

"I would love to see a gold-bug in real life. In the story they go on a hunt for treasure and there are codes and maps. It is very unexpected." Margaret, 11



THE GOLD-BUG

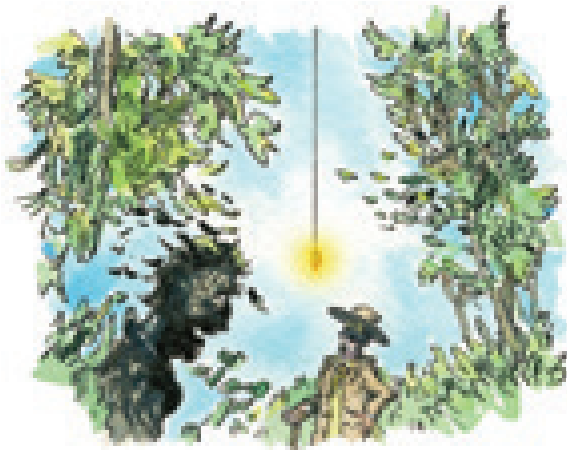
EDGAR ALLAN POE

'Dat gold-bug was a vicious bug. Massa caught it first but it bit him. I think da bite has made Massa poorly. It has affected him in da head.'

William Legrand has found a new type of bug, a golden bug, unusually heavy. His servant, Jupiter, is worried. Why is Legrand behaving so oddly? Has the bug's bite made him mad? When Legrand shows his friend a drawing of the gold-bug, it looks more like a skull. What can this mean?

The arrival of the gold-bug leads the three men on an exciting adventure towards skeletons, a skull, and a hunt for buried treasure.

Should we believe Jupiter's superstitious fears, or is there a more logical explanation of events? If there is, can you, the reader, discover it?



ISBN 978-1-906230-81-4



9 781906 230814

www.realreads.co.uk



THE GOLD-BUG
Edgar Allan Poe



Retold by Gill Tavner
Illustrated by Felix Bennett



THE GOLD-BUG

EDGAR ALLAN POE



www.realreads.co.uk

Retold by Gill Tavner
Illustrated by Felix Bennett

CONTENTS

The Characters	4
The Gold-Bug	7
Taking things further	55

Published by Real Reads Ltd
Newbury, Berkshire, UK
www.realreads.co.uk

Text copyright © Gill Tavner 2015

Illustrations copyright © Felix Bennett 2015

The right of Gill Tavner to be identified as author of
this book has been asserted by her in accordance with the
Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988

First published in 2015

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any
form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including
photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval
system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 978-1-906230-81-4

Printed in China by Wai Man Book Binding (China) Ltd
Designed by Lucy Guenot
Typeset by Bookcraft Ltd, Stroud, Gloucestershire



THE CHARACTERS



The Narrator

The narrator lives in Charleston, North Carolina, USA. An educated man, he is a good friend of William Legrand. Is he right to worry about him? Can he help him?

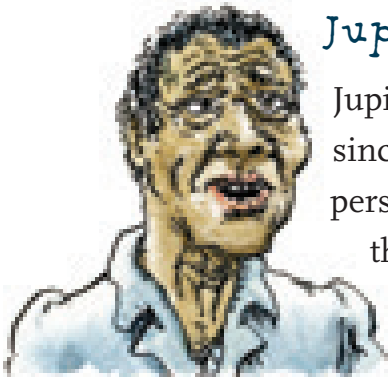
William Legrand

Legrand lives at the remote end of an island with only his loyal servant and his dog for company. He is naturally prone to mood swings, but has the gold-bug seriously affected his mind?



Jupiter

Jupiter has looked after Legrand since boyhood. He is loyalty personified. Is he right to fear the gold-bug? Is he right to fear for Legrand's safety?



wolf

Wolf is Legrand's huge Newfoundland. How can his greeting to the narrator influence everybody's future? Why is he so eager to dig for treasure? What will he find?

