

WOLVES OF THE SEA

By RANDALL PARRISH

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CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

The hilt of the knife in my belt attracted my attention, and I drew it forth, curious to learn if it bore any mark of ownership. My eyes were instantly attracted to a dark stain on both hilt and blade. I held it to the light—it was the stain of blood, and my hands were also reddened by it. In that first instant of horror I hurled the weapon out through the open port into the sea. Blood! There had been murder committed on board, and the fellow I had struck down was seeking refuge, endeavoring to find concealment following his crime. Ay, but what about the light in the cabin? It had been extinguished after the fleeing fugitive had entered Dorothy's stateroom. Did this mean that the slayer had an accomplice? If so, then the killing was not the result of a mere personal quarrel amidships, or in the forecabin, but the result of some conspiracy. I thought of Sanchez, and of Estada's plan to obtain control of the ship. Could this be its culmination? And was the Spaniard already lying dead in his cabin?

Nothing came of my thought—only confusion; nor did I dare investigate for fear of becoming more deeply involved in the tragedy. No, there was nothing to be done; my safety, and the safety of the girl depended on our apparent ignorance of what had occurred. Convincing myself of this, I washed the blood stains from my hands and lay down in the bunk fully dressed to await my call.

When called I exchanged but few words with LeVere. He went quickly to his room. Nothing of importance occurred during my watch.

The dawn came cold and gray but with clearing skies. I climbed into the main cross-trees and swept the horizon with a glass. Not so much as a speck rewarded my efforts, and I descended the ratlines, shouting to the boatswain to call the port watch. Watkins came aft to the wheel and I sent the fellow thus relieved down into the cabin to rout out LeVere. The two returned to deck together, the negro glancing about curiously without mounting the ladder.

"You call Senor Estada yet?" he questioned.

"No; I had no orders to do so."
"He tol' me call him at daylight. Here you, Amada; go wake up the senor."

The seaman disappeared, while LeVere crossed the poop deck and stood beside me looking out across the expanse of sea.

Amada emerged from the companion and stared up at us, shading his mouth with one hand as he spoke.

"He answer nothing, Senor LeVere."
"Was the door locked?"
"I know not, senor; I not try to open it."

"The swine," said LeVere, "I suppose I'll have to go myself."
"We'll go down together, senor," I said quietly. "Estada must be sick; I could hear the rumpus Amada kicked up even on deck here. No man could sleep through that racket."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A New Conspiracy.

The interior of the cabin appeared desolate in the gray light of dawn. I led the way directly to Estada's



It Was the Stain of Blood.

stateroom. My heart pounded like a hammer as I rapped on the wooden panels and waited some response from within. There was no answer, no sound of movement, and I rapped again more loudly, my questioning eyes seeking LeVere's face. He was listening as intently as myself.

"There is something wrong, senor," he whispered, "for he was ever a light sleeper."

The door was unlocked, the latch yielding instantly to the hand, and I stepped within. A glance told every-

thing. Estada lay in his bunk, with one leg dangling outside, and his head crooked against the side wall. His very posture was that of sudden death, even had it not been pictured by the ghastly face, and the dark pool of blood underneath. I heard an exclamation from Le Vere and stood for an instant utterly unable to move. I knew already what I should find, yet finally forced myself forward—he was stone dead, pierced with three knife thrusts. I stood up and faced the mulatto, whose countenance was fairly green with horror.

"What do you know about this, Senor LeVere?" I asked sternly. "The man has been murdered, knifed. Who did it—and why?"

He could scarcely answer, gripping at the table for support, and never removing his gaze from the face of the dead man. Yet I believed his words; was convinced this was not the terror of guilt.

"My God! I cannot tell; I have never dreamed of this."

"Had the man enemies, anyone you would suspect?"

"Enemies? Ay, plenty of them; we all have. We expect that in our trade. This ship is full of devils ready enough to do such a job; but I could not name the one who did do it. I know of no cause. I have heard nothing."

"I believe you, LeVere," I said.

"What can we do, senor?"

"Do! We must talk that over first. We cannot meet this thing until we are prepared. There is more danger in hasty action than anything else."

I shut the door behind us and turned the key. It was a relief to get outside, even into that dismal cabin, beyond view of Estada's dead face. LeVere, who had evidently lost his nerve, sank into a chair.

"You fear an uprising, a mutiny?" I questioned, "when this is reported?"

"What will prevent?" he asked.

"The captain cannot stir; the mate is dead; the men already crazed because we take no prizes. They will murder us also and take control. Those devils amidships."

"And who leads them? Who would be captain?"

"Mannuel Estevan," he whispered.

