



RAINBOW'S END
A NOVEL
By **REX BEACH**
AUTHOR OF
"THE IRON TRAIL," "THE SPOILERS," "HEART OF THE SUNSET," ETC.
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O'REILLY'S HOPES OF FINDING AND RESCUING ROSA RECEIVE A CRUSHING BLOW

Synopsis.—Don Esteban Varona, rich Cuban planter, hides his money and jewels and the secret of the hiding place is lost when he and the only other person who knows it are killed. Donna Isabel, step-mother of the Varona twins—Esteban and Rosa—searches vainly for years for the hidden treasure. Johnny O'Reilly, an American, loves and is loved by Rosa. Donna Isabel falls to her death in an old well while walking in her sleep. Esteban's connection with the Cuban Insurrectos is discovered and he and Rosa are forced to flee. O'Reilly, in New York on business, gets a letter from Rosa telling of her peril and he starts for Cuba. Pancho Cueto, faithless manager of the Varona estates, betrays Esteban and Rosa, leading Colonel Cobo, notorious Spanish guerrilla, to their hiding place. Esteban, who is absent, returns just in time to rescue Rosa.

CHAPTER X—Continued.

"Senior, you are in danger. Tonight, at midnight, you will be arrested. I beg of you to see that there is nothing incriminating in your possession."

O'Reilly's face betrayed his amazement. "Arrested? What for? On what charge?"

The stranger shrugged. "I don't know. That newspaper man will be arrested at the same moment, so you had better warn him. But be careful where and how you do so, for all his movements are watched, all his words are overheard."

"Why do you tell me this—you? Is it some scheme to—to incriminate me?" O'Reilly inquired.

Manin was leaning over the counter, his face drawn with anxiety, his lips framing the same question.

"No!" The lieutenant shook his head. "I am a friend—a Cuban, in spite of this uniform. If you repeat my words I shall be shot within the hour. I implore you—his voice became more urgent—"to heed my warning. Remember—midnight!" He bowed, turned to the door, and was gone.

On the stroke of midnight O'Reilly was arrested. After a thorough search of his person and his premises he was escorted to government headquarters, where he found Leslie Branch.

The invalid looked taller, thinner, more bloodless than ever, and his air of settled gloom admirably became the situation.

"Hello. What luck?" Johnnie flashed at him.

"Good!" An officer sharply commanded him to be silent.

The prisoners were ordered to stand side by side, facing their accusers. Then each in turn was subjected to a rigorous examination. Owing to his



"Tonight, at Midnight, You Will Be Arrested."

acquaintance with Spanish, O'Reilly was able to defend himself without the aid of an interpreter.

It was evident from the first that Branch's case was hopeless. He readily acknowledged himself to be a newspaper writer, and admitted having sent articles for publication through the mails. This was quite enough; from the attitude of the military men it promised to go hard with him. Judgment for the moment was suspended, and the two prisoners were led away.

At last O'Reilly was recalled; but when he re-entered the big room he found General Antuna awaiting him, alone.

The general spoke with force and gravity: "Mr. O'Reilly, I believe you

to be a far greater menace to the interests of my country than—well, than a score of dynamite experts. I believe you are a writer."

The American smiled. "Are writers such dangerous people?"

"That altogether depends upon circumstances. The United States is inclined to recognize the belligerency of these Cuban rebels, and her relations with Spain are becoming daily more strained; ill-feeling grows, and all because of the exaggerations, the mendacities, that have gone forth from here to your newspapers. We are determined to put down this uprising in our own way; we will tolerate no foreign interference. War is never a pleasant thing, but you journalists have magnified its horrors and misrepresented the cause of Spain until you threaten to bring on another and a more horrible combat. Now, then, you understand what I mean when I say that you are more dangerous than a powder expert; that your pen can do more injury, can cause the death of more Spanish troops than could a regiment of Americans with dynamite. Your English friend makes no secret of his business, so we shall escort him to Neuvitas and see him safely out of the country, once for all."

"And yet you permit me to remain?" Johnnie was surprised.

"For the present, yes! That is my official message to you. Privately, however"—the speaker eyed O'Reilly with a disconcerting expression—"I would like to warn you. You are a bright fellow, and you have a way with you—there's no denying it. Under other conditions it would be a pleasure to know you better. It grieves me, therefore, to warn you that your further stay in Cuba will not be pleasant. I almost regret that there is no conclusive evidence against you; it would so simplify matters. Come, now, hadn't you better acknowledge that I have guessed your secret?"

O'Reilly's perplexity was changing to dismay, for it seemed to him he was being played with; nevertheless, he shook his head. "I would only be deceiving you, sir," he said.

