

## The Land of Broken Promises

A Stirring Story  
of the Mexican  
Revolution

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"The Fighting Fox!"  
"Hidden Waters"  
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### SYNOPSIS.

Bud Hooker and Phil De Lancey are sent owing to a revolution in Mexico, to give up their mining claim and return to the United States. In the border town of Gadsden Bud meets Henry Kruger, a wealthy miner, who makes him a proposition to return to Mexico to acquire a title to a very rich mine which Kruger had 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 his efforts to obtain the title, 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 a title for them. But the predatory work of 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 falls in with 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 obtained. Phil is arrested by Manuel del Rey, captain of the rurales and suitor of Gracia's. He is released on promise to stay away from Gracia. Phil is forced to enlist in the rurales. The rebels are defeated in a fierce battle near Fortuna.

### CHAPTER XVII—Continued

"What, señor?" she bantered; "you do not speak? Surely, then, your friend De Lancey was wrong when he said you would save me! For look, Mr. Hooker, I am promised to marry dear Phil; but how can I manage that when Manuel del Rey is watching me? It is impossible, is it not?"

"Seems so," muttered Bud, and in the back of his head he began to think quickly. Here was the fountainhead of his misfortunes, and if she had her way she would lay all his plans in ruins—and even then not marry Phil. In fact, from the light way she spoke, he sensed that she did not intend to marry him. Her grudge was against Manuel del Rey who drove away all her lovers.

"Well," he ventured, "there's no rush, I reckon—Phil's enlisted for five years."

"Ha!" she cried contemptuously; "and do you think he will serve? No! At a word from me he will flee to the border and I shall join him in the United States!"

"What?" demanded Bud; "Phil deserted?"

In a moment he saw what such a move would mean to him—to Kruger and the Eagle Tail—and he woke suddenly from his calm.

"Here now," he said, scowling as he saw that she was laughing at him, "you've made me and Phil enough trouble. You let that boy alone, savvy!"

He stooped toward her as he spoke, fixing her with masterful eyes that had tamed many bad horse and man, and she shrank away instinctively. Then she glanced at him shily and edged over toward the open door.

"I will do what I please, Mr. Hooker," she returned, balancing on the verge of flight.

"All right," Bud came back; "but don't you call me in on it. You've made a fool of Phil—I suppose you'd like to get me, too. Then your father would grab our mine."

"What do you mean?" she challenged, turning back upon him.

"I mean this," responded Hooker warmly. "Phil holds the title to our mine. If he deserts he loses his Mexican citizenship and his claim is no good. But you don't need to think that your father will get the mine then, because he has to whip me first!"

"Oh-ho!" she sneered; "so that is what you are thinking of? You are a true gringo, Mr. Hooker—always thinking about the money!"

"Yes," returned Bud; "and even at that I believe your old man will best me!"

She laughed again, with sudden capriciousness, and stood tapping the floor with her foot.

"Ah, I see," she said at length, gazing at him reproachfully; "you think I am working for my father. You think I got poor Phil into all this trouble in order to cheat him of his mine. But let me tell you, Senor Gringo," she cried with sudden fire, "that I did not! I have nothing to do with my father and his schemes. But if you do not trust me—"

She turned dramatically to go, but when Hooker made no effort to stay her she returned once more to the attack.

"No," she said, "it was because he was an American—because he was brave—that I put my faith in Phil. These Mexican men are cowards—they are afraid to stand up and fight! But Philip dared to make love to me—he dared to sing to me at night—and when Manuel del Rey tried to stop him he stood up and made a fight!"

"Ah, that is what I admire—a man who is brave! And let me tell you, Senor Hooker, I shall always love your friend! If I could run away I would marry him tomorrow; but this cur, Manuel del Rey, stands in the way. Even my own father is against me. But I don't care—I don't care what happens—only do not think that I am not your friend!"

She paused now and glanced at him shily, and as her eloquent eyes met his own Bud felt suddenly that she was sincere. The gnawing and corrosive doubts that had eaten at his heart fell away, and he saw her now in her

hooked his thumb into his belt and regarded the captain fixedly.

