

# The Land of Broken Promises

A Stirring Story of the Mexican Revolution

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### SYNOPSIS.

Bud Hooker and Phil De Lancey are forced, owing to a revolution in Mexico, to give up their mining claim and return to the United States. In the border town of Gadsden they meet Henry Kruger, a wealthy miner, who makes him a proposition to return to Mexico to acquire title to a very rich mine which Kruger has blown up when he found he had been cheated out of the title by one Aragon. The Mexican subsequently had spent a large sum of money in an unsuccessful attempt to relocate the vein and then allowed the land to revert for taxes. Hooker and De Lancey arrive at Fortuna, near where the Eagle Tail mine is located. They engage Cruz Mendez to acquire the title for them and begin preliminary work. Aragon accuses them of jumping his claim. Hooker discovers that matrimonial entanglements prevent Mendez from acquiring a valid title. Phil, who has been paying attention to Gracia Aragon, decides to turn Mexican and acquire the title. Aragon fails in his attempt to drive them off the claim. Rebels are reported in the vicinity. A rich vein of gold is struck and work on the mine is stopped until the title can be perfected. Phil is arrested by Manuel del Rey, captain of the rurales and ruler of Gracia's. He is released on promise to stay away from Gracia. Phil is forced to enlist in the rurales. He goes back to take care of Gracia. The rebels are defeated in a fierce battle near Fortuna. Phil deserts and returns to the United States. Bud turns Mexican and takes steps to secure title to the mine in his own name.

### CHAPTER XIX—Continued.

He looked the adobe house over thoughtfully, listened long to the news of the border and of the rurales' raid on their camp, and retired to the rocks for the night. Even Bud never knew where he slept—somewhere up on the hillside—in caves or cliffs in the rocks—and not even the most pressing invitation could make him share the house for a night. To Amigo, as to an animal, a house was a trap; and he knew that the times were treacherous.

So indeed they were, as Hooker was to learn to his sorrow, and but for the Yaqui and his murderous knife he might easily have learned it too late. It was evening, after a rainless day, and Bud was cooking by the open fire, when suddenly Amigo vanished and four men rode in from above. They were armed with rifles, as befitted the times, but gave no signs of ruffianly bravado, and after a few words Bud invited them to get down and eat.

"Muchas gracias, señor," said the leader, dismounting and laying his rifle against a log. "We are not hungry."

"Then have some coffee," invited Hooker, who made it a point to feed every one who stopped, regardless of their merit; and once more the Mexican declined. At this Bud looked at him sharply, for his refusal did not augur well, and it struck him the man's face was familiar. He was tall for a Mexican and heavily built, but with a rather sinister cast of countenance.

"Where have I seen you before?" asked Bud, after trying in vain to place him. "In Fortuna."

"No, señor," answered the Mexican politely. "I have never been in that city. Is it far?"

"Ten miles by the trail," responded Hooker, by no means reassured, and under pretext of inviting them to eat, he took a look at the other men. If they had not stopped to eat, what then was their errand while the sun was sinking so low? And why this sudden refusal of the coffee which every Mexican drinks?

Bud stepped into the house, as if on some errand, and watched them unseen from the interior. Seeing them exchange glances then, he leaned his rifle just inside the door and went about his cooking.

It was one of the chances he took, living out in the brush, but he had come to know this low-browed type of semi-bandit all too well and had small respect for their courage. In case of trouble Amigo was close by in the rocks somewhere, probably with his gun in his hand—but with a little patience and circumspection the unwelcome visitors would doubtless move on.

So he thought, but instead they lingered, and when supper was cooked he decided to go to a show-down—and if they again refused to eat he would send them on their way.

"Ven amigos," he said, spreading out the tin plates for them. "Come and eat!"

The three low-brows glared at their leader, who had done what little talking there was so far, and, seized with a sudden animation, he immediately rose to his feet.

