

WOLVES of the SEA

By RANDALL PARRISH

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CHAPTER XXX.—Continued.

I heard her cry out, and barely caught the lantern as it fell from her hand. At first I doubted the evidence of my own eyes, snatching the bit of flaring candle from its tin socket and holding it where the full glare of light fell across the grewsome object. Ay, it was a woman, with lower limbs doubled back from lack of space, but otherwise lying as though she slept, so perfect in preservation her cheeks appeared flushed with health, her lips half smiling. It was a face of real beauty—an English face, although her eyes and hair were dark and her mantilla and long earrings were unquestionably Spanish. A string of pearls encircled her throat, and there were numerous rings upon her fingers. The very contrast added immeasurably to the horror.

"She is alive! Surely she is alive!" The words were sobbed into my ear from Dorothy's lips.

"Alive! No, that is impossible!" I touched the figure with my hand. "The flesh is like stone," I said, "thus held lifelike by some magic of the Indies. What can it all mean? Who could the woman be? Is it love or hate?"

"Not love, Geoffrey. Love would never do this thing. It is hate, the gloating of revenge; there can be no other answer—this is the end of a tragedy."

There was nothing, not a scrap of paper, not even the semblance of a wound exposed. The smile on those parted lips had become one of mockery; I could hear the sight no longer, and rose to my feet, clasping Dorothy close to me, as she still gazed down in fascination at the ghastly sight.

"We will never know. The man who could tell is dead."

"Captain Paradilla?"

"Who else could it be? This was his schooner, and here he alone could hide such a secret. There is nothing more we can learn, and the horror unnerves me. Hold the light, dear, while I replace the lid of the chest."

It required my utmost effort to accomplish this. I was glad to have the thing hidden, to escape the stare of those fixed eyes, the death smile of those red lips. It was no longer a reality but a dream of delirium; I dare not think or speculate—my only desire being to get away, to get Dorothy away. In absolute terror I drew her with me to the open door—then stopped, paralyzed; the half revealed figure of a man appeared on the cabin stairs.

"Stop! Who are you?" "Watkins, sir. Please below to call you. There's sumthin' bloomin' odd takin' place out there in the fog, Captain Carlyle. We want yer on deck, sir, right away."

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Boat Attack.

He waited for us just without the companion, but my eyes caught nothing unusual as I emerged into the daylight. I could barely see amidships, and on either side hung the impenetrable bank of cloud, leaving sea and sky invisible.

"What is it, Watkins? Where are the men?"

"Forrad, sir, a-nangin' over the starboard rail. That's somethin' cursedly strange a-happenin' in that fog. Ole was the first ter hear the clatter over our slippin' in a rowlock. Then, sir, while we was a-listenin' we both caught sound ov' a Spanish oath, spoke as plain as if the buck was aboard."

"A lost boat, likely—shipwrecked sailors adrift in the fog; perhaps our other quarterboat. No one hailed them?"

"No, sir; I told the men ter keep still till I called you."

The crew were all gathered at the rail, staring out into the mist, whispering to each other. I pressed my way in among them. We may have been clinging there a minute of two, breathlessly listening. Then a voice spoke directly in front of me out from the dense fog.

"Try the port oar, Pedro; we must have missed the d—n ship."

I straightened up, as though struck, my eyes seeking those of Watkins who stared back at me, his mouth wide open in astonishment.

"You heard that?" I whispered. "Do you know who spoke?"

"Do I? Dead or alive, sir, it was Manuel Estevan."

"Ay; no other, and alive enough, no doubt. Lads, come close to me and listen—they must not hear us out there. By some devil's trick the Namur has followed our course, or else yonder are a part of his crew cast away. They clearly know of us—perhaps had a glimpse through some rift in the cloud—and are seeking to board with a boat party. 'Tis not likely those devils know who we are; probably take us for a merchant ship becalmed in the fog and liable to become an easy prey, if they can only slip on us unseen. How are you, bullies? Ready to battle your old mates?"

"Those were no mates o' ours, sir," said Watkins indignantly. "They are half-breed mongrels, and no sailors; Estevan is a hell-bound, an' so far as my voice goes, I'd rather die on this deck than ever agin be a bloody pirate. It that the right words, lads?"

The others grumbled assent, but their muttered words had in them a ring of sincerity, and their faces exhibited no cowardice. One only asked a question.

