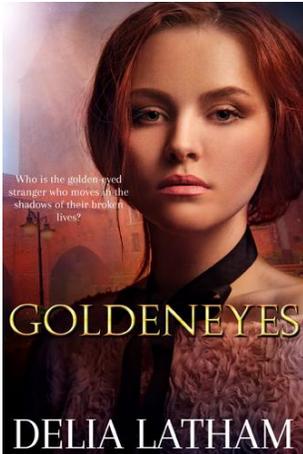


# Goldeneyes



Deep in the darkness of a Depression-era night, a man addicted to alcohol commits an unspeakable crime to obtain it. His vile action impacts the lives of two entire families, and decades will pass before the horrible wrong begins to be made right again.

Two young women - strangers to each other - unknowingly enmeshed in a Pandora's Box of secrets that could prevent them from finding happiness with the men they love. Two adoring mothers who know more than they are willing to say. A newsman with a story he cannot tell.

What is their connection, and who is the golden-eyed stranger who moves in the shadows of their broken lives?

## Goldeneyes Excerpt

The old cuckoo clock on the shelf in the front room struck midnight. Its persistent chirping irritated Jack Kelly's already frayed nerves as he paced back and forth across the small room.

"Shut up! *Shut up!*" he growled beneath his breath, casting an anxious look at the crib in the next room. When no signs of disturbed sleep were forthcoming, he breathed a grateful sigh of relief. The last thing he needed right now was a squalling infant to further vex the burning demon within him. He had promised his wife he would not spend a cent on liquor. New babies meant new expenses, and those things must come first.

So far he had kept his promise; he'd had no choice. Every penny he earned with his hoe, day after blistering day in the cotton fields, was swallowed up in scratching out a meager existence.

There never seemed to be a penny extra, to say nothing of the few dollars a bottle of whiskey would cost. With the addition of this new offspring, who knew when he would be able to quench the gnawing demon of thirst that drove him insane? He had to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. The arrival of more children would only make that job harder, and it was obvious Annie did not intend to stop at one pregnancy.

Another glance into the small bedroom revealed no unwelcome stirrings from the crib. A bright moonbeam, however, lay across the bed, and Kelly's tormented gaze fell on the lovely face of the woman he had married. He had considered himself a lucky man when she said yes to his proposal, despite her goody-two-shoes, Bible-thumping parents. If he loved anything on this poor excuse of an earth, he loved Annie. She was a perfect wife.

Their home might be barely more than a shack, but it sparkled, and she was a real wonder in the kitchen. He could not remember her voice ever raised in anger, even when he had fallen through the front door, dog drunk, a week after she married him.

Kelly's fevered mind wandered to his conversation with the poor fish in the cotton field. Had it only been eight or nine hours ago? It seemed an eon; every moment without the drink he craved was an eternity.

Poor fella don't know how lucky he is. Only has to worry 'bout that pretty little gal and hisself. I bet he could buy a bottle of whiskey if he wanted one!

With the thought, an idea was born, full-blown and itching for action. He actually stopped pacing for a moment, shocked to the core by the undiluted vileness of the seed taking root in his mind. He stood staring at the crib against the far wall and shook his head as if to toss out the evil thought.

"You're crazy," he whispered. His heart pounded painfully against his chest; little beads of sweat dotted his forehead and chin. "You've done gone stark, starin' mad!"

And perhaps he had, for suddenly he found himself across the room, gazing down into the hand-me-down crib. He was horrified at the darkness within his imagination, yet knew full well he hadn't the strength of mind or will to resist its powerful pull. One more almost desperate glance at his wife's face...if she would only wake up, he would have to forsake this notion, and perhaps he could rid himself of the unforgivable intent. Indeed, Annie did stir a little and drew a deep sigh, almost as though she heard his desperate mental cry. But hers was the sleep of utter exhaustion, and she slumbered on.

A few moments later, Kelly slipped silently out the back door of the little shack, clutching a tiny pink bundle in his arms and blinking back the tears of shame and self-loathing that sprang unbidden to his eyes.

He closed the door behind him, careful to make not the slightest sound as he stole through the back yard and around the house to the dirt road that fronted it. Moving now with purpose and determination, he slipped from shadow to shadow, toward another little shack just down the lane.

Standing for a long moment in the darkness beneath a large, gnarled old cottonwood tree, he held the little bundle close to his heart. "It's best like this," he whispered. "It really is best for ever'body."

One awkward stroke of a tiny cheek then he strode to the front door and gave it a few firm raps. A light sprang up in the front window, and he breathed a sigh of relief. A moment later the door swung open, and he entered.

Exactly thirty-two minutes later, Kelly left the house, his arms empty. Hooked to his worn khaki trousers, a cheap pocket watch read 12:42 a.m. when he stepped back out into the moonlit night. He glanced furtively all around before slipping into the beckoning shadows. Head bowed, hands shoved deep into his pockets, he stole back the way he had come.

And at just after four o'clock in the morning, before the sun rose over the distant mountains, a piercing scream filled the dark camp, jolting the slumbering inhabitants of several nearby houses out of their much-needed rest. It was the bone-chilling cry of a mother bereft of her child.

**Available through [Amazon](#), [Vinspire Publishing](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), and most other online booksellers.**

## *Goldeneyes Reviews*

### **The Romance Studio**

**5 hearts**

I need to return to school to update my vocabulary in order to do justice to this book! Never have I read anything quite like it! This is the most unbelievable story I have ever read. Maybe someone could envision this plot; however, there is no way anyone could possibly match Ms. Delia Latham's expertise in her details. I could not stop reading; it was that mind-boggling. I could not wait to turn the page. This book is bound for greatness...it should be seen on all the top-seller lists.

**Reviewed by: Brenda Talley**

**Former Reviewer for The Romance Studio**

### **FemmeFlashpoint**

From windswept and parched Texas ranch-land to Bakersfield, California you can count on meeting some intriguing characters that you'll come to admire, love and in some cases be compelled to forgive. Perhaps you'll even find yourself examining your own life and values as you journey with the folks in the story and will very likely be able to feel a connection between them and people you know in real life.

There are several adventures happening throughout this book and I found the whole story to be riveting enough that I read the whole book in one sitting, sincerely loving every twist and turn it took me on.

### **Long and Short Reviews**

From the very first page, I was drawn into Jack Kelly's story. Rich storytelling combined with believable and lovable characters only enhanced the already well-woven plot. Goldeneyes was filled with twists and turns and surprises I never saw coming. Add to this the faith and Christian values sprinkled throughout the pages and you get an amazing story of love, faith, and endurance of spirit that you won't soon forget. Delia Latham's Goldeneyes is a treasure of a story sure to make an impact on anyone who picks it up.

**Reviewed by Cholla**

[Read the rest of Cholla's review](#)

**Ruth Tisdale/California**

All I can say is WOW. ...Most books I can figure out by the end but this one just exploded with the unexpected.

**Amy (A Goodreads Reader)**

A wonderfully written book about life, love, and hard choices and how family, faith and love will bring you through it all.

[LoRee Peery](#)

**Author of the Frivolities Series**

I was riveted from the beginning. Loved the time period, the tension, and emotion. And I especially enjoyed the twist at the end. Very well done, Ms. Latham.