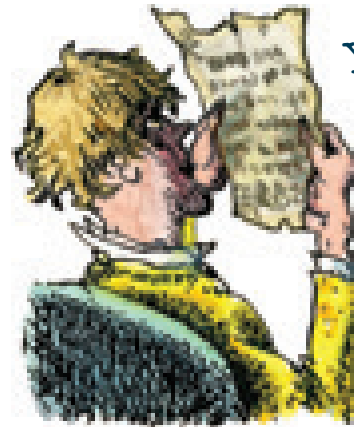
The gold-bug

When Legrand finds an unusual beetle on the beach, it bites him. As bright and as heavy as gold, what powers – if any – does this bug possess? Is Jupiter right to fear it?



You, the reader

Are you superstitious, or would you describe yourself as a logical thinker? The narrator will set you a pirate's puzzle. Will you be able to solve it?





What ho! What ho! This fellow
is dancing mad!
He hath been bitten by the Tarantula.
All in the Wrong. 

THE GOLD-BUG

Some believe that the bite of a tarantula can cause madness, which can be cured only by a frenzied dance.

They are wrong.

This is a story about a friend of mine, who was bitten by a previously unknown golden bug. You will find within these pages a thrilling conflict between superstition and logic. I hope you enjoy both.



I met Mr William Legrand many years ago. Originally from a wealthy family, a series of unfortunate events had reduced him to poverty. To escape the shame of his fall, he left his home in New Orleans and moved to Sullivan's Island, near Charleston in North Carolina, where he built himself a modest hut. He lives there with the ever-loyal Jupiter, a former slave of the Legrand family who, when freed from servitude, refused to leave 'Massa Will', the name he uses for Legrand.

William Legrand is an intelligent, well-educated man. A keen collector of shells, insects and other small creatures, he has an impressive collection of fascinating, sometimes rare, biological specimens. I found him interesting from the start. Although Legrand is not keen on company, and although he is subject to unpredictable moods, which make him sometimes enthusiastic and sometimes melancholic, our friendship developed quickly. I visit him quite regularly.

Winter on Sullivan's Island is rarely cold, but this particular October day on which I set out to visit my friend was unusually chilly, so much so that I thought it wise to wear an overcoat. After scrambling through the dense myrtle undergrowth, I arrived at Legrand's hut late in the afternoon, to discover that both he and Jupiter were absent. However, a fine fire blazing upon the hearth suggested that they would soon return. I let myself in, threw off my coat and sat in a chair before the welcome warmth of the crackling logs.



Back in time

Edgar Poe was born in Boston, Massachusetts, USA in 1809. Orphaned at an early age, he was cared for by John and Frances Allan of Richmond, Virginia, hence the addition of Allan to his name. He spent some of his childhood in Great Britain, returning to the USA in 1820. His early adulthood was rather unsettled, with erratic relations with the Allans. His attempts to settle into army life ended when he deliberately engineered his own court-martial. In his twenties he married his thirteen-year-old cousin. The cause of Poe's death, at the age of only forty, is not known. It is possible that he was a victim of cooping – a brutal kidnapping and drugging by which people were forced to vote a particular way in elections. However, this is not certain, and other causes such as tuberculosis or a brain haemorrhage are still considered as possibilities.

As a writer, Poe is now best known for his *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. Some of the better known of these tales include *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Pit and the Pendulum* (both available as *Real Reads*), *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *A Premature*

Burial and *The Fall of the House of Usher*. We recommend reading them all. Of all his stories, *The Gold-Bug* earned him the most money in his lifetime.

Poe is considered to be one of the first writers to establish the requirements of an effective short story. Through stories such as *The Gold-Bug* and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, he greatly influenced, some claim created, the genre of detective fiction. The character Legrand is very similar to August Dupin in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. Both allow Poe to show the importance of logic in solving mysteries and puzzles.

Poe himself gained great enjoyment from puzzles. He even invited his readers to set him challenges, to see whether he could succeed in breaking their codes. In *The Gold-Bug*, Legrand voices Poe's belief that 'it may well be doubted whether human ingenuity can construct an enigma of the kind which human ingenuity may not, by proper application, resolve'. In short, nobody can create an impossible code. The type of code used in *The Gold-Bug* is called a cryptogram.