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## PEG O' THE RING

By WALTER K. HILL and JO BRANDT

Novelized from the Motion Picture Play of the Same Name by the Universal  
Film Manufacturing Co.

Peg's attack of hysterical madness, climaxing in her attack upon Flip, the clown gave Chockro and his man the opportunity they desired. They had watched Peg as she left the circus, throat until he fell unconscious to the ground. Then when the circus girl tumbled forward upon the clown's prostrate body they rushed eagerly to the spot.

The Hindu raised the girl with the help of his henchmen, and carried her from the tent. They had secured the assistance of an automobile owner willing to perform the service they required for the bribe they offered, and before the greatly excited people with the circus realized what had happened, Chockro, carrying his still insensible victim, had left the circus. The excitement attendant upon the boisterous scenes around the circus made possible the success of the Hindu's daring action.

When Flip had sufficiently recovered to tell what had happened to him the alarm was sounded that Peg had again disappeared.

"Send word to young Doctor Lund," said Flip. "He has rescued her before and he will not fail this time."

Ferry, the hippodrome jockey, ever eager to serve Peg, was prompt to volunteer as the messenger.

Arriving at the house of death, Jerry was admitted by Mrs. Lund's maid, and to her the boy imparted, in whispering sentences, the information that Peg had again been kidnapped.

"The young Doctor Lund was to be told."

"Tell him without the old woman hearing you," was Jerry's injunction.

"There is no need to caution me," responded the maid. "I know the old girl better than anybody else, and I know that she would keep the boy from going to help Peg if she knew what he was after."

It was some little time before the maid found an opportunity favorable to her purpose. And when she told young Lund, in a few words, that Peg was again in danger, he was prompt to act.

Hurrying to the circus, Lund sought out Flip, but the old clown could give him no information. There was no body around the show who could give the slightest clue to Peg's whereabouts.

Burdened with the responsibilities of preparing for his stepfather's funeral, Lund was in a distressing state of mind, racked between love for the girl and respect for the dead, the young man was puzzled as to the next move he might make.

There was an immediate necessity for him to visit the local office of the circus, situated in a building not far from the show lot. Lund decided that he would go there first, transact his business, and then bend his efforts to the discovery of Peg's whereabouts.

What for the moment seemed to be an unfortunate cause of delay to Lund's main purpose to rescue Peg from her latest peril, proved to be the most fortunate trick fate had yet played in the many adventures of the preceding few months.

Lund was unconsciously directing his steps to the very building where Peg had been carried by her kidnappers.

When the automobile bearing Chockro and his unconscious burden left the show grounds, the driver hurried to the building in which the circus office was situated.

Chockro had taken good care to arrange, by liberal means, to have the show entirely deserted at the appointed time, the watchman having a convenient errand that took him away from the building, as soon as the Hindu had arrived. Chockro carried the girl upstairs and placed her lying upon the floor of the circus office.

Being sure that her hands and feet were securely bound the Hindu left his man in charge of the prostrate girl and proceeded to report in person to Mrs. Lund; to deliver to "his boss" the letter he had secured that afternoon when, with a sledge, he had broken into Flip's trunk. Chockro was highly elated over the turn affairs had but taken lately.

He felt that the immense sum that had been promised him by Mrs. Lund as reward for the dastardly service he had performed was almost within his grasp.

Mrs. Lund was in conference with her lawyer when Chockro arrived, and it was necessary for both of the conspirators to exercise caution. The will was to be read late that afternoon, and Mrs. Lund was going over

the preliminaries with her attorney. When Chockro was announced Mrs. Lund apologized to the attorney for being compelled to ask him leave the room.

"I am compelled to receive my visitors here," she said, "and if you will step into the next room and wait, I shall be detained only a few moments."

When the lawyer had withdrawn, Chockro was ushered in by the maid. Mrs. Lund drew the curtains and turned eagerly to the Hindu for his report.

"We have got the girl safe where she can't get loose until the will is read," said Chockro, "and here is the letter you want."

Mrs. Lund held out her hand to grasp the precious document. But the Hindu indicated that he had something further to say.

"It's time for a settlement now," said Chockro. "The old man is dead, and this letter puts the fortune in your hands. Pay me now, and the letter is yours."

"You know perfectly well that I cannot pay now. Until I get control of the fortune I cannot pay—but as soon as the estate is settled I will keep my word and pay you to the last penny."

