

# HEART OF THE SUNSET

By REX BEACH

Author of "The Spoilers," "The Iron Trail," "The Silver Horde," Etc.

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CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

Years of experience had taught him to be always alert, even during his moments of deepest preoccupation, and so, from force of habit, when he came to the farmhouse door he carefully scanned it. In the dust were fresh hoof-prints leading toward the river. Now he knew this road to be seldom used, and therefore he wondered who could be riding it at a gallop in this blistering midday heat. A few rods farther on and his quick eye detected something else—some tiny object that brought him from his saddle. Out of the rut he picked a cigarette butt, the fire of which was cold but the paper of which was still wet from the smoker's lips. He examined it carefully; then he remounted and rode on, pondering its significance.

Dave loped out of the thicket and straight across the clearing to the Morales house. Leaving Montros's reins hanging, he opened the door and entered without knocking. Rosa appeared in the opening to another room, her eyes wide with fright at this apparition, and Dave saw that she was dressed in her finest, as if for a holiday or for a journey.

"Where's your father?" he demanded. "He's gone to Sangre de Cristo. What do you want?" "When did he go?" "This morning, early. He—"

"Who's been here since he left?" "Rosa was recovering from her first surprise, and now her black brows drew together in anger. "No one has come. You are the first. And have you no manners to stride into a respectable house—?"

Dave broke in harshly: "Rosa, you're lying. Jose Sanchez has been here within an hour. Where is he?"

When the girl only grew whiter and raised a hand to her breast, he stepped toward her, crying, "Answer me!"

Rosa recoiled, and the breath caught in her throat like a sob. "I'll tell you nothing," she said in a thin voice. Then she began to tremble. "Why do you want Jose?"

"You know why. He killed Don Eduardo, and then he rode here. Come! I know everything."

"Lies! Lies!" Rosa's voice grew shrill. "Out of this house! I know you. It was you who betrayed Paffilo, and his blood is on your hands, assassin!"

With the last word she made as if to retreat, but Dave was too quick; he seized her, and for an instant they struggled breathlessly.

Dave had reasoned beforehand that his only chance of discovering anything from this girl lay in utterly terrorizing her and in profiting by her first panic; therefore he pressed his advantage. He succeeded better than he had dared to hope.

"You know who killed Senor Ed," he cried, fiercely. "The fortune-teller read your plans, and there is no use to deny it."

Rosa screamed again; she writhed; she tried to sink her teeth into her captor's flesh. In her body was the strength of a full-grown man, and Dave could hardly hold her. But suddenly, as the two scuffled, from the back room of the house came a sound which caused Dave to release the girl as abruptly as he had seized her—it was the clack and tinkle of Mexican spurs upon a wooden floor.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### The Water-Cure.

Without an instant's hesitation Dave flung himself past Rosa and through the inner door.

Jose Sanchez met him with a shout; the shock of their collision overbore the lighter man, and the two went down together, arms and legs intertwined. The horse-breaker fired his revolver blindly—a deafening explosion inside those four walls—but he was powerless against his antagonist's strength and ferocity. It required but a moment for Law to master him, to wrench the weapon from his grasp, and then, with the aid of Jose's silk neckerchief, to bind his wrists tightly.

From the front of the little house came the crash of a door violently slammed as Rosa profited by the diversion to save herself.

When finally Jose stood, panting and snarling, his back to the wall, Dave regarded him with a sinister contraction of the lips that was almost a grin.

"Well," he said, drawing a deep breath, "I see you didn't go to the east pasture this morning."

"What do you want of me?" Jose managed to gasp.

There was a somewhat prolonged silence, during which Dave continued to stare at his prisoner with that same disquieting expression. "Why did you kill Don Eduardo?" he asked.

"I? Bah! Who says I killed him?" Jose glared defiance. "Why are you looking at me? Come! Take me to jail, if you think that will do any good."

"It's lucky I rode to Las Palmas this morning. In another hour you would

have been across the Rio Grande—with Rosa and all her fine clothes, eh? Now you will be hanged. Well, that is how fortune goes."

The horse-breaker tossed his head and shrugged with a brave assumption of indifference; he laughed shortly. "You can prove nothing."

"Yes," continued Dave, "and Rosa will go to prison, too. Now—suppose I should let you go? Would you help me? In ten minutes you could be safe." He inclined his head toward the muddy, silent river outside. "Would you be willing to help me?"

Jose's brows lifted. "What's this you are saying?" he inquired, eagerly. "I would only ask you a few questions."

