

HEART OF THE SUNSET

By Rex Beach

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DAVE LAW STRIKES A TRAIL THAT LEADS HIM TO DEATH'S DOOR—HE SUFFERS HEAVY LOSS BUT DOESN'T TURN BACK

Mrs. Alaire Austin, handsome young mistress of Las Palmas ranch, lost in the Texas desert, wanders into the little camp of David Law, state ranger, lying in ambush for a Mexican murderer. She is forced to stay 24 hours, until Law captures his man, kills another and escorts her home. "Young Ed" Austin, drunken wastrel, berates his wife and makes insulting insinuations about the ranger. Austin is secretly in league with Mexican rebels and horse thieves. Mrs. Austin starts for her other ranch, La Feriz, in Mexican territory, to secure damages for cattle taken by Mexican soldiers, and encounters Gen. Luis Longorio, who becomes instantly enamored of her beauty and personality, much to her embarrassment.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

Law ventured to remark that none of Blaze's enemies had grown fat in prosecuting their feuds, but this was a subject which the elder man invariably found embarrassing, and now he said:

"Pshaw! I never was the blood-letter people think. I'm as gentle as a sheep." Then to escape further curiosity on that point, he suggested that they round out their riotous evening with a game of pool.

The next morning at breakfast Paloma announced, "Father, you must help Dave hunt down these cattle thieves."

"Ain't that sort of a big order?" Blaze queried.

"Perhaps, but you're the very man to do it. Ricardo Guzman is the only person who knows the Lewis gang as well as you do."

Jones shook his head doubtfully. "Don Ricardo has been working up his own private feud with that outfit. If I was the kind that went looking for a fight, I wouldn't have paid freight on myself from the Panhandle down here. I could have got one right at home, any morning before breakfast."

"Ricardo Guzman is something of a black sheep himself," Law spoke up.

"Pshaw! He's all right. I reckon he has changed a few brands in his time, but so has everybody else. Why, that's how 'Old Ed' Austin got his start. If a cowboy tells you he never stole anything, he's either a good liar or a bad roper. But Ricardo's going straight enough now."

"He has lost his share of stock," Paloma explained, "and he'll work with you if father asks him. You go along with Dave—"

"I'm too busy," Blaze demurred, "and I ain't feeling good. I had had dreams all night."

"I don't want you around me here this morning. That new dressmaker is coming."

Jones rose abruptly from the table. "I reckon my business can wait. Hustle up, Dave." A few moments later, as they were saddling their horses, he lamented: "What did I tell you? Here I go, on the dodge from a dressmaker. I s'pose I've got to live like a road-agent now, till something happens."

Don Ricardo Guzman was an American, but he spoke no English. An accident of birth had made him a citizen of the United States—his father having owned a ranch which lay north instead of south of the Rio Grande. Inasmuch as the property had fallen to Ricardo, his sons, too, were Yankees in the eyes of the law. But in all other respects Don Ricardo and his family differed not at all from the many Guzmans who lived across the border. The Guzman ranch comprised a goodly number of acres, and, since live stock multiplied rapidly, its owner had in some sort prospered. On the bank of a resaca—a former bed of the Rio Grande—stood the house, an adobe structure, square, white and unprotected from the sun by shrub or tree. Behind it were some brush corrals and a few scattered mud jacals, in which lived the help.

Ricardo had just risen from a siesta when his two visitors rode up, and he made them welcome with the best he had. In the cool of the afternoon Ricardo rode with his visitors, and then, cordial relations being now established, he began to divulge information of value to Law.

Yes, he had endured many deprecations from thieves. It was shameful, but doubtless God willed that a certain amount of stealing should go on in the world. The evidences were certainly favored by nature, in this locality, for the great expanse of brush country to the north and east offered almost perfect security, and the river, to the south, gave immunity from pursuit or prosecution. The beavers were driven north into the wilderness, but the horses went to Mexico, where the war had created a market for them. The federals had plenty of money to buy mounts.