"Ah, very well," said Del Rey, jerking his waxed mustachios. "I will not press the matter. But I understand from one of my men, señor, that you are harboring a dangerous criminal here—the same man, perhaps, whom I saw running up the canyon?"

He smiled meaningly at this, but Bud was swift to defend his Yaqui.

"No, señor," he replied. "I have no such criminal; I have a Mexican working for me who is one of the best miners in Sonora, and that is all I know about him."

"A Mexican?" repeated Del Rey, arching his eyebrows. "Excuse me, sir, but it is my business to know every man in this district, and he is no Mexican, but a Yaqui. Moreover, he is a fugitive and an outlaw, and if he had not been enlisted with the federales I should have arrested him when he passed through Fortuna. So I warn you, sir, not to hide him, or you will be liable to the law."

"I'm not hiding him," protested Hooker scornfully. "I'm just hiring him as a miner, and any time you want him you can come and get him. He's up in the rocks there somewhere now."

"So!" exclaimed the captain, glancing uneasily at the hillside. "I did not think—but many thanks, señor, another time will do as well."

"To kill Mexicans with!" he replied, and in those words Hooker read the secret of his thrifit.

While his wild brethren fought in the hills or prepared for the battles to come, it was his part to earn the money that should keep them in ammunition. It was for that, in fact, that Porfirio Diaz had seized all the peaceful Yaquis in a night and shipped them to Chiapas—for he saw that while they were working the wild Yaquis would never lack.

He reined his horse away as he spoke and, with a jerk of the head to Aragon, rode rapidly down the canyon. Aragon lingered to retrieve his fallen gun-belt and then, seeming to think better of his desire to speak, he made a single vindictive gesture and set spurs to his champing horse.

It was merely a fling of the hand, as spontaneous as a sigh or a frown, but in it Hooker read the last exasperation of the Spaniard and his declaration of war to the knife. He bared his strong teeth in reply and bissed out a blighting curse, and then Aragon was gone.

That evening, as the darkness came on and the canyon became hushed and still Bud built a big fire and stood before it, his rugged form silhouetted



"Take That Gun Off, Do You Understand?"

against the flames. And soon, as quiet as a fox, the Yaqui appeared from the gloom.

"Did he come for me?" he asked, advancing warily into the firelight, that captain?"

"Yes," answered Bud, "and for me, too. But you must have known him before, Amigo—he seems to be afraid of you."

A smile of satisfaction passed over the swarthy face of the Indian at this, and then the lines became grim again. His eyes glowed with the light of some great purpose, and for the first time since he had been with Bud he drew aside the veil from his past.

"Yes," he said, nodding significantly, "the rural is afraid. He knows I have come to kill him."

He squatted by the fire and poured out a cup of coffee, still brooding over his thoughts—then, with a swift gesture, he laid open his shirt and pointed to a scar along the ribs.

"He shot me there," he said.

"And so you have come to kill him?"

"Yes," answered Amigo; "but now. Tomorrow I go to my people—I must take them my money first."

"Have you got a wife?" asked Hooker, forgetting for once his accustomed reserve.

"No," grumbled Amigo, shaking his head sadly, "no wife."

"Oh, you take your money to your father and mother."

"No. No father—no mother—nada!"

He threw up his open hands to signify that all were gone, and Hooker said no more. For three months and more he had worked alongside this giant, silent Yaqui and only once had he sensed his past. That was when Amigo had torn his shirt in lifting, and across the rippling muscles of his back there had been shown the long white wale of a whip.

It was the mark of his former slavery when, with the rest of his people, he had been deported to the henequen fields of Yucatan and flogged by the overseer's lash—and Amigo was ashamed of it. But now that he was about to go, Bud made bold to ask him one more question, to set his mind at rest.

"Perhaps this captain killed your people?"

