

WEBSTER
—**MAN'S MAN**
by
Peter B. Kyne
Author of "Cappy Ricks," "The Valley of the Giants," etc.



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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—John Stuart Webster, mining engineer, after clearing up his fortune in Death Valley, Calif., boards a train for the East. He befriends a young lady annoyed by a masher, thoroughly touncing the "pest."

CHAPTER II.—At Denver Webster receives a letter from Billy Geary, his closest friend. Geary urges him to come to Sobrante, Central America, to finance and develop a mining claim. He decides to go.

CHAPTER III.—Dolores Rucy, the young woman Webster befriended, and who had made a deep impression on him, is on her way to Sobrante.

CHAPTER IV.—At Buenaventura, capital of Sobrante, Billy Geary, ill and penniless, is living on the charity of "Mother Jenks," keeper of a dramshop. She receives a telegram from Dolores, telling of her coming.

CHAPTER V.—Dolores' father, Ricardo Rucy, president of Sobrante, had been killed in a revolution led by Sarros, the present executive. Dolores, a child of eight, was smuggled out of the country by Mother Jenks and supported by her in the United States. The old woman, ashamed of her occupation and habits of life, fears to meet Dolores and sends Geary to the boat to say she has gone to the United States.

CHAPTER VI.—Webster, on his way to Sobrante, is taken ill on the train, and is in a hospital in New Orleans two weeks. Geary bungles his mission, Dolores easily seeing through his story. She greets Mother Jenks as her friend and benefactor. Geary falls desperately in love with the girl.

CHAPTER VII.—At New Orleans, while waiting for the steamer to Buenaventura, Webster saves the life of a young man who is attacked by two assassins. The youth leaves Webster without disclosing his identity.

CHAPTER VIII.—On the steamer Webster finds his stateroom occupied by a stranger who declares his intention of being his guest to Buenaventura. At first angered, Webster and the stranger, after a somewhat forcible argument, reach an amicable agreement. Webster recognizes him as the youth whose life he had saved the day before, though the other does not know Webster.

CHAPTER IX.—Arriving at Sobrante, Geary welcomes Webster and is instrumental in helping his friend "cross" ashore. The latter is known to Webster as "Andrew Bowers." Geary houses him at Mother Jenks'. Webster gets the idea that Geary and Dolores are in love, and with the intention of giving Geary every chance he smilingly contradicts the girl's statement that they have met before.

CHAPTER X.—Webster resolves a warning conveyed by "Don Juan Cafetero," really John J. Cafferty, Irishman of good qualities fallen through overindulgence in liquor, that there is a plot to assassinate him. Webster meets a firm friend of Cafferty. Later, the American is insulted by a Sobrante army officer and publicly ridicules him. A challenge to a duel is accepted under such stern conditions that the Sobranteans withdraw it.

CHAPTER XI.—Webster secretly visits "Andrew Bowers" at Mother Jenks'. He learns that "Bowers" is Ricardo Rucy, brother of Dolores (whom he believes dead), and that a revolution is contemplated. Next morning he tells Dolores that her brother, of whom she has no recollection, is in the country, projecting the overthrow of President Sarros. Very much in love with the girl, but believing that her affection has been bestowed on Geary, Webster leaves to investigate the mine which he has come to finance.

CHAPTER XII.—Webster, after looking it over, decides to put his whole fortune into the mine. He sends Billy Geary to the United States to purchase the necessary equipment, advising him to marry Dolores in Buenaventura before he leaves. Knowing that unless Geary can overthrow Sarros his mine will be confiscated, Webster agrees to finance the venture. Returning to Buenaventura, he is astonished to find Dolores still there and Geary on his way to the United States.

CHAPTER XIII.

John Stuart Webster's agile brain was the repository of many conflicting emotions as he bathed, shaved, and changed from his soiled khaki field clothes to a suit of dunes before presenting himself before Dolores.

