

HEART of the SUNSET

BY REX BEACH



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FOLLOWING DISCOVERY BY ED AUSTIN AND GENERAL LONGORIO THAT DAVE LAW AND BLAZE JONES ARE RETURNING FROM MEXICO WITH GUZMAN'S BODY, CLASHING FORCES GO TO THE RIVER—PALOMA AND ALAIRE LOOK ON

SYNOPSIS—Mrs. Alaire Austin is the handsome young mistress of Las Palmas ranch in Texas and La Feria ranch in Mexico. She dislikes her husband, who is a brutal, profligate, lecherous drunkard, but she feels a strong sympathy for David Law, state ranger, when she discovers accidentally that he loves her hopelessly. There is trouble between Mexicans and Americans along the border. Law discovers that Austin is leagued with American horse thieves and Mexican rebels, among them Tad Lewis, who is under suspicion. Law kills a horse thief. When Law's friend, Ricardo Guzman, goes to the Mexican side to collect money due him, he is murdered by the Lewis gang because he can give incriminating testimony against them. Law and Blaze Jones go to the Mexican side to get Guzman's body secretly. Mrs. Austin and Paloma Jones, Blaze's daughter, are preparing to give them aid on their return to the American side when Gen. Luis Longorio, an odious admirer of Mrs. Austin, comes to call. Ed Austin and Longorio learn of the Jones-Law expedition. Tad Lewis is warned and his gang and Longorio's meet at the river to kill the friends of Guzman.

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

Alaire drove as swiftly as she dared, following the blurred streak of gray that was the road, and taking the bumps with utter recklessness. Ahead loomed the dark ridge of the river thickets, a dense rampart of mesquite. But even before they were sheltered from the moonlight Paloma saw the lights of another automobile approaching along the main-traveled highway behind them—the lights, evidently, of Tad Lewis' machine. A moment later Alaire's car drove into the black shadows. It had been a short, swift, exciting ride. "Young Ed's" runabout could not be many minutes ahead of them. The women got out, then breast the high grass and brambles between their hiding place and the pumphouse road. A hundred yards away they could now see the ghostly Rio Grande, its sallow surface faintly silvered by the low moon; lights gleamed from the windows of Morales' house. In the distance the vague outlines of the Mexican shore were resolving themselves, and far beyond twinkled the evidence that some related citizens of Romero were still awake.

Paloma had brought with her the long-barreled rifle, and this she clutched nervously as she and Alaire stood whispering. Conditions were favorable for an approach to the pumphouse itself. They had nearly reached their goal when out into the clearing behind them, with metallic rattle and clang, burst another automobile, and Paloma whispered excitedly.

"There's the Lewis outfit at last!"

In the Lewis car were several men. They descended hurriedly, and when one of them ran around the front of the car to turn off its lights, both women saw that he carried a rifle. Evidently Tad Lewis had come prepared for desperate measures.

A small door gave entrance to the pumphouse, and into the lock of this Mrs. Austin fitted a key; the next moment she and Paloma were safely inside. Dusty, cobwebbed windows let in a faint ghost-glow of moonlight, but prevented clear observation of anything outside; Alaire's fumbling fingers found the latch and began to lift a window, when someone spoke, just outside the building.

"What did you discover?" inquired a voice which neither woman recognized. Paloma clutched blindly for her companion; the two eavesdroppers stood rooted in their tracks. The pounding of their hearts sounded loudly. Since the building was little more than a wooden shell, they could plainly hear the answer:

"The house is full of greasers. I can't tell who they are."

A third man spoke, this time in Spanish. "That was Tad Lewis who just came, senior."

There followed some whispered words indistinguishable to the listeners, then a rustle of bodies moving through the tall grass and weeds.

Paloma placed her lips close to Alaire's ear. "Who are those people?" she breathed.

"I don't know. They must be the ones who came in that strange automobile."

Paloma chattered viciously. "Everybody in Texas is here. I wish we'd thought to scatter ticks behind us."

Cautiously they swung the door back and looked out. The open space along the river bank was leveled by the moonlight; from Morales' house, to their right, came the sound of voices. The women waited.

A few moments, then a number of men appeared. Paloma judged there were at least a dozen, but she was too excited to count them. As they came straggling toward the pumphouse one of them called back:

"Morales! Put out your lights." Both women recognized Tad Lewis as the speaker.