"I'm fer fightin', sir," he said grimly, "but what'll we use? These lads ain't comin' aboard bare-handed, but damn if I've seed a weapon on this hooker."

"Dar's three knives, an' a meat cleaver in der galley, sah," chimed in Sam.

"We'll do well enough; some of you have your sheath knives yet, and the rest can use belaying pins and capstan bars. The point is to not let them get aboard, and, if there is only one boat, we will be pretty even-handed. Pick up what you can, and man this rail—quietly now, hearties, and keep your eyes open."

It proved a longer wait than I expected. Unable to withstand the inaction any longer I turned and took a few steps aft, thinking to gauge our progress by the wake astern. I was about the cabin on the port side when Dorothy called my name—a sudden accent of terror in her voice.

The alarm was sounded none too soon. Either fortune, or skill, had served those demons well. They had succeeded in circling the stern of the Santa Marie, unseen and unheard by anyone aboard. Even as she shrieked the alarm, a hand was at her throat, and she was struggling desperately in the merciless grip of a half-naked Indian.

Yet at that they were too late, the advantage of surprise had failed them. A half dozen had reached the deck, leaping from the rail, the others below clambering after their leaders, when with a rush we met them. It was a fierce, mad fight, fist and club pitted against knife and cutlass, but the defenders struck like demons incarnate. I doubt if the struggle lasted two minutes. I heard the blows, the oaths, the cries of pain, the dull thud of wood against bone, the sharp clang of steel in contact, the shuffling of feet on the deck, the splash of bodies hurled overboard. Each man fought for himself, in his own way. I thought only of her, and leaped straight for her assailant with bare hands, smashing recklessly through the hasty guard of his cutlass and gripped the copper devil by hair and throat. I knew she fell to the deck beneath our feet, but I had my work cut out for me. He was a hell-bound, slippery as an eel in his half nakedness, strong as an ox, and fighting like a fiend. Yet I had him foul, my grip unbreakable, as I forced his neck back against the rail, until it cracked, the swarthy body sliding inert to the deck. Whirling to assist the others I found no need. Except for bodies here and there the deck was clear; men were struggling in the chains; two below in the boat were endeavoring to cast off, and Schmitt, with Estevan helpless in his arms, staggered to the side and flung the shrieking Spanish cur overboard out into dark water. I heard the splash as he fell, the single cry his lips gave, but he never again appeared above the surface. Above the bedlam Watkins roared out an order.

"That's it, bullies! That's it! Now let her drop! We'll send them to hell where they belong. Good shot; she landed!"

It was the hank of a spare anchor,

balanced for an instant on the rail, then sent crashing down through the frail bottom of the boat beneath. The wreck drifted away into the fog, the two miserable occupants clinging desperately to the gunwales. I lifted Dorothy to her feet, and she clung to me unsteadily, her face yet white.

"Watkins, have you figured up results?"

"Two of our men are cut rather badly, and one hasn't come to yet from a smart rap on the head."

"None got away?"

"Not less they swum, that's six dead ones aboard. Four took ter the water, mostly because they hed to. The only livin' one o' the bunch is that nigger 'longside the wheel, an' nuthin' but a thick skull saved him."

"Then there were eleven in the party. What do you suppose has become of the others aboard the Namur?"

"I dunno, sir; they might be a waitin' out there in fog. Perhaps the nigger cud tell you."

I crossed over to where the fellow sat on a grating, his head in his hands, the girl still clinging to my sleeve, as though fearful of being left alone. The man was a repulsive brute, his face stained with blood, dripping from a cut across his low forehead. He looked up sullenly at our approach, but made no effort to rise.

"Look yere, you black villain," roared Watkins, driving the lesson home with his foot, "don't be a playin' possum yer. Stand up an' answer Mister Carlyle, or yer'll git a worse clip than I give yer afore. Whar is the bloody bark?"

"Pounding her heart out on the rocks yonder," he said civilly, "unless she's slid off an' gone down. To the west, maybe a mile or so."

"What about the crew?"

"They got away in the boats, an' likely mostly are ashore. We were in the last boat launched, and headed out so far ter get 'round a ledge o' rocks we got lost in the fog. Then the mist sorter opened an' give us a glimpse o' yer topsails. We didn't expect no fight, once we got aboard."

"Expected to find something easy, of course? Perhaps it would have been



It Was a Fierce, Mad Fight.

