.

His legs were straight down. His hands held one of the heavy limbs by reaching backward and encircling it. He was like a rider in a saddle, and he was quietly, motionlessly overlooking the

all over the countryside looking for Allan and looking for the gold, too. 'Look for gold,' I told Her heart did not beat for so long that it very them. 'Look for that pilot.' And I told them to nearly failed altogether. Her throat drew itself shut. Her lips bared her teeth. She did not scream because that sudden apparition was too terrible for screaming.

The man in the tree must have seen her trespass of the glade. He was looking almost directly at the place where she crouched.

She had not taken her eyes from him. She stopped in the hideous shadows, frozen, paralyzed. Into that iciness trickled the glad thought that the man must be Dr. Ames or Gregory, and it was driven out at once by the moon-revealed fact that the tree sitter wore breeches and leather

With all her being she ached to scream and run. She could do neither. Before she lost control the necessity of not moving became apparent. Any motion might bring the ray of a flashlight and the quick crack of a gun.

She saw with horrid clarity, that it would be a duel between herself and the man She realized that he was doubtless as afraid of her as she was of him. He must be conscious of the target he made against the moon.

TE would have seen that she was a girl as she E would have seen that she was a girl as she moved cerily along the glade's fringe of trees. But he would naturally assume that she

Why, then, had he not shot at her-or accosted her-at once? Perhaps because he realized how well camouflaged he was in the great oak. If it had not been for the accident of his body coming between herself and the moon, she would never

She clenched her jaws because she was afraid the sound of her chattering teeth would carry to

He sat still, stiffly, with his back pressed close against the tree. He depended upon his rigidity for concealment.

Minutes had passed since she saw him. He was now sharply defined against the moon. Linda stared. In her ears was the roar of her own blood. She was still convulsed. She found herself wondering with the petty insistences that inflict themselves even through sheer horror why he did not budge. It was impossible for a human being to remain so still. Sooner or later nature would compel him to turn his head an inch, or stir an arm, or swing one of his dangling, downthrust legs. But he did not.

His profile stood against the light. And Linda

Then she knew. He was dead.

She knew who it was in the same instant. The puttees and breeches told her. It was Denslow's pilot, David Allan. She could bear no more. She screamed; she

whirled around; she ran, wildly, blindly along the way she had come. She stumbled and fell. She was not hurt; simply she lacked the strength to rise at once. She

lay on the ground, listening. There were footsteps near her. A man's voice. "Who are you?"

It was Dr. Ames' voice, and Linda tried to reply, but she lay helpless a moment longer. "Where are you? . . . What's happened? Where are you?" This was Gregg's voice; yes, his beyond doubt.

"Gregg!" she called. "Gregg! Dr. Ames!" "Linda! Good God, Linda Where are you? You hurt? . . . What is it?" Linda sat up and rose to her feet; she could

see them in the moonlight between the trees. "Linda Linda!" he held her to him, steadying her, kissing her. "Linda child how did you get here? Who hurt you? Who---'

"Nobody hurt me, Gregg. I came here myself. I wanted to find you. O. Gregg, I found Allan. He's there-there!" she stabbed with a frantic finger. "He's in a tree-dead. You can see him!" Not from that spot could they see him, but Linda did not move. The doctor remained with

her and Gregg went into the woods; after a few

minutes he returned. "It's Davy Allan, doctor," he reported. "1 left him just as he was. I'll take Linda back to her home, then we'll look over everything together. Linda lay on the couch in the living room, a light burned beside her. She had to have a light now, though she had awakened no one else in the house. It was midnight.

Gregg and the doctor had promised to come to her before summoning the sheriff or communi cating with Mr. Prescott. What were they finding or what were they doing which took them so long? Had something frightful and silentsomething which might have involved no firing of revolver or gun -happened to them? Might it be that they would be found in the morning motionless like Davy Allan in the tree?

At last she saw lights leading out of the woods and approaching the house.

(To be continued.)