Alaire had stubbornly refused to charge her husband with any active share in this evil business, but her faith in Ed suddenly vanished when she heard him say:

"Hush! You're making too much noise. You'd better scatter out, too, for there's no telling where they'll land." Alaire leaned weakly against the door. "I'm going to leave, and let you all attend to the rest," he was saying. But Tad Lewis halted him as he turned from the group.

"Where are you going, Ed? You left your car back yonder by the road. I almost ran into it."

"Ed? What are you talking about? My car is over by Morales' house."

"Senior Austin is in a great hurry," sneered someone in Spanish. "Once more he leaves all of the fighting to his friends."

"That's Adolfo Urbina," panted Paloma. "I know him." Stung by this open charge of cowardice, Austin began a voluble defense, but in the midst of it General Longorio addressed him sharply.

"You will stay here, senior. Nobody leaves this place."

"I told you I wouldn't be a party to the business," Ed declared hotly. "You forced me to come in the first place—"

"Yes! And now I force you to stay!"

Longorio's stand appeared to please Lewis, who chimed in with the words: "That's right, Ed. You've got to stick, for once in your life!"

"What do you mean, you nearly ran into my car back yonder?" Austin asked after a moment.

"Ain't that your machine yonder by the thickets?" inquired Lewis. "If it ain't, whose is it?" As no one answered, he started in the direction he had indicated; but at that moment a man came running from the river bank, crying softly:

"Look out! They come."

A man passed swiftly by the crack of the half-open door and scarcely ten feet beyond. He was followed by three others.

The first of the newcomers, acting as spokesman for his party, stepped out into the moonlight and cried loudly: "Hello, men! What's going on here?" It was an American voice; it had a broad, slow Texas drawl.

The group of plotters turned; there was a startled murmur, then Tad Lewis answered:

"Hello! Who are you! What do you want?"

"I reckon we must have got off the road," announced the stranger. Then he peered out across the river. "Say! Ain't that a skiff yonder?" he inquired.

"Well, it don't look like a steamboat," Lewis laughed disagreeably. "We're havin' a little party of our own. I reckon you fellows had better beat it. Understand?"

The outposts that had been sent to cover the bank in both directions were now coming in. Through the stillness of the night there sounded the thump of oarlocks. Seeing that the stranger did not seem to take his hint, Lewis raised his voice menacingly:

"That's your road back yonder. It's a right good road, and I'd advise you to travel fast."

But this suggestion was also ignored; in fact, it appeared to amuse the man addressed, for he, too, laughed. He turned, and the women noticed that he carried a short saddle gun. They saw, also, that at least one of the men at his back was similarly armed.

"Now, what's the hurry?" The stranger was chuckling. Suddenly he raised his voice and called loudly: "Hello, Dave! Is that you-all?"

The answer floated promptly back: "Hello, Cap! Sure it's us."

"Have you got him?"

It was Blaze Jones' voice which answered this time: "You bet!"

Paloma Jones was trembling now. She clung to Alaire, crying, thankfully: "It's the Rangers! The Rangers!" Then she broke away and ran out into the moonlight, trailing her absurd firearm after her.

"Now, boys," the Ranger captain was saying, "I know most every one of you, and we ain't going to have the least bit of trouble over this thing, are we? I reckon you-all are friends of Ricardo Guzman, and you just couldn't wait to find out about him, eh?"

Alaire, who had followed Paloma, was close enough now to recognize the two Guzman boys as members of the Ranger party. Lewis and his men had drawn together at the first alarm; Longorio's Mexicans had gathered about their leader. The entire situation had changed in a moment, and the Ranger captain was in control of it.

Soon Dave Law and Blaze Jones came up over the river bank; they paused, stricken with surprise at finding a score of people where they had expected no more than four.

Blaze was the first to speak. "What's all this?" he cried. He peered nearsightedly from one to the other; then his huge bulk shook with laughter: "Say, do my glasses magnify, or is this an open lodge meetin'?"

"Dad! Oh, dad!" Paloma scurried to him and flung herself into his arms.

"What you don't here, kid?" the father exclaimed. "Why, you'd ought to be home and abed, long ago. You'll catch your death of cold. Is that gun loaded?"

Dave Law was even more amazed than his companion. Recovering from his first surprise, he took a position beside his superior officer. Captain Evans did not seem at all troubled by the disparity in numbers. One Ranger, or two at the most, had always been sufficient to quell a Texan disturbance; now that there were three of them, he felt equal to an invasion of Mexican soil, if necessary. In consequence, he relaxed his watchful vigilance, and to Dave he drawled:

"We've got most of the leading citizens of the county, and I reckon somebody in the outfit will be able to identify Guzman."