If—that is it you see out there, Simms?"

The seaman, who was standing with hollowed hands shading his eyes, staring forth into the swirling drapery of fog, turned at my call and pointed excitedly.

"There's a bark aground yonder, sir; and it looks like the Namur!"

Even as I crossed the deck to his side the wreaths of obscuring mist seemed to divide, as though swept apart by some mighty hand, and there in the full glow of the sun, a picture in a frame, lay the wrecked vessel. Others saw it as I did, and gave vent to recognition.

"Damned if it ain't the old hooker!" "She got what was comin' to her all right mates."

"And she's lousy with treasure!"

"Come here, Sam! That's the last of the Namur."

CHAPTER XXXII.

The Last of the Namur.

The vessel was plainly a total wreck, rapidly pounding to death on a sharp ledge of rock. Both masts were down, and, lifted as the bow was, it was easy to perceive the deck was in splinters where falling spars and topmasts had crushed their way through. The bows had caught, seemingly jammed in between rocks, the stern sunk deep, with cabin port holes barely above reach of the waves. Not a living thing appeared on board, and, as the fog slowly drifted away, my eyes could discern no sign of any boat, no evidence of the crew, along the wide sweep of water. A voice aroused me.

"What was it you said, Jack, 'bout treasure on the old hooker? Why not get it afore it's too late?"

"It's thar, all right, Ole," and I knew

the speaker to be Haines. "Ain't it Mr. Carlyle?"

"Yes, lads, there must be money on board, unless those fellows took it with them in the boats. I know of fifty thousand pounds stolen in Virginia, and no doubt there is more than that. The bark is liable to slide off that rock any minute and go down like a stone. What do you say, bullies? Here is a risky job, but a pocket full of gold pieces, if we can get aboard and safely off again. Who'll go across with me?"

There was a babel of voices, the men crowding about me, all else forgotten as greed gripped their imaginations.

"Stand back, lads! I cannot use all of you. Four will be enough. You'll not lose anything of what we bring back; it'll be share and share alike, so fall to, hearties."

I paused an instant to speak to Dorothy, seated on the flag locker, explaining to her swiftly my object in exploring the wreck and pledging myself not to be reckless in attempting to board. I redid fear in her eyes, yet she said nothing to dissuade me.

I slipped down a rope and dropped into the boat, taking my place with a steering oar at the stern, and we shot away through the green water. The Namur proved to be a more complete wreck than our distant view had revealed, and lying in a more precarious position. It was no pleasant job getting aboard, but ordering Haines to accompany me, and the others to lie by, I made use of a dangle backstay, and thus hauled myself up to a reasonably secure footing. The fellow joined me breathless, and together we perched on the rail to gain view of the deck.

It was a distressing, hopeless sight, the vessel rising before us like the roof of a house, the deck planks stove in, a horrible jumble of running rigging, booms and spars, blocking the way forward. There were three bodies tangled in the wreckage within our sight, crushed out of all human resemblance, and the face of a negro, caught beneath the ruins of the galley, seemed to grin back at me in death. Every timber groaned as the waves struck, and rocked the sodden mass, and I had no doubt but that the vessel had already broken in two.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WHERE GREAT WRITER SLEEPS

Grave of Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa. Located Amid Scenes of Rare Beauty.

The Samoan islands have two shrines—the home and grave of Robert Louis Stevenson. In his search for health, Stevenson built a home on one of the islands and called it Vailima (Five Waters). Here he spent the last four years of his life.

Vailima lies far up a steep mountain road. It is a rambling, green wooden house, half native style, half an English country home. Stevenson is said to have enjoyed contrasts of native and English life. He pleased him to have his household appear in evening dress at dinner and to be waited upon by Samoan natives.

His many kindnesses toward the natives so touched them that they were aroused to enough energy to build a road up the mountain to his home. The crude but important piece of work they called "The Road of the Loving Heart." "It shall never be muddy, it shall endure, this road that we have dug," prophesied the natives on presenting their gift.

The grave of Tusitala, the story teller, lies far up the mountain beyond Stevenson's home. The trail is so difficult that the services of over fifty natives were needed to carry the casket up to its destination. The mountain path leads through a tropical forest of the gorgeous flowers of Samoa. Hibiscus, cape jasmine, orange blossoms fill the air with their perfume. Many birds sing and flash through the underbrush, for native chiefs forbid use of any firearms on the mountain where Tusitala lies.