Chockro was stumped. Unless Mrs. Lund had the letter, Peg might be able to establish her claim, and until the estate was settled Mrs. Lund could not pay. The woman had him completely at her mercy in the matter, and if he were to secure any part of the reward that had been promised his only mode of procedure would be to trust Mrs. Lund with the letter.

The Hindu turned the subject over in his mind and arrived at the only logical conclusion. As he placed the letter in the woman's hand he said: "I am trusting your to keep your word. Now I will return and it will be my duty to see that you do."

"You may depend upon me to keep my word," said the woman, as Chockro for the last time left the presence of his relentless and cruel "boss."

And when the Hindu departed Mrs. Lund called her attorney to again enter the room and resume their discussion of the will.

"It seems by the document that Doctor Lund has drawn, that the will must be read in the presence of your self and your son, if it is possible to do so," said the lawyer. "But there is a provision that it must be read before six o'clock on the day after his death, even if either yourself or your son may not be present."

"We can, therefore, do nothing but wait until six o'clock, when we may then read the will," the lawyer continued. "Meanwhile notify your son to be here by the appointed time."

Mrs. Lund smiled with satisfaction, recalling the fact that Chockro had Peg safely confined where she could not interrupt, and that the letter in her possession was the only proof that she possessed if she would attempt to claim a share of the fortune.

The woman left her lawyer in the drawing room and retired to her own chamber, there in seclusion, to read the letter Chockro had delivered to her. As she hurriedly devoured the written words with eager eyes, Mrs. Lund's face was radiant with smiles of satisfaction.

The letter she had so long schemed to gain possession of was in fact a utter disclaimer of any share in Doctor Lund's estate, reciting the fact that Doctor Lund was the father of La Belle's child. The deed, Mrs. Lund saw visions of the plans she had been laying for years arriving at fruition—the Lund millions would be in her possession.

Chockro, upon leaving Mrs. Lund, went direct to his prisoner, sauntering leisurely along in the assurance that matters were shaping themselves to his advantage and that his strenuous efforts to reap the rich reward would soon end in success. So well was the Hindu pleased to himself and his prospects that he abandoned all caution and proceeded boldly a long the street that led to the office in which he had left his captive bound and gagged.

Young Doctor Lund was hurrying to the same destination. He approached the building from a direction opposite to Chockro and was surprised to see the Hindu walk leisurely along. Deciding to await developments, Lund screened himself from view in a convenient doorway and watched Chockro approach.

Suddenly a piercing scream came to Lund's ears. Instinctively he jumped

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from the doorway in which he had been hiding and looked inquiringly around. Chockro also heard the screams, and at the same instant caught sight of young Lund.

The Hindu leaped forward and ran full speed to the door of the building in which Peg was confined. Lund saw the move, and undertook to head Chockro off, but before the young doctor could reach the door, the Hindu had entered the building. When Lund reached the door he found it securely locked against him.

Again the screams rang out along the deserted street. Chockro's presence in the vicinity convinced Lund that he had unwittingly located Peg and her undoubted danger inspired the young man to renewed determination.

Lund flung himself against the heavy wooden door, fruitlessly, again and again. The strong material of which it was built resisted his every effort. He was compelled to abandon the attempt to enter the building through the door, and immediately began casting about for some other means of going to Peg's relief.

He stepped back from the building toward the curb line and looked up, at the instant that a crash of glass sounded upon his ears, while a heavy book that had been thrown through the window fell at his feet.

The incident gave Lund an idea, and from a quick glance at the front of the building Lund concluded that he might climb up to the window that had just been broken. It was his conviction that Peg was held prisoner in the room from which the book had just been thrown. The peculiar construction of the facade helped Lund in his climb.

Narrow ledges of stone coping projected from the brick wall at equal distance, running parallel with the stone window sills. By breaking the glass with his feet to gain a foothold on the window sashes, and reach up for hand holds on the iron ledges, Lund was able to climb the perpendicular sides of the building.

Chockro had mounted the stairs and entered an office adjoining the room in which Peg had been left bound hand and foot. The Hindu was conscious of the fact that a noise from the front office attracted his attention. The two men rushed into the next room.

Peg had managed to gain her feet and was leaning against a heavy desk presumably to be ready to execute some unexpected maneuver. Without stopping to consider the futility of the move, Chockro snatched up a book from a nearby desk and flung it at the girl. Peg dodged, and the book continued on its course, crashing through the window.

Chockro and his man made haste to reach the circus girl and throw her once more on the floor. Peg, in resisting their attack, not alone kept the two men busy at their brutal task, but provided time for young Lund to reach the window.

