

HEART OF THE SUNSET

By REX BEACH

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Copyright by Harper & Brothers CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

"Heaven knows! Out in the barn or under the house." Taking advantage of the dressmaker's momentary absence from the room, Paloma continued in a whisper: "I wish you'd talk to dad and see what you make of him. He's absolutely queer. Mrs. Strange seems to have a peculiar effect on him. Why, it's almost as if—"

"Well, I suppose I'm foolish, but—I'm beginning to believe in spells. You know, Mrs. Strange's husband is a sort of—necromancer."

"How silly!" There was no further opportunity for words, as the woman reappeared at that instant; but a little later Alaire went in search of Blaze, still considerably mystified. As she neared the farm buildings, she glimpsed a man's figure hastily disappearing into the barn. The figure bore a suspicious resemblance to Blaze Jones, yet when she followed, he was nowhere to be seen.

"Mr. Jones!" Alaire called. She repeated Blaze's name several times; then something stirred. The door of a harness closet opened cautiously, and out of the blackness peered Paloma's father. He looked more owlish than ever behind his big, gold-rimmed spectacles. "What in the world are you doing in there?" she cried.

Probably it was nicotine poison that killed twenty acres of my cotton, too; and maybe if I'd cut out tobacco I'd have floated that bond issue on the irrigation ditch. But I was wedded to cigarettes, so my banks are closin' down on me. Sure! That's what a man gets for smokin'."

upon the figures of her customers than hanging pythons folds about her own, and he found his own fame growing with every day. His mediumistic gifts came into general demand. The country-people journeyed miles to consult him, and Blaze Jones' statement that they confided in the fortune-teller as they would have confided in a priest was scarcely an exaggeration. Phil did indeed become the repository for confessions of many sorts.



"Over Her Head Floats a Skeleton—"

pleasant responsibility. Chancing to meet Dave Law one day, he determined to relieve himself of at least one troublesome burden. But Dave was not easily approachable. He met the medium's allusions to the occult with contemptuous amusement, nor would he consent to a private "reading." Strange grew almost desperate enough to speak the ungarish truth.

"You'd better pay a little attention to me," he grieved; "I've got a message to you from the 'Unseen World.'" "Charges collect, I reckon," the Ranger grinned. Strange waved aside the suggestion. "It came unbidden, and I pass it on for what it's worth." As Dave turned away, he added, hastily, "It's about a skeleton in the chapparal, and a red-haired woman."

Dave stopped; he eyed the speaker curiously. "Go on," said he. But a public street, Strange explained, was no place for psychic discussions. Dave agreed. When they were alone in the fortune-telling "parlor," he sat back while the medium closed his eyes and prepared to explore the invisible. After a brief delay Phil began:

"I see a great many things—that woman I told you about, and three men. One of 'em is you, the other two is Mexicans. You're at a water hole in the mesquite. Now there's a shooting scrape; I see the body of a dead man. And now the scene changes. Everything dissolves. I'm in a mansion; and the red-haired woman comes toward me. Over her head floats a skeleton—"

All the same, I'm sure Jose ain't carrying no epitaph for you. From what I've dug out of Rosa, he's acting for a third party—somebody with pull and a lot of coin—but who it is I don't know. Anyhow, he's cooking trouble for the Austins, and I want to stand from under."

Now that the speaker had dropped all pretense, he answered Dave's questions without evasion and told what he knew. It was not much, to Dave's way of thinking, but it was enough to give cause for thought, and when the men finally parted it was with the understanding that, Strange would promptly communicate any further intelligence on this subject that came his way.

On the following day Dave's duties called him to Brownsville, where court was in session. He had planned to leave by the morning train, but as he continued to meditate over Strange's words, he decided that, before going, he ought to advise Alaire of the fellow's suspicions in order that she might discharge Jose Sanchez and in other ways protect herself against his possible spite. Since the matter was one that could not well be talked over by telephone, Dave determined to go in person to Las Palmas that evening.