Whom did Don Ricardo suspect? The old man was noncommittal. Suspicion was one thing, proof was quite another; and conviction was difficult under the best of circumstances.

Why, even a cow's recognition of her own calf was not evidence for a court, and all this was easily proved. Unless the thieves were caught in the very act there was no case against them, and—por Dios!—one could not be forever on guard. Who could tell where the malefactors would strike next? Now, in Mexico one could afford to kill an undesirable neighbor without so much formality. But, thank God! Don Ricardo was not a Mexican. No, he was a good American citizen. It was something to make him sleep well in these war times.

"Just the same, I'll bet he'd sleep better if the Lewis outfit was cleaned up," Dave ventured, and Blaze agreed.

Guzman caught his enemy's name, and nodded.

"Ah! That sin verguerza! He sells arms to the Candelistas and horses to the Potosistas. Perhaps he steals my calves. Who knows?"

"Senor Lewis doesn't need to steal. He has money," Jones argued.

"True! But who is so rich that he would not be richer? Lewis employs men who are poor, and he himself is above nothing. I, too, am a friend of the rebels. Panchito, the Liberator, was a saint, and I give money to the patriots who fight for his memory. But I do not aid the tyrant Potosi with my other hand. Yes, and who is richer, for instance, than Senor Eduardo Austin?"

"You surely don't accuse him of double-dealing with the rebels?" Blaze inquired curiously.

"I don't know. He is a friend of Tad Lewis, and there are strange stories afloat."

Just what these stories were, however, Ricardo would not say, feeling, perhaps that he had already said too much. The three men spent that evening together, and in the morning Blaze rode home, leaving the Ranger behind for the time being as Guzman's guest.

Dave put in the next two days riding the pastures, familiarizing himself with the country, and talking with the few men he met. About all he discovered, however, was the fact that the Guzman range not only adjoined some of Lewis' leased land, but also was bounded for several miles by the Las Palmas fence.

It was pleasant to spend the days among the shy brush-cattle, with Bessie Belle for company. The mare seemed to enjoy the excursions as much as her owner. Her eyes and ears were ever alert; she tossed her head and snorted when a deer broke cover or a jackrabbit scuttled out of her path; she showed a friendly interest in the awkward calves which stood and eyed her with such amazement and then galloped stiffly off with tails high arched. Law had many times undertaken to break Bessie Belle of that habit of flinging her head high at sudden sounds, but she was nervous and inquisitive, and this was the one thing upon which she maintained a feminine obstinacy.

On the second evening the Ranger rode home through a drizzle that had materialized after a long, threatening afternoon and now promised to become a real rain. Ricardo met him at the door to say:

"You bring good fortune with you, senor, for the land is thirsty. Tomorrow, if this rain holds, we shall ride together—you, Pedro and I. Those thieves do their stealing when they leave no tracks."

The sky was leaden, the rain still fell in the morning when Dave and his two companions set out. Until afternoon they rode, their slickers dripping, swaying to the tireless foxtrot of their steaming horses, their eyes engaged in a watchful scrutiny.

At last Pedro, who was ahead, reined in and pointed; the others saw where the barbed-wire strands of the fence they had been following were clipped. A number of horse and calf tracks led through the opening, and after an examination Ricardo announced:

"There are two men. They have come and gone, with the calves tied neck and neck."

"That is Las Palmas, isn't it?" Law indicated the pasture into which the trail led.

Father and son answered, "Si, senor."

For a time the Ranger lounged side-

wise in his saddle, studying the country before him. Perhaps a half-mile away a long, narrow patch of woods, with the tops of occasional oaks showing, ran parallel with the fence for a considerable distance.

"They took them in yonder, to brand," he said, straightening himself. "Maybe we'll be in time."

Side by side the three men rode off Guzman's land, following the tracks to the nearest point of woods; there Law stopped to give his directions.

"Pedro, you ride down this side; Ricardo, you skirt the outside. I shall keep to the middle. Walk your horses, for I shall go slowly." With a dubious shake of the head Ricardo rode away, while Dave guided Bessie Belle into the grove.

