

THE
BARQUE
OF THE
BROTHERS

HANS BAUMANN

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A TALE OF THE DAYS OF
HENRY THE NAVIGATOR

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Part One

THE CLIFFS OF SAGRES

I

The Instigator

A SHAFT of sunlight hardly the breadth of a hand fell on to the face of the twelve-year-old boy as he lay sleeping. Aires woke up, blinked at the rising sun, and stretched out his hand to shake his brother from his sleep, as he always did if Tinoco did not get up before him. That was the agreement between them—one was to wake the other as soon as he himself woke. Their mother, who had looked after the garden and field and cottage, and the two goats, was dead; and now their father was gone too. So the brothers had all they could do to cope with things. The boat and the cottage belonged to them now, and two pairs of hands had to do the work which a year ago three, and two years ago four, pairs had done.

When Aires got up every morning his first task was to look after the goats; and he had never yet neglected to do all that was needful for his goats.

But now, when his hand clutched at emptiness, Aires jumped up in alarm. The deserted sleeping-place was no longer warm; Tinoco must have been gone quite a while. Aires rubbed his eyes once more. Then he got out of bed quickly and stood listening intently in the middle of the cottage.

‘Tinoco!’

All remained silent outside. Now Aires went out into the full morning light, which was reflected from the sea and the naked cliff-walls of the bay. He peered down at the strand which still

lay shrouded in shadows. He could see only one boat at the moorings, but when he looked out to sea there were about thirty visible—the boats of all the other fishermen.

‘Tinoco!’ shouted Aires again, but it was doubtful if his voice reached down to the solitary boat. He began to run past the other fishermen’s cottages, down the stony path to the strand.

When he got to the moorings he stood staring so intently at the empty boat that he did not notice an old fisherman sitting a little aside on a big rock, looking quietly up at him.

‘You’re looking for Tinoco?’ asked the old man.

‘Do you know where he is, Manuel?’ asked Aires, startled.

The old man pointed up to the high cliff above the village. Aires thought at first that he was pointing to his own cottage, which stood higher up than all the other fishermen’s cottages. But Manuel said: ‘He’s right up there on the look-out rock from which you can get the best view over the sea.’

‘What does he want up there?’ asked Aires crossly. ‘It’s good weather for fishing today.’

For a long time the boy remained peering up at the cliff. It seemed to Manuel that his face looked even thinner than usual.

‘I thought you’d come looking for him here,’ continued Manuel. ‘That’s why I came down.’ He waited patiently for Aires to come up, then made room for him.

‘How could he go away like that, without saying a word?’ asked Aires, with a puzzled expression.

‘I heard him passing by my cottage,’ said Manuel, ‘and I looked out after him.’

‘And you didn’t call him?’

‘I knew from the sound of his steps that he wanted to be alone.’

‘I must go up to him at once,’ said Aires uneasily.

The old fisherman grasped the hand of the boy beside him. ‘He wants to be alone,’ he said.

‘Why does he want to?’ asked Aires, pulling his hand away from the old man’s clasp. Already it was a real fisherman’s hand, broad, and welted, and scarred from hauling the net.

‘Has he not talked to you about it?’ asked Manuel, looking searchingly at Aires.

'About what?' asked Aires brusquely. But then he admitted with reluctance: 'When we're lying in bed in the dark Tinoco often begins to talk . . . about coasts no ship has ever yet touched at; and about Africa, which is so big that no one knows how far it reaches; and about a priest who is also a king, and whose kingdom is supposed to lie somewhere in the south; and about the town on the edge of the desert which the Infante Henrique conquered from the Moors. Before he used to talk while we worked, but these days he only talks when we've done our work. And he is always talking about things no fisherman has any business with, because they take a man's mind off fishing.'

'He wants to go away,' said Manuel quietly.

'He has never said a word about that,' said Aires, eyeing Manuel inquiringly.

'It's a queer thing,' said Manuel, 'but the older I grow the better my eyes get. Every day I am finding it easier to see what people have in their minds.' He bent down to Aires. 'Tinoco is very fond of you; that's why it's hard for him,' he said. 'For a long time past he has been wanting to go away.'

'Why does he want to?' asked Aires, astonished. 'We've got a good cottage and a good boat, and we're getting on all right, and the other fishermen look on us as equals although Tinoco is not yet fourteen and I'm only twelve.'

'He's venturesome,' said Manuel warily. 'That's it.'

Aires was going to stand up, but Manuel pointed to the village. 'Look up at the cottages,' he said. 'They can hardly be seen though they're whitewashed. They're hidden behind fig and olive trees, tucked away in the shelter of the bay as if they were afraid of the storms from the north which blow so fiercely and always come without warning. But Tinoco is afraid of nothing. It annoys him that the cottages are hidden away, and I know well that he's looking out at the sea up there now. And it doesn't please him at all to see the boats looking as small as nutshells and their sails like tiny flames that every breath of wind can swell. And it annoys him that the fishermen don't venture beyond the shelter of the bay on to the sea which lies between Portugal and the coast which he dreams about.'

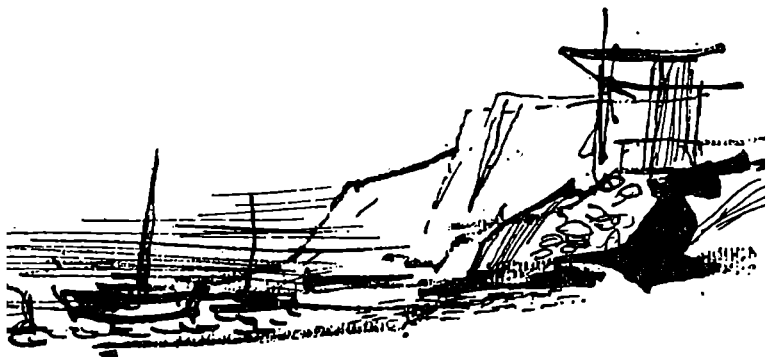


‘How can you know all that?’ asked Aires, a cold fear gripping his heart.

‘He has his father’s eyes,’ said Manuel. ‘Your father never used to come to me, and Tinoco never comes to me either. Men like your father and your brother make all their decisions alone. But your mother used to come to me, just as you do. And from her I know how the open sea called your father. It was only for love of your mother that he remained a fisherman. She lived in constant fear that he’d sail off to Africa. That worry killed your mother. And as soon as she was dead your father tried to sail away.’

‘And you believe that Tinoco will do that too?’

‘No, he won’t do it,’ said Manuel, without hesitation, ‘not while



he sees that you’re so fond of the village, and the cottage, and the pike with which you hook out the crabs and starfish, and the net which you cast, and the rope which holds your boat and keeps the north wind from driving it against the cliffs beyond which the open sea begins. Tinoco thinks the fishermen are a poor-spirited lot because they call their boats after saints and heroes—and are afraid of the sea.’

‘Our boat hasn’t got a high-sounding name any more,’ said Aires bitterly.

'I know what you're thinking now,' said Manuel quietly. 'You're thinking: While Father and the two of us were going out in the boat, it was called *Trinidad*—Trinity—and everyone thought that a grand name. But since we two have been going out in it and showing we need no help, all the fishermen call our boat the Barque of the Brothers.—Tinoco and Aires in their boat, that's what spells bliss for you—it is something you would never wish to give up, for anything in the world.'

'Why isn't the Barque of the Brothers enough for him too?' asked Aires sorrowfully.

'He knows as you do that the open sea is no place for a fishing boat. He dreams of a big ship. These times everyone is talking about the big ships in which Portuguese seafarers are setting sail from Lagos to explore the coasts of Africa.'

'But everyone says—and the priest says it too—that there's a cape which is called Cape Non because no one can sail out beyond it without going under. For the sea ends there, so they say, and beyond it is hell.' Aires stopped when he saw that Manuel was smiling.

'No one has seen hell yet,' said the old man. 'Have a good look at the people who talk about hell. They're afraid; *that's* hell. Tinoco isn't afraid. Up there he's looking out towards Lagos, the harbour from which the explorers' ships sail.'

'But Lagos can't be seen from up there,' objected Aires. 'The coast sticks out between here and Lagos. I know it does.'

'He sees Lagos,' said Manuel, as he gazed out at the sea.

Aires looked distrustfully into the old man's face. 'You've given me lots of useful hints about fishing,' he said, fervently. 'You've taught me how to play on your guitar, and you've always liked listening to me when I played to you in your cottage. But now you talk as if you didn't care one bit about either fishing or playing the guitar.'

'Listen to me, Aires,' began Manuel. 'If it came to this: that you could only keep one or the other—the boat or your brother . . .?'

'How can you ask such a thing?' In his distress Aires grasped

Manuel's wrinkled old hand. 'What am I to do? Tell me what I am to do!' he cried.

'It will come to you of itself,' said the white-haired old man. 'I am quite sure that it will come to you.'

Aires' eyes were fixed on the boat, which was rocking in the morning wind. 'I will never part from her,' he said resolutely. 'Tinoco may do or not do what he likes!'

'He'll remain here as long as the boat is here,' said Manuel definitely. 'As soon as you hoist the sail now he'll come. Wait till I clear off, then hoist it and you'll see, he'll come. He'll never let you down.'

Aires turned towards the village.

'Where are you going?' asked the old fisherman.

'I haven't looked after the goats yet.'

'Don't bother about your goats,' said Manuel. 'I can look after goats.' He began walking up the hill. 'Give the truant a good piece of your mind,' he called back. 'I hope you've enough fishermen's curses ready for that.'

'Plenty,' said Aires, but his throat felt dry.

He hoisted the sail as soon as Manuel could no longer see him; but he did not curse or make reproaches when he saw Tinoco coming. Tinoco was carrying the pike, and the bag of provisions was hanging from his shoulder. Aires had left them lying in the cottage. Without hurrying, Tinoco calmly arranged the implements in the boat, and looked over the sail and the net to see that they were all right, just as he did every morning that they sailed out. Then together they pulled in the anchor.

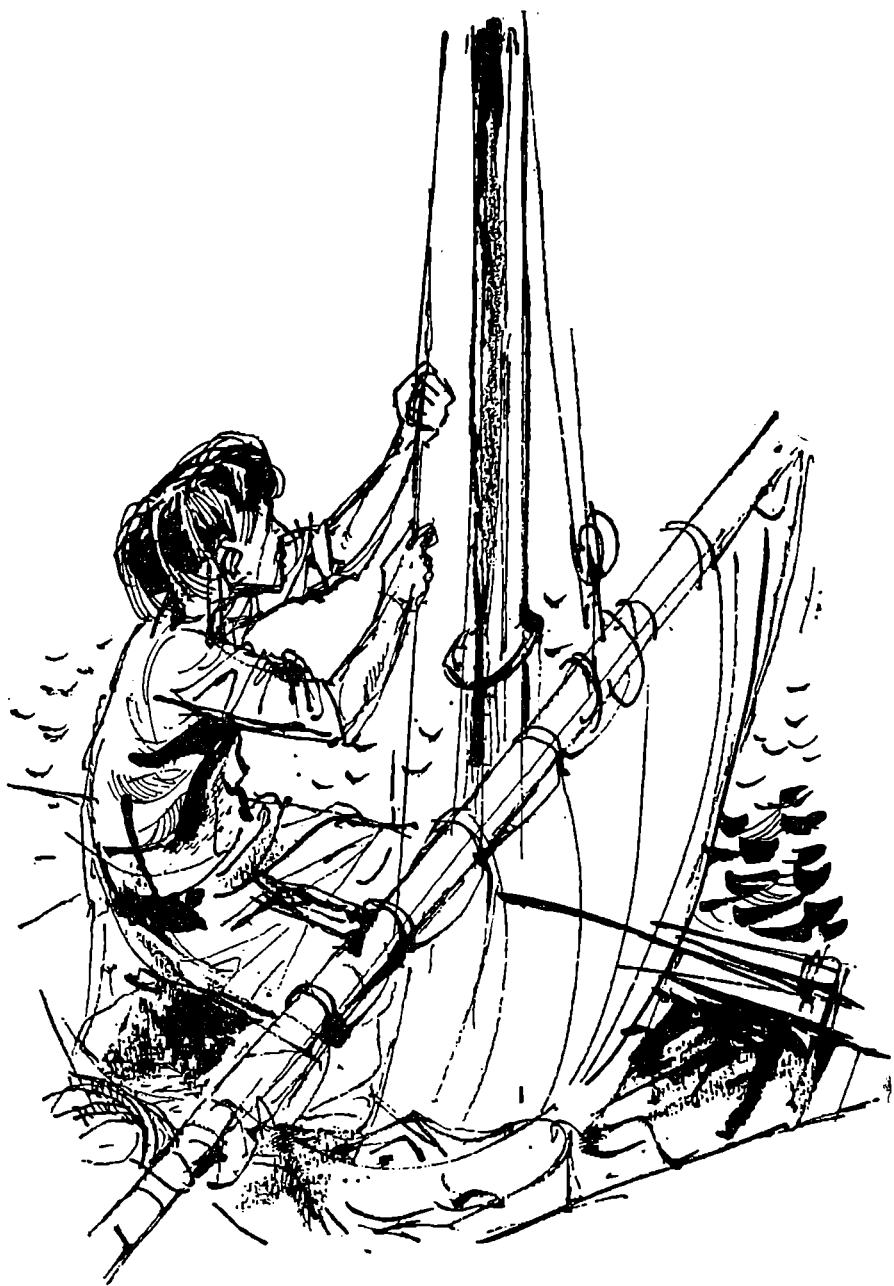
Aires suggested that they should fish close to the cliffs, and Tinoco agreed.

'I didn't feel like starting early this morning,' he began casually, as they were casting the net.

Annoyed at the careless tone which Tinoco assumed, Aires said reproachfully: 'You should have said something about it.'

Tinoco eyed him askance. 'I have often spoken about it,' he said quietly, 'but you have never listened.'

'I did listen,' said Aires defiantly, 'but you seem to have forgotten how it fared with Father.'



'I have not forgotten,' said Tinoco earnestly. 'Hardly a day passes that I do not speak with him.'

'You are trying to persuade yourself of something you would like to believe,' said Aires passionately, 'but only one thing is certain, and that is that the boat in which he tried to do it came back, and everyone in the village believes he wanted to give us a sign.'

'And you hold with such talk, do you?' Tinoco glanced at Aires scornfully. 'The wind veered round and drove the capsized boat back into the bay—nothing more is known for certain.'

'That's what you think,' said Aires angrily. 'And you also believe that out there, where Africa ends and the Dark Sea begins, ships can still sail onwards.' Aires was pale with excitement. 'I hate Africa because it lured Father away from us,' he continued, 'and if you go . . .'

'Don't let such ideas trouble you,' said Tinoco, trying to comfort his brother. 'I know where my place is as long as we have this boat and you are so fond of it.'

They went on fishing, and it was a lucky day for them. Within a short time a whole lot of fishes had gone into their net. While they were fishing Aires observed the reefs which formed a barrier around three-quarters of the bay. They stuck out of the water like the teeth of a monster animal.

The Barque of the Brothers returned home with a heavy catch. As Tinoco moored the boat he looked searchingly at the sky and said: 'It's possible that there may be a storm. The air feels like it.' He made sure that the knots which tied the Barque were tight enough. Then they brought their catch to the dealer who was waiting on the strand, and sold it for a good price.

The brothers noticed that there were hardly any people at the place where the fish was bought. But a lot of noise was to be heard from the village, and Tinoco asked the dealer what it was all about.

The dealer laughed. 'Just go and have a look at the crazy fellow up there. I've run across him several times already. The daft fellow has been everywhere!'

'Where has he been?' asked Tinoco eagerly.

The fish dealer continued readily: 'He was there when they discovered the islands on which there is dragons' blood; and the country where horses live in the rivers. And he was with the Infantes when they went to Africa to conquer the town of the seven hills.'

'Was he in Africa?' Tinoco asked, with burning eyes.

'I wouldn't mind betting that he was also in Noah's Ark, and that he was present when the Red Sea was divided.' When the dealer saw the disappointment in Tinoco's face, he said: 'Go on up there! You'll find him in front of the inn.'

The roadway in front of the inn was narrow. It was packed tight with men, women and children. The brothers could see the crowd and hear the noise and laughter from a long way off. Now and then there was a moment's quietness, and they could hear a man talking in a rough voice. Tinoco and Aires pushed their way through until they were able to see the man who was talking. He was sitting there, his shirt open, gesticulating with big red hands. His hair and beard were red too. In fact, he looked as if he was on fire.

'It's time you came!' cried a fisherman to the brothers. 'He has more stories than a dog has fleas!'

'As many stories as there are grains of sand in the sea!' cried another fisherman.

'Stories, did you say?' asked the redbear indignantlly. 'I was there, I tell you! I was everywhere!'

'We believe you!' someone said, and they all laughed.

The redbear took a draught from a big tankard which stood in front of him. He looked out over the tankard at his many listeners. 'Sand from the sea!' he said mysteriously. 'It all began with sand.'

'And you were there!' jeered another.

'No,' said the redbear, and his eyes looked stern beneath the bushy brows. 'But I heard Captain Furtado boasting about it, and as I couldn't believe it, I went to Prior Camillo myself and promised to confess my sins to him, and as he was as keen on my confessing my sins as I was on hearing his story, he told me



everything.' The redbear held up his hand in a gesture of affirmation. 'Not a scrap of Africa would belong to Portugal today if Prior Camillo had not got the idea about the sand.'

'Well, tell us about it at last!' the listeners urged impatiently.

'Very well. You all know that Joao our King has five sons, and when the time came for the three eldest, Duarte, Pedro and Henrique, to be made knights, the King decided to hold a tournament lasting a whole year to give the Infantes the opportunity of distinguishing themselves. But the Infante Henrique, the youngest of the three, said: "Why thrust Christians out of their saddles with blunt lances? It would be better to show the heathen that our swords bite." And the King's Treasurer said at once: "A year's tournament costs more money than to conquer all Africa!" And as the King had been wanting for a long time to wash away in the blood of heathens the sins he had committed against his Christian brothers, he consented to the Infante Henrique's plan of capturing their best town, Ceuta, the town of the seven hills,

from the people of Mauretania, and turning the mosques into churches of the true Faith. A fleet was made ready, but the King wanted first of all to find out how best to attack Ceuta, for it was considered the strongest bulwark of the Saracens. So Captain Furtado and Prior Camillo offered to investigate the town. They suggested to the King that he should send them in a state galley to the widowed Queen of Sicily, to ask her hand for his son Duarte. They knew that nothing could come of it because the Queen was thrice the age of the Infante. But on the way there and back they could call in at Ceuta and have a friendly look at the Moors, and at the same time spy out what they wanted to know. So that was what they did.

'And they returned to the port of Lisbon and rode straight up to the King's palace at Cintra to report to the King and the Infantes. The Captain knew exactly how the currents run in the sea by Ceuta and how the desert winds sweep into the city, but he found it hard to put this into words. He said everything the wrong way round, and the King got angry and was on the point of rejecting the whole plan, especially as the plague was raging in Portugal at the time and even the Queen had been attacked by it.

'Then, to everyone's astonishment, Prior Camillo asked for a bag of sand. The sand was brought, and the Prior spilled it out. With his own hands he formed mountains, and valleys, and a headland, and he said: "That is what Africa looks like round about the town of the seven hills." Then he asked for a dish of water, and with it he made the Bay of Ceuta. And finally he asked for three pounds of beans. With these beans he marked out the walls, and it could be seen plainly where the strongest towers were and where the fortress, the Almina, was situated, and where the gates and the accessible points were. And the King and the Infantes were seized with a fierce warlike ardour, just as if they already had Ceuta before their eyes. And the Queen, who was a pious woman, gave her blessing to the Infantes in the work which they intended to carry out, and she also gave them three beautiful swords. And when a sudden storm assailed the palace, making the Infantes feel as if they were already on a swaying ship, and the

King's counsellors turned pale and asked what such a terrible roaring from the heavens might signify, Philippa the Queen said: "It is a wind from the north. It will fill the sails of your ships and speed them to Africa. Heaven is indicating that it is with you." And raising her eyes and her hands to Heaven, she prophesied that the Infantes would sail across to Africa with all the ships on the 25th of July, 1415, the Feast of Saint James.

'Everyone was very much surprised at this, for it was easy to count the days until that great feast day, and there was still much to be got ready. But the coopers set to work with such energy that in one day they made as many barrels as formerly they made in a week. The butchers pickled an enormous number of oxen. The fishwives prepared so much fish that there was not an inch of ground in the harbours which was not glistening with the scales. And the furnaces glowed, and the stamping hammers of the smiths and the coiners resounded day and night. Cannon, scaling ladders and rammers were brought on board.

'The news that Portugal was preparing a campaign had spread to every country, and as the destination of the expedition had been kept secret, many men eager for adventure arrived on the scene, and so great was the enthusiasm, so the Prior assured me, that even the dead longed that their bones might be clothed in flesh again to enable them to accompany their sons and grandsons on the expedition against the infidel.'

For a few moments there was silence in front of the inn.

'He was there!' whispered Tinoco to his brother.

Obviously Redbeard had sharp ears. He looked at Tinoco and said: 'I was no older than you are when I became a cabin-boy on one of the ships. And I was on the ship which brought the three Infantes, Duarte, Pedro and Henrique, on their expedition to Africa. It was the Barque of the Brothers.'

Tinoco nudged Aires. Now he had eyes only for the man there in the midst of them, and he bent forward listening.

'At first,' continued the redbear, 'it looked as if everything was only prepared for a great festival. Although the Queen had died, we wore brightly coloured clothes and the ships were decorated with pennants—a forest of flags pushed its way towards

the coast of Africa. And when we arrived in front of Ceuta at night, the fleet turned into a floating town of light, and the Moors tried to imitate us and lit lights on all the roofs and turrets. A storm put an end to the magic scene. It scattered our ships like chaff. The soldiers and sailors began to despair. Yet what seemed a disaster proved to be a dispensation of Providence. For now Sala Ben Sala, the Commandant of Ceuta, believed that it was not his town which was to be attacked, and he sent home all the auxiliary troops which had hurried from the country of Barbary and the Kingdom of Fez. And so, next morning, when the Infantes rallied their fleet and landed with all their forces, they found the town undefended, and were able to take both town and citadel. And I myself saw spices from India spilled in the streets, and silk garments, and carpets, and golden vessels lying in the squares. And I saw how the Infante's soldiers hadn't hands enough to take all the treasures that were there.'

The rebeard stared in front of him as if he saw the conquered city before him once more. The light slowly left his face. In a changed voice he suddenly said: 'Only one person did I see who took nothing.'

'Who was that?' asked many voices at once. 'And why didn't he take anything?'

'Because he wanted more,' said the rebeard dismally.

'Do tell us who it was!' urged one man.

'Believe me, it is not for your ears.' The rebeard looked around the circle. 'You are fishermen and you love your village, and you like sailing in your boats, don't you?' he said.

'That's so,' a few of them admitted. 'It's a peaceful life here.'

'I thought so,' said the stranger; and then he repeated: 'It wouldn't be for your ears.' He looked searchingly from one face to another until his eyes met Tinoco's. Without taking his eyes off the tall boy he stood up and said in a friendly way: 'I'd like to stay with you until I set off on my road again.'

'You can stay with any of us,' said one of the fishermen, 'for as long as you like.'

The stranger shook his head. 'He alone has seen that I really

was there'; then, turning to Tinoco: 'Show me to your cottage, lad,' he said.

'It's farther up,' said Tinoco, embarrassed. Then he went on ahead with Aires.

'You're of the same family, are you?' inquired the redbear, and he scrutinized Aires, who was so much smaller than Tinoco.

'Aires is my brother.'

'And what is your name?'

'Tinoco.'

The others looked after the stranger with mistrust. He had broad shoulders and walked with a stoop. Now that he had turned his back on them, they began to regard him with suspicion.

'Who are you, anyway?' one of them called out after him.

The redbear turned round and looked the questioner up and down.

'Where do you come from?' another wanted to know.

'From hell,' said the stranger so loud that everyone could hear him. He laughed boisterously. Then turning to Tinoco he slapped him on the shoulder and said: 'It's the absolute truth, but you two need have no fear of me.'

'We're not afraid of you,' said Tinoco.

When they were out of hearing of the others the redbear blurted out: 'My name is Luis and I'm a sailor who no longer sails. I have my reasons for not telling my name to everyone.' Walking behind the brothers, he climbed silently up to the cottage.

'A nice home!' he said when he entered and looked around. The cottage consisted of only two little rooms joined by a door which always stood open. The brothers had their bed in the inner room. In the outer one there was a fireplace over which copper utensils hung. There were, besides, two stools, a table and a bench. 'It's good to have a home such as this,' said Luis, who remained standing by the table, although Aires had long since offered him a seat. 'It's a long time since I had one.' As he said this he wiped his eyes and a shadow passed over his face. Then he offered to prepare the evening meal with the fishes which Aires took out of the provision bag. He was an expert cook and he and

the boys ate a tasty supper of baked fish and wine. While they ate Luis told of foreign parts.

While Tinoco was devouring every word Aires tried to penetrate the ardent face and the stories with which the guest was enrapturing Tinoco. The stranger looked like a hunted man and sometimes his eyes strayed to the door as if he feared that someone would come to fetch him. Aires decided not to close an eye that night.

It was late when the brothers fixed up a bed near the hearth for the stranger and went to their own bed in the adjoining room. Aires would have liked very much to have whispered a few words to his brother; but he recalled how the sailor had caught Tinoco's whisper even in the crowd of people, and now in the silent darkness the slightest creaking in the woodwork made a terrible noise. The darkness was eerie. Stars, cold as the eyes of fishes, shone through the window as if eager to intrude, and there were dark islands between the stars; and everything above was listening—or so it seemed to Aires. Later on it became quieter. Aires remembered how carefully Tinoco had fastened up the boat. He saw Tinoco distinctly before him making sure that the knot was tight enough. His last thoughts before he fell asleep were of the boat which no storm could tear loose.

Aires woke up and heard whispering in the kitchen. He could hear every word through the open door.

'I have many things to ask you, but I couldn't get away until he was asleep,' Aires heard Tinoco whispering by the sailor's sleeping-place.

'I expected that you'd come, but not your brother.'

'What made you think that?' asked Tinoco eagerly.

'You have the hunger in your eyes which I had once.'

Aires propped himself up on his elbows with the utmost caution and pushed his head out into the darkness, which was now impenetrable. He felt anxiety for his brother taking hold of him again and at the same time a violent repugnance rose up in him against this man with the red beard who forced his way into other peoples' cottages apparently in order to incite them to dangerous plans.

‘Why do you no longer sail?’ Tinoco wanted to know. ‘Has the ship in which you used to sail been shipwrecked?’

‘I am shipwrecked,’ Aires heard the sailor reply.

‘I don’t understand,’ admitted Tinoco.

‘Don’t bother about me,’ said Luis. ‘I’m finished, but you, on the contrary, still have your life before you.’

‘I envy you,’ said Tinoco. ‘You have experienced many wonderful things.’

‘Indeed I have,’ Luis agreed. ‘I was even in hell itself.’ The sailor spoke in a toneless voice, but every word was like a sharp little blow in the stillness which hung about the door. ‘The conqueror of the city of the seven hills is the driving force behind all the expeditions to Africa. It is not enough for him to have the city on the edge of the desert in his clutches. He wants all Africa, for Africa has bewitched him.’

‘You are speaking of the Infante Henrique?’

‘Who else? You should see him. He has black burning eyes. Those who know him call him the Carthaginian, the black Infante. He hunted us into hell. You see, he has a little crowd around him who are blindly devoted to him. There, where Portugal stretches a stony hand out into the sea, he has his house up on a cliff which has a cleft in it that reaches down into the sea. He never sails himself. Like a spider he crouches in his hide, pondering over his plans; he wants to draw the whole of Africa into his web. He draws the life-blood from everyone who enters his service. Be on your guard against him! You must know, he is a sceptic. He explained to us what is written in the old books, and he openly admitted that he considers much that is written to be fantasy. He does not even believe in the Bible where it tells of the ends of the earth. But it is written that somewhere in the North the earth ceases and people ride on reindeer there. Beyond that there is ice and twilight, nothing more. And in the South—so it is written—there is a Cape called Non, and whoever sails round it does not know if he will ever return, for beyond it fire flows from the sun on to the earth. And in the middle of the Dark Sea there is a mountain which draws the iron nails and rivets from the ships which come too close to it.’

'I have heard that,' said Tinoco, 'but I did not believe it.'

'I was there,' said the sailor dismally. 'It was last year. The year 1433 was the year that finished me.'

'You were at Cape Non, then?' asked Tinoco excitedly.

'We saw the gates of hell,' whispered Luis. 'The Infante had sent out Gil Eannes, the pilot whom he trusts most next to Nuno Tristão. He gave Gil his best ship, the Barque of the Brothers. There were only fourteen of us. For three weeks we sailed with a favourable wind. Then we saw the Cape in front of us. It was no Cape. It was a terrifying wall rising out of the sea, which shone like gall and blood. Eannes searched for a way through. Pillars of water were towering up to the sky. We saw the air filled with huge creatures. Craters gaped down on us from above, and out of the fire-veined darkness which hung over us hot floods broke forth. We were enveloped in steam; we crouched on our knees praying, and the Barque trembled and drifted into invisible snares. Eannes vowed never again to tempt Providence if we escaped from the cauldron of destruction. The miracle came to pass. We got back to Lagos.'

'And we went up to the house of the Infante which stands on the cliff of Sagres. He listened to the whole story with a face of stone. Then he said: "Eannes, I believe you when you tell me it was hard. It is possible that on the coast of Africa there are thunderstorms such as we in Portugal do not know. But I will forget what you have told me about having seen hell. You have been listening to seamen's tales such as are told by Flemish sailors who have no knowledge of the compass by which one finds one's way on the sea. I would not like to lose you, Gil. Therefore, go back to the Barque and try it again, and as sure as there is a God in Heaven you will find that it is not hell but land which awaits you behind Cape Non." That is what the Infante said.'

'And Eannes? What did he do?' asked Tinoco, so lost in wonder that his words could hardly be understood.

'He gave in to him,' said Luis in a gloomy voice. 'He is on the way there now, and hell will devour the thirteen. I saw the Barque of the Brothers gliding out of Lagos harbour. Since then

I've been wandering about.' Luis heaved a sigh. Then he said vehemently: 'He never sails himself. He has the crazy stone with which he makes the needles move wildly—I have seen it. It's a black stone from that mountain which makes the ships capsize.'

Aires kept his eyes fixed on the door all the time. Now he could distinguish its outline.

'I've nothing more to tell you,' he heard Luis saying. 'But I'd have told you all this even if you had not come to me. For I saw that you have the same longing which urged me on. Don't give in to it! You have a boat, and you have a brother who has calm eyes. He could not live without you.'

Tinoco did not reply.

'Perhaps you don't believe that it was all like that?' asked Luis.

'I believe you. But I wish I were there this time.'

'On the Barque of the Brothers?'

'Yes,' said Tinoco. 'I believe that the Infante is right. They will get through.'

'Be on your guard against him!' said Luis, dismayed. 'He has already begun to draw you into his web.'

'I would go this very day,' said Tinoco, depressed, 'but I cannot as long as we have the boat in which Father tried it. The boat came back without him, and my brother believes that Father sent it back as a sign to us.' Then Tinoco said bitterly: 'That is our Barque of the Brothers, just good enough for fishing in the bay! And I am tied to it. When Mother was dying she made me promise never to abandon the boat which Aires loves so much. Aires doesn't know about this. That is how things are with me.'

'Now go back to bed!' said Luis.

'He doesn't know how Africa is drawing me.'

'Perhaps he does know.'

'If he did he wouldn't be sleeping now. Everything which holds me here—the cottage, and the boat, and the net—they're all a torture to me!'

Tinoco stood up. Aires heard him, and he lay back quietly on the bed. When Tinoco pushed in beside him Aires noticed that his brother was dead tired, and he fell asleep almost at once. And now, when all three were lying down quietly, Aires heard the

threatening noises outside, which were gradually increasing. That is the storm which Tinoco felt coming, thought Aires. It's on us now.

Aires waited until strong gusts of wind began to buffet the cottage. Then he got up. With storm raging he could slip out unheard.

Outside dawn was already breaking. Aires ran down through the village as he had done the morning before when looking for Tinoco. He ran because he was afraid that if he stopped he might lose heart. The boat was jerking to and fro under the raging wind; the knot had become so tight that for quite a long while Aires tried in vain to loosen it. His fingers began to hurt. At last he drew the sharp blade of his knife through the taut rope. It broke with a dull sound and splashed into the water. The boat began to hop about on the waves. Then it started riding away, quicker and quicker, from the shore. The storm forced it towards the rocks. Aires took a long time to get up to the village again. He had too little breath left to run. He was utterly exhausted. When he had reached the cottage he turned round and looked down into the bay. The fishing-boats were lying quietly one beside the other at their moorings. Far out in the bay one forlorn little boat was driving relentlessly towards the reefs around which the water looked like snow.

When Aires got back to the cottage he noticed at once that the sleeping place by the hearth was deserted. But Tinoco was fast asleep. Aires lay down beside him.

'Your boat! Wake up! Your boat!' Some of the fishermen had forced their way into the cottage, and one of them was shaking Tinoco and Aires to waken them.

Tinoco sat up. 'What about our boat?' he asked.

'You haven't one any more,' said the fisherman, frantically agitated.

Another man was holding out to the brothers a bit of the anchor rope which he had salvaged along with the anchor. 'This is yours,' he said. 'We were below seeing to our boats, and yours is gone!'



Tinoco noticed the cut at once. 'That wasn't the storm,' he said.

'It was the red-headed devil,' said one of the men. 'He's gone. No one else did it.'

'Tell them to get out,' said Aires.

Tinoco now looked down at his brother. There was a new expression in Aires' face which startled him.

'You can go,' said Tinoco to the fishermen. 'It's all right.'

'One of you can come with me,' said a fisherman, taken aback. 'I can take one of you.'

'And I can take the other,' another man offered.

'We'll always sail together,' declared Tinoco.

The fishermen stood around, disconcerted.

'What else do you want?' Aires shouted at them. '*Do* get out!'

The fisherman who had brought the rope let it fall. Then they went out. Tinoco picked up the rope and stared at the smooth cut. 'But what about the cottage?' he asked quietly.

'It won't fall down,' said Aires.

'And your goats?'

'Manuel can look after them.'

'I'll go and tell him that everything is different now.'

'You needn't. It was he who put me up to do it.'

'Manuel?'

'Yes, he assured me he could look after goats. He'll mind them till we come back.'

Tinoco now looked at his brother with burning eyes. 'Believe me, the Barque of the Brothers isn't finished yet. We'll sail in the Barque of the Brothers,' he said.

'It's all the same on what boat we sail.'

'No,' said Tinoco obstinately. 'It will be either the Barque of the Brothers or no barque.'

Through the door which the fishermen had left open behind them a shaft of light the height of a man streamed into the front room, making it look quite big.

The brothers took little with them—just a small bundle each. Tinoco stuck the purse which contained their savings into his pocket and slung a bag of provisions over his shoulders, while Aires did the same with the big round wineskin with a beak.

As they came by Manuel's cottage the old man was standing at the door. He had the guitar in his hand.

'Here, take it!' he said to Aires. 'It's of no use here. My fingers have got too old.'

Aires hesitated to take it, but the old man forced it on him.

'I'll take great care of it,' promised Aires.

'It's three days to Lagos,' said Manuel, 'no more than that.'

II

The Doves

THE brothers asked the way now and then, and everyone knew the road to Lagos. They were now in the third day of their journey. This third day too was scorching hot. Tinoco and Aires kept looking out for shade, but there was none except in the olive-groves away from the road, and the brothers did not want to waste time by going off their route. From the hilltops windmills, dazzling white towers with restless wings, waved to them over fields and meadows which were green only in the early morning hours. During the daytime the undulating land lay withered up as if under ashes.

'We'll be there today,' said Tinoco encouragingly.

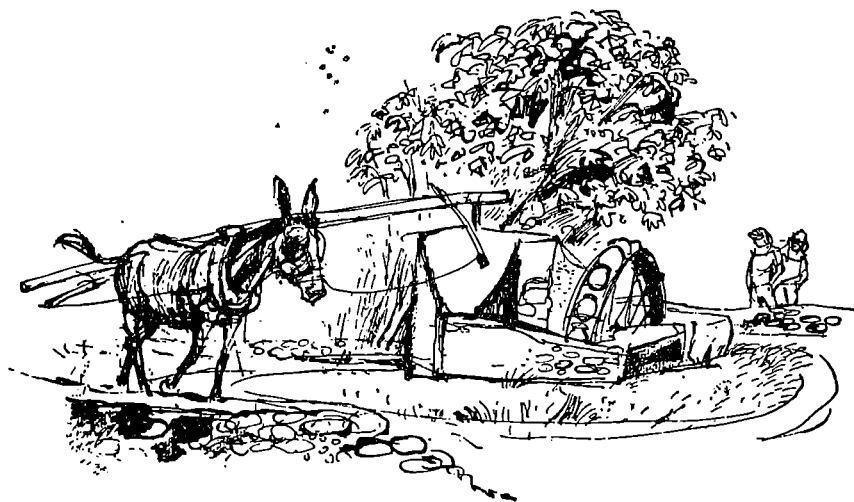
'It's a good thing the journey won't be much longer,' said Aires.

Tinoco peered in front of him. 'There's a tree over there,' he said.

And then the brothers heard someone singing in a shrill voice. They walked on in the direction of the song. A boy of about ten years of age was lying in the scanty shade of the olive tree, and he was singing a sad song which soared up through the green branches into the scorching sky.

'We are thirsty,' said Tinoco, when the singing did not stop.

At this the song did stop and the boy sat up. He looked at the two brothers through half-shut eyes, and pointed a bit farther on.



There a donkey which was tied to a horizontal pole was moving round and round in a circle. It was yoked to a winch by which water was being hauled up from a well.

'Pardon me, Senhores,' said the boy with exaggerated politeness. 'I have to lie here and sing, because if I don't, the donkey won't go on, and then there will be no water; and the fields are thirsty just as you are, your Excellencies. So please help yourselves!'

'*Muito obrigado!* Many thanks,' said Tinoco and Aires. They went over to the well to drink. The water was delicious, but the brothers felt sorry for the donkey which had to walk around continually in a circle and listen to the sad song at the same time.

An hour later they found themselves once more in front of a donkey. It was standing in the shade of the windmill up to which Tinoco and Aires had gone because they were hungry. They looked up at the mill, the wings of which were turning against the wind. They were powerful wings, spanned with sail-cloth, and the beam-ends were tied together with cords on which little jugs made of baked clay were hanging.

With these pitchers the mill drew a song out of the air. It was a dreary song, and when the wind rose it sounded like the howling of wolves.

'I wouldn't like to have to be here always,' Aires admitted.

'So much sail and so much wind, and never to move from the spot,' said Tinoco contemptuously.

A woman came out of the mill. She was carrying a heavy sack and she went up to the donkey. When she caught sight of the two boys she put down the sack, and only now, as she straightened herself up, could they see how tall and thin she was. She looked at the brothers sharply, and then said in a friendly way: 'I'm the miller, in case you're looking for work. I could just do with two boys like you.'

'We have something else in mind,' said Aires, embarrassed.

'But we'll willingly help a little,' Tinoco hastened to add, for he had noticed a look of displeasure crossing the woman's face.

'What are you intending to do?' she inquired distrustfully.

'We're on the way to Lagos,' said Aires evasively.

'Then I know what you're up to!' cried the woman. Her eyes flashed angrily. 'You're going out to sea—the accursed sea!'

'Who has cursed the sea?' asked Tinoco, tossing his head.

'I have,' said the tall woman, 'and all of us women who had husbands whom the sea has driven crazy; and all of us who have sons——' The woman went up to the brothers. 'And your mother too—I know that!—she's now cursing the sea, that boundless stretch of stinking water which destroys everything.' She pointed across the fields. 'If sea-water floods the land it no longer bears crops. The mills have to stand still and perish in the winds.'

'There's fish in the sea,' said Aires, trying to pacify her. 'We are fishermen.'

'You're good-for-nothing fellows who should be in your home!' cried the woman. 'You should be with your mother!'

'We no longer have a mother,' said Aires.

'Oh, what a terrible misfortune!' lamented the woman. 'Come into the mill; come and eat! And stay here with me! I'll be a mother to you.'

Aires and Tinoco looked at their shoes, which were worn out from the road.

'You wouldn't be bored here,' continued the woman. 'I have two just like you.'

The brothers looked up at her, astonished. 'Where are they?' asked Aires quickly.

With a sad look the woman pointed up to the narrow slits which could be seen beneath the roof.

'Up there?' asked Tinoco incredulously. 'That's more like a place for bats, it seems to me.'

'And for my two doves!' said the woman severely. 'I've locked them up there for the day because I caught them talking about the harbour again! Up there they won't hear anything but the grinding of the millstones and the crunching of the corn which is being ground into flour. Up there they'll lose their wish for looking over to Lagos.'

'How far more is it to Lagos?' asked Tinoco cautiously.

'Oh, if it were only two years' distance instead of two hours!' lamented the woman. 'Our land is too near to the sea, which is drawing all the men away since the Infante started making voyages to Africa!' She pointed to the donkey which was patiently waiting for the sack. 'Only they stay here—only the donkeys.'

The brothers tried not to laugh. They peered up at the narrow slits. 'What are the names of the two doves?' inquired Tinoco, trying to look as serious as possible.

'Pedro and Paolo,' said the woman. 'I'll hang millstones round their necks if they don't stop talking about the sea and the accursed Barque.'

'A barque—and is it accursed too?' asked Tinoco, astonished.

The thin woman raised her arms. 'The Barque with which the brothers sailed to Africa, the Barque which the Infante sends out again and again, because he wants to get the kingdom of Prester John, who is lord of the Mountains of the Moon and guardian of the Earthly Paradise. But God has placed hell in front of the Paradise because of the sins of man, and whoever attempts to sail out beyond the Cape which is called Non is guilty of a crime, and his white skin becomes black for evermore. And marked with this black skin he will appear be-

fore his Judge on the Day of Judgement, and God will reject him!

'We have heard about that,' said Tinoco, unshaken. 'There was a man with us in our village who had been to that Cape in the Barque of the Infante. We also know about the mountain which they say draws all the iron out of the ships.'

The woman let her arms drop. 'Oh, you lost ones!' she cried. 'The sea has robbed you of your little bit of reason.' Then she looked at the brothers with eyes full of compassion and talked as if she had her own children before her. 'The sea is teeming with dangers. From its black depths storms arise which no ships can survive but the ships of the pirates who have their safe hides. No one who sails far out escapes the pirates. They are worse than devils.'

'We'll be on our guard,' said Tinoco.

'Get on then, you doves!' cried the woman angrily. She turned her face towards the wind. 'Oh, this terrible north wind, which is driving so many to the south since the Black Infante has been squatting there on his rock! But I will steal the sails from his ships and cover the wings of windmills with them! I will compel the north wind to turn them so that corn turns into flour!'

She suddenly stopped, went into the house, and brought out bread and cheese, which she gave to the brothers. She said nothing more. Tears were running down her weather-beaten cheeks as the brothers thanked her and went their way.

They felt no inclination for food. Silently they continued their journey. At last they saw a hill in front of them.

'We will rest there,' suggested Tinoco. 'Behind it we won't be able to see the mill any longer.'

'You're ungrateful,' said Aires reproachfully.

They sat down in the scanty shade of some juniper bushes and began to eat.