"Many thanks, señor," he said with a cringing and specious politeness. "We have come far and the trail is long, so we will eat. The times are hard for poor men now—this traitor, Madero, has made us all hungry. It is by him that we poor working men are driven to insurrection—but we know that the Americans are our friends. Yes, señor, I will take some of your beans, and thank you."

He filled a plate as he spoke and lifted a biscuit from the oven, continuing with his false patter while the others fell to in silence.

"That, in truth, is no jest to the Mexican people. This man has betrayed us all; he has ruined the country and set brother against brother. And now, while we starve because the mines are shut down, he gathers his family about him in the city and lives fat on the money he has stolen."

He ran on in this style, after the fashion of the revoltosos, and by the very commonplaces of his fulminations Bud was thrown completely off his guard. That was the way they all talked, these worthless bandit-beggars—that and telling how they loved the Americans—and then, if they got a chance, they would stick a knife in your back.

He listened to the big man with a polite toleration, being careful not to turn his back, and ate a few bites as he waited, but though it was coming dusk the Mexicans were in no hurry to depart. Perhaps they hoped to stop for the night and get him in his sleep. Still they lingered on, the leader sitting on a log and continuing his harangue.

Then, in the middle of a sentence, and while Bud was bending over the fire, the Mexican stopped short and leaned to one side. A tense silence fell, and Hooker was waked from his trance by the warning click of a gun-lock. Suddenly his mind came back to his guests, and he ducked like a flash, but even as he went down he heard the hammer clack!

The gun had snapped! Instantly Hooker's hand leaped to his pistol and he fired from the big pointblank at the would-be murderer. With a yell to the others, one of the Mexicans sprang on him from behind and tried to bear him down. They struggled for a moment while Bud shot blindly with his pistol and went down fighting.

Bud was a giant compared to the stunted Mexicans, and he threw them about like dogs that hang on to a bear. With a man in each hand he rose to his feet, crushing them down beneath him; then, in despair of shaking off his rider, he staggered a few steps and hurled himself over backward into the fire.

A yell of agony followed their fall and, as the live coals bit through the Mexican's thin shirt, he fought like a cat to get free. Rocks, pots and kettles were kicked in every direction, and when Hooker leaped to his feet the Mexican scrambled up and rushed madly for the creek.

But, though Bud was free, the battle had turned against him, for in the brief interval of his fight the other two Mexicans had run for their guns. The instant he rose they covered him. Their chief, who by some miracle had escaped Bud's shot, gave a shout for

them to halt. Cheated of his victim at the first he was claiming the right to kill.

As Hooker stood blinded by the smoke and ashes the fellow took deliberate aim—and once more his rifle snapped. Then, as the other Mexicans stood agape, surprised at the failure of the shot, the cannonlike whang of a Mauser rent the air and the leader crumpled down in a heap.

An instant later a shrill yell rose from up the canyon and, as the two Mexicans started and stared, Amigo came dashing in upon them, a splitting pistol in one hand and his terrible "wood-chopping" knife brandished high in the other.

In the dusk his eyes and teeth gleamed white, his black hair seemed to bristle with fury, and the glint of his long knife made a light as he vaulted over the last rock and went plunging on their track. For, at the first glance at this huge, pursuing figure, the two Mexicans had turned and bolted like rabbits, and now, as the Yaqui whirled in after them, Bud could hear them squealing and scrambling

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as he hunted them down among the rocks.

It was grim work, too, even for his stomach, but Hooker let the Indian follow his nature. When Amigo came back from his hunting there was no need to ask questions. His eyes shone so terribly that Hooker said nothing, but set about cleaning up camp.

After he had washed the ashes from his eyes, and when the fury had vanished from Amigo's face, they went as by common consent and gazed at the body of the chief of the desperadoes. Even in death his face seemed strangely familiar; but as Hooker stood gazing at him the Yaqui picked up his gun.

