

# HEART OF THE SUNSET

By Rex Beach

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CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

"But first, wait!" exclaimed the horse-breaker. "I bring you something of value, too." Desiring to render favor for favor, and to show that he was fully deserving of the general's generosity, Jose removed from inside the sweatband of his hat a sealed, stamped letter, which he handed to his employer. "Yesterday I carried the mail to town, but as I rode away from Las Palmas the senora handed me this, with a silver dollar for myself. Look! It is written to the man we both hate."

Longorio took the letter, read the inscription, and then opened the envelope. Jose looked on with pleasure while he spelled out the contents.

When the general had finished reading, he exclaimed: "Ho! A miracle! Now I know all that I wish to know."

"Then I did well to steal the letter, eh?"

"Diablo! Yes! That brute of a husband makes my angel's life unbearable, and she flees to La Feria to be rid of him. Good! It fits in with my plans. She will be surprised to see me there. Then, when the war comes, and all is chaos—then what? I'll warrant I can make her forget certain things and certain people." Longorio nodded with satisfaction. "You did very well, Jose."

The latter leaned forward, his eyes bright. "That lady is rich. A fine prize, truly. She would bring a huge ransom."

This remark brought a smile to Longorio's face. "My dear friend, you do not in the least understand," he said. "Ransom! What an idea!" He lost himself in meditation, then, rousing, spoke briskly: "Listen! In two, three days your senora will leave Las Palmas. When she is gone you will perform your work, like the brave man I know you to be. You will relieve her of her husband."

Jose hesitated, and the smile vanished from his face. "Senor Ed is not a bad man. He likes me; he—" Longorio's gaze altered and Jose fell silent.

"Come! You are not losing heart, eh? Have I not promised to make you a rich man? Well, the time has arrived." Seeing that Jose still manifested no eagerness, the general went on in a different tone: "Do not think that you can withdraw from our little arrangement. Oh, no! Do you remember a promise I made to you when you came to me in Romero? I said that if you played me false I would bury you to the neck in an ant-hill and fill your mouth with honey. I keep my promises."

Jose's struggle was brief; he promptly resigned himself to the inevitable. With every evidence of sincerity he assured Longorio of his loyalty, and denied the least intention of betraying



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his general's confidence. After all, the gringos were enemies, and there was no one of them who did not merit destruction.

Pleased with these sentiments, and feeling sufficiently assured that Jose was now really in the proper frame of mind to suit his purpose, Longorio took the winding trail back toward Sangre de Cristo.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Warning.

A few days after she had written to Judge Ellsworth Alaire followed her sister in person, for, having at last decided to divorce Ed, she acted with characteristic decision. Since Ellsworth had more than once advised this very course, she went to Brownsville, enlisting his willing support. She had written Dave Law, telling him that she intended to go to La Feria, there to remain pending the hearing of her suit. To be sure, she would have preferred some place of refuge other than La Feria, but she reasoned that there she would at least be undisturbed, and that Ed, even if he wished to effect a reconciliation, would not dare to follow her, since he was persona non grata in federal Mexico.

She had counted upon seeing Dave

during her stay in Brownsville, and her failure to do so was a grave disappointment as she knew that he was in town attending court. Yet she told herself that it was brave of him to obey her injunctions so literally and to leave her unembarrassed by his presence at this particular time. It inspired her to be equally brave and to wait patiently for the day when she could welcome him with clean hands and a soul unshamed.

In the midst of Alaire's uncertainty of mind it gratified her to realize that Dave alone would know of her whereabouts. She wondered if he would come to see her. He was a reckless, headstrong lover, and his desires were all too likely to overcome his deliberate resolves. She rather hoped that in spite of his promise he would venture to cross the border so that she could see and be near him, if only for a day or for an hour. The possibility frightened and yet pleased her. The conventional woman within her frowned, but her outlaw heart beat fast at the thought.

Alaire did not explain her plans even to Dolores, but when her preparations were complete she took the Mexican woman with her, and during Ed's absence slipped away from the ranch. Boarding the train at Jonesville, she was in Pueblo that night.

It seemed at last that war with Mexico was imminent. After months of uncertainty the question had come to issue, and that lowering cloud which had hung above the horizon took ominous shape and size. Ellsworth awoke one morning to learn that an ultimatum had gone forth to President Potot; that the Atlantic fleet had been ordered south; and that marines were being rushed aboard transports pending a general army mobilization. It looked as if the United States had finally risen in wrath, and as if nothing less than a miracle could now avert the long-expected conflict.

