

WOLVES of the SEA

BY RANDALL PARRISH

CHAPTER XX—Continued.

We emerged through the companion, and I stepped aside as the others rushed by. There was no shout, no cheer, the fellows seeming to realize the desperate nature of their work, and the importance of surprise. They were outnumbered five to one, and their only hope of success lay in rendering their opponents helpless before they could rally to a defense. All the pent-up hate of years was in their hearts, blazed madly in their eyes; they were tigers leaping at the throat of their prey, yet sane enough to comprehend even in their blood-rage that they must act together. It was over so quickly I scarcely saw it all. My eyes swept from group to group—the four toiling at the cover of the main hatch; the fellows racing toward the forecastle; and Watkins' squad driving straight into the grouped watch beyond the foremast. It was smartly done; Watkins had taken no cutlass, but went in with both fists, asking no questions, but battering right and left, his men surging after, with steel blades flaming in the sunlight. The astounded watch, cursing and fighting grimly, held for a moment, and then went staggering back against the port rail, unable to stem the rush, and roaring for mercy. I had view of Carlson dropping recklessly down the forecastle scuttle, and then sprang forward myself to give a hand to the four wrestling with the main hatch. Together we dragged it into position, forcing relentlessly back as we did so, a dozen struggling figures frantically endeavoring to reach the deck. Shots were fired, the bullets whistling through the opening, the flare lighting up the black depths below, revealing vaguely a mass of frantic men staring up, and cursing us fiercely in a dozen languages; but, in spite of them, we clamped the hatch down tight, and locked it securely into place with an iron bar.

Watkins needed no help; he had his party rounded up. To my orders they were driven into the cook's galley and a guard stationed at the door. Then I turned to the more serious work confronting me in the forecastle. We must have men enough to sail the bark, and if I was to command them, I must first of all prove my courage and enforce authority. The whole success of our effort depended on this.

"What's going on below?" I asked.

"Curst' mostly," answered Carter, peering down through a slight uplighting of the scuttle. "They don't just know what's happening yet, but the big nigger seems ter be raisin' hell. Carlson is a holdin' him back with his cutlass."

"Open up and let me down."

I fell, rather than clambered along the rungs of the ladder, coming to my feet on deck in the midst of a group of angry men. The light was so poor I could scarcely see their faces; a babel of voices greeted me, and more than one hand gripped me fiercely as the excited owner yelled a demand to know what in hell we were up to. I roughly cleared a space, aided by Carlson's cutlass, and fronted them. Towering above them all, his black ape-like face, distorted with rage, I distinguished the giant Cochose, his immense hands grasping a wooden bar ripped from a bunk. Plainly enough he was the leader. If I was to rule, this black brute must be conquered at the very start, conquered by my own hands, and in the presence of his mates.

"Stand back there lads," I said sternly. "I'll explain all that has happened presently, but first I am going to lick that black within an inch of his life. Step out there, Cochose."

He came grinning widely, balancing the heavy club.

"You mean me, sah? You all think yer kin lick me?"

"Yes, I think so; I'll try it anyway. Here Carlson, take this pistol and sheath knife. If anyone interferes shoot him. All I ask is fair play. Drop that club, Cochose, and throw away your knife. You and I will fight this out with bare hands."

His dull brain worked slowly, and he stared at me, his eyes ugly. His silence and lack of response, awoke a growl from the impatient circle of men behind. One fellow kicked the club out of his hand contemptuously, and another plucked the knife from his belt.

"You big skulker," the latter said, with an oath of derision, "go on, and fight!"

"What for Ah fight this white man? Ah don't even know who he is."

"Then I'll tell you. Estada is dead; Manuel is a prisoner. I'm in command of this bark. You are a big, boasting cur! I heard what you said when I came down, and now I'll make you prove it."

I took two steps forward, my ad-

vance so swift and unexpected the big negro had not even time to throw up an arm in defense. With open hand I struck him squarely across the face.

CHAPTER XXI.

In Full Possession.