"No, señor," returned Bud grimly. "I know nothing of your errand. But this I do know. I have done nothing for which I can be arrested, and if any man tries to make me join the army—"

brought up usages of the past—of peaceful Yaquis, seized at every ranch in Sonora on a certain night; of long marches overland, prodded on by rurales and guards; of the crowded prison-ships from which the most anguished hurried themselves into the sea; and then the awful years of slavery in the poisoned tropics, until only the hardiest were left.

Amigo had seen it all, as the scars on his broad back proved—but he withdrew now into silence and left his thoughts unsaid. As he sat there by the fire, one long, black hand held out to keep the gleam from his eyes, he made a noble figure, but the Yaqui songs which he had crooned on other nights were forgotten, and he held himself tense and still. Then at last he rose and gazed at Bud.

"You pay me my money," he said. "I go now."

"Sure," answered Bud, and after he had weighed out the equivalent in gold on his scales he slipped in some more for luck and gave him a sack to hold it.

"What you buy with all that?" he inquired with a friendly grin; "grub?"

"No, señor," answered Amigo, knotting the precious gold in a handkerchief; "cartridges!"

"What for?" queried Bud, and then it was Amigo who smiled.

"To kill Mexicans with!" he replied, and in those words Hooker read the secret of his thrifit.

While his wild brethren fought in the hills or prepared for the battles to come, it was his part to earn the money that should keep them in ammunition. It was for that, in fact, that Porfirio Diaz had seized all the peaceful Yaquis in a night and shipped them to Chiapas—for he saw that while they were working the wild Yaquis would never lack.

All the time that Amigo had been doing two men's work and saving on the price of a shirt he had held that cheerful dream in his mind—to kill more Mexicans!

Yet, despite the savagery in him, Hooker had come to like the Yaqui, and he liked him still. With the rurales on his trail it was better that he should go, but Bud wanted him to return. So, knowing the simple honesty of Indians, he brought out his own spare pistol and placed it in Amigo's hands. Often he had seen him gazing at it longingly, for it was lighter than his heavy Mauser and better for the journey.

"Here," he said, "I will lend you my pistol—and you can give it to me when you come back."

"Sure!" answered the Indian, hanging it on his hip; "adios!"

They shook hands then, and the Yaqui disappeared in the darkness. In the morning, when a squad of rurales closed in on the camp, they found nothing but his great tracks in the dust.

### CHAPTER XIX.

It was June and the windstorms which had swept in from the southeast died away. No more, as in the months that had passed, did the dust pillar rise from the dump of the Fortune mill and go swirling up the canyon.

A great calm and heat settled over the harassed land, and above the far blue wall of the Sierras the first thunder caps of the rainy season rose up till they obscured the sky. Then, with a rush of conflicting winds, a leaden silence, and a crash of flickering light, the storm burst in tropic fury and was gone as quickly as it had come.

So, while the rich landowners of the hot country sat idle and watched it grow, another storm gathered behind the distant Sierras, and as empty rumors lulled them to a false security, suddenly from the north came the news of dashing raids, of railroads cut, troops routed, and the whole border occupied by swarming rebels.

In a day the southern country was isolated and cut off from escape, and while the hordes of Chihuahua insurgents laid siege to Agua Negra, the belated Spanish hacendados came scuttling once more to Fortune. There, at least, was an American town where the courage of the Anglo-Saxon would protect their women in extremity. And, if worst came to worst, it was better to pay ransom to red-flag gendarmes than to fall victims to bandits and looters.

As the bass roar of the great whistle reverberated over the hills Bud Hooker left his lonely camp almost gladly, and with his hard-won gold-dust safe beneath his belt, went galloping into town.

Not for three weeks—not since he received the wire from Phil and located the Eagle Tail mine—had he dared to leave his claim. Rurales outlaws and Mexican patriots had dropped in from day to day and eaten up most of his food, but none of them had caught him napping, and he had no intention that they should.

A conspiracy had sprung up to get rid of him, to harry him out of the country, and behind it was Aragon. But now, with the big whistle blowing, Aragon would have other concerns.