Blaze Jones took the San Antonio paper out upon the porch and composed himself in the hammock to read the latest war news. Invasion! Troops! The Stars and Stripes! Those were words that stirred Jones deeply and caused him to neglect his work. Now that his country had fully awakened to the necessity of a war with Mexico—a necessity he had long felt—he was fired with the loftiest patriotism and a youthful eagerness to enlist. Blaze realized that he was old and fat and near-sighted; but what of that? He could fight. Fighting, in fact, had been one of his earliest accomplishments, and he prided himself upon knowing as much about it as any man could learn. He believed in fighting both as a principle and as an exercise; in fact, he attributed his good health to his various neighborly "unpleasantnesses," and he had more than once argued that no great fighter ever died of a sluggish liver or of any one of the other ills that beset sedentary, peace-loving people. Nations were like men—too much ease made them flabby. And Blaze had his own ideas of strategy, too. So during the perusal of his paper he bemoaned the mistakes his government was making. Why waste time with ultimatums? he argued to himself. He had never done so. Experience had taught him that the way to win a battle was to beat the other fellow to the draw; hence this diplomatic procrastination filled him with impatience. It seemed almost treasonable to one of Blaze's intense patriotisms.

He was engaged in laying out a plan of campaign for the United States when he became conscious of voices behind him, and realized that for some time Paloma had been entertaining a caller in the front room. Their conversation had not disturbed him at first, but now an occasional word or sentence forced its meaning through his preoccupation, and he found himself listening.

Paloma's visitor was a woman, and as Blaze harkened to her voice, he felt his heart sink. It was Mrs. Strange. She was here again. With difficulty Blaze conquered an impulse to flee, for she was recounting a story all too familiar to him.

"Why, it seemed as if the whole city of Galveston was there, and yet nobody offered to help us," the dressmaker was saying. "Phil was a perfect hero, for the ruffian was twice his size. Oh, it was an awful fight! I hate to think of it."

"What made him pinch you?" Paloma inquired.

"Heaven only knows. Some men are dreadful that way. Why, he left a black-and-blue mark!"

Blaze broke into a cold sweat and cursed feebly under his breath.

"He wasn't drunk, either. He was just naturally depraved. You could see it in his face."

"How did you escape?"

"Well, I'll tell you. We chased him up across the boulevard and in among the tents, and then—" Mrs. Strange lowered her voice until only a murmur reached the listening man. A moment, then both women burst into shrill, excited laughter, and Blaze himself blushed furiously.

"Who? Who is it?"

"Dave Law. He must have come in on the noon train. Anyhow, I found him—like that." The two men hurried toward the road, side by side.

"What's wrong with him?" Blaze demanded.

"I don't know. He's queer—he's off his bean. I've had a hard time with him."

Paloma was in the carriage at Dave's side now, and calling his name; but Law, it seemed, was scarcely conscious. He had slumped together; his face was vacant, his eyes dull. He was muttering to himself a queer, delirious jumble of words.

"Oh, dad! He's sick—sick." Paloma sobbed. "Dave, don't you know us? You're home, Dave. Everything is—all right now."

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"He asked me to take him to Las Palmas," Strange explained. "Looks to me like a sunstroke."

Paloma turned an agonized face to her father. "Get a doctor, quick," she implored; "he frightens me."

But Mrs. Strange had followed, and now she spoke up in a matter-of-fact tone: "Doctor nothing," she said. "I know more than all the doctors. Paloma, you go into the house and get a bed ready for him, and you men lug him in. Come, now, on the run, all of you! I'll show you what to do." She took instant charge of the situation, and when Dave refused to leave the carriage and began to fight off his friends, gabbling wildly, it was she who quieted him. Elbowing Blaze and her husband out of the way, she loosed

Alarmed at his tone, Paloma came running. "What is the matter?" she asked, quickly.

"Get her out!" Blaze cried, savagely. "Get shed of her."

"Her? Who?"

"That varmint."

"Father, what alls you?"

"Nothin' alls me, but I don't want that caterpillar crawlin' around my premises. I don't like her."

Paloma regarded her parent curiously. "How do you know you don't like her when you've never seen her?"

"Oh, I've seen her, all I want to; and I heard her talkin' to you just now. I won't stand for nobody tellin' you—bad stories."