A roar of delight went up. I knew sailors and felt they would welcome a fight like this and their immediate sympathy would be with me for starting it. More than that, this black brute, ruling over them by brute force, could be no favorite. They might fear him, but with that fear would be mingled hate, and a delight in his downfall.

In that instant, although I cannot recall removing watchful eyes from the negro's face, I received an impression of my surroundings never to be erased from memory—the gloomy interior, the deck, foul, littered with sea boots, and discarded clothing, and the great beams overhead blackened by smoke. The rays of the swinging slush lantern barely illuminated the central space, the rows of bunks beyond remaining mere shadows, yet this dim, yellowish light, fell full upon the excited half circle of men who were roaring about the negro. They were a rough, wild lot, ranging in color from the intense black of Central Africa to the blond of Scandinavia, half naked some, their voices mingling in a dozen tongues, their eyes gleaming with savagery.

I know not whether Cochose lunged forward of his own volition, or was pressed on from behind, yet suddenly he was within reach of me, and the battle was on, his object evidently being to crush me in his giant grip, mine to oppose science to strength, and avoid his bear-hug. We swayed back and forth to the sharp pitching of the ship. Then he sprang straight at me determined to smash me to the deck by the very power of his onslaught. But I side-stepped him, getting in two swift blows, which rocked his head, and tore open one cheek, from which blood trickled. Yet he kept his feet, blindly gripping for me.

I evaded his clutch by leaping aside, but the space was far too small to permit these tactics to carry long, and finally he had me. Yet, even as he seemingly crushed the very breath out of me, his giant strength met with a resistance which increased his fury. Already the fellow had lost his head, but I fought coolly, putting my skill against brute force, every wrestler's trick I knew flashing into my brain. Breathlessly, my flesh scraped and bruised, I wriggled partly free, and tripped him, his great body striking the deck with a thud. I fell with him, dragged down by his desperate grip, but was first upon my feet, saluted by a roar of delight from the lips of those crowding about us. As he staggered up also, I struck him again, a blow which would have ended the game, had not my foot slipped on the reeling deck. As it was it drove him to his knees, groggy, and with one eye half closed, yet with strength enough left to regain his feet as soon as I. This time he charged me like a wild bull, froth whitening his lips, scarcely appearing human in the yellow light. In mad rage he forgot all caution, his one thought to reach me with his hands, and throttle me into lifeless pulp. I fought him back, driving blow on blow through his guard, side-stepping his mad rushes, landing again and again on his body. Twice I got in over his heart, and at last, found the chance I sought, and sent a right jab straight to the chin. All the force of one hundred and eighty pounds was behind the clenched fist, and the negro went down as though felled by a poleax. Once weakly he endeavored to rise, but this time I used my left, and he never stirred again, lying there with no sign of life except the quivering of the huge body. Assured that he was down and out, I stood above him, gazing into the ring of excited faces.

"That's one attended to," I said shortly. "Now is there any more of you who would like to fight this out?"

There was no answer although the ring widened under the threat of my eyes, and I met sullen faces here and there. I was in no mood to take chances.

"Carlson," I said, "you know all these men. Pick out those you can trust, and have them stand over there to the right. Call them out by name; be lively now."

They stepped forth eagerly enough, and ranged themselves before the bunks, the faces mostly those of northern Europe, although a negro or two was among them. As the Swede ceased calling, six or seven yet remained clustered in front of me, a motley lot, one of them an Indian, the others mostly half-breeds. I glanced from face to face inquiringly.

"How about it, you?" I asked. "Are there any more of you fellows who take a chance with us? This is my last offer."

"What's the game?" asked a sullen voice in English, and a bearded fellow, burned black, pushed his way to the front. "I used ter be Scotch; now I don't know what I am. One flag is as good as another tar me—only I want to know what sorter game I'm playin' in. Who are yer? An' whar'd yer cum from?"

