"PAWNED"

An Unusual Romance of People Whose Very Being is Pledged to Do the Bidding of Others

By FRANK L. PACKARD

Author of "The Miracle Man," "From Now On," etc.

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THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Hawkins, an old New York cabman, unable to throw off his love of drink, pawns his little motherless daughter, Claire, to his old friend, Paul Veniza, to be brought up without knowledge of her real father until he can redeem his pledge by overcoming his weakness and redeeming himself. Twenty years later, a futile attempt made by a young, unknown white man to stow away on a passenger ship sailing from Samoa brings him under the keen observation of one of the passengers, who follows him ashore and astonishes him by revealing accurate knowledge of his former life as a San Francisco youngster of wealth and good family, with one weak spot—gambling. Persuaded by the tentative promise of a passage home to relate the story of his wanderings since his disappearance from San Francisco, the stranded youth tells of touching the low spots of life in a vain effort to follow successfully the lure of chance. Satisfied that the youth has no criminal record, the mysterious passenger draws up a strange contract, whereby the younger man agrees to pawn himself, body and soul, into his service. Gilbert Larman is the signature of the older man upon the written bond—a name known widely as the head of America's wealthiest chain of gambling houses. The younger man writes his signature with native iron ink, requiring the action of the salt sea water to bring out the simple name—John Bruce. In the gambling house which Bruce "visits" as a secret inspector, he plays till he is broke, and through the management is given a chance to pawn some valuables. The pawnbroker is a marvelously beautiful girl. Trailing her taxicab, he gets into a brawl with some excited foreigners, but finds sanctuary just as he keels over at the feet of a girl.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

CHAPTER IV

A Doctor of Many Degrees

DEAD! The girl was on her knees beside John Bruce. Dead—he did not move! It was the man who had pawned his watch-fob hardly half an hour before! What did it mean? What did those angry shouts, that scurrying of many feet out there in the lane mean? Hurriedly, her face as deadly white as the face upturned to her from the floor, she tore open the once immaculate shirt-front, that was now limp and wet and ugly with a great crimson stain, and laid bare the wound.

The sounds from without were receding, the scurrying footsteps were keeping on along the lane. A quiver ran through the form on the floor. Dead! No, he was not dead—not—not yet.

A little cry escaped from her tightly closed lips, and for an instant she covered her eyes with her hands. The wound was terrible—it frightened her. It frightened her the more because, intuitively, she knew that it was beyond any inexperienced aid that she could give. But she must act, and act quickly.

She turned and ran into the adjoining room to the telephone, but even as she reached out to lift the receiver from the hook she hesitated. Dr. Crang! A little shudder of aversion swept over her—and then resolutely, even pleading with central to hurry, she asked for the connection. It was not a matter of choice, or aversion, or any other consideration in the world save a question of minutes. The life of that man in there on the floor hung by a thread. Dr. Crang was nearby enough to respond almost instantly, and there was no one else she knew of who she could hope would reach the man in time. And—she stared frantically at the instrument now—was even he unavailable? Why didn't he answer? Why didn't——

A voice reached her. She recognized it.

"Dr. Crang, this is Claire Veniza," she said, and it did not seem as though she could speak fast enough. "Come at once—oh, at once—please! There's a man here frightfully wounded. There isn't a second to lose, so——"

"My dear Claire," interrupted the voice suavely, "instead of losing one you can save several by telling me what kind of a wound it is, and where the man is wounded."

"It's a knife wound, a stab, I think," she answered; "and it's in his side. He is unconscious, and——"

The receiver at the other end had been replaced on its hook.

She turned from the telephone, and swiftly, hurrying, but in cool self-control now, she obtained some cloths and a basin of warm water, and returned to John Bruce's side. She could not do much, she realized that—only make what effort she could to stanch the appalling flow of blood from the wound; that, and place a cushion under the man's head, for she could not lift him to the couch.

The minutes passed; and then thinking she heard a footstep at the front door, she glanced in that direction, half in relief, and yet, too, in curious apprehension. She listened. No, there was no one there yet. She had been mistaken.

