

# 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, BACK IN CUBA AT LAST, HEARS BAD NEWS ABOUT ROSA AND ESTEBAN

**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, stepmother 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. O'Reilly's efforts to reach Rosa are fruitless and he is compelled by the Spanish authorities to leave Cuba. Esteban wreaks a terrible vengeance on Pancho Cueto. A fierce fight with Spanish soldiers ensues. Esteban escapes, but, badly wounded and half-conscious, he is unable to find his way back to his camp. Rosa, with the faithful servants who had remained with her, is forced to obey the concentration order of General Weyler, the Spanish commander, and seek refuge in Matanzas. O'Reilly returns to Cuba with a band of filibusters, which includes Norine Evans, an American girl who has dedicated her fortune and services as nurse to the Cuban cause.

### CHAPTER XII—Continued.

Evening came, then night, and still the party was jerked along at the tail of the train without a hint as to its destination. About midnight those who were not dozing noted that they had stopped at an obscure pine-woods junction, and that when the train got under way once more their own car did not move. The ruse was now apparent; owing to the lateness of the hour, it was doubtful if anyone in the forward coaches was aware that the train was lighter by one car.

There was a brief delay; then a locomotive crept out from a siding, coupled up to the standing car, and drew it off upon another track. Soon the "excursion party" was being rushed swiftly toward the coast, some twenty miles away.

Major Ramos came down the aisle, laughing, and spoke to his American proteges.

"Well, what do you think of that, eh? Imagine the feelings of those good deputy marshals when they wake up. I bet they'll rub their eyes."

Miss Evans bounded excitedly in her seat; she clapped her hands.

"You must have friends in high places," O'Reilly grinned, and the Cuban agreed.

"Yes, I purposely drew attention to us in Charleston, while our ship was loading. She's ready and waiting for us now; and by daylight we ought to be safely out to sea. Meanwhile the Dauntless has weighed anchor and is steaming north, followed, I hope, by all the revenue cutters hereabouts."

It was the darkest time of the night when the special train came to a stop at a bridge spanning one of the deep Southern rivers. In the stream below,



Ten Minutes Later He Found Himself at the Steering Oar.

dimly outlined in the gloom, lay the Fair Play, a small tramp steamer; her crew were up and awake. The new arrivals were hurried aboard, and within a half-hour she was feeling her way seaward.

With daylight, caution gave way to haste, and the rusty little tramp began to drive forward for all she was worth. She cleared the three-mile limit safely and then turned south. Not a craft was in sight; not a smudge of smoke discolored the skyline.

It had been a trying night for the filibusters, and when the low coastline was dropped astern they began to think of sleep. Breakfast of a sort was served on deck, after which those

favoring ones who had berths sought them, while their less fortunate companions stretched out wherever they could find a place.

Johnnie O'Reilly was elated. Already he could see the hills of Cuba dozing behind their purple veils; in fancy he felt the fierce white heat from close-walled streets, and scented the odors of "mangy" swamps. He heard the ceaseless sighing of the royal palms. How he had hungered for it all; how he had raged at his delays!

It had seemed so small a matter to return; it had seemed so easy to seek out Rosa and to save her! Yet the days had grown into weeks; the weeks had aged into months. Well, he had done his best; he had never rested from the moment of Rosa's first appeal. Her enemies had felled him once, but there would be no turning back this time—rather a firing squad or a dungeon in Cabanas than that.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### The City Among the Leaves and the City of Beggars.

The night was moonless and warm. An impalpable haze dimmed the star-glow, only the diffused illumination of the open sea enabled the passengers of the Fair Play to identify that blacker darkness on the horizon ahead of them as land. Major Ramos was on the bridge with the captain. Two men were taking soundings in a blind search for that steep wall which forms the side of the old Bahama channel. When the lead finally gave them warning, the Fair Play lost her headway and came to a stop, rolling lazily.

Major Ramos spoke in a low tone from the darkness above, calling for a volunteer boat's crew to reconnoiter and to look for an opening through the reef. Before the words were out of his mouth O'Reilly had offered himself.

Ten minutes later he found himself at the steering oar of one of the ship's lifeboats, heading shoreward. There was a long night's work ahead; time passed, and so O'Reilly altered his course and cruised along outside the white water, urging his crew to lustier strokes.