He had his wife and daughter, the beautiful Gracia, to hurry to town, and perhaps the thought of being caught and held for ransom would deter him from stealing mines. So reasoned Bud, and, dragging a reluctant pack-animal behind him, he came riding in for supplies.

At the store he bought flour and coffee and the other things which he needed most. As he was passing by the hotel Don Juan de Dios halted him for a moment, rushing out and thrusting a bundle of letters into his hands and hurrying back into the house, as if fearful of being detected in such an act of friendship.

"Perhaps this captain killed your people?"

"No, señor," answered Amigo quietly.

"I know nothing of your errand. But this I do know. I have done nothing for which I can be arrested, and if any man tries to make me join the army—"

trimmer, a man who tried to be all things to all people—as a good hotel keeper should—but now he altered his opinion a little, for the letters were from Phil. He read them over in the crowded plaza, into which the first refugees were just beginning to pour, and frowned as he skimmed through the last.

Gracia and vain protestations of devotion there was enough and to spare, but nothing about the mine. Only in the first one, written on the very day he had deserted, did he so much as attempt an excuse for so precipitately abandoning their claim and his Mexican citizenship. Phil wrote:

My mail was being sent through headquarters and looked over by Del Rey, so I knew I would never receive the papers, even if they came. I hope you don't feel hard about it, pardner. Kruger says to come out right away. I would have stayed with it, but it wasn't any use. And now, Bud, I want to ask you something. When you come out, bring Gracia with you. Don't leave her at the mercy of Del Rey. I would come myself if it wasn't sure death. Be quick about it. Bud; I count on you.

The other letters were all like that, but nothing about the mine. And yet it was the mine that Bud was fighting for—that they had fought for from the first. The railroad was torn up now, and a flight with Gracia was hopeless, but it was just as well, for he never would abandon the Eagle Tail.

In two months, or three, when the rebels were whipped off, his papers might come. Then he could pay his taxes and transfer his title and consider the stealing of Gracia. But since he had seen her and touched her hand something held him back—a grudging reluctance—and he was glad that his duty lay elsewhere. If she was his girl now he would come down and get her anyway.

But she was not his girl and, gazing back grimly at the seething plaza and the hotel that hid her from sight, he rode somberly down the road. After all, there was nothing to get excited about—every revoltoso in the country was lined up around Agua Negra and, with four hundred soldiers to oppose them and artillery to shell their advance, it would be many a long day before they took that town.

Twice already Agua Negra had fallen before such attacks, but now it was protected by rifle-pits and machine guns set high on mud roofs. And then there were the Yaquis, still faithful to Madero. They alone could hold the town, if they made up their minds to fight. So reasoned Hooker, mulling over the news that he had heard. But he watched the ridges warily, for the weather was good for raiders.

A day passed, and then another, and the big whistle blew only for the shifts; the loneliness of the hills oppressed him as he gazed out at the quivering heat. And then, like a toad after a shower, Amigo came paddling into camp on the heels of a thunder-storm, his sandals hung on his hip and his big feet squelching through the mud.

Across his shoulders he wore a gay serape, woven by some patient woman of his tribe; and in the belt beside Bud's pistol he carried a heavy knife, blacksmithed from a ten-inch file by some Yaqui hillman. All in all, he was a fine barbarian, but he looked good to the lonely Bud.

"Ola, Amigo!" he hailed, stepping out from the adobe house where he had moved to avoid the rains; and Amigo answered with his honest smile which carried no hint of savagery or deceit.

Try as he would, Bud could not bring himself to think of his Yaqui as dangerous; and even when he balanced the Indian's murderous bowie-knife in his hands he regarded it with a grin. It was a heavy weapon, broad across the back, keen on one edge, and drawn to a point that was both sharp and strong. The hilt was wrapped with rawhide to hold the clutch of the hand.

"What do you do with this?" queried Hooker. "Chop wood? Skin deer?"

"Yes, chop wood!" answered Am