"There's no trouble about that, sir. We found him. Pedro and Raoul can make sure." The sons of Ricardo Guzman stepped forward promptly, and Law waved them toward the boat landing, where the two helpers were waiting with Ricardo's remains.

Despite the Ranger captain's easy assumption of command, the strain of the situation had not subsided, and Longorio drew swift attention to himself when he said:

"It is fortunate that I chanced to learn of this matter. You have done me a great service, Senior Law, for I came to Romero purposely to examine into the death of this unfortunate man. But I could learn nothing; nobody knew anything whatever about the matter, and so I became convinced that it amounted to little. Now—behold! I discover that I was deceived. Or—perhaps there still may be a mistake."

Blaze Jones thrust his daughter aside and advanced toward the speaker. "There's no mistake," he declared.



"Hello, Men! What's Going on Here?" belligerently. "I don't make mistakes when I go grave-robbin'. Don Ricardo was shot by your men. He had five thousand dollars on him, or he should have had, and he was an American citizen. Your Colonel Blanco covered the body, but he'll have a h-ll of a job coverin' the facts. It's time we came to a showdown with your murderin' outfit, and I aim to see if you've got a government in your country."

"Heaven guided my hand," devoutly breathed the general. "It is regrettable that you used this means when a word to me would have served the purpose, for—it is no trivial matter to desecrate a Mexican graveyard. My country, it has a government. An officer of the state of Texas, under arms, has crossed the Rio Grande. What does that mean?"

Captain Evans had a sense of humor; Longorio's ominous words amused him. "Say, general, it ain't the first time," he chortled. "And you're an officer, too, ain't you? You're in Texas at this minute, and I'll bet if I frisked you I'd find that you was under arms." The Mexican understood English sufficiently well to grasp the significance of these words. After a moment's consideration, therefore, he modified his threatening tone.

"But my mission was friendly. I had no criminal purpose," he said mildly. "However—perhaps one offense condones the other. At any rate, we must

have no international complications. There is a more practical side to the matter: If Don Ricardo Guzman met his death in Mexico, there will be a rigid investigation, I assure you."

Evans agreed. "That's fair! And I'll make a bargain with you: you keep still and so'll we. We never aimed for this affair to get out, anyhow. I reckon these men—'ain't liable to talk much."

The two Guzman boys, greatly moved, returned to announce that they had identified their father's body, and Longorio could not well refuse to accept their evidence.

"Very well," said he. "I am indebted to you. Since there is nothing more to be said, apparently, I will return to Romero." With a bow to Mrs. Austin, who had silently watched the play of these opposing motives, he turned away, and Tad Lewis followed him.

But Dave Law had recognized Adolfo Urbina in the crowd, and, stepping forward, disarmed him, saying:

"Adolfo, there's a warrant for you, so I'll just take you in."

For a moment Adolfo was inclined to resist, but, thinking better of it, he yielded with bad grace, bitterly regretting the curiosity which had prompted him to remain to the end of this interesting affair.

Tad Lewis gave him some comfort. "Never mind, Adolfo," he said. "They can't prove anything on you, and I'll go your ball. Ed Austin knows where you was the day that stock was stole." He and his two remaining men moved toward their automobile, and a moment later the vehicle went clattering away up the thicket road.

So ended the attempt to foil the return of Ricardo Guzman's body to Texas soil.

When Alaire came to look for her husband, he was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

Superstitions and Certainties.

The sensation caused by Ricardo Guzman's disappearance was as nothing to that which followed the recovery of his body. Whatever the facts of the rescue, it was generally recognized that the result had been to bring on a crisis in the affairs of the two nations. Strong influences, however, were at work to prevent that very outcome for which the people of Texas prayed. During the delay there arose a report that Ricardo Guzman had borne an evil reputation, and that he had been so actively associated with the rebel cause as to warrant punishment by the federal government. Moreover, a legal question as to his American citizenship was raised—a question which seemed to have important bearing upon the case.

Public interest is short-lived; few living men can hold it more than a day or two, and it reckons no dead man worthy of more than an obituary notice. Thus in the course of time the Guzman incident was in a fair way of being officially forgotten and forgiven.

But there were several persons who felt intense relief at the course events had taken, and among these was Alaire Austin. In the days following that midnight expedition she had had ample time in which to meditate upon her husband's actions. It seemed probable that he had fled to San Antonio, there to remain until interest in the Guzman matter had abated.

