

The IMPOSSIBLE BOY BY NINA WILCOX PUTNAM ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. D. RHODES

SYNOPSIS.

Pedro and the dancing bear, Mr. Jones, prevent a tramp from stealing a young lady's purse. Pedro's ambition to become a painter spurs him to quit Old Nita and the strolling bear dancers. Pedro, Old Nita and the bear trainers start for New York. Miss Iris Vanderpool quarrels with her artist lover, Sam Hill, and they part. She discovers in her father's desk a portrait, which she recognizes as that of Pedro, who rescued her from the pirate another. Hill meets Pedro and Mr. Jones in Washington square. Hill discovers talent in Pedro's drawings and in a mad desire to lose himself, gives his studio and all in it to Pedro in exchange for Mr. Jones. Pedro occupies Hill's studio and calls on Leigh, the sculptor, with a letter from Hill. Leigh, calling in return, in the alley bumps into two men, one of whom is Reginald Vanderpool, Iris's father, in disguise. Vanderpool's companion goes into the basement of Hill's studio and talks with Ricardo, or Rowe, the basement tenant, of a conspiracy against a foreign government. Vanderpool, over whom Rowe has a secret hold, is implicated. Senora Dausa and her child, supposedly dead in an uprising, Rowe knows to be alive. Senora Dausa is driven by Ricardo to a resort where the conspirators meet her and profess loyalty. Sam Hill sees Rowe unexpectedly attacked by Old Nita, and rescues her.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"Madonna, I beg that we talk of something else than myself," he continued. "These pictures of De Bush's par example. You must go to them. He is wonderful as an interpreter either of character or personality."

"Very well," said she, not looking at him, for she was piqued at the purely friendly unsentimental glance with which he had returned her somewhat languishing one.

How he avoided the personal! It seemed as though he feared it above everything, and detecting the approach of an intimate note, changed the theme at once.

"I have a curious sketch of Leigh's with me," he said, changing the subject determinedly; "would you care to see it?"

"Oh, yes, I like that man Leigh—although he never pays the slightest attention to me—nor indeed to any woman, for that matter. He looks as if he could be intensely interesting if he would only talk. But though I have known him, en passant, for years, I never seem to get at him at all."

"You are certainly right in supposing him to be interesting!" exclaimed Pedro, his eyes lighting up at this appreciation of his friend. "He is a man among men! A great mind; a sincere artist. One night not long ago we were talking about form in music, and he told me that he had caught nature herself demonstrating their intimate kinship. Listen—he saw the Pocomtoco hills against the sunset, and suddenly it occurred to him that if five parallel lines were drawn behind them in a given space (as the foundations of a music score are drawn) the outlines of the hills against them would form a melody where the extreme height and depth of outline occurred. He made a drawing of the hills, cut it out, laid it upon the five black lines, and behold—a melody resulted, which he showed me upon the piano. He afterward gave me the drawing; it is in this pocket, I think."

He fumbled in the depths of the old green coat, while Iris waited with bated breath.

How good he was to look at; a trifle slight, possibly; but what wonderful hair he had, that curled a little. Ah, he had found the paper!

Together they were leaning over it as he spread it upon the tablecloth, when a sharp exclamation from across the room caused them to look up hastily. In the doorway stood Reginald Vanderpool, his aristocratic clean-shaven face for the instant blanched, his eyes fixed upon Pedro as though in fascinated unbelief. Iris covered the odd situation quickly.

"Signor Pedro," she said, "this is my father."

On the moment the man's face became impassive, and with courteous grace he advanced to greet the guest at his table.

"Are you the painter of whom the morning paper speaks?" he inquired of Pedro. "Pardon my not knowing."

"I suppose I am," replied Pedro composedly.

"Ah! I shall be interested in seeing your work," said Vanderpool. But his tone was perfunctory, except for a note of what might have been disappointment. After this he spoke very little, but whenever the conversation between his daughter and Pedro became most animated he would steal a covert look at the youth—a look full of interest and something else, too, which would have been difficult for an observer to define.