Suddenly she caught her breath in a little gasp, as though startled. Doctor Crang was clever; but faith in Doctor Crang professionally was one thing, and faith in him in other respects was quite another. Why hadn't she thought of it before? It wasn't too late yet, was it?

She began to search hastily through John Bruce's pockets. Doctor Crang would almost certainly suggest removing the man from the sitting room down here and getting him upstairs to a bedroom, and then he would undress his patient, and—and it was perhaps as well to anticipate Doctor Crang! This man here should have quite a sum of money on his person. She had given it to him herself, and—yes, here it was!

The crisp new fifty-dollar bills, the stamped and numbered ticket that identified the watch-fob he had pawned, were in her hand. She ran across the room, opened a little safe in the corner, placed the money and ticket inside, locked the safe again, and returned to John Bruce's side once more.

And suddenly her eyes filled. There was no tremor, no movement in the man's form now; she could not even feel his heartbeat. Yes, she wanted Doctor Crang now, passionately, wildly. John Bruce—that was the man's name. She knew that much. But she had left him miles away—and he was here now—and she did not understand. How had he got here, why had he come here, climbing in through that window to fall at her feet like one dead?

The front door opened without premonitory ring of bell, and closed again. A footstep came quickly forward through the outer room—and paused on the threshold.

Claire Veniza rose to her feet, and her eyes went swiftly, sharply, to the figure standing there—a man of perhaps thirty years of age, of powerful build, and yet whose frame seemed now woefully loose, disjointed and without virility. Her eyes traveled to the man's clothing that was dirty, spotted, and in dire need of sponging, to the necktie that hung awry, to the face that, but for its unhealthy, pasty-yellow complexion, would have been almost strikingly handsome, to the jet-black eyes that somehow at the moment seemed to lack fire and life. And with a little despairing shrug of her shoulders, Claire Veniza turned away her head, and pointed to the form of John Bruce on the floor.

"I—I am afraid it is very serious, Doctor Crang," she faltered.

"That's all right, Claire," he said complacently. "That's all right, my dear. You can leave it with confidence to Sydney Angus Crang, M. D."

She drew a little away as he stepped forward, her face hardening into tight little lines. Hidden, her hands clasped anxiously together. It—it was what she had feared. Doctor Sydney Angus Crang, gold medalist from one of the greatest American universities, brilliant far beyond his fellows, with additional degrees from London, from Vienna, from Heaven alone knew where else, was just about entering upon, or emerging from, a groveling debauch with that Thing to which he had pawned his manhood, his intellect and his soul, that Thing of gray places, of horror, of forgetfulness, of bliss, of torture—drugs.

"Aren't you going to help him? Is he to die there before your eyes?"

Halfway from the threshold to where John Bruce lay, Doctor Crang halted abruptly.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, and glanced with suddenly darkening face from Claire Veniza to the form of John Bruce, and back to Claire Veniza again.

"Oh, will you hurry!" she implored. "Can't you see that the wound——"

"I am more interested in the man than in the wound," said Doctor Crang, and there was a hint of menace in his voice. "Quite a gentleman of parts! I had expected—well, say, one of the common knife-sticking breed that curses this neighborhood."

Claire Veniza stamped her foot.

"Oh, hurry!" she burst out wildly. "Don't stand there talking while the man is dying! Do something!"

Doctor Crang advanced to John Bruce's side, set down the little handbag he was carrying, and began to examine the wound.

"Yes, quite a gentleman of parts!" he repeated. His lips had thinned. "How did he get here?"

"I do not know," she answered. "He came in through that window there and fell on the floor."

"How peculiar!" observed Doctor Crang. "A gentleman down here in this locality, who is, yes, I will state it as a professional fact, in a very critical state, climbs in through Miss Claire Veniza's window, and ——"

The telephone in the other room rang. Claire Veniza ran to it. Doctor Crang's fingers nestled on John Bruce's pulse; he made no other movement save to cock his head in a listening attitude in the girl's direction; he made no effort either to examine further or to dress the wound.

Claire Veniza's voice came distinctly: "* * * Yes * * *No, I do not think he will return tonight"—she was hesitating—"he—he met with an—accident——"

Doctor Crang had sprung from the other room and had snatched the receiver from the girl's hand. A wave of insensate fury swept his face now. He pushed her roughly from the instrument, and slapped his hand over the transmitter.