On a tiny plateau at the top of the mountain is the tomb with the memorial verse that Stevenson himself wrote carved on the stone. Far away from even the quiet life of the native settlements Stevenson's grave is the most peaceful place in an island of peace.—"Niksah" in Chicago News.

Bigger and Heavier Her Fruit.

It is thought by naturalists that the eggs of domestic hens of the present day are larger and heavier by nearly a third than those of the hens of the ancients. Eggs differ a good deal in weight, the average weight being about two ounces. A good egg is made up of ten parts shell, 60 parts white and 30 parts yolk. The white of an egg contains 86 per cent water. The shell contains about 2 per cent animal matter and 1 per cent of the phosphates of lime and magnesla, the rest consisting of carbonate of lime. Half the various specimens of snakes lay eggs. Instead of shell the covering of the egg is a tough, white, leathern substance. The largest egg of any bird today is the ostrich egg.

Not Valued.

"Polltiness costs nothing"—perhaps if it didn't there would be more of it.—Boston Transcript.

STATE NEWS IN BRIEF.

Amity.—The Amity drug store was broken into Monday night and all the jewelry, valued at about \$500, was stolen, besides several cameras, flashlights, cigars and what small change was in the till.

North Bend.—The annual report compiled by City Recorder Maybee shows that 68 arrests were made in the city in 1919. Of this number 21 were for speeding, 16 for drunkenness, 10 for having liquor in possession, 7 for minors in pool halls, 6 for disturbing the peace and 8 for other offenses.

Salem.—A state game and fish commission composed of seven members, as proposed following a conference of the fisheries industries and game committee of both houses of the legislature held here Monday, has the endorsement of Senator John Gill, of Portland, according to a letter received from him at the executive offices.

Bend.—To make the pay for the work of census taking sufficient to insure a thorough enumeration of residents of this city, the Bend Commercial club directors have decided to pay 4 cents a name in addition to the 4 cents already offered by the government. Unofficial enumerators may be appointed to work the week end to assist the government employes in obtaining population data.

Marshfield.—The perennial threat from Medford and other Rogue river valley cities to close the lower Rogue to commercial fishing has stirred up the residents of Curry county as usual, and they are out with a determination to block any such bill at special session of the legislature. Fishermen down there have organized to fight what they term "hold-up" and the Marshfield chamber of commerce is backing their efforts.

Salem.—There were 44 fires in Oregon, exclusive of Portland, during the month of December, according to a report prepared by A. S. Barber, state insurance commissioner. Klamath Falls suffered heaviest of any town in the state, the aggregate fire losses there for December amounting to \$40,000. Total losses from fires in December showed a marked decrease when compared with those of the previous month, according to Mr. Barber.

Eugene.—Notwithstanding alarming reports to the effect that the recent cold weather has killed the loganberry vines that had been trellised and that appeared above the snow, the vines in many Eugene gardens and in fields throughout Lane county are beginning to sprout. It is believed that the damage will not be half what it was thought to have been. A number of farmers in Eugene say that the vines in many places are budding out as if nothing like zero weather has happened.

In each county of the state a committee of women who have been active in patriotic service is now being formed to cooperate with Miss M. Belle Jeffery, the State Director of Oregon, in the World's Service Program of Education and Finance which the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association are carrying on throughout the United States during January and February. The purpose is to raise a \$3,000,000 fund to meet the increased demands of the reconstruction work among girls in this state, our own country, in France, Russia, Turkey, and other war stricken centers, and to provide leadership for such countries as China, Japan, India and South America. Health and recreation are to be featured for the girls in industry, business and in the smaller towns and rural districts. Social and moral standards are to be emphasized. Foreign born women are to be helped along lines of Americanization. The Y. W. C. A. has pledged itself to care for the womanhood of America and to do all it can for the young women of the world. It needs the cooperation and help of every community, for all are more or less affected by the great impetus to better living, and the protective influence of this organization. Girls from the smaller towns are constantly drifting into the cities and colleges where the Y. W. C. A. is ever ready with open doors and warm hearts to welcome and assist the girls needing its help and protection, or its friendly social life. Is not \$21,600 a small amount for the prosperous State of Oregon to raise as its share for the protection and development of the young womanhood of the world?