'She's very fond of her children,' said Aires sympathetically.

'Doves!' said Tinoco scornfully.

'She's certainly a good mother to the two of them.'

Tinoco looked at Aires challengingly. 'Have you ever seen doves which were not allowed to fly?' he asked.

Aires continued to eat in silence.

'Perhaps you'd like to join them—behind the slits?'

'I didn't find it very homely at the mill,' admitted Aires.

'It would be enough to make anyone run away,' said Tinoco angrily. 'I'm surprised that the two "doves" don't do so.'

Suddenly Aires looked up. 'There's someone about,' he said.

'Where?'

'Behind the bushes.'

'There are footsteps in the sand,' said Tinoco excitedly.

At this moment two boys emerged from the bushes; their shirts were covered all over with dust.

'Well done!' cried Tinoco, who grasped at once who were in front of him. 'How did you manage it?'

'Mother has a lot to do,' said one of them.

'Are you Pedro?' inquired Aires.

'I'm Pedro,' said the other one.

Paolo asked eagerly: 'You want to go to Lagos, don't you?'

Aires nodded.

'But the Barque hasn't returned yet,' continued Paolo.

'Do you know that for sure?'

'Nothing else has been talked about in this region for the last two months.'

'At the Port you should ask for a man named Lanzarote,' advised Pedro. 'He is looking for crew. Lanzarote is one of the Infante's captains. He's going to sail off with several ships as soon as the Barque of the Brothers comes back.'

'We're only waiting for that,' said Tinoco.

'Will you have something to eat?' said Aires. 'Your mother was so kind——'

'No, eat it yourselves!' said Pedro. 'You have a lot before you.'

'We envy you,' said Paolo, 'because you've already got so far.'

'We no longer have a mother,' said Aires. 'That's why we can do it.'

Pedro and Paolo looked in front of them glumly.

'How old are you?' asked Tinoco, in a matter-of-fact way.

'He's ten and I'm eleven,' said Pedro.

'What's worrying you, then?' asked Tinoco sympathetically. 'I'm almost fourteen, so it's about time for me.'

The brothers learned a great deal from Pedro and Paolo; above all, that there were captains and pilots at the harbour and that the captains were gentlemen of property who expected to make a profit on the voyages; the pilots on the other hand were men who understood all about ships and wanted to discover as much as possible.

'Pilots—those must be the Infante's men,' surmised Aires.

'The Infante has captains in his service too,' said Pedro. 'He needs money, and he takes men who stake something. Lanzarote is not a coward. He doesn't look like one; he looks like a fox.'

'Your mother is very strong,' said Aires as they took their leave. 'We saw her carrying a full sack, and all by herself.'

'We two carry full sacks as easy as fun,' said Pedro. 'Would you like to see us doing it some time?'

'We're quite sure that you can,' Tinoco assured them.

Aires searched in his pockets and took out a mussel shell which was especially beautiful. 'So that you'll think of us sometimes,' he said.

'We'll do that in any case,' said Paolo, taking the shell.

III

An Admiral and Two Pilots

LANZAROTE was not to be found at the harbour, although the brothers searched for him at all the landing-places at which ships were tied. Many of the people they saw about the ships had foxy faces, but they always turned out to be traders who were negotiating the purchase of shipments. The seamen had not the faces of foxes.

The brothers were surprised at the number of ships which were lying in Lagos harbour, and at the number of languages the sailors spoke. There were ships from England and Flanders, Germany and Sicily and Venice. And when they inquired the origin of an unusually beautiful ship, they learned to their astonishment that it was a Saracen ship, a *dhow*, which the King of Granada had sent from the East with merchandise.

'Are Saracens not our enemies, then?' asked the brothers.

'Only when there's a war on,' they were told, 'but if there's always war even kings get tired of it.'

'Do ships come from Africa too?' Tinoco inquired.

'Indeed they do,' said the sailor. 'The King of Fez and the King of Mauretania like to do business too when they're not in the humour for war. Three days ago a *dhow* from Mauretania was here.'

'Where are the ships which sail to Africa?'

The sailor looked askance at Tinoco. 'Yonder there by the wharf,' he said. 'That's the African fleet.'

The brothers peered over towards the wharf. They could distinguish ships there—ships which you could see through.

‘But those are only skeletons,’ cried Aires, taken aback.

‘And that’s what they’ll remain, too,’ said the sailor, laughing, ‘though Lanzarote is really no church mouse, but owns a lot of property. Moreover, he is principal tax-collector and almoner of Lagos, and as he collects plenty of taxes and distributes few alms, he can’t lack money.’

‘What does he lack, then?’ inquired Tinoco.

‘Faith,’ said the sailor. ‘He has given up hope that Gil Eannes will return with the Barque of the Brothers. We have all given up hope. She’s already away a full month longer than the last time.’

‘Does no one believe any longer that she’ll come back?’ asked Tinoco, horrified.

‘Not one except the Infante. Every week he rides over from Sagres, his town, to Lagos.’

The sailor pointed towards the stretch of coast which jutted out into the sea. Far out they saw a man standing.

‘And that man out there, he still believes,’ said the sailor. ‘He’s Nuno Tristão, Gil’s friend. He wanted to go with him at any cost, but the Infante wouldn’t allow him.’

‘Why not?’ asked Tinoco impatiently.

‘Because next to Gil, Nuno is his best pilot,’ the sailor explained. ‘The Infante sends only one at a time into the fire.’

‘Into the fire?’ asked Aires, astonished.

‘That’s only a manner of speech,’ said the sailor, and he winked at the brothers as he walked off.

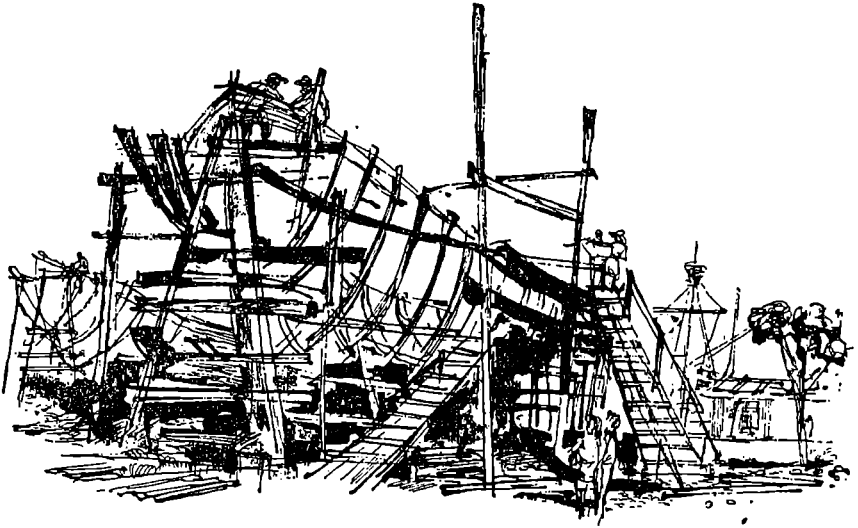
Tinoco and Aires went to observe at closer range the lonely man who was standing like a sentry on the farthest rock of the coast. As if he had felt their eyes on him, the Pilot turned round towards them.

‘What are you looking for out here?’ he asked them.

‘We’re waiting for the Barque which the Infante has sent out.’

‘Just look at them!’ said the Pilot. ‘Another pair of lunatics.’ He looked out over the sea again.

‘Our father tried it,’ said Aires.



The Pilot looked as though he were listening, but he did not say anything.

‘We met someone who was there the last time,’ continued Tinoco, coming to the point.

‘Luis, wasn’t it?’ said Nuno Tristão at once. ‘Or did he not tell you his name?’

‘His name was Luis,’ Tinoco blurted out.

‘He roams about everywhere,’ said the Pilot contemptuously. ‘He’s afraid the Infante will call him to account—the disloyal fellow. As if the Infante had nothing better to do than to run after a coward! The worst of it is that he talks about things he should keep to himself,’ concluded Nuno angrily.

‘In front of the inn, when many people were listening to him, he said nothing about the Cape,’ said Aires. ‘He only told us two.’

‘Anyone who enters the service of the Infante,’ said the Pilot seriously, ‘promises to be silent about everything he sees and hears. This Luis lost courage—that’s excusable—but he talked, and that’s why his conscience gives him no peace. He wants others to share his fears. But it seems as if he hadn’t any luck with you.’

'We already intended to come here,' said Tinoco at once.

The Pilot looked at the brothers with his dark eyes. 'For the past month I have been here every day,' he said slowly. 'For how long will you watch with me?'

'Until the Barque returns,' said Tinoco, without lowering his eyes.

'That's a pretty speech,' said the Pilot derisively. He scrutinized the two boys in a way which made them prefer to move off.

They felt miserable as they returned to Lagos. Darkness had fallen quickly. They turned into an inn and ordered some food. The innkeeper looked at them distrustfully when they asked if they could stay the night.

'My rooms are all taken,' said the innkeeper, 'but you may sleep behind there on the benches when the customers are gone.'

There were not many customers and they went soon. Aires and Tinoco stretched themselves out on the benches. The innkeeper bolted the door and quenched the lamps, all but one. The yellow light from it fell on his covetous face, and he began to count the money which the day had brought him. The coins jingled, and so at first the innkeeper did not hear someone knocking at the window. When the knocking was repeated he gave a bad-tempered grunt and looked up from his money-counting.

'It is we,' said a voice of someone obviously used to giving orders.

The innkeeper seemed to recognize it. He hurried to open. Two men entered. One of them had a foxy face and was elegantly dressed, the other was in clerical garb and strikingly young for a priest. The innkeeper put out chairs and was going to light the lamps.

'One is enough,' said the elegantly dressed man.

Thereupon the innkeeper put the light on the table, at which the two men sat down; and then he asked for the orders of his belated guests.

'Wine, nothing more,' said the elegant gentleman, 'but the very



best, and enough of it. And then leave us alone! Later on a good bed for each of us.'

'Luckily the best beds are still free,' the innkeeper hastened to say.

The brothers were lying in the darkest corner of the inn parlour; the broad shadow of the fine gentleman fell on them, and they were hidden by the tables.

'I have news for you, Lanzarote,' began the priest after the two had had a drink.

'There's no news here,' said the Almoner peevishly. 'Things are bad as regards the ships. No one believes any more that Gil will return. I no longer believe it myself. And what does his reverence, the Court Chaplain of the Infante, think?'

'As Court Chaplain I must believe whether I like it or not.' The priest laughed.

The brothers did not like his laugh. They remained motionless. Since they had recognized the foxy face all their tiredness had vanished.

'And your news, Padre Martin?' Lanzarote bent expectantly over the table.

'The Infante is coming over here tomorrow.'

'He does that every week,' said Lanzarote, disappointed.

'This time he is coming to fetch Nuno Tristão from yonder on the cliff. He intends coming to see you too. You are to finish building one of your ships for Nuno. The one pilot is to go and get the other out of his trouble.'

'You mean out of hell, of course,' said Lanzarote at once. 'My money is too precious for that.'

'The Infante says: There is no hell there.'

'And what's written in the Bible?' replied Lanzarote sharply. 'The Lord drew a circle over the surface of the water, where light and darkness end.'

The Court Chaplain nodded gloomily.

'Have not Lactantius and Augustine and other Fathers of the Church warned against sailing over "the end of the world"?' continued Lanzarote. 'Did not even the Babylonians know about the "Bitter River" which flows around the globe? And is it not written in the book of the Arab Bakui: "There the air is burning poison; no plants, no animal can live there"? I tell you, Court Chaplain, God made the fair land, but the dark sea belongs to the devil, as the common folk say.'

'Why then have you built ships for the Infante at all?' asked the Court Chaplain rudely. 'Why did you contrive that I, your friend from childhood, should become the Infante's Court Chaplain?'

'I'll confess the reason to you,' said Lanzarote, 'because after all the Infante may be right.' Continuing in a whisper he said: 'Nothing is certain. I do not trust the Bible. I only believe what I see and know. I know that in Africa there are gold, ivory, spices—and black men. Whether those black people have souls or not is uncertain, but it *is* certain that they make strong, healthy beasts of burden. I assure you that in nothing else can such good

trade be done as in human beings. You know how it was on the Fortunate Isles—after they were discovered, no one wanted to settle there. Then a certain Lanzarote advised the King to take two thousand Jewish children from their parents and send them off on a ship. There was great weeping and wailing, of course, but now the little Jewish grandchildren are already shouting lustily there on the Fortunate Isles, and the Islands yield a profit for the crown of Portugal. And that was the idea of one Lanzarote. It's ideas we need!' Lanzarote took a drink. 'For a time I had the idea of being the Infante's Admiral. I built ships for him because I thought it would be possible to get to the African gold through a back door. But now I have a new idea. I will now *breed* ships—ships of the desert!' He slapped the Court Chaplain on the shoulder. 'In other words—camels!' he said.

'But what will you do with them?' asked Padre Martin, startled.

'Cross the country into the interior of the Dark Continent,' explained Lanzarote, 'through the main door. Of course a bolt must first be burst open.' Again he began to whisper. 'Listen! I'll bring the Infante round to the idea that it's nonsense to keep on sending out ships. Soldiers must be sent across, and Tangier, Fez and all the Moorish towns will fall to us as Ceuta did, if only we set about things properly. I have equipped ships for him—I will also raise money for an armed force. Why do you look so horrified?'

'Because that is what he is going to do if Nuno Tristão does not return; and if you go to him with the idea he'll get wild with enthusiasm.'

'There's no need for this Tristão to sail first,' said Lanzarote decisively. 'The discovering is finished with. Now it's war! But I see you're trembling!'

'Lanzarote,' said the Court Chaplain dismally, 'you must build a ship for Nuno Tristão. The discovering must go on. But no war!'

'You're not afraid, are you?' asked the Almoner ironically.

The Court Chaplain looked at Lanzarote imploringly.

'Don't you worry. He won't take you with him,' said Lanzarote. 'You can get ill beforehand.'

'He will take me,' moaned the Court Chaplain. 'He is pious and he must have his Mass every day.'

'Surely that must seem but right to you,' said Lanzarote brusquely. 'Here, drink!'

They drank.

'You shall see,' continued Lanzarote cheerfully, 'we will drive the Moors like camels into the desert! You can keep in the background, of course. And when we get through to the kingdom of Prester John—if indeed he really exists—we will depose him and you shall be High-Priest Martin.'

'So you won't build a ship for Nuno Tristão?'

'No.'

'And if Gil Eannes returns?'

'He won't return.'

'But if he does come all the same?' asked Padre Martin despairingly.

'You are more irritating than a flea,' said Lanzarote, laughing. 'But listen, I never slam a door. If he comes back, I will finish building my ships. In that case I will even sail myself. And I will become the Infante's Admiral as surely as I have made you his Court Chaplain! For then it will be worth while. And now get drunk and drown your fear! Hold your head high and your nose in the wind so that you'll know which way the wind is blowing!'

The two kept on drinking for a long time.

At last Lanzarote threw some coins on the table, whereupon the innkeeper came and, bowing obsequiously many times, conducted them to their rooms. He took the lamp with him.

Now there was no longer a glimmer of light in the inn parlour. A black impenetrable wall surrounded each of the brothers. Nevertheless Aires perceived that Tinoco was sitting up. He too sat up.

'His father sold two thousand children,' Aires whispered into the surrounding darkness.

'We know now what kind of a person he is,' said Tinoco thoughtfully, 'and that's worth a great deal.'

'And what if Eannes does not come back? And if Tristão does not sail?'

'Go to sleep now! We'll see the Infante tomorrow.'

'To think that he tolerates such people round him!'

'Think of the man we met out by the sea!'

'He doesn't want to know us.'

'Tomorrow morning, even before Tristão goes out, we'll be there. And we'll be there like that every day until he won't send us away any more.'

'I feel so unhappy about it,' Aires began again.

'We needn't worry about that Almoner.'

'I'm thinking of the Court Chaplain.'

'I know many priests who are quite different,' said Tinoco firmly. 'Perhaps this Padre Martin isn't really a priest at all. Perhaps the chief tax-collector Lanzarote has set him up as one because it suits his plans!'

'I wonder if the Infante has really got the black stone? And I wonder if it is true that he really makes steel needles come to life with it?'

'People who are afraid no longer see things clearly,' said Tinoco obstinately. 'Luis saw ghosts and devils where there weren't any.'

Aires stared into the darkness. He did not try to speak any more. Tinoco waited until he was sure that Aires had lain down. Then he whispered: 'Now go to sleep, Aires! Everything looks different in the daytime. You must remember that the Infante has men like Tristão too.' Then he too lay down to sleep.

Even before there was light in the inn parlour the brothers were startled out of their sleep by noisy shouting.

'The Barque!' shouted someone in front of the window. 'The Barque of the Brothers!' The cry was immediately heard passing some houses farther up as the shouting man ran along the street. 'The Barque! The Barque!'

Just as the brothers were jumping up, the innkeeper rushed, half dressed, through the room and flung open the tavern door.

Outside people were running past, and everyone was shouting: 'There is no hell! The Barque! The Barque!'

'Where is she?' roared the innkeeper.

'In the harbour! *Viva Eannes!*'

'*Viva Eannes!*' shouted the people in the street. 'There is no hell!'

The brothers tried to get out, but the innkeeper barred their way. 'Pay!' he demanded. 'To sleep in Lagos on such a day is beyond price!'

Tinoco drew the little bag containing their savings out of his pocket and threw it in the innkeeper's face.

'Oho!' The innkeeper bent down to pick up the bag. 'What a day!'

Lanzarote and the Court Chaplain entered the inn parlour, with staring, startled faces.

'What's the matter? Is it the end of the world?' asked the Chaplain.

'There is no hell!' roared the innkeeper.

'Isn't that what I have always said,' protested Lanzarote; 'but no one believed me.'

'Eannes is back! The Barque! The Barque!' came the shouts from outside.

'What did I say?' cried Lanzarote even louder. 'Come, Chaplain, come down to the harbour!'

Lanzarote pushed the innkeeper aside and forced his way out to the street, the Chaplain following close on his heels.

'We'll easily overtake them,' said Tinoco, spitting in front of the innkeeper's feet. Then the brothers ran off.

They had difficulty in getting along, for more and more people were surging towards the harbour, but they were soon able to overtake the Chaplain and Lanzarote.

A mob of shouting people surrounded the harbour. Right in the middle, away from the other ships, the Barque had dropped anchor. There she lay, looking slender and small among the cargo ships from Flanders and Venice. Only the front of the ship was covered. One of the two masts was broken away.

A swarm of boats surrounded the Barque, but it was obvious

that the crew were not allowing anyone on deck. The brothers had good eyes. They noticed that one man alone was getting through in his boat right up to the Barque. A rope ladder was thrown over and the man climbed on board.

'Nuno Tristão!' whispered Aires excitedly. He had grasped Tinoco's wrist with his right hand.

'That must be Gil Eannes,' said Tinoco hoarsely. His eyes were fixed on the man who had stretched out his arms towards his friend.

Tinoco held his hand over his eyes, for at that moment the sun began to rise high in the heavens. The iron-grey wall of coast looked as if it was beginning to melt at one spot.

'Make way for the Infante!' The call came from one of the streets which led from the town down to the harbour. Silence fell both on the shore and on the boats.

'He must have set out before dawn,' the brothers heard a man near them saying.

'They say he needs hardly any sleep,' whispered another.

The Infante came riding along on a grey horse. Except for a groom he had no attendants. He was dressed in black, a dark moustache covered his upper lip, his black hair hung over his brow. He rode up quickly, and when he stopped his horse the brothers saw his eyes too. They were black and unusually brilliant.

The Infante was just about to dismount from his horse when Lanzarote pushed his way through the surge of people. 'I was told Your Highness wished to speak to me,' he said.

Without a word the Infante pointed over towards the Barque. Lanzarote understood this as a reproach.

'I never gave up hope,' he lied, boldly raising his voice.

The Infante looked down at him from his horse, his face unmoved. 'How far on are you with the ships?' he asked.

'It will all be done,' Lanzarote assured him. '*I* was always in favour of going ahead with the ship-building, but the circumstances——'

The Infante signed to him to stop.

'When may I lay my plans before Your Highness?'



‘We shall see,’ said the Infante. He dismounted and looked across towards the boat which two men, as like as brothers, were rowing over from the Barque. The two pilots jumped ashore, and one of them went up to the Infante.

‘Eannes,’ said the Infante. ‘You see, I was drawn here.’

‘We’re late in returning, Senhor Infante,’ said Eannes. ‘That is because we sailed out much farther than we had intended. We did not want to return home with empty hands.’ He showed the Infante what he was holding in his hands—dried blossoms of huge size.

‘We plucked these south of the cape which used to be called Cape Non. Anticipating your permission, we have given it a new name, Cape Bojador—the Cape which has been sailed around. For we have successfully doubled it, and now we know that human beings live where those before us believed hell to be.’

The Infante observed the withered flowers closely and then looked up, astonished. 'Are they roses?' he asked.

'We have christened them St Mary's roses,' said Eannes. 'On the desert sands we saw caravan tracks leading southwards. Therefore we believe that in the country farther down the southern coast men and beasts thrive, and that there is more vegetation there than immediately behind Cape Bojador.'

The Infante found it hard to conceal his emotion. 'You and your companions, who have taken the first step, shall make the next voyage,' he promised Eannes.

At this the Pilot turned round and pointing to Nuno Tristão said: 'It is his turn next.'

The Infante let his dark eyes rest on Nuno, but his face did not betray his thoughts.

That evening there was great life in all the taverns or the town. The banquet which the Mayor of Lagos held in honour of the 'Conquerors of Hell' and the Infante lasted well into the night. Lanzarote was not invited. He sat with the Court Chaplain in the tavern where they had spent the previous night, brooding to himself in the midst of the noise which filled the bar. Suddenly he raised his head with a jerk. A tall man was standing in the doorway, peering into the room. Lanzarote stood up unsteadily, thumped the table and called out towards the door: 'Gil, old explorer of hell, you've come at last! I'll sail with you next time.'

'You will have to arrange that with the Infante,' came the reply.

'Infante, indeed!' stammered Lanzarote. 'Is it I who build ships for you pilots, or the Infante?'

'Stop your bragging, Almoner!' said the man in the doorway sharply.

At this Lanzarote pricked up his ears. 'Why, you're not Gil at all,' he jabbered, 'you're Nuno!' Then he continued excitedly: 'What do you want here? You're not so sure yet of going. I saw that much in the Infante's eyes—I'm not as blind as all that!'

'Sleep off the fog in your brain, old toper!' said Tristão ironic-

ally. 'Lie down beside your half-built ships, which suit you so splendidly!'

A deadly silence fell in the tavern.

Lanzarote stared angrily at Nuno. 'What do you mean by that?' he asked.

'I mean that you had given up Gil—like all those who are now shouting so bravely since he returned.'

'You imagine, I suppose, that only you two, yourself and the Infante, still believed!'

'Oh, no,' said Nuno in a tone which made everyone listen. 'There were two others, two fisher boys from God knows where, do you hear! Two little penniless fellows with patched pants! I don't even know their names. They came out to me on the rock on which I have been waiting day after day. I sent them away. I'm sorry for that now. But as truly as Gil is back, I will find them both again. And when it comes to my turn, do you hear, I'll take the two of *them* with me and not you—you Grand Admiral of the half-built ships!'

Saying this, Nuno turned his back on Lanzarote and went off.

He searched through several streets. Then he went down to the harbour. Silence reigned there, for the crowds who had been shouting at the harbour were now shouting in the taverns. The ships stood out darkly and very distinctly against the water, which glistened in the moonlight. Tristão looked over at the Barque of the Brothers. He felt no desire to return to the hall where the Infante and Eannes were being forced to listen to endless panegyrics.

The Pilot decided to spend the rest of the night on the Barque. On the beach he saw the boat in which Gil's crew had come ashore. He pushed the boat into the water and rowed over to the Barque.

When he was sufficiently near to it he noticed the remnants of the gilt moulding which had dated from the expedition against Ceuta. All the ships which had taken part in the expedition against the Moors had been splendidly painted and rigged out. Nuno now noticed that the Barque of the Brothers had been stripped of all its ornamentation by the breakers. But the planks

were in good condition, and the shield with the motto and arms of the Infante had held firm on the prow. The letters glittered in the silver light: '*Talent de bien faire.*'

No man can do more than that, thought the Pilot. He was surprised that no sentry challenged him from the ship. Looking up to listen, he heard a voice which he recognized at closer range.

'Hanno!' cried the Pilot. 'You've a visitor.'

An old man with a white beard immediately threw down the rope ladder. 'Another visitor,' he cried delightedly, 'and such a distinguished one!'

'So you've got other guests?' asked Nuno, surprised.

'You'll like the two of them,' said the old man. 'I fetched them from the shore when all the shouting crowd had gone away and the two of them stayed there gazing towards the Barque as if their home was here.'

'I think I know the two,' said Nuno. 'I've been looking for them for hours.'

'All the better,' said the old man. 'But you must promise me one thing.'

'I know what it is,' said Nuno, laughing. 'I mustn't interrupt the story you're just telling.'

'You know me very well, Pilot,' said the old man. And he did not allow Tinoco and Aires to stand up for a lengthy greeting. While he offered Nuno a seat he continued: 'Now we were four days at sea, and all night and every night we saw the land looking full of flames. In the daytime we saw that it was a mountain which spat fire. We called it the Chariot of the Gods. After sailing three days more down the Crocodile River we arrived at the Southern Horn, which is inhabited by numerous savages. Most of them were women with rough, hairy bodies. Their long arms hung down almost to the ground. We tried to catch some of them, but they leaped away over the rocks, bared their teeth and threw stones at us. We were able to get hold of one of them, and we brought her back to Carthage.'

'Ah, so you're at your favourite story,' cried Nuno merrily, 'about how you caught the gorillas! But when was it that you



were the Carthaginian navigator Hanno and sailed to the crocodile rivers?’

‘Two thousand years ago,’ replied the old man promptly.

‘You must know,’ said Nuno, turning to the brothers, who were listening bewildered, ‘that this old man, who imagines he was once the famous Carthaginian navigator Hanno, is really even older than that.’

‘Quite right,’ said the old man cheerfully. ‘Earlier still I was Captain of a Phoenician ship, and the Pharaoh of Egypt, whose name was Necho, sent us off to sea. We were to sail around the coast of Africa. That’s what we did. We sailed so that for two whole years the sun rose on our left. But one morning,’ the old man whispered, and his eyes began to sparkle, ‘one morning the sun rose on our right.’

‘I don’t understand that,’ said Aires.

‘No one can understand it,’ said Nuno reassuringly, ‘but it is written in the old books which the Infante has, and which Manuel knows off by heart, as he had the job of looking after Dom

Henrique's books for a time.' Nuno turned apologetically to the old man. 'Forgive me for occasionally calling you Manuel,' he said; 'but if I don't, with your old stories, you'll end by losing the name your father christened you with. And now I'll go and lie down for a while.'

'Good night, Pilot!' said the old man shortly.

Before Nuno went off he looked at the brothers. 'I've been searching the taverns for you,' he said. Aires and Tinoco were about to stand up. 'Stay where you are!' he told them. 'I should have guessed at once that you'd be here. This place suits you much better.'

When the Pilot had gone to the bow of the ship to lie down in one of the empty bunks, the old man said in a low voice: 'He's the best of them all, next to Gil. The Infante thinks a lot of him. And it seems to me that he has great plans for you.'

'Will he be the next to sail to Africa?' inquired Tinoco.

'Only the Infante knows that,' said the old man.

'How far is it to Africa?' asked Aires.

'It's still a long way off for you,' said the old man warily. 'The Infante sends all those he takes out into his school first. I could bet my old beard that Nuno is going to take you two to the Infante's town.'

'What does it look like?'

'Have you ever seen a monastery? I know monasteries because I was in one for many years until I decamped because I could not forget the sea.'

'Is the Infante's town like a monastery?' asked Tinoco, taken aback.

'It's a strange place,' reported the old man. 'It's like no other place in the world. Cliffs, sky, sea, nothing more; the loneliest spot in Portugal—a huge stone claw stretching out towards Africa. They say a druid's temple stood there long ago, and the old Iberians believed the gods assembled by night in the cave that extends right through the rock into the sea, and spoke there with the ocean and the winds, and sent out their thoughts like birds.'

'Are there no houses there?' asked Aires, dismayed.

'Dom Henrique lives in a house, of course; and his pilots and geographers and other retainers have fixed abodes too. But the Infante lives in his house like a monk. You must know, he makes his discoveries for God. He wants Africa for God.' The old man fell silent and looked up at the stars. 'But now you must go and sleep. It will soon be day,' he said after a pause.

'Is your name really Manuel?' asked Aires, who was thinking of Manuel the fisherman.

'I was christened Manuel, but I prefer people to call me Hanno,' said the old man.

'We will always call you Hanno,' Tinoco assured him.

The old man gave the brothers rugs and showed them to their sleeping-places. Then he went back to his post and resumed his watch.

From where they were lying Tinoco and Aires could survey a big piece of the sky. They saw the one mast which the Barque of the Brothers still possessed. From the fact that its tip was swaying to and fro between the stars, they knew that the Barque was rocking on the waters.

Without wanting to, they fell asleep, and Aires dreamt he was in a cave which led down to the sea through bare rock. Down below he saw Nuno, standing perilously on the wet stone; above him Lanzarote was holding on firmly to a projecting rock and trying to push the Pilot into the sea. Aires was seized with such anxiety for Nuno that he shouted out and woke up from his sleep.

Manuel went along to him at once. 'What's the matter?' he asked.

'Is he not there, then?' asked Aires, bewildered.

'Who should be there?' inquired the old man, full of sympathy.

'Lanzarote,' whispered Aires.

'What makes you speak of him?'

'We came across him in a tavern.' Then Aires, his eyes still full of anxiety, asked Manuel: 'Does the Almoner come to the Infante's town too?'

'Yes, now and then,' replied the old man hesitantly. 'The Infante needs money.'

'Does the Infante give ear to that fox or to his pilots?'

'You ask strange questions,' said Manuel evasively. 'Don't worry, the Infante knows how to take care of himself. Now go to sleep.'

'I dreamt that Lanzarote pushed the Pilot through the cave down into the sea.'

It could be seen for a moment that Manuel was startled. Then he tried to reassure Aires. 'And even if he did,' he said casually, 'Nuno can swim.'

The old man remained with Aires until he had fallen asleep. Again and again he shook his head as he looked down at the boy's thin face. Tinoco was sleeping beside his brother like a stone.

For a long time Manuel considered whether he should say anything to Nuno Tristão about the dream. Finally he decided to do so.

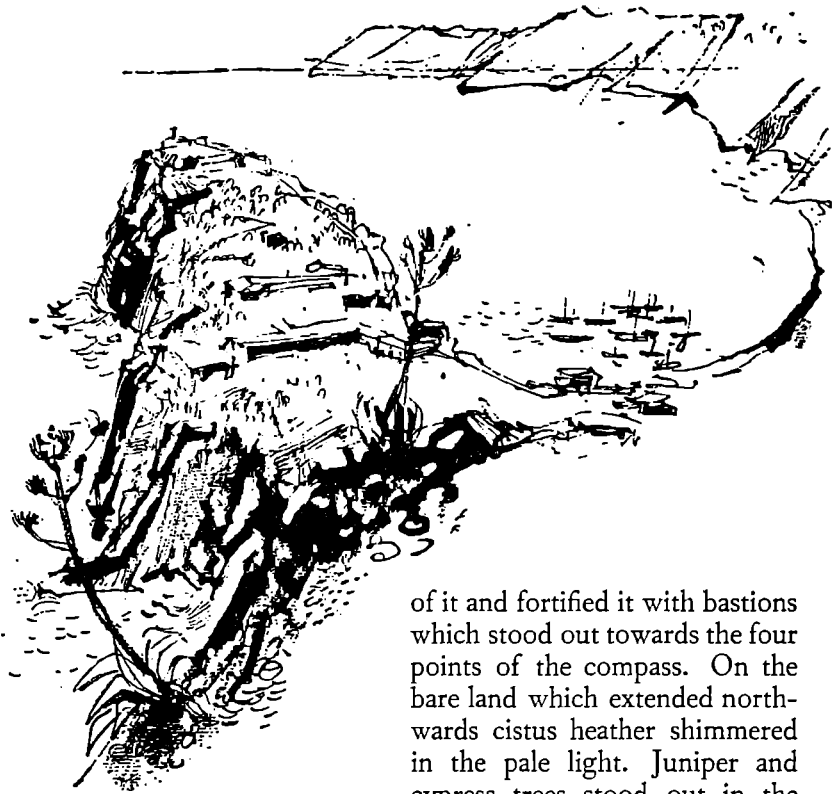
IV

In the Infante's Town

Two hours after midnight the brothers had taken over 'watch' duty, relieving two young nobles, Alvaro da Costa and Andre Diaz, who also belonged to Nuno's 'Barque'. There was a crew of about twenty to each 'Barque', and each crew had its communal dwelling in the town of the Infante, where they lived together with their Pilot, just as if they were at sea.

It was not the first time that Tinoco and Aires, who had already been living almost seven months in Sagres, had spent two hours of the night in the little guard-room. The room was something like a crow's-nest built of stone—a narrow room in the tower above the gateway of the Villa do Infante. Several windows afforded an adequate view of the ramparts which ran to east and west from coast to coast, projecting out here and there, and cutting off the Infante's secret domain from the mainland to the north. Behind the fortification stood the dwellings and stables, the school, the observatory, and the Infante's residence, a plain, long building. It was a peculiar little town, for there were no women in it apart from a few domestic servants.

The brothers could see the sea shimmering to right and left of them. It beat ceaselessly against the cliffs of Sagres which stretched out two thousand paces to the south and fell away steeply on three sides. This rocky promontory lay like a ship of the Titans which had settled down at anchor for the rest of time. The Infante, with a keen eye for its position, had taken possession



of it and fortified it with bastions which stood out towards the four points of the compass. On the bare land which extended northwards cistus heather shimmered in the pale light. Juniper and cypress trees stood out in the gloomy solitude like sentries.

‘Did you imagine it would be like this?’ said Aires in a low voice to Tinoco, who, like himself, was looking out watchfully over the countryside.

‘This in front of us? Or what do you mean?’

‘That we should be almost living in the same house with him and scarcely ever get a glimpse of him.’

‘We see him in the chapel every morning,’ said Tinoco.

‘He’s not there for *us* during Mass.’

‘But we are there for him,’ continued Tinoco; ‘doesn’t that satisfy you? We live under the same roof with da Costa and Diaz, and Correo and Almida, although they and almost all the others come from castles and palaces, and we come from a

fisherman's cottage. He has taken us into his school because Nuno proposed us, and we're learning riding and fencing and are treated like the sons of a count. Nuno has promised to show us the observatory next week and to start giving us lessons there. You can't deny that Nuno could not take better care of us than he does.'

'Nuno is always ready to help his crew,' admitted Aires.

'And we have belonged to it for the past six months now,' said Tinoco proudly. 'What more do you want? We may even call him Nuno, as if we were his younger brothers!'

'I admire Nuno,' said Aires fervently.

'It was especially lucky that we came to him! There are many here whom I like,' admitted Tinoco, 'but Nuno is the best of them all.'

'What astonishes me most is that he never shows that he notices anything.'

Tinoco pricked up his ears. 'What are you thinking of?' he asked.

'It must surely hurt him,' Aires burst out angrily.

Tinoco looked at Aires reprovingly. 'That's only the Infante's business,' he said.

'I know,' said Aires. 'But I don't understand why he always passes over Nuno. Don't you think that many of his crew wonder why their Pilot always has to wait, and Eannes is sent out again and again, and this time with another pilot, Baldaya—anyone but Nuno.'

'The Infante must have his reasons.'

'I'm just wondering about it,' said Aires.

'That's exactly what you shouldn't do,' replied Tinoco angrily. 'What the Infante decides is good.' Tinoco caught his brother by the arm. 'You see, the strength which enables his pilots to venture farther and farther southwards comes from him. I've known that since I saw his eyes.'

'But that he should have dealings with Lanzarote——' protested Aires.

'Hush!' begged Tinoco.

They both listened. Footsteps could be heard in the tower.

'That's Nuno,' said Aires at once.

When the Pilot entered, Tinoco reported that nothing had happened.

'Unfortunately the sentries at the southern mast report the same,' said Nuno. He looked tired and sat down at the little table which was there.

'It's time for Eannes and Baldaya to return with their Barque.'

Nuno stared in front of him glumly. 'Who knows how far it is to the river which the Infante set as their goal!' he said.

'What kind of river?' inquired Tinoco.

'The Rio de Ouro,' explained Nuno, 'the river which is said to contain gold.'

At this Aires asked: 'Does the Infante know, then, what's to be found in a place where no one has ever been to?'

Nuno shrugged his shoulders. 'In the old books which the Infante's brother, Dom Pedro, brought back from a journey through thirty-four countries, including Babylon, Syria, Egypt, Hungary and Venice, there's a lot written about expeditions in search of gold to a country sometimes called Ophir and sometimes called Punt. Phoenicians, Egyptians and Carthaginians are supposed to have carried away gold from there—you must have heard our old Hanno telling strange tales about it often enough. The Infante believes that this land of gold is in Africa, south of Cape Bojador.'

'Is the Infante interested in gold?' asked Aires quickly.

'Ships cost money,' Nuno explained. 'A whole lot of ships are needed for exploring. The Almoner has given us to understand that dried roses are poor booty.'

'To think that the Infante should tolerate that——' Aires did not finish the sentence, for Nuno silenced him with a quiet look.

'The Infante needs him,' said Nuno, 'just as he needs you and me. Sometimes I have the feeling that just because he needs them, nothing can happen to those whom the Infante sends out. Really, I'm not worrying about Eannes and Baldaya. They want to bring home plenty of information, and that's why they're in no hurry to return.'

'But what if they run into a boiling cauldron of storm again,

as they did on the first voyage, and it drives them somewhere that there's no coast?' suggested Tinoco. 'How will they find their way home again?'

A roguish smile appeared on Nuno's face. 'The Infante gave his "little finger" to each of them,' he said, sticking his hand inside his shirt and taking out a narrow little box. 'Each one of his pilots has this "little finger". And now that I'm quite sure I can depend on you, I'll show it to you two.' He opened the little box and lifted out a flat needle to the ends of which two tiny pieces of steel were hanging. The Pilot held the needle in the middle. The brothers gazed spellbound at the pieces of steel.

'Why don't they fall off?' asked Aires excitedly.

'The needle is holding them by its tips,' said the Pilot. 'I'm no magician—it is not due to me.' He handed the needle to Aires. 'Here, you take it!' he said.

Aires held the needle between the tips of his fingers.

'There's a mysterious power in the needle since the Infante touched it with the "black stone",' Nuno explained. 'By touching it with the "black stone" he woke up the needle; now it's alive.'

'Then what Luis told us is true—that the Infante has a stone out of hell!' Aires blurted out.

'The chatterbox!' said Nuno, displeased. 'He half listened and half understood, and now he's talking nonsense. It is a mystery, but there's nothing diabolical about it,' continued Nuno seriously. 'Far away in the north much "black stone" must be lying in the ground; every needle which has ever touched "black stone" turns towards it as if it were homesick. Anyone who has such a needle can know where the north is, even on a starless night.' Nuno took the water-jug and the bowl which were standing in a corner of the guard-room and poured water into the bowl. Then he took out his knife and cut off the table a fine chip of wood hardly the length of a finger. He fastened the needle to it with a thread which he drew from his shirt. Then he set it floating. The needle seemed to be searching. Finally it stopped moving. The Pilot pointed his arm in the direction which the needle indicated. 'Look out of the window,' he said, 'and tell me whether my finger is pointing to the north star, or not.'

Tinoco and Aires knelt by the window and looked from it to Nuno's arm. The outstretched finger was pointing towards the Polar star.

'There's no magic in it,' Nuno assured them again. 'Anyone who knows how to, can do it. It's even better with a straw. But not many people know, and many who do know haven't the courage to do it.' The Pilot took the needle out of the water, untied it from the chip of wood, and made it draw the bits of steel on to it. 'Otherwise it would lose its power,' he said. He put the needle carefully back in the little box, then he said thoughtfully: 'The marvellous thing is that the needle passes on its power and becomes stronger in doing so.'

When Nuno said this, a thought passed through Tinoco's mind like a flash of lightning. It's the same with the Infante, he thought, and those with whom he comes in contact. Tinoco became intoxicated with this thought, but he kept it to himself.

'Be at the southern mast at the usual hour tomorrow afternoon,' said Nuno, before leaving the guard-room. 'Then we'll continue our talk.' He nodded to the brothers and went off to finish his round.

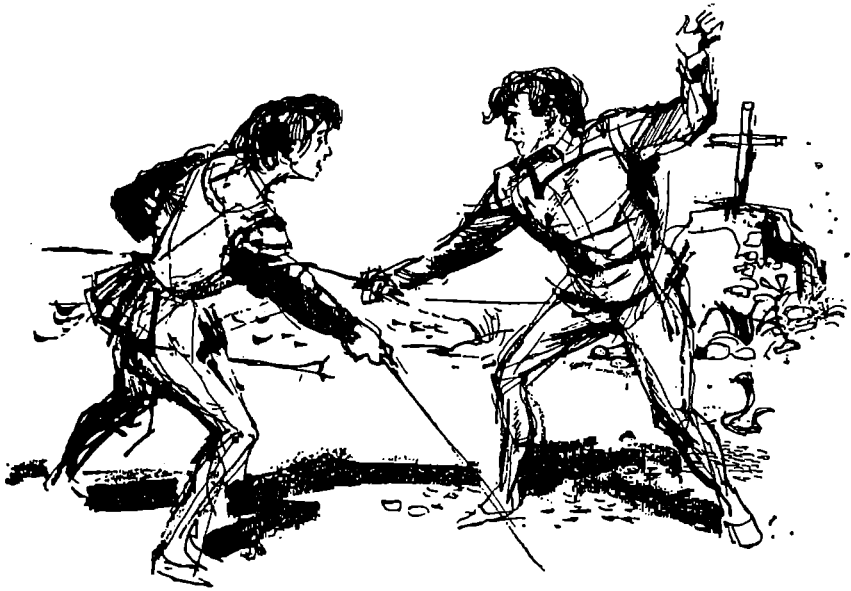
Near the southern mast there was a big compass dial hewn on the naked rock. The brothers liked to go to this spot, for from it there was an open view over the sea on three sides. They performed their fencing exercises there too. Every day they had to spend an hour fencing. The swords with which they practised had blunt blades; a little ball of metal was screwed on to the point.

Today they wanted to make use of the time until Nuno would arrive—although there was a hot wind blowing from the south—*Simun*, the breath of the desert, which blows from Africa.

Tinoco fought well, but he became excited easily. Aires was the better fencer because he did not allow himself to be led into making ill-considered thrusts, and his eye was unerring.

Tinoco did not leave himself open to attack. Aires did not get in a thrust for a long time, but he forced his brother farther and farther towards the compass dial.

After a number of rounds they both needed a rest. Tinoco



played with the point of his weapon. 'It's a good thing that there's a cap on your sword too. Otherwise I'd be like a sieve already. Your thrusts are very true,' he said.

'I wouldn't make thrusts without a ball on the sword,' said Aires calmly.

'Not at me, of course,' continued Tinoco, 'but if you had some Mohammedan dog in front of you, say, before the walls of Ceuta——'

'I'd rather not be in that position,' Aires assured him.

'You behave as if you had never yet seen blood.'