A servant, entering with a note, caused a diversion, and as he put the envelope into his pocket, Vanderpool arose, although he had scarcely eaten anything.

"Sorry, but I must run along," he said, and went out as abruptly as he had come.

Iris suggested the gray room, and they climbed the stair to it and sat themselves upon the sofa where Hill and she had quarreled. But no ghost of a former love haunted her now. Instead, her infatuation for Pedro burned higher every moment. She must find some method of attaching him and of assuring their meeting frequently, so that she might have opportunity gradually to bind him by more tender ties. Then, too, that miniature in the desk seemed to haunt her—that and her father's start when he entered the dining room. But among her numerous questionings, one thing she could and would discover: What did Pedro know about Hill?

"Have you known Mr. Hill long?" she asked. "I see that it is his studio that you have taken."

"No," said he; "I have seen him only once. But I feel a great friendship for him," he added in a significant tone.

She changed the subject hastily. How could this stranger have learned of her former attachment? And yet

his tone implied that he had. All at once the idea for which she was searching flashed into her mind.

"I hope you will not think what I am about to say, too strange," she began, "or consider me very presumptuous in assuming that you are already sufficiently my friend to permit my making such a request of you; but remember that I owe you a rescue and that we have come together instantly on the same plane without any of the usual preamble. Perhaps indebtedness already incurred is scarcely a ground for claiming further help; but you will understand—ah, you must, for I am in great distress and trouble, and there is no one to whom I can go with my difficulty."

Pedro, who had been examining a vase, turned to her with surprise. Ever ready with sympathy, he put out his hand with a single expressive gesture.

"Madonna!" he exclaimed, "you know I would willingly serve you. If it is in my power to help, surely you must know that I would not hesitate."

"Very well, then," she said gravely. "It is this: My father is a strong man, a brave man, I am sure, and one who is not easily daunted or disturbed. You noticed how he acted today? Why, he was scarcely civil to you. Such rudeness, believe me, is far from his customary habit, and there is only one explanation for it. He must be deeply troubled about something, and for it to disturb him so, that thing is a very serious matter; otherwise he would throw it off, or, at worst, conceal it."

"Have you no idea of what this trouble is?" he asked.

"I have tried to get him to tell me," she replied, "but it has been a useless effort. My father and I are close friends, but he persists in saying there is nothing wrong, which simply means that something is very wrong indeed; so much so that he is unwilling to tell me."

"I am sorry," said Pedro, "but how can I help?"

"The case is just this!" she cried, rising in her excitement: "I have good reason to believe that he is being either defrauded by a pack of scoundrels who have managed to deceive him into some questionable undertaking, or that he is being black-mailed. Could you—oh, do you think that you could in any way find out if he is being deceived, imposed upon, and help him, or at least set my disturbed mind at rest?"

"It is a curious request," said Pedro slowly. "I to help your father! Why, he is a great man—a wonderfully successful person. Surely you cannot really believe I could serve him!"

"You do not yet understand," she urged. "He is strong and capable, but he is almost ridiculously sensitive on lines which touch his honor, and is quite susceptible to being worked and tormented by unscrupulous people. And I have some real proof that this is happening, although I cannot actually show it to you at this moment. Do you remember my saying that I carried papers of value the day you rescued me with your bear? Well, the sight of them excited my father greatly, and ever since, he has been receiving letters which have nothing to do with his regular business or his social correspondence. I know it for a fact, because I stumbled upon them accidentally, in a secret drawer of his desk. They are in a foreign language—Spanish, I think—and he keeps them all with great secrecy. Oh, I am sure he is being harried by some mysterious people. Why, that note he received at luncheon was directed in that same fine foreign handwriting in which the others are written. Now won't you help me? Don't you see that it is an exquisitely delicate matter with which I cannot go to every one?"

"Have you no relations whom this would concern?" he asked.

"No," said she, "we have only some distant cousins whom we seldom see and who would not do at all."