Paloma snickered. "The idea! She doesn't—"

"Get her out, and keep her out," Blaze rumbled. "She ain't right; she ain't—human. Why, what'd you reckon I saw her do, the other day? Makes me shiver now. You remember that big bull-snake that lives under the barn, the one I've been layin' for? Well, you won't believe me, but I saw her pick him up and play with him. Who—ee! The goose-flesh popped out on me till it busted the buttons of my vest. She ain't my kind of people, Paloma. 'Strange' ain't no name for her; no, sir! That woman's dam' near peculiar."

Paloma remained unmoved. "I thought you knew. She used to be a snake-charmer."

"A—what?" There was no doubt about it. Blaze's hair lifted. He blinked through his big spectacles; he pawed the air freely with his hands. "How can you let her touch you? I couldn't. I'll bet she carries a pocketful of dried toads and—and keeps live lizards in her hair. I knew an old voodoo woman that ate cockroaches. Get shed of her, Paloma, and we'll fumigate the house."

At that moment Mrs. Strange herself opened the kitchen door to inquire, "Is anything wrong?" Misreading Blaze's expression for one of pain, she exclaimed: "Mercy! Now, what have you done to yourself?"

But the object of her solicitude backed away, making peculiar clucking sounds deep in his throat. Paloma was saying:

"This is my father, Mrs. Strange. You and he have never happened to meet before."

"Why, yes we have! I know you," the seamstress exclaimed. Then a puzzled light flickered in her black eyes. "Seems to me we've met somewhere, but—I've met so many people." She extended her hand, and Blaze took it as if expecting to find it cold and scaly. He muttered something unintelligible. "I've been dying to see you," she told him, "and thank you for giving me Paloma's work. I love you both for it."

Blaze was immensely relieved that this dreaded crisis had come and gone; but wishing to make assurance doubly sure, he contorted his features into a smile like of which his daughter had never seen, and in a disguised voice inquired, "Now where do you reckon you ever saw me?"

The seamstress shook her head. "I don't know, but I'll place you before long. Anyhow, I'm glad you aren't hurt. From the way you called Paloma I thought you were. I'm handy around sick people, so I—"

"Listen!" Paloma interrupted. "There's someone at the front door." She left the room; Blaze was edging after her when he heard her utter a stifled scream and call his name.

Now Paloma was not the kind of girl to scream without cause, and her cry brought Blaze to the front of the house at a run. But what he saw there reassured him momentarily; nothing was in sight more alarming than one of the depot hacks, in the rear seat of which was huddled the figure of a man. Paloma was flying down the walk toward the gate, and Phil Strange was awaiting on the porch. As Blaze flung himself into view the latter exclaimed: "I brought him straight here, Mr. Jones. 'Cause I knew you was his best friend."

"Who? Who is it?"

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## Home Town Helps

### MAKING BACK PORCH USEFUL

Vines, Hammocks and Plants, Employed With Discretion, Turn It Into a Cool Resting Place.

One may easily turn his back porch to account by a little planning. To turn the back porch into a cool resting place the use of vines and hammocks and plants has proved successful. These forms of decorations used with discretion cool off the interior of the house, keeping out the heat from the scorching asphalt streets.

Permanent wooden roofs are not necessary for verandas and improvised loggias. Awnings will easily serve this purpose in many instances, for they can be run up and down at every change of the barometer and rob the house of no sun in the winter.

So-called front piazzas, structures that have roofs running all around the first story of a house and sometimes only around one side, could have its roof flattened, hung with awnings and made into a lounging place for a family upstairs. A house may not present a good appearance of itself, but the piazza may make it the most interesting dwelling place on the street. A green and white awning hung from the roof makes a nice appearance. Boxes of red and white geraniums placed on the rails, fastened with vines falling on the rail adds to the artistic effect. Turkey-red curtains also add charm. Stray tables, chairs, hammocks, bird cages and flowers on stands and big pots may be so arranged as to make a comfortable lounging place.

### LIMITING SIZE OF CITIES

Speakers at Town Planning Conference Place Ideal Population for Municipality at 300,000.

Rodney H. Brandon, speaking before the Ad club on the worth in dollars and cents of a citizen to a community in which he lives, declared that the inhabitant value decreases in proportion to the increase in population, says the Des Moines Capital. The larger the city, after a population of 25,000 has been reached, the less is each inhabitant worth to the property owners.