"Look!" he said, and pointed to a bullet-splash where, as the Mexican held the gun across his breast, Bud's pistol shot had flattened harmlessly against the lock. It was that which had saved the Mexican chief from instant death, and the jar of the shot had doubtless broken the rifle and saved Bud, in turn, from the second shot.

All this was in the Yaqui's eye as he carefully tested the action; but, when he threw down the lever, a cartridge rose up from the magazine and glided smoothly into the breach. With a rifle full of cartridges the ignorant Mexican had been snapping on an empty chamber, not knowing enough to jack up a shell!

For a moment Amigo stared at the gun and the man, and his mouth drew down with contempt.

"Ha! Pendejo!" he grunted, and kicked the corpse with his foot.

But if the Mexican had been a fool, he had paid the price, for the second time he snapped his gun Amigo had shot him through and through.

### CHAPTER XX.

In a country where witnesses to a crime are imprisoned along with the principals and kept more or less indefinitely in jail, a man thinks twice before he reports to the police.

With four dead Mexicans to the Yaqui's account, and Del Rey in charge of the district, Hooker followed his second thought—he said nothing, and took his chances on being arrested for murder. Until far into the night Amigo busied himself along the hillside, and when the sun rose not a sign remained to tell the story of the fight.

Men, horses, saddles and guns—all had disappeared. And, after packing a little food in a sack, Amigo disappeared also, with a grim smile in promise of return.

The sun rose round and hot, the same as usual; the south wind came up and blew into a belling mass of clouds, which lashed back with the accustomed rain; and when all the earth was washed clean and fresh the last trace of the struggle was gone. Only by the burns on his hands was Hooker aware of the fight and of the treachery which had reared its head against him like a snake which has been warmed and fed.

Nowhere but in Mexico, where the low pelado classes have made such deeds a subtlety, could the man be found to dissimulate like that false assassin-in-chief. To pause suddenly in a protracted speech, swing over and pick up a gun, and halt his victim for the shooting by the preparatory click of the lock—that indeed called for a brand of cunning rarely found in the United States.

There was one thing about the affair that vaguely haunted Hooker—why was it that a man so cunning as that had failed to load his gun? Twice, and with everything in his favor, he had raised his rifle to fire; and both times it had snapped in his hands. Certainly he must have been inept at arms—or accustomed to single-shot guns.

The reputed magic of the swift-firing rifles evidently had been his undoing, but where had he got his new gun? And who was he, anyway? With those two baffling questions Bud wrestled as he sat beside his door, and at evening his answer came.

The sun was swinging low and he was collecting wood down the gulch for a fire when, with a sudden thud of hoofs, a horseman rounded the point and came abruptly to a halt. It was Aragon, and he was spying on the camp.

For a full minute he scanned the house, tent and mine with a look so snaky and sinister that Bud could read his heart like a book. Here was the man who had sent the assassins, and he had come to view their work!

Very slowly Bud's hand crept toward his six-shooter but, slight as was the motion, Aragon caught it and set frozen in his place. Then, with an inarticulate cry, he fell flat on his horse's neck and went spurring out of sight.

The answer to Bud's questions was very easy now. The Mexican who had led the attempt on his life was one of Aragon's bad men, one of the four gunmen whom Hooker had looked over so carefully when they came to drive him from the mine, and Aragon had fitted him out with new arms to make the result more sure. But with that question answered there came up another and another until, in a sudden clarity of vision, Bud saw through the hellish plot and beheld himself the master.

As man to man, Aragon would not dare to face him now, for he knew that he merited death. By his sly approach, by the look in his eyes and the dismay of his frenzied retreat, he had acknowledged more surely than by words his guilty knowledge of the raid. Coming to a camp where he expected to find all dead and still, he had found himself face to face with the very man he had sought to kill. How, then, had the American escaped destruction, and what had occurred to his men?

Perhaps, in his ignorance, Aragon

was raving at his henchlings because they had shirked their task; perhaps, not knowing that they were dead, he was waiting in a fever of impatience for them to accomplish the deed. However it was, Bud saw that he held the high card, and he was not slow to act.