A mile—two miles—it seemed like ten to the taut oarsmen, and then a black hiatus of still water showed in phosphorescent foam. O'Reilly explored it briefly; then he turned back toward the ship. Soon he and his crew were aboard and the ship was groping her way toward the break in the reef. Meanwhile, her deck became a scene of feverish activity; out from her hold came cases of ammunition and medical supplies; the fieldpiece on the bow was hurriedly dismounted; the small boats, of which there was an extra number, were swung out, with the result that when the Fair Play had maneuvered as close as she dared everything was in readiness.

O'Reilly took the first load through, and discharged it upon a sandy beach. Every man tumbled overboard and waded ashore with a packing case; he dropped this in the sand above high-tide mark, and then ran back for another. It was swift, hot work. From the darkness on each side came the sounds of other boat crews similarly engaged.

Daylight was coming when the last boat cast off and the Fair Play, with a hoarse, triumphant blast of her whistle, faded into the north, her part in the expedition at an end.

Dawn showed the voyagers that they were indeed fortunate, for they were upon the mainland of Cuba, and as far as they could see, both east and west, the reef was unbroken. Men were looting about, exhausted, but Major Ramos allowed them no time for rest; he roused them, and kept them on the go until the priceless supplies had been collected within the shelter of the brush. Then he broke open certain packages and distributed arms among his followers.

The three Americans, who were munching a tasteless breakfast of pilot bread, were joined by Major Ra-

mos. "I am dispatching a message to General Gomez headquarters, asking him to send a pack train and an escort for these supplies. There is danger here; perhaps you would like to go on with the couriers."

O'Reilly accepted eagerly; then thinking of the girl, he said doubtfully:

"I'm afraid Miss Evans isn't equal to the trip."

"Nonsense! I'm equal to anything," Norine declared. And indeed she looked capable enough as she stood there in her short walking suit and stout boots.

Branch alone declined the invitation, vowing that he was too weak to budge. If there was the faintest prospect of riding to the interior he infinitely preferred to await the opportunity, he said, even at the risk of an attack by Spanish soldiers in the meantime.

It took O'Reilly but a short time to collect the few articles necessary for the trip; indeed, his bundle was so small that Norine was dismayed.

"Can't I take any clothes?" she inquired in a panic. "I can't live without a change."

"It is something you'll have to learn," he told her. "An insurrecto with two shirts is wealthy. Some of them haven't any."

"Isn't it likely to rain on us?"

"It's almost sure to."

Miss Evans pondered this prospect; then she laughed. "It must feel funny," she said.

There were three other members of the traveling party, men who knew something of the country round about; they were good fighters, doubtless, but in spite of their shiny new weapons they esembled soldiers even less than did their major. All were dressed as they had been when they left New York; one even wore a derby hat and pointed patent-leather shoes. Nevertheless Norine Evans thought the little cavalcade presented quite a martial appearance as it filed away into the jungle.

The first few miles were trying, for the coast was swampy and thickly grown up to underbrush; but in time the jungle gave place to higher timber and to open savannas deep in guinea grass. Soon after noon the travelers came to a farm, the owner of which was known to one of the guides, and here a stop was made in order to secure horses and food.

Johnnie, who was badly fagged from the previous night's work, found a shady spot and stretched himself out for a nap.

The shade was grateful. O'Reilly enjoyed his sleep.

The party had penetrated to the foothills of the Sierra de Cubitas, and as they ascended, the scenery changed. Rarely is the Cuban landscape anything but pleasing. It is a smiling island. It has been said, too, that everything in it is friendly to man; the people are amiable, warm-hearted; the very animals and insects are harmless. But here in the Cubitas range all was different. The land was stern and forbidding; canyons deep and damp raised dripping walls to the sky; bridge paths skirted ledges that were bold and fearsome, or lost themselves in gloomy jungles as noisome as Spanish dungeons. Hidden away in these fastnesses, the rebel government had established its capital. Here, safe from surprise, the soldiers of Gomez and Maceo and Garcia rested between attacks, nursing their wounded and recruiting their strength for further sallies.

It was a strange seat of government—no nation ever had a stranger—for the state buildings were huts of bark and leaves, the army was uniformed in rags. Cook fires smoldered in the open glades; cavalry horses grazed in the grassy streets, and wood smoke drifted over them.

The second evening brought O'Reilly and Miss Evans safely through, and at news of the expedition's success a pack train was made ready to go to the assistance. Norine's letter from the New York junta was read, and the young woman was warmly welcomed. One of the better huts was vacated for her use, and the officers of the provisional government called to pay their respects.

