

# Webster=Man's Man

By PETER B. KYNE

Author of "Cappy Ricks," "The Valley of the Giants," Etc.

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## DON JUAN.

John Stuart Webster, mining engineer, boards a train in Death Valley, California, on his way back to civilization after cleaning up \$100,000. He looks like a hobo. Then he rescues a distressed lady, who makes his heart flop over. He eliminates the offending man. She is Dolores Rucy. In Denver he is offered a \$5,000-a-year job by a capitalist friend, Edward J. Jerome. He receives a delayed letter from his own particular pal, Billy Geary, asking him to finance a gold-mining proposition in Central America and go fifty-fifty with him on the profits. So he starts for Sobrante. Jerome goes with John to the depot. They meet the distressed lady on her way to the same train. John tells Jerome the whole story. Jerome secretly sees the girl, offering her \$10,000 if she induces John to take his job inside of ninety days. The girl accepts. The scene now shifts to Buenaventura, Sobrante, where Geary has existed for two months on credit extended by Mother Jones, keeper of a hotel and dramshop. Dolores cables Henrietta Wilkins (Mother Jenks) that she is on her way to visit her. Mother Jenks has been educating Dolores, who is the daughter of former President Rucy of Sobrante, deposed and executed by President Sarron. Mother Jenks doesn't want Dolores to find out she is no longer respectable. So Billy meets the steamer and tries to turn the girl back. But Dolores lands and salutes Mother Jenks as "Mother." Billy promptly falls in love with Dolores. Webster in New Orleans secures a stateroom on La Estrellita by buying a ticket for a mythical valet, "Andrew Bowers." In New Orleans Webster saves a young man from assassination. On the steamer he finds the mythical valet in his stateroom. He accepts "Bowers" on trust, without learning his identity. At Buenaventura he assists the "valet" to land. He finds Billy in love with Dolores, and like the good scout he is bids farewell to his romance. Dolores astonishes him. He makes his will.

## CHAPTER X—Continued.

"Quite right. Few women have a sense of sportsmanship. You stand a very good chance of becoming a millionaire in Sobrante, but you must beware of a dark man who has crossed your path—"

"Which one?" Webster queried mirthfully. "All coons look alike to me—Gressers also."

"More patter of our profession, Mr. Webster," she admitted, "tossed in to build up the mystery element and simulate wisdom. Fortune awaited you in the United States, but you put it behind you, at the call of friendship, for a fortune in Sobrante. Now you have reconsidered that foolish action and at this moment you are contemplating sending a cablegram to a fat old man who waddles when he walks, recalling your decision not to accept a certain proposition of a business nature. However, you are too late. The fat old man with the waddle has made other arrangements, and if you want to make money, you'll remain in Sobrante. I think that is all, Mr. Webster."

He was gazing at her with an expression composed of equal parts of awe, amazement, consternation, adoration, and blank stupidity.

"Well," she queried innocently, "to quote Billy's colloquial style: did I put it over?"

"You did very well for an amateur, but I'm a doubting Thomas. About



"Did I Put it Over?"

this fat old man who waddles when he walks: a really notepath palmit could tell me his name."

"Well, I'm only an amateur, but still I think I might, to quote Billy again, make a stab at it. Do you care to bet me about ten dollars I cannot give you the fat party's initials—all three of them?"

He gazed at her owlishly. She was

the most perfectly amazing girl he had ever met; he was certain she would win the ten dollars from him, but then it was worth ten dollars to know for a certainty whether she was perfect or possessed of a slight flaw; so he silently drew forth a wallet that would have choked a cow and skinned off a ten-dollar gold certificate of the United States of America.

"I'm game," he mumbled.

"The fat gentleman's initials are E. P. J.,"

"For the twelve apostles, Peter, Simon—"

"Don't blaspheme, Mr. Webster."

He stood up and shook himself. "When you order the tea," he said very distinctly, "please have mine cold. I need a bracer after that. Take the ten. You've won it."

"Thanks, ever so much," she answered in a matter-of-fact tone, and tucked the bill inside her shirtwaist. "I am a very poor woman, and—"

"Every little bit added to what you've got makes just a little bit more," she caroled, swaying her lithe, beautiful body and snapping her fingers like a cabaret dancer.