"I am an English seaman," I answered shortly, "and how I came aboard makes no difference. Right now I am the only navigator on the Namur. Estada is dead—knifed last night by one of the buccaneers, Manuel Estevan had a hand in the business, and he's safely locked in a stateroom aft. Captain Sanchez is wounded and helpless, and those cut-throats amidships are battened down below hatches. LeVere and I are the officers left, and we control the deck."

"Yer mean those fellers were aimin' ter take the ship?"

"Exactly that; now where are you lads? With Manuel and his bunch of pirates? Or with us?"

"What'er yer going ter do with us, an' this ship? That's the fu'st question."

I had not decided that even in my own mind, but the answer came promptly enough.

"I am going to leave that to the crew. As soon as we have all secure, I'll have every man on deck, and then we'll talk it over. That's fair enough isn't it?"

"It looks fair. Come on, mates; I'm fer the Englishman."

Only one followed him, however, a sheep-faced boy; the others remained sullen and defiant. I had no further time to waste in explanations. I glanced up at Carter's face framed in the scuttle hole.

"Carter, pass these men up and take them forward with the others. Turn them over to Watkins. Then come back here, and report to me."

They went up the ladder one by one, and disappeared onto the deck above. Carlson and I watched the others until Carter stuck his head once again through the opening.

"All safe, sir—they was like lambs."

"Very well; stand by to help. Now you lads, lift this black and shove him up to where they can get hold above."

They hoisted the unconscious form up the ladder and forced it through the hole onto the deck. At my stern command they crawled forth into the sunlight. There they picked up Cochose and carried him aft.

I went to the main hatch, and had the cover slipped to one side, the armed sailors gathering close about the edge, as I peered down. It was a scene of pandemonium, revealed in the yellow flame of slush lanterns, a group of white faces showing clearly, as the prisoners below struggled forward, gesticulating and shouting. Ignoring their mad roaring, and the threat of leveled guns, I stared down at the infuriated faces, until the clamor ceased sufficiently to let my voice be heard.

"What are you men trying to do, frighten me? You might as well stop that. This opening is lined with guns, and if one of you fire a shot we'll pour lead into you. More than that; if you attempt to climb out there is a brass cannonade trained on the hatch. So listen! We are in control of the ship and mean to keep it. The old officers are either dead or prisoners. What we do with you will depend on your actions, but we're ready to kill if necessary. If you keep quiet down there, and obey orders, you'll be fed, and treated decently enough. Pass up your arms."

There was no movement, only a glare of hostile eyes, an indistinguishable growl of voices.

"Kneel down, lads and cover those fellows." I ordered sternly drawing my own pistol. "Now you below there, this is my last word. I'll count ten, and you'll either pass up those weapons or we'll pour our fire into you. Take aim, boys."

There was a moment of deathly silence, except for my counting. One man uttered a curse, and the jam of figures at the foot of the ladder endeavored to work back out of range, yet, before I had spoken the word eight, guns were held aloft, and poked up within reach, and at this sign of surrender even the most desperate lost heart and joined the more cowardly. It was a strange collection of weapons stacked on the deck—guns, cutlasses, knives and pistols of every description. Probably all had not been delivered, yet I felt no further fear of the few pieces remaining hidden.

"That's all, is it? Very well—now take care of this big nigger we're sending down; no, he is not dead, only stunned. Now stand aside while a few of your friends join you; they'll tell you what's up. Make room there."

We passed the forecastle scum down one by one. Ignoring the indignant roar of voices which greeted my order, I watched the men shift the heavy hatch cover into place, and then permitted my eyes to survey the deck, as I hastily considered our next action.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Rich Rhine Country.

Strange to say, the fine grapes are grown on the eastern slopes of the Rhine and the choicest varieties, as Johannsburger and Steinberger, are produced higher up the river, south of the Rhine province. It is, nevertheless, the land of the vine, especially the Moselle valley. The substantial claim of the province is its mineral wealth.

Optimistic Thought.

He hath riches sufficient who hath enough to be charitable.