'I've never yet shed blood.'

'And what if there's a war? Will you stay at home then?' asked Tinoco sharply.

'Why should there be war?' said Aires, startled. 'Is there talk of it?'

'No,' said Tinoco. 'I only think of it because you're so very skilled in the use of arms. You can certainly drive me into a corner. No one could get the better of you very easily. I'm very glad of that. Come, let us go on with it!'

They went on fighting, and Tinoco lost ground more and more. He was already close to the cross in the centre of the compass dial when Aires suddenly stopped, his eyes strayed, and then Tinoco made a pass and came through. 'Your first miss,' he cried, triumphantly.

But with one leap Aires was beside him. Tinoco saw the blade flashing down, and when he turned round he noticed an adder just behind him. Aires had broken its backbone with his sword.

With a second blow the little metal ball hit the flat head.

'You've given it the finishing stroke,' cried Tinoco admiringly. 'You know how to kill!'

'If you had taken one more step back it would have bitten you,' said Aires, who had gone white to the lips. 'It had already raised its head.'

Tinoco pushed the dead adder aside with his sword. Only then did he realize what danger he had been in. He bowed gallantly to Aires. 'My rescuer!' he said.

'Let us sit down over there for a bit,' suggested Aires.

They went over to a bush which gave a little shade. It was a ladanum bush, and it had a resinous perfume. It was covered with white blossoms. Aires looked at them closely for the first time and discovered that each blossom had a spot on it the colour of blood.

'But Nuno assured us that the Infante isn't thinking of war any more,' said Aires, resuming the conversation.

'I came to the idea quite on my own,' said Tinoco. 'You're worrying too much again.'

'Since Eannes sailed around the Cape even Lanzarote is keen on the exploration,' Aires continued obstinately.

'Lanzarote!' cried Tinoco contemptuously. 'He only sees a thing in the light of how much he gets out of it, whether it's discoveries or——'

'Don't say the word again!' begged Aires vehemently.

'You needn't be so squeamish!' said Tinoco, annoyed.

They saw Estevam d'Almada, the young nobleman who taught them riding, coming up to them.

'Nuno is with the Infante,' said Almada. 'There's great news——'

Eannes and Baldaya are back. Lanzarote rode over with them from Lagos.'

'What does he want here?' asked Aires crossly.

'That fox is insatiable,' said Almida. 'Come along, let us take our horses out of their stables for a while!'

As they rode past the Residence on the way to the gate they saw sentries posted before the entrance to the Hall of the Maps.

'Is Lanzarote in there with them?' asked Aires anxiously.

Almida nodded.

'But only the pilots and Jacomo the cartographer are allowed into the Hall of the Maps,' said Tinoco, surprised. 'And why are there sentries posted?'

Almida shrugged his shoulders. 'Perhaps there's a consultation going on, at which something important will be decided on.'

When they returned from their ride two hours later, sentries were still in front of the Hall of the Maps. Almida and the brothers stabled their horses and then sauntered over to the place where there was an opening in the cliff which went right down to the sea. Nowhere was it so cool as in that cave.

'I'd love to have a look at the maps over in the Hall,' said Tinoco to Almida, for whom he had a great regard.

'There aren't such good maps anywhere else in the world, for Jacomo improves them after every voyage,' Almida told them. 'But,' he continued resolutely, 'it's a good thing not to have to be too secretive. Otherwise one could become a traitor to Portugal in the twinkling of an eye. The Infante and his royal brother Duarte watch jealously lest Castile, or Venice, or any other sea-going power should get exact information about the newly discovered coasts.'

'So the Infante makes his discoveries for Portugal and not for God?' asked Aires, taken aback.

Estevam d'Almida looked down into the cleft in the rocks, where the sea was roaring as in a great shell. 'I only understand horses and ships, nothing more,' he muttered.

Aires too scanned the smooth wall of rock, and he suddenly felt anxiety for Nuno again. 'No one could get down there to the sea, could he?' he asked.

'It would be impossible,' said Almida. Then he began to smile, and, as he seldom smiled, Aires observed his changed expression intently. 'Some say,' said Almida, 'that formerly the Infante used to wear a ring on his finger, and that he threw it down here in order to wed himself to the sea; others say to Africa.'

'A fairy tale,' said Tinoco derisively.

Estevam d'Almida looked at him sharply. 'Fairy tales are always true,' he said, 'but generally one doesn't grasp that fact at once.'

'Do you think that the Infante will go out to Africa again one day?' asked Aires, turning to the young nobleman.

'As far as I know, Duarte is again making an alliance with the Moors,' replied Almida, 'and after all, since Dom Joao's death, Duarte occupies the throne. The whole population is against war. Even the old general who has been discovering enemies on every frontier of Portugal during the last thirty years and has always attacked them without delay, is tired of war and has built a monastery for himself. But don't bother me with such questions!' He stood up, as he found it too uncomfortable to remain in the cave so long. The three of them looked over at the Residence.

'They're still consulting,' said Aires uneasily.

Then they sauntered across to the compass dial.

Almida noticed the dead viper lying on the ground.

'It had designs on me,' reported Tinoco, 'but Aires was quicker than it.'

'I didn't know that there were vipers in the Infante's town,' said Aires.

'Sometimes one finds its way in,' said Almida, glancing over at the Residence again. The sentries were still posted in front of the Hall of the Maps.

Nuno arrived two hours later. There was nothing to be read from his face. He sat down beside Almida, who everyone knew was his closest confidant, and looked attentively at the brothers, who had stood up.

'Stay here!' said Nuno. 'Anyone to whom I have given "the little finger" gets my whole hand by degrees.'

'What have Eannes and Baldaya brought back?' inquired Almida.

'Something very pretty,' replied Nuno slowly. 'A lion cub for the Infante.'

'A live lion?' asked Tinoco eagerly. 'Is it still on the ship, or already here?'

'The Infante is already playing with it,' said Nuno. 'He's quite crazy about it.'

Almida did not like the tone in which Nuno told the news. He asked: 'Is that all they discovered?'

'Oh, no,' said Nuno. 'They found gold dust in the Gold River, and to the south of the river by the coast they found a heap of elephants' dung almost as high as a man. Baldaya brought some of it back.'

'What a thing to bring home!' cried Almida, looking as if he did not know whether to laugh or not.

'They also saw natives, who swam out to the Barque through heavy breakers.' The Pilot looked up. 'And Baldaya made two prisoners, moreover, a boy younger than you two, and a young man who they say is very good-looking. Lanzarote says he is a Prince of the Azenegues.'

'How would the Almoner know?' asked Almida, troubled.

'He "bought" the black prince at once,' said Nuno. 'This is how it was,' he continued. 'As neither Gil nor Baldaya is good at languages, but Lanzarote knows the Berber language, immediately after they landed he engaged in a conversation with the prince, whose name is Adahur, and he obtained a whole lot of information from Adahur, who had travelled all over Africa. Above all, he learned that there is little gold to be found by the coast, but a great deal in the interior of Africa.'

'Is that really so important to the Infante?' asked Aires.

'Lanzarote managed to make it clear to the Infante that it matters supremely who gets the gold,' continued Nuno. 'He urged the Infante to make war on the infidel Moors.'

'He will not succeed in persuading the King,' said Almida. 'And as far as I know, Dom Pedro is also against a war being waged.'

'Lanzarote expressed the belief that the young Queen Leonor

has a great love of jewellery,' said Nuno. 'Moreover, he advised the Infante to make his younger brother Fernando enthusiastic for the plan, and reminded him that Fernando is just the right age to win his knighthood out there, as Duarte, Pedro and Henrique won theirs at Ceuta.'

'And what had the Pilots to say to the plan?'

'The Infante kept on playing with the lion cub,' said Nuno. 'He let Lanzarote talk, and Lanzarote agreed to build galleys now—for troops.'

'And did the Infante keep silent at that?' Aires burst out. 'That covetous fox . . .'

'What's come over you!' cried Tinoco, reprimanding his brother so angrily that Nuno and Almida looked up, startled.

'So we shall not be sailing so soon, then?' asked Almida. 'I mean—with the Barque?'

'Yes, we shall be sailing,' said Nuno. He turned to Almida. 'And you will be coming with us too,' he said.

'But not down by Cape Bojador and out to the Cape of the Masts . . .?'

'You may be sure we are,' replied Nuno. 'The Infante has given me orders to push on farther down the coast to the south with the Barque. Eannes and Baldaya and I were with him half an hour longer than Lanzarote.'

'I was always certain the Infante wouldn't forget us!' cried Tinoco, his face glowing.

Nuno looked at him for a long time. 'I'm sorry, Tinoco,' he said. 'You and Aires won't be going this time—you won't be on the Barque of the Brothers.'

'But we belong to it,' Tinoco tried to protest.

'The Infante has settled it definitely in that way,' said the Pilot; 'and he alone—you know that—decides whose turn it is.' Nuno Tristão looked in front of him as he continued: 'The Barque has a strange commission this time. She has to put a man ashore on the coast, as far to the south as possible, and fetch him again in a year.'

'But will the person not be lost? One man alone in Africa?' asked Aires at once.

'He is to penetrate into the wilderness,' continued Nuno, calmly. 'It is important for the Infante to get information which he can rely on.'

'Has Lanzarote not extracted enough information from the Azenegue Prince, then?' asked Almida.

'Somewhat too much, the Infante thinks,' explained Nuno. 'Actually, he has the feeling that Lanzarote invents things to add to the information. He wants to find out for himself. I thought that quite reasonable, and I offered to go.'

'Then you are the man who is going to be left in Africa?' asked Almida, horrified.

'Unfortunately I am not,' said Nuno. 'The Infante thought someone else more suitable than me—Joao Fernandez. Fernandez was a prisoner in Africa for eight years and he knows a whole lot of African languages. I am to take him out and fetch him home again.'

'It's a good thing that Lanzarote has overreached himself,' said Almida at last, after all four had been silent for a time.

'He has not overreached himself,' said Nuno thoughtfully. 'He is to build the galleys. He will ride off to the Queen and Dom Pedro to induce them to influence the King to make war on the Moors. But first, they say, he will invite the Infante Fernando here. He is most sure of succeeding with him.'

'Is Fernando, then, such a——?' Aires sought in vain for a word.

'He's a young lion,' said Nuno. 'All who have ever met him, love him.' Nuno stood up and slapped the brothers on the shoulders. 'You won't find it boring here. A young lion and a young Infante! And the Negro boy will soon be here too. The Infante has some plan for the boy. The Court Chaplain is to educate him to be an interpreter.'

'Is the Court Chaplain able to talk to a person from Africa?' asked Aires doubtfully.

'Padre Martin spends a lot of time with Lanzarote,' said Nuno, 'and he has learned a great deal from him. Besides,' he added, 'the Infante expects you also to look after the black boy so that he won't die of homesickness before he can send him back.'

The Pilot went with Estevam d'Almida to the living-quarters to assemble his crew. The brothers remained behind by themselves.

'Now there will be a long time more to wait,' said Aires, and as he said it he realized that he was not thinking of the Barque in which Nuno and his crew and Joao Fernandez would be sailing out of the harbour in a few days. He was thinking of the bay above which stood the cottage that the old fisherman Manuel was looking after.

'Whatever the Infante decides is right,' said Tinoco gloomily. 'He knows better than we do what is necessary. But the day will come when we too will go where we want to go.' And he looked at Aires encouragingly.

Aires did not avoid his brother's eyes. He nodded to him, but kept silent and went on thinking of Manuel and the bay.

V

Lopo

SINCE Nuno had set out for Africa with the Barque of the Brothers, Tinoco and Aires had found new companions among Gil's crew, with whom they now lived. They had riding lessons from Vasco Albargo and fencing lessons from Cabral; and under the tutorship of these two young men, who were hardly twenty, the brothers made rapid progress in their training. Gil Eannes took them in hand so thoroughly for everything else that they sometimes felt as if Nuno were still there, especially as the two pilots were very similar in appearance and habits. Gil also taught the brothers to draw maps, and as Aires was especially talented at this Jacomo the cartographer often entrusted him with the making of rough sketches and praised his sure eye and skilled hand.

At the instance of Lanzarote, who was hardly ever seen in the Infante's town himself, as he was busy hurrying from shipyard to shipyard and from one royal residence to another, the African prince Adahur and the Negro boy were brought to Sagres. The Court Chaplain started his tuition. Tinoco and Aires alone were allowed to be present, and they learned many Azenegue words, for Adahur, who also knew the Negro boy's language, was an ardent student and eagerly grasped every Portuguese word. The Negro boy, on the contrary, could not be induced to speak. He sat there so silent and indifferent that Tinoco sometimes felt tempted to give him a push, but the Court Chaplain had made a

rule that no one was to interfere with his work. His face was blazing as he taught; he profusely praised Adahur, whose eagle face was always stretched forward tensely, and every now and then he looked angrily at the Negro boy. Up to the present nobody even knew the boy's name.

The prisoners could move about freely within the precincts which were shut off by the walls. But while Adahur made friends with anyone who spoke to him, the boy carefully avoided all company. He did not look at anyone, and when he opened his eyes to look away into the distance, a deep sorrow was written on his face. Only once did Aires see his dark face animated—that was when the Negro bent over the lion cub to stroke its coat with the whitish palm of his slender hand.

Tinoco took extra fencing lessons because the fact that he was behind his brother at this left him no peace. During these lessons Aires was alone, and then he would take his guitar and go off to some place where he would not be disturbed. He had found a niche in the rocks where he could sit with his back covered, facing the sea. This spot was in the eastern range of cliffs. As he played Aires' eyes wandered in the direction of the bay from which the brothers' own little barque had been driven against the reefs by the increasing storm from the north.

Aires listened to the sounds which his fingers drew from the old instrument. He played quietly, but sometimes it seemed to Aires as if the rocks behind him swayed in rhythm.

Deep below, the sea lay so calm and clear that Aires could see fishes moving in dense shoals. He became lost in thought as he looked at them, and began playing louder, as if to move the silent creatures down below to stop and listen to him. But the fishes moved on noiselessly. Now Aires began to hum to the music, but gave up, as he could no longer hear the notes distinctly. He always tried his best to listen well when he was playing. No one spoke to him as his guitar did. Aires longed for someone to speak with like that, without words.

All of a sudden he knew that someone was near him. Continuing to play, he raised his head and turned calmly towards the

Negro boy, who was standing just where the rock ceased, looking at him with wide-open eyes.

Aires did not venture to speak to him. He felt that the other was looking not at him but at the hand which was evoking the music. He stopped looking over and continued to play.

Now two are listening, he and I, thought Aires, and this thought made him happy. He played for longer than usual, and when he stopped he did not look around for the Negro boy. Only after a time did he stand up to go, and he was not surprised that the boy had already disappeared. Filled with a secret joy, Aires went to his quarters. At the same time Tinoco returned from his fencing and called out from a distance: 'I'll soon be able to drive you into a corner. Be on your guard!'

'It's quite possible,' replied Aires briefly.

'You've been over there again?'

'Yes.'

'Any news?'

'No,' said Aires. He did not say a word to Tinoco about his encounter, although up till now he had never kept anything secret from him.

The next day the Court Chaplain, the Azenegue prince, the Negro boy and the two brothers met near the little cage where the Infante kept the lion cub. Padre Martin had procured permission for this because he hoped that the proximity of the lion cub would help his plans. It was apparent from the double energy with which he began that he had resolved to make some headway this time with the Negro boy. He had come equipped with a sheet of paper, a pen and two different kinds of ink, one yellow and the other a dark almost blackish brown. The Negro boy was this colour all over except for the palms of his hands.

Padre Martin was certain of victory, and this made his heart beat faster and his face turn red. He spread the sheet of paper out on the table and said confidently to Aires and Tinoco: 'Today you will see that he will give up his obstinacy!' The Court Chaplain did not address himself to Adahur, who was looking on with interest. As soon as he began to draw, an unusual brightness



lit up the eyes of the Negro boy, who had not even glanced at either Aires or Tinoco. The Chaplain drew a fair boy with the yellow ink. At intervals he looked over at Aires, and soon it could be seen that the picture which was appearing on the sheet of paper was meant to represent Aires. The likeness was unmistakable, though the ink used was not the light brown colour of Aires' face and hands. The Negro boy grasped what was being done more quickly than Aires did. When the picture was finished he looked at Aires steadily, expecting Aires to do something. He even pointed to Aires.

'Yes, it's Aires!' said the Court Chaplain.

'Aires,' whispered the Negro boy, his eyes shining restlessly.

'He has grasped it,' said the Court Chaplain, thoroughly satisfied with the effect which his drawing had on the Negro boy. 'Wait a while! I'll make him talk! I've got the first Portuguese word out of him.' He began to sketch again, dipping his quill in the dark ink this time. 'Now we'll learn his name at last!' he said, sure of success.

He sketched quickly, and the picture of the Negro boy was an even better likeness than Aires' picture, which occupied the other half of the sheet. Tinoco and Aires followed the pen stroke for stroke.

Only when the picture was completed did they notice that something had happened to the Negro boy which made him look completely different. All the lustre had disappeared from his eyes. The pupils were two black holes, filled with fear. The Negro boy stood in a stooping position, looking pleadingly at Adahur. His lips whispered unintelligible words.

'What's the matter with him?' the Court Chaplain asked Adahur.

'He wants to have the picture,' Adahur informed the Chaplain.

'He must speak!' said Padre Martin. Holding the picture in front of the boy's face and pointing alternately to the boy and to the picture he demanded, more urgently: 'Who is that? Say who it is!'

The Negro boy began to tremble.

At this the Court Chaplain, angry because his work had not

had the desired effect, lost all patience and, with the quill pen in his hand, rushed at the Negro boy. The boy did not step aside. Obviously he was not afraid of the anticipated stab. But when the Chaplain, realizing perhaps that it was easier to bore a piece of paper with a quill pen than a human being, in the twinkling of an eye changed and aimed the quill at the paper instead, the Negro boy leaped up like a panther and hit out before the Chaplain could carry out his intention. The Chaplain lay on the ground, felled by two black fists. The boy tore the sheet of paper from his hands, stuffed it into his mouth, and swallowed it in great haste. Then he straightened himself up, and like one now proof against all danger, looked down with shining eyes at the Court Chaplain.

'You beast!' cried the raging Chaplain, getting up quickly. He took hold of a stool and was about to strike down the Negro boy with it, but Tinoco and Aires intercepted the blow.

'Get out of the way, you two!' roared the Chaplain. 'I'll teach this creature to lay hands on a servant of God!' Padre Martin's voice cracked with rage, but as neither Aires nor Tinoco moved from the spot, he had to lower the stool, which he could not keep permanently held above him.

He was just beginning to storm again when he caught sight of the Infante walking towards the lion-cub's cage. Turning to Dom Henrique, he said: 'This black boy is dangerous—he knocked me down!'

The Infante looked observantly from one to the other, and as Padre Martin was unable to give a calm report, he asked Aires to tell him what had happened. As he listened Dom Henrique angrily pushed aside the stool with which the Chaplain had tried to hit the Negro boy.

'Ask Adahur why the boy swallowed the paper,' said the Infante, turning to his Chaplain.

The Chaplain and Adahur talked together, and finally the Chaplain, who was still extremely agitated, said: 'What nonsense! Adahur says that black blockhead believed he would fall dead just because I was going to stick the quill through his picture.'

The Infante looked kindly at the Negro boy. Then he said to



the Chaplain: 'If he believes that, his belief should be respected. It is against my wishes that any prisoner should have reason to be afraid.' Then he looked at the boy again. 'What's his name?' he asked.

'That's just what I was trying to find out,' said the Chaplain, still much agitated.

The Negro had been observing the movements and expression of the Infante intently. Then he spoke a few words to Adahur, and Adahur turned to Aires and said in broken Portuguese: 'He asks you to give him a name.'

Aires and Tinoco exchanged glances, but at last Tinoco said: 'Why not do so, since he wishes it? I like him. You could give him Father's name, Lopo.'

'Lopo is a good name,' said the Infante to Aires encouragingly.

At this Aires said to the Negro boy: 'You—Lopo.'

'Aires,' whispered Lopo, his eyes shining. He pointed to Tinoco. 'Brother,' he said in Portuguese, and they all heard it with surprise.

'Yes, he's my brother,' said Aires, looking joyfully at Lopo.

'He will soon speak like a Portuguese,' said the Infante to

Aires. 'You will teach him, I think.' Then he turned towards the cage. 'What's my little prince of the jungle doing?' he asked.

With growing delight the brothers, Lopo and Adahur, watched the Infante making the lion cub come up to his hand. The Chaplain alone was still looking angrily at the spot where he had fallen. The lion cub was hitting Dom Henrique's hand with its soft paw, and playfully throwing back its head, which was still too heavy for its body.

Quite suddenly Aires was able to understand why the Infante was so fond of the cub.

'He's wonderful, isn't he!' said Tinoco enthusiastically.

'How gently he hits out!' added Aires.

'I meant the Infante.'

'He's splendid,' whispered Aires to his brother, his eyes shining with happiness. Then he looked over Tinoco's shoulder into Lopo's dark, radiant face.

In the weeks which followed the little skirmish at the lion's cage, Lopo was constantly to be seen with the brothers, and whenever Tinoco and Aires were busy in different places, Lopo stayed with Aires. To be sure, he did not attend lessons at the observatory or on the training barque, but he learned riding and fencing. The Infante allowed this as a reward for the zeal with which Lopo was now learning Portuguese. Lopo himself did not find learning a trouble. The words which came to him from Aires' mouth remained in his mind for ever. 'Lopo mouth has eaten Aires' picture, Lopo ears eat Aires' words,' he said.

When Lopo was alone with Aires he spoke in his own language now and then, and Aires picked up the words which Lopo repeated in his clear, bird-like voice, until Aires was able to say them properly. But Lopo liked best of all when Aires went with his guitar to his eyrie above the sea. Then Lopo would sit in the niche of rock beside him, looking spellbound at the strings, and whenever he looked up, his eyes would turn towards the south. When Aires stopped playing, Lopo would sometimes begin to sing softly, moving his hands as if there was a drum in front of

him. He produced sounds like drum-beats, in the midst of which a shout would suddenly break forth; and then the strings of the guitar would join in gently.

The two were always alone on the ledge of rock; Tinoco remained away deliberately. It pleased him that Lopo was fonder of Aires than of himself. Lopo was a bit of Africa, and something which would draw Aires more and more towards the land beyond the sea would be transmitted from him to Aires—or so Tinoco hoped.

From the hour when Dom Henrique had intervened so decisively for Lopo, Tinoco felt certain that Aires had begun to understand the Infante—to see him for what he was—the man to whom it was given to make a nation of fisher-folk into a nation of explorers and seafarers who were opening up the world for Portugal.

VI

The Lion Cub

FOR weeks on end preparations were going on in Sagres for the reception of Fernando, the young Infante. Dom Henrique, who formerly hardly ever left his house, was eagerly urging on preparations for a tournament which he wished to stage in honour of his brother. Brilliant trappings were ordered for every horse which was to take part in the equestrian games. Timber platforms were erected. By the time the preparations were finished, the 'town' was hardly recognizable.

Aires was enchanted at the splendour which was developing before him. All this for Dom Fernando! he thought. The Infante must think a lot of his younger brother.

The horseman who came to announce the young Infante's arrival, rode into Sagres at dawn. Dom Henrique sent for Gil Eannes. 'You and your crew shall accompany me when we go to fetch Dom Fernando,' he said. The Infante gave Gil directions that Tinoco and Aires too were to be of the party who would ride out to meet his brother.

An hour later they set off, the Infante leading the procession. They gave the horses their heads, and when the sun shot its first shaft across the heavens like a glistening sword, the horsemen welcomed the day with shouts of joy.

They did not have to ride far. Dom Fernando too had hurried eagerly on in order to meet his elder brother as soon as possible.

He came with only a small retinue. All the horsemen had

superb horses. Fernando rode a white horse, on whose spotless coat the early sunshine cast a rosy glow.

The two Infantes leaped from their horses and hastened towards each other. Dom Henrique stretched out his arms wide open to receive his brother. Fernando ran into them with passionate joy. The young Infante's face was thin and fair. He had the golden hair of his English mother, Queen Philippa. Everything about him was in amazing contrast to the gloomy severity which seemed to emanate from his elder brother. As they looked at each other—Henrique with his inscrutable expression, Fernando with eyes whose lustre was as yet undimmed by any shadow—Aires thought: These brothers are like day and night. He thought it guilelessly, for he saw how tenderly devoted the 'black' prince was to his younger brother.

They were already nearing Sagres and close to the walls of the town, when Aires noticed for the first time that Lanzarote had come with Fernando.

'He's keeping in the background,' said Aires to Tinoco, as he pointed out the Almoner to his brother.

'He's a useful man to the Infante, nothing more,' said Tinoco. 'You have seen how the Infante goes to meet one who is really near to him. The two brothers will now decide what's to happen.'

Aires looked towards the head of the procession where the young prince was riding on his brother's right.

'He came like the sun,' said Aires enthusiastically. 'He will drive away all thoughts of war.'

'And what if he too thinks that it's time to conquer Africa from the Moors?' asked Tinoco, looking at Aires challengingly.

'In that case I would have no hesitation in going,' Aires assured him. '*He* can do nothing bad, I'm certain of that.'

'You'll learn to understand his elder brother also in time,' said Tinoco; and he looked happy.

The tournament lasted a whole week. The fights in which swords were carried were held on the same exercise ground on which Aires had so often driven his brother into a corner, and on

which he had killed the adder. But the stone compass dial in the short grass was now surrounded by many masts. Fluttering silken banners indicated whether the wind came from the sea or from the north.

Fernando had defeated all the fencers who had accepted his challenge, even Cabral, who was considered the best fencer, with the exception of the Infante. Tinoco and Aires too had fought with the young Infante, and Aires had held out for several rounds. Now the last fight was about to take place. Dom Henrique had challenged Dom Fernando.

The fight was indecisive for a long time. Both the Infantes fought magnificently, but neither Henrique nor Fernando came to a *riposte*—one sword met the other again and again. One lightning stroke nullified the next one.

Dom Henrique was breathing heavily. He was trying with all his strength to win ground. When Fernando retreated a little, Henrique lunged forward wildly. Then he slipped, and the point of Fernando's sword was only a hand's breadth from his naked breast. Fernando immediately lowered his sword and held up his elder brother.

'You have won,' said Henrique.

Fernando shook his head and pointed to the slippery ground.

'If a Moor were in your place I'd be dead now,' said Henrique emphatically.

'How can one make a thrust at someone who is falling?' protested Fernando. He asked his brother to continue the fight, but Henrique would not hear of it.

'The fight is decided,' he said. 'You have gained a splendid victory, for you have won when you did not want to win too easily.' Henrique turned to the people who had looked on breathless at the fight. 'A higher prize is due to the Infante Fernando than the one I had intended at the beginning of the tournament. The young Infante shall have the lion cub!' he cried.

For a moment there was silence on the tourney ground, for everyone knew how fond the Infante was of the lion cub. Then a storm of cheering broke out, and the people shouted: '*Viva Henrique! Viva Fernan!*'

The Infante led Fernando to the cage, and all the people pressed around the royal brothers. Fernando bent over the lion and began to play with it.

'The prince of the jungle hits out!' warned Henrique.

The young lion did hit out and blood began to drip from Fernando's hand. Fernando did not withdraw his hand; he tried to pacify the lion cub. But now, incited by the drops of blood, the instinct of the beast of prey emerged for the first time. A menacing growl came from the young lion. It crouched, ready to spring.

'It will soon have to be taken seriously,' said Henrique, smiling, as he drew Fernando away. He looked steadily at the lion cub, which seemed to him more fascinating than ever. Everyone was enjoying the angry behaviour of the animal, which had not yet got over its rage.

Dom Henrique looked at Fernando's hand.

'It's no harm,' said Fernando, taking away his wounded hand. 'A little blood doesn't upset me.'

Aires looked beyond the cage. He saw Lanzarote standing at the other side. The Almoner was smiling like a player whose game was not going badly.

At the council which took place next day in the Hall of the Maps, besides the two Infantes only two pilots, Eannes and Baldaya, the cartographer Jacomo and the Almoner Lanzarote were present.

Tinoco and Aires were standing sentry in front of the door. Henrique, who had drawn the two brothers more and more frequently into his immediate personal service, had appointed them this task.

A leaden, grey sky, in which not a breath of air moved, hung heavily above the cliffs of Sagres. Obviously it was unbearably hot in the Hall of the Maps, for after an hour the Infante Henrique ordered the windows and doors to be opened. Gil Eannes sent Tinoco to mount guard in front of the row of windows, while Aires was told to remain by the door. 'Not a word which is spoken inside is to reach other ears or to cross your lips,' said Gil.

'The Infante trusts you two!' Gil saw from the brothers' faces as they heard his words that they considered the warning unnecessary.

Now the brothers were able to follow everything which went on in the hall. Dom Henrique, who obviously had already stated his opinion, was requesting a report from Lanzarote.

Lanzarote launched forth eagerly. 'Everything humanly possible has been done. The galleys are being built, soldiers are being enlisted. Without a doubt fifteen thousand fighting men will be ready for action in a few weeks. There are enough ships ready, too, to take the army over to Africa.'

'And what has the King to say to it?' asked Jacomo, the old cartographer, who had an important say in every decision. 'The Kingdom of the Moors is a hundred times bigger than our country!'

'The Queen has assured me,' said Lanzarote, 'that the King is becoming every day more favourable towards the plan. He desires the strictest secrecy to be maintained, however.'

'But such extensive preparations cannot remain hidden,' objected Gil.

'That, too, has been considered,' said Lanzarote. 'In order to prevent Moorish spies from getting suspicious about the preparations, the King is going to declare war on the Duke of Holland. A delegation informing the Duke of Portugal's real intentions is already on the way to Holland.'

'A splendid counsel, Lanzarote,' cried Dom Henrique.

'It was not I, but the Queen, who gave the counsel,' said the Almoner.

'So the stone has been set rolling, and no one will stop it,' lamented Jacomo.

'That has not been said,' declared Lanzarote emphatically. 'The matter is still open. The final decision of the King depends upon whether Dom Fernando as well as Dom Henrique approves the plans. For Dom Pedro is not willing to give his consent to going to war, and I can understand the reasons he puts forward.'

This declaration came as such a surprise that there was dead silence in the Hall of the Maps for a moment.



‘But surely you don’t share Dom Pedro’s doubts?’ cried Dom Henrique, alarmed.

‘I understand them,’ repeated Lanzarote.

‘Explain yourself more fully!’ demanded Dom Henrique sharply.

‘*Vossa Senhoria,*’ said the Almoner in a voice which sounded like that of another person. ‘It is true that the inducement to go over to Africa with military forces is great. There is no doubt that great riches are awaiting us there—spices, ivory, gold—’

‘We are not hucksters,’ interrupted Dom Fernando, who up till now had remained silent. ‘It is for God that we want Africa, on which the enemy with the green turban has laid his hands.’

'That devil has hundreds of thousands of hands,' objected Lanzarote. 'He has the desert behind him and is unassailable from there.'

'The desert is his enemy and ours,' said Dom Henrique.

'Up to the present we have only got one little foothold in Africa—Ceuta,' said Lanzarote thoughtfully. 'This one town is being constantly assailed by the Moors.'

The young Infante jumped up. 'That's the very reason why we must go over!' he cried. 'Shall we leave Ceuta without help? Ceuta must not fall! No sacrifice is too great for Ceuta!'

'We have taken Ceuta,' said Henrique in a firm voice. 'We shall take Tangier, the city of which Sala Ben Sala, who surrendered Ceuta, is still lord. We shall not allow ourselves to be stopped from doing what is necessary by one who has already fled before us.'

'No one could wish more than I do that Tangier should fall,' Lanzarote hastened to say, raising his voice. 'For it is a shame that Christian ships should have to pay tribute to the Moors when they cast anchor in African ports. And it would undoubtedly be an immense advantage to obtain direct trade with India, which now goes through twelve different hands. But the power of the Moors is tremendous—there is a giant ready to confront us yonder.'

'Goliath was a giant too,' cried Fernando, 'but David conquered him!'

Dom Henrique agreed heartily with Fernando. 'It is time for us to break our way through the Moors, who are standing between us and the Kingdom of Prester John. Those Saracens are disunited; they are not as strong as they would have us believe. What have their cartographers done? All the places from which they wished to keep our ships they have indicated profusely on their maps with sea monsters, sea unicorns, treacherous reefs, and even with the hand of the devil. Gil Eannes and his men did not let themselves be frightened off by them. Cape Non has become Cape Bojador.'

'And in the same way Mauretania will become another Portugal!' cried Fernando, his eyes flashing. 'We will drive the

Moors back to where they came from. And never will I leave my elder brother in the lurch in this task,' he vowed. 'I am willing to lay down my life for it—Africa for God!'

'Say that to the King!' cried Lanzarote, now speaking in the voice which Tinoco and Aires knew as his. 'Speak to him, Dom Fernando, as you have spoken to us! And he will send you, his David, over there, and Goliath, whose shadow covers Africa, will fall!'

'This very day I will ride to my brother, the King,' Fernando promised.

'We will ride together, Fernando,' said Dom Henrique. 'We will go to Africa together, and if God wills, we shall return together.' He walked up to Fernando and embraced him.

Four weeks later everyone in Portugal knew that the King intended to go to war. Despite the declaration of war on the Duke of Holland, nothing was talked about but Africa. Just as before the expedition against Ceuta, ships were equipped for carrying troops, and this time the fleet counted far more sails than at the first departure for Africa.

The absence of the Barque of the Brothers passed unnoticed, for only a few initiated persons had learned of the assignment on which she was now under sail.

Tinoco and Aires had ridden to the port of Lagos with Gil Eannes and his crew. Dom Henrique had assigned them their places on the ship which was to take the two Infantes to Africa. It was a big ship of magnificent and decorative design.

Night fell over the ships and the town. The noise from the taverns could be heard right down to the harbour. All except those on watch had leave until midnight.

Tinoco and Aires were sitting on deck with Hanno. The old man did not seem in the mood for stories.

'When we return,' said Aires thoughtfully, 'the ships which continue to explore along the coast need have no fear that a *dhow* will cross their path.'

'Then we will sail to the South right to where Africa ceases,' said Tinoco enthusiastically, 'and then on to the East!'



‘Perhaps we shall one day try to sail towards the West again,’
interjected Hanno.

Both brothers pricked up their ears.

‘Have Portuguese already sailed out over the ocean towards
the West?’ asked Aires, surprised.

Hanno winked at him and began to rub his beard.

'Don't keep us on the rack!' pleaded Tinoco.

'When my name was still Fuas—Fuas Rupinho,' said Hanno in that mysterious manner which even at the first meeting had given Tinoco and Aires a creepy feeling and at the same time awakened their curiosity, 'and I was a captain of King Alfonso, we began making the first voyages on the open sea. Then, after King Diniz had planted a pine-forest near Leira, and his son had built barques from it, we became more daring. A hundred years ago—I no longer remember the date exactly—we sailed to the West with three ships and found the Fortunate Isles. We had horses and siege equipment with us, but there wasn't much there to be conquered. First we discovered a miserable island—cliffs and goats, nothing more, and a few naked men and women. Their chief was dressed in goatskins dyed yellow and red. Four men swam over to our ship. We took them with us. And then we found another island. There were houses on that one, so we landed, and after some searching came upon a temple. We broke into it. And there we found what I want to tell you about. It was a wooden god. He held a boat in one hand and a ball in the other.'

'What did that mean?' asked Aires.

'No one was able to say. The people of the island were unable to speak to us, and even if we had been able to understand them, who knows if they knew themselves? But the wooden god gave me no peace. He has a boat, I pondered, and he wants to sail in it, but where to? He has a ball. What does that ball signify? A toy for the god. Does a god play with a ball which represents nothing more than a ball? A god plays with the world—*that* was what lay on his hand. He will sail round the world in his boat—that was what I thought—for I had read in old books that the world is round like a ball, and not flat like a disc.'

Tinoco was going to say something, for the old man's words did not seem very intelligible to him. In fact, they seemed rather weird. But Hanno did not give him a chance. 'We sailed on,' he continued, 'to the West and to the North. We saw islands so numerous and so tiny that we called them "ants". We found

other islands inhabited by hawks, and we called those islands the Azores—Hawks. Far out we came upon an island which we named Corvo; and the inhabitants, who shared everything we gave them as if they were children of one father, showed us the western point of the island—a rock in the form of a horse and horseman. And the horseman—listen attentively now!—held one arm outstretched as if he had had nothing in his mind for thousands of years but to point out that there was a route towards the West.’

‘And yet our ships always sail south,’ said Aires.

‘Perhaps what we are seeking is to be found in the West,’ said Hanno obstinately, ‘or perhaps,’ he continued as if to himself, ‘it’s all the same where we sail—if the earth is round after all.’ He fell silent for a while and looked with a far-away expression in his eyes at the brothers, who were spell-bound by his strange words. ‘I have been believing that for more than two thousand years,’ he said; ‘I, Necho, Hanno, Fuas and Manuel. Otherwise I would not have ventured it,’ he whispered. ‘Our Infante too believes it—I have read it in his eyes. He would never send out anyone were he not sure that the ocean is not encircled by hell.’

At this Aires ventured to ask: ‘Why does he not sail himself?’

‘No one knows why,’ said Hanno. ‘Only one thing is certain. It is not fear that keeps him from sailing himself. He is without fear, otherwise he would not come on board this ship tomorrow.’

Tinoco looked at the old man, startled. ‘You have not, perchance——’ He did not say the word that was on his lips.

‘Now and then it comes on me,’ said the old man; ‘then I know in advance what is coming, just as I often see before me what has been. Anyway, I envy all who are now setting sail on the Barque of the Brothers—even Joao Fernandez, who has the desert before him.’

‘Do speak!’ cried Tinoco, trying to fathom him. ‘Tell us what is awaiting us out there?’

‘It has gone already,’ said the old man, passing his hand through the darkness as if he were wiping off a blackboard something which he did not like to see. ‘Wouldn’t you play the guitar for a bit?’ he asked Aires.

'I haven't got it with me,' admitted Aires, embarrassed.

'You without your guitar?' asked Hanno, surprised.

'It's because Lopo has to remain behind in Sagres,' Tinoco answered for Aires. 'He left it to him as a pledge that he would come back.'

'He has good eyes, that boy,' said Hanno thoughtfully, and it was not clear whether he meant Lopo or Aires.

VII.

The Expedition against Goliath

THREE days later a favourable wind from the west carried the Portuguese fleet into Moorish waters. About midnight the ships had passed by the Rock of Gibraltar, which stood out darkly in the pale light. As all were sleeping except the watch, only a few had seen this one of the two Pillars of Hercules. In the south, at the other side of the Straits, the other one, the rugged cliff behind which was Africa, stood bathed in moonlight.

As the stars began to pale a tumult arose on the Infante's ship. Tinoco and Aires were awakened by loud shouts. Someone was shouting: 'Fire! Fire!' again and again.

The brothers started up and looked over, stupefied, to where the cry came from. A sailor was standing there shouting, because the ship's lantern, which was hanging above the powder-barrels, had caught fire. He was throwing his arms about in a panic, afraid either to run away or to grasp the lantern.

Before the brothers had fully realized the danger the ship was in, an old man rushed up to the lantern, which every second was becoming more like a flaming torch. The flames were already licking the rope by which the lantern was hanging, and beginning to consume it. The old man, whom the brothers now recognized when the fire lit up his face, was Padre Pio, Dom Fernando's confessor. He quickly grabbed at the blazing lantern, but that same instant it was seized from the other side by two stronger hands, which tore it down and flung it over the side of the ship.

into the sea. Hissing like a raging animal, it disappeared under the water.

The man who had performed this feat was now surrounded on all sides, and everyone recognized him. It was Dom Henrique. The two doctors who were on board hurried along, and while they were applying burn ointment, everyone could see how severely the Infante's hands were burnt.

'But was there not someone else who tried to do it?' said Dom Henrique, for, dazzled by the fire, he had not recognized the Padre. 'Who was it?' he asked, looking around.

'Padre Pio,' said Aires. Everyone moved back as the old priest came up and stood before the Infante.

'It's nothing to worry about,' said Padre Pio when the doctors wanted to examine his hands.

'He won't allow himself to be called Court Chaplain on any account,' Tinoco whispered to Aires.

'I've never heard him called anything but Padre Pio,' replied Aires in a whisper, and he felt glad that Padre Pio was on the ship, and not only Padre Martin.

It was still too early to remain up. Most of the men went to bed again, and Tinoco and Aires did so too. But they did not go to sleep again; they talked in a whisper about the old priest who did not think about his hands when he plunged them into the flames to save the ship.

When the sun rose above the horizon a few hours later its reflection cast a blood-red path in front of the ship. The soldiers and sailors looked at it shuddering, and their eyes turned southwards. Towards midday the coast appeared. Ceuta, fortress and town, stood silhouetted more and more distinctly against the cloudless sky which stretched above them.

The crew talked about the event of the night, and all agreed that the Infante, in saving the ship from the flames, had wrested a sure prey from the sea.

'He will wrest their towns from the heathen dogs one after another in the same way!' cried a veteran named Barros.

'You should know,' said another. 'You were there when Ceuta fell.'

'I should say I was!' said Barros boastfully. He glanced over at the front mast, beside which Dom Henrique was standing. 'He, our Infante, did more than half the fighting himself,' said Barros in a loud voice. 'While we, dazzled by silken robes and gold, were only thinking of booty, he was routing the Moors. With only seventeen fighting men he drove a hundred Moors in front of him. And it was he who wanted to take the citadel too the same day that the town fell. But heaven did not want any more dead, so it cast the black curtain of night between him and the enemy. In the morning the Infante noticed at once that a swarm of sparrows was calmly sitting on the citadel walls. Sala Ben Sala had taken to his heels. And he'll make off this time too in the same way as soon as the Infante appears—if he hasn't done so already because Menezes, the Governor of Ceuta, has raised his stick as before.' Barros looked into the faces of the younger men. 'You didn't know that, did you? Well, it was like this. No one wanted to stay on in Africa—they all wanted to go back home to Portugal. They really did not know what to do when the war came to an end, so they played *choca*, the favourite ball game. Menezes won, and he raised his stick and shouted: "*Aloee*," as is the custom for the winner to do. And he went on: "With this stick I will hold Ceuta, if the Infante so wishes!" The Infante did wish it. Menezes has been holding the town to this day.'

Barros received applause and laughs and went from one reminiscence to another. 'It's child's play to take a town from those fellows,' he concluded, as the ship sailed into the bay of Ceuta and cast anchor.

A review was held the next day in the open field in front of the town. The Almoner had fifteen thousand men on his lists, namely, three thousand five hundred horsemen, seven thousand foot soldiers, five hundred mounted cross-bowmen and five hundred men for the cannon and siege engines. The count showed that more than four thousand were missing. When this became known there was general dismay, and the feeling spread among the troops that the campaign should be called off. But Henrique turned to the army and cried: 'The fewer the fighters,

the more honour for each one! Since we are fighting for God, God will hasten to our aid and fill the gaps.' And so that Heaven should hear it, he ordered a blank shot to be fired in the direction of Tangier from all the cannon. Towards evening a retarded echo of this thunder arrived in the form of some Berber princes from the Atlas Mountains, who came to offer submission and tribute to Dom Henrique. Those who had been urgently advocating calling off the advance took this as a sign that the rest of the enemy would scatter like chaff at the mere sound of the Infante's voice.

'You will see what these disciples of Mohammed are like! A rabble who whine for mercy!' they said.