"Then," said Pedro, "I will help you. It is a position of questionable honor, almost, which you require for this spying and I cannot go about it deliberately. Yet, if you sometime can give me a definite task in the matter, I will make sure to perform it; or should chance throw me any information, I shall not fail to use it and follow it up, and I shall be on the watch for any such. Still, it is not likely that such a thing will cross my path."

"Thank you!" she exclaimed in real gratitude. "It is a relief to know that I may call upon you if necessary. Then the matter can rest between us two. There is nothing at present that I can ask you to do, but if a clue should arise I shall let you know."

"And I will respond immediately," said he, arising to take his departure. "I have friends—ay, good friends—who are more likely to hear rumors of plotting than I. They probably know most of the sub rosa doings of the town by now, or else they have fallen in their habit of other cities! But even so, I am afraid that there's not a very great chance of their stumbling upon the particular information we need. And now, Madonna, I must leave. Will you pose for me? I want to paint the beautiful line which runs from your chin downward, like the edge of the young moon."

"Pose!" she gasped, astonished at this new turn of affairs. Then delight at the prospect flooded her heart and suffused her cheeks with a delicate color. "Pose for you! Indeed, yes. When?"

"Tomorrow."

"At any time?"

"At nine, if that is not too early."

"I shall be gone," she breathed. When he had gone she descended cautiously to the library, and finding it vacant, made the door fast. Then, springing the secret catch in the desk, she took out the miniature which lay within the hiding-place. For a long

time she gazed at it earnestly. Then a curious discovery startled her. The portrait was Pedro, feature for feature, expression and all; but one item which had somehow escaped her now added greatly to her already deep perplexity. The hair of the picture, instead of being dark, like Pedro's, was of a ripe corn gold!

CHAPTER X.

Concerning Bohemia.

On the following morning, at nine o'clock promptly, Iris reached the top landing of the Muldoon place house and paused, flushed and rather breathless, before the studio door. On it, below the heavy brass knocker and the plate engraved with Hill's name was a modest ticket bearing simply the word "Pedro." Tucked under a corner of this last was a folded bit of paper addressed to "Madonna Iris." At sight of it her heart almost stopped beating. Could he have gone away? Did he not wish to see her? With trembling fingers she unfastened it, opening it to her anxious gaze.

At the top of the page was a sketch of Pedro himself, empty handed, and running frantically to the open door of a shop which bore the sign: "Artists' Supplies." Then came the words: "The door is unlocked. Wait, I beseech you, I haste; I fly!" Below this was a second sketch of himself running madly, package in hand, toward a door marked studio.

From sheer relief she laughed aloud, and at the sound a door upon the landing below creaked as though some one had opened it to listen. However, Miss Vanderpool did not notice this, but, turning the handle, let herself into the studio, where she had often been before, to be sure, but never until now unaccompanied.

Closing the door behind her, she stood motionless, leaning against it. Pedro's funny little note crushed tightly in one hand, while she let a flood of mixed emotions sweep over her. Pedro, the adorable!

Slowly she advanced to the center of the floor and smoothed out the crumpled note. How clever he was! With a tender little sigh she folded it carefully and slipped it into the bosom of her gown. Then flushing a little, she removed her long outer wrap and laid it, with her hat and furs, upon the couch.

There was a footstep upon the landing, and the door opened suddenly. Expecting to see Pedro, she whirled about with a word of greeting, but to her amazement, in his stead the doorway was occupied by a woman!

It was Cassie.

For a long moment neither woman spoke, but stood staring intently, one as much amazed as the other.

"Good morning," said Iris interrogatively, the question following swift on the heels of the first pang of jealousy she had ever experienced.

What woman was this who entered his apartment as though by right? Cassie's smile was disarming.

"Pretty, and a lady—a rich lady," she said. "Why, you must be her! Well, I'm glad to see you!"

"Who are you, please?" repeated Iris, smiling a little in response, despite herself.

"Of course you'd have to ask," replied Cassie. "He wouldn't be likely to have mentioned me to you. No more has he told me anything about you; not knowingly, that is. But just the same, I've no need to return your question."

