

# L. RON HUBBARD



## FORBIDDEN GOLD

GALAXY  
PRESENTS

## CHAPTER ONE

THAT'S all you have to do, Mr. Reid. Just match this gold nugget and old Nathan Reid's money is yours." Kimmelmeyer looked legally at Kurt Reid and rolled the nugget in question about in his soft, plump hand.

Kurt Reid cocked his head a little on one side and took a long drag at a cigarette. Then he crossed his long legs and exhaled the smoke in a blue cloud which enveloped the desk.

Kimmelmeyer coughed, but his eyes remained very fatherly and legal. Compared to Kurt, Kimmelmeyer was small. Kimmelmeyer's head was bald, shining as though newly burnished with furniture polish. Kimmelmeyer's ears were elfinly pointed. His chin was sunk far down in a wing collar, giving his face a half-moon appearance.

"That's all I have to do," said Kurt with a twisty grin. "What's the matter, Kimmelmeyer, don't you like me any better than Nathan Reid did?"

"Like you?" gaped Kimmelmeyer, missing the point.

"You act as if I were about to go on a Sunday School picnic instead of a gold hunt in Yucatán. What if I don't want to go, huh?"

The legal look vanished. Kimmelmeyer stared amazed at Kurt. He did not feel at all at ease with this young man.

Something in Kurt's attitude was vaguely insolent. The man's poise was too astounding. No, Kimmelmeyer did not understand Kurt Reid. They were too many character miles apart. Gangly, good-humored Kurt, on his part, understood Kimmelmeyer a little too well.

"But Mr. Reid!" said Kimmelmeyer. "Have you no sense of proportion at all? Here I have just offered you a chance at four million dollars and a town house and a country house and what do you do? You sit there and ask me foolish questions about whether I like you or not."

"I knew old Nathan Reid," said Kurt, dragging at his smoke. "And as certain as I'm his grandson, he didn't intend to do any good by me through you. Besides, when you're running through soup and you're out of gas and you see a landing field, it's ten to one the thing's a bog and you'll get killed anyway."

"Ai! Don't be so pessimistic. I thought all pilots were optimists."

"I'm alive," said Kurt. "Optimistic pilots are all dead."

"But what can be wrong? See here, I bring you here at my own expense—"

"At Nathan's," corrected Kurt.

"I bring you here to show you the contents of his will and you aren't even glad about it. He says right here, paragraph three, 'Whereas, if said Kurt Reid sees fit to match this gold nugget in Yucatán, I designate further that he be given my entire estate.' Now what you want, eh? You want I should just sign these papers over to you now?"

"That wouldn't be a bad idea," said Kurt. "But come along.

Let's stop arguing about this thing. Does he say where this gold is down there in Yucatán?"

"No."

"Any bet he only gives me a month to find the stuff."

"That's right."

"And he makes no provision for getting me to Yucatán."

"What you want, eh?" cried Kimmelmeyer. "Can't you invest a couple thousand in return for four million?"

"Sure, but I haven't got a penny. Look here." Kurt raised his brown oxford so that Kimmelmeyer could see the sole. A hole was there, backed by a white piece of paper. "That paper is the letter you sent me," said Kurt.

"But I thought you had a good job on a transport line, eh?"

"I had one until two weeks ago. I stunted a trimotor when I was feeling good and the company didn't like it at all. In fact, they fired me. I'm flat and you'll have to give me the dough to go down there."

The request was rather sudden. Kimmelmeyer took several seconds to answer. "I . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Reid, but you see things are sort of slack and I thought . . ."

"I thought you were so hot to get me down there," said Kurt.

"Oh, I am! I am! I mean . . . er . . . should I not want to see you get all this money instead of hospitals and things maybe?"

"I don't know what the game is, Kimmelmeyer," said Kurt, squinting through the smoke, his silver-gray eyes studious. "Old Nathan Reid was my grandfather, yes, but he never liked me. He wanted me to study and follow in his footsteps, but I ran off and learned to fly. Furthermore, I was often sassy and

I seem to remember telling him to go to hell once or twice. He never appreciated that, someway.

“He hated me first because I was my father’s son. He hated Dad because Dad went into the Navy and Nathan Reid was once thrown off the president’s chair in Nicaragua by the United States Navy. He’s got me all mixed up.

“Nathan Reid knew he could never get anything on me while he was alive. Now he’s trying to do it after he’s dead. He never had any scruples as a filibuster. He made enemies more than friends. After his Central American misadventures he tried to run everything by the same yardstick.

“You’re just his mouthpiece, that’s all. You don’t know these things. I do. Nathan Reid wants to see me dead and I know damned well that a trap is waiting for me in Yucatán if I go down there looking for this gold. That pretty nugget you’ve got there still retains some of its quartz. That’s rose quartz. The ledge is jewelry rock. Oh, I know my gold mining. If it’s there, I can find it. Give me time.

“But here’s something that you’ve never heard about. There’s a saying about Yucatán and gold. The fact is known all around the Caribbean. You can look for gold in Yucatán. Gold comes out of Yucatán, brought by the Indians there. *But no white man that ever found gold in Yucatán ever got out alive except filibuster Nathan Reid.*”

“My God,” whispered Kimmelmeyer.

“Nathan Reid hated me and now that he’s dead he’s trying to kill me. He knew that I’d go, and I’m going. I’m broke, but I’ll make it someway. I know where he traveled in Yucatán.

Somehow I'll get a plane and fly over his old routes there until I find the place. I'm going to beat him at his own game."

The finality and earnestness of Kurt's last remark jarred Kimmelmeyer. In many ways, Kurt was like Nathan Reid. There was a certain positiveness about him, a certain gleam to his silver-gray eyes, a certain set to his lean, almost swarthy face.

Kimmelmeyer nodded. He had dropped the gold nugget on the polished surface of his desk. He had dropped it as though it had been hot. Kurt picked it up, studied it and handed it back.

Kurt stood up. "I'm going now. In a month—on the eighth of October—I'll be back here with a mate for that gold."

"Wait, wait," said Kimmelmeyer, once more efficient and legal. For a moment he had been transported to the seared plains of Yucatán, but now he was right back in New York with a solid chair under him, a newspaper and a big dinner waiting for him in an hour or two.

Kimmelmeyer picked up a copy of the *Eastern Pilot*, opened it and handed it to Kurt. "I was looking for your address and I got a copy of this," said Kimmelmeyer. "Look here, I just thought . . ."

Kurt read the advertisement in its neat little box. It said:

WANTED: A transport pilot, a radio operator and a mechanic for long flight. Two planes will be used, the duration of the trip will be six weeks or thereabouts. Destination: Yucatán.

Kimmelmeyer was eager, "There's your chance."

Kurt studied the man, grinned a little and then nodded. “Yes, here’s my chance.” He stuffed the magazine into the pocket of his tweed jacket and went out, slamming the door behind him.

Kimmelmeyer mopped his forehead and muttered, “Ai, but that was easy. Easy!”