There were two routes to Tangier. One led across Seghir through wild, rocky mountain country; the other, a roundabout way via Tetuan, which had recently been taken by Duarte, son of Menezes, led along by the coast through Angera. As the Moors could easily hinder any advance by attacking from the rocky crags and ravines, Dom Henrique decided on the longer route, thus avoiding the Atlas Mountains on his left.

The Portuguese set out on a Sunday after Mass. Three hundred cross-bowmen on horseback went on ahead to reconnoitre. The forces passed by two tower-like houses called *castelejos* by the Portuguese, got over the dangerous pass where they had been wedged between the marshes and the coast, and arrived in front of the Moorish town of Tetteguin. There they encamped at the river Guad el Jelu, in the midst of vineyards and gardens. The soldiers took what they wanted from the surrounding Berber villages without resistance.

The following day the knights and foot-soldiers, the cross-bowmen, and the soldiers in charge of the baggage, each wearing a red cross on his shoulder, marched past Tangier with banners waving, and proceeded to entrench themselves in the hills to the west of the town, among which there were fruit-groves and springs. From here there was an extensive view southwards to the desert and westwards to the ocean where the Infante's ships lay. To the north stretched the promontory Trafalgar. And over the dazzling town of Tangier, like a huge stone lion rearing itself

up ready to spring, stood the mountain fortress of Kasba, a building as magnificent as the Alhambra of the Moorish Kings of Granada. The town, rich in noble buildings and fountains, lay nestling in the flank of the lion.

Tinoco and Aires learned from Hanno that this town had been founded by Hercules himself after he had vanquished Antaeos, the son of King Atlas.

'He called the town Tanga after his wife,' said Hanno.

The Infante Henrique had word sent to every detachment of the army that Hercules had come over from Portugal just as he had.

'Which is not quite certain,' Hanno whispered to the brothers. 'But it is certain that he vanquished Antaeos. It was a lengthy struggle, and Antaeos did not die until Hercules no longer let him touch the earth, from which Antaeos got his strength. Hercules held him above the earth, and only by doing so was he able to squeeze him to death.'

Hanno pointed towards the north where the Portuguese fleet lay behind the promontory. 'My old head cannot grasp why the Infante is going so far from his ships that he cannot keep in touch with them,' said Hanno. 'He has his reserve forces on the ships.'

'But there are no Saracens between us and the ships,' objected Tinoco, 'not even Berber rabble.'

'Not yet,' said Hanno.

But Tinoco was no longer listening to him.

The Portuguese saw the crescent, Sala Ben Sala's standard, raised above the walls of Kasba. Spies had found out that seven thousand defenders were waiting ready in the town, amongst them six hundred of the most renowned archers of Granada. The Infantes also knew that African troops were approaching under young Mulai Abd Allah, King of Fez, and his Vizier Lazurac, and that troops of the King of Velez and the King of Tafilet were also on the march, making a total of sixty thousand horsemen, as well as soldiers on foot.

Dom Henrique had no intention of passively awaiting so great

a military force, and he ordered the town to be stormed immediately. He himself set to work against the Kasba straight away. But the volleys of stones from the siege engines failed to breach the walls, the scaling ladders proved too short, and boiling pitch rained down on the ramming-towers which had been placed against the walls. It was as if the sluices of hell had been opened. The attack on the Kasba had the most disastrous ending. By evening the field in front of the fortress was covered with dead.

Dom Henrique hurriedly sent horsemen to Ceuta for heavier cannon and longer ladders.

In the interval the Moors were not idle. Saracen horsemen in red *haiks* harassed the Portuguese encampment ceaselessly—also Amazirges, equally feared as fighters with the short sword or the sabre, Riff pirates in white *galebs*, with one lock of hair hanging wildly over the shoulder from their otherwise shorn heads; Negroes with assagais, Berbers with sickle-shaped knives—and at the head of them all Mansur Ben Ziam, riding a pitch black horse.

They came as unexpectedly as if the desert had spat them out. As soon as Dom Henrique's warriors tried to fight them, they fled, luring their pursuers, whom they enveloped in clouds of dust, into ambushes.

When King Mulai's troops arrived, the defenders too, incited by Sala Ben Sala, rushed out of the gates of the town, and the besiegers, cut off from their ships, immediately became the besieged. Amid the frantic rumble of the *atabali*—huge kettle-drums—the Moors stormed the Portuguese camp for seven hours. By the time this onslaught had been checked, every third man of Henrique's army lay dead. The survivors, tortured with thirst, pressed their lips into the mud.

Aires and Tinoco had fought continuously alongside Gil's crew in the immediate vicinity of the Infante, and they had seen what a terror Dom Henrique was to the enemy. As night was falling they saw Fernando, with Padre Pio by his side, coming to the Infante, who had the Almoner and the Court Chaplain with him.



The young Infante talked with his brother for a long time. 'There are many dead,' he said—'far too many.'

'The other side has suffered much greater losses,' said Henrique grimly.

'There will soon be thirty of them against each one of us.'

'There's no turning back now,' said Henrique obstinately.

'You're right,' said Fernando, 'because soon not one of us will be alive.'

'Even if we wanted to turn back,' said Henrique gloomily, 'we could not do so. We're cut off.'

'Padre Pio thinks there is a way out,' said the young Infante.

'Speak, then!' said Henrique.

'If we go over unarmed to Sala Ben Sala he will treat with us.'

'They only want us dead,' said Henrique harshly.

'They want us to go away from Tangier,' replied Padre Pio.

'On our return people would point the finger of scorn at us,' declared Henrique bluntly.

'Senhor Infante,' said Padre Pio resolutely, 'for every man



whom you bring back to Portugal, a wife or a mother will bless you. There is no doubt that you set out because you believed you would accomplish something great. If you keep on fighting now you will be permitting murder.'

'You are speaking very boldly, Padre,' said Henrique angrily.

A tense silence separated the Infante and his counsellor for quite a time. The Court Chaplain tried to set the conversation going again. In a voice trembling with fear he said: 'Padre Pio is right—we must ask for mercy if we are to leave this accursed country alive.'

'Never!' cried Dom Henrique indignantly. He measured Padre Martin with a contemptuous glance. 'If Padre Pio advises treating with the enemy,' said the Infante scathingly, 'he has a

right to do so. He burnt his hands as I did. But you—you are tottering with fear for your life.'

The Court Chaplain cast down his eyes. They were filled with unconcealed hatred.

'May I now say where I see a way out?' asked Lanzarote.

The Infante indicated that he might speak.

'It has become meaningless to think of conquering Tangier,' stated the Almoner, 'and it is just as foolish to beg mercy of the Moors, who will want to have their revenge for Ceuta. We are encircled, but our ships are free. It therefore seems obvious to me that we should try this very night to fight our way back to the ships, and do so before the others have got wind of what we're up to. We must break out of this deadly ring.'

'But that would mean even more dead!' cried the Court Chaplain, horrified. 'Every one of us may forfeit our lives in doing so.'

'To be sure,' cried Lanzarote, extremely provoked; 'your life too is at stake, though I doubt whether the life of a coward counts for much in heaven!'

Padre Martin looked at the Almoner with helpless rage.

'Death will come to all of us one day,' said Padre Pio, 'and to you too, Padre Martin.'

The Infante sat lost in thought. He exchanged a glance with Fernando.

'We will make the attempt,' said Henrique at last. 'Two hours after midnight, when the enemy are least expecting it, we will try to break through. Everything depends upon our making our preparations unnoticed. In one hour all the captains and officers are to assemble before me.'

As soon as the Infante had given that order he dismissed everyone, including Lanzarote and Padre Martin. He wished to be alone.

Tinoco noticed that the Court Chaplain, who had shown his weakness so miserably and who knew now that even Lanzarote had contempt for him, hurriedly disappeared into the darkness.

'Look!' whispered Tinoco to his brother. 'See how quickly the night swallows him.'

'One can feel sorry for him,' said Aires. 'When a man is harried by fear as if by dogs——'

'I don't feel sorry if a person like that goes to the devil,' said Tinoco; then he continued firmly: 'It's a good thing that we're making the attempt. Lanzarote gave the only right advice.'

'I thought Padre Pio's advice better,' replied Aires.

'You don't doubt, do you, that we'll get through?' asked Tinoco, looking at his brother reproachfully.

'The command has now been given,' said Aires, 'and I will do my best.'

When the hour arrived everyone did what he was able to. Spies slipped undetected behind the enemy lines through an unwatched mountain gorge. At last, from the top of a chain of hills, on which, likewise, none of the enemy were to be found, they saw the ships lying below, and succeeded in making contact with the captains. The fleet made ready to send out boats and pick up the few thousand survivors who would get through.

Fernando led the vanguard. Henrique had reserved for himself the task of covering the rear.

The vanguard arrived noiselessly at the gorge. The place was uncannily silent. A part of the main body had already left the encampment, and everything seemed to be going on unexpectedly smoothly, when suddenly the sons of the desert emerged from every nook and cranny. Now, encircled more completely than ever, the Portuguese had to take the offensive. From all sides the thunder of the *atabali* had burst forth with appalling suddenness. Dom Henrique listened despairingly into the darkness which had come to life in such a terrible way.

'Treason!' cried Fernando. 'Back to the camp!' His cry was drowned in the raging howls of the attackers and the groans of the wounded. As there was no longer any prospect of getting through to the ships, all who were still alive turned back to the camp. The Portuguese fought like men who had death before their eyes and whose only wish now was to make the enemy pay as dearly as possible for their lives. Knowing themselves betrayed, in their despair they treated everyone who came in their

way as if he were the traitor. Many died with a curse on their lips for the unknown man who was guilty of their death.

Tinoco and Aires fought side by side with Dom Fernando. They were farther than anyone from the camp, but they fought a way through.

The fighting stopped near the encampment. It seemed as if Sala Ben Sala was sparing those penned up inside the camp, who were his sure victims, until the following day, so that the sun too might share his triumph. There were no longer many Portuguese left. Most of them, including the Infantes and the brothers, were wounded.

Tinoco and Aires sank down exhausted by one of the rampart walls. Then someone, whom they did not recognize at once in the darkness, came staggering towards them. Blood was gushing from a wound over his forehead and streaming down one side of his face.

'Oh, to have found you at last!' gasped the wounded man. It was Hanno, and the brothers ran to help the old man and wanted to bandage him straight away.

'Let it alone!' said Hanno. 'My head hasn't got it the worst.' He pointed to his breast, and the brothers saw with horror that his whole tunic was soaked with blood.

'I wanted to find you again,' said Hanno, when the brothers had settled a place for him as best they could. 'You, and the bravest man I've ever seen, Padre Pio. Call him over here to me, Tinoco! Tell him that old Hanno hasn't much time left.'

Tinoco hurried off to fetch Padre Pio.

'I wanted to talk to you once more,' said Hanno to Aires. 'Come near so that you can hear me!'

Aires knelt beside the old man and bent down over him. His face was only the breadth of a hand from Hanno's blood-drenched face.

'The Infante didn't listen to Padre Pio, but to the other,' said Hanno; 'that's why many have to bite the sand of the desert now.' The old man grasped Aires' hands. 'But you must not desert him.'

Aires was unable to utter a word. He held Hanno with his hot

hands and tried to warm the old man's fingers, which felt cold as stone.

'He has many to follow him blindly,' said Hanno, 'but only a few who have an eye for the shadow which emanates from him. If such as you remain near him, the shadow will not stretch out too far; it cannot fall where you are.'

'I don't understand you very well,' said Aires.

'See,' said Hanno, 'he has a traitor for his Court Chaplain . . .'

'Was it *he* who did it?' asked Aires, horrified.

'I knew it beforehand,' whispered Hanno, his eyes wide open. 'He wanted to live at any price—but how could I accuse him before he had done it? Don't think of him any more, stick to Dom Henrique! If he had a priest like Padre Pio as Court Chaplain fewer misfortunes would happen around him. Therefore, continue to stick to the Infante, even though he suffers people like Lanzarote near him and listens to them! He will listen to you one day. He is one of those who see the new which is coming on us, before the masses realize it is coming. He has turned Cape Non into Cape Bojador—he and not Gil Eannes; he has pushed the Pillars of Hercules into the sea—he and not we; we were only the fingers of his hand, which he stretched out into the unknown. Though he never sails, he is a navigator such as few before him have been.'

Hanno drew Aires close to him and whispered: 'I was certain that I would find you in the end, for you were always near to me, nearer than your brother. . . . You were near to my heart, you youngest of all my brothers, my Benjamin! Do not fear that I will let you out of my sight when my heart ceases to beat. A glance which has once penetrated through to another does not cease again. Therefore, do not be troubled. Rely on me; I have seen a great deal; I am very, very old!' Hanno tried to speak once more in the voice in which he used to tell his stories. 'At the beginning, do you hear, when I first started to discover the sea, and my name was still Odysseus, I suffered shipwreck and was drifting about alone on a ship that had neither helm nor mast, and Neptune emerged from the waves and asked anxiously: "Do you wish to come to me already?" I calmed him: "One of

my kind does not give up so quickly, Old Man of the Sea; it is not yet time by a long way"—but now . . .' His voice failed, and in the dim light of the night it looked as though the old man had a smile on his face which was so distinctly divided in two by his wound.

Padre Pio, whom Tinoco had found at last, came hurrying along, but by this time the wound above Hanno's forehead had stopped bleeding, and the grip with which the old man held Aires had become so rigid that Aires had difficulty in loosening his hands.

As long as it was still night isolated troops continued to turn up at the encampment of the Portuguese, and in the early dawn a belated little group led by Barros arrived. Though wounded like the others, Barros could not refrain from inundating Padre Pio with a torrent of words as soon as he caught sight of him.

'Listen, Padre!' he said, 'this is something for you. We have just risen from the dead!'

The Padre had to listen to him whether he liked it or not, for Barros held him tight.

'There we four were lying in such a terrible state that no one thought we were alive,' said Barros, 'not even the Amazirges, who run their knives into the body of anyone who still has a breath of life in him. They were about to throw us into the ravine, which was already a horrible grave for many hundreds. But as soon as they touched us we jumped up, crying: "Although we are already dead, we are still Portuguese, and if you infidel dogs sniff at us, may God have mercy on you!" Padre, I tell you, we gave the finishing stroke to at least forty of them who were standing there like idols!'

'Thirty,' said one of the four, weakly.

'You windbag!' Barros rebuked his comrade. 'I suppose you counted them! Well, I admit it was too dark to count them accurately,' he said, turning to the Padre. He let go of the Padre and went to look for another audience for his story.

VIII

The Golden Spurs

THE morning came, making the armour of the Christian combatants glisten wherever it was not tarnished with blood. Fernando, the various commanders, Padre Pio and the two Pilots were assembled with Dom Henrique.

‘Where is Padre Martin?’ inquired Eannes.

‘He is dead,’ declared Dom Henrique.

‘No one saw him fall,’ said one of the captains. ‘He hasn’t been seen anywhere since midnight. It’s said that . . .’

‘He is dead,’ repeated the Infante.

An expression frightful to see passed over his face. After that no one asked any more.

‘It won’t be long until they attack,’ said Dom Henrique, jerking his head in the direction of the enemy.

In full sight of all, the commanders of the Saracens had assembled. The individual horsemen could be distinguished by the colour of their horses, on the bridles of which the rising sun shone.

Dom Fernando stood up. ‘Brother,’ he said, ‘we all know that our enemy, though he may have other ideas about God than we have, always lends a ready ear to an enemy who is valiant in defeat.’

‘Oh, yes,’ agreed Dom Henrique bitterly. ‘He has made use of a hint from a traitor without the slightest hesitation.’

‘We were trying to steal away,’ said Fernando, unshaken.

'As long as we met Sala Ben Sala in the open field he behaved in the manner one would expect of a knight.'

'What are you driving at?' asked Henrique impatiently.

'When Ceuta was taken,' continued Fernando eagerly, 'as everyone knows, there was a man-to-man fight. A gigantic African, a terror with his stone sling, offered to fight a champion from the Portuguese army, to determine the battle. Vasco Martinez went out to meet that Goliath, and felled him.'

'That is a long time ago,' said Henrique, unmoved.

'All our people know that Vasco was only a few years older than I am,' said Fernando, offering himself.

'My little brother,' said Henrique, looking at Fernando gloomily, 'those on the other side remember that too, if with less pleasure. But even if they had a giant to place in the field, as they had then, they would not do it. The battle is already decided. Sala Ben Sala only needs to put the final stroke to the account which shows such heavy losses on our side.' Henrique looked intently at his captains and said: 'I alone bear the blame for it. You have lacked neither courage nor discretion. I have made a mistake.'

When there was a movement in the row of captains and someone stepped forward to speak, Henrique made a sign for silence. 'On firm land,' he said, 'I am on uncertain ground. You know that my field of action begins where the coast ends in the sea. In those latitudes into which I sent the Barque of the Brothers I feel at home. And because I believe that victories await Portugal on the ocean, I shall take it on myself to approach Sala Ben Sala submissively, and even kiss his horse's stirrup to induce him to allow us to depart in freedom.'

A profound silence followed the Infante's words.

'You are very brave,' said Padre Pio.

The Infante Fernando hurried up to his brother. 'Let me go over,' he begged. 'I am the King's brother just as you are.'

Dom Henrique staggered. The wound he had received was giving him trouble. 'Very well, ride over,' he said, 'and you ride with him, Padre Pio. Inform the Lord of Tangier that as soon as I am in a fit state I will go over to accept his conditions, what-

ever they may be.' He looked gloomily in front of him, his eyes full of grief. But a few hours later, when he was watching out for his ambassadors' return, his face was resolute.

Even before the sun had reached its zenith, the young Infante and Padre Pio returned.

'Will you please give the report!' Fernando asked the priest.

'There was a man lying between them and us,' Padre Pio began. 'We did not recognize him at once. There was scarcely any clothing left on his body, and his face was gone—they had taken it off him.'

The Padre looked down at the ground. 'Sala Ben Sala had it explained to us that they had helped the man who had run over to them in such a hurry to hurry still more by tying him to the tails of two horses. They had brushed the ground with him, for a traitor merits nothing better, they said.'

Everyone looked over at Padre Pio, horrified.

'Will Sala Ben Sala grant our request?' asked Dom Henrique.

'He ensures a safe withdrawal to you, Senhor Infante, and to all the others, whose bravery he extols.'

Henrique stood up. 'And the price?' he inquired.

'What was to be expected,' said Padre Pio. 'Ceuta.'

Henrique stared at the ground. He did not say a word.

'In the event of your accepting the conditions, Sala Ben Sala awaits Dom Fernando and twelve companions to be held as hostages until the last Portuguese have left Ceuta.'

'I am ready to go,' said Dom Fernando.

'Let him take me,' demanded Dom Henrique violently.

'Sala Ben Sala insists on Dom Fernando,' explained Padre Pio with emphasis. 'He says that you, Senhor Infante, the King, and the whole Portuguese nation are devoted to him.'

Fernando went up to Dom Henrique and gripped him by the shoulders. 'I know what I am undertaking,' he said firmly. 'And I know too what remains for you to do—just as well as you know it.'

'Sala Ben Sala offers his own son as security for the keeping of the agreement,' continued Padre Pio. 'I am to tell you that

he gives you until the sun touches the horizon to come to a decision.'

As the sun sank into the sea in the west the Infantes, accompanied by twelve young horsemen and Padre Pio, rode into Sala Ben Sala's camp. All the Moorish princes had assembled there.

The conditions for the safe withdrawal were discussed without one offensive word. The army was to embark on the ships at dawn the following morning in the Bay of the Jews. The route down to the Bay of the Jews was the least difficult one. Sala Ben Sala facilitated Dom Henrique in every way. The Infante agreed that Dom Fernando should remain a prisoner of the Moors until Ceuta was given back.

Before Dom Henrique set about returning to the Portuguese camp with Sala Ben Sala's son, he walked up to Fernando deeply moved and clasped him in his arms. Then he removed from his riding-boots the golden spurs which his father had handed him before the walls of Ceuta and gave them to Fernando. Padre Pio, whose eyes surveyed the impassive faces of the Moorish princes, saw a scornful flicker on the face of Lazurac.

'Senhor Infante,' said the Padre, turning to Dom Henrique, 'now that you no longer need me, I ask you to grant me leave.'

'The number of hostages is complete,' said Dom Henrique, taken aback. Dom Fernando opposed the request even more strongly.

'I do not ask to remain as a hostage,' said Padre Pio, 'but as a brother in Christ to the Infante and his companions.' As he knew the Moorish language, he turned to Sala Ben Sala. The lord of Tangier and Arzilla granted the old priest's request without hesitation.

Tinoco and Aires saw the solitary horseman arriving. He was followed at some distance by Sala Ben Sala's son and twelve other Moorish hostages. They were riding the horses which the twelve other Portuguese hostages had taken over with them. All saw that Dom Henrique was returning without Padre Pio.

'Now they have got him too,' said Tinoco gloomily.

'Why should he not remain with Dom Fernando?' asked

Aires. 'Each one of us would have remained too if we were in his place. I think it splendid of him to have done so,' continued Aires with animation. 'The Moors won't keep the fourteen long in their clutches.'

Tinoco looked at his brother, surprised. 'You really believe that, do you?' he asked.

'Why shouldn't I believe it?' asked Aires, astonished at Tinoco's look. 'After all, they've only been handed over until Ceuta has been evacuated.'

Tinoco bit his lip.

'Surely the Infante won't break his word?' said Aires vehemently. 'See how Sala Ben Sala has given him his own son!'

Tinoco looked down at the ground.

'The King will redeem his brother.'

At this Tinoco said: 'Ceuta must not fall—Fernando said that too.'

Aires looked at Tinoco dumbfounded. 'You think then that the Infante intends to leave Africa without his brother?'

'Dom Henrique will stay in Africa too,' said Tinoco. 'You'll see—I'm not mistaken. I know him; he will hold Ceuta.'

'If he does that . . .' Aires began, but he was unable to finish the sentence. The thought that Henrique could break his word and abandon his own brother seemed too monstrous to him.

The agreement which Dom Henrique made with the Moorish princes provided for the withdrawal of all Portuguese without arms. Dom Henrique gave the command to take arms.

The agreement ensured that no Saracen should dare to approach within a mile to the right or the left of the retreating Portuguese. When the Portuguese were half-way on their journey, they were attacked by wild insubordinate Berbers whose bloodlust had not been satisfied. Sala Ben Sala and Mulai hurried along to stop the Berbers from murdering unarmed men, but to their surprise and indignation they saw that the Portuguese had sufficient arms to defend themselves.

Nevertheless they did not prevent the men from embarking. It was only when they saw that the ships did not sail to the north-

west, but to the east, where Ceuta lay, that Sala Ben Sala's face darkened. 'It would have been better if he had met his death here than in Ceuta,' he said angrily.

'Your son . . .' cried Mulai, dismayed. 'We must try to forestall that false fellow in the bay before Ceuta.'

'It is too late for that,' said Sala Ben Sala.

Lazurac turned to him. 'Give me over that young Christian prince,' he said. 'It's better for us to take him away from here—farther into the desert.'

'Do what you like with him!' said Sala Ben Sala bitterly.

'You have seen how his treacherous brother handed him the golden spurs which he was to win before Tangier,' said Lazurac, with a malicious smile. 'If you have no objection I will give them to him many times—in my own way.'

'Do what you like with him!' repeated Sala Ben Sala, as his eyes followed the Portuguese ship which was bearing one of his sons to Ceuta.

IX

The Abyss

MONTH after month the Infante remained in Ceuta. He had shut himself up like a monk in a cell in a tower of the Almina, the fortress for whose capture he had won the golden spurs when he was twenty. There, having made all preparations for an eventual attack by the Moors, he received only his most intimate counsellors and Menezes, the defender of the town. Everyone who was called to Dom Henrique got a shock. Two black lights flickered in the wax-white face. The eyes did not conceal the fact that they belonged to one who was being consumed by a fire raging within him.

‘His soul will turn to ashes if he goes on living like that,’ said Gil Eannes to Tinoco and Aires, when he came from the Infante and met the brothers on the cliff, where they were often to be found. The cliff was embodied in the wall and formed part of the fortification. Aires’ eyes roamed far towards the west, into the dim distance where Tangier lay behind the grey Atlas Mountains, while Tinoco looked up again and again to the two slits of windows behind which he knew Dom Henrique to be.

Eannes secretly observed Aires, with troubled eyes, for since Hanno’s death he had been more and more worried about him. At last he said: ‘There’s no sense in always staring in the same direction. Tangier cannot be seen even from up there.’ He pointed up to the tower. ‘The doctors told me that during the first days the Infante couldn’t be kept away from the windows—

but then he had to see that there was nothing for him to do but give up.'

Aires looked at Gil, bewildered. 'He has given up, has he?' he said.

'He has given up doing what you are doing,' said Gil patiently. 'He has realized that looking over does not help.'

'I've known that long since,' said Aires. He clung to Gil appealingly. 'I wonder if the Infante would listen to me?' he asked.

'You?' asked Gil, surprised. 'What have you got to say to him?'

'That one of us must try . . .'

'Try what?'

'To get through to Fernando,' said Aires vehemently. 'It must be killing him to feel that he's cut off from us like a branch from a tree. I am certain that I could get through to Tangier.'

'I believe you,' said Eannes, struck by the seriousness with which Aires disclosed his plan.

'I would get into the Kasba.'

'You have great confidence in yourself,' said Gil, without a smile.

'I'd get to him!'

The Pilot gripped Aires by the arm. 'You would have just as little success as the young Saracen who penetrated into the Almina last night with a dagger and even got as far as the dungeon in which Sala Ben Sala's son lies imprisoned.'

'A Saracen? And with a dagger?' Tinoco started up.

'Sala Ben Sala wished to "free" his son in that way. He could not bear to think of his being a prisoner. He would prefer him to be dead.'

'Why did no one hear about this "liberator"?' asked Tinoco excitedly.

'Menezes urged the Infante to keep it secret,' Eannes informed him. 'I am confiding it to you only because I feel that you two are also cherishing dangerous designs!'

'I have no plan in mind,' said Tinoco honestly. 'The Infante will do everything that lies in his power.'

‘What has he done?’ asked Aires, beside himself.

‘You greenhorn!’ said Eannes angrily. ‘Why do you think the Infante buries himself alive up there? He has only one thought—how to free Fernando without sacrificing Ceuta. His sorrow has gone to the heart of each one of us. And Lanzarote——’

‘Always that one!’ cried Aires contemptuously. ‘Has he not done enough harm already?’

‘Don’t undervalue that desert fox!’ said Gil. ‘He’s never at a loss for a way out.’

‘We know that.’

‘You don’t know anything!’ replied Gil impatiently. ‘I’ll tell you another story which is being kept secret, and with reason. The Infante is leaving no stone unturned. He sent one of our men, who willingly volunteered for the task, with a letter to Dom Fernando. This man was caught by Mulai’s spies and stoned. In spite of this, much as it repelled him, the Infante adopted a plan which Lanzarote had hatched. The Almoner found out that two of the Moorish hostages are brothers. He had one of them brought before the Infante, and the Infante guaranteed that his brother would be freed if he would be ready to take a letter to Dom Fernando on the sly.’

‘And the Moor?’

‘He smiled,’ said Gil, ‘and he did not cease to smile when Lanzarote asked him if he did not love his brother. He smiled when Lanzarote struck him,’ concluded Gil very seriously.

‘Then there’s no hope, is there?’ Tinoco did not dare to look at Gil as he asked the question.

‘We do not even know where the young Infante is held prisoner,’ said Gil Eannes gloomily. ‘He is no longer in Tangier—our spies found that out for us. Lazurac has dragged him off somewhere or other into the desert. How could one of us get through the desert?’

‘But the young Saracen did come through it,’ said Aires obstinately. And suddenly he asked: ‘Does the Infante permit this man to be struck too?’

‘He let him go free,’ said Gil.

Aires cast down his eyes, ashamed.

'He even left him the dagger,' continued Gil. 'He only instructed him to say to Sala Ben Sala that he need have no anxiety about his son, and that he, the Infante, would be happy to hear the same as regards his brother.'

'Shall we get news, then?' asked Aires, in great excitement.

'That rests with Allah, not with God. Gil turned to go, leaving the two brothers alone on the battlement.

It was in the fifth month after the retreat from Tangier, and about three weeks after the young Saracen's attempt to force his way in to Sala Ben Sala's son, that Alvarez, one of the thirteen hostages, arrived in Ceuta riding a Barbary horse. On the way up to the Almina he was surrounded by Portuguese, who stormed him with questions. He let them know that they would hear all he had to report, because he was only permitted to speak if the Infante would listen to him in the open square. This condition caused many of them to pause and wonder, and so, though hundreds were following him, Alvarez continued his ride up to the Almina amidst a profound silence.

Dom Henrique hastened forward to meet him. It was the first time for many weeks that the Infante had appeared before those who had escaped with him from the blood-bath of Tangier. He embraced Alvarez as if he were his own brother, then began plying him with questions, but Alvarez informed him of the condition which Sala Ben Sala and Mulai had lain upon him in connexion with the message. Then the Infante stepped back and, looking searchingly at Alvarez, said: 'All those assembled here have a right to hear the news you bring. Therefore tell us how it fares with my brother, Dom Fernando, and with all of you, and if you may, tell us first of all where he is.'

'He is now in the Darsena, the dungeon of Fez,' said Alvarez. 'On the way from Tangier to Fez our shoes were taken from us and we were driven like beasts through the burning sand of the desert. Then Lazurac had the Infante separated from the rest of us. Thirteen *ulemas*, "holy men of the desert", are his guards, and they have orders from the Vizier to give to Dom Fernando each day what he wished to win for himself before the walls of Tangier.'



'I do not understand you,' said Henrique, horrified.

'Lazurac,' explained Alvarez, 'took from the Infante the golden spurs which you gave him, but only to give them back to him every day anew in the most terrible manner. Oh, Senhor Infante!' continued Alvarez, his voice choked with emotion, 'that Vizier has the appearance of a man, it is true, but he cannot have been born of a mother as other men are. That "guardian" of your brother has charged me to keep nothing back from you. Dom Fernando's wrists are sore from the chains, his whole body is being devoured by vermin. Even before the sun rises his torturers waken him with whips on the thongs of which the spurs sparkle. Day after day he is taken out to the market-place like an animal and we others are forced to look on while they flog him. When Padre Pio, unable to bear the sight, shaded his eyes, the Vizier had his eyes put out so that he would not have to put his hands before his face again! Oh, Dom Henrique, the Infante bears all his tortures with the greatest courage, but it is certain that the sun will not rise for him much longer if no one wrests him from the desert.'

There was a deathly silence in the square. All eyes were fixed on Dom Henrique. The Infante remained motionless. His face was as if carved in stone, and while loud lamentations rose around him and even the *hidalgos* were shaken with their grief, Dom Henrique kept looking at the ground with an inscrutable expression.

Fernando Cabral, who had saved the Infante's life at Tangier, walked up to him. 'Oh, Senhor Infante!' he cried, 'we have no right to our lives if we hesitate any longer to save Dom Fernando from such terrible torments.'

Others too pressed around Dom Henrique now, entreating him loudly to lead them across the desert to Fez, to free Fernando and his companions.

Dom Henrique remained so motionless that many were seized with anxiety for him. Gradually the cries died down.

The Infante turned to Alvarez. 'If we were all to set out this very day—every one of us,' he asked, 'how many of us would get through to Fez?'

'Not one,' said Alvarez. 'That is not the way.'

'If I were to go to my brother the King, and beg him to offer all the treasures of Portugal in ransom for Fernando?'

'They want Ceuta,' said Alvarez.

'They are devils,' said the Infante. 'They have sent you in order to wound me so terribly from a distance that I would weaken. They want to see the green flag of their Prophet waving over Africa. Their pride cannot endure the fact that there are no longer any mosques in Ceuta.'

Dom Henrique went up to Cabral, who was still standing before him. 'You sacrificed one arm to save my life, and you would give the other to save Fernando's, would you not?'

In affirmation of his willingness, Cabral raised his remaining arm.

'Now, I ask you, Cabral, could you act against the God in whom you believe, even if your brother's life depended on it?'

Cabral, startled, let his arm drop. And then he said: 'It cannot be acting against God to save one's own brother, even at the cost of a town. A few churches more or less won't matter to God.'

The Infante turned to Menezes. 'You have held Ceuta for many years and have brought to nought all the efforts of the Saracens to recapture it. Now I ask you, who have done more for Ceuta than I have, shall we allow this town to fall?'

The white-haired Menezes, perplexed by the Infante's question, stared in front of him uncertainly. But at last he spoke without faltering. 'I have never thought of going away from here. No other town, not even the one in which my mother bore me and my father taught me my first steps, is so dear to me as Ceuta. Yet, knowing now that for the sake of this town Dom Fernando is doomed to a terrible end, Ceuta weighs no more with me than a handful of desert sand!'

The aged Menezes continued to speak with deep emotion, and many agreed with him.

Dom Henrique gave up looking for anyone to back him. He felt that he was being pressed from all sides to surrender Ceuta. Unconcealed reproach met him in every eye. All their looks said: You have given a promise. Keep it and redeem your brother!

The Infante now looked at Alvarez searchingly. 'Does Dom Fernando know that you have been sent here?' he asked.

'Yes,' replied Alvarez. 'Lazurac told him.'

'And were you present when the Vizier did so?'

'Yes,' repeated Alvarez. Disquieted by the Infante's questions he went on: 'He did so when he had the horse brought for me. I had to mount the horse in front of the Infante. It was one more of the many tortures inflicted on Dom Fernando.'

'And Dom Fernando?' continued the Infante, without taking his eyes off Alvarez's face. 'Did he give you no message for me?'

At this Alvarez cast down his eyes. 'I had to give the Vizier my word that I would not tell you what the Infante said. Otherwise . . .'

'There is no need for you to break your word, Alvarez,' said the Infante. 'That Vizier hoped that my brother would become his tool in a moment of weakness. He was mistaken—the prince remained steadfast. I will act on that knowledge alone, even if there is not one among you who does not curse me for doing so.' Labouring under deep emotion, Dom Henrique went up close to Alvarez. 'Tell him,' he whispered into Alvarez's face, 'that he can always rely on me! I will not free him. Tell him I will never surrender what he himself would not betray!' Then, tearing himself away from Alvarez with a supreme effort of will, the Infante turned and walked through the lane which silently opened before him in the throng, up to the gate of the Almina.

Tinoco and Aires slept in the same room with the rest of Gil's crew. Tinoco was fast asleep, but Aires had been lying awake for many hours staring into the darkness under the low ceiling. His eyes were swollen. It was long past midnight when he stood up cautiously and began to climb over his brother and the other sleepers who lay between him and the door. Eannes was lying near the door, which stood open. The Pilot too was fast asleep.

Outside Aires kept close to the high walls which made the courtyard almost pitch dark. He knew where there were sentries posted. As he was in bare feet, his step was silent. Without being challenged he arrived at the cliff to the west of the fortress. The

cliff looked a formless mass in the scanty light which fell from the moonless sky, yet it was not difficult to climb it from the courtyard, as steps had been hewn out on it. Aires dragged himself up the last bit and peered down into the ravine, which yawned open outside the walls. Only intense darkness met his gaze.

He had often looked down the cliff in the daytime; he knew that it was only possible to descend the upper half of it, and that even this could not be done without danger. Lower down the cliff hung over. Anyone trying to leave the Almina had no choice but to jump down into the depths.

Aires began the descent. With his bare feet he groped for the first firm foothold on the outer side of the wall of rock. In order to get a new foothold somewhat lower down, he was just about to take his right hand from the sharp ledge to which he was holding on with both hands when his left arm was suddenly gripped by the two hands of a man. The man who had gripped Aires dragged him up so violently that for a moment Aires let go altogether and was hanging over the abyss. But the man was strong and did not let go of him.

'Up, young fellow!' he panted. 'I'll help you!'

He did help indeed, but he did it with little consideration, dragging Aires over the sharp edge so roughly that his whole left side began to smart. Then he gripped Aires by the shoulders and began to shake him as if he were a sack from which something had to be extracted by main force. While doing so he said to Aires in a subdued voice: 'You can't deceive me—I know perfectly well what's the matter with you.'

Aires was unable to defend himself. 'I'm one of you,' he stammered. 'Let go of me!'

'Let go of you, is it? What are you thinking of! I will give you a good thrashing, just as my mother used to give me.'

'A thrashing?' asked Aires, bewildered.

'It's the only cure,' the man assured him. 'My mother knew that. She was a rock of a woman, I tell you! It took a long time for me to understand that she loved me, but she had more sense than all the men in the village. She got the moon out of me once and for all.' The man made a gesture of invitation which was not

quite visible in the darkness. 'Bend over,' he demanded, 'so that I can begin!'

'Begin what?' asked Aires, who was beginning to doubt if the man was in his right senses.

'To thrash you,' said the man. 'I want to thrash the moon out of you.'

'But there's no moon tonight!' cried Aires, utterly perplexed.

At this the man let go of him, but only to catch hold of him again more firmly than ever. 'You're right, you young scamp. There's no moon in the sky tonight. And I thought you were climbing about because you were moonstruck, as I used to be!'

'Let go of me!' demanded Aires, still more urgently.

'Not until I know what you were up to,' said the man, giving Aires a push. 'Deserting, were you? But you don't look that sort.'

'What's that to you?' asked Aires defiantly.

'I'm on sentry duty,' the man explained. 'You'd better look out! I climbed after you because I have a soft spot for the moonstruck, but if you want to bolt . . . if you can carry it off . . .'

The sentry gripped Aires still more firmly. 'Own up at last!' he said.

'I must get to him,' began Aires, in faltering gasps, 'because I see him before me all the time—I see them flogging him. I can't stand it here any longer.'

At this the man let go of Aires. 'I couldn't have known that,' he said, embarrassed. 'I should have known it,' and as Aires looked up at him, he continued in a low voice, 'because it's just the same with me as with you. It's the same with all of us, I believe, since Alvarez was here. But we cannot change anything—neither you nor I.'

'*He* could change it,' said Aires, 'but Africa is more to him than his brother.'

'That's what I used to think,' said the sentry.

'And what do you think now?'

'I have given up thinking—because I could never get to the bottom of it.'

'I cannot stop thinking about it,' said Aires, tormented.

'Then there's nothing to be done for you,' said the man regretfully. He observed Aires attentively. 'Look here, aren't you one of the two brothers in Gil's crew?' he asked. He did not wait for an answer. 'Now I know for sure,' he said. 'I saw you fighting side by side in front of Tangier. You fought the Moors well, you and your brother.' He carefully took hold of Aires by the wrist—the same wrist by which he had dragged him up the cliff. 'Where is your brother?' he asked.

'He's asleep,' said Aires. 'He's able to sleep.'

'And you were going to go off without him, were you?'

Again Aires began to look down into the ravine from which the man had dragged him back.

'I see him in front of me,' said the sentry in a low voice, '*your brother*—looking at the empty sleeping-place in the morning when he'd wake up . . . and finding you were not there.'

'Let go of me!' protested Aires.

'Come!' said the sentry. 'I'll take you back, so that you won't fall into the hands of others who would take you for God knows what.'

The man climbed down ahead, and Aires apathetically submitted to being helped by him in climbing down to the courtyard.

They slipped along by the wall unobserved until they arrived at the open door. Then the man said: 'You can bless your lucky stars that it was I who was on sentry duty on the cliff, and not someone who understands nothing of the moon.'

'What is your name?' asked Aires in a low voice

'I'd prefer you didn't know it,' said the sentry. 'If you did you might look at me askance when you come across me in the daytime—just because I was moonstruck once, and took you to be the same.' Saying this, the man gave Aires a gentle push, then disappeared into the night.

As Aires groped his way back to his sleeping-place, he stepped on Tinoco's hand.

Tinoco sat up. 'Where were you?' he asked.

'I've only just wakened up.'

'But you've come from outside,' whispered Tinoco, worried. 'You are quite cold.'

'The air was stifling here.'

'What's the matter with you?' persisted Tinoco. He took hold of the wrist which was still hurting from the hard grip of the unknown man. 'Tell me at once where you were!'

'Outside!' said Aires wearily.

'What did you want outside?' Tinoco kept on.

'Let me go to sleep now!'

'Will you tell me in the morning?'

'Perhaps.'

At this Tinoco let his brother free and moved aside to give him more room.

X

The Man at the Mast

A WEEK later the Portuguese fleet sailed out of the bay of Centa as night fell. Nearly all those on board were seamen.

Most of the soldiers who had survived Tangier had orders from Dom Henrique to stay on in the African fortress, as it was expected that Sala Ben Sala would attack it one day. Menezes was instructed to defend the town to the last man.

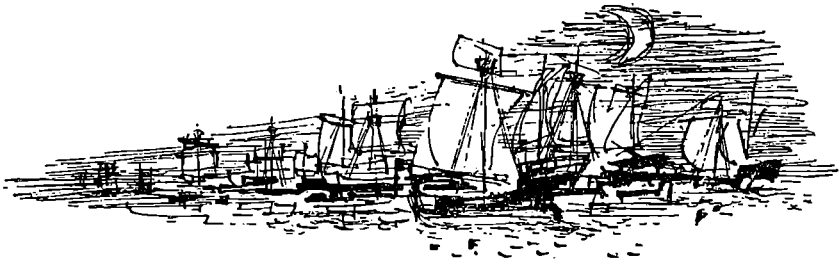
The ships sailed westwards under a favourable wind. Most of them were to sail to Lisbon or Oporto. Only three ships, amongst them the caravel with the Infante on board, were bound for the harbour of Lagos.

As the crescent moon rose above the horizon the ships were already so far out that they could not be seen by the Moorish guards along the coast. The higher the moon rose in the wind-swept sky, the more clearly did the sea begin to glisten. Silver streets lay between the ships.

Aires sat by the ship's side looking over at the front mast. The mast stood out darkly against the large white sail, dividing it in the middle by a sharp outline.

The Infante and Lanzarote were standing by the mast. Aires could not see the Infante, for the mast was hiding him, but he had seen him walking towards it with the Almoner.

He is on the ship, and the fox instead of his brother is by his side, pondered Aires. The Infante is returning from Africa, and his brother is not . . .



Aires was tempted to waken his brother to confess to him now why he had gone out that night, but when he saw that Tinoco was sleeping peacefully, unassailed by doubts, he lost courage to do so. He calmly accepts things that I shall never understand, thought Aires bitterly. How can he think so differently from me?

Aires was seized with anxiety for his brother. He had never feared for him while they had been fighting before Tangier, surrounded by Saracens. But now he had the feeling that danger threatened Tinoco from that man who was standing there so rigidly by the mast. That man had not left only his brother behind in Africa. Many were dead, and twelve others had been surrendered like Fernando. A priest who had acted like a saint was not with them on the ship. Aires looked across the empty deck and thought of the many whom the Infante refused to allow to return home because he deemed it necessary to fortify Ceuta more strongly. He will keep his hold in Africa, Luis had said. What does he care about human beings?

Aires was persistently tortured by the thoughts which had assailed him a hundred times before. If he had let us sail on the Barque of the Brothers with Nuno and the 'Desert Wanderer', we would have been spared that bitter experience—perhaps we would already be home again . . . Aires yearned for the Barque of the Brothers. His eyes wandered over the pale sail into the vast expanse of the night sky in which single stars stood out, shimmering. He thought of the white-washed fishermen's cottages in his bay, and he felt a choking in his throat. He longed to talk to someone who could understand him, and he thought of Manuel, the old sailor, who was now dead, and of Lopo, who wanted to

return home to Africa. And then Aires realized that he longed for nothing more than to return home with Tinoco, and his thoughts wandered on to that other Manuel, who was still living and waiting for them—at home in their bay.