Had Billy's courage forsaken him at the last minute, with the result that he had gone back to the United States without having settled the question of Dolores' future? Had he proposed and been rejected, or had he proposed, been accepted, and had his plans for an immediate marriage vetoed by Dolores?

In either event, why had Billy least you were when Bill met you and fell in love with you—and I know that boy so well I was convinced, after meeting you, that his future happiness and yours would best be conserved if you married him. I realize this is a most unusual conversation—

"Quite to be expected of an unusual man, Caliph. And I do not think you were one bit presumptuous. It was wonderfully dear of you, and I am profoundly grateful that Billy and I have such a true, unselfish friend, whose first thought is for our happiness. Of course, you realize how bad I felt to think I couldn't accede to Billy's plan. Billy's such a dear, it quite broke my heart to disappoint him, but a little temporary unhappiness will not ruin Billy, will it? It makes me feel blue to talk about it, Caliph."

"Not at all, not at all, Miss Rucy. Bill is one of the impulsive, whirlwind kind, up in the clouds today and down in the slough of despond tomorrow. He'll survive the shock. However, I'm glad to know everything will come out all right. Seeing you

failed to leave a note for him at the Hotel Mateo, or mailed him a letter to the Globo de Oro at San Miguel de Padua, advising him of the change in the plan of action outlined for him by Webster?

In the simplicity of his single-hearted devotion Webster was puzzled to understand how any woman in her right mind could fail to fall in love with Billy Geary. A man he was, from heels to hair, and a man with prospects far above the average. To Webster's way of thinking, the girl who married Billy might well count herself fortunate.

Dolores greeted him with unaffected pleasure. "Well, Caliph!" she said. Just that. It made Webster sensible of a feeling of having returned to her after an absence of several years. "I'm so glad to see you, Miss Rucy," he replied, and added boldly, "particularly since I didn't expect to."

She knew what her reply would lead to; nevertheless, with that dissimulation which can only be practiced in perfection by a clever and beautiful woman, she answered with equal boldness: "Indeed! Pray why?"

"Well, for a pretty good reason, I think. A few weeks ago, after examining Bill's concession very thoroughly, I told him he was a potential millionaire. Now, while I disclaim any appearance of braggadocio, when John Stuart Webster, E. M., makes any mine owner a report like that, he is apt to be taken very seriously. And having made Bill a potential millionaire and arranged to give him three or four months' vacation back home, I had a notion he'd present to you a very valid reason why you should accompany him."

"You are very frank, Caliph." "That's because I'm curious. He had a certain dream, and told me about it, and I did my little best to make it come true."

"I think I understand, Caliph. It would be very difficult, I think, for anybody to meet Billy without being attracted toward him. He's one of the dearest, most lovable boys in the world—and he did do me the signal honor of asking me to marry him. So there!"

"Well, and why didn't you?" She smiled at his blunt insistence on forcing the issue. "For a number



"Well, and Why Didn't You?" of excellent reasons, Caliph. In the first place, he wanted me to marry him immediately—and I wasn't ready

to leave Sobrante, while Billy was. Indeed, it was highly necessary that he should leave immediately, for the sake of his health, and I had Billy's interest at heart sufficiently to insist upon it. You seem to forget that when a girl marries she must make some preparation for the event, and if she has any close relatives, such as a brother, for instance, she likes to have that relative present at the ceremony. You will recall, Caliph, that I have a brother and that you have promised to introduce me to him very shortly."

"By Judas, I never thought of that, Miss Rucy," the repentant Webster answered. "In fact, I wasn't thinking of anybody's interest in this matter but Bill's."

"Not even of mine, Caliph?" reproachfully.

"That goes without saying. Could I have done anything nicer for you than fix it for Bill so he would be in position to marry you? Here you are, practically alone in the world—at here gave me a momentary chill; thought a cog had slipped somewhere, so I helped myself to Cupid's license and asked. A man cannot learn very much from a woman unless he asks questions, can he? I mean on the subject of love."