"What questions?" "Where is Senora Austin?" Jose's face became blank. "I don't know."

"Oh yes, you do. She started for La Feria. But—did she get there? Or did Longorio have other plans for her? You'd better tell me the truth, for your general can't help you now." Dave did his best to read the Mexican's expression, but failed. "Senor Ed's death means nothing to me," he went on, "but I must know where his wife is, and I'm willing to pay, with your liberty." In spite of himself his anxiety was plain.

Jose exclaimed: "Ho! I understand. He was in your way and you're glad to be rid of him. Well, we have no business fighting with each other."

"Will you tell me—?" "I'll tell you nothing, for I know nothing."

"Come! I must know." Jose laughed insolently.

Law's face became black with sudden fury. His teeth bared themselves. He took a step forward, crying:

"By heaven! You will tell me!" Seizing his prisoner by the throat, he pinned him to the wall; then with his free hand he cocked Longorio's revolver and thrust its muzzle against Jose's body. "Tell me!" he repeated. His countenance was so distorted, his expression so maniacal, that Jose felt his hour had come. The latter, being in all ways Mexican, did not struggle; instead, he squared his shoulders and, staring fearlessly into the face above him, cried:

"Shoot!"

For a moment the two men remained so; then Dave seemed to regain control of himself and the murder light flickered out of his eyes. He flung his prisoner aside and cast the revolver into a corner of the room.

Jose picked himself up, cursing his captor eloquently. "You gringos don't know how to die," he said. "Death? Pah! We must die some time. And supposing I do know something about the senora, do you think you can force me to speak? Torture wouldn't open my lips."

Law did not trust himself to reply; and the horse-breaker went on with growing defiance:

"I am innocent of any crime; therefore I am brave. But you—the blood of innocent men means nothing to you—Paffilo's murder proves that—so complete your work. Make an end of me."

"Be still!" Dave commanded, thickly. But the fellow's hatred was out of bounds now, and by the bitterness of his vituperation he seemed to invite death. Dave interrupted his vitriolic curses to ask harshly:

"Will you tell me, or will you force me to wring the truth out of you?" Jose answered by spitting at his captor; then he gritted an unspeakable epithet from between his teeth.

Dave addressed him with an air of finality. "You killed that man and your life is forfeit, so it doesn't make much difference whether I take it or whether the state takes it. You are brave enough to die—most of you Mexicans are—but the state can't force you



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to speak, and I can." Jose sneered. "Oh yes, I can! I intend to know all that you know, and it will be better for you to tell me voluntarily. I must learn where Senora Austin is, and I must learn quickly, if I have to kill you by inches to get the truth."

"So! Torture, eh? Good. I can believe it of you. Well, a slow fire will not make me speak."

"No. A fire would be too easy, Jose." "Eh?"

Without answer Dave strode out of the room. He was back before his prisoner could do more than wretch at his bonds, and with him he brought his lariat and his canteen.

"What are you going to do?" Jose inquired, backing away until he was once more at bay.

"I'm going to give you a drink." "Whisky? You think you can make me drunk?" The horse-breaker laughed loudly but uneasily.

"Not whisky; water. I'm going to give you a drink of water."

"What capers!" "When you're drunk enough you'll tell me why you killed your employer and where General Longorio has taken his wife. Yes, and everything else I want to know."

Seizing the amazed Mexican, Dave flung him upon Morales' hard board bench, and in spite of the fellow's struggles deftly made him fast. When he had finished—and it was no easy job—Jose lay "spread-eagled" upon his back, his wrists and ankles firmly bound to the corners and foot posts, his body secured by a tight loop over his waist. The rope cut painfully and brought a curse from the prisoner when he strained at it. Law surveyed him with a face of stone.

"I don't want to do this," he declared, "but I know your kind. I give you one more chance. Will you tell me?"

Jose drew his lips back in a snarl of rage and pain, and Dave realized that further words were useless. He felt a certain pity for his victim and no little admiration for his courage, but such feelings were of small consequence as against his agonizing fears for Alaire's safety. Had he in the least doubted Jose's guilty knowledge of Longorio's intentions, Dave would have hesitated before employing the barbarous measures he had in mind, but—there was nothing else for it. He pulled the canteen cork and jammed the mouthpiece firmly to Jose's lips. Closing the fellow's nostrils with his free hand, he forced him to drink.