In the morning he saddled Copper Bottom, who had been confined to the corral for weeks, and went galloping into town. There he lingered about the hotel until he saw his man and started boldly toward him. Surprise, alarm and pitiful fear chased themselves across Aragon's face as he stood, but Bud walked proudly by.

"Good morning, señor!" was all Bud said, but the look in his eyes was eloquent of a grim hereafter.

And instead of hurrying back to guard his precious mine Hooker loitered carelessly about town. His

mine was safe now—and he was safe. Aragon dared not raise a hand. So he sat himself down on the broad veranda and listened with boyish interest to Don Juan's account of the war.

"What have you not heard of the battle?" cried forth Don Juan, delighted to have a fresh listener. "Agua Negra has been taken and retaken, and the railroad will soon be repaired. My gracious! have you been out in the hills that long? Why, it was two weeks ago that the rebels captured the town by a coup, and eight days later the federals took it back."

"Ah, there has been a real war, Mr. Bud! You who have laughed at the courage of the Mexicans, what do you think of Bernardo Bravo and his men? They captured the last up train from Fortuna; loaded all the men into the ore cars and empty coaches; and, while the federals were still in their barracks, the train ran clear into the station and took the town by storm."

"And eight days later, at sundown, the federals took it back. Ah, there was awful slaughter averted, señor! But for the fact that the fuse went out two hundred Yaqui Indians who led the charge would have been blown into eternity."

"Yes, so great was the charge of dynamite that the rebels had laid in their mine that not a house in Agua Negra would have been left standing if the fuse had done its work. Two tons of dynamite! Think of that, my friend!"

"But these rebels were as ignorant of its power as they were of laying a train. The Yaquis walked into the town at sundown and found it deserted—every man, woman and child had fled to Gadsden and the rebels had fled to the west."

"But listen, here was the way it happened—actually, and not as common report has it, for the country is all in an uproar and the real facts were never known. When Bernardo Bravo captured the town of Agua Negra the people acclaimed him a hero. He sent word to the junta at El Paso and set up a new form of government. All was enthusiasm, and several Americans joined his ranks to operate the machine guns and cannon. As for the federals, they occupied the country to the east and attempted a few sallies, but as they had nothing but their rifles, the artillery drove them back."

"Then, as the battle ceased, the rebels began to celebrate their victory. They broke into the closed cantinas, disobeying their officers and beginning the looting of the town, and while half of their number were drunk the federals, suddenly informed of their condition, suddenly advanced upon them, with the Yaquis far in the lead."

"They did not shoot, those Yaquis; but, dragging their guns behind them, they crept up through the bushes and dug pits quite close to the lines. Then, when the rebels discovered them and manned their guns, the Yaquis shot down the gunners."

"Growing bolder, they crept farther to the front—the rebels became disorganized, their men became mutinous—and at last, when they saw they would surely be taken, the leaders buried two tons of dynamite in the trenches by the bull-ring and set a time-fuse, to explode when the Yaquis arrived."

"The word spread through the town like wildfire—all the people, all the soldiers fled every which way to escape—and then, when the worst was expected to happen, the dynamite failed to explode and the Yaquis rushed the trenches at sundown."

"Did those Yaquis know about the dynamite?" inquired Bud.

"Know?" repeated Don Juan, winking the thought away; "not a word! Their commanders kept it from them, even

after they discovered the mine. And now the Indians are making boasts; they are drunk with the thought of their valor and claim that the rebels fled from them alone."

"The roadmaster came into town this morning on a velocipede and said that the Yaquis are insufferable, thinking that it was their renown as fighters and not the news of the dynamite that drove all the soldiers from town."

"However, Agua Negra is once more in the hands of the government; the track is clear and most of the bridges repaired; so why quarrel with the Yaquis? While they are, of course, nothing but Indians, they serve their purpose in battle."

