

# APPENDIX A - DIARY OF THE HONORABLE ARCHIE HERBERT

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*The Honorable Archie Herbert 4th son of Philip Herbert, 5th Earl of Pembroke, 2nd Earl of Montgomery*

*Twenty-second day of November in the sixteen hundred and fifty-ninth year of our Lord.*

*While traveling through the countryside looking to find something worthwhile to occupy my time, I found myself at a small seaside tavern in the town of Abersoch in the Principality of Wales.*

*I was approached by a tottering old gaffer who offered to tell me a yarn if I would buy him a pint. Since the place failed to have any other form of entertainment, I indulged him. He told me a tale of privateering, legendary treasure, mystical dreams, threats of mutiny, savage seas, and eventual devastation and tragic loss.*

*This diary is my attempt to capture the story he told me that day.*

*The old man was named Rory Woods, and as he spun his strange and fantastic tale, I became enthralled with the thought of actually living a life of mystery and adventure. I continued to provide him with a drink as he detailed his journey as a young man aboard the English privateering galleon Pollux under Captain Richard Harper in 1592. Rory was a young cabin boy on his first voyage. He had never been to sea before and was looking forward to an exciting adventure. He got much more than he bargained for.*

*One fine sunny and breezy day off the southeastern coast of the Spanish Main, the Pollux came upon a Spanish Galleon stuck on a high reef. The Spanish captain and crew offered no resistance as the English ship approached. The ship was named Nuestra Senora de Begona. She was on her return trip to Havana to meet up with the rest of the fleet for their final voyage home, laden with treasure. The ship had been stuck on the reef for several days, and the crew was in a foul mood. Captain Harper demanded the Spanish surrender and hand over their cargo. The Spanish captain surprisingly complied.*

*The English looted the Spanish ship's hold full of porcelains, silks, and spices from the Far East. There was also a cache of gold and silver coins, newly minted out of jewelry seized from the Mayans. As a special prize, there were three golden jewelry pieces: an ornate headpiece, a gilded necklace and matching earrings, and an elaborate chest piece. The Spanish captain was almost happy to see the treasure go. He stated they had faced nothing but bad luck on their journey to Havana: Infested food supplies, horrible weather, no wind, torn sails and sheets, wet powder, nightmares, and finally, being stuck on a reef. He blamed it on the cursed Mayan treasure.*

The Pollux's happy crew left the looted and stranded Spanish ship and headed for home. The next day, several of the crew complained that they had disturbing dreams during the night. The following day, the wind, uncharacteristically for the season, stopped. The ship was in irons for several days and made no progress. Every day, more and more sailors talk about their vivid dreams. These dreams soon turned into nightmares. After three days of no wind, an unexpected storm raged for two days, blowing the ship off course. More nightmares from the crew.

After the storm passed, the lookout spotted a nearby island, and Captain Harper gave orders to make land for repairs and refresh supplies. They found a cove to anchor the ship and began repairs and searching for food and water. While a reconnaissance party was exploring, they were ambushed by Carib natives. The sailors took several casualties but forced the savages to retreat.

The crew's nightmares continued, and they demanded that something be done. One sailor proclaimed that the Spanish were right and that the treasure was cursed. He suggested they abandon the Mayan treasure to appease the wrath of the heathen gods. This caused an argument amongst the crew. Most of them did not want to give up their share of the booty. To keep a fight from breaking out, Captain Harper distributed the gold, silver, and jewelry as shares to groups of sailors and told them to do with it as they will. One group of sailors decided to take their gold and silver coins and the ornate necklace and hide them in a cave near a lake in the center of the island before continuing their journey.

The day after the Pollux set sail, the sailors who left their shares of treasure on the island reported they were free from bad dreams. However, the troubles aboard the ship and the nightmares for the rest continued. Over the next several days, the crew found that the brandy turned to vinegar, a swarm of rats from the bilge ran about the ship, and a sudden strong gust of wind ripped the mainsail to shreds. While repairing the sails, the Pollux dropped anchor off a small cliff-faced island.

More of the crew was now convinced that their troubles were caused by the Mayan treasure and wanted to rid themselves of the curse. There was talk of throwing the booty overboard, but whether greed or some other compulsion, none of the crew could dump the treasure into the water. Instead, some took the ship's boat to the island and located a partially submerged cave entrance. The group hid their coin and ornate chest piece within the watery cave. Like before, those crewmen stopped having nightmares.

This did not mean that all their troubles were over. As the Pollux continued its voyage home, the waves and wind constantly fought their passage. One day, the crew was pelted with rotten fish falling from the sky. On another, their rudder became entangled in seaweed, and they had to send sailors overboard to clear it. The winds and waves pushed against the ship for several more days, keeping them traveling off course.

One morning, they approached an island with a small seaside village; Captain Harper ordered the Helmsman to make for the port so they could barter for sailcloth and provisions. At first, the villagers were happy to see the Pollux crew and their gold but soon began to act strangely. This progressed from frowns to rudeness to physical fights. All the while, the nightmares continued for those who kept their share of the cursed treasure. As soon as the repairs to the sails were completed, the captain decided it best to leave the village before relations got worse.



But before leaving, the captain and the remaining crew, with a share of Mayan booty, tired and scared from lack of sleep and horrible visions, buried their share, including the Mayan necklace and earrings, outside of the village near an old graveyard.

As the Pollux set sail, there was a great sense of relief amongst the crew as the winds shifted and the waters calmed. The return trip to the British Isles was uneventful until they approached the coast. Suddenly, a violent storm arose and bashed the Pollux into the rocks and cliffs of Dover. All hands were lost at sea save young Rory, who was found half drowned the next day clinging to a few broken planks.

Rory returned to his home in Abersoch and vowed never to take to the seas again.

After the tale was told, I asked the old codger for details about the locations of the islands and where the treasures were buried. Rory warned me that the treasure was cursed and would only bring trouble to those who pursued it. Him being an uneducated bumpkin, I knew that tales of curses are just told to scare children and entertain adults. So I offered to pay him a handful of gold coins for the information. The old man's greed overcame his reluctance, and he told me all he knew. In addition, he gave me a gift that he claimed would prove that we were telling the truth.