Jose clenched his teeth, he tried to roll his head, he held his breath until his face grew purple and his eyes bulged. He strained like a man upon the rack. The bench creaked to his muscular contortions; the rope tightened. It was terribly cruel, this crushing of a strong will bent on resistance to the uttermost; but never was an executioner more pitiless, never did a prisoner's agony receive less consideration. The warm water spilled over Jose's face, it drenched his neck and chest; his joints creaked as he strove for freedom and tried to twist his head out of Law's iron grasp. The seconds dragged, until finally nature asserted herself. The imprisoned breath burst forth; there sounded a loud gurgling cry and a choking inhalation. Jose's body writhed with the convulsions of drowning as the water and air were sucked into his lungs. Law was kneeling over his victim now, his weight and strength so applied that Jose had no liberty of action and could only drink, coughing and fighting for air.

Somehow he managed to revive himself briefly and again shut his teeth; but a moment more and he was again retched with the furious battle for air, more desperate now than before. After a while Law freed his victim's nostrils and allowed him a partial breath, then once more crushed the mouthpiece against his lips. By and by, to relieve his torture, Jose began to drink in great noisy gulps, striving to empty the vessel.

But the stomach's capacity is limited. In time Jose felt himself bursting; the liquid began to regurgitate. This was not mere pain that he suffered, but the ultimate nightmare horror of death more awful than anything he had ever imagined. Jose would have met a bullet, a knife, a lash, without flinching; flames would not have served to weaken his resolve; but this slow drowning was infinitely worse than the worst he had thought possible; he was suffocating by long, black, agonizing minutes. Every nerve and muscle of his body, every cell in his bursting lungs, fought against the outrage in a purely physical frenzy over which his will power had no control. Nor would insensibility come to his relief—Law watched him too carefully for that. He could not even voice his sufferings by shrieks; he could only writhe and betch and gurgle while the ropes bit into his flesh and his captor knelt upon him like a monstrous stone weight.

But Jose had made a better fight than he knew. The canteen ran dry at last, and Law was forced to release his hold.

"Will you speak?" he demanded. "Thinking that he had come safely through the ordeal, Jose shook his head; he rolled his bulging, bloodshot eyes and vomited, then managed to call God to witness his innocence."

Dave went into the next room and refilled the canteen. When he reappeared with the dripping vessel in his hand, Jose tried to scream. But his throat was torn and strained; the sound of his own voice frightened him.

Once more the torment began. The tortured man was weaker now, and in consequence he resisted more feebly; but not until he was less than half-conscious did Law spare him to recover.

Jose lay sick, frightened, inert. Dave watched him without pity. The fellow's wrists were black and swollen, his lips were bleeding; he was stretched like a dumb animal upon the vivisectionist's table, and no surgeon with lance and scalpel could have shown less emotion than did his inquisitor. Having no intention of defeating his own ends, Dave allowed his victim ample time in which to regain his ability to suffer.

Alaire Austin had been right when she said that Dave might be ruthless; and yet the man was by no means incapable of compassion. At the present moment, however, he considered himself simply as the instrument by which Alaire was to be saved. His own feelings had nothing to do with the matter; neither had the sufferings of this Mexican. Therefore he steered himself to prolong the agony until the murderer's stubborn spirit was worn down.

Once again he put his question, and, again receiving defiance, jammed the canteen between Jose's teeth.

But human nature is weak. For the

first time in his life Jose Sanchez felt terror—a terror too awful to be endured—and he made the sign.

He was no longer the insolent defier, the challenger, but an imploring wretch, whose last powers of resistance had been completely shattered. His frightened eyes were glued to that devilish vessel in which his manhood had dissolved, the fear of it made a woman of him.

Slowly, in sighs and whimpers, in agonies of reluctance, his story came; his words were rendered almost incomprehensible by his abysmal fright. When he had purged himself of his secret Dave promptly unbound him; then leaving him more than half dead, he went to the telephone which connected the pumping station with Las Palmas and called up the ranch.

He was surprised when Blaze Jones answered. Blaze, it seemed, had just arrived, summoned by news of the tragedy. The countryside had been alarmed and a search for Ed Austin's slayer was being organized.

"Call it off," Dave told him. "I've got your man." Blaze stuttered his surprise and incredulity. "I mean it. It's Jose Sanchez, and he has confessed. I want you to come here, quick; and come alone, if you don't mind. I need your help."

Inside of ten minutes Jones piloted his automobile into the clearing beside the river, and, leaving his motor running, leaped from the car.

Dave met him at the door of the Morales house and briefly told him the story of Jose's capture.

"Say! That's quick work," the rancher cried, admiringly. "Why, Ed ain't cold yet! You gave him the 'wa-



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ter-cure," eh? Now I reckoned it would take more than water to make a Mexican talk."