"You are correct in supposing he has not spoken of you," said Iris, puzzled but with a cold fear creeping over her. "Why should he have done so? I—I have not known him very long, and we have only talked about—What is your name?"

"My name is Miss Goodell," replied the girl, still smiling, her eyes full of curiosity.

"And who—how do you know me?" asked Iris.

"I pose for him," she said, "and I ain't generally considered to be lacking in charm. Well, the charm failed."

"There!" at last exclaimed Pedro, throwing down his tools. "Enough for today."

"I should think so!" cried Leigh. "You look exhausted. And you, too, Miss Vanderpool. I didn't know you had met Pedro!" he continued, helping her to descend from the model throne. "You see, I have been away, and am behind the times."

"Oh! yes, we are friends," said Pedro, his face lighting up wonderfully at sight of Leigh. "Welcome home! Did you get the commission? But they delighted with the sketch? Or, of course! Dio! you are a sight to gladden the heart!"

Pedro's cheeks were aflame, and his eyes shone with excitement. Iris noted this with wonder, and thought that truly his friendship for Leigh must be great, since the mere sight of the sculptor aroused in him an enthusiasm so far beyond any which he displayed for others. And, indeed, at this moment Pedro appeared to see no one but the tall, gaunt man, whose hands Iris looked at her watch, and noted the hour with an exclamation of surprise. Then she began slipping into her outdoor garments.

"I must fly!" she cried. "When shall I come again?"

"I—er—suppose I call you up and you can let me know?" said Pedro, looking, however, at Leigh. "We must have it soon. Ah! it is good to have you back, among moi!" he added to the sculptor.

"Tomorrow?" said Iris. It almost seemed as if she were persisting. "I could come in the morning."

"Will you be working tomorrow?" Pedro asked of Leigh.

"This day I loaf with you," he said. "Tomorrow I shall begin to set up the big group."

Pedro turned to Iris.

"Tomorrow morning will be splendid then!" he said. "You will come early, eh?"

"Yes," she replied, "but now I must go."

"And I, also," said Leigh. "I must leave an order at Penell's for plasterline. I'll be back in an hour, Pedro. May I show you to your motor, Miss Vanderpool? It's waiting out on the avenue."

"Thank you," said Iris. "I shall be glad." Then she turned to Cassie, all her original antagonism coming back in full force. What right had this girl to dictate to her, Iris?

"Good-by," said Iris, stiffly, ignoring the girl's outstretched hand. Then she went out with Leigh, her head very much in the air.

When Pedro and Leigh went down the stairs, arm in arm, the door of the ground-floor apartment was slammed with violence, just as they passed it.

"Do you know the chap who lives there?" asked Leigh.

"Never saw him," said Pedro. "These tenants are all very quiet. I never meet any of them, except Cassie."

"I've seen this down-stairs fellow," said Leigh. "Disagreeable fellow. Name's Rowe, I believe."

"I have never seen him," Pedro replied. "Where shall we go, eh?"

"Paleri's," said Leigh; "we can talk there."

It was close on to one o'clock in the morning when, in a very enthusiastic mood, Pedro saw Leigh to the latter's

door. They stood for several moments in the shelter of the vestibule, comparing the English of Oscar Wilde to that of the King James Bible. Then Leigh found his latchkey and Pedro turned homeward.

But he was not destined to reach the studio immediately.

Before he had gone to the end of the block he turned and stood quite motionless, looking up at Leigh's window, where a dim light shone appeared behind the cracked and yellow blinds.

Until this light had been extinguished he waited, looking up with a strange expression in his eyes. Then, when the window went dark, he buried his face in his hands and seemed to purge his soul of some trouble. After a moment or two, however, he abruptly squared his shoulders and resumed his homeward way, only to be halted by the sight of two men, who issued from the swinging door of a little suburban cafe and paused together under a street lamp.