General Antuna sighed. "Then I see embarrassments ahead for both of us."

"More arrests?"

"Not necessarily. Understand me, I speak as one gentleman to another, but—you must have noticed that Americans are unpopular with our troops. Eh? They are impulsive, these troopers; accidents cannot be prevented. Suppose something should happen to you? There is the trouble. You came to Cuba to enjoy its climate; you cannot be expected to remain indoors. Of course not. Well! Among our soldiers are many new recruits, patriotic, enthusiastic young fellows, but—careless. They are wretchedly unproficient marksmen, and they haven't learned the danger of promiscuous rifle fire. They are forever shooting at things, merely to score a hit. Would you believe it? Oh, I have to discipline them frequently. To think of you being abroad through the streets, therefore, worries me intensely. Suppose you should be found dead some day. Imagine my feelings." The speaker's tone and expression were eloquent of concern. "How could I fix the responsibility?"

"By having me followed, as usual, I dare say," O'Reilly said bitterly.

"Oh, you will of course be shadowed day and night; in fact, to be quite sure of your—er—safety, I shall ask you to permit one of my men to accompany you everywhere and even to share your room. We shall try never to lose sight of you, depend upon it. I wish you could find another climate equally beneficial to your rheumatism. It would lift a great load from my mind." The speaker paused hopefully; that same sardonic flicker was on his lips.

Johnnie could not summon an answering smile, for his heart was like lead. He realized now the utter futility of resistance; he knew that to remain in Puerto Principe after this thinly veiled warning would be to court destruction—and destruction of a shocking character against which it would be impossible to guard. After

a moment or thought he said gravely:

"I appreciate the delicacy of your consideration, sir, and—I shall go."

General Antuna leaped to his feet, his grim face aghast; striding to O'Reilly, he pressed his hands—he seemed upon the point of embracing him. "I thank you," he cried. "You render me a supreme service. See, I breathe easy. Permit me to offer you refreshment—one of our famous Spanish wines. No? Then the best cigar in all Cuba!"

O'Reilly was escorted to the railway station at daylight. He and Branch took their seats and their guards filed in behind them. He cursed savagely; the memory of those wasted weeks, the narrow margin of his failure, filled him with a sick feeling of dismay and impotence.

In marked contrast to the difficulties of entering Cuba was the ease of leaving it. A ship was sailing from Neuvitas on the very afternoon when the two Americans arrived, and they were hurried aboard. Not until the anchor was up did their military escort depart from them.

With angry, brooding eyes O'Reilly watched the white houses along the water front dwindle away, the mangrove swamps slip past, and the hills rise out of their purple haze. When



"His Name is Weyler."

the salt breath of the trades came to his nostrils he turned into his stateroom, and, taking the crate of coconuts with which General Antuna had thoughtfully provided him, he bore it to the rail and dropped it overboard.

"Rheumatism was a fool disease, anyhow," he muttered.

"Great news!" Esteban Varona announced one day as he dismounted after a foraging trip into the Yumuri. "We met some of Lauret's men and they told us that Spain has recalled Captain General Campos. What do you say to that?"

"Does that mean the end of the war?" Rosa eagerly inquired.

"Oh, no. They have sent a new man—he's in Havana now—a dark little old fellow who never smiles. He has a long nose and a big chin; he dresses all in black—a very 'jew-bird' in appearance, from what I hear. His name is Weyler—Valeriano Weyler, marquis of Tenerife."

Esteban covertly appraised his sister's charms, but respecting her terror of Cobo he did not speak his thoughts. He was certain, however, that Rosa knew, as well as he, what motive lay behind the fellow's tireless persecutions of the valley dwellers; for, in spite of their isolation, stories of Cobo had reached both the boy and the girl sick with apprehension. The colonel, it seemed, had nearly died of his machete wound, and on recovering he had sworn to exterminate the wasps that had stung him. He had sworn other oaths, too, oaths that robbed Esteban of his sleep.

Esteban idolized his sister; her loyalty to him was the most precious thing of his life. Therefore, the thought of that swarthy ruffian hunting her down as a hound hangs to the trail of a doe awoke in him a terrible anger. Second only to his hatred for the guerrilla chief was his bitterness against the traitor, Pancho Cueto, who had capped his villainy by setting this new peril upon them; and since Rosa's safety and his own honor called for the death of both men, he had sworn that somehow he would effect it. It was, of course, a difficult matter to get at the colonel of volunteers, but Cueto still lived in the midst of his blackened fields, and it was against him that the boy was now planning to launch his first blow.