"I thought as much. Then it is Mannuel Estevan we must secure first—before they know. Whatever his men may know of what has occurred they will make no move until they get his orders. We must stop the possibility of his issuing any. Without a leader the advantage is ours."

"You mean to kill him?"

"Only as a last resort. There is no good feeling between those quartered amidships and the crew?"

"No, senor; it is hate generally, although they are not all alike. The real sailors are mostly captured men; they serve to save their lives, and only for those others on board could not be held long. Your plan, senor, is to set the one against the other?"

"Yes, if possible. These sailor men are of all races. Can they be trusted?"

"Some might be, sir; it is hard to tell how many. It is not the race which counts so much, senor. There are those among them who would not care to return to honesty."

"And you, LeVere?"

He spread his hands and shrugged his shoulders. "There is no hope of me; I was born to the free life."

"What then is it with you?"

"Hate, senor—revenge," and his teeth gleamed savagely. "I would spit on this Mannuel who seeks to be chief, I can never be—no; I am of black skin, with negro blood in my veins, and white men would never have it so. But I can hate, senor. That is why I am with you now, if the devil so will. Your plan might work—tell me more of it."

"What are the odds, say you—thirty to a hundred? Ay, but surprise will overcome that. My plan is this: First to secure Mannuel as quietly as possible but at whatever cost. With him in our hands, or dead, the buccaneers have no leader. What then? There are men in the crew on deck and in the forecabin to be trusted—Watkins is one, and he will know others, a dozen no doubt. They will be enough. We will whisper the truth to these, and have them ready for a signal. The forward door from amidships is closed by iron bars—is it not?"

"Si, senor," his eyes again sparkling with interest. "The men quarreled, and there was fighting."

"Then there is no escape in that direction and it can be no great task to close any passage leading aft. Lower the deck hatch and we have those devils below caged like so many rats. There need be no fighting; starvation will bring them to terms."

"But, senor, your dozen men cannot guard the buccaneers below and also manage the bark. The crew are not all lambs—many will sympathize with those thus locked beneath deck. Choose is bad, and a friend of Mannuel. He will fight, and there are others to back him."

"I know that, LeVere. The whole plan is desperate, but there is no other possible. Here is my scheme. There is a gun rack in the cabin to arm the

dozen men we can trust. The others have nothing but their sheath knives. The buccaneers can be secured below, before these other lads ever realize what is happening. As soon as we have control of the ship we'll round them up forward. They won't dare face the guns. I'll give them their choice."

"And what will you tell them, senor?"

I caught my breath, conscious of his meaning. My secret hope could not be revealed to this fellow. The answer came quickly to my lips.

"The whole truth, Senor LeVere—that Mannuel conspired to seize the bark through a mutiny of the buccaneers; that these were to be turned loose with license to kill anyone on board who opposed them; that their real purpose was to divide among themselves all the treasure below."

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WORLD HAPPENINGS OF CURRENT WEEK

Brief Resume Most Important Daily News Items.

COMPILED FOR YOU

Events of Noted People, Governments and Pacific Northwest, and Other Things Worth Knowing.

Control of the international mercantile marine has been definitely placed in the hands of England and Englishmen, according to the Liverpool Post.

With eggs at 85 cents a dozen, burglars passed up the cash in a till at a Helena, Mont., grocery store early Tuesday, taking 22 dozen eggs.

A plot to assassinate Premier Venizelos and overthrow the monarchy has been discovered in Athens. Many arrests have been made by the authorities.

The British government has directed the Pacific Steam Navigation company to take charge of the German ships which were interned in Chile during the war.

King Segis Pontia Alcarta, \$50,000 prize bull, owned by John H. Arfman, of Middletown, N. Y., was killed by swallowing a nail, according to the report of veterinarians.

Retail clothiers in accounting for the prevailing high prices of men's clothing, at a hearing before the commission on necessities of life, said that spring suits would cost even more.

President Wilson has "materially improved," but is still very weak, Dr. F. X. Dercum, Philadelphia specialist, said Saturday when he paid his regular weekly visit to the White house.

At a conference Saturday in Budapest of the leaders of all parties, Karl Huszar was confirmed as minister-president to succeed Stephen Friedrich. He is engaged in forming a cabinet.

Catholics throughout Mexico were warned Saturday against the danger of radicalism as represented by "socialism and communism" in collective pastoral letters signed by eight archbishops and 20 bishops.

The Southern Newspaper Publishers' association, meeting in Birmingham, Ala., to consider the white paper problem, agreed Monday that consumption must be curtailed. Otherwise, it was declared, the smaller newspapers could not survive.

Transcripts of the testimony of Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, the "soviet ambassador," given before the Lusk investigating committee last week, will be submitted to the state department with a request for deportation, Samuel A. Berger, deputy attorney-general, announced.

