



The Venom Business

John Lange , Michael Crichton

Download now

Read Online ➞

The Venom Business

John Lange , Michael Crichton

The Venom Business John Lange , Michael Crichton

As an expert handler of venomous snakes - and a smuggler of rare artifacts - Charles Raynaud is accustomed to danger. So the job bodyguarding an old acquaintance about to come into a fortune shouldn't make him break a sweat.

But when the attempts on the man's life nearly get Raynaud killed, he's left wondering: is *he* the killers' real target...?

The Venom Business Details

Date : Published November 19th 2013 by Hard Case Crime (first published 1969)

ISBN : 9781783291229

Author : John Lange , Michael Crichton

Format : Paperback 385 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Crime, Thriller

 [Download The Venom Business ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Venom Business ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Venom Business John Lange , Michael Crichton

From Reader Review The Venom Business for online ebook

Camille says

Another great book by Michael Crichton. It dealt with a man who extracted snake venom, a playboy from London, a devious uncle who was a doctor that dealt with research using snake venom and a calculating stepmother who was about to lose money when her playboy step-son came into his inheritance. Mix in greed, drugs and murder and you have quite a story. Excellent read that I recommend to everyone!!

Mike says

I had high hopes for "The Venom Business" by John Lange (a.k.a. Michael Crichton), but I ended up disappointed with it. Seventy to eighty percent of the book is quite good. But the things the author gets wrong, he gets very wrong.

As I've come to expect from the "Lange" novels, there are rugged men, beautiful women, dangerous liaisons, sinister plots, vile villains, and exotic locales. You know, good escapist/thriller kinds of fun for that era--from 1970, with love.

The hero, rugged Charles Raynaud, is a man of the jungle. He hunts rare snakes for a living. But he is recruited (by more than one conspirator) to mingle with vicious, two-legged snakes in London. And those reptiles are the most poisonous kind of all.

The convoluted plot centers around hellion and hedonist, Richard Pierce. Pierce and Raynaud are old school chums. And Pierce is about to come into a huge fortune. But his conniving stepmother and adoptive uncle are out to make sure they maintain control of that fortune. To them, Raynaud seems like an excellent pawn to manipulate.

On top of that is the complication that the beautiful heiress Raynaud happens to meet in the jungle is about to play a large role in Richard Pierce's life. That chance meeting and flirtation is a coincidence that strains belief, but the author does his best to mute it by making her disappear for a large portion of the book.

The central portion of the book is one long series of mind games between Pierce and Raynaud. Are they friends? Are they enemies? Can either of them tell the difference? Richard Pierce lives a life of debauchery and excess. Yet he also has a shrewd mind and an abiding hatred of his alluring French stepmother. He does his best to win Raynaud over to his side, even as the sexy French stepmother does the same. And the sinister uncle--a clinical psychiatrist--lurks in the wings, pulling strings for his own benefit.

"The Venom Business" does seem like more than one novel has been grafted somewhat inexpertly together. While there are some tangential connections from the beginning section of the book to the rest of the story--a plot point about snake venom, mostly--the "man of the jungle" seems quite a bit different once he arrives in London.

Putting all that aside, after an elaborate mental and physical chess game between Raynaud, Pierce, the heiress, the stepmother, and the psychiatrist, the actual climax of the story is rushed and unsatisfying. Like it was hastily rewritten or revised. The "twist" is one you can see coming from a mile off. And the fates of the

various characters involved are handled in odd and perfunctory ways. I had the same problem with the ending of Lange novel "Easy Go."

The abrupt ending of "The Venom Business" was basically a slap in the face to the reader. The last chapter ends things in an arbitrary way...and it made this reader wonder why he bothered to read the whole serpentine tale if THAT was the payoff.

it'chy says

i thought it's gonna be snakes all the way

a bit complicated, though

p154: from the worn edges, he determined that it had seen lots of use.

N.V. Cefalo says

3.5 stars

It started out great, then the story was getting convoluted and it dragged on and on. I am still unsure of how much time had exactly passed, and if anyone had any sense of time in general?? I had a problem with the pacing of the story, it went from fast, to snails pace, to fast again, to abruptly ending - it threw me off by the end. I didn't particularly get closure from the story as well. A product of it's time with the drugs, women, and other things; it was jarring to read Crichton's work displayed in such a manner. It was alright in the end. Not sure I would really recommend this to friends, as he has countless other masterpieces.