Truth to say, he was hungry to see Alaire. By this time he had almost ceased to combat the feeling she aroused in him, and it was in obedience to an impulse far stronger than friendly anxiety that he hired a machine and, shortly after dark, took the river road. The Fates are malicious jades. They delight in playing ill-natured pranks upon us. Not content with spinning and measuring and cutting the threads of our lives to suit themselves, they must also tangle the skein, causing us to cut capers to satisfy their whims.

At no time since meeting Alaire had Dave Law been more certain of his moral strength than on this evening; at no time had his grip upon himself seemed firmer. Nor had Alaire the least reason to doubt her self-control. Dave, to be sure, had appealed to her fancy and her interest; in fact, he so dominated her thoughts that the imaginary creature whom she called her dream-husband had gradually taken on his physical likeness. But the idea that she was in any way enamored of him had never entered his mind. In such wise do the Fates amuse themselves.

Alaire had gone to her favorite after-dinner refuge, a nook on one of the side galleries, where there was a wide, swinging wicker couch; and there, in a restful obscurity fragrant with flowers, she had prepared to spend the evening with her dreams. She did not hear Dave's automobile arrive. Her first intimation of his presence came with the sound of his heel upon the porch. When he appeared, it was almost like the materialization of her uppermost thought—quite as if a figure from her fancy had stepped forth full-blown.

HOME TOWN HELPS

SITE MATTER OF IMPORTANCE

Should Be Selected by Home Builder Only After Many Things Are Taken Into Consideration.

Selection of the proper site, the one most adapted to the style of structure contemplated, is a question of great importance to the prospective home builder. Many features should be considered in choosing the location. All of the reasons why much care should be exercised in picking the right situation have an important bearing on the enjoyment of the home by the occupants.

CITY PLANTS SHADE TREES

Women of Oakland, Cal., Aid Superintendent of Parks in Beautification of Residence Streets.

All of the big residential streets in Oakland are to be planted with shade trees, according to Lee S. Kerfoot, superintendent of parks. He will be assisted in the matter by local society women.

Ain't It So?

If you want to live in the kind of a town Like the kind of a town you like, You needn't slip your clothes in a grip And start on a long, long hike. You'll only find what you left behind, For there's nothing really new. It's a knock to yourself when you knock your town, It isn't your town—it's you.

Getting Privacy About Home.

Within the last few years Americans have begun to discover that the land about their house should be treated as a part of the home and that it should have the charm of intimacy and privacy. They have reverted to the ways of the early Colonial days, when the fence was not only a protection but an ornamental part of the grounds. Some of the fences around the old houses in Salem, Mass., in Charleston, S. C., and elsewhere bear witness to the state and dignity of the persons who lived behind them, and through the gates one still gets glimpses of charms that would lose by half if they were not secluded and kept for the persons who live in the houses of which they form the setting.



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PATENTS

HE WAS WAITING PATIENTLY Constant Attendant at Play Was Bound to Be on Hand When Erring Wife Was Caught by Husband.

A problem play was being produced in Chicago. One evening it was discovered that a certain man, evidently from the rural district, had attended the play six nights in succession and always sat well down in front. Each night he leaned forward eagerly in his seat and drank in the words of the drama.

Sociable.

An orderly chosen from among the student officers at Ft. Harrison sits daily outside Brig. Gen. Edwin F. Glenn's office door. A different man is chosen each day, and the other day the post fell to the lot of Charles E. Shafe of Indianapolis, says the Indianapolis News. Shafe went on an errand for the general, and returned just after the general had wished to speak to an officer in one of the other rooms and there being no orderly to summon him, had gone after the man himself.

Quite Happy.

Through the wild ways of her good-for-nothing husband, a hard-working charwoman had to remove to a little two-roomed cottage, where there was scarcely space to sneeze without striking the ornaments from the mantel-piece.

The True Word.

Two elderly New York clubmen who have retired spend much of their time gazing out upon the Fifth avenue throngs from their leather rest chairs at a club lounge window.

Southern states contain 777 cotton mills, valued at \$225,000,000.

Advertisement for Bobby Says Post Toasties with cream for lunch on hot days, featuring a cartoon character.