Ralph Deiken, of Springfield, Ill., whose dollar tips to barbers and expensive clothes gained him the title of the "Beau Brummel" bank clerk, was arrested Saturday on a federal warrant charging him with embezzlement of \$27,000 from the Kildgaley Farmers' State bank, where he was employed as paying teller until a month ago.

The Paris Temps Friday said it hoped that a solution will be found of the situation created by the failure of the United States senate to ratify the peace treaty with Germany, "because if the league of nations can live while awaiting the United States, it cannot endure without the United States."

Permanent organization of the Western States Reclamation association, which will work for the passage of legislation beneficial to the western arid states, was determined upon at Salt Lake City Friday by the delegates from 13 western states attending the irrigation conference called by Governor D. W. Davis of Idaho. A recommendation submitted by the resolutions committee of the conference was unanimously adopted providing for a president, vice-president, treasurer, and executive committee consisting of one member each from the member states, together with the president, ex officio.

Revival of the 2-cent coin, bearing the likeness of the late Colonel Theodore Roosevelt with the dates of his birth and death, is the object of a campaign by the Women's Roosevelt Memorial association.

Eleven students at Madison, Wis., are said to be \$35,000 richer as a result of the payment Thursday of their first educational bonus. So long was the line at times that students were obliged to wait an hour before reaching the paymaster's window.

U.S. WARNED NOT TO CUT DOWN OUTPUT

Canadian Takes Rap at Plan for Eight-Hour Day.

PRODUCTION IS FIRST

Other Delegates From Neighboring State, However, Favor Plan to Shorten Hours.

Washington, D. C.—Consideration of the draft convention proposed by the committee to limit the hours of work in industry to eight hours a day and 48 hours a week was begun Monday by the international labor conference and enough progress made to indicate its adoption probably soon.

The conference adopted the clause, defining the "industrial undertaking" to which the agreement would apply with an amendment which provided that questions relating to navigation on inland waterways be referred to a special conference.

Opposition to the convention as a whole was expressed by S. R. Parsons, employers' delegate from Canada, who insisted the "general application of the shorter working day would, according to actual experience, greatly lessen production." Now when the government of the country, he said, is calling on manufacturers to increase their output and experts in order to meet heavy national obligations nothing should be done which would tend to hinder them in their efforts.

"The cost of living," he added, "could be reduced only by increased production and to ignore this fundamental truth is to blind our eyes to the actual facts."

"It is generally recognized," Mr. Parsons said, "that unless the United States accepts similar extension it would be placing an unfair burden upon Canadian employers and the country at large to be bound by terms of the proposed convention."

Newton D. Rowell, government delegate from Canada, disagreed with Mr. Parsons, saying he "feared" the position of Canada might be misunderstood as a result of Mr. Parsons' remarks. He announced that he and the other Canadian government representatives would vote for the convention.

"The action of the government of Canada does not depend upon the action of the government of the United States in dealing with these matters," he declared.

Mr. Rowell pointed out that the Canadian parliament already had approved the treaty containing the labor clause and the league of nations covenant, and that since it had approved them the government of Canada would "carry out the obligations it assumed in the treaty, in spirit as well as in letter."

The conference admitted Luxembourg to membership.

HINES AND RAILWAY MEN FIX NEW SCALE

Washington, D. C.—A new wage and working agreement was signed late Monday between the railroad administration and officials of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes and Railway Shop Laborers.

While demands of the union were not fully met, the eight-hour basic day was established for track laborers and others of that classification, and time and a half pay after eight hours was provided. Most of the other employes included under the agreement will receive time and a half overtime pay after 10 hours.

Signing of the new contract by Director-General Hines ended negotiations which have been in progress since February. Approximately 400,000 men are affected, railroad administration officials estimated. The contract also provides that it shall be applicable during the period of federal control unless notice of 30 days is given of its cancellation.

Return of Bodies Asked.

Washington, D. C.—The American embassy at Paris has been instructed by the state department to "make the strongest representations possible" to the French government for the removal of bodies of American soldiers now buried in France.

The hope was expressed that an understanding would be reached to enable the war department to undertake as speedily as possible the return of the bodies.

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You corn-pestered men and women need suffer no longer. Wear the shoes that nearly killed you before, says this Cincinnati authority, because a few drops of freezone applied directly on a tender, aching corn or callous stops soreness at once and soon the corn or hardened callous loosens so it can be lifted out, root and all, without pain.

A small bottle of freezone costs very little at any drug store, but will positively take off every hard or soft corn or callous. This should be tried as it is inexpensive and is said not to irritate the surrounding skin.

If your druggist hasn't any freezone tell him to get a small bottle for you from his wholesale drug house. It is fine stuff and acts like a charm every time.—Adv.

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