When the Infante's caravel, which, with its two escorting ships, had preceded the fleet, arrived in the harbour of Lagos two days later, a silent wall of people lined the shore. Not a sound was to be heard from the ships which were already lying alongside. The news of the unhappy outcome of the Tangier campaign had long since reached the harbours of Portugal.

The Infante did not seem to notice the silence with which he was received. The Barque of the Brothers was lying in the middle of the harbour at the same spot at which she had furled her sails after her return from the voyage to Cape Non.

'It is a good omen that she is here!' cried the Infante, so that all could hear him, as he pointed joyfully to the slender ship.

Tinoco fixed his eyes longingly on the Barque of the Brothers. There was no one to be seen on her but the watch.

'She must have been here a long time already,' said Tinoco. 'Nuno must surely be in Sagres by now.'

The Infante cast anchor right beside the Barque. The watch confirmed that the Pilot had already ridden to the Infante's town.

'We'll ride there this very hour,' said the Infante to Eannes and Lanzarote. Gil's crew received orders to follow the next day.

'He could have taken us with him,' said Tinoco impatiently, when the Infante had left the ship. 'We will report for watch,' he suggested to Aires. 'We could not sleep anyhow.'

Aires consented. His face remained impassive.

'Or does a tavern attract you?' inquired Tinoco mockingly.

'I want to talk to you,' said Aires, 'when all the others have left the ship.'

'To talk?' asked Tinoco, surprised. 'What's there still to talk about, since the Barque is here?' He left Aires and went over to the prow of the caravel, from which the Barque of the Brothers could best be seen.

'Very well, speak!' Tinoco invited Aires, who like himself was



sitting leaning against the front mast. All the rest of the crew had left the ship. The ship lay calm, glistening in the light of the moon, which had just risen.

Aires hesitated. 'Perhaps you're right,' he said. 'Perhaps it's better if we don't talk together.'

'Three hours ago you thought differently,' said Tinoco irritably. 'You don't know what you want.'



'I know what I want,' said Aires resolutely, 'just as well as you know what you want. But I don't want us to become still more separated.'

'I think that up to now we have always wanted the same things,' replied Tinoco impatiently.

'You want to remain with the Infante,' said Aires. 'I don't want to.'

Tinoco looked at Aires surprised. 'What do you want, then?' he asked.



'I want to go back to where we belong,' said Aires tensely.

'We belong yonder there!' said Tinoco vehemently, pointing to the Barque of the Brothers.

'No,' said Aires. 'Not a second time to Africa—neither you nor I.'

'Surely you don't want to run away?' asked Tinoco, in an offensive tone.

'We have gone through enough evil things,' said Aires firmly. 'It's time for us to finish with that, now, at once.'

'Now?' cried Tinoco indignantly. 'But we're on watch!'

'No one will steal the ship,' said Aires bitterly. 'But he's stealing you from me. You will not admit that he drives everyone who has anything to do with him to misfortune. You are blind to the fact because you have fallen for him.'

'You have lost your reason,' said Tinoco. 'One word more against the Infante and——'

'I have a great deal more to bring up against him,' continued Aires, undeterred. 'And I have a right to make you listen to me because it was for your sake that I went with him.'

Tinoco looked dumbfounded into Aires' face, which was pale as a corpse in the moonlight. 'You are ill,' he said, dismayed. 'It was too much for you.'

'It was too much for all of us,' replied Aires. 'But what's that to him? If only the goal which he has set is reached! His goal!'

'Our goal,' Tinoco corrected him angrily. 'Surely it was he who first gave a meaning to our lives.'

'That's what you think,' said Aires reproachfully. 'I think of Fernando and the others whose lives he deems of no account compared with the possession of a town which he won't surrender though he gave his word to do so. I think of the fact that thousands are dead because he wants even more towns! I think of the fact that Padre Pio no longer has any eyes.'

'But Aires,' said Tinoco, abashed, 'you yourself fought to wrest Tangier from the Moors. You killed men, because he ordered it.'

'Not for his sake,' protested Aires. 'I struck down those who were trying to strike you or me down. I wasn't thinking of

Tangier when I was killing. I was only thinking that you and I should return home.'

'Shut up!' said Tinoco. 'I can't listen to you. You're talking like a . . . in any case not like a man.' He looked at Aires defiantly. 'Where were you that night?' he asked. 'Were you trying to—run away?'

'I wanted to get away,' admitted Aires.

'Where did you want to go?' inquired Tinoco. 'Home?'

'I wanted to get to Dom Fernando.'

'Without me?' asked Tinoco sharply.

Aires was at a loss for a reply.

'Then you should surely be able to understand him,' said Tinoco earnestly. 'That night you too had an aim which meant more to you than your brother. He cannot surrender Ceuta—Ceuta belongs to God. Fernando would not understand it if Henrique were to get him free!'

'I did not succeed in leaving you alone,' said Aires, distressed. 'Do you not understand that?'

'Aires,' said Tinoco with affection, 'perhaps you should do so now, and return to Manuel in the bay. This life is not for you. It is easy for me because I have only one desire—to be in the service of the Infante. You have too many thoughts of your own; they stand in your way. I will not take it badly of you if you return to the village. They would give you a warm welcome—you belong there. Any one of them would take you in his boat. But you will have to go alone. I cannot return. The Infante will send Nuno to Africa again, and I don't want to miss going with him on any account.'

'If he had only men like Nuno around him, I would stay,' said Aires.

'What do the others matter to us?' replied Tinoco. 'One of that sort has already deserted him—dropped off like a rotten fruit. And the other . . .'

'The Infante listens to him more than ever,' objected Aires. 'He is his evil spirit.'

'That makes it all the more necessary for us to stick to the Infante.'

'So you're remaining, then?'

'For me there's no question about it.'

'I am afraid for you, Tinoco.'

'You should get all those silly ideas out of your head,' begged Tinoco.

'Tinoco,' began Aires, getting out every word with difficulty. 'I cannot bring myself to go home alone. Yet I'm miserable if I stay, because everything in me revolts against it.'

Tinoco pushed up as close as he could to his brother. 'I felt sure you had got over that,' he said tenderly, 'but as I know what it's costing you, I'll make you a promise. Once we have made the voyage with the Barque I'll return to the village with you. I want nothing more than that. But just once I must sail farther than anyone before us has ever sailed. It would kill me if I were never to have that experience. Can you understand that?'

'I understand you,' said Aires.

'The place where we have been now is not the Africa which draws me,' continued Tinoco. 'To me war is no less terrible than it is to you. But to discover new coasts . . .'

'I understand you,' repeated Aires.

'The Africa from which Lopo comes has got hold of me,' said Tinoco.

At these words a feeling of warm affection came over Aires; he saw before him Lopo's dark face with the sparkling eyes—the slender hands which had grasped the guitar so eagerly and yet so tenderly when Aires was going away.

'It would not have been easy for me to sail without you,' said Tinoco, 'but I would have had to do it.'

'There's no turning back for me now,' declared Aires solemnly.

'You should decide without thinking of your brother.'

'I'm not thinking of you now,' said Aires. 'I'm ashamed that I could have forgotten Lopo for one moment.'

'Nuno will definitely take Lopo with him,' said Tinoco eagerly. 'He will make a good interpreter. He will do his job splendidly.' Tinoco drew his brother away from the mast to a place from which it was no more than a jump across to the Barque of the Brothers.



The cliffs of Sagres were bathed in dazzling light as Gil's crew approached the town of the Infante from the east. The men and the two boys had set out early. They were urged on by the desire to have news of Nuno.

When the outlines of the walls appeared silhouetted against the sky, Aires noticed that someone was running towards them. The distance between quickly decreased, and the brothers soon saw it was Lopo. He was holding something tightly in both arms. Tinoco and Aires begged to be allowed to gallop on in advance, and so they quickly reached Lopo. His face was shining with perspiration, and he was panting.

'What have you got there?' asked the brothers in astonishment, as they dismounted. The animal which Lopo was carrying was no bigger than a fawn, but it had well-formed antlers.

'Good Pilot brought with him,' panted Lopo, 'little deer, like we have in Africa.'

The dwarf deer tried with all its strength to free itself. Its eyes rolled; it threw back its head and horned Lopo's shoulder, from which some drops of blood were already trickling.

Lopo smiled. 'You first show,' he said eagerly. 'Africa!'

The brothers did not mount their horses again. They walked the last stretch beside Lopo, leading their horses by the reins.

Nuno was waiting by the gate. 'It's about time you came back,' he said.

'Have you a lot to tell us?' asked the brothers.

Nuno shook his head. 'I can spare myself the trouble. The Infante has promised that you two may come with us on the next voyage, when we go to fetch home the "Desert Wanderer"!'

'And when will that be?' asked Tinoco.

'Before your first beard has grown,' replied the Pilot, laughing.

Part Two

THE VOYAGE TO THE BITTER RIVER

I

Grains of Paradise

THE crippling shadow which had lain over Portugal since the Tangier disaster seemed to miss out the cliff of Sagres. After the return of the Infante and his men life went on there just as before the African campaign. Henrique left nothing undone which would help in the preparation of new voyages of discovery. The brothers hoped soon to be setting out on the Barque with Tristão and his crew.

Tinoco, now seventeen and broad-shouldered as a full-grown man, sauntered along to the observatory. Aires, astonishingly tall for his fifteen years, was down on the strand with Lopo gathering shells. In half an hour the brothers were to go to Tristão for instruction.

Tinoco was surprised when he saw that the Pilot was already standing in the observatory, and he was afraid he had made a mistake about the time. But Nunō was not looking out for his pupils, he was talking to Gil Eannes, and Tinoco was just about to make a detour around the observatory to go and meet Aires, when the Pilots beckoned to him.

'We've just been talking about you two,' said Nuno.

'About your brother,' Gil corrected him. 'We are uneasy about him.'

The tone in which Eannes spoke made Tinoco prick up his ears. 'But Aires is better than I am in all subjects,' he asserted firmly, 'not only in map-drawing and fencing.'

The Pilots suppressed a smile.

'You don't need to defend him,' said Nuno; 'he's capable enough.'

'Remarkably so for his age,' agreed Gil. 'He could be entrusted with a ship. He'd take it through to Africa.'

'Why, then, are you worried about him?' asked Tinoco anxiously.

'I have been worried about him,' said Eannes, 'especially over in Ceuta. Over there he was going about like a ghost. I didn't feel that Africa was the place for him. He has only begun to revive since we came back here.'

'That's because we're soon being allowed to sail,' said Tinoco promptly. 'War was not for him . . . besides, it weighed on his mind that the young Infante remained behind.'

'Don't take it badly of me, Tinoco,' said Gil, 'but I sometimes have doubts as to whether Aires would last out such a long journey as Nuno and you have before you.'

'He has his heart set on this voyage and nothing else,' Tinoco assured him emphatically. 'He's if anything more keen on it than I am.'

'Then everything is all right,' said Nuno. 'There he comes now with Lopo. If Lopo were not a Negro one could think: Those two are brothers.'

'He definitely wants to go over there to Lopo's country some day,' Tinoco explained eagerly, and then he asked Nuno: 'Lopo may come with us, may he not?'

Nuno nodded thoughtfully.

'Lopo too seems to me to be one of those who suffer from homesickness,' said Gil.

'Aires has got over that completely,' declared Tinoco.

'At the worst,' said Gil, winking, 'you can give your greetings to the Portuguese storks which will be just setting off for home when you are lying alongside south of the Cape.'

'That won't be necessary,' protested Tinoco.

The Pilots observed how Aires gave his treasures to the Negro boy before merrily running up to the observatory. Nuno looked at him without anxiety.

In the weeks which followed the return from Africa the Almoner was seldom to be seen in the Infante's town. It was no secret that he was equipping a fleet for Dom Henrique. When he was in Sagres he spent most of his time with the Azenegue prince. Especially when night was falling, Lanzarote and Adahur would roam about the cliffs, standing here and there in earnest conversation—but they always stood and talked in places where they were sure no one would hear them.

It was already fairly dark as they sat down on a stone bench right beside the niche in which Aires and Lopo usually met. Neither Lanzarote nor Adahur knew the hide; therefore they could not know that Aires and Tinoco were there. Tinoco had been listening to Aires playing, as he often did these times, and now they were looking out silently at the sea upon which more and more eyes were blinking down from the night sky.

Lopo was not there; he was on sentry duty at the stables.

When the brothers recognized the voices of Lanzarote and Adahur, they listened attentively. They could hear every word.

'I have good news for you, Adahur,' began Lanzarote.

'Shall I be allowed to sail with Nuno?'

'Not with that Tristão—with me!'

'Is not Tristão the next to sail?'

'I am the next to sail,' declared Lanzarote triumphantly. 'I have got my way with the Infante at last. I'm sailing with thirty ships. One of them will be the ship of that stuck-up fellow.'

'You don't speak well of Nuno.'

'Those Pilots are terribly conceited—but for me not one of them would have a ship. But for me the Infante wouldn't get a step farther.'

'O, Africa!' whispered Adahur.

Lanzarote, misunderstanding Adahur, said with a shrug of the shoulders: 'That was a blow for him, of course, and it was a bad business for me also. But it had its good side too. Now the Infante is in my power. I equipped the first fleet for him for the war against Tangier. As nothing came of it, the Infante owes me an enormous sum of money now, and he has to do what I want.'

'O, Africa!' repeated Adahur, who obviously had not been listening. 'How I long to be once more riding one of the swift white camels which we call *heiri*—wind drinkers. I am homesick for the desert. When do we sail?'

'Soon,' said Lanzarote, 'but the matter has its difficulties as far as you are concerned. And you yourself are to blame for that.'

'I do not understand,' said Adahur, alarmed.

'You know Portuguese too well.'

'I do not understand,' repeated the Azenegue prince.

'You are of too much use,' explained Lanzarote. 'The Infante wants you to take part in many more voyages. He is out to discover new places. You can talk to the people. You are worth too much to him.'

'How much?' asked Adahur excitedly. 'I will give ten for myself, ten slaves. And gold.'

'How much gold?' asked the Almoner.

'A large dish full of gold dust.'

'Where do you people get so much gold from?' asked Lanzarote.

'I am a prince,' said Adahur proudly. 'My father sends caravans through the desert. His slaves travel from Tapezza to Timbuktu in forty days, and from Timbuktu to Melli in thirty days. And they carry blocks of salt on their heads or on wooden trestles, and at a water-course they lay the blocks of salt beside the gold which is standing there in bowls already weighed. If there is enough gold there they take it and leave the salt. If they think there is too little gold, they leave the salt blocks and the bowls of gold standing and withdraw to leave the gold people time to estimate for themselves.'

'They do not speak to the gold people, then?' asked Lanzarote, astonished.

'They have never yet seen each other,' Adahur assured him.

'Is nobody there, then, to watch the gold?'

'The gold does not run away,' said Adahur derisively.

'But someone could take it and give nothing for it.'

'Up to now no one has thought of doing such a thing,' said

Adahur. 'And it would be foolish to do so, because the next time there would be no gold there.'

That seemed to give Lanzarote an idea. He pondered silently for a while. Then he said quickly: 'Slaves, did you say? Your father has slaves?'

'Many slaves,' confirmed Adahur. 'Anyone who lives in our country has slaves to work for him.'

'That is worth emulating,' remarked Lanzarote. 'But I fear you will not be let free so easily. The Infante has not got enough interpreters.'

'What does he want interpreters for?' asked the Azenegue prince. 'When white men come to Africa they do not need to speak. Everyone in Africa knows what they want—slaves, ivory, gold.'

'You are clever, Adahur,' admitted Lanzarote candidly. 'Listen, now! If I take it on myself to let you free, how many slaves will you give me?'

'Ten.'

'Let us say twenty. Do you agree?'

'My father is no huckster,' said the prince.

'And a bowl of gold dust?'

'What about two?' suggested Adahur, with an undertone of irony in his voice.

'It is clear that you are of royal blood,' said Lanzarote. 'I will see to it that you will soon have a wind drinker under you once more. On the way over you can give me a few hints as to where your father gets his many slaves from.'

'Only when I am really sitting on a *heiri*,' said Adahur, with a contemptuous glance at Lanzarote.

'I'll find what I want for myself all right,' muttered Lanzarote. 'It's not necessary to knock my nose against it first.'

Then the two moved on. When their footsteps were no longer to be heard, Aires whispered: 'And Nuno has to sail with a person like that!'

'That remains to be seen,' said Tinoco, trying to calm him. 'In any case we'll tell Nuno as soon as we have an opportunity.'

'He'll get a shock.'

They remained sitting in the niche for a while looking at the sea, which was strangely agitated although there had not been a breath of wind for hours.

One day when Nuno Tristão was riding with some of his crew, Tinoco drew his horse up beside the Pilot's horse, and asked him to drop behind with him. Tinoco showed by a glance that it had something to do with Lanzarote. The corners of Nuno's mouth twitched scornfully, but he dropped behind.

'Next thing you will be eavesdropping on him,' said the Pilot reprovingly. 'I don't like people to carry tales.'

Tinoco forced himself to continue. 'He has been arranging business with Adahur—rather shady business.'

'That was to be expected,' said Nuno. 'Since he's a business man he cannot do otherwise.'

'He's going to free the prince on his own in exchange for twenty slaves,' Tinoco related.

'Poor Adahur!' said the Pilot laconically.

'Above all, he asserts that he will be in command of the fleet, and that the Barque of the Brothers, too, will be under his command. Is that true?' The brothers looked at the Pilot anxiously.

'That's nothing new to me,' said Nuno.

'We couldn't believe it when we heard it,' said Tinoco, depressed.

'That's not the worst,' said the Pilot.

'He asserts,' said Aires bitterly, 'that the Infante has to do what he, Lanzarote, thinks best. That fox——'

'It is an insult to all foxes to call him a fox,' interrupted Nuno sternly.

'Why does the Infante listen to him?' Tinoco wanted to know.

'Because there's nothing else for him to do,' said the Pilot. 'I will try to explain it. Since the Tangier expedition turned out badly the King has lost all interest in Africa. The Infante stands alone. Lanzarote finds the money without which the Infante cannot continue his work. He has succeeded in equipping thirty

ships for the new expedition. We will sail with this armada or Lanzarote's.'

'For slave-catching!' cried Aires indignantly.

'Not we,' replied the Pilot. 'The Infante has given me a secret commission. Our adventure will only begin when the slave-catching armada turns back. The Barque of the Brothers will return home with clean sails.'

'Why can we not set sail before Lanzarote?'

'He is in a hurry. In three weeks all the ships will be ready, and he insists that we sail with him.' The Pilot now gave free rein to his indignation. 'You will see all kinds of things. He has arranged to take donkeys with him for carrying the gold. He behaves as if all of Africa was already in his hands. He knows of a Negro king named Giloffa who is supposed to maintain an army of eight thousand horsemen. Lanzarote gets to know everything; Lanzarote cannot keep his mouth shut any longer! But one day we will get rid of him, you may rest assured of that! He won't always have the last word.'

'I'd like to deal him a stinging blow right now—so hefty that it would knock the wind out of him,' said Tinoco.

At this Nuno stopped his horse.

'Wait a moment, you two! You've just given me an idea! I brought back something from the last voyage which only the Infante knows about so far. Now Lanzarote shall become acquainted with it.'

'With what?' asked Tinoco.

'The Africans call it "grains of paradise",' said Nuno, grinning.

'What is it?' asked the brothers, very excited.

'A kind of pepper,' the Pilot burst out. Then he galloped on again. 'We'll do it with that,' he said in high spirits. 'A few days before the fleet sails Lanzarote is going to give a banquet in Lagos in honour of the Pilots and the captains of the thirty ships. You will be there as cup-bearers. Lopo too—we'll get him to do it. It's better for someone who knows nothing about it to do it.'

'Do what?' asked Tinoco.

'I'll explain that to you this evening, you tale-bearers!' said the Pilot, with a grim smile.

Lanzarote, who now allowed himself to be addressed as Admiral quite openly, had made most lavish preparations for the banquet. The Mayor of Lagos, always eager to sun himself in the brilliance of festivities, had placed at his disposal the same hall in which the 'conquerors of hell' had previously been honoured. Models of the thirty ships, in brilliant colours, hung from the ceiling on gilded ropes. The walls were covered with banners, the hall was festooned with garlands made of gold and silver tinsel, and on all the tables huge erections of artificial flowers towered up as big as elephants' ears. The cup-bearers, amongst them Tinoco and Aires, were dressed in richly braided livery. Lopo looked splendid all in white.

With a flourish of trumpets the Infante, the Admiral, the captains and the Pilots entered the hall. The Mayor greeted the guests with a pompous flow of words. The Pilots, who had little use for fine words, encouraged each other by significant glances to drink, and as the Infante left the banquet early, there was boisterous fun at all the tables. Lanzarote himself drank most of all. Again and again he raised his harsh voice in a torrent of bragging.

'It's only beginning properly now!' he cried. 'Nothing can be done with single ships; that has been proved. A business only pays when it's done on a big scale. Just wait—the blacks will open their eyes and stand as if rooted to the ground when they see a whole swimming town coming across the sea, and we'll have nothing to do but grab them. "Black ivory!" That's worth more than cast-off elephants' tusks and worth far and away more than gold. I tell you, trade will thrive. Lanzarote will fill the empty pockets of the poverty-stricken, and the coffers of the King!'

The captains showed great enthusiasm. There were some among them who took every word which Lanzarote spoke for gospel truth because it corresponded to their own expectations. These people pressed round Lanzarote, who had difficulty in getting rid of his over-eager friends. He aimed at getting applause from the Pilots too, and he directed his talk more and more emphatically towards the table at which Tristão and Eannes were sitting. The two had hardly cast a glance at him up to the present,

nor had they drunk a toast to the Admiral of the Armada, as all the others without exception had done. It was obvious that Lanzarote was waiting for this.

Gil Eannes had a great desire to leave the banquet, and he did not conceal it.

'You want to go now, do you?' asked Nuno with a sly smile, 'now, when the best part is only just beginning!'

'Yes, yes,' agreed Gil fiercely, 'he still seems to have a lot of sulphur to spit out.'

'I hope so,' said Tristão. 'For the more in full swing he is, the better the effect will be.'

Gil, who had not been initiated into the plan, was puzzled. He looked closely at his friend. 'You have something up your sleeve for that braggart, have you?' he asked.

'I'd like to have a bet with you,' said Nuno, dropping his voice, 'that he won't have the last word—not today.'

'You'll lose your bet,' replied Gil at once. 'Nothing would stop his talk.'

'It will be stopped this time,' Nuno assured him. He beckoned Aires, who was just passing by the table with wine, and the young cup-bearer's eyes flashed.

'A plot?' asked Gil, whom nothing had escaped. 'And without me?'

'You'll have all the more fun out of it,' Nuno assured him. He held Aires firmly by the arm. 'You may bring them now, and then send Lopo here!' he said.

'Is Lopo a conspirator too?' inquired Gil, amused.

'He hasn't the slightest suspicion,' said Nuno, 'but he's going to do it.'

Aires brought along three unusually large tankards full of wine. Nuno Tristão took one tankard between his knees and glanced around to make sure that no one was observing him. To Gil's astonishment he now took a little box full of a strange sparkling powder out of his pocket. Then he carefully took a few pinches from the box and mixed the dust-fine powder into the wine. Finally, he placed the 'doctored' tankard beside his own, which he left standing untouched.

'Don't you drink, either, until the time comes!' he requested Gil. 'We want full tankards.'

The next time Lanzarote began his loud bragging, Nuno beckoned the two brothers and Lopo to come over.

'You two are to offer the tankards to us Pilots, and Lopo shall take one to the Admiral!' he said. Thereupon he gave Lopo the tankard into which he had mixed the powder. 'We wish to drink his health,' he said.

Lanzarote did not fail to notice that the two Pilots were preparing to do what he had been expecting of them for hours past, and he became more loud and boastful than ever. 'Friends!' he cried. 'Nothing is impossible if only the right people take an enterprise in hand together. Now that a Lanzarote is stretching out his hands towards Africa, the hands of those who co-operate with him will not remain empty. Let us drink to Africa, Portugal's colony!'

Nuno gave Gil a nudge. 'Now he's in full swing,' he said.

The two Pilots stood up, and ceremoniously accompanied by the brothers and Lopo, walked up to Lanzarote's table. The Almoner was delighted to see them coming. 'The Pilots wish to drink a toast with me!' he exclaimed.

'That's what we wish,' confirmed Nuno Tristão.

Lopo offered Lanzarote the full tankard, and the Pilots took the tankards which Aires and Tinoco held ready.

'To the Grand Admiral of the Armada!' cried Nuno. 'To the conqueror of Africa!' he continued in a tone which made Lanzarote start. He began to watch the Pilots' faces suspiciously.

'You two doubt the success of our undertaking?'

'Africa is fairly large,' said Gil dryly.

'No fear, old explorer of hell!' said Lanzarote. 'We will not let ourselves be deterred by seamen's tales. And if the Bitter River, of which the old men weave legends, should really turn out to be somewhere down there—we will drain it! And if hell itself comes in our way, we will empty it! We will gobble up all Africa, as surely as I will drain this tankard to the very end!'

'You have accomplished a great deal,' said Nuno flatteringly, 'built a whole slave-catching fleet! And if you drink that tankard

in one draught,' he continued with a look which pierced Lanzarote, 'then I have no doubt at all but that you will get hold of all Africa.'

'That will be easy!' replied Lanzarote, 'even if I have emptied a good few already today!' He moved the big tankard about in front of his face. 'I will drink this out as surely as I will find the Earthly Paradise for Portugal!'

'Your health, Grand Admiral!' cried Nuno in a loud voice. The Pilots raised their tankards.

Everyone looked tensely at Lanzarote, for the tone in which Nuno had expressed a doubt as to whether the Admiral would drain the tankard had made them all prick up their ears. Lopo did not take his eyes from the tankard which Lanzarote had put to his lips—it was as if the fate of Africa depended on it.

Lanzarote took a mighty draught. But then he let the tankard fall as if it had been hit by lightning, and stared in front of him with his mouth wide open, looking as if he had seen a ghost. He struggled for air—his breath had left him. He thought he was suffocating, and flung his arms about.

'What is the matter, Grand Admiral?' asked Nuno, who, like Gil, had drunk his tankard to the end. 'Why don't you drink it to the end? The fate of all Africa is at stake!'

Lanzarote tried to speak. He could not get out a word. Lopo, who had been following as if spellbound what was happening to Lanzarote, now stared at Nuno. 'Great magician!' he whispered, 'Admiral wants to, but cannot.' And there and then Lopo began to dance for joy. 'Does not get Africa! Does not get Africa!' he cried.

'It is plain,' said Eannes to Lanzarote, 'that there are things which even a Lanzarote cannot do!'

Lanzarote now began to writhe as if there was fire inside him. With a supreme effort he gasped: 'Hell! Poison! Hell!' Then he fell forward. The Pilots caught him as he fell.

'No one dies of that,' Nuno assured the captains who carried the Admiral away. 'It's only a passing joke!'

Gil, in high delight, caught Nuno by the arm. 'All that done by the few . . .'

'Grains of paradise ground to dust,' declared Nuno, winking at the brothers. 'African pepper! That is what he has inside him!'

Nuno was now besieged from all sides by people asking him what the African pepper was, but the Pilot only laughed and invited them all to have a drink with him. 'You'll see for yourselves when we get to where the pepper grows,' he said.

Highly pleased with himself, he sat down beside Gil, and called the brothers and Lopo over to his table.

Dawn was already breaking when the two Pilots left the hall with Lopo and the brothers, who had stayed on with them. They





climbed over heaps of tinsel and the poles of banners which had been knocked over. Lanzarote's armada hung forlorn in the air above the field of ruins.

A man whom Gil took to be a beggar was standing in the roadway. He threw him a gold piece. The man did not catch it, nor did he stoop to pick it up as it rolled away.

Gil looked at him more closely. 'I seem to know you,' he said.

The man did not answer, but continued to look at Gil. Then Gil went up and looked straight into his face, but stepped back, disconcerted. 'You here? You have no business with us again,' he said.

The man clung to Gil. Gil could not shake him off.

'Don't trouble yourself about him!' said Nuno, trying to draw Gil away.

The brothers had recognized Luis at once, though his face had taken on an expression of despair.

'It will kill me if you don't let me try it just once again,' said Luis desperately.

'You can sail with the Grand Admiral,' said Nuno. 'He can't have enough men. He takes anyone.'

'Not with him,' cried Luis resolutely, 'not with him! On the Barque on which I sailed before—with you, Pilot!'

'I'm not sailing,' said Eannes. 'Tristão is sailing!'

Luis turned to Nuno. 'I must go with you,' he said. 'I must get out of hell.'

Tristão looked at Luis for a long time. 'You ran away from it; that's why it overtook you. It will be no picnic this time either.'

I must sail with you,' implored Luis.

At this Nuno turned to the brothers. 'Would you sail with a fellow like that? With such a . . .' He suppressed the word which was on his lips.

'We would not be here but for him,' said Tinoco.

'Listen!' said Nuno to Luis. 'We are sailing out to where the pepper grows—African pepper!'

'It's all the same where to,' said Luis, as his face twitched and tears began to flow down his red beard.

'Don't you try that on me!' said Nuno roughly, turning to go. 'You can bless your lucky stars that you knocked up against me today, you . . .' For the second time he swallowed a word which was on the tip of his tongue. Then he thought of Lanzarote and began to laugh grimly. 'How his breath left him! And you two tale-bearers!' he said to the brothers. 'It was you who put me up to it!'

Nuno hung on to Gil, for he did not feel steady on his legs. The brothers too needed something to hold on to, so they took Luis in between them.

II

Dragons' Blood

THE Barque of the Brothers was by far the most insignificant ship in Lanzarote's fleet. The Grand Admiral had built caravels, high-decked ships about a hundred feet long by twenty-five feet wide, with a double tower astern, bristling with lombards. The caravels had three masts with lateen sails—great three-cornered linen sails which pointed sharply towards the sky and reached down to the gunwale. These made it possible to sail even with a lateral wind, and when the course had to be altered it was only necessary to trim the sails.

All Lanzarote's ships without exception had pious names—*What God Wills, As God Wills, Holy Cross, Holy Wounds, Queen of Angels*, and so forth. Fourteen of the caravels had been built in Lagos, nine in Lisbon and five in Oporto. Zarco and Teixeira, the two discoverers of the Canary Islands and now their governors, had hastened to the scene from Madeira in magnificent ships. Directly behind these two caravels, whose masts towered over those of all the other ships, even Lanzarote's own caravel, the Barque of the Brothers sailed along, holding her own with difficulty in the rolling swell.

'The Madeira ships have powerful masts!' remarked Tinoco admiringly.

'That's natural, since they come from the island of forests,' explained Luis, who meanwhile had earned the respect of all the crew as ship's cook. Since he was sailing on the Barque of the

Brothers once more all traces of despair had vanished from his red face. He served up not only tasty dishes but also good jokes, and he frequently spiced with good stories the daily ration of a quart of wine. 'I was there . . .'

'When Zarco and Teixeira discovered the island of forests?' asked Aires, who, like Tinoco, was eager to learn more about Madeira.

'That was before my time,' said Luis modestly. 'When the year 1418 began nothing had yet been discovered by the Infante's seafarers. But two young noblemen who were in his service, Zarco and Teixeira to be precise, being familiar with the plans of exploration which Dom Henrique was drawing up, appeared before the Prince one day and said: "We can no longer endure lounging about here on the land."

'The Infante was delighted with their purpose and procured a barque for them. And he said: "Now you have an opportunity not only of winning fame for yourselves but also of breaking down the disbelief in the existence of those regions which the devil is holding shut against mankind." Heaven was evidently against their reaching the coast of Africa—violent storms blew the barque westwards instead, towards an island of rock which served them in their dire need as a harbour, and the survivors called the little island, on which hardly anything was growing, Porto Santo—Holy Harbour. There were unfamiliar shrubs and giant trees which looked so uncanny with their reed-like leaves that they seemed to the discoverers like rearing dragons with bristling dagger-like scales. They called the red resin which they brought home with them "dragons' blood". It proved very suitable for the manufacture of Tyrian purple.

'Another young man named Perestrello offered to make something of the island, and Zarco and Teixeira took him with them when they sailed for the second time. As they sailed off, a friend presented Perestrello, who had seeds of all kinds on his ship, with a rabbit which had young when they were out on the high seas. Everyone considered this to be a good omen. They steered for Porto Santo, and Perestrello landed with those who wanted to settle on the island, taking his seeds and the rabbits with him. But

Zarco and Teixeira caught sight of a cloud which lay far to the south-west. They had already noticed this cloud from Porto Santo when they first landed, and at the very same spot. There were cowards among them who suspected that beneath this cloud lay St Brandon's Island, which tradition says immediately submerges like the back of a great whale when anyone steps on it. Zarco and Teixeira manned their ship, which was called the *Saint Lawrence*, with reliable men and sailed towards the cloud. Three hours before daybreak they hoisted sail, and towards evening they saw some mountain tops and later on a flat tongue of land, and then bare reefs appeared in the sea in front of them. A white wall of breakers prevented them from entering the bay which lay behind the tongue of land. The crew lost courage completely, but Zarco cried out: "*São Lourenço chega!*"—Saint Lawrence, come to our aid! And they steered safely by the ridge of reefs through the breakers into calm waters. Now they saw that they had arrived in a paradise. A large and luxuriantly verdant island lay before them. Here too they found dragon-trees, over which towered the higher stems of the *til* trees, whose dark crowns contrasted with the lighter-coloured *vinhaticos* and the smooth stems of the *adorno*. An overpowering perfume rose from the balsam cedars and the *folhado* trees, which had large white flowers as big as doves. The discoverers saw before them flowering myrtles, wild figs, huge bushes of fennel, and heather as tall as trees. The ground was covered with a thick carpet of moss.

"The interior of the island seemed to be an impenetrable jungle of green trees and shrubs.

Zarco and Teixeira kept to the coast. They found mountains of tufa rock full of terns and jackdaws. There were hosts of birds—robins, blackbirds, warblers, wood-pigeons, green canaries and black nightingales which Teixeira named *tintonegros*. The birds were tame, and perched on the rowers and their oars. The crew found a cave which opened to the sea; its walls were of basalt as smooth as glass. A herd of sea-wolves roamed about unsuspectingly in the magnificent chamber, and just as the men had only to stretch out their hands to pick up birds, so it did not

give them much trouble to turn the "chamber of the sea-wolves" into a slaughter-house with their axes.'

'Why did they do that?' asked Tinoco, surprised.

'They did not want to come home empty-handed,' said Luis. 'It's always like that. Men go out to find paradise—they find it and make an end of it. I don't know if it's true,' continued Luis, 'but they say that the settlers who went to Madeira later, weary of the slow clearing, set the whole forests on fire. It is said that for seven years the fire kept on glowing—a hell which could break out at any moment—beneath the thick layers of fallen leaves. It was good luck that there were rivers on the island, which put a limit to the *fogo morte*, the fire of death. They say the settlers fled into the rivers from the destruction which they themselves had caused. But perhaps that is all exaggerated talk.'

'And what about the rabbits?' asked Aires, who was distressed by the story. 'And how did things go on the other island?'

'Quite the other way,' said Luis as his face lit up and his eyes began to sparkle roguishly. 'The other island was bare all over, but Perestrello was a man of determination. He sowed the seeds in the earth. As he didn't wish to harm anything, even the rabbits, he let them run free. That was a mistake, for before the sowings could yield enough for the settlers to live on, the handful of rabbits had multiplied, first into hundreds, then into thousands, and soon there were so many that they undermined the whole island wherever it was not rock. The settlers had the choice of either dying of hunger or returning home. They sailed back to Portugal. Since then Perestrello has been called the rabbit-breeder. He was laughed at all over Portugal.'

'That's true,' said Nuno, who had been listening to the story.

'I've never heard of Perestrello,' said Aires. 'Is he still alive?'

'Indeed he is,' said Nuno, grinning.

'In Portugal?'

'No,' cried Nuno cheerfully. 'He's back on his island again!'

'And breeding rabbits?' asked Tinoco.

'He cherishes his island,' said Nuno with emphasis.

'I understand,' said Tinoco. 'Bad luck for the rabbits!'

'But good for the crops,' said Nuno. 'I like Perestrello.'

Day after day the heavens were friendly and sent enough wind to fill the sails. The fleet approached the African coast sooner than was expected. Everyone on the ships was in good humour. Each one entertained his own hopes and took the favourable wind as a sign that Heaven was partial to his wishes. Lanzarote and Pacheco, the treasurer of Ceuta, Gomes Pires, Gonzalo da Sintra and nearly all the other captains dreamed of rich booty in the form of 'black ivory', and bowls full of gold. There were three guests on Lanzarote's ship who wanted nothing more than to experience 'how the sea in the south rolled'. They were Vallarte the Dane, Peter the German and Balthasar from Austria.

Nuno and Tinoco dreamed of undiscovered coasts; and Joao Correo, Duarte d'Olando, Estevam d'Almada, Diego Machado, Andre Diaz and Alvaro da Costa, all members of the crew of the Barque of the Brothers and determined to serve as pilots of the Infante one day like Tristão and Eannes, had no other thoughts either. Adahur dreamt of a *heiri* swift enough to carry him to freedom.

Aires too had his dreams. When he played his guitar he thought of Manuel the old fisherman, and of his native bay; and Tinoco, who, like everyone else, loved to listen, nodded sympathetically to Aires, and the brothers were happy. In his heart Aires began to love the open sea. True, it was now carrying him towards coasts which lay far away from that bay. But this sea, which for days past seemed to be the only thing beneath the sky, would certainly within measurable time—Aires felt sure of that—carry himself and Tinoco back to their bay. Aires felt freed from all the worries which had oppressed him. The fact that Lanzarote and his like were sailing with them no longer distressed him. He scarcely gave a thought to the Infante—he had only one idea: to get through this voyage well, help Lopo back to his home and then return home himself with Tinoco.

Tristão knew the coast of Africa as far as the Bay of Arguim, where he had put Joao Fernandez ashore. He took over command when the fleet came near to Africa.

After sighting land they sailed for a whole week, now along by

steep coasts of grey rock, now by flat sand-banks which stretched from the desert right into the ocean. No matter how near they approached the land, they were never able to see either men or animals. They felt the breath of the desert.

At one place where a brook flowed down through a ravine into the sea, the ships cast anchor and the crews went on land to fetch fresh water on to the ships. Here too they intended to repair some small damage which a few of the ships had suffered during the voyage.

'If the Pilot permits we could go and have a look at the desert,' said Tinoco to Aires.

Lopo listened, his eyes sparkling. Aires offered at once to go to Tristão.

'I'd very much like to go and have a look myself,' said the Pilot.

'Lopo can come too, can't he?' inquired Aires cautiously.

Nuno looked doubtful. 'And what if he should run away?'

'He would never do that to me,' said Aires.

'It would be his death,' said Tristão. 'Within a few days the sun would cause him to fall in the sand, and the sand would cover him up. Inland there are no wells far and wide—we searched for them before. Without camels no one can travel here. I hope he knows that.'

Nuno took the compass with him. He climbed up the ravine with the brothers and Lopo before the sun rose. They groped their way through blue shadows, and were freezing cold.

'It's as cold as in a cellar,' said Tinoco. 'I thought the desert was quite different.'

'Just you wait!' said Nuno.

The mountain which they had climbed with great difficulty was flat as a table on top.

'A table for giants!' cried Aires, surprised.

'It's laid for nobody!' said Nuno.

They remained up there until the sun rose. It rose rapidly and enveloped the desert in bluish-red. Other giants' tables emerged distinctly towards the north. For a while it looked as if the rising sun had covered them with red damask. Towards the east

and south the desert looked like a sea which had solidified in primeval ages. This strange sea began to stir as the sun moved higher in the sky. Lights flickered in the sand as if it had been strewn with fragments of mirrors. The brilliance which flowed from the sky broke into a million fragments over the dunes. The desert began to flicker. Little flames danced about, were extinguished, broke forth in new places, joined other little groups of flames, and finally the light immediately above the ground was stronger than the radiance from above—the desert had wakened up for a new day.

The Pilot, the two brothers and Lopo climbed through a gorge leading towards the south, in order to get a little way into the sea of sand. They did not speak. The silence which surrounded them made them disinclined for words. The wanderers felt lost in the vast expanse of desert. The sand now looked as blue as the sky had looked before. The desert, eager for coolness, had sucked all the blue out of the sky. But the brothers noticed, with growing astonishment, that the sky was turning more and more yellow. The desert and the sky had exchanged colours. The wanderers' eyes began to smart in the biting light. The brothers were no longer able to distinguish clearly where the desert ceased and the sky began. It seemed to them as if the desert did not end anywhere, but was there only to overwhelm the sky. Nuno walked silently in front of the brothers. Suddenly, as if something behind him had frightened him, he turned round and with one hand shading his eyes, peered back over the brothers.

'Where is he? Do you see him?' asked the Pilot.

Only then did the brothers notice that Lopo was not with them. He had slipped off without the slightest sound. Aires looked at the sand in bewilderment. Nuno had already begun hurriedly to retrace his steps. Soon they arrived at a spot from which footprints led aside towards a smooth, sloping dune, and on top of it they saw a shadow gliding about in strange zigzag movements.

'There he is!' cried Nuno, relieved. 'Thank God!'

'What is he doing there?' asked Tinoco, surprised.

'He is chasing something,' said Nuno, who was slowly approaching the dune.

'There—look!' cried Aires, softly, bending down and pointing to tiny tracks in the sand.

'A bird that hops!' conjectured Tinoco. 'But surely nothing can live here!'

'We shall see,' said Nuno. 'Here comes Lopo, and he seems to have something.'

Lopo came running down the dune. The animal which he had caught was so small that his hand covered it, only the head was to be seen.

'A mouse?' asked the brothers.

'Mouse which jumps,' said Lopo. 'Swift as spirit.'

'But how did you manage to catch it?' cried Aires, as Lopo showed the long hind legs with the reddish glimmering paws. The fur of the desert mouse was the colour of the desert.

'How on earth did you see it?'

Lopo sniffed and in this way showed how he had noticed it. He got Nuno and the brothers to smell the desert mouse.

'Imagine animals being here!' said Tinoco, surprised.

'Many animals, and dangerous ones too,' said Lopo. 'Animals that sting and animals that bite—mouse has to take care. Else it will be eaten up by snake.'

'And what does the mouse live on?'

Lopo began to search about. He traced the fine tracks in the sand. The Pilot and the brothers followed the young Negro cautiously, trying not to disturb the tracks. They came to a hollow where the sand was rooted up.

'Has the mouse been scraping up here?'

Lopo shook his head. 'Two mice,' he said.

'Have they fought?'

'Danced!' explained Lopo enthusiastically. 'Danced for joy!' He searched again. And suddenly he uttered a low exclamation, bent down and picked up something which looked like an old, withered-up fruit of a brownish-grey colour. As soon as Lopo held the strange article in front of the desert mouse's nose it began to sniff it.

'Mouse-food?' asked Aires.

Lopo smiled. He let the desert mouse go free. Then, carrying the queer thing in his hand, he went along ahead of his companions to the rocks behind which the ships lay, speaking not one word on the way. He found a less difficult passage through the rocks, and stopped by the brook. Then he scooped out a little hollow, put water into it and laid the strange thing down. After a short time it began to move, turned green, opened out and finally became like a dark green hand with many fingers.

