

The Manly Physique

As requested by the Baronet Clive Masterly on the twenty third night of March in bequest of Baron Von Munchausen to one Captain Sir Robert, Gentleman Pirate. Being transcripts of some merit.

I hope this story can be kept... well I trust you to remember there are ladies present. It has been brought to my attention that you did in fact name your ship the Manly Physique with result that when travelling to Russia, Catherine the Great commandeered your ship. Could you explain how you got the ship back?

That is an interesting story. The good ship, Manly Physique, commissioned out of Liverpool of course, was in fact named after an obscure port in the southern continent, of all places.

Baron Celsius: Which is it sir?

Well, Physique, of course. A well known spot just to the south of Sydney Bay I understand. I could of been confused. There were many French women who wanted me to call it that, except they wanted it in French. I don't know about that. I'd just finished delivering a rather large cargo consisting largely of rubber ducks and rabbit tails to a certain good friend of mine and I was looking around for other things to do when I received a commission. A commission to perform in front of Tsarina Catherine of Russia. