

# HEART of the SUNSET

BY REX BEACH

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

(Continued)



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 insecurely 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 seamstress' 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. "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—"

"What?"

"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 owl than ever behind his big, gold-rimmed spectacles. "What in the world are you doing in there?" she cried.

Blaze emerged, blinking. He was dusty and perspiring.

"Hello, Miz Austin!" he saluted her with a poor assumption of breeziness. "I was fixin' some harness, but I'm right glad to see you."

Alaire regarded him quizzically. "What made you hide?" she asked.

"Hide? Who, me?"

"I saw you dodge in here like a sopher."

Blaze confessed: "I reckon I've got the willies. Every woman I see looks like that dressmaker."

"Paloma was telling me about you. Why do you hate her so?"

"I don't know 's I hate her, but her and her husband have put a jinx on me. They're the worst people I ever see Miz Austin."

"You don't really believe in such things?"

Blaze dusted off a seat for his visitor, saying: "I never did till lately, but now I'm worse than a plantation nigger. I tell you there's things in this world we don't sabb. I wish you'd get Paloma to fire her. I've tried and failed. I wish you'd tell her those dresses are rotten."

"But they're very nice; they're lovely; and I've just been complimenting her. Now what has this woman done to you?"

It seemed impossible that a man of Blaze Jones' character could actually



The Door of a Harness Closet Opened, and Out of the Blackness Peered Paloma's Father.

harbor crude superstitions, and yet there was no mistaking his earnestness when he said:

"I ain't sure whether she's to blame, or her husband, but misfortune has folded me to herself."

"How?"

"Well, I'm sick."

"You don't look it."

"I don't exactly feel it, either, but I am. I don't sleep good, my heart's actin' up, I've got rheumatism, my stomach feels like I'd swallowed something alive."

"You're smoking too much," Alaire affirmed, with conviction.

But skepticism aroused Blaze's indignation. With elaborate sarcasm, he retorted: "I reckon that's why my best team of mules ran away and dragged me through a ten-acre patch of grass

burrs, eh? It's a wonder I wasn't killed. I reckon I smoked so much that I give a tobacco heart to the best three-year-old bull in my pasture! Well, I smoked him to death, all right. Probably it was nicotine poisoning 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'."

"And do you attribute all these misfortunes to Paloma's dressmaker?"

The man nodded gloomily. "That ain't half! Everything goes wrong I'm scared to pack a weapon for fear I'll injure myself. Why, I've carried a bowie knife in my bootleg ever since I was a babe in arms, you might say; but the other day I jabbed myself with it and nearly got blood-poisoned. This fellow, Strange, with his fortunetellin' and his charms and his conjures, has hocus-pocused the whole neighborhood. He's gettin' rich off of the Mexicans. He knows more secrets than a parrot."

"He is nothing more than a circus fakir, Mr. Jones."

"Yes'm! Just the same, these greasers 'd vote him into the legislature if he asked them. Why, he knows who fetched back Ricardo Guzman's body! He told me so."

"Really?" Alaire looked up quickly, then the smile left her face. After a moment she said, "Perhaps he could tell me something I want to know?"

"No, don't you get him started," Blaze cautioned, hastily, "or he'll put a spell on you like he did on me."

"I want to know what Ed had to do with the Guzman affair."

Blaze shook his head slowly. "Well, he's mixed up somehow with Lewis. Dave thinks Tad was at the bottom of the killin', and he hoped to prove it on him; but our government won't do anything, and he's stumped for the time bein'."

"I don't know any more about Ed's dealin' than you do, Miz Austin; all I know is that I got a serpent in my household and I can't get shed of her. I've got a lapful of troubles of my own."

"This is too occult for me," she declared, rising. "But—I'm interested in what you say about Mr. Strange. If he can tell me something, I do hope you have no more misfortunes."

"You stay to supper," Blaze urged hospitably. "I'll be in as soon as that tarantula's gone."

But Alaire declined. After a brief chat with Paloma, she remounted Montrose and prepared for the homeward ride. At the gate, however, she met Dave Law on his new mare, and when Dave had learned the object of her visit to Jonesville he insisted upon accompanying her.

It was early dusk when they reached Las Palmas; it was nearly midnight when Dave threw his leg across his saddle and started home.

Alaire's parting words rang sweetly in his ears: "This has been the pleasantest day I can remember."

The words themselves meant little, but Dave had caught a wistful undertone in the speaker's voice, and fancied he had seen in her eyes a queer, half-frightened expression, as of one just awakened.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### An Awakening.

Time was when Phil Strange boasted that he and his wife had played every fairground and seaside amusement park from Coney Island to Galveston. In his battered wardrobe trunks were parts of old costumes, scrapbooks of clippings, and a goodly collection of lithographs, some advertising the supernatural powers of "Professor Magi, Sovereign of the Unseen World," and others the accomplishments of "Mlle. Le Garde, Renowned Serpent Enchantress." In these gaudy portraits of "Magi the Mystic" no one would have recognized Phil Strange. And even more difficult would it have been to trace a resemblance between Mrs. Strange and the blond, bushy-headed "Mlle. Le Garde" of the posters. Nevertheless, the likenesses at one time had been considered not too flattering, and Phil treasured them as evidences of imperishable distinction.