"That's one lie you've told me!" he said hoarsely. "I'll attend to the rest of this now." He withdrew his hand from the transmitter. "Yes, hello!" His voice was cool, even suave. "What is it? * * * Monsieur Henri de Lavergne speaking—yes * * * Mister—who? * * * Mr. John Bruce—yes." He listened for a moment, his lips twitching, his eyes narrowed on Claire Veniza, who had retreated a few steps away. "No, not tonight," he said, speaking again into the transmitter. "Yes, a slight accident * * * Yes * * * Good-by."

Doctor Sydney Angus Crang hung up the receiver, and with a placid smile at variance with the glitter that suddenly brought life into his dulled eyes, advanced toward the girl. She stepped backward quickly into the other room, retreating as far as the motionless form that lay upon the floor. Doctor Crang followed her.

And then Claire Veniza, her face grown stony, her small hands clenched, found her voice again.

"Aren't you going to help him? Aren't you going to do something? Is he to die there before your eyes?" she cried.

Dr. Crang shrugged his shoulders.

"What can I do?" he inquired with velvet softness. "I am helpless. How can I bring the dead back to life?"

"Dead!" All color had fled her face; she bent and looked searchingly at John Bruce.

"Oh, no; not yet," said Dr. Crang easily. "But very nearly so."

"And you will do nothing!" She was facing him again. "Then—then I will try and get some one else."

She stepped forward abruptly.

Dr. Crang barred her way.

"I don't think you will, Claire, my dear!" His voice was monotonous; the placid smile was vanishing. "You see, having spoken to that dear little doll of a man, Monsieur Henri de Lavergne, I'm very much interested in hearing your side of the story."

"Story!" the girl echoed wildly. "Story—while that man's life is lost! Are you mad—or a murderer—or——"

"Another lover," said Dr. Crang, and threw back his head and laughed.

She shrank away; her hands tight against her bosom. She glanced around her. If she could only reach the telephone and lock the connecting door! No! She did not dare leave him alone with the wounded man.

"What—what are you going to do?" she whispered.

"Nothing—till I hear the story," he answered.

"If—if he dies"—her voice rang steadily again—"I'll have you charged with murder."

"What nonsense!" said Dr. Crang imperturbably. "Did I stab the gentleman?" He took from his pocket a little case, produced a hypodermic syringe, and pushed back his sleeve. "A doctor is not a magician. If he finds a patient beyond reach of aid what can he be expected to do? My dear Claire, where are your brains tonight—you who are usually so amazingly clever?"

"You are mad—insane with drug!" she cried out piteously.

He shook his head, and cooly inserted the needle of the hypodermic in his arm.

"Not yet," he said. "I am only implacable. Shall we get on with the story? Monsieur de Lavergne says he sent a gentleman by the name of John Bruce out in your father's car a little while ago for the purpose of obtaining a loan in order that the said John Bruce might return to the gambling joint and continue to play. But Mr. Bruce did not return, and the doll, for some reason being anxious, telephones here to make inquiries. Of course"—there was a savage laugh in his voice—"it is only a suspicion, but could this gentleman on the floor here by any chance be Mr. John Bruce?"

"Yes," she said faintly. "He is John Bruce."

"Thanks!" said Dr. Crang sarcastically. He very carefully replaced his hypodermic in his pocket. "Now another little matter. I happen to know that your father is spending the evening uptown, so I wonder who was in the car with Mr. John Bruce."

She stared at him with flashing eyes.

"I was!" she answered passionately. "I don't know what you are driving at! I never did it before, but father was away and Monsieur de Lavergne was terribly insistent. He said it was for a very special guest.

"I—I didn't, of course, tell Monsieur de Lavergne that father couldn't go. I only said that I was afraid it would not be convenient to make any loan tonight. But he wouldn't listen to a refusal, and so I went—but Monsieur de Lavergne had no idea that it was any one but father in the car."

Dr. Crang's lips parted wickedly.

To be continued tomorrow

CHAMPION TYPIST GIVES SPEED EXHIBITION HERE

New York Expert Makes One Error, and That on Purpose

Can you run over the keys of a typewriter to the tune of 145 words a minute, at the same time keeping up a running conversation having not the slightest thing to do with what you write?