"Well, I guess yes!" responded Bud warmly. "Serve their purpose, eh? Where were these Mexican soldiers and their Spanish officers when the Yaquis were taking the town? And that was just like a dog-and-cat Mexican—setting that time-fuse and then not having it go off. More's likely the poor yep that fired it was so scared he couldn't hold a match—probably never lit it, just dropped the match and ran. They're a bum bunch, if you want to know what I think. I'd rather have a Yaqui than a hundred of 'em!"

"A hundred of whom?" inquired a cool voice behind him, and looking up Hooker saw the beautiful Gracia gazing out at him through the screen door.

"A hundred Mexicans!" he repeated, and Gracia murmured "Oh!" and was gone.

"Miss Aragon is very loyal to her country," observed Don Juan, but Hooker only grunted.

Somehow, since those four Mexicans had come to his camp, he had soured on everything south of the line; and even the charming Gracia could not make him take back his words. If she had intended the remark as a challenge—a subtle invitation to follow her and defend his faith—she failed for once of her purpose, for if there was any particular man in Mexico that Bud hated more than another it was her false-hearted father.

Hooker had, in fact, thought more seriously of making her a half-orphan than of winning her good-will, and he lingered about the hotel, not to make love to the daughter, but to strike terror to Aragon.

The company being good, and a train being expected soon, Bud stayed over another day. In the morning, when he came down for breakfast, he found that Aragon had fled before him. With his wife, daughter and retinue, he had moved suddenly back to his home. Hooker grinned when Don Juan told him the news.

"Well, why not?" he asked, chuckling maliciously. "Here it's the middle of the rainy season and the rebel going on all summer and nary a rebel in sight. Where's that big fight you was talking about—the battle of Fortuna? You've made a regular fortune out of these refugees, Brachamonte, but I fail to see the enemy."

"Ah, you may laugh," shrugged the hotel-keeper, "but wait! The time will come. The rebels are lost now—some day, when you least expect it, they will come upon us and then, believe me, my guests will be glad they are here. What is a few weeks' bill compared to being held for ransom? Look at that rich Señor Luna, who was here for a time in the spring. Against my advice he hurried home and now he is paying the price. Ten thousand pesos it cost to save his wife and family, and for himself and son his friends advanced ten thousand more. I make no evil prophecies, but it would be better for our friend if he stayed on at my poor hotel."

"Whose friend?" inquired Bud bluntly, but Don Juan struck him upon the back with elephantine playfulness and hurried off to his duties.

As for Hooker, he tarried in town until he got his mail and a copy of the Sunday paper and then, well satisfied that the times were quiet and wars a thing of the past, he ambled back to the Eagle Tail and settled down for a rest.

Flat on his back by the doorway he lay on his bed and smoked, reading his way through the lurid supplement and watching the trail with one eye. Since the fight with Aragon's Mexicans all his apprehensions had left him. He had written briefly to Phil and Kruger, and now he was holding the fort.

It had been a close shave, but he had escaped the cowardly assassins and had Aragon in his power. Not by any force of law, but by the force of fear and the gnawing weakness of Aragon's own evil conscience.

Aragon was afraid of what he had done, but it was the suspense which rendered him so pitiable. On a day he had sent four armed Mexicans to kill this Texan—not one had returned and the Texan regarded him sneeringly. This it was that broke the Spaniard's will, for he knew not what to think. But as for Bud, he lay on his back by the doorway and laughed at the funny page.

As he sprawled there at his reading, Amigo came in from the hills, and he, too, was content to relax. Gravely scanning the colored sheet, his dark face lighted up.

It was all very peaceful and pleasant, but it was not destined to last.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Real Boss.

Wigg—"Young Bjoes thinks he is a born leader." Wagg—"Oh, many a fellow who thinks he was born to command marries a woman who was born to countermand."—Philadelphia Record.

Is in All Men's Power.

It is prodigious the quantity of good that may be done by one man if he will make a business of it.—Benjamin Franklin.

The Eugenicist.