The struggle within the office drowned the noise made by Lund in smashing glass as he clambered upward, drawing himself up by his forefinger and toes until he could secure a foothold on the window frame. It was therefore possible for Lund to reach the window of the room in which the ruffians were struggling with Peg before his approach was discovered.

Standing on the window ledge and steadying himself by holding the stone coping above, Lund kicked the remaining glass from the sash and swung himself into the room. Chockro and his fellow thug had just time to rise to their feet, before Lund attacked them. Peg rolled herself close against the wall to avoid the scuffle, and in a twinkling the three men were engaged in a terrific struggle.

The battle waged fierce, Lund making his blows count as he belabored his antagonists. Chockro determined to take no risk in the encounter, pulled from his pocket a revolver, and was in the act of discharging it when Lund's quick eye detected the move. Disregarding the blows of the other thug, Lund clenched with the Hindu in a struggle for the revolver.

The young physician fully realized that Chockro would use the gun if he could. By a concentration of his great strength Lund managed to turn the weapon against the Hindu's body. The frenzied encounter lasted only a few seconds, for in the height of the battle the gun exploded and Chockro crumpled to the floor.

With one agonized disposed of, Lund centered his athletic attention upon Chockro's hired man. Back and forth across the floor of the office they fought, and when by an opportune blow, Lund knocked his antagonist into the adjoining room, he speedily followed his advantage and resumed the battle on new grounds.

The thug held his own, giving and taking in desperate fashion. When he tried to back Lund through a door and over the top of a flight of stairs, the young physician formed a sudden

resolve. With a quick move he lifted the thug from his feet, raised him above his head and lunged with him toward the banister.

The ruffian in desperation reached out with both hands and caught some hanging electric light wires that had been insecurely fastened against the wall of the hallway. The force of his grasp and the struggle pulled the wires from their fastenings and broke them in two.

Neither of the struggling men noticed that the broken strands had fallen into a box of rubbish. They struggled back into the outer office unaware that the crossed wires had ignited the flimsy paper and that they had started a fire that might mean their death.

Fiercely the struggle continued, the scene of the struggle shifting again to the outer office, where Chockro lay dead upon the floor. Over his prostrate body the Hindu thought, until Lund by rare chance secured a firm grasp upon the throat of his antagonist and bent him backward over the desk.

Lund held his grapple tight, until his man was limp and helpless. He then flung the thug to the floor, and turned his attention to Peg, struggling against her fastenings, in the corner. With all speed Lund freed the girl, when they started toward the door great clouds of smoke rolled into the room, their stifling fumes being the first inkling of this new danger.

"We're trapped, girlie," Lund cried. "We're gone unless we can get out the way I came in." And while he spoke Lund was swiftly dragging Peg toward the window.

The flames were roaring with consuming ferocity. Dense hot smoke filled the room. Quick action and sturdy nerves and strength could alone save them.

Lund first climbed through the window, and stood on the stone sill. He then assisted Peg to reach his side, and instantly began the perilous descent. They made their escape not an instant too soon.

Being in a remote part of town, the alarm was delayed, and only a few people had been attracted by the fire when the young people had accomplished their escape. Without waiting for an investigation, Lund hurried Peg to the circus grounds, disregarding the commotion they created as they ran through the streets.

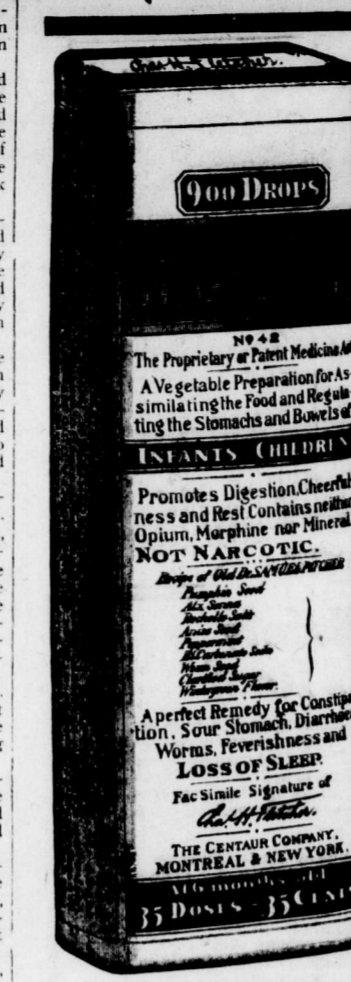
Flip was fast recovering from the shock of Peg's attack, and when he heard that the girl was safely returned to the show, the joy of realizing that she was unharmed served to completely revive the old clown. When Peg had finished dressing, and had joined Lund and Flip, the three started at once for the Lund home.