Jennifer says

The Good: I love a mystery that keeps me baffled all the way through and The Venom Business did just that. The real trick here is Lange/Crichton kept me entertained even while I was utterly confused. Hard boiled, noir-ish novels aren't my thing at all, but I just couldn't help wanting to know what was going on and who was really pulling the strings here. Things were wrapped up tightly on each other, each revelations giving just enough to suck me in further.

The Bad: There were so many unlikeable characters in this book. Albeit purposely unlikeable, but still just a struggle to even read without wondering why someone hadn't just killed the entire lot of them yet.

Patrick Hayes says

I purchased this novel looking for a pulp thriller, much in the vein of the original Hard Case Crime books, having been a subscriber to this series while they were still offered through the mail. I found this oversized edition in a book store, and seeing it to be the longest of the Lang books, I purchased this.

The novel starts simply with a random encounter in Mexico and quickly changes into a mystery/thriller for Charles Raynaud once he goes to England. He meets with a former acquaintance and this person's playboy lifestyle drags the protagonist into a scheme involving money, murder, and sex.

This went on for far too long. There's a lot of pages devoted to characters telling other characters information that the reader is already aware of. There's also an over-the-top subplot involving a doctor and an experimental drug that had me jointly groaning at it's impossibility and how it figures into the antagonists' plot.

I was happy when this book was over and has me questioning if I should read other books by Lang. Thankfully, Michael Crichton improved considerably as a writer after this book.

Josh says

This book was tracking as a 5 star read for me around the halfway mark but a change in direction soiled the story to a degree.

Charles Raynaud reads as a James Bond type character; introduced as a professional snake handler, he knows his way around a forest almost as good as he knows his way around women. He's a protagonist full of mystery and intrigue. Equally adept at smuggling priceless artifacts as he is undertaking murder for hire, his thirst for money lands him in the middle of a scandal that is a little hard to decipher.

THE VENOM BUSINESS lacks clarity to how Raynaud gets mixed up in a family drama centered around a big inheritance and relatives with murderous intent. Add to the mix a couple of attractive and willing women and what was a decent read turns murky.

I'm not sure if author Michael Crichton during his pulp phase published any more books featuring Raynaud but THE VENOM BUSINESS protagonist has a lot of potential and was the most enjoyable aspect to the book.

Krystle says

Page turning delight!

This was a Crichton book to enjoy. Suspense, sex and scandals. Venom business was amazing to read. I really didn't want it to end. So many great characters were involved here and the plot was incredible.

Possible spoiler:

Jane Mitchell and Charles Raynaud... I love how these two communicate and compliment each other with their wits and talents.

Richard Pierce, Dominique, Sandra, Lucienne and his step-uncle Johnathan Black wow what an unusual character bunch. They are masterfully written.

Ashwin Dongre says

I don't know what so many people are complaining about the last 20% of the story, they all said it was kind of change in direction. But I felt it the exact direction the story was going throughout.

I liked the story, you finally start to see the Crichton that you know so very well from his later novels. Do read it.

Cheryl says

This is one of my least favorite books from the early works of author, Michael Crichton writing as John Lange. There really wasn't much of a story. I agree with other readers that there was just a lot of talking and at times repeat information as well as sex. I am not a prude but when the sex has no purpose, then, it is not needed.

Charles is ok. This is kind of sad as he has an interesting job and in fact, it seems like he is a bit of a rogue. However, I had trouble connecting to him as well as the rest of the characters. Plus, again as I stated, I thought the storyline itself was weak as well. This book does not "bite" you with excitement.

Jason Edwards says

Most of Michael Crichton's early "John Lange" novels (at least the ones I've read) follow the same pattern: an innocent—but able—man gets caught between dueling criminal factions. He's pushed back and forth, a pawn in their game, until he decides to man-up and use their own complicated schemes to thwart them. Along the way he meets a stunning—but able—lady, with whom he eventually has sex, although that's only after he's bedded a several other easily discarded women.

Venom Business is no different, in this regard. If you've read anything else Crichton wrote while he was in medical school, this one won't be anything too terribly new. The plot this time is a little bit more complicated, which is to say, contrived, which is to say, does not deliver when the climax comes at all. It's also a longer novel than earlier ones—unnecessarily longer, in my opinion.