CHAPTER VII.

A Ranger's Horse.

Onward through the dense foliage the two friends wound. Now and then they stopped to listen, but the rain was heavy enough to drown all other noises. Encountering fresh tracks finally, Dave leaped from his saddle and studied them. He had gone perhaps half a mile when Bessie Belle raised her head, and he noted that her nostrils were working sensitively. Law fancied that he could detect the smell of a wool fire. Farther along they came to a place where the brush was low, and there, rising through the treetops beyond, he saw a wavering plume of blue smoke.

The Ranger rode into sight of the branding fire with his repeater across his saddle horn and his thumb upon the hammer; what followed came with almost the blinding suddenness of a lightning crash. First there was the picture of a sandy glade, in the center of which burned a fire with branding irons in it, and a spotted calf tied to a tree, but otherwise no sign of life. Then, without warning, Bessie Belle threw up her head in that characteristic trick of hers, and simultaneously Dave saw a figure rise out of the grass at his left with a rifle leveled. With the first jerk of his horse's head his own gun had leaped to his shoulder—he was not conscious of having willed it to do so—and even as he pressed the trigger he felt Bessie Belle give way. The next instant his feet, still in the stirrups, were on the ground and his horse lay between them, motionless. That nervous fling of her head had saved Dave's life, for the rustler's bullet had shattered her skull in its flight, and she lay prone, with scarcely a muscular twitch, so sudden had been her end.

For a moment the Ranger was dazed. He stood staring down at his pet; then the truth engulfed him. He realized that he had ridden her to her death, and at the thought he became like a woman bereft of her child, like a lover who had seen his sweetheart slain.

A shout—it was a hoarse, inarticulate cry; a swift, maddened scrutiny that searched the sodden scene of the ambush; then he was down beside the mare, calling her name heartbrokenly, his arms around her neck, his face against her warm, wet, velvet hide.

Law knew that two men had entered the thicket, and therefore one still remained to be reckoned with, but he gave no thought to that. From the corner of his eye he could see a pair of bootsoles starting at him out of the grass, and they told him there was no need for investigation. Near the body he heard the calf stirring, but he let it struggle.

Bessie Belle's bright eyes were glazing; she did not hear her lover's voice. Don Ricardo and his son burst out of the brush from opposite directions almost at the same moment, to find the Ranger with his face buried in his horse's mane.

"Caramba! What is this?" The old man flung himself from the saddle and came running. "You are injured?"

Pedro, too, bent over the officer, his brown face pale with apprehension. "Mother of God!" breathed the latter. "It was a wild thing to do, to ride alone—"

"I'm all right," Law said, rising stiffly, whereupon both Mexicans voiced their relief.

"The saints be praised!"

"Si! What happened? There was a shot! Did you see nothing?"

Law jerked his head in the direction of the fallen man at his back and Pedro uttered a loud cry.

"Look! Father and son ran through the grass, then recoiled and broke into a jargon of oaths and exclamations.

"Right in the mouth! The fellow was in death before he realized it."

"See! It is as we thought, Pedro; one of Lewis'! Tse! Tse! Tse! What a sight!"

"Who is he?" queried the officer.

"Pino Garza, one of the worst!" chimed the two Guzmans.

Ricardo was dancing in his excitement. "I told you that Lewis knew something. The other one got past me, but I cannot shoot like this."

It was difficult to secure a connected story from Ricardo, but he finally

made it plain that at the first report the other thief had fled, exposing himself only long enough for the old man to take a quick shot in his direction. Ricardo had missed, and the miscreant was doubtless well away by this time. He had ridden a sorrel horse, that was all Ricardo could remember.

Law looked only briefly at the gruesome results of his marksmanship, then he turned back to the body of his beloved mare. Ricardo noticed at length that he was crying; as the Ranger knelt beside the dead thoroughbred, the old Mexican whispered to his son:

"Valgame Dios! This is a strange fellow. He weeps like a woman. He must have loved that horse as a man loves his wife. Who can understand these gringos?" After a time he approached cautiously and inquired: "What shall we do with this hombre, senor? Pedro has found his horse."