'What a marvel!' exclaimed Aires.

They pressed round Lopo and were astonished to see what the shrivelled up, dead-looking thing had turned into.

'Desert not dead,' said Lopo. 'Desert has many hands. When rain falls, desert opens hands.' Lopo gave Aires a present of the strange 'hand of the desert'.

The four desert wanderers quenched their thirst and then returned to the ship. They were very hungry.

Luis, who had obviously been awaiting their return, waved eagerly from the caboose. He had a frying-pan on the fire and he called out buoyantly: 'It's just ready. I've something here that none of you has ever yet eaten!'

Tristão looked with surprise into the pan, which was full up to the brim.

'Why so many eggs?' he asked severely, for he kept a sharp eye on the provisions.

'One egg.' To prove it Luis fetched a gigantic egg from a basket, where he had hidden it. 'This is coming home with us,' he added. 'It will hatch out. Wait till we see what comes out of it!'

'An ostrich!' cried Lopo, showing by a gesture that the bird was taller than himself.

'Where did you get the two eggs?' asked the Pilot.

'I was on land a bit too,' admitted Luis, holding the sizzling pan up to the Pilot's face. 'The everlasting ship's biscuits, salted meat and cheese—they're enough to sicken any cook!' he went on vehemently as he served up his ostrich-egg omelet.

'You are a wonderful cook,' said Tristão approvingly. 'It's a blessing for us to have you!'

Nuno insisted that each one of the crew who did not happen to be on land should have a taste of the gigantic egg. 'These are the true joys of discovery!' he said as he ate with relish his own portion, which could easily have fitted in a nutshell.

The crew of the Barque were attached to their Pilot. They had been together for years; and Tinoco, Aires and Lopo were also regarded as belonging to the 'old crowd' by now. And there was a curious thing about Luis. Though he had only come aboard at the last moment, everyone had felt from the outset that he filled a very definite gap. It was a crew with no outsiders.

The crew of the Barque kept as aloof as possible from the crews of the other ships. Lopo and the brothers in particular were never tempted to have a look around the other caravels. Lanzarote's ships were manned by men who had been hired in a hurry. It was no wonder that there was often quarrelling, and even hand-to-hand fighting on them.

'There are able fellows among them, but some of the wrong kind too,' said Luis, as he, Tinoco and Aires looked over at the neighbouring ship, the *Queen of Angels*, where things were just then particularly lively. It was evident that the captain was not on board, for no one intervened to make peace. Wild abuse and even curses could be heard.

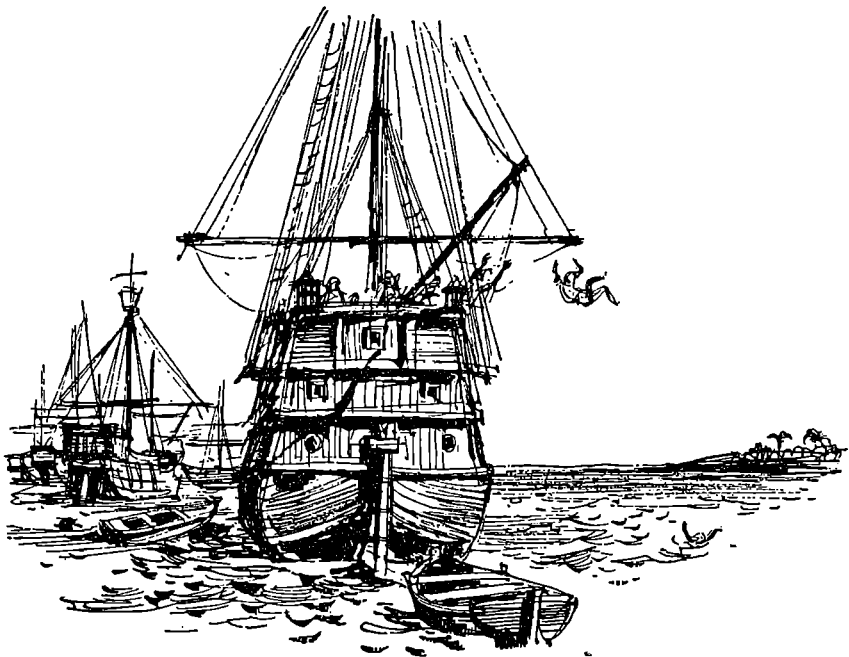
'It doesn't concern us,' said Luis. 'Let us take another turn on land—we're off to sea again tomorrow!'

Aires was just about to go off with Luis when Tinoco held him back. He was looking steadily over at the *Queen of Angels*. It was difficult to survey the deck, which was higher than that of the Barque, but when one side of the fighting mob dropped back, the men's heads and shoulders could be seen.

'It's they, without a doubt, it's they!' cried Tinoco excitedly.

A gigantic fellow was swinging two wriggling little boys over his head as he roared: 'First these two impudent brats go overboard and then anyone else who thinks differently from myself!' And without more ado he flung the two cabin-boys into the sea.

The row on the caravel immediately died down; the splashing,



which was distinctly audible, had brought the men to their senses. When the boys rose to the surface and cried for help, of course not one of the bullies was willing to plunge into the sea to save them; and it was obvious that they could not swim. But Tinoco and Aires jumped in, and so did Lopo, and as it was not far to the shore, the three of them got the two boys on land in a short time. The cabin-boys had swallowed plenty of salt water, but they were conscious and they looked with embarrassment at their youthful rescuers.

‘I recognized the two of you at once,’ said Tinoco. He was panting, for he had dragged one of them ashore all by himself. ‘Are you Pedro?’ he asked.

‘No, I’m Paolo,’ replied the boy.

‘It’s hard to know one from the other,’ said Tinoco. ‘It’s amazing what fine rowdies you’ve become in the last three years!’

'We had nothing at all to do with that villainous fellow,' protested Pedro.

'You are on the wrong ship,' said Aires tolerantly.

'Nobody wanted to have us,' said Paolo. 'Only the captain of the *Queen* was still looking for cabin-boys.'

'Fine cabin-boys, indeed, who can't even swim!' interjected Luis, who had arrived meantime in a boat.

'Why didn't you jump in?' asked Tinoco. 'I had a tough pull by myself.'

'You'd have had a still tougher pull if I had,' said Luis, laughing.

'Can you not swim either?' asked Aires, astonished.

'No ship's cook can,' said Luis calmly.

Nuno now came up to the two boys who had been fished out of the sea and were being gaped at from all sides.

'What kind of queer birds are these?' inquired the Pilot.

'Cabin-boys from a neighbouring ship,' said Luis, as the brothers had hesitated to give the information. He pointed to the *Queen of Angels*, where the rowdies were now standing peacefully side by side on deck.

'How do they concern you?' asked Tristão.

'They're old acquaintances of ours,' said Aires apologetically.

'The two of them?' The Pilot was obviously astonished.

'It was much the same as with Luis,' said Tinoco.

'What am I to understand by that?'

'Luis was the first to tell us about the Barque of the Brothers,' said Tinoco. 'We learned further details from these two. In fact, they wanted to come with us when we met them on the road to Lagos.'

'I haven't a job for anyone,' said the Pilot firmly. 'It's useless for you to try to touch my heart.'

'The fellow over there will throw them into the sea again,' pleaded Luis.

'It's quite possible!' said Nuno.

'Pacheco is the captain over there,' continued Luis. 'He's a hard drinker and has a most villainous crew.'

'The Barque isn't a children's home,' said Nuno.

At this Pedro took his brother by the arm. 'Come, let us go!' he said.

'Aren't you afraid of the bully over there?' asked Luis anxiously.

'Let him try to lay hands on us again!' said Pedro.

'Don't run off all at once!' said Nuno. 'Perhaps I'll get round Pacheco—when he's sober. But what can you do, when you can't even swim?'

'To carry a full sack is nothing to them,' said Aires promptly. 'They are splendid at carrying sacks.'

'There's a whole lot for them to do on the Barque,' added Luis.

'If it goes on like this,' groaned the Pilot, 'we'll have to enlarge the Barque.' Then he warmly recommended Luis to look after the two.

Pedro foolishly told how their mother used to lock them up, and call them 'doves'. From that moment they were never called anything but 'the Doves' by the crew.

When the fleet continued its voyage the following day two cabin-boys were missing from the *Queen of Angels*, while the Barque had to register two more hands. The crew were pleased with their Pilot's decision because cabin-boys are useful for all kinds of jobs.

'And we had imagined we had a complete crew!' said Tinoco.

'We had nearly forgotten you,' admitted Aires.

'We hadn't forgotten you,' said Pedro. And Paolo took out of his pocket the little shell which Aires had given him.

'We beg pardon of your Excellencies,' said Tinoco, for just at that moment he remembered the courteous little donkey-driver whom they had met on the way to the mill.

'How is your mother?' inquired Aires.

'Yes, how is the miller?' asked Tinoco jocosely.

'There is a miller there again,' said Paolo, 'a man. That made it easier for us to go.'

'Is he a strong, capable man?' inquired Tinoco.

'Oh, yes,' said Pedro. 'Since he came to the mill we were

simply never out of the dove-cote. It was high time for us to clear off. And now I'm actually older than you were when you were on the way to Lagos.'

'You poor doves!' said Tinoco, laughing.

'He always called us donkeys,' said Pedro indignantly.

'He was wrong there!' said Tinoco.

'One can be wrong about every possible thing,' added Luis. His thoughts were already at Cape Non, towards which the fleet was sailing.

Nuno Tristão had urgently advised Lanzarote to steer the caravels south-westwards and make a big detour round Cape Bojador. He himself kept the Barque of the Brothers close to the coast in order to spy out the hidden dangers of the Cape.

'There must be a strong current from the west in the sea,' said the Pilot.

The Barque was forced in dangerously close to the coast. A ridge of rock stretched out into the sea and apparently it continued under the water as an invisible reef for more than seven miles along the coast; for although the sea was only slightly agitated, a white streak extended westwards from the Cape.

'Is that all it is?' asked the crew, disappointed.

Nuno Tristão did not reply. He stayed at the rudder and looked steadily over at the white streak which became imperceptibly broader.

'So that's the whole of hell, is it?' asked Correo.

Nuno steered the Barque closer to the reef and ignored this conversation. When the breakers could be heard, he beckoned Luis and the brothers to come over to him.

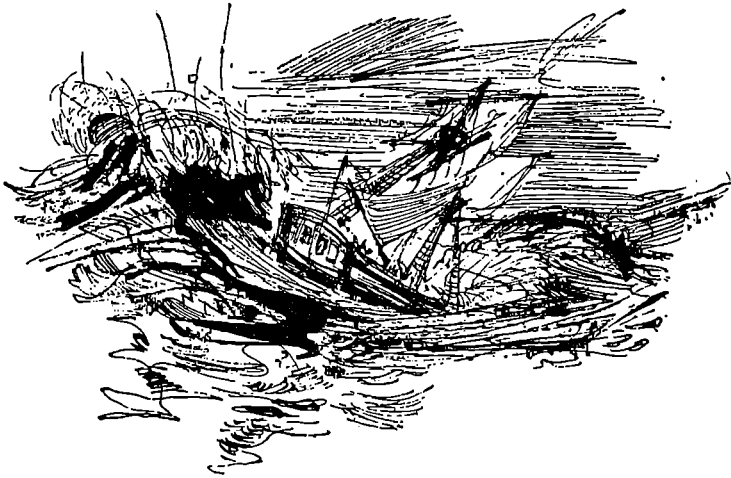
'I can't understand why we turned back the first time,' said Luis.

'I can,' replied Nuno very definitely. 'Besides, as Gil told me, it looked somewhat different that time.'

'Yes, it looked different,' confirmed Luis. 'According to the hour it was day, but not a sign of the sun was to be seen. The sky

was black, rent with lightning, and the rain which poured down on us was hot and black too. But, for all that, we saw dragons where there were none.'

'No dragons?' asked Nuno. 'Just look! There's a whole brood of dragons raging in front of us!' He steered so close to the reef that the breakers stood like a wall in front of them. No one mocked now. Even soberly estimated, the breakers were definitely higher than the Barque.



'It was lucky that Gil turned back,' said Nuno. 'The dragons would have shattered the ship to pieces.'

'Dragons?' asked Luis incredulously. 'I don't see any.'

'You must have no eyes in your head!' shouted Nuno, trying to make himself heard above the thunderous noise of the breakers. 'And no ears either! Don't you hear them roaring? Just look over and see how they're fighting each other, one tearing the other to pieces! Don't you see their white blood gushing out? If that isn't dragons' blood . . .!' Nuno seemed to be carried away by the sight. 'Only a scoundrel wouldn't be afraid! Confound it, but it's time for us to round to and catch up with the others.'

For it seems that they are the sort of men who shrink from nothing.'

Now he steered due west to where the white frenzy came to an end, and so far out that the coast soon looked like an indistinct line between the sky and the sea.

III

The Prophet Bird

THE Barque caught up on the caravels at the Angra dos Ruivos. The brothers, together with Nuno, Almida and da Costa, following a pleasant stream, penetrated into the interior until they found a small settlement. There they witnessed an incident which told them that Lanzarote and his men were still about. Aires was least of all prepared for such an experience; for throughout the voyage up to the present he had been as completely occupied with Nuno and his companions as if this one barque and this one crew of explorers alone existed. Tinoco too had completely lost sight of the idea that he would ever have anything to do with the Almoner again. But now, on emerging from a thick patch of jungle with the Pilot and the two young men, they suddenly saw him in front of them. He had about ten other men with him. Three of them were struggling with a young Negress whom they were trying to fetter. The young woman was defending herself like a beast of prey. Again and again she succeeded in shaking off the three men. The brothers watched the struggle just as dumbfounded as Nuno, who did not interfere right away, as he did not want to spare the three heroes a shameful defeat. He even held back Lopo. The brothers were surprised that the young woman, who was as nimble and as strong as a lion, did not flee when she had wrenched herself free for a moment.

Then they noticed for the first time that a helpless infant, which apparently belonged to the young woman, was lying on the

ground some distance away. This was only proved when Lanzarote, disgusted at the men's unsuccessful efforts, rushed and picked up the child, which up till then had been quite disregarded, and began to make off with it. The child yelled, and instantly the young mother ceased to resist. It was not even necessary to fetter her; she apathetically let herself be led away by Lanzarote, who laughed scornfully. The Admiral now set out on the return journey with his booty.

At this point Nuno intervened. 'Give me the child, Almoner!' he said.

Lanzarote stopped short. He had not seen Nuno and his companions approaching.

'Oh, what a lover of children!' he sneered, handing Tristão the black baby. 'I don't want this black brat—I only want the woman.' With a nod he indicated the young mother, who was looking at Tristão timorously. 'And now I have secured her.'

'She defended herself like three devils,' said one of the men.

'A woman like that will do the work of three,' said Lanzarote.

'No one is to touch the woman!' said Nuno resolutely, going up and handing the child to her. Before Lanzarote or any of his men could do a thing, the young mother had fled to safety with her child.

'What are you thinking of, Pilot!' cried Lanzarote, in a rage.

'I'm thinking of Joao Fernandez,' said Tristão quietly. 'We want to get him back alive. We shall not do so if this sort of business starts. If I had allowed you to get away with what you were doing, Almoner, the next time we land we would be met with assagais, and none of us would have a chance of returning home again.'

'You're afraid, are you?' sneered Lanzarote.

At this Tristão walked up to him so angrily that the Admiral stepped back.

'The Infante has ordered that no force shall be used until we have Fernandez safely aboard the ship which is to take him home to Lagos,' said Tristão with emphasis, 'and if at all possible, not even then.'

'And what if the "Desert Wanderer" has been swallowed up

for ever by the desert?' Lanzarote stopped short, for the Pilot had already turned his back on him.

Tristão and his companions went up to the huts. All except one of them was deserted. A Negro boy with a broken leg was crouching in the darkest corner of this one. When they had brought the little fellow out of the hut, Nuno attended to him. The child submitted meekly while he put the leg in splints as best he could with smooth rods, binding it with bast which was lying about the hut. Then he took from his pocket a little box of honey which he had brought with him as barter, tasted it before the boy's eyes and gave it to him. The boy would not eat it. Only when Lopo encouraged him would he try it. Then a smile overspread his face. He caught Nuno's arm and began to rub the wrist where the skin was whiter than on the back of his hand.

'He wants to rub away the white,' said Lopo. 'He cannot believe that there is not black underneath—as with other people whom he knows to be good people.'

Lopo spoke earnestly with the little boy, and as the white men left, the child looked after them, his eyes sparkling.

Half way between the Angra dos Ruivos and the mouth of the Rio de Ouro was the Angra dos Cavalos. On an earlier voyage Baldaya had sent two of his men on horseback to follow a track; they had penetrated two leagues into the interior and had a clash with Azenegue warriors, from which they had returned wounded.

Adahur requested Lanzarote to take him to this part of the coast, for his father's domain began there, he said, and he could get across the country to the Rio de Ouro quicker by land than sailing around by ship. He promised to await Lanzarote with twenty slaves and two bowls of gold at the same spot at which he had been taken captive. Lanzarote, who wanted to show off before the others, gave the prince a present of a beautiful cloak, a sword and a magnificent ornamental bridle and reins. As he now felt himself to be absolute commander, he saw no reason for being secretive about his intentions. He intended to give a part of his profits to those who were especially submissive to him in order to make them even more subservient.

'Since no force is to be used in this case, you can hardly object

either,' he said to Tristão before the others. The Pilot did not condescend to answer him.

Before the prince was taken ashore he asked Lopo if he wished him to procure his freedom too. Lopo shook his head. But then he made a request of Adahur. This could be seen by his gestures; but he made it in words which none of the Portuguese could understand.

As the wind had veered, the ships took longer to reach the Rio de Ouro than Lanzarote had expected. Lanzarote's caravel sailed at the head of the fleet. When the estuary of the river came in sight he pointed to the river-banks, which were black with natives. 'Not merely twenty!' cried the Almoner. 'You shall see—Adahur is exceeding himself in generosity!'

As soon as the caravels had cast anchor the Admiral had himself rowed ashore in a boat. Accompanied by a few armed men he went straight up to the huge baobab tree which had been agreed upon as an easily recognized meeting-place. When the men and women saw armed men arriving, they fled. Only one man, a Negro armed with an assagai, remained. He stood there, motionless as the great tree, looking out towards the other ships. He did not even move when Lanzarote began to speak to him, pointing in agitation to the suddenly deserted strand.

The Barque, being smaller than the caravels, was able to sail in to the mouth of the river. The anchor, which was fastened to a stout rope, had just been cast out when Lopo jumped into the river from the side of the boat which was facing the tree. He swam ashore with rapid strokes and ran up to the man. The man let the assagai fall and stretched out both arms to embrace Lopo.

'His father—do you think that it's his father?' whispered Aires to Tinoco.

'His father or his brother.'

'But then it's all at an end!'

'You *did* want to bring him back, though,' said Tinoco. He too realized now how fond he was of Lopo.

Aires did not take his eyes off the man who was embracing Lopo, and he did not even hear Nuno ordering him to come on land with him.



Lanzarote was running up and down on the shore. The captains were trying to calm him. For some time Tristão had been looking at a marabou, which was standing patiently in the shallow water near the bank.

‘Almoner!’ he cried loudly to Lanzarote. ‘There’s a marabou standing there. People consider it to be a prophetic bird. We could ask the oracle if your prince will come or not!’

‘He will come—only something or other has delayed him,’ said Lanzarote indignantly.

‘Just for fun,’ suggested Nuno, ‘I’ll clap my hands loudly three times. If it flies away then, as it naturally should, it will be a sign that your “wind drinker” is hastening here. If, on the other hand, it remains where it is, we too shall be left sitting in our pool here. Agreed?’

‘I’ll bet my head!’ cried the Almoner.

‘Not so quick,’ said Nuno, laughing. ‘Each of us has only one. Now look out!’ Nuno went nearer to the bird and clapped his hands loudly three times. The marabou did not lift a leg, not to mention a wing. It only turned its head and looked at them



sadly. Nuno had the jokers on his side. The strand resounded with laughter, but the prophet bird remained unmoved.

'The silly creature does not know a thing!' cried Lanzarote, irritated. Now the marabou moved round so that its back was unmistakably turned to the Admiral. Lanzarote made a move as if to rush at the bird. Then Lopo came up to him.

'My father says the prince is not coming,' said Lopo in Portuguese.

'How does he know that?' asked Lanzarote, beside himself.

'Adahur sent him. Me to fetch.'

'You as well!' shouted Lanzarote, gasping for breath.

'I go not,' said Lopo resolutely. 'Father ashamed that prince does not keep word. I remain—until Barque returns.'

'You?' shouted Lanzarote, turning pale. 'You are of no use to me.'

'Come, Lopo!' said the Pilot. 'You belong to our crew, not to them.'

Tristão looked over at the tree beneath which Lopo had run into his father's arms. Now there was an assagai stuck in the ground.

'There meet again when we return,' whispered Lopo. He went to fetch the spear.

With a favourable wind the fleet reached Porto do Cavalleiro, the Knights' Harbour, so called because here on an earlier expedition the young Antao Gonsalves received his knighthood after a skirmish with natives, and according to the words of the chronicles, was the first 'to receive such a high honour in those regions of the world'. The armada did not stop in this port, but sailed straight on to Porto do Galé, the Galley Bay. This harbour got its name from a high slender rock projecting into the sea which had reminded the discoverers of a galley. The brothers and Lopo, and also Pedro and Paolo, got permission to climb the galley. From the top they saw fishing-nets spread along the narrow white edge of the strand, apparently left behind when the owners had fled in haste. The boys climbed down to where the nets were, and discovered to their surprise that these were made

of a special kind of tree-bark worked in knots. Farther southwards the coast became flatter. Red sandbanks alternated with dazzling white strips of shore, and finally a light-coloured promontory rose perpendicularly out of the sea. It was Cabo Branco, the White Cape, and it jutted out far into the south-east.

Tristão was seized with uneasiness. He knew that if the wind remained favourable they would only have to sail a day and a half more to reach the Bay of Arguim, on the shores of which he hoped to find Joao Fernandez again.

The wind held. As they sailed past the pretty island, which the Pilot had named Arguim Island, into the bay, an overpowering perfume was wafted over from it, and a cloud of magnificent butterflies of many colours passed over the Barque.

IV

The Desert Wanderer

THE Barque was leading the fleet. As they approached the coast strange objects detached themselves from the land. From a distance they looked like huge centipedes which were able in some mysterious way to keep on the water and even to move along on it. There was an active wriggling going on at each side of the rigid objects, from one end to the other.

'Those are native canoes,' Nuno explained to the brothers and the 'Doves'. 'You'll soon see for yourselves. The Negroes call these boats which they row with their feet *yangodabs*.'

The native boats came rapidly nearer. The rowers seemed to recognize the Barque, for they waved from a distance and uttered shouts which sounded like joyful greetings. Now the people on the Barque could see clearly that they were dugouts which were scurrying along the water as if running on many feet.

When the caravels appeared, the Negroes moved off in their *yangodabs*.

'Are these polypods old friends, eh?' Lanzarote asked the Pilot ironically, as soon as they landed.

'I hope they'll remain so,' said Nuno. 'We are dependent on the help of the people who know this neighbourhood if we are to look for Fernandez. We'll make a start tomorrow.'

'In doing so we can give a look round to see what else is to be had,' said the Almoner. 'You can hardly take it ill of me if

I pay off the blacks for the trick which the Azenegue prince has played on me!

'I would like to remind you once again of the Infante's orders,' said the Pilot, very resolutely.

'I would like to do the same,' replied Lanzarote. 'If Africa really does give us back this Fernandez, no hindrance is to be put in the way of my plans. Isn't that how the order ran?'

Tristão remained silent. His face was gloomy.

'The Barque is to assist the fleet in carrying out their task, and only to continue its voyage when the caravels have taken sufficient cargo on board. Is that clear?'

'It is clear,' said the Pilot, and went to rejoin his crew. Meantime Luis had made a good fire on land and on the Pilot's instructions had prepared a specially generous meal.

Tinoco and Aires strolled along by the river-bank with Lopo. They saw a remarkable number of heron, and at one place they came upon large white water-fowl, even bigger than swans. They had gleaming red beaks which were long and narrow and curved like the blades of Moorish swords.

Lopo tried to get into conversation with the Negroes. Very soon he found out that the natives were afraid of the many big ships. When Lopo inquired about a white man who had come a year ago, they nodded eagerly and pointed south, and offered to fetch the white man.

Lopo and the brothers ran to Tristão to give him the news.

'Ask them how far it is to the place where the white man is to be found,' the Pilot asked his young interpreter.

'A day's journey distant,' said Lopo, when he had talked again to the Negroes who had followed him.

Tristão looked at the sun. 'We will start off at once,' he said; 'we will have light for at least four hours longer.'

He chose Almida, Tinoco and Aires, and Lopo; and also took two natives, who had offered to accompany them. The little group of seven set off on their journey in a rowing-boat. They kept as close as possible to the cliffs. Although when darkness fell the Negroes strongly advised going on land and there awaiting the morning, with a fire to protect themselves from the wild



animals, Nuno was all for continuing the journey. He was longing to see again his comrade Fernandez, for whom he had suffered anxiety for a whole year.

The boat glided noiselessly through dark, calm waters, each dip of the oars making a flash of light. Now and then the occupants of the boat saw a fire on the land, usually close to the sea. Then the reflection stretched out to the boat, like a red gangway, and moved along with it for a bit. The Negroes exchanged greetings with the people round the fires.

Half the night was past when the boat rowed towards a fire which seemed to be standing in the sea, far down from the coast. As they came nearer it could be seen that the fire was burning on the tip of a tongue of land. Nuno was just going to turn outwards when he heard voices coming across the water. He ordered the men to stop rowing and listened intently over in the direction of the fire. 'Joao! Joao!' he suddenly shouted.

At first no sound was heard. Nuno shouted a third time. Then someone over on the shore began to shout: 'Nuno! Nuno! Nuno!' And the man who was shouting threw off his white cloak, ran from the fire to the water, jumped in and began to strike out with his arms through the red gangway.

'Row quicker!' ordered Nuno, his voice hoarse with excitement.

A few minutes later the rowers were grasping the wet arms

which Fernandez stretched up. It was not easy to pull him into the boat.

'Joao, old desert wanderer, how are you?'

'Oh, how wonderful that you've come!' panted Fernandez, clasping one after the other, including the Negroes, in his arms.

'Don't squeeze me to death,' said Nuno, laughing. 'I want to know first how things have gone with you. You certainly have the strength of a giant.'

'Come on land with me,' said Fernandez, deeply moved. 'My friends are there. We heard of your arrival and set out at once.'

When the firelight fell on Fernandez, who was stark naked, Nuno laughed. 'You're double your old self!' he said.

'The Prince of the Desert is to be thanked for that!' cried Fernandez, well pleased. 'He was always afraid I'd starve.'

A tall man in a white *burnouse* was standing with three other men by the fire, awaiting the arrival of Nuno and his companions with great solemnity.

'This is Maymom, the Prince of the Desert, without whom I would long since have been a meal for the vultures and the jackals,' said Fernandez, introducing him.

Maymom greeted the Pilot and his companions ceremoniously. In an outburst of joy Nuno drew off the ring which he was wearing and presented it to the Prince of the Desert. Then they sat down and the Pilot prepared a feast with his own hands. They ate together and drank wine which at first made Maymom and his men merry, and later, when they had drunk a great deal, caused them to fall fast asleep. The Portuguese and Lopo now sat close to Fernandez, who, sitting wrapped in his *burnouse*, looked like a second Prince of the Desert.

'They gave me this soon after you entrusted me to the desert,' said Fernandez, beginning his narrative. 'It was lucky that I met Azenegue people, with whom I could speak. My clothing disappeared completely, it is true, but I must admit that in the desert a *burnouse* is the best covering imaginable. Actually, only the upper classes wear a *burnouse*—the poor wear skins of animals which they sew together to make trousers and also vest-like garments. I learned from the Azenegue people, who had so

kindly clothed me, that a prince named Maymom lived far in the interior of the desert. I wanted to go to him. But how was I to find the way in a country where there are no roads?’

Fernandez drew an outline in the air with his hand. ‘Except for the streak with which God has marked the sea from the land, there is nothing in the desert regions which does not change,’ he said. ‘Where there are tracks today, tomorrow there is nothing but loose sand in which the wind makes ripples. In the desert the paths shift about.’

‘And how do the inhabitants of the desert find their way about?’ Nuno inquired.

‘They go by the stars, and in the daytime they go by the flight of the birds,’ said Fernandez, continuing his story. ‘It seemed to me that they knew the way by instinct, like birds of passage. They travel unerringly against wind and drifting sand through solitudes where there is nothing to indicate the way. With a scent like that of animals, they arrive without fail at the occasional wells, without which no journey could continue. They find the infrequent oases in the midst of the enormous sea of sand. They find the hollows where there are thorn bushes and thorn-apple trees, on which their horses and camels and even the herds going from one pasture to another manage to survive. They themselves live on camels’ milk and dates. Very seldom do they eat meat. Thus they live, nomads from time immemorial, sharing the life of the desert with gazelles, ostriches and lions, and moving to and fro like the little migrant swallows, the *andorinhas*. There are shepherd tribes, Alarven, as well as Azenegue, and the people of Melli. Proud and free-born, they live under a portable roof. There are skilled people among them who know how to prepare leather soft as silk and white as milk, from the skins of lions and panthers. They make artistic saddles, bridles and weapons which your kind of people want.’

‘And how did you get to the Prince of the Desert?’ the Pilot inquired.

‘Only after riding for weeks and weeks, and after my two companions and myself had spent the last three days without water,’ Fernandez reported. ‘We were riding little white camels.’

Maymom received me very kindly. He would be surprised if he knew that I spoke of that, because, unlike the Moors or us Christians, these sons of the desert make no difference among the children of Adam, and open their tents to everyone who comes their way. My hands were empty. Maymom did not look at them. He treated me like a brother. I went freely among his people and saw how they lived. The women do not wear any clothes—only a veil over their faces. The men too veil their mouths, at least after meals, for they consider it unseemly to belch or to have an unpleasant breath, as can happen. There are rich men among them whose wives wear gold rings in their ears and nostrils. The poorer decorate their necks, wrists, ankles and waists with chains of shells, which are also their small coinage. As large coinage they use gold, which they know how to weigh accurately. They obtain this gold from the Wangara el Tibr district. It takes them weeks to get there. I enjoyed being with them, even though the desert knows no pity and the few regions which are sometimes covered by a green carpet are often plagued by swarms of locusts which fall on the countryside like showers of reddish-yellow hailstone and cause starvation to the herds, of which sometimes hardly one animal may survive. The sons of the desert, however, are not conquered by them. This one,' and Fernandez indicated Maymom, 'is one of the noblest of them. It will be hard for me to part from him.'

'The Infante will be happy to see you again, Joao,' said Nuno. 'He has arranged for the swiftest ship to take you home.'

'Are there other ships besides the Barque?' asked Fernandez, surprised.

'A whole fleet—under an Admiral,' said Nuno in a disdainful tone.

'Is it Lanzarote?'

Nuno nodded in silence. Fernandez looked into the fire. 'I will sail with you and with no other,' he said stubbornly. 'I think I can be of use to you.'

'I have no doubt of it,' said the Pilot, 'but the Infante has settled it otherwise. He is hungering for news. You will bring him more than any of us.'

'A few weeks sooner or later—does it matter?'

'Not really,' said Nuno, 'but it does matter that we carry out correctly what he has ordered us to do. Now let us talk again of what you have been experiencing!'

'I belong to the Barque,' said Fernandez obstinately. 'I'm one of you!'

Nuno gave him a searching look. Then his eyes wandered over the faces of the others. He noticed how decisively all of them were taking Joao's part. Aires took no pains to hide his thoughts either. And now Almida said: 'Has not a man who has exposed himself to danger for a whole year got the right to decide for himself?'

'I can understand you all,' said the Pilot, looking at Fernandez again, 'and I understand you best of all, you desert wanderer. I myself have often wanted to do something other than what the Infante wanted. I wanted to sail with Gil; the Infante sent him without me to Cape Non.' Tristão wiped his forehead with his hand. 'We ought not to speak about it at all,' he said.

'Why not?' asked Fernandez. 'It was I who betook myself to the desert, not he. I did it because he commanded it. He is our commander,' he said harshly, 'but we count too.'

'No one knows that better than the Infante,' said the Pilot. 'Otherwise he would not allow us a part in what he does.' Nuno searched for words. 'He is greater than us all,' he said.

A violent feeling of anger rose up in Aires. Something in him rebelled against the fact that the Infante, though so far away from them, still disposed of them all as he pleased. The others too looked at the Pilot anxiously.

'I would not speak about it,' said Tristão hesitantly, 'if I did not feel that you are all inwardly rebelling against one of his commands, just as I have often done. It is incomprehensible to you that he forces us to sail with Lanzarote and to afford cover and protection to that man, who has wicked plans afoot; why he forbids Joao, who has wandered through the desert for him, to sail with us, although he belongs to our crew. You have doubts. I have had them too. There were hours in which I was so tortured by them that I was going to leave his service. I no longer

want to, for I begin to understand why he does things one way and not another. Only if he does not permit his eye to be diverted by any consideration can he keep his aim in mind. He himself, son of a king, lives like a monk—you all know that. He denies himself much in order to attain one thing. He even denies himself the satisfaction of sailing, because he knows that on the voyages there are thousands of reefs on which he could be shipwrecked, just as could happen to any of us. Because he cannot permit his work to be shattered, he avoids danger. It is a form of bravery which few understand—but he can expect understanding from you, on whom he relies.’

Nuno lowered his voice. While an inscrutable smile spread over his face, he said: ‘If anyone is a desert wanderer, it is he. Where no one suspects a route, he sees it. In an hour of depression, when my doubts were almost suffocating me, I spoke to Guadalha, his astronomer, who is also his doctor. He disclosed to me how the stars stood at the birth of the Infante. Dom Henrique is destined to make conquests which are not to be accomplished by force of arms. Wherever he has tried force, he has met with disaster, as was proved in the campaign against Tangier. But he does not remain on the ground when he is thrown down by a failure. He has been granted that patience which he needs to penetrate into undiscovered regions. Saturn, the guardian of secrets, is his star.’

Nuno stopped speaking and gazed in front of him into the fire which had burnt down. He picked up some dry branches which lay there and pushed them into the embers. Little new flames shot up. Aires, who had begun to shiver, now began more and more to feel the warmth which came from the blazing fire, and he saw how the shadows fell away from Nuno’s face. The others too noticed it. No one thought of sleeping. Fernandez made the most of the hours until dawn by telling them more and more.

Maymom went down to the bay with them. As soon as the boat reached the fleet, the Desert Wanderer took leave of the Desert Prince and let himself be taken aboard the *Santa Maria*, which had instructions to sail back to Lagos with him.

Nuno was surprised that no Negroes were to be seen near the

coasts which lined the bay. All the landing-places were deserted. On the other hand, all the caravels seemed full of life. The matter was explained to the Pilot when he reached the Barque.

Lanzarote had already started work. He had captured the crews of all the *yangodabs* which he could get hold of, and he had even taken Negroes from land too. Some of the caravels were on the way to neighbouring islands. Nuno immediately rowed over to the ship on which Lanzarote was.

The Admiral was examining the booty.

'That is against every agreement,' said the Pilot angrily.

'Is Fernandez still on land, then?' asked Lanzarote maliciously.

'How are we to carry out our orders if the natives are being hunted like wild beasts?' protested Tristão.

'I tried to do it differently,' the Almoner asserted.

'How then?'

'I negotiated with the chief. I gave him cakes, and mirrors for his wives, and other pretty things too. I left him free to choose men and women whom he considered he could do without.'

'Did the chief understand what was being asked of him?' asked Nuno excitedly.

'Yes, quite well,' said Lanzarote. 'An interpreter was not necessary.'

'And was he willing to hand over some of his people?'

'Certainly not,' said Lanzarote. 'He crushed the cakes before my eyes and stamped on the mirrors. But that is not the worst. I gave him a present of a cross, and he broke it into bits.'

'He could not know what he was doing,' objected Nuno.

'I had made him understand that it is a holy sign for us. He insulted God!'

Nuno looked in front of him with a stony expression.

'And they were not at all so easy to get,' said Lanzarote, as his eyes scanned the prisoners. 'They dived like cormorants.'

Some boats came along from the north, full of Portuguese. Lanzarote looked towards them greedily. The men in the boats waved from a distance with knives and axes which had a reddish glimmer.



'Where are they coming from?' asked Nuno, a terrible suspicion rising in his mind.

'From the Bank of the Seals,' Lanzarote informed him readily. 'I was told there are plenty of them there, so I didn't want to let the time pass unused. Seal-skins are always useful. But now I think we need not delay any longer with such things. Fernandez is in safety. Now we must see that we fill the remaining caravels with the most useful freight possible—so that the discovering can be continued. Surely you have nothing against that?'

'The Barque will begin with it this very day.'

'What do you mean?'

'The Barque is parting from the fleet this very day.'

'That is against the Infante's instructions,' objected Lanzarote

sharply. 'You have to remain with the fleet until we have carried out our orders.'

'We have nothing more to do with each other,' said Tristão decisively. 'I will never sail with you again.'

'And what if the Infante orders you to do so again?' asked Lanzarote slyly.

'Even then I will not,' said the Pilot. 'There are limits to everything.'

'The Infante will be astonished to hear that,' said Lanzarote menacingly.

Nuno turned away and looked over at the *Santa Maria*, which was just hoisting her sails.

'I'm not dependent on you,' said Lanzarote. 'Besides, we have almost finished our business. I think that the crew who are having a look round the neighbouring islands will come back with sufficient cargo. If you really intend to sail on immediately, you will meet the caravel of da Cintra, one of my ablest captains. As his plan is to make surprise attacks, nothing can go wrong. All the same,' he said, trying to return to the main point, 'in your place I would consider the matter again, and in doing so think of the Infante.'

'You do not think of him,' replied Nuno angrily. 'You have not grasped what he is out for. Otherwise you would not stab him in the back.'

'I?' cried Lanzarote indignantly. 'I, who have built the fleet for him?'

'You are poisoning the arrows which will be sped against us from the land,' said the Pilot.

'Psh!' cried Lanzarote. 'The centipedes will think twice before they attack caravels. We are the stronger.'

The Pilot listened. Lanzarote too raised his head. The sound of drums could be heard from land. Their beats were sharply separated, like words shouted by someone over a great distance to someone else. The drum-beats suddenly stopped. After a short period of ominous silence drum-beats began to answer from a distance.

'That is your work,' said Nuno.

'They are just beating drums—that needn't worry us!' said Lanzarote derisively.

'You are sailing home, you man-hunter!' cried the Pilot, exasperated, 'but we want to sail on.'

'So you're afraid, are you?' asked Lanzarote.

Nuno, losing all patience, gave him a resounding blow in the face. The Almoner ducked. When he raised his face it was deathly pale.

V

The Race with the Drums

THE Barque of the Brothers steered south. Nuno Tristão, who was steering, wished to avoid the two islands, Fools' Island and Tide Island, which lay at the southern edge of the bay. He wanted on no account to come in contact with Lanzarote's men again. After three hours the coast had disappeared from sight and the seventeen members of the crew of the Barque had nothing but sea before their eyes, whichever way they looked. A north-west wind filled the two sails. The Barque was making good progress.

'It was time we came away from them,' said Almida. 'Everyone on the Barque thinks the same.'

'It was bad enough to have to set sail with that slave armada,' said the Pilot, with a grim expression. 'Now it has come to a race.'

'A race with whom?' asked Almida, surprised.

'Surely you heard the drums.'

'They concern Lanzarote, not us,' protested Almida. 'We have nothing on our consciences.'

'Don't deceive yourself!' warned the Pilot. 'In the eyes of the Negroes we are Lanzarote's men. We came with him. The drums are shouting that white men who have come in ships are ravaging the coasts like beasts of prey.'

Almida, dispirited, fell silent.

'I had already decided to turn back,' the Pilot admitted. 'But

what's to be gained by that? It would be even more difficult for the next who would come. Perhaps we may yet get ahead of the drums.'

'The tribes farther south will quickly notice that we are not beasts of prey,' said Almida.

'We must try to win the race. That is our only hope,' concluded Nuno. 'The wind is in our favour!'

The Barque was already almost off Fools' Island when da Costa sighted a boat far out ahead. Everyone was surprised, for there was no sign of a caravel to be seen in any direction. 'They seem to be trying to join us,' said da Costa to Tristão.

'It seems so,' said the Pilot.

'Are you going to avoid them?'

'I would like very much to do so, for I have an idea who are in the boat.'

But Tristão did not alter course. As they came nearer, the crew of the Barque saw that there were only three men in the boat. Two were rowing and one was steering.

'Tristão!' shouted the rowers from a distance.

'They are men of da Cintra's crew,' said Nuno. 'The Almoner let drop that he had sent da Cintra, "one of his ablest captains", to Fools' Island.' Tristão had the sails lowered. When the boat was alongside, the Pilot walked to the edge of the Barque, the crew crowding behind him. They now recognized the men in the boat as Travazos, Picanzo and Tavira. Tavira looked like a corpse, and was only able to stand up with difficulty.

'It's a bit of luck that you've come to pick us up!' Travazos shouted up to Nuno.

'Where is your caravel?' asked Tristão.

'It's stuck fast in front of the accursed island,' said Picanzo. 'It ran aground on a sandbank at ebb tide. And our boats got stuck in the salty marshes. We did not worry about that. The tide will float them again, we thought, and meantime we went to look after our business. But those savages looked after it for us. They lured us so far into the interior of the island that we did not notice the tide coming up and cutting us off from the



boats. We three were able to swim, so we got away in one of the boats.'

'And the others? The captain and his crew?'

'They're all dead. But we'll pay off those black devils!' stormed Travazos. 'Now get us up on board.'

'We have to go on,' said Nuno.

'You're not going to help us?' asked Picanzo, dumbfounded. The crew of the Barque too had their eyes fixed on the Pilot.

'But surely you will take us back to the fleet and take part in an expedition of revenge with us!' Travazos demanded vehemently.

'No,' said Tristão definitely.

Travazos pointed to Tavira. 'He has been hit,' he said.

'I'm sorry for that,' said Nuno, 'but I cannot help him.'

Travazos observed Tristão with growing mistrust. He took Tavira's left hand and held it up. 'A wound which can scarcely be seen!' cried Travazos bitterly. 'Just as if he had scratched himself with a thorn, nothing more! That is the accursed arrow. All the others were killed with arrows like that—thirty-two Portuguese!' Travazos reached up an arrow with traces of blood on it to Nuno; the tip had a greenish shimmer.

'Whoever is hit dies,' said Lopo, in reply to Tristão's inquiring glance.

The Pilot had the rope ladder let down, and he climbed into the boat. He looked closely at the wound in Tavira's hand. There was a tear the breadth of a finger on the wrist; the hand and arm were already stiff.

'I took no notice of it at first,' said Tavira, 'but now I know that I will fare as the others have done.'

'You may die comforted,' said Travazos grimly. 'We will avenge you a hundred-fold.'

'Don't go back!' warned Tavira. 'We should never have gone there; we had no business there!'

'He's raving!' raged Travazos. 'We will exterminate the whole brood!' He grasped Nuno by the arm. 'You are Portuguese, as we are, and you will help us to avenge the dead!'

'Let go of me!' demanded Nuno. 'We have no time to lose.'