It can be done, and Miss Bessie Friedman, of New York, champion accuracy typist of the world, stopped in this city yesterday long enough to prove it.

The demonstration took place in the Germantown High School auditorium, before several hundred students. Miss Friedman, who holds the accuracy championship by virtue of her record writing of 152 words a minute for fifteen minutes without an error in June of 1918, started the exhibition yesterday with 147 words in her first minute of action, just to show that she had lost none of her speed. The next exhibition, in which the conversation was mingled, had no perceptible effect on the result.

Miss Friedman had to slow down to eighty-nine words a minute during some dictation that followed, but announced aside that she would have gone much faster had the man who read the copy speeded up.

The only error of the afternoon was purposely made in order that she might show her audience the actual time wasted in the correction of even so little as one letter. To stop, erase and start again required nine seconds, and timing the next nine seconds of her writing showed that twenty-five words went on the paper in that small part of a minute.

IVY BALL AT PENN TO BE CLIMAX OF SOCIAL SEASON

Annual Affair is Expected to Surpass Former Successes

Undergraduate social activities of the University of Pennsylvania will come to a climax tonight at the traditional Ivy Ball to be held according to recent custom in Weightman Hall.

Committees organized by Kenneth L. Kurtz have been laboring [illegible] weeks on plans that it is h[illegible] make the event the most suc[illegible] years.

The decorations this year will [illegible] resent a summer scene and [illegible] flowers will change the [illegible] sombre interior of Weightman Ha[illegible] the background of color and fre[illegible] One of the effects is a balcony [illegible] with flowers.

The usual promenade balcony [illegible] not be used this year.

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with $10 worth of records
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Victrola No. 300, $265
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AMERICAN

Will the Soldiers Get A Bonus?

To the jobless ex-fighter who needs the cash, to the Congressman who needs votes in November, to the taxpayer who must eventually foot the bill, the question whether a bonus shall be paid to our soldiers of the great war and how the money is to be raised to pay it is of increasing interest.

To raise the money to pay a bonus various new taxes are suggested. The idea of legalizing and taxing the sale of light wines and beers won the enthusiastic advocacy of the New York *World*. The National Grange comes out for an excess profits tax. Some Congressmen suggest that taxation may be avoided by paying a tax out of the savings realized by reductions in the Navy and in Army and Navy personnel.

Why tax anybody, asks Arthur Brisbane in the New York *American*, "why not simply print the currency and pay the soldiers with perfectly good money manufactured by the Government at the cost of paper and printing, without taxing anyone or disturbing any business?"

The *Daily News*, New York, defends the bonus as "simple justice to the nation's defenders" and "an investment in good-will." The financial objections do not greatly impress the Seattle *Times*, which "ventures the modest prediction that bonus legislation will be enacted at this session and that money will be found with which to finance the payment to former service men."

But the opposition to the bonus is being vigorously voiced by such widely scattered dailies as the New Haven *Journal Courier*, Newark *News*, Syracuse *Herald*, Buffalo *Commercial*, Philadelphia *Inquirer*, Dallas *News* and Louisville *Courier Journal*, not to mention the truck loads of letters and telegrams being sent to the Capitol and the White House.

The leading article in THE LITERARY DIGEST this week presents all the arguments current for and against the bonus, and the various methods that have been suggested to finance it.

Other news-articles in THE DIGEST this week, February 25th, includes

Stormy Dawn of the Irish Free State
The New Crop of Swindlers
A Big Strike Against Wage Cuts
To Trust the Farmers with Trust Methods
Red Rivalry in Russian Relief
Britain's Peril in India
America's "Mortgage" on Europe
Russia Resents "Colonization"
Is the "Black Belt" Fading?
Birth Control As a Cure for War
Spraying with Molten Metal
What to Eat in Cold Weather
"Orphans of the Storm"—Griffith's New Thriller
The Wilson Foundation
Chesterton Worried by American Jokes
Armenia's Tragic Finish
Methodists "Lifting the Curse"
Turning Pews Into Couches
What the ex-Kaiser is Doing in Exile
The New "Night Life" of New York
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