The afternoon had passed amid such a riot of excitement that it was almost six o'clock when Doctor Lund, with Flip and Peg, arrived at the house. Mrs. Lund was impatiently waiting for the will to be read, and had repeatedly urged the lawyer to proceed.

"Every condition of the will must be complied with to make it legal," said the attorney, nettled by Mrs. Lund's eagerness.

As a tone of six approached Mrs. Lund became more impatient and restless. And when young Lund had arrived, just a few minutes within the hour, she was greatly enraged to discover that the girl had been brought along with the old clown.

"What right has this girl to come here at this time?" cried Mrs. Lund as Peg, with Flip, entered the room, cutting in on a solemnly aggravating tone that served only further to in-



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furiate the mercenary and cruel woman.

The lawyer adjusted his glasses and opened the will. Then he read the brief document. In the first two paragraphs Doctor Lund referred to his marriage to Mrs. Lund, relating that he had raised her son as his own child and recounted that as Mrs. Lund was wealthy in her own right, he felt that the money he had spent upon young Lund's education might well be considered an advance payment of any share she might have in the Lund millions.

The third and final paragraph disposed of the dead man's fortune in this manner: "To my dear daughter, Peg, I bequeath all my money, property and valuables, and the mammoth circus, as a slight reparation for the wrong done to both the girl and her mother, La Belle La Sieur."

Mrs. Lund's outburst of passionate rage almost drowned the voice of the lawyer as he read the important paragraph. The enraged woman held aloft the letter Chockro had given her and shrieked at the top of her voice.

"This impostor shall not have the fortune. Here is a letter left by her mother that shows Peg had no claim on my late husband's fortune."

Then she flung the letter upon the table, and looked with triumphant

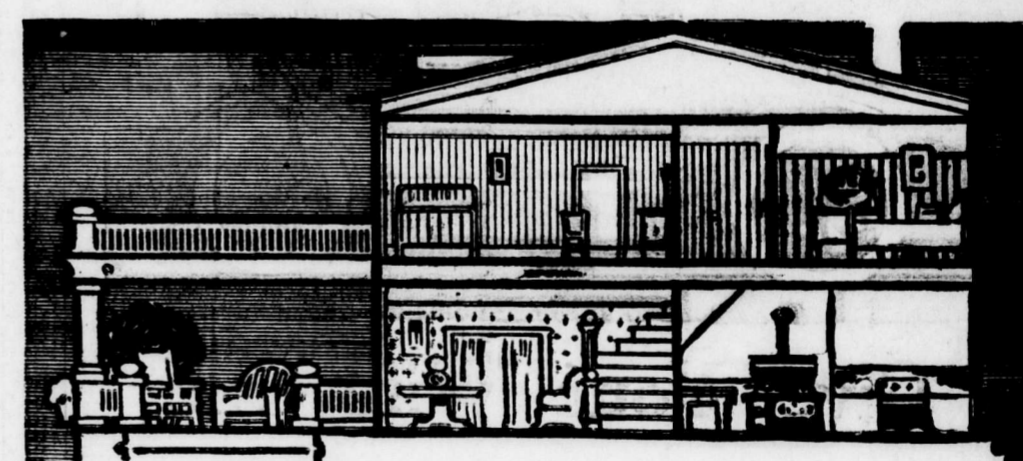
scorn at Peg and Flip. Peg remained smilingly silent, but Flip drew from his pocket the original letter that La Belle had entrusted to him. There was a look of triumph on his face as he remarked in a clear, steady voice: "Mrs. Lund, your sinful eagerness to possess Doctor Lund's millions has made you an easy victim of trickery. I had that fake letter made to mislead you. Peg and your own son composed it, and I hid it in the trunk where your paid tools might find it."

Then Flip handed the original letter to the lawyer and said: "This is the genuine document, and it proves that Peg is the first and only child of your late husband and real heir to his entire fortune."

Young Lund stood silently watching every move in the game. His mother's conduct during the past few weeks had completely killed the boy's natural love for his parent, and had well-nigh established a sentiment of loathing in its stead.

When Flip had finished speaking, the boy moved to his mother's side. Her pitiable position, brought to complete humiliation by her own folly, moved the son to compassion. Lund put his arm over the woman's shoulder and said:

Continued on page 8



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