PAWNED"

An Unusual Romance of People Whose Very Being is Pledged to De the Bidding of Others By FRANK L. PACKARD

Hawkins, an old New York cabman, make to throw off his love of drink, hawns his little motherless daughter. Claire, to his old friend, Paul Venisa, to be brought up without knowledge of her real father until he can redeem his bledge 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 Samos prings him under the keen observation of a mysterious passenger, who draws up a strange contract, whereby the younger man agrees to pawn himself into his service. Githert Larmon is the secret head of America's wealthiest chain of sambling houses. The younger man, who is a Ban Franciscan of leod family, with a mania for gambling is John Ruce. In the sambling house which Brice 'visite', as a secret inspector, he plays till he is broke, and through the management is given a chaose to pawn some valuables. The pawnbroker is a marvelously beautiful sit. Trailing her segats into a brawl, and finds sanctuary in her home just as is keels over at the segate into a brawl, and finds sanctuary in her home just as is keels over at the segate into a brawl, and finds sanctuary in her home just as is keels over at the segate into a brawl, and finds sanctuary in her home just as is keels over at the segate of Bruce's money which Claire has hidden. Bruce asks her to marry him, and is astonished at Crang's grip on her, hawkins reveals to Bruce he is the sir's worthless father. Hawkins prom sea to fedeem himself by giving up drink, and voniza agrees that Claire shall learn who her father is, but Hawkins returned, him downstairs. Claire refuses to see him, and he soes back to his "work" of gambling in Larmon's house to check off on the employes, but does not play. He has taken a dislike to gambling. Bruce is kidnapped by Crang, who threatens to kill him if he refuses to write a letter decoying Larmon, the gambling king, into Crarza's blackmailing power. Venisa. Sick in bed, sends Claire for Hawkins. THIS BEGIN THE STORY

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

MVOU say Hawkins is upstairs? open, and you can see for yourself it's

She had put the table between them.

She had put the table between them.

That he made no effort to come nearer out in front of the house, is it, and—
oh!' She caught Claire's arm anxiously.

She had put the table between them.

That he made no effort to come nearer for the moment afforded her a certain relief, but there was something in the oh!' She caught Claire's arm anxiously.

She had put the table between them.

That he made no effort to come nearer for the moment afforded her a certain ready taken care of himself—at another man's expense.'

Claire stared number.

Claire stared number.

"I am sure he never left the house." were not many who would have for that queer old car that was so intimately associated with Hawkins! to warn him over the could think of only one—and of only one reason. She pulled at Mrs. "Ah!" he exclaimed sharply. "Ah!" he exclaimed sharply. "Ah!" he exclaimed sharply. "Claire shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, yes!" she said contemptue would have reason.

chaire looked at her for a moment.
"No," she said slowle "Then we'll get the police at once!"

"No." she said slowly, shaking her brad. "You mustn't do that. It—it will come back."
"Come back?" Mrs. Hedges stared helplessly. "It nin't a cat. You—you ain't quite yourself, are you, Miss Chaire? Poor dear, this has upset you. Claire? Poor dear, this has upset you.
It ain't a fit thing for young eyes like yours to see. Me—I'm used to it."
"I am quite myself." Claire forced calmness she was far from feeling into ber voice. "You mustn't notify the solice, or do a thing, except just look ofter Hawkins. It—It's father's car. you know; and he'll know best what to

Well, maybe that's so," admitted

Mrs. Hedges.

"Do you know who the men were who were here with Hawkins?" Claire asked.

"No. I don't." Mrs. Hedges answered excitedly. "The thieving devils, coming here and getting Hawkins off like this! I just knew there were some men up in his room with him because I heard them talking during the evening, and then when I heard them go out and get the car I thought, of course, that Hawkins had gone with them."

"I—I see," said Claire, striving to speak naturally. "I—I'll go back to father now. I can't leave him alone very long, anyhow. I'll tell him what has happened, and—and he'll decide what to do. You'll look after Hawkins, won't you, Mrs. Hedges?

"You run along, dear." said Mrs. Hedges reassuringly. "Who else but me has looked after him these ten years?"

Claire ran from the room and down the stairs, and out to the street. The

Claire ran from the room and down the stairs, and out to the street. The one thing left for her to do was to reach home and get to the telephone one thing left for her to do was to reach home and get to the telephone—set the Bayne-Miloy Hotel—and John Bruce. Perhaps she was already too late. She ran almost blindly along the street. Her intuition, the foreboding that had obsessed her so heavily all evening was only too likely now to prove if self far from groundless. What object, save one, could anybody have in obtaining possession of the traveling pawn shop, and at the same time of keeping Hawkins temporarily out of the road?

road?

It had never seemed so far-just that little half block and halfway along an-other. It seemed as though she had been an hour in coming that little way when she finally reached her home. Her breath coming in hard, short gasps, she opened the door, closed it, and, with no thought but one in her mind, ran across the room to the telephone. She re-membered the number of the Bayne-Miloy. She snatched the telephone re-Miloy. She snatched the telephone re-ceiver from the hook—and then, as though her arm had suddenly become incapable of further movement, the receiver remained poised halfway to her

Dr. Crang was leaning over the banister, and looking down at her. With a stifled little cry, Claire replaced the receiver. Paul Veniza's voice reached her from

Paul Veniza's voice reached her from bove.

"Is that you, Chire?" he called.

"Yes, father," she answered.

Dr. Crang came down the stairs.