There were other Americans in Cuba, as O'Reilly soon discovered. During his first inspection of the village he heard himself hailed in his own language, and a young man in dirty white trousers and jacket strode toward him.

"Welcome to our city!" the stranger cried. "I'm Judson, captain of artillery, departamento del Oriente; and you're the fellow who came with the quinine lady, aren't you?"

O'Reilly acknowledged his identity, and Judson grinned. "Have you met the old man," he inquired—"General Gomez?"

"No; I'd like to meet him."

"Come along, then; I'll introduce you."

Gen. Maximo Gomez, father of patriots, bulwark of the Cuban cause, was seated in a hammock, reading some letters; O'Reilly recognized him instantly from the many pictures he had seen. He looked up at Judson's salute and then turned a pair of brilliant eyes, as hard as glass, upon O'Reilly. His was an irascible, brood-

ing face; it had in it something of the sternness, the exalted detachment, of the eagle, and O'Reilly gained a hint of the personality behind it. Maximo Gomez was counted one of the world's ablest guerrilla leaders; and indeed it had required the quenchless enthusiasm of a real military genius to fuse into a homogeneous fighting force the ill-assorted rabble of nondescripts whom Gomez led, to school them to privation and to render them sufficient-ly mobile to defy successfully ten times their number of trained troops. This, however, was precisely what the old Porto Rican had done, and in doing it he had won the admiration of military students.

With a bluntness not unkind he asked O'Reilly what had brought him to Cuba.

When O'Reilly explained the reason for his presence the old fighter nodded.

"So? You wish to go west, eh?"

"Yes, sir. I want to find Colonel Lopez."

"Lopez? Miguel Lopez?" the general inquired quickly. "Well, you won't have to look far for him." General Gomez' leathery countenance lightened into a smile. "He happens to be right here in Cubitas." Calling Judson to him, he said: "Amigo, take Mr. O'Reilly to Colonel Lopez; you will find him somewhere about; I am sorry we are not to have this young fellow for a soldier; he looks like a real man and—quite equal to five quintos, eh?"

It was the habit of the Cubans to refer to their enemies as quintos—the fifth part of a man! With a wave of his hand Gomez returned to his reading.

Col. Miguel Lopez, a handsome, animated fellow, took O'Reilly's hand in a hearty clasp when they were introduced; but a moment later his smile gave way to a frown and his brow darkened.

"So! You are that O'Reilly from Matanzas," said he. "I know you now, but—I never expected we would meet."

"Esteban Varona told you about me, did he not?"

The colonel inclined his head.

"I'm here at last, after the devil's own time. I've been trying every way to get through. The Spaniards stopped me at Puerto Principe—they sent me back home, you know. I've been perfectly crazy. I—You—O'Reilly swallowed hard. "You know where Esteban is? Tell me—"

"Have you heard nothing?"

"Nothing whatever. That is, nothing since Rosa, his sister— You understand, she and I are engaged—"

"Yes, yes; Esteban told me all about you."

Something in the Cuban's gravity of manner gave O'Reilly warning. A sudden fear assailed him. His voice shook as he asked:

"What is it? Not bad news?"

There was no need for the officer to answer. In his averted gaze O'Reilly read confirmation of his sick-est apprehensions.

"Tell me! Which one?" he whispered.

"Both!"

O'Reilly recoiled; a spasm distorted his chalky face. He began to shake weakly, and his fingers plucked aimlessly at each other.

Lopez took him by the arm. "Try to control yourself," said he. "Sit here while I try to tell you what little I know. Or would it not be better to wait awhile, until you are calmer?" As the young man made no answer, except to stare at him in a white agony of suspense, he sighed:

"I will tell you all I know—which isn't much. Esteban Varona came to me soon after he and his sister had fled from their home; he wanted to join my forces, but we were harassed on every side, and I didn't dare take the girl—no woman could have endured the hardships we suffered. So I convinced him that his first duty was to her, rather than to his country, and he agreed. He was a fine boy! He had spirit. He bought some stolen rifles and armed a band of his own—which wasn't a bad idea. I used to hear about him. Nobody cared to molest him, I can tell you, until finally he killed some of the regular troops. Then of course they went after him. Meanwhile he managed to destroy his own plantations, which Cueto had robbed him of. You know Cueto?"

"Yes."