At his first glimpse of the taller of the two men, Pedro's heart gave a great thump of surprise. It was Mr. Vanderpool, Iris's father! And who was the disreputable-looking fellow to whom he was talking? Why had the chap such a familiar look? Where had he seen the fellow before? Impossible to remember. But whatever their former encounter, it paled in interest beside the fact that the mystery he had undertaken to unravel was probably being enacted, in part, under his very nose.

Clearly some mischief was afoot. By his tone and gestures the smaller man appeared to be dictating to the millionaire, who followed his words anxiously. Assuming a careless manner, Pedro pulled his cap far down over his eyes and walked past the two.

"A week is impossible; too long, by far," the villainous-looking person was saying as Pedro passed. "I warn you it must be ready by three days from now at the latest."

Vanderpool's low-voiced reply did not reach the straining ears of Pedro, who had stepped into an arway just beyond, where he could watch through the railing without being seen himself. But he could hear nothing further, owing to the direction of the wind. What was to be done? How strange that chance should have let him stumble upon the action of a mystery which he had scarcely believed in the existence of! And mystery there was, beyond a doubt, else why this meeting in a little, unnamed wine cellar—why this hour of the night? But how should he, Pedro, act? Follow Vanderpool? Perhaps! In all probability the millionaire would go directly home. Follow the other? That might prove more fruitful. While he waited in perplexity his problem was decided for him by the appearance of a cab, which Vanderpool hailed, and, getting into it, drove off.

After waiting a moment to make certain of the direction taken by the cab, the man with whom Vanderpool had been talking started off rapidly. On the instant Pedro was shadowing him, dodging in and out of the darker spots and keeping at a discreet distance.

After a few moments he realized that they were bound in the direction of his own studio! The man was evidently in a hurry and did not pause, nor once look around. And all the time Pedro puzzled his head as to where he had seen the fellow's back



It Was Mr. Vanderpool—Iris's Father.

before. He became so much absorbed in trying to place this person that he could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw the man vanish behind them. A swift glance about showed that he was on his home block. There was only one place into which the man could have gone—Muldoon place! Breaking into a run, Pedro gained the entrance just in time to see the man he was pursuing gain admittance to the interior house by the basement door. For a moment he stood stock-still with surprise. The basement of the house in which he himself lived! Why, that was a part of those people's apartment—what was their name? Ah, yes, Rowe!

Alive with curiosity, he crossed the court with cautious steps, and tiptoeing to the barred window, which was further reinforced by shutters on the inside, knelt down upon the stones and applied his eye to the crack of a lame slat.

At first he could see nothing but a patch of red carpet, so he shifted slightly, bringing into full view the man whom he had followed. At this he suddenly remembered. It was the tramp who had tried to rob Iris! What a mystery was here! First a man tries to rob the daughter and then is seen in secret conference with the father! Papers! Yes, she had papers in that little silk purse, and this rascal knew their value, no doubt. But what could they concern? The man had moved aside now, disclosing another, at sight of whom Pedro's heart liked to have stopped. "Ricardo!" he gasped, amazed. But his gaze and his painful wonderment were instantly deflected from "Rowe" to a woman who sat beyond him. Feature for feature, the face she lifted in the light was his, Pedro's, very own. She was his counterpart, all but the color of her hair!

Like a wounded animal, Pedro gave a little moan, and, clutching at his heart, dropped his head upon the stone sill and sobbed gaspingly, terribly. Then a noise inside the room startled him. They were coming to the door. Evidently the woman was leaving. Arising, he flung out his arms toward the warmly lit interior with a single gesture of passionate longing, and, turning, fled terror-stricken to the sanctuary of his room above stairs.

Watercress possesses abundant phosphur and iron and imparts these necessary constituents to the blood in the most delightful method possible.

Eaten with lemon oil in the shape of salad, it is a combination of virtues that should be appreciated daily.

The old Romans used to say "Eat cress and learn to walk."

A good way to make cress salad is to mix it with young shaddock leaves or shredded cabbage and serve with French dressing.

Peru's exports in 1913 amounted to \$37,722,950 in value.