Law roused himself. With his own hands he gently removed Bessie Belle's saddle, bridle and blanket, then he gave his orders.

"I'll take your horse, Ricardo, and you take—that fellow's. Get a wagon and move him to Jonesville."

"And you?"

"I'm going to follow that man on the sorrel."

The dead man's saddle was left beside the body; then when the exchange of mounts had been effected, and all was ready, Law made a request that amazed both father and son.

"If I'm not back by morning, I want you to bury my mare." His voice broke; he turned away his face. "Bury her deep, Ricardo, so—the coyotes can't dig her up; right where she fell. I'll be back to see that it's done right. Understand?"

"Buena! I understand perfectly. She was a pretty horse. She was your—bonita, eh? Well, you have a big heart, senor, as a brave man should have. Everything shall be done as you wish; I give you my hand on it." Ricardo reached down and gripped Law's palm. "We will name our pas-



With the First Jerk of His Horse's Head His Own Gun Leaped to His Shoulder.

ture for her, too, because it is plain you loved her dearly. So, then, until tomorrow."

Law watched his two friends ride away, then, with a miserable ache in his throat, he mounted and rode off to pick up the trail of the man on the sorrel pony.

The fellow had ridden in the direction of Las Palmas, which Dave judged must be fully twelve miles away, and when they continued to maintain this course the Ranger became doubly interested. He risked his own interpretation of the rider's intent and pushed on without pausing to search out the trail step by step. At the second gate the signs indicated that his man was little more than an hour ahead of him.

The prospect of again seeing the ruddy-haired mistress of Las Palmas stirred Law more deeply than he cared to admit. Nevertheless, he was uncomfortably aware that she had a husband. Not only so, but the sharp contrast in their positions was disagreeable to contemplate; she was unbelievably rich, and a person of influence in the state, while he had nothing except his health, his saddle and his horse—No; no horse now, she was gone.

Dave Law digs up startling evidence and Mrs. Austin finds her position at La Feria dangerous. Some important developments are described in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Buffalo Bill's First Indian. Col. William F. Cody tells in his book, "The Adventures of Buffalo Bill," published by the Harpers, the story of his first fight with Indians. It was in 1857, when he was only eleven years old, that he killed an Indian. He was accompanying some cattle-herders when they were attacked on the South Platte river. The Indians stampeded the cattle, killed three men and then charged on the rest. A volley stopped them for the moment and the herders took refuge in the river, wading behind the bank on their way to Fort Kearney. Buffalo Bill fell behind and when he suddenly looked up at the bank above he saw an Indian's head. He aimed and fired and the next moment was terrified to see "about six feet of dead Indian come tumbling into the river." From that time forward, he says, "I became a hero and an Indian-killer."

HOME TOWN HELPS

CITY SHOULD KNOW ITSELF

One That Has All Necessary Information at Fingers' End Makes Impression Upon Inquirer.

There are many ways in which a central organization can be of service to a city in industrial development. An industrial commissioner, a man of vision and intelligence, with experience in the problems that confront manufacturers, can make a survey of a city with reference to industrial advantages and have them ready for every inquirer.

The prospective manufacturer likes to do business with a city that knows itself, just as the individual likes to trade with the man that knows his stock. There are so many details that enter into industry, so many points of information about location, switching and traffic facilities, raw materials, and related industries, that it requires exhaustive study of the whole field to make a credible presentation of the city's advantages to the inquirer from the outside. The city that has all these facts at its fingers' end, and can present them convincingly, is in better position than the one where only a smattering of essential facts are known.

The importance of a careful survey of related manufacturing groups should not be underestimated. Now more than ever before the manufacturer looks for a place where his unfinished material can be delivered in any volume on short notice and at a minimum of cost. Or it may be that he wants a city which has developed a line related to his own, so that he can get the benefit of its prestige in that line. Here, again, we see the importance of knowing our city and its industrial possibilities thoroughly, and that is the function of the industrial department of a chamber of commerce.

