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WITH THESE HANDS

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LOUIS L'AMOUR



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WITH THESE
HANDS

AFTERWORD

By Beau L'Amour

Thanks for reading *With These Hands*. It is the final book in a series of four that we began with *Beyond the Great Snow Mountains*. *With These Hands* includes "Gloves for a Tiger," the second sale of a short story that Louis ever made—it came almost two years after his "Anything for a Pal" and was a turning point in his life. Unlike the disheartening dry spell following "Pal," "Gloves for a Tiger" was the first in a string of sales that lasted until he left for Europe during World War II. Louis was in his middle thirties and it was the first time in his life that he could say that he had a career.

With These Hands contains the final installments of several Louis L'Amour series. "Flight to Enbetu" and "Pirates of the Sky" wrap up the Turk Madden stories, and "Voyage to Tobalai" is the last of the Ponga Jim Mayo series. "Dream Fighter" is the first of the Kip Morgan stories, although instead of being a hard-boiled crime story it is an amusing boxing

yarn. Kip also appears in "Corpse on the Carpet"; he's not quite a detective yet, but "Corpse" is definitely a thriller set on the streets of 1940s L.A. These two stories complete the Kip Morgan set, and "The Sucker Switch" wraps it up for P.I. Neil Shannon.

The Louis L'Amour Biography Project has turned a corner and is beginning to wind down the research machine. Materials are now being organized and with any luck my writing will begin in 2002 or 2003. I would like to thank everyone who has helped out so much and to remind anyone who knew Louis in the 1908 to 1961 time period that they can still contact the Biography via the Biography Project section of louislamour.com.

louislamour.com has finally got its Louis L'Amour's Lost Treasures web site up and running. It is a subscription service that gives you access to a rotating archive of Louis's papers: unfinished stories and novels, notes, articles by Louis on writing, research, travel, and history. Also included will be complete treatments on stories that were never written, personal and business correspondence, uncollected short stories, and much more. With luck we will be able to turn louislamour.com into a portal to anything and everything that you ever wanted to know about Louis L'Amour.

Thank you all again for coming to the well time after time.

ABOUT LOUIS L'AMOUR

"I think of myself in the oral tradition—as a troubadour, a village tale-teller, the man in the shadows of the campfire. That's the way I'd like to be remembered—as a storyteller. A good storyteller."

It is doubtful that any author could be as at home in the world re-created in his novels as Louis Dearborn L'Amour. Not only could he physically fill the boots of the rugged characters he wrote about, but he literally "walked the land my characters walk." His personal experiences as well as his lifelong devotion to historical research combined to give Mr. L'Amour the unique knowledge and understanding of people, events, and the challenge of the American frontier that became the hallmarks of his popularity.

Of French-Irish descent, Mr. L'Amour could trace his own family in North America back to the early 1600s and follow their steady progression westward, "always on the frontier." As a boy growing up in Jamestown, North Dakota, he absorbed all he could about his family's frontier heritage, including the story of his great-grandfather who was scalped by Sioux warriors.

Spurred by an eager curiosity and desire to broaden

his horizons, Mr. L'Amour left home at the age of fifteen and enjoyed a wide variety of jobs, including seaman, lumberjack, elephant handler, skinner of dead cattle, and miner, and was an officer in the transportation corps during World War II. During his "yondering" days he also circled the world on a freighter, sailed a dhow on the Red Sea, was shipwrecked in the West Indies and stranded in the Mojave Desert. He won fifty-one of fifty-nine fights as a professional boxer and worked as a journalist and lecturer. He was a voracious reader and collector of rare books. His personal library contained 17,000 volumes.

Mr. L'Amour "wanted to write almost from the time I could talk." After developing a widespread following for his many frontier and adventure stories written for fiction magazines, Mr. L'Amour published his first full-length novel, *Hondo*, in the United States in 1953. Every one of his more than 120 books is in print; there are more than 270 million copies of his books in print worldwide, making him one of the bestselling authors in modern literary history. His books have been translated into twenty languages, and more than forty-five of his novels and stories have been made into feature films and television movies.

His hardcover bestsellers include *The Lonesome Gods*, *The Walking Drum* (his twelfth-century historical novel), *Jubal Sackett*, *Last of the Breed*, and *The Haunted Mesa*. His memoir, *Education of a Wandering Man*, was a leading bestseller in 1989. Audio dramatizations and adaptations of many

L'Amour stories are available on cassette tapes from Bantam Audio Publishing.

The recipient of many great honors and awards, in 1983 Mr. L'Amour became the first novelist ever to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the United States Congress in honor of his life's work. In 1984 he was also awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Reagan.

Louis L'Amour died on June 10, 1988. His wife, Kathy, and their two children, Beau and Angelique, carry the L'Amour publishing tradition forward.