He could have groaned with the futility of his overwhelming desire for her; it even occurred to him what a shame it was to waste a marvel like her on a callow young pup like Billy, who had fought so many deadly skirmishes with Dan Cupid that a post-impressionistic painting of the Geary heart must resemble a pincushion. Then he remembered that this was an ungenerous, a traitorous thought, and that he had not paid the lady her fee.

"Well, what's the tariff?" he asked.

"You really feel that I have earned a professional's fee?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"Since you have taken Billy away from me this evening, I shall make you take Billy's place this evening. After dinner you shall hire an open victoria with two little white horses and drive me around the Malecon. There is a band concert to-night."

"If it's the last act of my wicked life!" he promised fervently. Strange to relate, in that ecstatic moment no thought of Billy Geary marred the perfect serenity of what promised to be the most perfectly serene night in history.

They were seated at the tiny tea table when the sound of feet crunching the little shell-paved path through the patio caused Webster and Dolores to turn their heads simultaneously. Coming toward them was an individual who wore upon a head of flaming red a disreputable, conical-crowned straw sombrero; a soiled cotton camisa with the tails flowing free of his equally soiled khaki trousers, and sandals of the kind known as alparagates—made from the tough fibre of a plant of the cañon family and worn only by the very lowliest peons—completed his singular attire.

"One of Billy's friends and another reason why he has no social standing," Dolores whispered. "I believe he's going to speak to us."

Such evidently appeared to be the man's intention. He came to the edge of the veranda, swept his ruin of a hat from his red head and bowed with Castilian expansiveness.

"Yer pardon, Miss, for appearin' before you."

She smiled her forgiveness to what Webster now perceived to be an alcoholic wreck. He was about to dismiss the fellow with scant ceremony, when Dolores, with that rich sense of almost masculine humor—a humor that was distinctly American—said sweetly:

"Mr. Webster, shake hands with Don Juan Cafetero, bon vivant and man about town. Don Juan, permit me to present Mr. Webster, from somewhere in the United States. Mr. Webster is a mining partner of our mutual friend Mr. William Geary."

A long, sad descent into the Pit had, however, imbued Don Juan with a sense of his degradation; he was in the presence of a superior, and he acknowledged the introduction with a respectful inclination of his head.

"Tis you I've called to see, Misher Webster, sor," he explained.

"Very well, old-timer. In what way can I be of service to you?"

"Tis the other way around, sor, if ye please, an' for that same there's no charge, seein' ye're the partner, ay that fine, kind gentleman, Misher Geary. Did ye, whilst in New Orleans, have dallings wit' a short, stout spigoty wit' a puckered scar under his right eye?"

John Stuart Webster suddenly sat up straight and gazed upon the lost son of Erin with grave interest. "Yes," he replied, "I seem to recall such a man."

"Tis none av me business, sor, but would ye mind tellin' me just what ye did to that spigoty?"

"Why, to begin, last Sunday morning I interrupted this pucker-eyed fellow and a pop-eyed friend of his while engaged in an attempt to assassinate a white, inoffensive stranger. The following day, at the gangplank of the steamer, we met again; he poked his nose into my business, so I squeezed his nose until he cried; right before everybody I did it. Don Juan, and to

add insult to injury, I plucked a few hairs from his cat's moustache—one hair per each pluck."

"I'd a notion ye did somethin' to him, sor. Now, thin, listen to me: I'm not much to look at, but I'm white, I'm an attachay, as ye might say, av Ignatz Leber—him that do have the import an' export house at the end av the Calle San Rosaria, forinst the bay. Also he do have charge av the cable office, an' whin I'm sober enough, I deliver cablegrams for Leber. Now, thin, ye'll recall we had a bit av a shower to-day at noon?"

Dolores and Webster nodded. Don Juan, after glancing cautiously around, lowered his voice and continued: "I was deliverin' a cablegram for Leber, an' me course took me past the palace gate—which, be the same token, has sinthry-boxes both inside an' out, wan on each side av the gate. The sinthry was not visible as I came along, an' what wit' the shower comin' as suddint as that, an' me wit' a wardrobe that's not so extinsive I can afford to get it wet, I shteepped into wan av the outside sinthry-boxes till the rain should be over, an' what wit' a drink av aguardiente I'd took to brace me for the thrip, an' the mimory av auld times, I fell asleep."