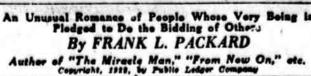
"I just dropped in a minute ago—
not professionally"—a snari crept into
his voice—"for I have never been informed that your father was #H."

Charles did not look up.

Claire doi not look up.
"It—it wasn't rerious." she said.

"It—it wasn't serious," she said.
"So!" Crang smiled a little wickedis. "I wonder where you get the gambling spirit from? One of these days
you'll find out how serious these attacks ared." He took a step forward.
"Your father tells me you have been
ever to Hawkins' room."
There was a curious hint of both
challenge and perverted humor in his
cole. It set at rest any lingering
doubt Claive might have had.
"Yes," she said, and faced him now,
her eyes, hard and steady, fixed on his.
"Poor Hawkins!" sighed Dr. Crang
to aically. "Even the best of us have
an vices! It should teach us to be
lerent with others!"

claire's little form was rigidly erect.
I wonder if you know how much I
you?" she said in a tense, low





It couldn't be true-but the signature was there, and-and it was genuine:

show the man that she had any fear. car will have been left in f "Don't follow me like that!" she kins' door again by now." I Mrs. Hedges stared incredulously.

"That's very strange!" She turned "Why not?" he retorted, as he rear window. "Look, Miss Claire! door. "I've got the right to, even if Come here! You can see!" And as I hadn't something that I came over Claire joined her: "The door of the shed, or the gradge as he calls it, is about—quite privately."

"Don't follow me like that!" she kins' door again by now." "What are you going to do with him?" Her voice was very low. "The promise that I gave you was on the condition that he lived—not only then, but now."

Crang laughed outright.

"Oh, don't worry about that! He'd."

h!' She caught Claire's arm anxiously. smile with which he surveyed her now. Claire at There's been an accident, you mean, a cynical, gloating triumph, that chilled understand.

"Well, what is it?' she demanded, brutal viciousness.

"Ah!" he exclaimed sharply. "You exposure isn't worth the few dollars that would buy him immunity." "Oh, yes!" she said contemptuously.
"My faith in you where evil is con-

Mrs. Hedges reached the door of Mawkins' room first.

"Oh, heavens." Mrs. Hedges cried out wildly. "He nin't dead, is he?" "No," said Claire in a strained voice. "He's—he's only had too much to drink. Help me lift him on the bed." It taxed the strength of the two women.

"And the car's stole!" gasped Mrs. Hedges, fighting for her breath.

"Yes," said Claire: "I am afraid "Ch, yes!" she said contemptuously. "My faith in you where evil is concerned is limitless. I heard your threats. I saw Hawkins a few minutes ago. He was quite—quite help-less. You, or some of your confederates, traded on his weakness, took the key of the car' away from him, and then stole the car. Ordinary thieves would not make them out. Then a sentence took form, and then another—and she read them piteously. "* I asked a girl

savage, hungry look came into Crang's landlady thought the police should be eyes. "But you're mine, for all that!
Mine, Claire! Mine! You understand
that, eh?"

The advanced toward her. The door

He advanced toward her. The door of the inner room, that for weeks, until a few days ago, had been occupied
by John Bruce, was just behind her,
and she retreated through it. He foling informed that Hawkins was in bad lowed her. She did not want to cry shape—no lie about that!—and walked out—the sound would reach the sick into the car without a murmur. Too room above; and, besides, she dared not show the man that she had any fear. car will have been left in front of Haw-

"Well, what is it? she demanded.

"I trapped that damned lover of yours tonight." he announced coolly. Claire, and her voice in its composed finality sounded strange even in her own ears. She was thoroughly frightened now, and her fears were beginning to take concrete form. There were not many who would have any use for that queer old car that was so intimately associated with Hawkins! She could think of only one—and of only one reason. She pulled at Mrs.

"Well, what is it? she demanded.
"I trapped that damned lover of yours tonight." he announced coolly. Claire felt her face go white. It was irrue, then! She fought madly with herself for self-possession.

"If you mean Mr. Bruce." she said deliberately. "I was just going to try to warn him over the phone; though, she could think of only one—and of only one reason. She pulled at Mrs.

"Ah!" he exclaimed sharply. "You

Crang took a letter from his pocket abruptly, and, opening it, laid it in front of Claire.

to marry me, and in doing so felt she had the right to my full confidence. She did me in "Bhe read on to The words became blurged It was

to marry me, and in doing so felt she had the right to my full confidence. She did me in "" She read on to the end.

"But it's not true!" she cried out sharply. "I don't believe it!"

"Of course, it ian't true!" said Crang complacently. "And, of course, you don't believe it! But Larmon will I've only shown you the letter to let you see what kind of a yellow cur this would be lover of yours is. Anything to save himself! But so long as he wrote the letter, I had no quarrel with him if he wanted to fake excuses for himself that gave him a chance of holding his job with Larmon afterward.

It couldn't be true—true that John Bruce had ever written the letter, a miserable Judas thing that baited a trap, for one who trusted him, with the good name of a woman for whom he had professed to care. It couldn't be true—hut the signature was there, and—and if was genuine: "John Bruce "John Bruce "John Bruce" It seemed to strike at her with the cruel. stinging blows of a whip-lash: "John To be continued tomorrow

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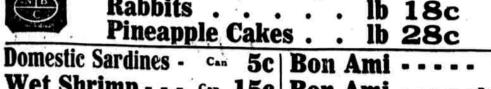
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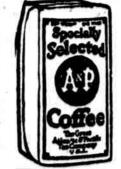
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