The Human Automobile

The human body, like an automobile, changes fuel (food) into power. When the fuel is too rich, or the motors and valves are out of order, waste products clog the machinery and reduce the power.

The kidneys, like exhaust valves, should carry off the waste (uric acid), but weak kidneys can't. Uric acid in excess causes headache, weak eyes, rheumatism, gravel, dropsy and fatal Bright's disease.

Doan's Kidney Pills help the kidneys fight off uric acid. It is the best recommended special kidney remedy.

A Maryland Case

"Every Picture Tells a Story." Mrs. Martha A. ...

SUNDAY ADVENTURES.

On that night when Rowe had struck Old Nita and she had fallen senseless into the arms of Samuel Hill, peace and order were long in coming to the little Summer Garden.

When a light had been lit to disclose the disorder of the bar, Hill's first thought was to get Nita and himself away before the matter went any further. A swift examination sufficed to show that she had not regained consciousness by the time that Mikey had begun telephoning for the police.

With an effort he gathered the old woman into his arms, and after a moment or two, found himself in the street. He extracted the old-fashioned key from the lock, and, closing the storm-door, fastened it on the outside. But what to do next? Anxiously he gazed up and down the deserted, snow-bound avenue. At a glance it was plain that he could not carry Nita to the car line, and he began, too late, to curse the lack of sense that had led them so far afield at such an hour.

At the moment of his despair there emerged from the basement of one of the houses a little down the line the caddy to whom the solitary remaining vehicle before the saloon belonged. Whether he was warmed by a successful amatory adventure, by the wiles of an unconscious host in the person of the cook's employer, or by some other agency, must go unrecorded here, but the fact remained that his good humor was such that without solicitation he halted the little group in the snow with a proposition which seemed like a beneficence direct from heaven.

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TO BE CONTINUED.

PULPIT REPARTEE IN 1740-42

Ministers Like Josiah Dwight of Woodstock Had a Remarkably Keen Sense of Humor.

Jonathan Edwards, the younger, was pastor in New Haven for 25 years and had a decided influence in forming the New England theology. It is not easy to characterize the theology of these sons of the Great Awakening (1740-42); they were all decided Calvinists, modified according to their individual ways of thinking, but they were men of power, and every one contributed to the development of the people to their ideas of personal liberty.

The impression that the sermons were uniformly long and dry is an exaggeration, and there were men of originality and humor in the ministry, like Josiah Dwight of Woodstock, who said: "If unconverted men ever get to heaven they would feel as uneasy as a shad up the croch of a white oak."

There was some disagreement between this man and neighboring ministers, and when they met him in the interests of harmony, he prayed that they "might so hitch their horses together on earth that they should never kick in the stables of everlasting salvation." Keen wit and sharp repartee characterized the conversation of many.—From "A History of Connecticut," by George L. Clark.

Changing Towns' Names.

The individual may go under an alias at small expense, but the village or town that wants to change its name must pay. Rugeley once wanted to be called something else to dissociate itself from a notorious murder. Slough has unsuccessfully tried to turn itself into Upton Royal. But the great triumph was that of Milton—one of the many—which disliked being called Milton-privet-Sittingbourne. It acquired a privy council order that it should be henceforth "Milton-Regis." But individual or town you need not change your name unless you have disgraced it. Your name need never disgrace you.—London Chronicle.

First Is Not Much of a Task.

A woman finds it much easier to make a fool of a man than to make a man of a fool.

Advertisements for Doan's Kidney Pills, Constipation Vanishes Forever, and other medical products.

Advertisement for Doan's Kidney Pills, featuring an illustration of a man and a woman.

Advertisement for Paine's Emulsion, featuring an illustration of a man carrying a large fish on his back.

Advertisement for Wood's Great Peppermint Cure, featuring an illustration of a man and a woman.

Advertisement for Hale's Honey, featuring an illustration of a man and a woman.

Advertisement for Babek, featuring an illustration of a man and a woman.

Advertisement for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, featuring an illustration of a man and a woman.