"Jose was hired for the work; he laid for Ed Austin in the pecan grove and shot him as he passed."

"Hired! Why this hombre needs quick hangin', don't he? I told 'em at Las Palmas that you'd rounded up the guilty party, so I reckon they'll be here in a few minutes. We'll just stretch this horse-wrangler, and save the county some expense." Law shrugged. "Do what you like with him, but—it isn't necessary. He'll confess in regulation form, I'm sure. I had to work fast to learn what became of Mrs. Austin."

"Miz Austin? What's happened to her?"

Dave's voice changed; there was a sudden quickening of his words. "They've got her, Blaze. They waited until they had her safe before they killed Ed."

"They? Who are you talkin' about?"

"I mean Longorio and his outfit. He's got her over yonder." Dave flung out a trembling hand toward the river.

Seeing that his hearer failed to comprehend, he explained, swiftly: "He's crazy about her—got one of those Mexican infatuations—and you know what that means. He couldn't steal her from Las Palmas—she wouldn't have anything to do with him—so he used that old cattle deal as an excuse to get her across the border. Then he put Ed out of the way. She went of her own accord, and she didn't tell Austin, because they were having trouble. She's gone to La Feria, Blaze."

"La Feria! Then she's in for it."

Dave nodded his agreement; for the first time Blaze noted how white and set was his friend's face.

"Longorio must have foreseen what was coming," Dave went on. "That country's adame; Americans aren't safe over there. If war is declared, a good many of them will never be heard from. He knows that. He's got her safe. She can't get out."

Blaze was very grave when next he spoke. "Dave, this is bad—bad. I can't understand what made her go. Why, she must have been out of her head. But we've got to do something. We've got to burn the wires to Washington—yes, and to Mexico City. We must get the government to send soldiers after her. What have we got 'em for, anyhow?"

"Washington won't do anything. What can be done when there are thousands of American women in the same danger? What steps can the government take with diplomatic relations suspended? Those greasers are filling their jails with our people—rounding 'em up for the day of the big break. No, Longorio saw it all coming—he's no fool. He's got her; she's in there—trapped."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## UNCLE SAM TAKES KEEN INTEREST IN 1917 APPLE CROP

Our Big Fruit Harvest Must Be Used to Help Save Wheat and Meat for Allies.

### FOOD ADMINISTRATION PLANS

"Consumer Campaign" Throughout the Land to Aid in Home Consumption During Autumn, Winter and Spring of Next Year.

Uncle Sam takes the keenest interest in this year's apple crop. For the fruit must be used to help save wheat and meats for our allies.

The food administration is planning a consumer campaign of publicity throughout the country.

This year's apple crop calls for intelligent handling. The latest government reports indicate a crop of about 190,000,000 bushels. That is a little below normal. Good prices are assured for all honestly packed, first quality apples, and also for honestly packed, selected second grades, which government experts say can be put into storage. When the crop is big it does not pay to store second grades, but this year, despite the fact that we cannot ship our usual 2,000,000 barrels of apples abroad, because shipping space is precious, we should be able to get fair prices for all good apples at home.

Careless packing of poor quality fruit has always been one of the chief causes of market instability and unsatisfactory prices to the growers. This year the whole apple industry is co-operating to remove this market handicap. There has never been an apple year such as this one is going to be. Growers have never been able to get together and engage and finance a national educational campaign among consumers to increase apple consumption. This year the situation makes it necessary for the United States government, through the food administration, to conduct a consumer's campaign of publicity on behalf of the apple. This campaign will begin while the crop is being sent to market, and will probably continue until the last apple is eaten up late next spring. So the grower has three great incentives for grading, packing and storing this crop with special care.

1. It is a good crop and calls for care.
2. The government will encourage apple eating and apple storage and will discourage speculation that raises the price abnormally.
3. We must eat up at home more than two million barrels of apples, which would ordinarily be exported.

To get the best of the crop to the market in prime condition it must be picked carefully at the time of maturity and promptly cooled in temporary storage, and then skillfully graded and packed. Second-grade fruit should not go into barrels or boxes. If it cannot be marketed in bulk in near-by consuming centers, then it should be worked up into by-products along with the culls.

There has been a gratifying improvement in apple marketing the past two or three years. Western apples are boxed to strictly honest standards, by the great co-operative growers' organizations in Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho and Colorado. The eastern barrel apple has also been wonderfully improved in New York and other states. Because apples are honestly packed and give the best possible value for the money, there is an increase in the consumer demand. Retail merchants who were formerly almost afraid to buy apples in barrels, because they were not sure of getting marketable values for their money, are now buying freely and in confidence. This good work makes it possible for the government to go further and encourage the use of apples as a war-time food measure.