Alaire telephoned Dave Law, arguing to herself that she must learn more about her husband's connection with the Lewis gang. Dave arrived even sooner than she had expected. She made him dine with her, and they spent the evening on the dim-lit gallery. In the course of their conversation Alaire discovered that Dave, too, had a hidden side of his nature; that he possessed an imagination, and with it a quaint, whimsical, exploratory turn of mind which enabled him to talk interestingly of many things and many places. On this particular evening he was anything but the man of iron she had known—until she ventured to speak of Ed. Then he closed up like a trap. He was almost gruff in his refusal to say a word about her husband.

Because of Ed's appropriation of the ranch cash, Alaire found it necessary a few days later to go to the bank, and, feeling the need of exercise, she rode her horse Montrose. When her errands had been attended to, she suddenly decided to call on Paloma Jones. It was years since she had voluntarily done such a thing; the very impulse surprised her.

Paloma, it happened, was undergoing that peculiar form of feminine torture known as "fitting," but insensitively basted, pinned and tucked as she was, she came flying down to the gate to meet her visitor.

Alaire was introduced to Mrs. Strange, the dressmaker, a large, acidulous brunette, with a mouthful of pins; and then, when Paloma had given herself once more into the searstress' hands, the two friends gossiped.

"I don't know what dad will say when he gets the bill for these dresses," Paloma confessed.

"Your father is a mighty queer man," Mrs. Strange observed. "I haven't so much as laid eyes on him."

Paloma nodded. "Yes. And he's getting more peculiar all the time; I can't make out what ails him."

"Where is he now?" asked Alaire.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HomeTown Helps

BUNGALOW GAINS IN FAVOR

Structure Has Individuality of Its Own and Has Lost Crudeness That Marked the Earlier Types.

The bungalow has practically revolutionized the entire building plan of the country, from a home construction angle. The structure possesses an individuality of its own which makes it a real home, not merely a shelter from the elements. Even an empty bungalow is not as deserted appearing as a vacant house of another type.

Apparent crudeness of construction which was characteristic of the early type of bungalow is practically extinct save at the seashore and sylvan camps. Bungalow-building has developed through many phases of construction in recent years, but the bungalow continues an effective ally of the builder. Well-planned bowlder ornaments, which are at the same time useful, as in a wall or chimney, are always attractive and enhance the beauty of the building.

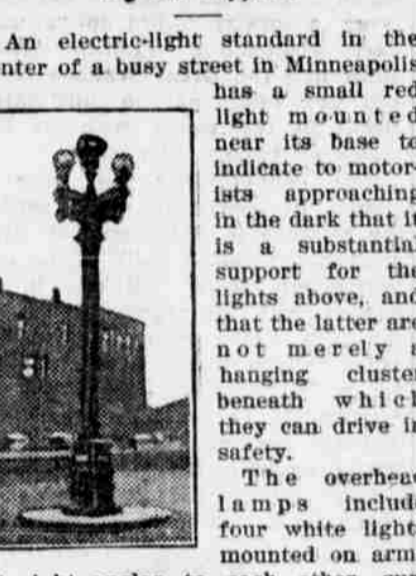
Popularity of the chalet type of bungalow is easily explained. It is not only unusually attractive, but makes an excellent place of abode. In the chalet type more room is allowed on the second floor than in most other models, yet the low effect is not lost and low porch eaves, which are among the real features of bungalows, are retained.

Stucco bungalows hold much favor throughout the country. With a flat roof and with or without a cornice this type of building is attractive. A low-pitched tile or other visible roof would be in keeping with the general plan of a stucco bungalow.

Bungalows built very close to the ground, with the first floor but one or two steps up, are also quite popular, especially when portions of it are overgrown with vines. Pergola posts, either of wood or stucco, according to the material used in constructing the bungalow, when overrun with roses or other flowers, enhance the beauty of the dwelling.

WARNING LAMP FOR AUTOISTS

Red Light Near Base of Street Standard Keeps Motorists From Striking the Support.



An electric-light standard in the center of a busy street in Minneapolis has a small red light mounted near its base to indicate to motorists approaching in the dark that it is a substantial support for the lights above, and that the latter are not merely a hanging cluster beneath which they can drive in safety.

Municipal Surveys.

In many cities the chamber of commerce or another similar organization has undertaken an elaborate and exhaustive survey of the municipal government, with the willing co-operation and helpful suggestions of the executives and departmental heads of the city. The primary object of such a survey is to disclose how things can be done better at less cost, how service can be improved, how citizens can be brought to a livelier and more enduring realization of their individual duty toward the city in which they are shareholders.