"Dear knows how long I sat there napping; all I know is that I was awakened by the sound av three men talkin, at the gate, an' divil a word did they say but what I heard. They were talkin' in Spanish, but I understood them well enough. 'He's at the Hotel Mateo,' says wan voice, 'an' his name is Webster—Jawn Webster. He's an American, an' a big, savage-lookin' lad at that, so take me advice an' be careful. Do ye two keep an eye on him wherever he goes, an' if he should shtep out at night an' wander t'rough a dark shtreet, do ye two see to it that he's put where he'll not interfere again in Don Felipe's affairs. No damn' grinnin'—beggin' yer pardon, Miss—can interfere in the wurk av the intelligence bureau at a time like this, in addition to insultin' our honored chief, wit'out the necessity av bein' measured for a coffin.'"

"Si, an' general," says another lad, an' 'Tis be sure, mi general,' says a third; an' 'wit' that the general, bad cess to him, wint back to the palace an' the other two walked on up the calle an' away from the sinthry-box."

"Did you come out and follow them?" Webster demanded briskly.

"Faith, I did. Wan av them is Francisco Arredondo, a young cavalry lieutenant, an' the other wan is Captain Jose Benevides, him that do be the best pistol-shot an' swordsmen in the spigoty army."

"What kind of looking man is this Benevides, my friend?"

"A tall, thin young man, wit' a dude's moustache an' a diamond ring on his right hand. He do be whiter nor most. Have a care would ye meet him around the city an' let him pick a fight wit' ye. An' have a care, sor, would ye go out av a night."

"Thank you, Don Juan. You're the soul of kindness. What else do you know?"

"Well," Don Juan replied with a naive grin, "I did know somethin' else, but shure, Misher Geary advised me to forget it. I was wit' him in the launch last night."

Webster stepped out of the veranda and laid a friendly hand on Don Juan Cafetero's shoulder. "Don Juan," he said gently, "I'm going back to the United States very soon. Would you like to come with me?"

Don Juan's watery eyes grew a shade mistier, if possible. He shook his head. "Whin I'm drunk here, sor," he replied, "no wan pays any attention to me, but in America they'd give me ten days in the hoosegow wanst a week. Thank you, sor, but I'll shtay here till the finish."

He knew the strength of the Demon and had long since ceased to fight even a rear-guard action. Webster put a hand under the stubby chin and tilted Don Juan's head sharply. "Hold up your head," he commanded.

"Tis the first of your breed I ever saw who would admit he was whipped. Here's five dollars for you—five dollars gold. Take it as a return with the piece intact to-morrow morning, Don Juan Cafetero."

Don Juan Cafetero's wondering glance met Webster's directly, wavered, sought the ground, but at a jerk on his chin came back and—stayed. Thus for at least ten seconds they gazed at each other; then Webster spoke. "Thank you," he said.

"Me name is John J. Cafferty," the lost one quavered.

"Round one for Cafferty," Webster laughed. "Good-bye now, until nine to-morrow. I'll expect you here, John, without fail." And he took the derelict's hand and wrung it heartily.

slightest interest either way. However, that's only one more reason why I should finish my work here and get back to Denver."

"But how did all this happen, Mr. Webster?"

"Like shooting fish in a dry lake, Miss Rucy," Webster replied, and related to her in detail the story of his adventure with the Sobrante assassins in Jackson square and his subsequent meeting with Andrew Bowers aboard La Estrellita.

Dolores laughed long and heartily as Webster finished his humorous recital. "Billy told me God only made one Jack Webster and then destroyed the mold; I believe Billy is right. But do tell me what became of this extraordinary and unblinded guest."

"The night the steamer arrived in port, Billy and Don Juan came out in a launch to say 'Hello,' so I seized upon the opportunity to tell Andrew to jump overboard and swim to the launch. Gave him a little note to Billy—carried it in his mouth—instructing Billy to do the right thing by him—and Billy did it. I don't



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know what Andrew is up to and I don't care. Where I was raised we let every man roll his own hoop. All I hope is that they don't shoot Andrew. If they do, I fear I'll weep. He's certainly a skookum lad. Do you know, Miss Rucy, I love anybody that can impose on me—make a monkey out of me, in fact—and make me like it?"

"That's so comforting," she remarked dryly.

Webster looked at her sharply, suspiciously; her words were susceptible of a dual interpretation. Her next sentence, however, dissipated this impression. "Because it confirms what I told you this afternoon when I read your palm," she added.