HATS THAT AWAIT AUTUMN



The time will soon be here for those exciting and fascinating excursions to the millinery shop in search of new millinery, of which much is expected. The old millinery axiom that a hat is becoming when one looks better with it than without it, is a good thing to bear in mind. At the very least we expect hats, like mirrors, to "be to our faults a little blind, and to our virtues not unkind." Just how much the right shape and the right colors can do to transform a face, is measured often by the long price which a small bit of millinery commands. It is the intangible in millinery that is worth more than anything else—the color harmony, the beautifully balanced lines, the poise of the hat on the head and its appropriateness, that are worth more than mere material.

No one understands this quite so well as the woman who has reached middle life, or passed it. She expects her hats to do much for her in the way of enhancing her good points, and designers who specialize successfully in headwear for matrons turn fabrics into gold. One of their promising new models is shown at the right of the group of three hats pictured above.

It is made of black satin and the top of the crown is soft. Narrow, looped silk fringe, very brilliantly black, makes a wide irregular band about the crown and there is a narrow brim with lines that flow in easy curves about the head.

The hat at the left, for a girl of ten or more, makes a picture on the head that boasts soft curls. Its crown is of felt in sections joined in seams that are outlined with stitches of wool yarn, and the rolling brim is also of yarn, apparently crocheted into shape. At the base of each seam in the crown a pair of pert little leaves support a diminutive apple. Almost any little girl will look well in this picturesque hat.

The hat at the bottom of the picture, made for a young woman, is a dressy affair of silver tissue with an odd trimming twirling about the crown. The trimming is likely to be made of twisted ribbon with a fancy edge, but might be of silver tissue or georgette. The maker of trimmings is no respecter of fabrics, taking anything that is within reach and fashioning it into something new and strange and nearly always beautiful.

AMERICAN MADE UNDERMUSLINS



Recently American manufacturers of underwear have thought so well of their achievements that they have proclaimed themselves as the designers of the styles now favored in lingerie. They certainly are justified in taking pride in the daintiness and attractiveness of the garments they make in such quantities and they find it easy to cultivate a taste for fine undermuslins. American women are appreciative, but they are also practical and they demand pretty but not too fragile garments. Few of them run to the extreme of wearing chiffon or georgette in undies, or care for bizarre designing. In the main they like fine weaves in cotton or crepe de chine for materials, not too much trimmed with fine and durable laces, hand embroidered and other needlework. Hand crochet in laces holds its own with them, and has everything to recommend it.

Of course not much handwork is to be found on manufactured undermuslins, but machinery has been made to do wonderful work and sometimes so effectively that comparisons with handwork are not by any means odious to the machine-made garment. Sometimes the plain sewing on undermuslins is done by machinery and the decoration by hand. But however they may be put together and finished, the styles are about the same in undergarments.

Three popular pieces are shown in the group above, a combination, a nightdress and a pair of pajamas. The combination is of batiste, hav-

ing the neck, armholes and bottom of the knickers edged with narrow val lace. Small sprays of prim daisies, tied with bow knots adorn the front of the body and appear on the pants. The special glory of this garment is a sash of satin ribbon that slips through slits about the waistline and ties at one side. Very narrow ribbon gathers in the fullness at the top and it is run through bending.

A nightdress of nainsook is shown, cut with short kimono sleeves and round neck. Its edges are scalloped and buttonhole stitched and there is a pretty band of needlework around the neck and shoulders. Detachable bows and rosettes of ribbon, that fasten with little safety pins, are among the treasures that some women own, and they add these pretty frivolities to their undergarments, pinning them on.

The pajamas in the picture are made of crepe de chine and embroidered with colored silks. One finds all these garments in crepe de chine and also in flesh-tone cotton mull. In the long run fine white cotton goods, prove their worth by standing wear and washing perfectly.

Julie Bottonly

Velour for Skirts.

In addition to tricotines and plaids, the favorites in the dress goods trade at the present time, velour checks are showing such strength that they deserve mention.

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Sworn to before me. MABEL T. SHERRY, Notary Public.

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