She smiled a little, wistful, knowing smile. "No, Caliph," she answered seriously. "Somehow the Master of Things ordained that on the subject of love man must do all the talking." "Yes, but on the other hand, woman has the last word—as usual. However, the only thing in your case and Billy's that worries me is the thought that since Bill left his magnet behind he will be drawn back here before he is in the kind of shape, physically, that I want him to be in before he relieves me on the job so I can go away."

"Do not worry on that point, Caliph. I am your ally there; between us both I think we can manage him."

"Fine business! And with those few kind words will dismiss William until you care to talk about him again, although if you're as deep in love as Bill you'll not stay off the subject very long. Hope you haven't been into mischief."

"I haven't been idle. I've made several dresses for Mother Jenks and done a lot of fancy work and begun the study of my mother tongue. If my brother should become president of this country, it would ill become his sister not to be able to speak Spanish. By the way, Billy told me you were going to remain up in the hills quite a while yet. What brought you back to town so soon?"

"Expected I'd have some freight arriving shortly."

"How long will you remain in Buenaventura?"

Considering the fact that he was no longer subject to temptation, since the object of his temptation was now definitely promised to his friend, Billy, Webster suddenly decided to remain until the political atmosphere should be cleared, although prior to his conversation with Dolores he had cherished a definite plan to go back to the hills within 48 hours.

"I'm going back," he replied soberly. "After I have kept my promise and introduced you to your brother in the government palace. If I cannot introduce him to you there, the title to our mining concession will be clouded, in which event it will not be necessary for Billy or myself to fuss with it further."

He related to her the information gleaned from her brother two days previously.

"It's no use for an individual to fight a government despot in courts controlled by the latter," he concluded. "Your brother must win and depose the Sarros; then with the title to the property certified by the government as without a flaw, I may dare to spend \$50,000 developing it."

"And if my brother doesn't win?"

"I may never have an opportunity to present you to him. We mustn't be squeamish about this matter, Miss Rucy. If Ricardo doesn't turn the trick, he may go the way of his father, unless he can manage to get out of the country."

She was silent, digesting this grim alternative. "As I understand it, then, Caliph, Ricardo hopes to win his revolution when he strikes the first blow."

"I think so. I dare say Ricardo hopes to take Sarros by surprise, bottle the city garrison up in the cartel and the government palace and there besiege them. Having secured nominal control of a seaport, he can import arms and ammunition; also he can recruit openly, and at his leisure hunt down the outlying garrisons. The Sarros crowd doesn't suspect his presence in Sobrante, and by a quick, savage stroke he should be able to jerk this one-horse government up by the heels in jig time—particularly since the elbowy feel no loyalty toward the Sarros regime and are only kept in subjection through fear and lack of a leader. I'm going to play Ricardo to win; if he isn't killed in the opening row, for I'm certain he'll lead his men."

"I dare say he is greatly like his father—not afraid to die for his country," she replied presently. "I am glad to be here when he takes that risk."

"Oh, but you mustn't be here," Webster protested.

"Why?"

"Because there'll be street fighting—probably of a desperate character, and I understand your countrymen go rather war-mad and do things not sanctioned by The Hague tribunal. If there's a steamer in port at the time I'll put you aboard her until the issue is decided. I'm going to see Ricardo tomorrow night and learn the details of his plan of campaign; after that I'll be able to act intelligently."

Ricardo Rucy, with Dr. Pacheco and Colonel Caraveo, were engaged in consultation when Jack Webster, having left the Hotel Mateo via his bedroom window in order to avoid possible espionage and made his way to El Buen Amigo on foot, was announced by Mother Jenks. The three conspirators greeted him joyously, as indeed they should, for his loyal friendship had thus far been one of their principal bulwarks.

"Well," Webster inquired, after greeting them and carefully closing the door behind him. "Here I am in Buenaventura, marking time and, like Mr. Micawber, waiting for something to turn up."

"You will not be required to wait long," Colonel Caraveo assured him. "Thanks to your kindly offices, the trap is already baited."