BETTER CITY AN INVESTMENT

Improvements in Streets and Buildings Pay Returns Just as in Any Private Business.

Mr. MacFarland, president of the American Civic Association, takes the practical business view when he says that city betterments are nothing less than paying investments. The streets belong to the people. Their widening, or the building of new ones to accommodate increasing traffic, is simply a business expansion that will pay a return as does any private business upon new capital put into it.

The same thing is true of housing. No city is rich enough to afford housing conditions that mitigate against the welfare of any part of its population, says the Kansas City Star. The man of small means, as Mr. MacFarland says—the man who must have a low rental—is the basis of industrial prosperity. Low rental dwellings are necessary, but it does not follow that low rental dwellings should be lacking in the sanitary conveniences that are essential to public health. The owner of rental dwellings who neglects to maintain them in proper condition is interfering with the city's business and prosperity. The city's business demands laws regulating housing in conformity with the best interests of that business, and those laws should be rigidly enforced.

Small Suburban Lot Best.

The ideal size for a suburban lot, if you do not keep a man or a horse, is about one-sixth of an acre—say, 50 by 150 feet. This is all that the owner can keep in apple-pie order, provided the place has plenty of vegetables and flowers. This assumes that the family is willing to spend \$25 a year for outside labor, fertilizers, seeds, bulbs, etc. It also assumes that the wife is willing to spend an hour a day in the garden and is not ashamed to be seen raking, planting and doing everything except the hard labor.

Those who move from the city to the country will make a great mistake if, under such conditions, they attempt more than this. Gardening is an expensive business and one might as well recognize the limitations of the game.

Brick Porch Improves Old House.

The transformation a broad porch of nice-looking face brick will bring about on an old-style frame house is wonderful. One sees in various places along the streets houses on which such changes have been made, and he is forced to admit that a great improvement has resulted. While the effect is so striking, the cost of such an addition is not so great.

A combination of rough face brick of reddish-brown coloring, white stone cap and turned columns painted white, with the steps and porch floor of concrete, makes an attractive appearance. A new brick porch would be a valuable addition to many wooden houses of the old type, which now boast of old-style narrow piazzas.

Value of Vegetable Garden.

A vegetable garden never hurt the looks of any lot. It doesn't take a dreamer to raise over a 30 by 40 foot plot of growing lettuce, ripening tomatoes or sturdy potato plants—not in these days of high prices. Indeed, if a piece of ground has demonstrated its productivity, it is more saleable than ever when put on the market.—Wisconsin State Journal.

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GET EXPLOSIVE FROM FLOWER

British Scientists Discover That Blossom of Mahua Tree in India is Rich in Acetone.

The munition output of India has in two years been increased a thousandfold, mainly through the discovery that one of India's commonest blossoms, the flower of the mahua or mohna tree, contains acetone in quantity. This tree is widely known to all travelers in Britain's Asiatic empire, but its use as a base for explosives is at least one thing new under the sun, says the Scientific American.

When the war broke out, acetone, which forms the chief ingredient of cordite, was extracted mainly from wood, maize, and starch; and the British admiralty erected a great factory for the process of acetone recovery from starch. But fortunately two English scientists in Hyderabad discovered that the mahua flowers contained acetone in larger proportions than it is found in any other vegetable substance—that this inoffensive bloom was ten times richer in the material in question than any known wood. In fact, the director general of ordnance for India reports that the mahua is by all odds the best source for acetone known.

Manufacture on a large scale is now under way and it is whispered that the abundance of munitions with which the British forces in Mesopotamia appear to be blessed is to be attributed to the new discovery.

Still Very Much Alive. "She has a past." "Oh! Why doesn't she bury it?" "It isn't dead yet."—Judge.

Grape-Nuts for Lunch Puts "PEP" into the afternoon's work

There's a Reason