'What are you going to do?' asked Picanzo, full of suspicion.

'We are going to sail farther down the coast,' said Nuno decisively, 'as the Infante ordered us to do.'

'You alone? That's madness!' protested Travazos. 'You won't be able to cope with them alone.'

'What you and your crowd have done is madness!' replied Nuno. 'And what you intend doing is madness!'

'So you're going to leave us to our fate, are you?' asked Travazos, beside himself.

'Lanzarote is waiting for you,' replied Nuno. 'Besides, you're steering in the wrong direction.'

'We have no compass,' said Picanzo.

'Unfortunately I cannot give you mine,' said Nuno. 'You must only keep nearer to the coast.'

'Very well,' cried Travazos, looking at Tristão with contempt, 'we'll get on without you.'

'I hope so,' said Nuno, 'but the later you rejoin the fleet, the better. Then those on whom you wish to wreak vengeance will have time to save themselves.'

'You traitor!' cried Travazos. 'You're on the side of da Cintra's murderers! And Tavira's murderers! May you be damned if you do not take us back to Lanzarote!'

Nuno turned to Tavira. 'If you wish I will take you with me, but we are sailing southwards,' he said.

'It is no use now,' said Tavira. 'Whether I go north or south—I know how it stands with me. Do better than we have done!'

Nuno could no longer bear to look at the pain-racked face of the wounded man. 'Tell the Almoner what Tavira has said to me!' he requested Travazos. 'Perhaps it will bring him to reason.'

Travazos glared at him. Holding the poisoned arrow up to the Pilot's face, 'Watch out lest you also catch one of these, you . . . ' he shouted, suppressing an abusive epithet.

Tristão ordered Luis to throw provisions down into the boat for the three men. Then he climbed up the rope ladder. As soon as he was on board, he had the sails hoisted.

The favourable wind held. It drove the ship into latitudes into which no white man's ship had ever penetrated before. Now and then Tristão steered up to the land and cast anchor for a short time in order to ascertain the exact lie of the coast. He ordered Aires, who was the most skilled in drawing maps, to make careful drawings of everything they had observed. Each time the Pilot returned from land he looked troubled.

'We have not yet overtaken them,' he said, 'but if the wind does not let us down . . . '

The farther south they sailed, the more fertile was the coast.

'We seem to have left the desert behind us,' said Tristão. 'That's important news for the Infante.'

One day they noticed that the colour of the sea had changed. The Barque was far from land. Nuno steered nearer to the coast.

It was easy to perceive that the ship was struggling against a current.

'There's surely a powerful river here,' said the Pilot. His excitement infected the whole crew. Luis drew a bucket of water from the sea. Everyone tasted it. It was fresh water.

'We are at the Nile,' said Luis, his face radiant. 'Eannes tried to get here before.'

The others looked at Luis incredulously.

'You see, the Nile has two arms,' explained Luis, full of enthusiasm. 'It embraces the world with them. That's what is written in the old books. I know it from Hanno, who knew the old books from cover to cover.'

'All possible kinds of things are written in the old books. You should know that by now!' said Nuno, for he saw that Luis was sticking to his ideas. 'If the arms of the Nile really embrace the world,' he continued seriously, 'then it's time for us to make our wills, for one end of the world must be at hand.'

'It looks like that,' said Luis uncertainly.

'The poor world!' said Nuno, laughing. 'Where does it get all the "ends" that are ascribed to it in the old books?'

They all laughed, and finally Luis too joined in. But when they sailed into the mouth of the river, whose waters they had tasted, no one laughed, although a paradise appeared before them. Clouds of perfume were wafted over from the river-bank, which was like a luxuriant garden. The crew of the Barque saw flamingos and rhinoceros-birds in the shallow water. They saw hippopotami lolling in the sun. Many kinds of fish were swimming round the Barque, amongst them fish with humps on their heads, and Luis cried excitedly: 'Hanno knew about those too! Now watch out, they'll raise their crowns out of the water any minute, for these creatures, which are really no fish, breathe through them.'

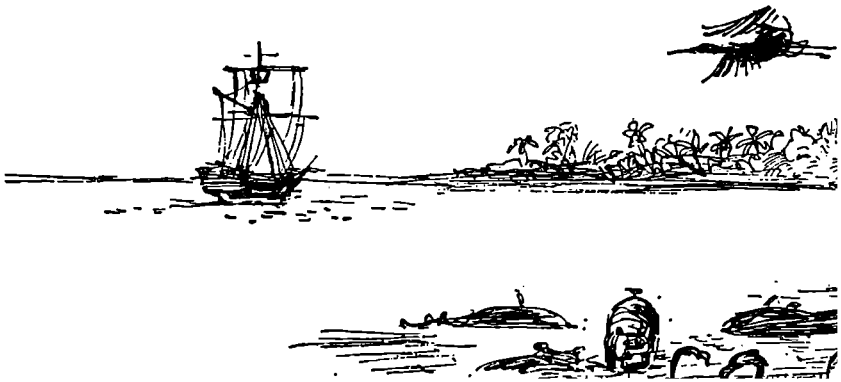
There were fishes longer than a full-grown man and with mouths gaping open more than three hands' breadth. But it was not the giant fishes nor the hippopotami which kept the Pilot and

his men from landing. They heard the drums beginning to beat as soon as they let down a boat. Shadows glided through the jungle on the river-banks which lay opposite the Barque. Nuno did not think it advisable to enter this threatening paradise.

The Barque raised anchor and resumed its race with lurking death.

Tristão learned from Lopo that the great river was called the Senegal. The coast continued green. After they had sailed for several days and nights without stopping, a cape suddenly appeared in front of the Barque. Unlike the stony Galley or Cabo Branco, the white promontory, its trees and shrubs held out an invitation to tarry. Yet Tristão sailed past the green cape. He was staking everything on getting ahead of the drums.

Two days later, as evening was falling, a bare promontory appeared before them. Two dead tree-trunks stood out desolately on its brow. It looked like a huge barque which had struck sail





for ever and anchored there. Nuno named this remarkable headland the Cape of the Masts. He decided to await the morning here and then go on land.

When darkness fell the crew of the Barque noticed that a fire had been lighted a short distance south of the cape, right on the level strand by the water's edge. There it stood, alone in the darkness which soon enveloped everything. Tristão had a boat let down, chose five companions, amongst them Lopo, and ordered them to row as silently as possible towards the fire.

They could now see a man in the firelight, and they could also see a hut not far from the fire.

The man was standing quietly by the fire. He seemed to be listening out towards the sea.

The men in the boat listened tensely.

'No drums,' whispered Nuno. 'We have got ahead of them.'

Then they heard the man on the shore shouting over to them.

'He is asking us to come on land,' said Lopo. 'It's strange that he speaks the language which I speak. Here they speak a different one. Shall I ask him?'

'Ask him,' ordered the Pilot.

Lopo shouted a few words across. The man on the shore replied at once.

'He says he knows you, Pilot,' explained Lopo. 'He says that a year back you gave him tools, in the bay.'

'I gave tools to a smith,' admitted Nuno excitedly. 'He helped me to repair some damage to the Barque. Ask him if his name is Mesa.'

'He is Mesa,' said Lopo, when he had put the question.

'How does he come to be here?'

Lopo again shouted across and got an answer.

'He says you should come,' Lopo translated. 'He wants to give you what he has made with your tools.'

'Shout across that we're coming!' said Nuno at once. 'Tell him that we have no arms!'

'Mesa says you should come,' Lopo interpreted the answer which came from the shore.

'Row to the land!' ordered the Pilot. He repeated his order,

as the rowers had hesitated. He intended to stake everything on one card.

Nuno recognized Mesa at once. He went up to him unembarrassed. 'Had I known it was you, I would not have come with empty hands,' he told Lopo to assure him.

The smith, who was a head taller than the Pilot, smiled. He pointed to a few bundles of throw-knives, on whose curved blades the firelight was shining. Then he said something.

'Mesa says he is giving you a present of all these knives. He made them with your tools.'

'Ask Mesa why he has made so many knives!'

'Mesa says that he was compelled to make knives. But he has not forgotten that you were good to him. He will not let the knives into the hands of your enemies.'

'Tell Mesa that I have no enemies in Africa! Ask him why he has come the long distance from the bay to here!'

'Mesa says that he wishes to go where no white man comes. Mesa is a friend of the white and a brother of the black. He cannot live where there are both. Mesa begs you to take the throw-knives.'

'Tell Mesa that I will not accept them! I am a friend of all his brothers.'

Mesa bent down and listened to Nuno's answer. He now spoke in great agitation.

'Mesa says that danger threatens you and your people.'

'Tell Mesa that we will not raise our hands against his brothers.'

When Lopo had translated these words Mesa went up to the pile of throw-knives. He uttered a cry. From three sides men with knives in their hands stepped out of the darkness. The black bodies gleamed as they came near the fire. Mesa talked with the men for a long time. In the end they bent down and seized the throw-knives which lay on the ground.

'Don't stir from where you are!' the Pilot said to his companions. Without taking his eyes off Mesa, he said: 'What do they intend to do, Lopo?'

'Everything is all right now,' said Lopo.



Mesa shouted a few words to his people.

At this the throw-knives whirled over the heads of the white men into the sea.

‘Who are those men?’ asked Nuno.

‘They are men of Mesa’s tribe,’ explained Lopo. ‘His tribe came here with him to get out of the way of the fighting. They saw your ship. Mesa told them that you are a good man. They asked him to offer you the knives. If you had taken them, we would all be dead now.’

Mesa then went into his hut and brought out a huge shield covered with elephant’s hide. He walked up to Nuno with this shield, and made a long speech. While doing so he broke out in sweat, for he was standing so near the fire that it was almost singeing him. All the time he held the shield over his head. Finally he handed the valuable gift to the Pilot and asked Lopo to translate his speech. Lopo said: ‘Mesa thanks you, white man, for coming on to land unarmed. They have heard that other white men have come and have killed people. He says that dead men make the hand of the living their tools, and kill again. He

and his people will now go to other tribes and tell of the ship with the two wings which is sailing alone. It is better if in future you come on land without me, otherwise the tribes will think that you have made me into a living dead, who can no longer do anything of himself. That is what Mesa says.'

'Tell Mesa that I will speak in the country from which we white men come, until no white man who is not a friend of the black man may any longer sail on a ship to the black man's country!'

'Mesa says that his people believe you. He says that you will soon come to the Bitter River. Mesa will send runners to the Bitter River so that the tribe who live there will receive you well. He will speak until the drums cease to harry you.'

Nuno loosened his belt and presented it to the smith. He invited the men to come on to the ship so that he might entertain them. But Mesa told Lopo to say that it was better not to lose any time now, but to continue the race with the drums both on land and on the sea.

VI

The Anchor Rope

WHEN the Barque of the Brothers cast anchor at the estuary of the Bitter River, no drum-beats were to be heard. But darkness was already falling, and the Pilot did not want to land by night. It was obvious that the villages of which Mesa knew lay farther up the river. When night fell not a single fire blinked over to the ship. Tristão decided to await daylight, but he now choose those who were to accompany him on the journey of exploration. He wished to go over in two boats, with six men in each boat, taking an oar for every man, so that in case of need the boats could move quickly. One boat was to row along by each bank.

Before the Pilot began to pick the crews, he said: 'I no longer hear the drums; it is possible that Mesa has silenced them, but it is not certain. We do not know the people we are going to meet, and they do not know us. I only know that as soon as day dawns we must try to make friends at the Bitter River. Everything depends on whether we succeed. Therefore we will take no weapons with us. We will be only twelve men in the two boats. If they want to kill us, weapons would not prevent them. We could defend ourselves and kill many of them, but that is not the kind of victory we need. If, on the other hand, they see that we are placing ourselves in their hands, it will be easier for Mesa to convince them. In order to regain their confidence, which Lanzarote has destroyed, it is necessary for us to stake our lives without any protection whatever, even to the extent of risking

that those who have suffered such great wrongs from white men may only begin to understand us after they have killed us. Only then will the way be free for those who come after us.'

Nuno looked before him in silence for a while. 'A few of you,' he continued, 'shall remain on the Barque and await the result of the expedition; for our main task is to bring back information to the Infante.' The Pilot looked from one to the other. 'You now know how matters stand. I leave each one free to decide for himself. I will not ask anyone to come with me who wishes to stay on the Barque. But before I choose my companions, anyone who does not want to come in the boats may put up his hand.'

Nuno saw that Luis was struggling with himself, so he said hurriedly: 'I have decided in any case for five to remain on the Barque—Lopo, Pedro and Paolo, and you, Luis.'

'Why me?' asked Luis, disconcerted.

'On account of your hands,' said Tristão. 'None of us has great paws like yours. The Negroes might think you were coming with two hammers. Moreover, you are the only one who can hoist the big sail to the mast by yourself.'

At this Luis smiled. 'Pedro and Paolo together could manage the sail easily,' he said, 'and Lopo . . . but who is the fifth?'

'Aires,' said the Pilot.

'Why me?' asked Aires, in a more determined tone than Luis.

'In your case it's a matter of your head,' Nuno explained, with a touch of irony. 'You understand the compass and the maps almost better than I do. Or will you deny that you can take a ship to where you want to take her?'

'I want to go in the boat in which Tinoco goes,' demanded Aires.

Nuno drew a sealed letter from his coat pocket. 'This is a command for you in case we should be prevented from returning to the Barque. Only in that case are you to open the letter. I want your word that you will obey the order.'

'How can I give my word when I do not know what the command demands of me?' objected Aires.

'I have written the command,' said the Pilot. 'Is that not enough for you?'

Aires still hesitated to take the letter.

'Besides myself, one other person—namely, your brother—knows what the command is,' said Nuno.

'You can safely give your word,' Tinoco advised Aires.

At this Aires took the letter and stuck it into his breast pocket.

'Only in case of emergency,' explained the Pilot. 'Now I think we can face the morning with confidence.' He listened into the night. 'No drums—Mesa has arrived before us.' He gripped Aires by the arm. 'Do not break the seal too soon!' he said. Then he took the compass needle, which he always carried with him, out of his breast pocket and handed it to Aires. This done, he instructed the cook to serve up the best meal the galley could produce, and he even distributed an extra portion of wine. After the meal he asked Aires to play his guitar, and everyone joined in with songs. They celebrated until late into the night. And when they listened over towards the land between the songs, they only heard the familiar voices of the primeval forest, but no drums.

The two Doves and some of the crew were already asleep when the Pilot began to look about for Luis. For quite a while past he had missed the cook, who was not one of the early sleepers. At last he saw light in the caboose, which also served as store-room for the provisions, and he perceived that an active shadow was moving about inside. He went over and stood in the narrow doorway, astonished at the sight which met his eyes. Luis had not heard him coming. He was eagerly absorbed in decorating baskets with coloured rags and strings.

'What on earth are you up to here behind my back?' inquired Tristão sharply.

'It was meant to be a surprise,' said Luis, embarrassed. 'They love coloured things. Nothing can be bright enough for them. They're as happy as children if you give them gaudy things.'

'Not at all a bad idea!' said the Pilot. 'They're very pretty! You've taken a lot of trouble with them.'

The Pilot looked, amused, at the decorated baskets, and jugs, and little casks.

'Only a little flour and honey, and a trifle of pickled meat,'

Luis explained. 'A little bit of everything. They have sweet teeth—like children.'

Tristão took up the cask of salt meat. 'A whole tribe would survive the rainy season with this,' he said, laughing.

'I took a bit of a liberty, of course,' said Luis penitently, 'but—I want to do whatever is in my power—so that it turns out well.'

'You are not afraid again, are you?'

'No, Pilot.'

Tristão looked at him searchingly. 'You are—just a little bit.'

At this Luis blurted out: 'If I could only go instead of Tinoco . . . you know the two have always been together. Why can it not remain like that?'

'You want to come with us?'

'I must go with you, Pilot!' Luis now picked up a flat basket which was covered with a sack. 'We'll do it with this!' he said eagerly. 'When they peer out of the bush over towards the boats, perhaps with their bows already bent, I'll suddenly pull off the sack!' He did so there and then.

The ostrich's egg lay in the flat basket, gleaming red, and looking bigger than it was. The Pilot uttered a cry of astonishment.

'That's exactly the effect it will have on them,' said Luis, his face radiant. 'They'll suddenly catch sight of something which they do not even know exists, and they won't shoot.'

'You have the talent of a commander-in-chief,' said Nuno. 'But I would not part with that egg if I were you.'

'All the time I see before me the arrow which Travazos was flaunting!'

Nuno bent over the big red egg. 'Wonderful!' he cried. 'You have turned it by magic into a real newly-risen sun—before it was only an egg, like thousands of others. Just imagine what may be in it! For heaven's sake don't put it under a hen when we go home! Promise me that!'

'I can't get the green arrow-tip out of my mind,' complained Luis, 'especially when I shut my eyes.'

'Hatch it yourself!' Tristão advised him. 'But don't let it

hatch right out! Just imagine what may be hidden in that egg! They say crocodiles lay eggs just like that!

'You're making fun of me, Pilot!'

'Not at all!' laughed Nuno. 'There are even elephants—a certain dwarf variety—which come out of eggs,' he continued enthusiastically. 'Just imagine how pretty dwarf elephants must look!'

'They attach great importance to magic,' said Luis, trembling. 'I think they'll fall for the red egg!'

At this Nuno gave up. 'It's no use talking to you,' he said wearily. 'But I'll never forget it of you—that you wanted to come with us.'

'You're not taking me, then?'

'Don't you understand,' said the Pilot, 'you would infect the others. Those fellows yonder would notice that you're afraid. They would not see the red egg at all. They would only see you and your fear.'

Luis covered up the red egg with the sack. The Pilot laid his hand on his shoulder. 'Don't worry about Aires! He can hold his own—like Tinoco! Each of them is a fine fellow on his own. Aires has the making of a Pilot; he's the best navigator on the Barque. That's why I'm entrusting the ship to him in case our distant relatives, whom we are visiting in the morning, do not rejoice like children when we arrive with your beautiful baskets. If that happens, don't give Aires any trouble, old Redbeard! Except for you and Lopo he has only the two Doves, Pedro and Paolo, who are hardly fledged yet. Will you promise me that I can rely on you?'

Luis did not speak. He glanced up at the Pilot, abashed, and then stared in front of him again—at the sack under which lay the red egg.

The Pilot shook him. 'Now go to bed, old elephant-breeder!' he said with rough affection. 'Your baskets are so pretty that we do not need the egg at all.'

About midnight the Pilot sent those who were still sitting over their wine to bed, and he himself lay down. Tinoco and Aires

had volunteered for the first watch. It was not a difficult task. An almost full moon shone down on the river, making everything clearly visible. No one could approach the Barque, which was anchored far more than an arrow-shot from land, without being seen.

Tinoco held his hand high in the air. 'The wind has turned to the south,' he said. 'It's favourable for the voyage home.'

'Is Nuno going to turn back already?' asked Aires, surprised.

'He thinks that if we succeed in carrying out what we have planned for tomorrow, quite a lot will have been achieved.'

'And what if you don't succeed?' asked Aires. 'If you have to come back to the Barque without carrying out your plans?'

'Then it will be a matter of making another attempt,' said Tinoco quietly. 'In any case we dare not return home with empty hands after Lanzarote returns with full ships. If we do, the devil will take the whole house—as it is, he already has half of it.'

'I don't understand.'

'People like Lanzarote always find a way into favour,' said Tinoco angrily. 'The Infante will never lack plenty of foxes around him, but he will lack men who sail for him, and not for themselves.'

'I understand,' said Aires. 'I have seen a lot of things on this voyage. I have been perturbed about many things. I give you back your word, Tinoco: it will not be our last voyage.'

'No, Aires,' said Tinoco decisively. 'I do not want you to do continual violence to yourself on my account.'

'It's not necessary to talk about it,' protested Aires.

'I'm keeping to what I have promised,' said Tinoco obstinately. 'This voyage is my last one.' He looked at Aires calmly. 'You have given up a great deal for my sake. I was drawn to this Barque of the Brothers, you were not. Now I have what I wanted, and you shall have the bay again, and the cottage, and a boat—everything which means happiness to you.'

'This Barque of the Brothers has become a home to me just as much as to you,' Aires assured him. 'I'm only anxious that we do not part from each other. I'm fond of the others on the Barque



too; I should not like to part from any of them. Nuno is splendid. They're all splendid—Lopo, and Luis, and da Costa, and all of them. And even the Doves will turn into good seafarers if we all stay together. Listen, Tinoco! I have felt rebellious against the Infante often enough—that's a thing of the past. The fact that the "Desert Wanderer" sailed home on the *Santa Maria* instead of coming with us, made me stop and think. I no longer believe that happiness consists in doing what one likes to do. I now understand many things about the Infante which used to puzzle me before. I admire the Infante who is bent on discovering, but I don't deny that the other Infante, who listens to Lanzarote, still worries me. And there is one thing I can never understand—that the Infante came home from Africa without his brother.'

Tinoco looked across to the glistening river. His face was drawn and stern.

'What are you thinking of now?' asked Aires. 'I must know what you are thinking of now.'

'Henrique was as fond of his brother as you are of me,' said Tinoco. 'I'm sure of that. I know no more.'

Aires started. The sealed letter in his breast pocket rustled. This made him suddenly remember what he had wanted to ask Tinoco for some time past. 'You know more than I do,' he said; 'you know what the command is.'

'I will not tell you what the command is, Aires,' said Tinoco calmly. 'I have given my word not to. But I have no advantage over you. You too know the command.'

'I have not opened the letter,' protested Aires.

'Do understand me!' said Tinoco. 'You don't need to open it at all. If it really comes to the worst, you will do what the command orders in any case.'

'How can you know that?' asked Aires, agitated.

'Because you are my brother,' said Tinoco. As if to correct himself, he added: 'Because the others are your brothers, too; not only I.'

Then Aires gave up plying Tinoco with questions. They spent the remainder of the watch scanning the sea and the river. Now and then their eyes wandered to the river-bank, over which hung

the pale orb of the moon. The great trees cast heavy shadows over the moonlit ground.

The morning came in a blaze of glory. A sparkling strand lay opposite the Barque. When they had all taken breakfast, the two boats were let down into the water. Tristão assisted eagerly in fastening the decorated baskets and little casks to the edges of the boats in such a way that they could be seen from a distance and yet would not hinder the rowers. The Pilot praised Luis before all the others; nevertheless he laughingly rejected the giant egg which the cook tried to press on him. They all became infected with Nuno's confidence. The Pilot even ordered the men to leave behind the knives which no one regarded as weapons.

'We could not have better weather for it!' he cried. 'The trip can begin now!' He looked up at the five whom he was leaving behind. 'No matter what way our "distant relatives" may behave towards us, we won't let ourselves be drawn into hostile action. Remember, none from the Barque either! If the worst comes to the worst we will try to be quicker than them. If you see us coming, hoist the sails! For the rest, obey the command!' he said to Aires. 'And now: *Talent de bien faire.*'

The two boats pushed away from the Barque and the twelve rowers soon brought them to the river. The five on the Barque watched them until they finally disappeared far up around a bend of the river.

The wind grew fresher in the morning. It buffeted the Barque in the direction of the open sea. It could be seen from the tautness of the anchor-rope that the anchor was firmly rooted in the sea-bottom.

Slowly the sun rose higher. Aires and Lopo and the three others waited, and nothing happened to increase their uneasiness. The wind from the south held. Only the shadows became impenetrable; they hung like black curtains on the branches of the trees. The waiting became painful.

It was not yet midday when suddenly, at first from a con-

siderable distance, the sound of drums was heard, the beats following in rapid succession. Loud shouts rose above the drumbeats.

Luis grasped Aires by the arm.

'Get the sails ready!' ordered Aires.

Luis and the two boys laid the sails ready, so that they would only have to be hoisted.

'Throw down the rope ladders!'

Luis obeyed, glad that there was something for his hands to do.

Lopo looked up the river, his face rigid. He did not stir from Aires' side.

'That does not sound like a friendly reception,' said Pedro gloomily.

'God knows it does not,' replied Aires.

'Shall we get our arms ready?' inquired Luis.

'No!' said Aires sharply. Leaning forward, he peered up towards the river. His hands were pressed against the anchor rope. He felt it vibrating in the strong wind.

The others stood closely pressed together behind him. At last they saw one of the boats emerging, and a little later the second one. The five drew a breath of relief, for no pursuers were to be seen. But then one canoe after another shot out from the bend of the river. They were dugouts, manned with warriors. They were trying to overtake the two boats. Aires finally counted twelve canoes. The distance between them and the boats increased, but the shouts became more terrible and the sound of the drums came nearer. And then the five on the Barque were able to see that there were no longer twelve men rowing. Only two men were still rowing in each boat. The others were lying in them. And when the boats were near enough for Aires to count the men, he counted only seven between the two boats. Now the five knew what had happened. The leading boat was being rowed by da Costa and Andre Diaz.

'Tristão is dead!' shouted da Costa from quite a distance. 'Hoist the sails!'

'Hoist the small sail!' ordered Aires, and Luis and the two



boys hoisted the sail on the small mast. Aires now felt the anchor rope being stretched almost to breaking point.

The boat shot forward towards them. 'The others are all dead!' cried Diaz. 'We have been hit with poisoned arrows too, but perhaps we'll pull through.'

'Help them up!' ordered Aires hoarsely.

Luis and Lopo dragged da Costa and Diaz on board. The empty boat drifted away.

Aires kept looking incessantly at the second boat, which was steadily gaining distance from the dugouts. It was now out of reach of the arrows, but the dugouts were continuing the pursuit. Aires recognized the two rowers—Correo and Tinoco.

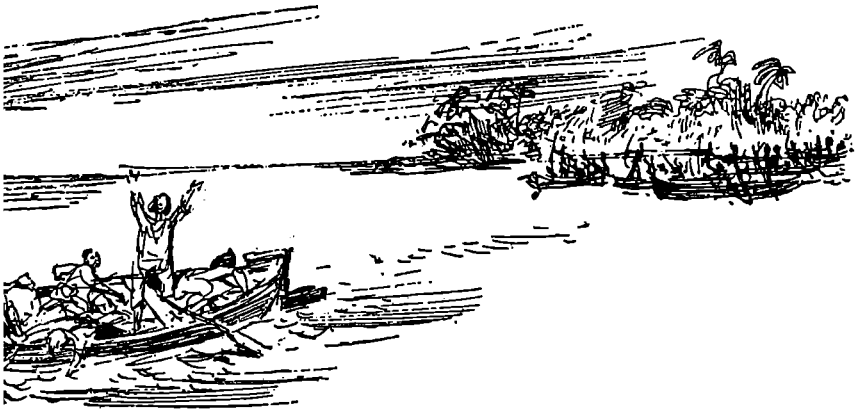
'Tinoco!' cried Aires. 'Tinoco!'

'Weigh anchor!' shouted Tinoco from a distance. 'We have all been hit. The poison is consuming us.'

'Don't bother any more about us! Hoist the big sail!' cried Correo.

Aires did not move a hand.

'Obey the command!' shouted Tinoco. He and Correo were no longer rowing. The dugouts were beginning to gain upon them.



Aires clung firmly to the anchor-rope.

'You must cut it!' demanded da Costa and Andre Diaz, who had come up behind Aires. They shook him by the shoulders. 'We know the command now.'

Aires pushed them away. 'I'm doing what I must do!' he said. He pulled the sealed letter out of his pocket and threw it into the sea.

'Bring home the Barque!' shouted Tinoco. 'That is the command.'

'Not without you!' roared Aires. 'Never without you, brother!'

The boat in which three dead men were lying between the decorated baskets was now so close to the Barque that Tinoco was able to grasp the anchor rope just where it disappeared into the water. Tinoco pulled at the rope. 'Aires!' he gasped, raising up his bare arm on which a long tear gaped open. 'Lopo is your brother! Luis is your brother! Pedro and Paolo are your brothers!'

Arrows began to fly from the dugouts. They were splashing into the water all around the Barque. Andre Diaz gave a cry. Aires saw that an arrow had struck his shoulder.

'Don't kill your brothers!' Tinoco's cry cut Aires to the heart. He pulled out his knife and drew the blade through the rope. It swung away from the Barque with a heavy, swishing sound, and fell into the water beside the boat in which Tinoco was standing, stiff as a mast. The Barque shook and began to move.

'Aires!'

Aires heard the cry. The knife slipped from his hand. He groped for a support. Lopo and da Costa caught him as he fell, and dragged him aft. Luis and the two boys had already hoisted the big sail.

Da Costa steered. Lopo took hold of Mesa's large shield with both hands and covered da Costa with it. But the arrows were no longer reaching the Barque.

VII

Cape Verde

WHEN the Barque was so far from land that Luis felt it was now safe from the dugouts, he began to search the deck for arrows, and gave Pedro and Paolo no peace until they helped him. 'They bite like snakes,' he announced gloomily. 'In any case it's a good thing to know where they are hidden, so that we do not walk on them and get cut.'

There was no arrow to be found in the elephant's hide, which Luis examined first. He praised the shield extravagantly. 'They probably don't trust themselves to come too near it,' he said, stroking the grey wrinkled skin, which was hard as stone. He saw by the expressions of Pedro and Paolo that they thought his words and behaviour exaggerated.

'Would you venture near an elephant?' he called down from above.

'Not near a living one,' replied Pedro. 'But that's only a bit of an elephant, and a dead one at that.'

'You know that because you have eyes in your head,' retorted Luis. 'Arrows are blind snakes. They have a poisonous tooth—nothing more.'

'Here's an arrow,' Paolo announced. He tried to draw out the arrow which was stuck in the small mast.

'Don't touch it!' Luis begged. 'I'll force out the poisoned tooth.' He hit the arrow with his fist, making it break off close to the mast.

They found two more arrows in empty provision boxes. They had penetrated the thin boards; their tips barely showed through inside the boxes.

Luis looked at the two arrows distrustfully. 'I will break them, anyway,' he said, and as with the first arrow which had stuck in the small mast, he hit away the long arrow-shaft. But he did not think that enough. 'I have heard,' he explained to the boys, 'that the heads of adders can still bite for a while after they're knocked off.'

Pedro and Paolo had all they could do to keep serious. That irritated Luis. 'It's only for your sakes,' he said. 'I promised the Pilot I'd look after you.' He considered for a while how he could make the two arrow-tips harmless. 'I have it,' he said after a pause. He fetched a hammer and nails and nailed the lids on the boxes. 'And when I get Aires' permission I'll burn them,' he asserted, grimly driving in the nails. 'You could get poisoned with them,' he added.

A fourth arrow caused Luis still more vexation. Pedro had brought him Aires' guitar. An arrow had penetrated crosswise through the instrument.

'What shall we do now?' lamented Luis.

He was unable either to draw out the arrow or to break it off, for fear of destroying the instrument completely.

'Let us ask advice of da Costa and Diaz!' Pedro suggested.

The wounded man da Costa was still at the helm. Beside him lay Diaz, stretched out on a makeshift pallet.

'There you have another whole one,' said Andre Diaz when he saw the arrow which Luis was holding. He offered Luis the arrow which he had pulled out of his shoulder. Luis took it reluctantly. Only then did Diaz notice that the guitar too had been hit. 'It's a pity it caught it!' he lamented. 'It could have outlived many men.' He groaned, for it hurt him to speak.

'A whole lot of arrows,' said Luis, observing the bundle in his hand. 'It was high time we came away. There are seven of us left, anyway!'

'Six,' said Diaz, trying to smile, though the pallor of death was on his face.

'Five,' da Costa corrected him. 'If you think it worth while taking stock, don't forget to strike me off the list!'

'You'll pull through,' said Diaz, 'it hardly scratched you.'

'Think of Tavira!' da Costa reminded him. 'No, no, we two will make the long journey together.' He turned to Luis. 'Come here,' he said, 'take over the helm. With this friendly wind it's child's play. I want to see how Aires is getting on.'

Before dragging himself away, da Costa, who was suffering horrible pain himself, glanced anxiously at Diaz. The others too noticed how it was with him.

'I'd rather stay here,' said da Costa. 'Every step hurts me.'

'Go!' said Andre Diaz. 'I can manage alone all right.'

'May we not take you to a better bed?'

'I want to keep an eye on the helm,' said Diaz obstinately.

'You old grouser!' replied da Costa tenderly. 'Don't go off without me! I cannot go with you until Aires is back at his post.' He arrived with difficulty at the Pilot's cabin, where Aires was lying.

Lopo was with him. All the time that Aires had been lying unconscious, Lopo had never left his side. Now he was waiting there, bent over the face which seemed not to have a drop of blood left in it. As da Costa entered the cabin, he and Lopo exchanged a glance. Da Costa sat down beside Aires. He felt very ill. Piercing pains were spreading from his wound through his whole body. The two silently watched the unconscious boy.

After an hour Pedro came in hurriedly. He laid his hand on da Costa's shoulder.

Da Costa looked inquiringly at the boy. 'Diaz?' he asked.

Pedro nodded. He choked down something which was rising up to the tip of his tongue.

Da Costa tried to stand up, but could no longer do so alone. 'It's a good thing,' he murmured. 'Aires will be spared seeing Diaz making the last journey. It's never very easy for those who are left behind.' Helped along by Pedro, he staggered on to the deck. Lopo did not move from Aires; he behaved as if no one else in the world mattered to him.

The sun was just touching the horizon when Luis and the two boys lifted Andre Diaz over the side of the ship. Luis had carefully enveloped Andre in one half of a torn sail. In a voice choking with emotion, he recited the funeral prayers.

A broad shaft of sunlight stretched from the setting sun to the Barque. 'Look!' cried da Costa, who was holding the steering-wheel with the greatest difficulty. 'A roadway right up to the sun! Andre deserved that.'

The Barque was now right in front of the Cape of the Masts. The bow of the stone ship glowed and the two bare tree-trunks stood out tinged with red against the sky. There was a black patch on the shore where Mesa's hut had stood.

The later it grew the brighter the night became. A clear full moon moved across the sky. The coast stood out sharply.

Da Costa remained a few more hours at the helm, wrapped up in rugs, but after that he no longer had enough strength to keep on. Pedro and Paolo squatted on the ground beside him. Luis steered.

'Now take me to Aires!' da Costa asked the two boys towards midnight. 'Keep close to the coast all the time!' he said to Luis, 'but not too close! When dawn comes we will have the Green Cape—Cape Verde—in front of us. I hope Aires will come round soon.'

Pedro and Paolo carried da Costa into the Pilot's cabin. Lopo helped them to prepare a bed beside Aires.

'Move me up a little higher!' da Costa asked them, 'so that I can see his face.' When he was settled comfortably he sent the two boys back to Luis, but he insisted that the door should be left open. He wanted to have plenty of light in the cabin.

Da Costa felt at the end of his strength, but his pain was too great to allow him to sleep. He began to pray that Aires might soon wake up from his death-like swoon.

Dawn was already breaking when Aires opened his eyes and looked round him, bewildered.

'Aires!' whispered Lopo.

Aires recognized him at once.

'Lopo! Where are we?'

'We're already past the Cape of the Masts,' interposed da Costa. 'The favourable wind is keeping up.'

'How are you, Alvaro?' asked Aires, who now sat up. 'How is Andre Diaz?'

'He's all right,' said da Costa, 'but it's time for you to get on your feet again. There are a few matters I want to talk to you about before we arrive at Cape Verde.'

'Are we as far as that already?'

'The wind is being kind to us,' said da Costa, speaking with difficulty. 'I want to talk to you,' he repeated.

'Shall Lopo go out?'

'Lopo may listen to everything,' said da Costa. 'You two—why, it's almost like you and Tinoco.'

'How could it have come to this?' asked Aires, the remembrance of everything which had happened striking him with sudden force. 'Tell me why it turned out so terribly!'

'It's easy to explain,' said da Costa. 'They allowed us to come up to their huts. The huts were not far from the river-bank—that was our good luck, otherwise not one of us could have got away. Tristão walked up to the huts, accompanied by Almida. They carried the most prettily decorated of Luis's baskets with them. Suddenly a huge man with his hands bound together rushed towards them. He had a gag in his mouth. He tried to sign to us from a distance with his bound hands. Then he stumbled and fell, and only then did we see that there were arrows sticking out of his back.'

'Was it Mesa?' asked Aires, horrified.

'Yes; apparently he had broken away,' continued da Costa. 'He wanted to prevent us from falling into the ambush.'

'And Tristão? And Almida? Did they get as far as the boats?'

'They did not even try to,' reported da Costa. 'Tristão shouted to us to get away. That is what we did. He himself, and Almida too, walked on calmly towards Mesa. They did not get as far as him on account of the arrows. A whole shower fell on them. And then the arrows caught us too.'

'So it was all in vain,' cried Aires, shattered, 'since Mesa is dead too!'

'They even burned his hut,' said da Costa, with a groan. 'We saw a black spot at the place where it had stood.'

'I wish they had left none of us alive!' said Aires despairingly.

At this da Costa sat up. 'I thought I would have to bring you to reason!' he said.

'But surely it's the end of everything!' exclaimed Aires. 'Who can explain now that we came as friends? They are all dead except us few. And we're only alive because we ran away! Who will speak to them now?'

'The dead will speak,' said da Costa emphatically. 'Mesa will speak to them with the gag between his teeth. They will listen to him and to Tristão. The absurdly rigged up baskets will have long since puzzled them, for meantime they will have rummaged through them looking for weapons, and found only honey, and flour, and meat. They will have been put to shame when they tore the belts off the dead men to look for hidden knives. Everything will have said to them: Mesa did not lie.'

Da Costa's face shone with perspiration. He had used up his breath. He struggled for air.

'You must spare yourself!' Aires implored.

'It's too late for that,' said da Costa. 'There is only one thing remaining for me to do—to talk to you. Listen!' he whispered, 'Tristão and all the others remained behind to prepare the ground, to *speak*, do you hear?'

'And what if the others remain deaf to them? After all, everything is still uncertain!'

'Yes, it is uncertain,' gasped da Costa. 'But I know . . . Tristão expects that others will come after him and try again.'

'No one else will venture now.'

'It makes me sad to hear you say that, Aires!' said da Costa with an effort. 'I would have expected that least of all from you. I thought there were still a handful of Portuguese left, really courageous fellows. A handful of men for the Infante.' He sank back. 'Send Luis here!' he whispered. 'Go you now and take over the helm!'

'I won't go away from you.' Aires gripped da Costa's arm. 'The handful of brave fellows will be there all right. The Infante

has Eannes and others who have more self-confidence than I have. He will find some of Tinoco's sort.'

'Tinoco counts on you,' insisted da Costa. 'You cut the rope because he was no longer able to do so. You must keep on doing what he can no longer do. You owe that to him . . . otherwise he would really be dead. Everything depends on you now, because you have gone through hell.'

'You have seen that it was beyond my strength.'

'But you have surmounted it. Tinoco depends on you.'

'Tinoco had the toughness which is necessary to carry one through. I have not got it,' said Aires, resisting.

'You have got it just as much as Tinoco. You will get to know yourself in time!'

'Everything touches me much too deeply. And when I'm thrown absolutely on my own resources . . .' Aires stopped speaking. 'I don't know whether I shall get the Barque through if there's a storm,' he added.

'If I had any spit left in my mouth now,' panted da Costa, 'I'd wash the doubt off your dirty face! What an idea, to make little of yourself! You are a born pilot. You could find the way in a storm if anyone could. You will overcome the sea if it rises up against you. You will also deal with your crew in the best way possible for themselves and the ship. *You* are now a pilot—Nuno has given you over his compass. If anyone should mutiny, you will strike him down as a drowning man who resists rescue!'

'I could never do that,' objected Aires.

'Tristão gave the helm into your hand,' asserted da Costa in gasps; 'it all depends on you, if everything is not to be at an end; on you alone! You will sail the Barque home to the Infante. You will not let yourself be beaten even if the heavens do not always caress you with a gentle wind, but instead give you something to cope with. Then it will be seen that there's something of Tinoco in you.'

'I am only half a man without Tinoco,' said Aires. 'I would never have dared to go without him.'

'Get back to the helm of the Barque, you moaner!' gasped da

Costa. 'That's where your place is! Tinoco is standing there when you stand there. He will get the Barque through if you do not give up. Off to the helm! Don't let Tinoco down!'

At this Aires pulled himself together and went to the helm. Da Costa gripped Lopo's arm with his sweaty hand. 'Stay with him!' he whispered. 'He needs a brother. I shan't be worried if he has you.'

Lopo went out and after a while Luis arrived.

'Bring the other half of the sail!' da Costa said to him. 'I must be off to join Andre Diaz; it's high time.'

Luis began to spread out the torn sail. 'It was a good sail,' mused da Costa. 'It held a long time. Now call the two boys.'

Luis fetched Pedro and Paolo. They lifted da Costa on to the sail and wrapped it round him up to the shoulders.

'How much farther to Cape Verde?' inquired da Costa.

'It's already in sight,' said Luis.

'Then carry me out,' said the dying man.

'Yes, there it is!' he whispered when he caught sight of the wooded promontory.

Luis and the two boys held da Costa up to give him a good view of the cape.

'Will you not come over here to the helm?' asked Aires.

Da Costa did not reply. Then they saw that he was dead.

VIII

The Shark

THE favourable wind held week after week. In the glaring noon-day light the Barque of the Brothers sailed through the broad channels of muddy water which the River Senegal hurled out into the sea. Aires and his little crew saw solitary hippopotami basking in the sun on the river-banks.

Fools' Island and Tide Island lay far to the right of Arguim Bay. Only from Cabo Branco, the White Cape, onwards did Aires sail closer to the coast once more. Porto do Galé, Galley Bay, came in sight, and two days later Porto do Cavalleiro. It was so easy to keep the Barque on her course that now and then Aires gave over the helm and the sails to the two Doves, after warning Luis to keep an unobtrusive eye on them. Then Aires would sleep, and Lopo would lie beside him just as Tinoco used to lie sleeping beside him before. And they slept as soundly as if they were storing up a supply of sleep.

During those hours Luis would inspect the provisions, although he knew that there was far more than enough on the ship for the diminished little group. He enjoyed preparing specially generous meals while Aires was asleep. And sometimes, after gazing at the sky which looked down so kindly, and at the lightly rippling sea, he would throw titbits into the sea, heartily regretting that the sky was out of reach. For Luis was anxious to keep both in good humour.

As the Rio de Ouro came in sight, Lopo was standing at the

helm beside Aires. The shores of the Gold River glistened and the huge baobab tree, under which Lopo's father had waited, stood out clearly.

Aires steered onwards, his face pale. He gave orders to put about, for he wanted to cross over to the coast. The two boys loosened the sail-cords. But Lopo, as soon as he realized the intention, jumped over quickly and tightly lashed up the cords again.

'Leave them alone!' said Aires, 'or else we won't get into the estuary.'

Lopo remained by the sail and held the cords. 'Not till next time, when the Barque passes here again,' he said. When he had met his father a few weeks before he had had a little talk with him, and when his father had let him go, he had pulled the assagai out of the ground. Now he hurried into the cabin where his father's spear lay. He fetched it and peered over at the baobab tree. When the Barque was right opposite the tree, Lopo threw the assagai, and it shot against the river-bank, dropped into the water, and when it came up it drifted along with a little wave in front of its tip. Then Lopo smiled, went back to Aires at the helm and looked at him with brotherly affection.

The Barque had just sailed by the Angra dos Ruivos when Aires surprised the cook again trying to appease the sea and sky. Luis had just sent a big lump of meat overboard when Aires, whom he supposed to be asleep, came up to him from behind.

'What does this nonsense mean?' asked Aires, annoyed. 'Do you want to waken up the sea?'