"Our friend, Rucy, has, since our first meeting, insisted on dispensing with my consent when using me to promote his enterprises. Colonel Caraveo to say I have been unable to locate him for his impudence. I was down at Leber's warehouse this afternoon. You have enough road-making tools consigned to me there to build a pretty fair highway to the gates of the government palace, I should say. I hope you have all pondered the result to me, an innocent bystander, if your enemies should take a notion to open one of those cases of shovels."

Colonel Caraveo favored him with a benignant smile. "You forget, my friend, that I am second in command in the intelligence department, and that during the absence of your particular friend, Raoul Sarros, in New Orleans, I am first in command. Since I already know what those cases contain, naturally I shall not take the trouble to investigate."

"Well, that's a comfort, Colonel." "You have investigated your mining concession, Webster?" Ricardo Rucy asked.

"You bet."

"What did you find?"

"A couple of millions in sight."

Ricardo shook his head slowly. "It is not in sight, old man," he reminded Webster. "Without our aid—and you cannot have our aid unless our revolution is successful, when you shall have it freely—your millions are, most positively, not in sight. If you want those millions, friend Webster, there is but one way to get them—and that is to close your eyes and play our game to the limit. I wonder if you'd go further—about \$40,000 further, to be exact."

"I might, but I never go it blind for a wad like that. What's your trouble?"

"The individual in charge of the funds of the revolutionary junta in New Orleans was murdered last night; the funds were deposited to his credit as agent in a certain bank, and before the junta can obtain legal possession of them again the psychological time for their use will have passed."

"We have a steamer chartered, and 200 men, whose business it is to fight under any flag at \$5 gold per day and no questions asked, are now marking time on the Isle of Pines, off the coast of Cuba, waiting for our steamer to call for them and land them, with their rifles and ammunition and six 75-millimeter field guns and some rapid-fire Maxims, at San Bruno, some 18 miles up the coast from here."

"The guns and munitions are now in Tampa, having been shipped to our agent there on sight draft, with bill of lading attached; the steamer is chartered, and en route to Tampa from Norfolk, Va., and we must pay the owners \$10,000 the day she begins taking on her cargo, and \$10,000 before she unloads it on lighters at San Bruno."

"We must also pay 200 men one month's pay in advance—that is, \$50,000; we cannot meet this expense and still take up that sight draft now awaiting our attention in the bank at Tampa."

"In return for this favor to the provisional government of Sobrante, you shall have the note of the provisional government, signed by the provisional president, myself, and the provisional cabinet, Dr. Pacheco, Colonel Caraveo, and two other gentlemen whom you will meet in due course unless in the interim they should be killed. And as a bonus for saving this country from a brutal dictator, who is pillaging its resources for his personal profit, you shall have a deed of gift to that mining concession you and your friend, Geary, are so desirous of working; also the title shall be certified by the government and the Supreme court of Sobrante and absolutely secured to you against future aggression in the event that the new regime

"It couldn't be any better if I had planned it myself. You might accept my suggestion and armor that little motor truck of mine. It arrived on yesterday's steamer."

"And some armor sheet steel with it—sheet steel already loop-holed for the barrels of the two machine guns it will carry!" Dr. Pacheco cried joyously.

"Have you provided a chauffeur, Doctor?"

"I have—likewise an armored sheet-steel closet for him to sit in while chaffering."

"How about that loan to the provisional government?" Ricardo demanded pointedly.

Webster did not hesitate. After all, what was money to him now? Billy had gone away, his hopes raised high, already a millionaire after the fashion of mining men, who are ever ready to count their chicks before they are hatched, provided only they see the eggs. Besides, there was Dolores. Full well Webster realized that Billy, tossed back once more into the jaws of the well-known wolf of poverty, would not have the courage upon his return to Sobrante to ask Dolores to share his poverty with him; should the revolution fall, Ricardo Rucy would be an outcast, a hunted man with a price on his head, and in no position to care for his sister, even should he survive long enough to know he had a sister. She would be alone in the world if he, John Stuart Webster, failed her now—more than ever she needed a man's strength and affection to help her navigate the tide-rips of life, for life to a woman, alone and unprotected and dependent upon her labor for the bread, she must

should be overthrown at some future date. Also you have my profound gratitude and that of my people."

"Tell me your plan of campaign," Webster suggested.

"In a secret rendezvous in the mountains I have 1,000 picked men—my father's veterans. They are armed with modern rifles and machetes. The nitrate company, which has been suffering from heavy export duties imposed by Sarros, has loaned me all the rolling stock of the railroad for one night. It will be mobilized at San Miguel de Padua by next Saturday night; my troops will arrive late the same afternoon and entrain at once."

"In the interim all telephone and telegraph communications with Buenaventura will be severed. The night previous our steamer will have discharged her cargo of men and munitions at San Bruno; a chain of outposts will at once be established and all communication with the capital will be shut off."

"On Saturday night, also, the Consolidated Fruit company's steamer, La Estrellita, will make port with 30 Americans in her stowage. These men will be road-makers and miners imported by M. J. S. Webster, and in order to make certain that they will come, you have already ordered them by cable. We have arranged with the port doctor to give La Estrellita a clean bill of health the very night she arrives. Hence the ship's authorities will not be suspicious, I hope, when we remove our men after dark and house them in Leber's warehouse, where they will spend the night unpacking those spades, picks and shovels of yours and getting the factory grease off them."

"At 4 o'clock in the morning various citizens of Sobrante, with rebellion in their hearts, will begin to mobilize at Leber's warehouse, where they will be issued rifles and ammunition and where they will wait until the action is opened to the south by the detachment from San Bruno, which, having marched from San Bruno the night before, will have arrived outside the city, and will be awaiting the signal from me. I will attack from the west—cautiously."

"Now, there are 5,000 government troops in the city and in various cantonments on the outskirts. These cantonments are to be rushed and set afire; I figure that the confusion of our sudden attack will create a riot—particularly when I do something that isn't very popular as a war feature down this way, and that is charge—and keep on coming."

"The government troops will start to fall back on the city, only to find themselves flanked by a fierce artillery fire from the San Bruno contingent; the troops from the arsenal, the guards at the palace and the Fifteenth regiment of infantry, now stationed at the Cuartel de Infanteria, next the government palace, will be dispatched post haste to repulse the attack, and 400 men, with the machine gun company waiting in Leber's warehouse, will promptly move upon them from the rear and capture the arsenal. There are a few thousand rifles and a lot of ammunition stored there; I miss my guess if, as soon as the news of its capture by the rebels spreads through the city (and I shall have men to spread it), I shall not have a few thousand volunteers eager to help overthrow Sarros."

"Once cut off from the arsenal and the palace, Sarros must fight his way out of the city in order to have the slightest chance to suppress the rebellion; for he will have no refuge in the city. And with the railroad and all the rolling stock in our hands, without a commissary for his troops, without a base of supplies, even should the government troops fight their way through, they leave the city in my hands and I'll recruit and arm my men and hunt them down like jack rabbits at my leisure. Once let the arsenal and the palace fall into my hands, once let me proclaim myself provisional president, once let the people know that Ricardo Rucy, the beloved, lives again in the person of his son, and I tell you, Webster, this country is saved. How do you like my plan of campaign?"

"What! And me with a healthy bet down on the result! I hope I'm a better sport than that."

"You're incorrigible. Be careful, then, and don't get yourself potted by a stray bullet."

"Shall I see you fellows before the blow-off?"

"I scarcely think so."

"Then if you're through with me, I'll bid you all good-by and good luck. I'll have dinner with you in the palace Sunday evening."

"Taken."

"May I bring a guest?"

"By all means."