Because the bulk of the crop will be picked by volunteer workers this year, and put into common storage until the grower can find time to grade and pack, there will be an opportunity to give closer personal attention to the grading and packing than might be the case if the crop were handled as in peace times. For the grower who desires instructions in apple packing, the department of agriculture at Washington has information in bulletin form. These bulletins can be secured free by writing to the department. Growers will do well to obtain a few copies for their pickers and packers.

Find a Use for Rats. The city authorities of Stockholm have begun a campaign against rats by offering a reward of 2½ cents for every dead one. While it is hoped thus to reduce the rat plague considerably, the chief end is to get an important addition to the stocks of fats available for the making of soaps and lubricants.

The rats are treated in a "corpse utilization establishment," where, after the fat has been boiled out, what remains is converted into a poultry food. South Sweden has for some time been utilizing carcasses of animals. Considerable fat is also obtained by skimming large containers placed in the sewers leading from hotels, restaurants and other places where there is an unavoidable waste of fat.

## BIG CROPS IN WESTERN CANADA

Good Yields of Wheat, Splendid Production of Pork, Beef, Mutton and Wool.

The latest reports give an assurance of good grain crops throughout most of Western Canada, where the wheat, oats and barley are now being harvested, about ten days earlier than last year. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are all "doing their bit" in a noble way towards furnishing food for the allies.

While the total yield of wheat will not be as heavy as in 1915, there are indications that it will be an average crop in most of the districts. A letter received at the St. Paul office of the Canadian Government, from a farmer near Delta, Alberta, says harvest in that district is one month earlier than last year. His wheat crop is estimated at 35 bushels per acre, while some of his neighbors will have more. The average in the district will be about 30 bushels per acre. Now, with the price of wheat in the neighborhood of \$2 per bushel, it is safe to say that there will be very few farmers but will be able to bank from forty to fifty dollars per acre after paying all expenses of seeding, harvesting and threshing, as well as taxes. The price of land in this district is from \$25 to \$30 per acre. What may be said of this district will apply to almost any other in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta. Many farmers have gone to Western Canada from the United States in the past three or four years, who having purchased lands, had the pleasure of completing the payments before they were due. They have made the money out of their crops during the past couple of years, and if they are as successful in the future as in the past they will have put themselves and their families beyond all possibility of lack of money for the rest of their lives. It is not only in wheat that the farmers of Western Canada are making money. Their hogs have brought them wealth, and hogs are easy to raise there—barley is plentiful and grass abundant, and the climate just the kind that hogs glory in. The price is good and likely to remain so for a long time.

A few days since a farmer from Daysland, Alberta, shipped a carload of hogs to the St. Paul market, and got a higher price than was ever before paid on that market. Two million three hundred and seventy-seven thousand two hundred and fifty dollars was received at Winnipeg for Western hogs during the first six months of this year. 181,575 hogs were sold at an average price of \$15 per cwt, and had an average weight of 200 pounds each. The raising of hogs is a profitable and continually growing industry of Western Canada, and this class of stock is raised as economically here as anywhere on the North American continent. There is practically no hog disease, and immense quantities of food can be produced cheaply.

It has been told for years that the grasses of Western Canada supply to both beef and milk producers the nutritive properties that go to the development of both branches. The stories that are now being published by dairymen and beef cattle men verify all the predictions that have ever been made regarding the country's importance in the raising of both beef and dairy cattle. The sheep industry is developing rapidly. At a sale at Calgary 151,453 pounds of wool were disposed of at sixty cents a pound. At a sale at Edmonton 60,000 pounds were sold at even better prices than those paid at Calgary. The total clip this season will probably approximate two million pounds. Many reports are to hand showing from six to eight pounds per fleece. 35 carloads were sent to the Toronto market alone.—Advertisement.

No Gold, No Eggs. American customs in business are being adopted in Europe more and more.

A shipment of several million eggs has been held up by the Dutch authorities on the German frontier. The Germans had promised to pay in gold, and offered some of their "just as good" paper. They didn't get the eggs, after they'd shown the "color of their money."—New Haven Register.

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Briefly Explained. "You look all tuckered out. Where you going for your vacation?" "Been there."

A new hat throws a brilliant light into a woman's eyes, but it takes a new baby to illuminate her heart.

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