But the Stranges had tired of public life. For a long time the wife had confessed to a lack of interest in her vocation which amounted almost to a repugnance. Snake-charming, she had discovered, was far from an ideal profession for a woman of refinement. It possessed unpleasant features, and even such euphemistic titles as "Serpent Enchantress" and "Reptilian Mesmerist" failed to rob the calling of a certain odium, a suggestion of vulgarity in the minds of the more discriminating. This had become so distressing to Mrs. Strange's finer sensibilities that she had voiced a yearning to forsake the platform and pit for something more congenial, and finally she had prevailed upon Phil to make a change.

The step had not been taken without misgivings, but a benign Providence had watched over the pair. Mrs. Strange was a natural seamstress, and luck had directed her and Phil to a community which was not only in need of a good dressmaker but peculiarly ripe for the talents of a soothsayer. Phil, too, had intended to embrace a new profession; but he had soon discovered that Jonesville offered better financial returns to a man of his accepted gifts than did the choicest of

seaside concessions, and therefore he had resumed his old calling under a slightly different guise. Before long he acknowledged himself well pleased with the new environment, for his wife was far happier in draping dress goods upon the figures of her customers than hanging python 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.

Contrary to Blaze's belief, however, Strange was no Prince of Darkness, and took little joy in some of the secrets forced upon him. Phil was a good man in his way—so conscientious that certain information he acquired weighed him down with a sense of un-



"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 ungarbled 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 chaparral, 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—"

Dave broke in crisply. "All right! Let's get down to cases. What's on your mind, Strange?"

The psychic simulated a shudder—a painful contortion, such as anyone might suffer if rudely jerked out of the spirit world.

"Eh? What was I—? There! You've broke the connection," he declared. "Did I tell you anything?"

"No. But evidently you can."

"I'm sorry. They never come back."

"Rot!"

Phil was hurt, indignant. With some stiffness he explained the danger of interrupting a seance of this sort, but Law remained obdurate.

"You can put over that second-sight stuff with the greasers," he declared sharply, "but not with me. So, Jose Sanchez has been to see you and you want to warn me. Is that it?"

"I don't know any such party," Strange protested. He eyed his caller for a moment; then with an abrupt change of manner he complained: "Say, Bo! What's the matter with you? I've got a reputation to protect, and I do things my own way. I'm getting set to slip you something, and you try to make me look like a sucker. Is that any way to act?"

"I prefer to talk to you when your eyes are open. I know all about—"

"You don't know nothing about anything," snapped the other. "Jose's got it in for Mrs. Austin."

"You said you didn't know him."

"Well, I don't. He's never been to see me in his life, but—his sweetheart has. Rosa Morales comes regular."

"Rosa! Jose's sweetheart?"

"Yes. Her and Jose have joined out together since you shot Panfilo, and they're framing something."

"What, for instance?"

The fortune-teller hesitated. "I only wish I knew," he said slowly. "It looks to be like a killing."

Dave nodded. "Probably is. Jose would like to get me, and of course the girl—"

(Continued next week)

## DISTRESSING RHEUMATISM

How many people, crippled and lame from rheumatism, owe their condition to neglected or incorrect treatment! It is the exact combination of pure Norwegian Cod Liver Oil with glycerine and hypophosphites as contained in

# SCOTT'S EMULSION

that has made Scott's famous for relieving rheumatism when other treatments have utterly failed.

If you are a rheumatism sufferer, or feel its first symptoms, start on Scott's Emulsion at once. IT MAY BE EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED.

Scott & Borne, Bloomfield, N. J.

Room rates in the Hotel Dyckman, Minneapolis, range from \$1.50 to \$3.50. Every room with private bath. 13-14.

Patrons of the Hotel Dyckman in Minneapolis are always assured of interested, courteous service in every department. 12-14.

An ad in the classified columns of the Graphic means that it meets the eyes of 12,500 prospective buyers.

The best dry cleaning can be had from Buller Bros. Prices Right.

## Daniel Bell & Co.

### PLUMBING AND HEATING SEWER AND WATER CONNECTIONS

Spence Hot Water Boilers and Standard Porcelain Enameled Ware. The Best on the Market.

Telephone 243 Williston, N. D.

## ALHAMBRA HOT SPRINGS

### ALHAMBRA, MONTANA

On the line of the Great Northern Railway, between Helena and Butte.

Open the year around. Vapor, Mud and Plunge Baths in the hotel. Swimming pool in connection. Steam heat and electric light in every room. Water unsurpassed for rheumatism, kidney, stomach and liver troubles.

Round trip rate, one and-a-third fares from all local points. Ask your agent for coupon ticket. Monday suggest that North Dakota patrons pay fare to Mondak, and buy coupon ticket at that point.

—M. J. SULLIVAN, Prop.

## An Eastern Man Is Here

And is now Building a

### DRY CLEANING, STEAM CLEANING and DYE WORKS

Open for business May 1. Will make a Specialty of cleaning

### SILK GOWNS, PARTY DRESSES AND KID GLOVES ALSO MEN'S GARMENTS

Clean all sorts of Household Goods. His work is guaranteed. Watch for further announcements.

## SAM KRIVOSHA & CO.

## Farm Machinery

Heider and Titan tractors. Monitor and Dowagiac drills. Moline and Rock Island Plows. Columbus and Mandt Wagons. Moline buggies and Spring wagons. Standard Owens and Bulldog fanning Mills. Bulldog and Owens Wild Oat separators. Cloverleaf and Widespread manure spreaders. Perfection Straw Separator. Primrose Cream separators. Harrows of all kinds. Monitor Wind Mills. Steel and wood tanks. Rock Island Gas Engines. Deering Binders, Mowers and Rakes. Splittstoser Potato Planters.

The above lines are all handled by

# C. D. MILLOY

The Implement Man Williston, North Dakota.