"Well, Esteban put an end to him after a while; rode right up to La Joya one night, broke in the door, and mached the scoundrel in his bed. But there was a mistake of some sort. It seems that a body of Cobo's volunteers were somewhere close by, and the two parties met. I have never learned all the details of the affair, and the stories of that fight which came to me are too preposterous for belief. Still, Esteban and his men must have fought like demons, for they killed some incredible number. But they were human—they could not defeat a regiment. It seems that only one or two of them escaped."

"Esteban? Did he—"

Colonel Lopez nodded; then he said gravely: "Cobo takes no prisoners. I was in the Rubi hills at the time, fighting hard, and it was six weeks before I got back into Matanzas. Naturally,

when I heard what happened, I tried to find the girl, but Weyler was concentrating the pacificos by the time, and there was nobody left in the Yumuri; it was a desert."

"Then you don't know positively that she . . . that she—"

"Wait. There is no doubt that the boy was killed, but of Rosa's fate I can only form my own opinion. However, one of Esteban's men joined my troops later, and I not only learned something about the girl, but also why Esteban had been so relentlessly pursued. It was all Cobo's doings. You have heard of the fellow? No? Well, you will." The speaker's tone was eloquent of hatred. "He is worse than the worst of them—a monster! He had seen Miss Varona. She was a beautiful girl. . . ."

"Go on!" whispered the lover.

"I discovered that she didn't at first obey Weyler's edict. She and the two negroes—they were former slaves of her father, I believe—took refuge in the Pan de Matanzas. Later on, Cobo's men made a raid and—killed a great many. Some few escaped into the high ravines, but Miss Varona was not one of them. Out of regard for Esteban I made careful search, but I could find no trace of her."

"And yet you don't know what happened?" O'Reilly ventured. "You're not sure?"

"No, but I tell you again Cobo's men take no prisoners. When I heard about that raid I gave up looking for her."

"This—Cobo,—the American's voice shook in spite of his effort to hold it



Why Look for Ethics in War?"

steady. "I shall hope to meet him some time."

The sudden fury that filled Colonel Lopez' face was almost hidden by the gloom. "Yes. Oh, yes!" he cried, quickly, "and you are but one of a hundred; I am another. In my command there is a standing order to spare neither Cobo nor any of his assassins; they neither expect nor receive quarter from us. Now, compañero—the Cuban dropped a hand on O'Reilly's bowed head—"I am sorry that I had to bring you such evil tidings, but we are men—and this is war."

"No, no! It isn't war—it's merciless savagery! To murder children and to outrage women—why, that violates all the ethics of warfare."

"Ethics!" the colonel cried harshly. "Ethics? Hell is without ethics. Why look for ethics in war? Violence—injustice—insanity—chaos—that is war. It is man's agony—woman's despair. It is a defiance of God. War is without mercy, without law; it is—well, it is the absence of all law, all good."

It was some time before O'Reilly spoke; then he said, quietly: "I am not going back. I am going to stay here and look for Rosa."

"So!" exclaimed the colonel. "Well, why not? So long as we do not know precisely what has happened to her, we can at least hope. But, if I were you, I would rather think of her as dead than as a prisoner in some concentration camp. You don't know what those camps are like, my friend, but I do. Now I shall leave you. One needs to be alone at such an hour—eh?" With a pressure of his hand, Colonel Lopez walked away into the darkness.

Judson and his adventurous countryman did not see O'Reilly that night, nor, in fact, did anyone. But the next morning he appeared before General Gomez. He was haggard, sick, listless. The old Porto Rican had heard from Lopez in the meantime; he was sympathetic.

"I am sorry you came all the way to hear such bad news," he said. "War is a sad, hopeless business."

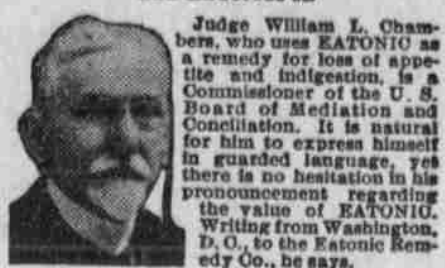
"But I haven't given up hope," O'Reilly said. "I want to stay here and—and fight."

Rosa and her two negro companions, in Matanzas, face death from starvation or from the epidemics that rage unchecked among the reconcentrados. The next installment tells of their plight and their efforts to keep body and soul together.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)  
The Chinese alphabet consists of 214

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