"You didn't know how truly you spoke when you referred to the dark man that had crossed my path. He's uncomfortably real—drat him!"

"Then you are really concerned?"

"Not at all, but I purpose sleeping with one eye open. I shan't permit myself to feel concerned until they send more than two men after me—say eight or ten."

His indifference appalled her; she leaned forward impulsively and laid a hand on his forearm. "But you must heed Don Juan's warning," she declared seriously. "You must not go out alone at night."

He grinned boyishly. "Of course not, Miss Rucy. You're going to ride out with me this evening."

"I'm not. I'll not subject you to risk."

"Very well; then I shall drive out alone."

"You're a despot, Mr. Webster—a regular despot."

"Likewise a free agent."

"I'll go with you."

"I thought so. For what hour shall I order the carriage?"

"Seven-thirty. After all, they'll not dare to murder you on the Malecon."

"I agree with you. It will have to be done very quietly, if at all. You've been mighty nice to me this afternoon, so I shall be grateful right up to the moment of dissolution."

"Speak softly but carry a big stick," she warned him.

"A big gun," he corrected her.

"—two of them, in fact."

"Sensible man! I'm not going to worry about you, Mr. Webster." She nodded her permission for him to retire, and as he walked down the veranda and into the hotel, her glance followed him with pardonable feminine curiosity, marking the breadth of his shoulders, the quick, springy stride, the alert, erect poise of his head on the powerful neck.

"A doer of deeds are you, John Stuart Webster," she almost whispered. "As Kipling would say: 'Walla! But you are a man!'"

A stealthy footstep sounded below the veranda; she turned and beheld Don Juan Cafetero, his hat in his left hand, in his right a gold-piece which he held toward her.

"Take it, allanah," he wheezed in his hoarse, drunkard's whisper. "Keep it fr me till to-morrow, for sornn av me can I trust to do that same—an' be the same token I can't face that big man wit'out it."

"Why not, Don Juan?"

He hung his red head. "I dunno, Miss," he replied miserably. "Maybe 'tis on account av him—the eye av him—the way av him—divil such a man did I ever meet—God bless him!

Shure, Misher Geary do be the fine lad, but he—"

"Mr. Geary never put a big forefinger under your chin and bade you hold up your head. Is that it?"

"Tis not what he did, Miss but the way he did it. All the fiends av hell 'll be at me this night to spend what he give me—and I—I'm afraid—"

He broke off, mumbling and chattering like a man in the grip of a great terror. In his agony of body and spirit, Dolores could have wept for Don Juan Cafetero, for in that supreme moment the derelict's soul was bare, revealing something pure and sweet and human, for all his degradation. How did Jack Webster know? wondered Dolores. And why did he so confidently give an order to this human flotsam and expect it to be obeyed? And why did Don Juan Cafetero come whining to her for strength to help him obey it?

"That wouldn't be playing the game," she told him. "I can't help you deceive him. You are the first of your breed—"

"Don't say it," he cried. "Didn't he tell me wanst?"

"Then make the fight, Don—Mr. Cafferty." She lowered her voice. "I am depending on you to stay sober and guard him. He needs a faithful friend so badly, now that Mr. Geary is away." She patted the grimy hand and left him staring at the ground. Presently he sighed, quivered horribly, and shuffled out of the patio on to the firing-line. And when he reported to Jack Webster at nine o'clock next morning, he was sober, shaking horribly and on the verge of delirium tremens, but tightly clasped in his right hand he held that five-dollar piece. Dolores, who had made it her business to be present at the interview, heard John Stuart Webster say heartily:

"The finest thing about a terrible fight, friend Cafferty, is that if it is a worth-while battle, the spoils of victory are exceedingly sweet. You are now about to enjoy one fourth of the said spoils—a large jolt of aguardiente! You must have it to steady your nerves. Go to the nearest cantina and buy one drink; then come back with the change. By that time I shall have breakfasted and you and I will then go shopping. At noon you shall have another drink; at four o'clock another; and just before retiring you shall have the fourth and last for this day. Remember, Cafferty: one jolt—no more—and the back here with the exact change."

As Don Juan scurried for salvatime, Webster turned to Dolores. "He'll fat me now, but that will not be his fault, but mine. I've set him too great a task in his present condition. Nevertheless, to use a colloquial expression I have the Cafferty goat—and I'm going to keep it."

