

**PAINTED ROCK**

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Painted Rock by Morley Roberts

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**MORLEY ROBERTS**

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TALES AND NARRATIVES OF PAINTED  
ROCK, SOUTH PANHANDLE, TEXAS, TOLD  
BY CHARLIE BAKER, LATE OF THAT CITY  
AND ALSO OF SNYDER, SCURRY COUNTY

BY

MORLEY ROBERTS

AUTHOR OF "RACHEL MARR" ETC.

PHILADELPHIA  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1907

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## PAINTED ROCK

### I

#### THE KILLING OF "SWEETWATER"

I HAD come into Painted Rock from Ennis Creek in a Studebaker wagon, pulled by Jones' two mules, Punch and Judy, and, while the men at the store were making up my orders for the extra grub that would see us through shearing, I took a *paseo* all round the town. It had never seemed more peaceful to me, and I daresay that any tender-foot from the East would have thought it lacked all those elements of romance that he had expected to find. Pillsbury and Gedge, my two gambling friends, said that things were indeed dull.

"There don't seem to be a dollar in the hull

## PAINTED ROCK

City," said Pillsbury, with a yawn, "at least, I've not sot eyes on one for days. And as for excitement, there ain't any. It's so derned dull and quiet and peaceful that my nerve is givin' out, and I expect something horrid to happen; eh, Gedge?"

"It is a mighty remarkable fact," replied the long-haired Georgian, "that such a period of peace in Painted Rock is mostly broke up by someone havin' a sudden funeral. I reckon that solid peace gets on our nerves, and the want of gayness and money is tryin' to us, and those that have a stake in the City feel it. Oh, I'd not be surprised if the calm was broke up any moment."

I took so much pity on their sad estate as to inquire if they would have a liquor with me.

"I should smile," said Pillsbury, and we went into the American House and had something destructive and highly poisonous at twenty-five cents a drink. While we stood up to the bar and discussed the trying peace, a stranger looked into the saloon as if he were seeking someone there, and I saw Gedge's eyes snap.

## THE KILLING OF "SWEETWATER"

"Who was that?" I asked, and Gedge stared at me with an odd, far-away look.

"I was just tryin' to recall him," said Gedge. "I don't never forget a face, and yet somehow I can't place him."

"Why should you?" asked the bar-tender. "He's a stranger, sure pop. I saw him get off the cars yesterday, and I've been in Painted Rock nigh on to three years, and I lay ten dollars he hasn't been here durin' that time."

"Well, I've seen him somewhere, I'll take an oath to that on a stack of Bibles," said Gedge. "I've been around this locality mor'n three years, my son, and mebbe I saw him twenty years ago in Georgia. I never forget a face or an injury or a good turn done me, and somehow I hev a solid based opinion that I've done more than passed the time of day with that melancholy individual that poked his head in here just now, and took a look around these deserted halls."

We had some more poison at Pillsbury's expense, and then Gedge smote the bar with his open hand. We looked at him in silence.

"I've located that stranger in my unfor-