The thought of the hated Cobo had momentarily distracted Esteban's thoughts. Now he collected them and said:

"Wait! I am forgetting something. See what Lauret's men handed me; they are posted from one end of the island to the other." He displayed a printed bando, or proclamation, signed by the new captain general, and read as follows:

"All inhabitants of the country districts, or those who reside outside the lines of fortifications of the towns, shall, within a period of eight days, enter the towns which are occupied by the troops. Any individual found outside the lines in the country at the expiration of this period shall be considered a rebel and shall be dealt with as such."

It was that inhuman order of concentration, the result of which proved to be without parallel in military history—an order which gave its savage author the name of being the arch-enemy of a nation reputed peculiarly cruel. Four hundred thousand Cubans driven from their homes into shelterless prison camps; more than two hundred thousand dead from hunger and disease; a fruitful land laid bare of all that could serve as food, and changed to an ash-gray desolation; want famine from Oriente to Pinar del Rio—that was the sequel to those printed words of "Weyler the Butcher" which Esteban read.

"Eight days! When is the time up?" Rosa inquired.

"Bless you, this is already two weeks old!" her brother told her.

"Why, then, it means that we'll be shot if we're caught."

"Exactly! But we shan't be caught, eh? Let the timid ones take fright at the squeaks of this old blackbird. Let them go into the cities; we shall have the more to eat!" Esteban crumpled the paper in his hand and dropped it. "Meanwhile I shall proceed toward my settlement with Pancho Cueto." His very careless confidence gave Rosa courage.

CHAPTER XI.

When the World Ran Backward.

Esteban went about his plan of destroying Pancho Cueto with youthful energy and zest. First he secured, at some pains, a half-stick of dynamite, a cap and fuse, and a gallon or more of kerosene; then he assembled his followers and led them once again into the San Juan.

La Joya was still tenanted when early in the evening its rightful owner arrived; the house and some of its out-buildings showed lights. Esteban concealed his men. While the horses cropped and the negroes rested he fitted fuse and cap to his precious piece of dynamite.

Now while Esteban was thus busied, Pancho Cueto was entertaining an unwelcome guest. In the late afternoon he had been surprised by the visit of a dozen or more volunteers, and inasmuch as his relations with their colonel had been none of the friendliest since that ill-starred expedition into the Yumuri, he had felt a chill of apprehension on seeing the redoubtable Cobo himself at their head.

The colonel had explained that he was returning from a trip up the San Juan, taken for the purpose of rounding up those inhabitants who had been dilatory in obeying the new orders from Havana. That smoke to the southward was from fires of his kindling; he had burned a good many crops and houses and punished a good many people, and since this was exactly the sort of task he liked he was in no unpleasant mood. He had demanded of Cueto lodging for himself and his troop, announcing that a part of his command was somewhere behind and would rejoin him later in the night.

Cueto had welcomed his visitor in all humility; he put up the soldiers in the bate of the sugar mill, and then installed Cobo in his best room, after which he ransacked the house for food and drink and tobacco.

When Cobo finally took himself off to bed Cueto followed in better spirits than he had enjoyed for some time. For one thing, it was agreeable to look forward to a night of undisturbed repose. Pancho's apprehensions had fattened upon themselves, and he had been living of late in a nightmare of terror.

But it seemed to him that he had barely closed his eyes when he was awakened by a tremendous vibration and found himself in the center of the floor, undecided whether he had been hurled from his bed or whether he had leaped thither. Still in a daze, he heard a shout from the direction of Cobo's room, then a din of other voices, followed by a rush of feet; the next instant his door was flung back and he saw, by the light of high-held torches, Esteban Varona and a ragged rabble of black men. Cueto knew that he faced death. He dodged a blow from Esteban's clubbed rifle only to behold the flash of a machete. Crying out again, he tried to guard himself from the descending blade, but too late; the sound of his hoarse terror died in his throat, half born.

"Quick! Soak the bed with oil and fire it!" Esteban directed; then he ran out into the hall to investigate that other shouting. He found the chamber whence it issued and tried to smash the door; but at the second blow he heard a gunshot from within and the wood splintered outward almost into his face. Simultaneously, from somewhere outside the house, arose the notes of a Spanish bugle-call.

Young Varona waited to hear no more. Nor did his men; realizing the peril into which they had been led, they bolted from the house as fast as they could go. There was no need for questions; from the direction of the sugar mill came belated orders and the sound of men shouting to their horses. Evidently those were troops—and trained troops, too, for they took no time to saddle; they were up and mounted almost before the marauders had gained the backs of their own animals.