Webster went immediately to his room, called for pen and paper, and proceeded at once to do that which he had never done before—to wit, prepare his last will and testament. In a few brief paragraphs he made a holographic will and split his bank roll equally between the two human beings he cared for most—Billy Geary and Dolores Rucy. "Billy's a gambler like me," he ruminated; "so I'll play safe. The girl is a conservative, and after Billy's wand is gone, he'd be boiled in oil before he'd prejudice hers."

Having made his will, Webster made a copy of it. The copy he placed in an envelope marked: "For Jack Not to be opened until after my death." This envelope he then enclosed in a larger one and mailed to Billy at Calle de Concordia No. 19.

Having made his few simple preparations for death, Mr. Webster next burrowed in his trunk, brought forth his big army-type automatic pistol and secured it in a holster under his arm, for he deemed it unwise and provocative of curiosity to appear in immaculate ducks that bulged at the right hip. Next he filled two spare clips with cartridges and slipped them into his pocket, thus completing his few simple preparations for life.

He glanced out the window at the sun. There would still be an hour of daylight; so he descended to the lobby called a carriage and took a short drive.

Returning to the hotel he dismissed the carriage, climbed the three short steps to the entrance and was passing through the revolving portal, when from his rear some one gave the door a violent shove, with the result that the turnst a partition behind him collided with his back with sufficient force to throw him against the partition in front. Instantly the door ceased to pivot, with Webster locked neatly in the triangular space between the two sections of the revolving door and the jamb.

He turned and beheld in the section behind him an officer of the Sobrante army. This individual, observing he was under Webster's scrutiny, scowled and peremptorily motioned to Webster to proceed—which the latter did, with such violence that the door, continuing to revolve, caught up with the Sobrante and subjected him to the same indignity to which he had subjected Webster.

"The terrible Captain Benevides."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Barrel Racing. Barrel racing is a favorite amusement among the workmen in a suburb of London. Some forty collar men, cooper and others competed in one race of this description. Then followed a double-barreled race, the men engaged being obliged to push before them two empty barrels instead of one.

MRS. ALICE GRESHAM DODD, mother of the first American soldier killed in France, who gives entire credit for recovery of her health to the well-known medicine Tanlac.



The following remarkable endorsement of Tanlac was given recently by Mrs. Alice Gresham Dodd, at the Gresham Memorial Home, Gavin Park, Evansville, Ind., which home was presented to her by the patriotic people of Indiana, as evidence of their appreciation of the services rendered to his country by her son, Corporal James B. Gresham, the first American soldier killed in France. Expressions of sympathy were received by Mrs. Dodd from all parts of the United States, and the newspapers of the country carried the story of the first "war mother."

"The shock of her son's death resulted in the serious breakdown of Mrs. Dodd's health, but everyone will learn with interest and pleasure that she is now in splendid health again. When seen at her home recently she made the following statement, giving the entire credit for her recovery to the well-known medicine, Tanlac.

"After my dear boy's death I had a general breakdown in health," said Mrs. Dodd. "At first it was just indigestion. My food used to upset me and I had to diet myself very carefully, which wasn't much hardship, as I lost all desire to eat. Then I had an attack of rheumatism, with severe pains in my shoulders, back and arms. Sometimes I used to suffer a great deal, and my joints would get all swollen up and stiff. I was able to do very little about the house, and at times couldn't even cook a meal. I got very nervous and restless, and at night would lay awake for hours, and lost many a night's sleep as a consequence.

"A friend of mine had received a great deal of help from Tanlac, and it was she who advised me to try it. I am so glad I did for it proved the best medicine I have ever taken. It soon gave me a good appetite and seemed to settle my stomach so that I was no longer troubled with indigestion. I don't know what it is to have rheumatic pains now, the swelling and stiffness has all gone out of my joints and I am able to do the work of the house with the greatest ease. My nerves are now steady and strong. I sleep fine at night, and I feel better in health than ever before in my life. I shall always be grateful for what Tanlac has done for me, and shall recommend it every chance I get."

Tanlac is sold by leading druggists everywhere.—Adv.

A Good Many Like Him. Friend—"I read that book you illustrated." Artist—"I didn't. How did the illustrations fit?"

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