What is the result of such a survey? For one thing, a well-governed and well-managed city is attractive in itself. Men like to live in the place that can boast of governmental advantages over other cities. Efficient municipal service at moderate cost is one of the charges that every business man must make against his cost of doing business. The higher the tax, for example, the more he is handicapped in his race with the competitor in another city with moderate taxes.—Exchange.

The Glory of Common Things.

Many a town and city that never was able to mobilize against microbes is now mobilizing against a human enemy. Citizens who have been lukewarm on the subject of building sewers are enthusiastically discussing the equipment of battleships. Unable to abate the dust on our streets, we are preparing to sweep the seas!

Probably the best way to render service to our country is first to make an earnest effort to realize the glory of common things. Rightly viewed, everything that conserves human life is honorable, exalted, sacred. The world too long has cherished the belief that it is a more illustrious deed to kill men than to feed them.—Southern Woman's Magazine.

GRAIN CROPS ARE PROMISING

Western Canada 1917 Crops in Good Shape.

While it is a little early to predict what the Western Canada grain crop will produce, there is every indication at the present writing that the 1917 crop will give an excellent return. Reports received from all portions of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta speak of good growing weather, a fairly advanced stage of all grains, with prospects as good as in the past two years. Should conditions continue as at present, it is safe to conclude that Western Canadian farmers, already free of debt, as a result of the splendid crops and prevailing high prices, expect from this season's returns to be in a position that will place them away beyond any fear of the future.

The acreage of Western Canada will be about the same as last year. Seeding was somewhat later than last year, but germination was quicker. The only possible drawback now would seem to be a scarcity of harvest hands, but it is felt by the authorities that the situation will be pretty well cared for by that time.

Land values are increasing, but there is room for a much greater increase than in the past, owing to the returns that farmed land will give when compared with its cost. In some districts land that could have been bought five years ago for \$15 an acre is changing hands at \$60 an acre, the seller satisfied that he is giving the purchaser good value for his money. And why not, when it is known that in a great many cases during the past two years crops have been grown on this land that have produced a profit of forty and fifty dollars per acre, over and above cost of production. These cases, while not general, were not exceptional.

In addition to the lands that are offered for sale by railway companies, land companies and private individuals, the homesteading areas offer great inducements to those who are willing to do a little pioneering for a year or two. By that time settlements would come into existence, and this means a condition similar to that enjoyed by many of the older settlements of today—schools, churches, railways. The land is of high-class quality, strong and vigorous, easily worked, and capable of producing the very best of crops.

The demand for all grains for some years will be great, and it will require all the resources of man, beast and soil to meet it. That the prices will be good goes without saying, but at the present time there is something more appealing than the lucrative prices that prevail. That is, the desire to assist in winning the world war. The man at the plow is doing his "bit," and the spirit of patriotism that prevails will lead him into a broader sphere of action. No matter where he may be he will look about him that he may find land to further develop the country's resources. It is possible that his own state may furnish the land, in which case he will be quick to take advantage of the offer. If land in his own state is not available, Canada (now our ally) will be glad to furnish it in unlimited quantity, as she is vitally interested in largely increasing the supply of foodstuffs which is now as urgently needed and is as valuable as ammunition to the allied countries.

The appeal made by Mr. Hoover, United States controller of foods, and also by Hon. W. J. Hanna, Canadian controller, emphasizes the need of the allies, urges economy and the prevention of the waste in food, and bespeaks whole-hearted public co-operation. Speaking of Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and their European allies, they say:

"For nearly three years their man power has been engaged in the direct work of war, and in some cases large areas of their most productive lands have been overrun by the enemy. Their food shortage and the food to supply the armies of Canada and the United States must be wholly provided from this side of the Atlantic. The supply must also be sufficient to cover losses at sea. Australia, New Zealand, the Argentine Republic and other countries are not now available to relieve the situation because of their remoteness and the shortage of tonnage.

"The crop of storeable foods grown in Canada and the United States suitable for shipment overseas threatens to be entirely inadequate to meet the demand unless the whole people determine by every means in their power to make up the shortage. Every individual is under a direct obligation to assist in rationing the allied forces. There must be national self-denial and national co-operation to provide the necessary supplies."—Advertisement.

Not in the Calendar.
Fond Mother—What's the matter, Eva?
Little Eva—I've heard of "Good Friday," and "Ash Wednesday," but what on earth is "Nut Sunday."

Hard on Him.
"Did the young couple just married take a flat?"
"The bride did."

A successful form of efficiency consists in inducing somebody else to do your work.