This brings up the question, which is receiving more serious attention every year, of how large our cities should be.

At the recent national conference on town planning in Kansas City a speaker from Dallas declared that his ambition was to see Dallas with a population of 300,000, and that he did not want it to become any larger. Other speakers concurred in the idea.

A city of 300,000 has all the urban advantages the individual could want. It has parks and modern playgrounds, the best there is in stores, factories, residences, transportation facilities and the other accomplishments and conveniences of the modern metropolis.

The ideal plan would be to require a certain area of agricultural land to each community according to its population. Then when a city reached its maximum, it would have to branch out.

### FORGETFUL

He called for a city beautiful;  
He shouted it day by day;  
He wanted a city where noise was not,  
Where the spirit of art should sway;  
He wanted a city that should be fair,  
Where filth might never be seen,  
And forgot, in spite of the zeal he had,  
To keep his back yard clean.  
—The Congregationalist.

### Test Soil in Selecting Site.

A problem that should be solved by the wise prospective purchaser of a building site is whether the soil at the depth of the cellar is gravel, clay, sand or simply rubbish and tin can filler. It is always advisable to make such a test, even in a familiar neighborhood.

The general character of the neighborhood, type of residents, restrictions, if any, and whether the lot will appreciate in value and prove a good investment are other important factors to be considered in choosing a home site.

The amount of money available for building investment will to some extent determine the choice of the site's location. Sentimental, business or professional reasons frequently cause the selection of a site over one just as well adapted for a desirable home location. The advice of a good architect is of value from the very beginning of the desire to construct a home.

### Building Codes Deficient.

There are more than 100 cities in the United States of upward of 50,000 population where the building code has not been properly worked out on the basis of a right and intelligent use of woods, according to the statement of a prominent lumber man. The same authority emphasized the importance of making wooden shingles more fire resistant, so that there can be a wider use of these materials within the fire limits of cities.



Worried.  
Old Lady—Doctor, do you think there is anything the matter with my lungs?  
Physician (after a careful examination)—I find, madam, that your lungs are in a normal condition.  
Old Lady (with a sigh of resignation)—And about how long can I expect to live with them in that condition?

### SKIN TORTURES

That Itch, Burn and Scale Quickly Relieved by Cuticura—Trial Free.

It takes about ten minutes to prove that a hot bath with Cuticura Soap followed by gentle applications of Cuticura Ointment will afford relief and point to speedy healing of eczemas, itchings and irritations. They are ideal for all toilet purposes.

Free sample each by mail with Book, Address postcard, Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

### A Temperance Lesson.

Newton Newkirk, who has been amusing newspaper readers for a number of years by chronicling the doings of rural folks in the Bingville Bugle, studies local color in the Maine villages during his vacation periods.

On one of the trips he formed the acquaintance of an old resident who had the reputation of being inordinately fond of cider.

Uncle Hez presented a sorry spectacle when Newt met him in the road one day.

"What has happened to you?" inquired the writer.

"I wuz up t' Sim Spradin's and drank a couple o' dippers o' hard cider."

"I see—"

"On my way back here I crossed the bridge over Gander creek—"

"Uh-huh!"

"And just as I reached the middle of the bridge I heard a splash?"

"What made the splash?"

"Well, there was a man flounderin' about in the water, and when I looked around to see who it wuz, derned if it wuzn't me."—Pittsburgh Chronicle.

### Fastened On.

It was small Gilbert's sad fate to suffer the attention of a well-meaning doctor.

"Put out your tongue, my boy," the persecutor said.

Gilbert feebly produced the tip of that member.

"No, no, put it right out," the doctor said.

Gilbert shook his head weakly and tears gathered in his eyes.

"I can't," he cried, "it's fastened on."—New York Globe.

### No Chance to Shine.

"Githers must find it rather depressing to wear khaki."

"Why so?"

"He holds office in several lodges and has a collection of uniforms whose magnificence would shame an oriental potentate."

### Fallen Greatness.

"Lizzie does put on such airs. She says the young man she's engaged to is at work in the trenches."

"I know that's strictly true. He's employed by a gas company."

There are numerous cures for rheumatism, and it usually lingers long enough to give the victim a chance to try all of them.



### A Call to Your Grocer

will bring a package of

## Grape-Nuts

A delicious, healthful food and a pleasing lesson in economy.

"There's a Reason"