Early Crichton liked to sprinkle in the medical knowledge, lots of Latin, and tries to hang the plot on some of this esoterica, although, again, it's not really required. At its core, *Venom Business*, like his other early novels reprinted under the Hard Case Crimes imprint, is nothing more (or less) than a pulpy he-man's novel, a 'Harlequin Romance' for guys.

Which sounds sexist and terrible, but then so are these novels. That's just the way things were back then, one might say, or that's just what the genre requires. But these are just excuses, justification for filling out a meager plot that would have done better as long short-story or a novella.

It sounds like I've got nothing good to say about Michael Crichton's John Lange works in general, and *Venom Business* in particular, but what I've always liked about Crichton—and it shows even in these early novels—is how readable his writing is. I don't know any other way to describe it. Even in a long, descriptive passage, or when he's laying down extended exposition, the words just flow by. These books are great to

take on vacation, for example, because you can slip into them, get lost, and finish them up before it's time to go back home.

And then, when you're done, throw them away.

Eliz L says

trashy, compelling, just right

Marcos Carvalho says

This book was a meandering slog. The worst of the Lange books, so far. It seems like it might have been an exercise in writing, like Crichton was trying out (too many) different writing techniques throughout the book.

But the story's biggest sin is how boring it is. Characters get haircuts, go to parties, have sex, talk endlessly, while the story just sits there, like a smoking toad, getting more bloated by the minute.

Read only if you're a die-hard fan. Even then, there's no shame in skipping to the last 20 pages.

Lexxi Kitty says

Strange story, quite interesting, but strange. At least until about the 80% mark. Then it went batty, insane. A very stupid turn to the book. A strange dream. Then an even stranger awake moment. Fast car, fight in car. Really bloody stupid it all was.

I realize that the sixties were a weird drug fueled time (for some), but . . . Lange (aka Crichton) must have been indulging mightily. At least from about 80% to 88%. Wacky.

Of course then it turned 'good' again at 89%. Bah. (then it got weird again, but I stop now suddenly reporting to myself while reading)

Hmms. Well, it's all over now. The book, I mean. Wacky book. It had such potential. If it hadn't taken a weird turn and then ended badly, I probably could have rated it quite highly. Annoying, that. Since this is the last book by Lange I hadn't yet read. Well, there's another, but I DNF'd that one. As in, I tried it, got bored, and stopped reading it. Guess I'll have to retry it.

I think there's one book under the Crichton name I never got around to reading, I think it was called Disclosure, or something like that. Then there's the Jeffrey Hudson book A Case of Need. I have a vague idea I haven't read that one yet. And probably never will. And I know I've never read the Michael Douglas one (a book Crichton wrote with his brother and released under the name Michael Douglas). So. Four fiction books by Crichton I haven't read yet, and probably never will. And, I believe, at least one work of nonfiction that I probably won't read. So I'm likely done.

I had thought, while I was reading this book, that it is unfortunate that John Lange didn't continue writing

books. I was going to include that line. And then say something like "yes I know that's Crichton . . .". I was going to say all that because, at the time, this book here was quite good. And there had been others that either showed potential or were, in fact, quite good. Then this one messed everything up by getting all wacky there at the end. Unfortunate, that.

I think I might have liked Lange better than Crichton, the books. A couple of Lange books I rather liked, and then two of Crichtons I rather liked. Maybe it's tied. I'm too tired to look. I know the two of Crichtons, though. That pirate one that got released after his death, and The Great Train Robbery.

Arah-Lynda says

John Lange puts the pulp in paper!

Charles Raynaud, expert handler of venomous snakes and smuggler of rare artifacts, is in Mexico when he first meets Jane Mitchell. He lives on the bare edge of danger. He is on his way to Paris to make a delivery, the goods cleverly concealed beneath his venomous travelling companions.

Hard liquor, fast cars, beautiful, lusty women, smoke filled rooms, strangers who emerge from the shadows of danger. All of it wrapped in slow, smoky, sultry prose.

And my word.....the cover, I was positively pea green in my urgency to have it, the very moment my eyes fell upon it.

Am I going back to the well? Hells yeah!

More please.....