Instantly there began a blind battle in desperately cramped quarters. Riders fought stirrup to stirrup with clubbed rifles and machetes; saddles were emptied and the terrified horses bolted. Some of them lunged up the banks, only to tumble down again, their thrashing limbs and sharp-shod hoofs working more havoc than blows from old-time battle-hammers.

Of course, after the first moment of conflict, Esteban had not been able to exert the least control over his men; in fact, he could not make himself heard. Nor could he spare the breath

to shout; he was too desperately engaged. His rifle was empty, he had his hot barrel in his hands; he dazedly distinguished Asensio wielding his machete. Then he found himself down and half stunned. Something smote him heavily, at last—whether a hoof or a gun-stock he could not tell—and next he was on all-fours, trying to drag himself out of this rat-pit. But his limbs were queerly rebellious, and he was sick; he had never experienced anything quite like this and he thought he must be wounded. It greatly surprised him to find that he could struggle upward through the brambles, even though it was hard work. Men were fighting all around and below him, meanwhile, and he wondered vaguely what made them kill one another when he and his negroes were all dead or dying. It seemed very strange—of a piece with the general unreality of things—and it troubled him not a little. One of his arms was useless, he discovered, and he realized with a curious shock that it was broken. He was bleeding, too, from more than one wound, but he could walk, after a fashion.

He was inclined to stay and finish the fight, but he recollected that Rosa would be waiting for him and that he must go to her, and so he set out across the fields, staggering through the charred cane stubble. The night was not so black as it had been, and this puzzled him until he saw that the plantation house was ablaze. Flames were belching from its windows, casting abroad a lurid radiance; and remembering Pancho Cueto, Esteban laughed.

By and by, after he was well away, his numbness passed and he began to suffer excruciating pain. The pain had been there all the time, so it seemed; he was simply gaining the capacity to feel it. He was ready to die now, he was so ill; moreover, his left arm dangled and got in his way. Only that subconscious realization of the necessity to keep going for Rosa's sake sustained him.

Daylight came at last to show him his way. More than once he paused, alarmed, at voices in the woods, only to find that the sounds issued from his own throat.

It had grown very hot now, so hot that heat-waves obscured his vision and caused the most absurd forms to take shape. He began to hunt aimlessly for water, but there was none. Evidently this heat had parched the land, dried up the streams, and set the stones afire. It was incredible, but true.

Esteban reasoned that he must be near home by this time, for he had been traveling for days—for years. The country, indeed, was altogether unfamiliar; he could not recall ever having seen the path he trod, but for that matter everything was strange. In the first place he knew that he was going west, and yet the morning sun persisted in beating hotly into his face! That alone convinced him that things had gone awry with the world. He could remember a great convulsion of some sort, but just what it was he had no clear idea! Evidently, though, it had been sufficient to change the rotation of the earth. Yes, that was it; the earth was running backward upon its axis; he could actually feel it whirling under his feet. No wonder his journey seemed so long. He was laboring over a gigantic treadmill, balancing like an equilibrist upon a revolving sphere. Well, it was a simple matter to stop walking, sit down, and allow himself

to be spun backward around to the place where Rosa was waiting. He pondered this idea for some time, until its absurdity became apparent. Undoubtedly he must be going out of his head; he saw that it was necessary to keep walking until the back-spin of that treadmill brought Rosa to him.

Rosa and her faithful companions, facing starvation, obey the Spanish concentration order, ignorant of the greater privations that await them in the terrible refugee camp. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



They Bolted From the House as Fast as They Could Go.

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A Paper Controller.
Great Britain now has its Paper Controller, concerning whose identity there has been a flutter of excitement in the publishing and newspaper worlds. There is, however, very much less talk and less fuss about the advent of this new official than there was over the subject of the introduction of food rationing, although the innovation is capable of having much greater effects on the life of the country than the mere reduction of the consumption of certain food supplies. H. A. Vernet, on whom it has devolved, is a director of the Underground Electric Railways company.

Worse Than the Barbers' Union.
In the reign of Elizabeth every beard of a fortnight's growth was subject to a tax of 83 cents. Peter the Great, in 1705, imposed a tax upon the beards of the Russian nobles of 100 rubles, while the common people's beard tax amounted to 1 kopeck. This tax caused much dissatisfaction, but in spite of this the impost was extended to St. Petersburg in 1714. The tax on beards was confirmed by Catherine I. in 1726, by Peter II in 1728, by Empress Anne in 1731, and in 1743 by the Empress Elizabeth.

Secret of Her Success.
Wonder at the success of the woman-lion tamer fades like a summer cold when her obituary explains that she had been married eight times.—Seattle Post-Intelligencer.



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