Webster shook hands with the trio and departed for his hotel. For the first time in many years he was heavy of heart, crushed. "Neddy Jerome was right," he soliloquized. "This is the last place on earth for me to have come to. I've made Neddy sore on me, and he's lost patience and put another man in the job he promised me; I've raised Billy's hopes sky-high and had to bet \$40,000 to keep them there; I've been fool enough to fall in love with my friend's fiancée; I'm a human cat's paw, and the finest thing I can do now is to go out next Sunday morning with that machine gun company from Leber's warehouse and get killed."

Continued in next issue.

What One Doctor Says.

Dr. M. C. Lyons says: "After careful investigation I heartily recommend it (Rheuma) for all forms of rheumatism." English Drug Store sells and guarantees it. Use of one bottle will convince you why this well-known doctor praises it so highly.

a witty person. Just laugh at the wrong time when he tells his favorite joke.

ent, must contain, at best, a full measure of terror and despair and loneliness. He pictured her through a grim procession of years of skimping and petty sacrifices—and all because he, John Stuart Webster, had hesitated to lend a dreamer and an idealist a paltry \$40,000 without security."

No, there was no alternative. If his friendship for Billy was worth a son, it was worth \$40,000; if his silent, unrequited love for Dolores Rucy was worthy of her, no sacrifice on his part could be too great, provided it guaranteed her happiness.

"Ruined again," he sighed. "This is only another of those numerous occasions when the tall goes with the hide. How soon do you want the money?"

Ricardo Luiz Rucy leaned forward and gazed very earnestly at John Stuart Webster. "Do you really trust me that much, my friend?" he asked feelingly. "Remember, I am asking you for \$40,000 on faith."

"Old sport," John Stuart Webster answered. "You went overboard at Buenaventura harbor and took a chance among those big, liver-colored, hammer-headed sharks. And you did that because you had a cause you thought worth dying for. I never knew a man who had a cause that was worth dying for who would even espouse a cause worth swindling for. You win—I only want you to understand one thing, Ricardo: I'm not doing this for the sake of saving that mining concession the Sarros government gave my friend, Geary. I'm above doing a thing like this for money—for myself. It seems to me I must do it to guarantee the happiness of two people I love: My friend, Geary, and the girl he's going to marry. I reject your promissory note and your promise of a deed of gift for that concession, and accept only your gratitude. There are no strings to this loan, because it isn't a loan at all. It's a bet. If you lose, I'll help you get out of the country and absolve you of any indebtedness to me. However, if you should win, I know you'll reimburse me from the national treasury."

"And you do not desire a bonus?" "Nothing that will cost the citizens of this country one penny of their heritage. I'm going to bet this money—but I, understand, not loan it. However, if you want to be a sport and grant me a little favor in return, you can."

"Fire away." "After I give you this money, I don't want the doctor and the colonel to kiss me to show how grateful they are."

"You wonderful fellow! Jack Webster, if I had a sister I should want her to marry you."

"Show how little you'd think of your sister—staking her to a sentimental jackass. Shall I cable the money to New Orleans in the morning?"

"That will do very nicely."

"To whom shall I cable the money?" "Send it to the Pleycune National bank of New Orleans, with instructions to credit account No. 246, J. E. P., trustee. In this little game we are playing, my friend, it is safer to deal in numbers and initials rather than names. The local cable office leaks quite regularly."

"Very well, Ricardo. I'll attend to it first thing in the morning. Go to it and win, or there'll be several new faces whining around the devil, not the least of which will be mine. When you charge, remember you're charging for my \$40,000—and go through with it. I worked rather hard for that \$40,000, and if I must lose it, I do not want to do it in a half-hearted fight. Give me, at least, a bloody run for my money. I'll have a reserved seat somewhere watching the game."

"If you'll take my advice, you'll go aboard La Estrellita and stay there until the issue is decided. When the first gun is fired, it signals the open season on mining engineers who butt in on affairs of state."

"What! And me with a healthy bet down on the result! I hope I'm a better sport than that."

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It's toasted



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"Tell Me Your Plan of Campaign."