Frauding the science of eugenics, Harold Dolce, the father of Eugenic, the eugenic baby, said in New York: "Eugenics is making headway everywhere. It is even penetrating into the exclusive circles of the old aristocracy of Philadelphia."

"A Philadelphia girl of the highest aristocracy actually got engaged last month to a young bank clerk. A Philadelphia clubman said to her reproachfully at a tea: "Is it possible that you, of a family eminent for seven generations, can stoop to marry an unknown upstart?" "Well, I prefer to marry a man without a name rather than a name without a man."—Detroit Free Press.

A GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Mr. F. C. Case of Welcome Lake, Pa., writes: "I suffered with Backache and Kidney Trouble. My head ached, my sleep was broken and unrefreshing. I felt heavy and sleepy after meals, was always nervous and tired, had a bitter taste in my mouth, was dizzy, had floating specks before my eyes, was always thirsty, had a dragging sensation across my loins, difficulty in collecting my thoughts and was troubled with shortness of breath. Dodds Kidney Pills have cured me of these complaints. Dodds Kidney Pills have done their work and done it well. You are at liberty to publish this letter for the benefit of any sufferer who doubts the merit of Dodds Kidney Pills."

Dodds Kidney Pills, 50c. per box at your dealer or Dodds Medicine Co., Buffalo, N. Y. Write for Household Hints, Dainty Recipes; also music of National Anthem. All 3 sent free. Adv.

Take the Blood Out and Wash It.

Drs. V. A. Ureyitch and N. K. Rosenberg have discovered a way to take the blood out of the body, wash it and put it back again. In the Rousky Vralch the describe their experiments upon animals. The idea, of course, is to rid the blood of poisonous substances. They found they could remove half the blood, prevent its coagulation by adding sodium citrate, wash it with salt solution and return the purified red corpuscles into the circulation. It was not necessary to return the white corpuscles.

The New York Medical Journal remarks that this, taken together with the transplantation of organs and the growth of tissue outside the body, forms an entirely new chapter in experimental medicine. Who can tell what the future has in store for us?"

The Hydraulic Ram.

She was a Delaware country girl. She lived near Gaston and was in Muncie with her escort, watching a piece of engineering work that was being done about a new bridge. Every once in a while there came a peculiar grinding noise whose origin she could not locate.

"Jim, what makes that noise?" she asked.

"Oh, that's the hydraulic ram."

"For land's sake! Where do they keep him?"—Indianapolis News.

A candidate must be a past master of political economy in order to get the most votes for the least money.

PRESSED HARD.

Coffee's Weight on Old Age.

When people realize the injurious effects of coffee and the change in health that Postum can bring, they are usually glad to lend their testimony for the benefit of others.

"My mother, since her early childhood, was an inveterate coffee drinker, had been troubled with her heart for a number of years and complained of that 'weak all over' feeling and sick stomach."

"Some time ago I was making a visit to a distant part of the country and took dinner with one of the merchants of the place. I noticed a somewhat unusual flavor of the 'coffee' and asked him concerning it. He replied that it was Postum.

"I was so pleased with it that, after the meal was over, I bought a package to carry home with me, and had wife prepare some for the next meal. The whole family were so well pleased with it that we discontinued coffee and used Postum entirely.

"I had really been at times very anxious concerning my mother's condition, but we noticed that after using Postum for a short time, she felt so much better than she did prior to its use, and had little trouble with her heart, and no sick stomach; that the headaches were not so frequent, and her general condition much improved. This continued until she was well and hearty.

"I know Postum has benefited myself and the other members of the family, but not in so marked a degree as in the case of my mother, as she was a victim of long standing." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum comes in two forms: Regular Postum—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages. Instant Postum—is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. 30c and 50c tins.

The cost per cup of both kinds is about the same.

"There's a Reason" for Postum.

—sold by Grocers.



The Artillery Drove Them Back.



Threw Them About Like Dogs That Hang Onto a Bear.