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FIGHTERS DON'T DIVE



Nimble “Flash” Moran parried a jab and went in fast with a left to the wind. Stepping back, he let Breen get a breath. Then he flicked out a couple of lefts, put over an inside right, and as Breen bobbed into a crouch and tried to get in close, he clinched and tied him up.

They broke, and Breen came in with a flurry of punches that slid off Moran’s arms and shoulders. Then Moran’s hip moved and a left hook that traveled no more than four inches snapped Breen up to his toes. Breen caught himself and staggered away.

The gong sounded, and Flash Moran paused . . . then he slapped Breen on the shoulder and trotted to his corner.

Two men were standing there with Dan Kelly. He knew them both by sight. Mike McCracken, an ex-wrestler turned gambler, and “Blackie” Marollo, small-time racketeer.

"You're lookin' good, kid," Kelly said. "This next one you should win."

"You might, but you won't stop him," Marollo said, looking up. "Nobody knocks Barnaby out."

McKracken studied Moran with cold eyes. "You got paper on him?" he asked Kelly.

"I don't need any," Kelly said. "We work together."

"Well, if you had it, I'd buy a piece," McKracken said. "I need a good middle. Money in that class now with Turner, Schmidt, and Demeray comin' up."

"I wouldn't sell," Kelly said. "We're friends."

"Yeah?" Marollo shot him a glance. "I'd hate to see somebody come along an' offer him a grand to sign up. You'd see how much friendship matters."

Flash Moran looked at Marollo, then dropped to the floor beside him.

"You've a rotten way of looking at things, Blackie," he said. "We aren't all dishonest, you know!"

"You're pretty free with that lip of yours, kid. Maybe somebody will button it up one day. For keeps."

Moran turned, pulled his robe around him, and started for the dressing room.

"That kid better get wise or he won't last," Marollo said. "You tell him, Kelly."

"You told him yourself," Kelly replied. "Didn't you?"

Dan Kelly turned and walked up the aisle after Flash. Behind him, he heard Marollo's voice.

"That punk. I'll fix him!"

"You won't do nothin' of the kind," he heard McKracken growl. "We got too much ridin' on this to risk trouble."

The voices faded out with the distance, and Kelly scowled.

In the dressing room the trainer spoke up. "Keep an eye on Marollo, kid, he's all bad."

"To the devil with him," Flash said. "I know his kind. He's tough as long as he has all the odds with him. When the chips are down, he'll turn yellow."

"Maybe. But you'll never see him when he doesn't have the difference." Kelly looked at him curiously. "Where you goin' tonight?"

"Out. Just lookin' around. Say, Dan, what do you suppose is bringing Marollo and McKracken around to the gym? One or the other's been down here five days in a row."

"Probably sizing you up, figurin' the odds." Kelly knotted his tie. "Well. I've got a date with the wife."

Shorty Kinsella was lining up a shot when Flash Moran walked into Brescia's Pool Room. He looked up.

"Hiya, champ! How's about a game? I'm just winding up this one."

He put the last ball in the corner and walked around, holding out his hand.

Moran took it, grinning. "Sure, I'll play."

"Better watch him." The man who Kinsella had played handed Shorty five dollars. "He's good!"

Moran racked the balls. "Say, what do you know about Blackie Marollo?"

Shorty's smile went out like a light. He broke, and ran up four, then looked at Flash thoughtfully.

"Nothing. You shouldn't know anything either."

Flash Moran watched Kinsella make a three-cushion shot. "The guy's got me wondering."

"Well, don't. Not if you want to stay healthy."

Flash Moran finished his game and went out. He paused on the corner and peeled the paper from a stick of chewing gum. If even Shorty Kinsella was afraid to talk about Marollo, there must be more behind Blackie than he'd thought.

Suddenly, there was a man standing beside him. He was almost as tall as Moran, though somewhat heavier. He lit a cigarette, and as the match flared, he looked up at Flash over his cupped hands.

"Listen, sonny," he said, "I heard you askin' a lot of questions about Marollo in there. Well, cut it out . . . get me?"

"Roll your hoop." Flash turned easily. "I'll ask what I want, when I want."

The man's hand flashed, and in that instant of time, Flash saw the blackjack. He threw up his left arm and blocked the blow by catching the man's forearm on his own. Then he struck. It was a right, short and wicked, into the man's wind.

Moran had unlimbered a hard blow, and the man was in no shape to take it. With a grunt he started to fall and then Moran slashed him across the face with the edge of his hand. He felt the man's nose crunch, and as the fellow dropped, Moran stepped over him and walked around the corner.

So, Blackie Marollo didn't like to be talked about? Just who was Blackie Marollo, anyway?

Up the street there was a Chinese joint, a place he knew. He went in, found an empty booth, and sat