'Quite the contrary!' protested Luis. 'I'm feeding the sea so that it doesn't get terribly hungry all of a sudden.'

'If you do that often we'll die of hunger on the Barque,' said Aires severely.

At this Luis smiled and pointed to the caboose. 'There are great mountains of food still in there,' he assured Aires. 'We won't use them up even if we sail to the moon. And certainly not now, since we have already covered half the way to Lagos.'

'On the sea the miles are not always the same length; don't forget that!'

Luis thought this was a favourable opportunity to do something he had wanted to do since the guitar had been ruined for ever by the arrow. He wanted to give Aires a present, so he asked him to come into the caboose now, to see for himself that there were sufficient supplies.

'I believe you,' said Aires. 'But do not lay hands on any more of the provisions. They do not belong to you!'

'What I have here does belong to me,' Luis insisted, and he did not stop until Aires came into the caboose with him. Luis lifted the sack under which the red egg lay. 'I don't want it,' he said.

'You only imagine that,' said Aires.

'If they had taken it with them, nothing would have gone wrong,' continued Luis obstinately.

'Stop that nonsense!' said Aires.

'Take it!' begged Luis. 'It only brings mistortune as long as I have it.'

'And if I have it?' asked Aires bluntly.

'Anyone else can have it without harm,' protested Luis. 'I alone cannot.'

'Then throw it into the sea!' suggested Aires.

'What? Throw it away?' asked Luis indignantly. 'Throw this wonderful egg away?'

'You're right,' said Aires, changing his tone. 'There's not another like it in the whole world.'

'Well then, take it!' begged Luis.

'No,' said Aires.

'You don't want it because it brings mistortune.'

'Nonsense!'

'Then why won't you take it?' inquired Luis anxiously.

'Because it's your egg,' said Aires stubbornly.

'I'll throw it into the sea,' threatened Luis.

'Do what you like, but give up your silly idea of feeding the sea!' said Aires, turning to go. 'It will bring sharks on us!' he added.

Just then Lopo came running into the caboose. 'Come and look at the enormous creature!' he cried.

'What is it—a whale?' asked Aires at once.

'It's as big as a whale, but it isn't blowing,' said Lopo. 'Its back fin is standing out of the sea like a great knife.'

'Is it a shark?' asked Luis, horrified. He rushed up to the deck behind Aires. Pedro, who was holding the helm, pointed to the shark.

'An enormous shark!' said Luis tonelessly. 'And he has begun it already.'

'Begun what?' asked Aires angrily.

'To circle round the ship.'

'Don't be gruesome!'

'I know all about sharks!' said Luis. 'They know in advance what's going to happen to a ship—they're never mistaken.'

'Not another word or I'll have you bound to the mast,' threatened Aires.

Lopo pointed to the west. 'Something else is coming too' he said. And now Aires saw the black line which separated the sky from the sea in the west.

A little later the sails became agitated. The wind veered round to the west.

'We haven't got the Cape behind us yet,' said Luis hoarsely.

'We have passed more than one Cape,' said Aires.

'But not the Cape which is called Non!' persisted Luis. He stared over at the shark, which was coming nearer and nearer to the Barque.

'Get along to your caboose!' said Aires. 'Your bits of meat have enticed the shark, otherwise he wouldn't have come!'

Aires took over the helm. He ordered Lopo, Pedro and Paolo to take below deck everything which was not firmly fixed. He knew exactly the stocks they had. Nuno had provided for a long voyage and had taken extra masts, sails and anchors with him. He had done everything conceivable to provide for making good any damage which storms could cause.

The sky grew dark in the west. Aires crossed over towards



the wall of cloud, away from the coast, and then steered northwards. Lopo came up to him again and again, and then the two friends took counsel together, and the young pilot was astonished to find how reliably Lopo could reckon the distance from the coast. Aires had a complete mental picture of the maps with all their details, and he was well acquainted with the hidden dangers of the coast, the position of the ship and the course which he had to steer. He knew from the position of the black wall which was pushing towards them that the storm would overtake the Barque considerably before they reached the dreaded Cape.

As the coast of Africa, along which the Barque was sailing, offered no place of refuge whatsoever, and moreover was Moorish territory, Aires decided to steer for the Fortunate Isles. They lay right in the north. If he succeeded in keeping the Barque on a northerly course, he could hardly miss them, and though he knew that this depended mainly on how he fared in the storm, he was confident. Only one thing troubled him, and that was the fact that they had no boats and would have no possibility of leaving the Barque, should she come to harm.

The wind became more violent. Aires ordered the big sail to be struck. The Barque made good progress with the little sail. Breakers swept higher and higher over the deck. Lopo helped Aires to hold the helm, for it was too much for one with the increasing impact of the waves. Pedro and Paolo looked after the sails. Huddled close together, they carried out the orders which Aires shouted to them above the roaring of the storm.

They could only see each other when a flash of lightning cut through the darkness which had suddenly fallen. Heavy waves swept over them before they could see them coming, so they bound themselves fast with long ropes. Huge, slashing gushes of water came from every side, as if the storm had torn the sea into pieces. The sky had long since ceased to be a sky—it was one half of the night, which had begun so mercilessly and so utterly out of its time, and had swallowed the sun. The sea was the other half of the terrible darkness. Sky and sea had become one. The Barque bounced and bucked and no longer did what Aires expected of her. All too often the rudder was hanging in the air

over a trough of waves. Then the Barque shook, and the sails began to flap like a wounded bird. It was impossible to steer by the compass.

The hurricane increased hour by hour and the night came without stars. Sheaves of lightning flashed out of clouds which hung so low that the two masts seemed stuck into them. Towards morning a frightful thrust of waves broke away the small mast, complete with its sail. Pedro and Paolo were swept with the sail to the wall of the pilot's cabin. The mast pushed in the door of the caboose and the little chamber remained stuck on it like a roast on a spit. Pedro and Paolo worked their way out from the sail with the help of Lopo, and all three of them crawled over to the rudder. In the flickering light of the blue-green flashes Aires noticed that Pedro was bleeding. A heavy wave washed away the blood, but the wound at once began to bleed again.

'Go into the cabin!' shouted Aires. 'Lopo and Paolo must bandage you.'

Lopo had already torn pieces from his shirt and was bandaging Pedro's bleeding forehead with them.

'It could be worse,' said Pedro. 'What are we to do now?'

'If you're able to, hoist the big sail,' Aires roared. 'Do it with Luis. I need Lopo at the rudder.'

Just then Luis came out of the caboose, which had been half smashed in by the mast. He carried out a box which he threw overboard, and was just about to do the same with a basket.

'Stay at the rudder!' Aires roared to Lopo as he sprang over to Luis. He pulled the basket out of his hands, gripped the sailor and shouted into his face, which looked green in the shine of the lightning: 'I will throw you overboard if you touch another box!'

'We must feed the shark!' shouted Luis, his eyes wide with fright.

'Hoist the big sail, you caboose hero!'

'No more sail, for heaven's sake!' implored Luis. 'Everything rests with Heaven now; it will be our sail! We are in the hands of God.'

'Quite right!' shouted Aires. 'but God needs your hands, your powerful paws!'

'I cannot,' stammered Luis.

'God cannot trouble about every coward,' said Aires contemptuously.

'I will not do it,' said Luis rebelliously. 'I'll feed the shark! Nothing else is my business!'

'Don't touch the provisions!'

'I'll feed him with *cruçados*! He'll have all my wages!' Luis began to fish coins out of his pocket and throw them overboard.

'Stop that!' ordered Aires.

'Dear shark, go away! Good shark, go away!' wailed Luis.

'Shut up!' ordered Aires. 'Hoist the big sail!'

'I will not interfere with what God has in hand!'

'Then go to the devil!' shouted Aires, 'but leave go of me—I must get back to the helm.'

'Don't steer!' panted Luis, hanging on to Aires. 'Leave it to Providence!'

'Get your paws away!'

'I want to get home alive; the shark must not get me!'

'Leave me!' shouted Aires. 'You smell like a corpse already!'

'Don't steer!' roared Luis, obsessed with fear. 'You'll steer into hell! It's there, right in front of us. I see it—there's the Cape which spits out dragons!'

'The shark would spit you out at once!' Aires tried to push Luis away, but the sailor clung on to him. Pedro and Paolo came to the help of Aires.

'Hoist the sail!' roared Aires.

'Hoist it yourself if you can!' scoffed Luis. 'But your hands are not free. I have your hands.'

Luis laughed wildly and held Aires' wrists as tightly as if in an iron vice. At last Aires gave him such a heavy kick that he crumpled up and fell down in a faint. Then he dragged him into the pilot's cabin, staggered over to the big mast and helped Pedro and Paolo to hoist the big sail.

'If I hadn't you . . .!' gasped Aires, when they had got the sail on to the mast. 'You—my brothers!' He held on to them to get his breath. 'We are not giving up. We won't let ourselves be pressed in to the coast—even if the whole west wind breaks loose

and throws itself on us!' Aires dragged himself to the helm. As he grasped it his hands met Lopo's hands. 'Brother!' gasped Aires. 'How good that you're with me, brother!'

They leaned against each other and regained control of the rudder which Lopo had not been able to manage alone.

The storm raged for four days and nights. Three days more the Barque still danced, and when the storm calmed down she had still got her mast. Pedro and Paolo attended to the big sail. Aires and Lopo took turns at the helm. Luis, who had come to his senses and cast off his paralysing shame and fear, fed the four boys, who looked like ghosts. He swallowed his own share with difficulty. When Aires fell into a death-like sleep, Luis persuaded Lopo to let him steer, and Lopo did so. When Aires reappeared on deck and saw Luis at the rudder, he went up to him.

'Not as much as the tip of a shark's tail to be seen,' said Aires; 'and yet I tried to prevent you . . .'

'Prevent me from what?' asked Luis uncertainly.

'From throwing in the box,' declared Aires. 'The box must certainly have hit the shark on the head.'

'I was worse than a jackal,' said Luis penitently.

'Or perhaps your *cruzados* did not agree with him,' continued Aires. 'Or he wasn't on his guard at the Cape and the dragons had him for their breakfast.'

'There aren't any dragons at the Cape.'

'Are we going to start quarrelling again?' asked Aires, trying to look grim.

'You held out where even Gil turned back,' said Luis.

'What else was there to do?' asked Aires. 'We knew what was behind us. We could not have turned back.'

'How it gets the upper hand of me again and again!' lamented Luis. 'But that has happened for the last time,' he vowed.

'What do you expect?' asked Aires. 'We are alive, and that is due to you more than to anyone.'

Luis looked at Aires suspiciously.

'You did not let us die of hunger,' affirmed Aires. 'That was your task, and you carried it out splendidly.'

'It was you who brought us through—better than many a pilot would have done.'

'I have not quite done so yet,' said Aires, now turning serious. 'I no longer know where we are.'

Luis looked at him horrified. 'Is that true?' he asked.

'The storm has spilled the water in the compass bowl,' said Aires. 'What good is the needle if I have to keep it hidden in my breast pocket? Who knows where we may have drifted to?'

'What's to be done now?' asked Luis, with growing anxiety.

'Now we are in the hands of God,' said Aires. 'We shall see what He has in store for us.'

'Can you not steer for the coast of Africa?'

'You're beginning to amuse me,' said Aires.

'Why?'

'Because you are so courageous.'

'I courageous?'

'You must surely know what the Saracens do with Portuguese ships which they get hold of—and with their crews!'

'Tell me the truth—are we still far from Portugal?'

'I do not know.'

'Are we far from Africa?'

'I hope we are far enough from it.'

'And if we just sail out to the west?' said Luis. 'If we simply sail away from Africa?' He began to tremble.

Aires laughed.

'Why are you laughing?'

'Because you're trying to pretend to me again now that you're afraid.'

'I *am* afraid,' confessed Luis.

'I won't be taken in by that again,' said Aires. 'Even the shark didn't believe you. He is gone.'

Luis began to scan the sea around the Barque. 'If only I could once get over it,' he muttered.

'You have got over it,' said Aires. 'The shark is never deceived; you said so yourself.'

Aires spread the map in front of him. The sea was so calm

now that it was time to put the 'little finger' to swim in the compass bowl again and steer by it.

Lopo, the two brothers and Luis watched Aires' face in eager expectation.

Aires ordered Lopo to steer north-east.

'By doing so we'll come on land in any case,' he said, 'either Portugal or Africa. We must just keep our eyes open so that we do not run up against a *fusta*!'

For two days the wind and visibility were favourable. But in the third night the sea became enveloped in fog. The Barque began to wander about in a white wilderness.

The heavy blanket of fog, which the changeable wind pushed this way and that, lay like a pall over the spirits of the crew. Even Lopo, who up to now had never shown a sign of despondency, began to stare into the terrible whiteness as he leaned over the edge of the Barque.

'We cannot be so very far from some coast,' said Aires, trying to reassure the others. 'According to my reckoning we must be off Tangier.'

Luis and the two boys hardly dared to look at him.

'We will beat him to it again,' said Aires, nodding with an ironical air into the thick fog. 'We are really in no hurry—and for that we are indebted to you, Redbeard!'

'Me? What have I to do with it?' asked Luis incredulously.

'Now, now,' said Aires, pretending to be serious, 'just imagine how it would be if you had given all our stores to the shark! But you shared honestly, and so we can last out a long time.'

At this the two Doves laughed, and Lopo stopped staring at the fog.

The Barque made hardly any headway in the fog. But one morning a huge shadow appeared in front of her, all of a sudden.

'Land!' cried Pedro, who was the first to notice the shadow.

'Shut up!' Aires commanded severely. 'Who knows if your shouting may not bring a *fusta* on us! You know that the Saracens have plenty of armed ships along their coasts!'

Now Aires steered towards the east. They left the shadow

behind them. But soon they came up against a new shadow. It stood out in the fog even higher than the other one.

'We must be in front of a bay,' said Aires, seized with uneasiness.

'What bay?' asked Paolo excitedly.

'If only I knew,' said Aires. 'We may be beside an island, or off Portugal, or off Africa.'

'That's the worst of all,' said Luis, exasperated, 'to have a bay in front of you and not to know whether it is a harbour or an ambush!'

'We'll know that soon enough,' said Aires.

'Are you going to sail into the bay?' inquired Luis.

'That's just what I'm going to do,' said Aires. 'I don't want to grope about in uncertainty any longer.'

'And what if it's Africa,' asked Pedro, 'and we come up against an armed ship?' He looked at Aires with unconcealed fear.

'If we did, it could only be a *fusta*,' said Aires, giving another turn to the wheel. Lopo stood silently beside him.

'Would it not be better for us to stay out on the sea?' asked Paolo.

'No,' said Aires, 'I'm sick of it.'

The Barque groped her way into the bay. Suddenly there was a third shadow right in front of her.

'Cast anchor and strike sail!' commanded Aires.

Lopo and the two boys threw the anchor overboard in great haste, while Luis hauled down the sail.

But the Barque kept drifting on.

The shadow in the fog grew rapidly more distinct, and soon it revealed itself as a ship which towered the whole height of a mast over the Barque. From the upper works of the ship and the position of the guns Aires recognized it as a pirate ship.

He stared grimly at the ship. There was no escaping it now, though it was lying there as motionless as a rock.

'Here, take these!' said Luis in a steady voice.

Aires turned round and saw to his surprise that Luis was offering him and Lopo a hatchet each. He had brought along a harpoon for himself.

'What am I to do with it?' asked Aires.

'They must not get you,' said Luis. It could be seen from his face that he was determined to hold out to the last. 'No one will dare to come on to our Barque as long as I'm alive!' he said.

'They have cannon,' Aires reminded him.

'Let them just dare to touch you!'

At that moment a convulsion shook the Barque. The almost imperceptible wind had pushed it against the *fusta*. A terrible curse was shouted down through the fog.

'Put down that weapon!' said Aires to Luis.

'You're not going to surrender without a fight, are you?' asked Luis furiously.

'What else can we do?'

'Surely you are not afraid?' said Luis, looking down at him.

'What else would I be?' admitted Aires.

'I have only known myself to be like that,' stammered Luis. 'Up to now you have been able to cope with everything!'

'Are you blind? Just look up!'

'I've seen the mouths of the guns—but all the same . . .'

'I don't mean the guns.'

At this Luis peered up at the ship which towered alongside the Barque. The hatchet and the harpoon instantly fell from his hands. There was a row of black faces looking down at him through the fog—about twenty of them.

'A slave-catcher!' whispered Lopo, who with the Doves had pressed up behind Aires.

'It looks like one,' said Aires. The five of them noticed that some of the black faces withdrew, and a red face with a blazing red beard appeared in their place at the edge of the ship.

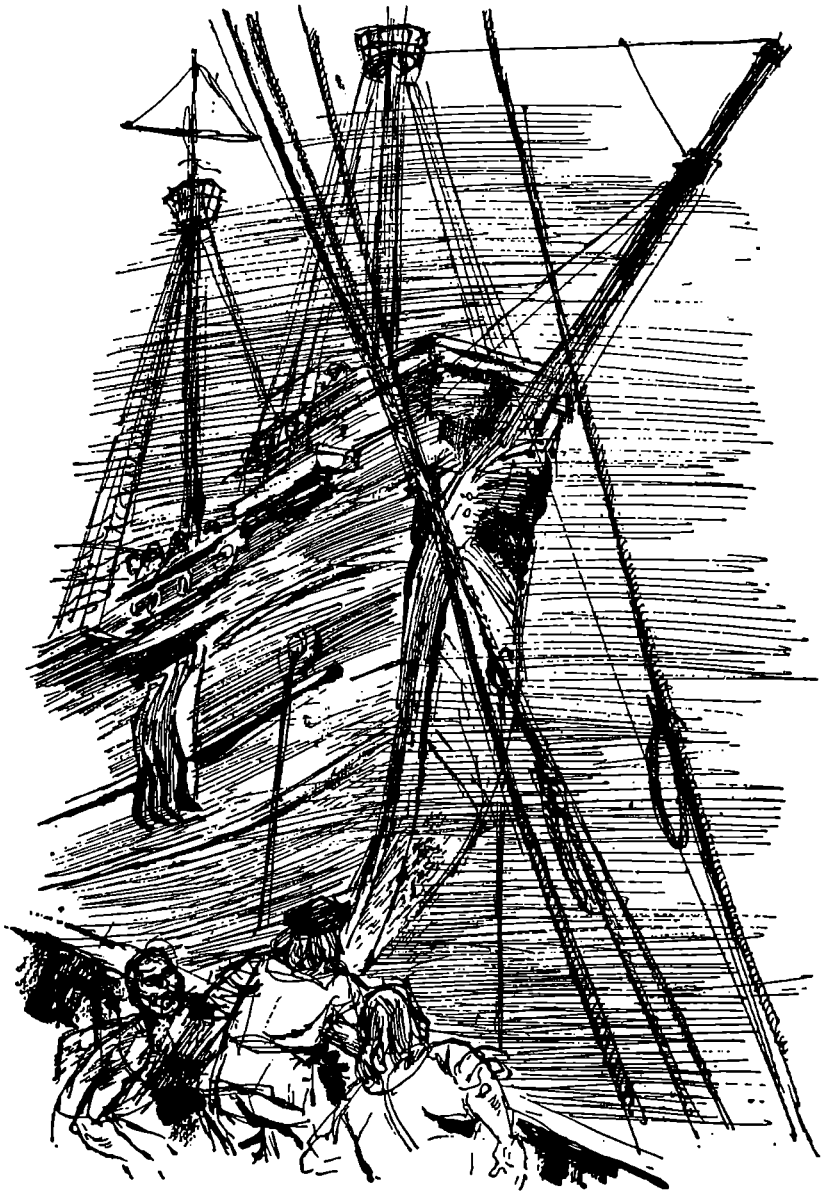
'Accursed Portuguese dogs!' cried the man, in Portuguese, as soon as he saw the Barque. 'Imagine ramming my ship with a ridiculous little fishing-boat!'

'That's certainly not a Saracen!' said Aires, utterly bewildered.

'Don't insult me, young fellow!' said the redbeard threateningly.

'Are you a slave-hunter?' inquired Luis.

'I'm the very opposite,' the man shouted down.



‘What are you then?’ asked Aires.

‘I’m a slave-fisher, little fellow!’ The man threw down a rope ladder. ‘Come up here and let me have a closer look at you!’

‘If you’re thinking of fishing *us*,’ said Aires, ‘we can adapt ourselves to everything possible, but not to being slaves.’

‘Damn it all!’ cried the redbear suddenly. ‘As sure as a gun, that’s the Barque in which Nuno sailed! Where’s the Pilot?’

‘Did you know Nuno?’ asked Aires, still more surprised. ‘Who are you, man?’

‘You must come from the moon if you don’t know *me*,’ cried the man indignantly, ‘for all the world knows *me*.’

‘Now I see who you are!’ said Luis. ‘You’re Pedro Falcom.’

‘That’s right,’ confirmed the man. ‘I’m Falcom, the most renowned pirate in Christendom! Now hurry up!’

Aires was the first to climb up the rope ladder.

IX

Beyond the Reefs

FALCOM himself helped to pull up the exhausted crew aboard his ship. Then he ordered his men to secure the Barque to the *fusta*. 'But do it properly, so that she lies as if against a harbour wall!' he said.

The pirate had an abundant meal and wine brought to his cabin, and indicated to the five by a stern glance that they should start to eat.

'Do please tell us where we are, and how you come to be here, and why you have black men on board?' asked Aires as he looked over at the Negroes, who were pressing round the windows and the open cabin door.

'Everything in its turn,' replied Falcom.

'Let us know at least what coast we are alongside! We must be in some bay or other.'

'Eat!' ordered Falcom. 'I don't like chatterboxes around me.'

'We must know whether we're on the coast of Portugal or Africa,' said Aires urgently.

'Drink!' ordered the pirate, even more grimly.

'There is one thing we want explained at once,' demanded Luis. 'Tell us whether you are our friend or our enemy. If you are the latter . . .!'

Falcom looked at Luis askance.

' . . . then I won't touch a bite,' continued Luis, unintimidated. His words sounded like a threat.

'Just look at the braggart!' Falcom's laugh boomed through the *fusta*. 'You imagine perhaps that you may put on airs just because you have a red beard like me! It isn't the beard that makes the man, however, whether it's a red one or not, you half-way to hell rover!'

Luis jumped up, furious.

'Sit down!' said Aires, holding Luis firmly. 'Falcom cannot know that since then you have left it behind you.' Aires made Luis sit down, and then he started to eat. He liked the food which Falcom had served up to them. The two brothers and Lopo ate with relish too, once they saw that Aires ate.

When the five had eaten enough, Falcom drank their health. 'You look as if you were picked to pieces . . . but I'd hire the lot of you without hesitation!' he said.

'It would be too great an honour for us,' replied Aires politely.

At this the pirate laid his tankard on the table with a heavy bang. 'There were seventeen of you—twelve are missing. Where have you left them? Where is Tristão?'

'You're asking a lot of questions all at once,' said Aires evasively.

'How far did you go after you left Fools' Island?' inquired Falcom.

'As far as the Bitter River,' said Aires, startled at the directness of the question. 'We left all the others there.'

'That murderer!' muttered Falcom.

'There were many of them,' said Aires.

'You're quite right!' cried Falcom, his eyes flashing. 'A whole pack of foul fellows in one heap! All those fine captains of the Pacheco and da Cintra stamp! But that one man was the instigator of all the evil doings! That avaricious rascal!'

'We think the same as you do about Lanzarote,' said Aires, 'but how are you so well up in everything?'

'He has killed Nuno,' said Falcom grimly, 'but wait till he crosses my path some day . . .!'

'What, then, has he done to you?' asked Luis, who was beginning to like the pirate.

'If anyone ever offended me most mortally, he did,' explained



Falcom. 'I wanted to go with them. Lanzarote sent me word: "We have no use for pirates"!'

'I think he was right,' said Aires.

'He was right,' agreed Falcom grimly. 'Falcom is no good for man-hunting. To drench his hands in the blood of defenceless people is not in Falcom's line. But I could not have known that a fleet of the Infante's would sail forth to foul its sails with dirty work.'

'Our sails are torn,' said Paolo, 'but we have not soiled them.'

'I'm not speaking of you fellows,' said Falcom. 'I'm speaking of the Almoner and his gang—those wretches who drag young mothers away from their children; who, like beasts of prey, stealthily descend upon fishermen and wood-fellers, and take them from their boats and huts and from the sun which means so much more to them than it does to us. How could you sail with such people?'

'Tristão was ordered to sail with them,' said Aires. 'He did everything in his power to hold back Lanzarote from murdering and from worse. And as soon as he could, Tristão parted from Lanzarote.'

'I know that,' said Falcom. 'I know that you were no longer with him when the worst things were done. What did those fine captains not do in the Bay of Arguim! Booty was their first aim. When they had almost satisfied their greed two of da Cintra's men came back from the island, where their companions had met their well-deserved fate in the salty marshes.'

'There were still three of them left when we met them,' said Luis.

'You could not guess what happened then,' said Falcom, his face darkening. 'A certain Travazos was the ringleader. He goaded on the others to take vengeance. They swore not to return home until neither man nor child, bird nor mouse, would still be alive on Fools' Island. They resolved to burn everything which was growing on the island—trees and shrubs and grass.

'After this they were going to set out on their voyage of discovery and show mere adventurers of your kind that exploring was something quite simple that could easily be done as a sideline. But they were not of one mind about what they were going to explore. One wanted to sail up the Nile to its source; another wanted to go to the Mountains of the Moon; a third wanted to seek the Kingdom of one Prester John. But they were all united in wanting to "punish Africa"; and with one mind they chose Fools' Island for this purpose. When they came to their decision, however, they were no longer sober. For after they had fired off their guns in the air in order to remind heaven of its duty to stand by them, they had a heavy bout of drinking, as men do who are sure of their victory.

'The following day the armada set sail. Now, I'll tell the story briefly. They did not do much with their swords—they only killed a few very old people. With minds clouded with drink and wild for blood, they slashed at tree-trunks with their swords and cut bushes to shreds. They crept into hides and routed out bats, and got lost in the salty marshes. At last they came back to their boats, salt-crusted knights of his Highness the Infante, riding on the backs of the donkeys which they had brought with them to carry gold.' Falcom shuddered with abhorrence. 'They are not worth spitting at, those infamous wretches in human

form, who treat human beings worse than animals ever treated other animals; those slave-hunters with golden spurs!

Aires and his four companions looked around, puzzled, at the black men who were eagerly listening though they could not understand a word. Their glances did not escape Falcom. 'You're quite right, they are slaves,' he said. 'They are a part of Pacheco's booty. He handed them over to me.' The pirate watched to see what effect his words would have on his guests. 'I see you can't understand that I would have anything to do with slaves, isn't that so?' he continued. 'Well, I was perplexed too. I found them in the sea. I fished them out of the water. And with them I fished out one of Pacheco's men, who has meantime thrown himself into the sea again—for good this time—because the horrors he had seen in Africa kept pursuing him. But before he did so he told me everything.'

Falcom wiped his eyes and brow. 'Pacheco's work! That treasurer from Ceuta, promoted captain overnight, had taken far too little provisions with him, and in his insatiable greed for gain had captured far too many blacks and then had run short of what was necessary to keep his crew and the Negroes alive. So he threw half of them overboard. That's what happened, and it was the merest chance that I came along just then. That was due to my curiosity, which had urged me to sail behind the slave armada. It happened half way between Portugal and the Cape which Gil was the first to round. Pacheco did it before my eyes, and he nearly died laughing when he saw me fishing out black men. I intended to bring them back to where they belonged. But the storm, which played a trick on you too, came and upset my plans. Heaven must be blind. Never in my life have I experienced such a storm. I was terrified and tried to sail before the wind. I steered for Portugal for all I was worth, and the storm drove me in here.'

'Where are we?' asked Aires.

'I don't know,' replied Falcom. 'I can't see through fog any better than you can. We are safe here for the present, and once this damned curtain lifts we will know where we are. Now lie down to sleep. You have need of rest.'

The pirate gave Luis, Lopo and the two brothers sleeping places with his crew. He kept Aires in his cabin. When the two were alone Falcom prepared a bed for Aires with his own hands. 'And now tell me how Nuno met his end,' he said. 'You can just tell it in a few words.'

Aires told about the Bitter River.

'And after that?' asked Falcom.

'Then the storm brought us here.'

'And what do you intend to do now?'

'I'm going back to the Infante.'

'You shouldn't do that,' said Falcom. 'You're too good for one who sends Lanzarote and Pacheco sailing in his name.'

Aires looked in front of him in silence.

'The Infante has blotted his escutcheon too much. Don't serve such a man any longer. He's carrying on a dirty business.'

'And what about *your* business?' asked Aires, drawing away his arm, which the pirate had taken hold of.

Falcom raised the red bushes of eyebrows which stood above his candid blue eyes. 'Lanzarote asked me the same question, just like that,' he said.

'I did not mean to offend you,' said Aires apologetically.

'That's all right,' said Falcom calmly. 'I owe you an explanation. I can see by your face that you're one of Nuno's or Gil's sort. Now listen to me. I live by forcing others to share what they have with me, but I only take as much as my people and I need to live on.'

'You do violence to others,' said Aires. 'That is not right.'

'You young explorer,' said Falcom, without a trace of mockery, 'you have much to learn yet! And one day you will discover how it is in the world . . . that everyone has not enough to eat, though enough grows for all. I try to make a fight against that—all on my own. Perhaps I'm nothing more than a fool. But Lanzarote did not build my ship. I acquired it honourably—from those who had dragged my father and brother into slavery. Those people yonder,' he pointed to the south, 'do the same kind of thing. I have paid for the *fusta*—with blood. And now I devote myself to trying to level out what has been far too uneven. I put

out my hand and pick up men who are floundering about in the water. They're all against me. And why? Because I do not sail under the flag of any one of them. If I did, they would be ready to overlook a great deal. But because I refuse to cloak my actions under a flag, they attack me, and life becomes more and more difficult. But so far I've come through. That's my life. Would it not suit you too?'

'I'm dead tired,' said Aires.

Falcom came over to him kindly and laid a blanket over him.

When Aires woke up he saw Falcom standing at the door of the cabin. His beard, eyebrows and face seemed even more glaring red than the day before. Falcom was blinking, for the sun was in his face.

Aires sat up. 'Has the fog cleared?' he asked.

'It's time for you to shake yourself awake,' said Falcom. 'The curtain has lifted.'

'Where are we?' Aires was about to jump up, but Falcom held him back. 'I'm waiting for your answer,' he said.

Aires tried to remember. 'Whether you will sail with me,' prompted Falcom.

'My place is on the Barque of the Brothers,' said Aires.

'And will you go back to the Infante?'

'Yes,' said Aires, without hesitation.

'Then we needn't talk about it any more,' said Falcom. 'And now look out. We were lucky. Here's a harbour which Heaven has made specially for us! It must be some part of Portugal or Spain—it definitely doesn't look at all like Africa. There's a little fishing village behind it! And there's a line of reefs right out into the sea—it's a wonder we got past them.'

Aires gazed in wide-eyed astonishment at the fishing village. His eyes lingered on the white cottages. He knew who lived in each one of them.

'Do you know the place?' asked Falcom. 'Perhaps you recognize the reefs which stand out so oddly—like the teeth of some monster?'

'They shattered the Barque of the Brothers,' said Aires, unable to hide his excitement.

Falcom glanced sideways at him with some uneasiness. 'Nothing has happened to the Barque,' he said reassuringly. 'See for yourself—she's lying undamaged beside the *fusta*.'

'Falcom,' said Aires, without taking his eyes off the village, 'see the second cottage from the top—that belongs to me and my brother.'

'What splendid luck!' cried Falcom, astonished. 'Well, then, you must not delay. Your brother will be expecting you.'

'Yes,' said Aires. 'Come home with me and let me entertain you.'

'Another time I'd love to come,' said Falcom, 'but I have to sail on now. Look at those!' He nodded his head towards the Negroes. 'I have deceived them unintentionally through going off my course in the storm. They want to go home, and now that the fog has lifted, I must make haste. You know, our kind are considered outlaws by those who think a lot of themselves. They could easily get the idea that I'm carrying an illegal cargo . . .'

He helped the five to climb down to the Barque. Luis was the last to climb down. He apologized to the pirate. Falcom laughed. 'I like people who say what they think,' he said. 'Real good fellows do that, not those who only have the gift of the gab. And you are a good fellow!'

Luis asked to have the rope ladder left hanging a few minutes longer. He disappeared inside the caboose of the Barque, then climbed up the ladder again and handed Falcom a sack with some round object rolled up in it.

'Don't open it until Africa is in sight!' said Luis to Pedro Falcom. 'There's something inside which brings good luck!'

He quickly descended the rope ladder again, and when half way down jumped into the Barque.

The *fusta* hoisted her sails and began to glide out of the bay. Lopo, Pedro and Paolo waved after her.

Luis was standing beside Aires, who was gazing steadily over at the shore, on which a big crowd was gathering. 'That it should drive us in here of all places!' whispered Luis.



'Don't talk about it!' Aires begged him. 'The others need not know.'

'Are you not going home, then?' asked Luis.

'No,' said Aires.

Then Lopo and the two brothers looked over at the strand too.

'What a crowd of people!' cried Pedro. 'It looks as if they had never seen a *fusta* before.'

'Yes, it looks like it,' said Aires.

'Look how they're staring over at the Barque as if she was some kind of strange creature!' said Paolo.

'It looks as if none of those people ever left the bay,' said Pedro derisively.

Aires began to scrutinize the strand carefully.

'What pretty little cottages!' said Paolo. 'They're like toys!'

'And the boats are even more like toys,' cried Pedro, amused.

'They're big enough for fishermen,' said Aires. Now he could distinctly see one figure moving out a little from the crowd. It was an old man with white hair, and he stood on the shore looking over at the Barque, and waving.

'Are you not going over?' whispered Luis.

'Go to the helm!' ordered Aires.

Luis went to the helm.

'Weigh anchor! Hoist sail! About ship!' ordered Aires.

Lopo and the two brothers were surprised at the sureness with which Aires shaped his course, even during the night.

As day was dawning the Barque of the Brothers sailed into the harbour of Lagos.

Two weeks later, at an unusual hour of the night, a solitary wayfarer approached the fishing village from the direction of Lagos. Walking quickly, he crossed the rocky ground and made for the upper shore of the bay, like one who was familiar with the place yet did not wish to meet anyone. He was carrying under his cloak some object which must have been light, for it did not seem to hinder him as he strode along. It was late in the night. The moon had just disappeared into the sea and the bay was shrouded in impenetrable darkness.

The wanderer walked up to the cottage right at the top of the village. The door was standing open and he looked inside. When he heard the breathing of someone sleeping he turned away and went as noiselessly as possible to the next cottage. He walked in and groped his way to the inner room. He did not light a lamp, but carefully placed in a corner the guitar which he had been carrying under his cloak, and then lay down, just as he was, on the big bed which filled nearly half the little room. Though he had intended staying awake, sleep overcame him. He had come a long way.

It was still dark when he woke up, frightened, out of a bad dream. In alarm he stretched out his arm to the other side of the bed, because he felt that someone was lying beside him.

'It is I, Aires,' said Manuel. 'Sleep on for a while!'

Aires sat up. 'I always stretch out my hand when I waken,' he said, still stupefied by his dream, 'but the place is always empty.'

'I've been coming over to look every night for quite a while,' said Manuel.

'I should have come sooner—you had a right to expect it of me.'

'I know everything already,' said Manuel. 'Some men from the village have been to Lagos. They wouldn't believe me at first when I told them it was your Barque that was lying alongside the *fusta* when the fog lifted. But then they heard everything in Lagos.'

'There were too many on the strand,' said Aires. 'They would all have asked me: Where's Tinoco?'

'I knew you would come,' said Manuel.

'I wanted to bring you back the guitar. It's no good any more. An arrow . . .'

'I know about that too,' Manuel interrupted him. 'It's more precious than ever now.'

'Did they tell you, Manuel, that it was I who cut the rope?' asked Aires into the darkness.

'You remember, don't you, that it was I who put you up to do it?' said Manuel.

'I don't mean the first time.'

'It was for him you did it both times,' said Manuel. 'It was what he wished and what he expected of you.'

'To come home without his brother . . . I could never understand the Infante doing that.'

Manuel laid his hand on Aires' arm. 'No one can understand what he has not gone through himself. Now you yourself have been yonder where the horizon is wider than it is here!'





‘I want to go away again,’ said Aires, ‘even before daylight. Lopo is waiting for me. He wants to go home to Africa.’

‘So I’m to continue looking after the goats,’ said Manuel in a tone of reproach; ‘I’m good enough for that.’

‘They belong to you,’ said Aires. ‘The cottage belongs to you too. It would kill me to stay here. The cottage, the fishing-boat, the pike—they would all be a torture to me.’

‘Now you’re talking like Tinoco,’ said Manuel.

‘If anyone can understand me, you should,’ said Aires. ‘All the time I was here, he was here too. If I stayed I would notice too much that he is no longer here. When I’m on the sea I am able to persuade myself that I’m on the way to him.’

‘You don’t need to persuade yourself of it,’ said Manuel. ‘It is so. Go back now to the Barque of the Brothers! But come back now and then and look in to see if I’m still here! And don’t come like a thief in the night! It’s not necessary for you to steal in like that.’

‘I must go now,’ said Aires. ‘Luis and Pedro and Paolo are also waiting for me.’

He stood up and walked out through the open doorway. Stopping in front of the cottage, he looked down at the sea



which was shimmering in the half light. Manuel came and stood beside him.

‘It smells of day already,’ said the old fisherman. ‘What are you waiting for?’

Aires looked at him in the grey light of the early morning.

‘Why are you in such a hurry to send me off?’

‘It’s not the first time I’ve sent you away,’ said Manuel wilfully. ‘I’ve had some practice in sending people away.’

The old man came up to Aires and laid his arm around the boy’s shoulders, which were now as broad as those of a man.

‘I have one more admission to make to you,’ said Manuel hesitantly; ‘and it is that before, when this cottage was not yet empty, it was much harder for me than now.’

‘But after all, I used to come to you,’ said Aires, ‘almost every day. And I used to play to you on your guitar.’

‘Tinoco never came,’ said Manuel, ‘and he was the one of you I loved most, not you. I felt sure that he would do what I had been longing all my life to do. He did it; and you did it too. Mind you, I’d never have thought you capable of it. I never dared to hope that there was a Tinoco in you. But now I see that there is, and you’ll admit that it’s not foolish of me now to hope that Tinoco will come to see me now and then.’

He peered into Aires’ face.

‘You won’t give the old man the lie, will you, Tinoco?’

‘I will come after every voyage,’ Aires promised sadly.

Manuel took his arm off the boy’s shoulders. ‘Now I have told you everything, so go!’ urged the old fisherman. ‘The Infante is waiting for you—to whom else could he entrust the Barque of the Brothers?’

And Aires went away.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2800-1328 B.C. The Egyptians sent expeditions to the gold country of Punt, presumably the gold-fields of South Africa.
- 1030-850 B.C. Voyages were made to the Ophir of the Bible, presumably the Zambezi.
- 600 B.C. The first circumnavigation of Africa believed to have been accomplished by Phoenician seafarers at the command of the Pharaoh Necho, as related by the earliest Greek historian, Herodotus.
- 450 B.C. Carthaginians under the navigator Hanno sail to the 'Crocodile River', presumably the Senegal.
- A.D. 50. The Greek navigator Hippalos, aided by the monsoon, ventures out on the open sea and crosses the Indian Ocean.
- A.D. 121. The Chinese invent and use the magnetic needle.
- A.D. 1139. After overthrowing the Moors, Alfonso is proclaimed King of Portugal. Fuas Roupinho is his captain.
- A.D. 1189. King Sancho forms a crusade fleet of forty galleys to free southern Portugal from the Moors.
- A.D. 1242. Arab navigators use the compass.
- A.D. 1291. Two Italian navigators, Doria and Vivaldi, set out to seek a sea route to India, but fail.
- A.D. 1293. King Diniz of Portugal gives titles of nobility to ship-builders. His Admiral is Manoel Pezagno.
- A.D. 1341. Navigators from Florence, Genoa and Castile, sailing in Portuguese ships, discover the Fortunate Isles (Canary Islands) and carry away the wooden idol holding a boat and a ball in his hands.
- A.D. 1370. Flavio Gioja sails by the compass.
- A.D. 1381. A Jew, Jaffado Cresques, makes the Catalonian Atlas of the World. (His son, Jacomo de Mallorca, is later cartographer to Henry the Navigator.)
- A.D. 1394. The Infante Henrique, third son of the Portuguese King, Joao I, is born at Oporto. Though this prince never made discoveries himself, he has come down in history as Henry the Navigator.

- A.D. 1402. The Infante Fernando is born.
- A.D. 1415. Queen Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and wife of King Joao I of Portugal, dies. Her sons, the Infantes Henrique, Duarte and Pedro, capture the Moroccan city of Ceuta from the Moors.
- A.D. 1418. Zarco and Teixeira discover Porto Santo and Madeira. (The daughter of Perestrello the 'rabbit-breeder' subsequently married Christopher Columbus.)
- A.D. 1419. The Infante Henrique goes to the relief of Ceuta.
- A.D. 1420. Henrique is appointed Grand Master of the Order of Christ.
- A.D. 1433. King Joao I dies. The eldest prince, the Infante Duarte, ascends the throne.
- A.D. 1434. Gil Eannes doubles Cape Bojador, which he had failed to do the previous year. On the maps which show the Portuguese voyages of discovery, Cape Bojador and Cape Non are shown as separate capes, Cape Bojador being 53 leagues south of Cape Non, but the discoverers themselves regarded them as one and the same cape, because they are both part of the same 'bulge' of land. This is clear from Gil Eannes' report to the Infante, which reads:
- 'Senhor Infante, we have doubled Cape Non. I was sent by you to sail around that cape, which is also called Cape Bojador. I was to consider, so you said, that to do this would be sufficient even if I could achieve nothing more on the same voyage.'
- A.D. 1435. Eannes and Baldaya sail as far as the Angra dos Ruivos.
- A.D. 1437. The Portuguese send a force to conquer Tangier from the Moors, but the expedition ends in disaster. Henrique's plan to break through to the fleet is betrayed to the Moors by his treacherous chaplain, Padre Martin Vieyra.
- A.D. 1443. Henrique's brother Fernando, who had been left behind as a hostage in 1437, dies a prisoner of the Moors, sacrificed by Henrique. He lives in history and literature as 'the Steadfast Prince' and the *Infante Santo*. Henrique continues to send out ships on voyages of discovery and trade, and the coast of Africa is opened up bit by bit. These voyages of exploration reach their climax when, twenty-eight years after Henrique's death, the Cape of Good Hope is doubled by Bartholomew Diaz.
- A.D. 1460. Death of the Infante Henrique.

POSTSCRIPTUM

The Voyage to the Bitter River also has its historical background. Nuno Tristão and most of his crew lost their lives at the Bitter River, which is called the Geba today but was called the Rio Grande when first discovered by the Portuguese. Tristão was one of the most famous of Henry the Navigator's captains.

Aires, a fifteen-year-old boy, brought Nuno's ship back safely to Portugal in spite of the most terrible storms. Besides Aires there were on board two cabin boys, a Negro boy, and one sailor—this was the entire crew.

The encounter with Pedro Falcom the pirate is also founded on fact.

Besides chronicles of the time, particularly those of Azurara, I have consulted the relevant works of de Veer, Beazley, Mayor and Prestage.

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TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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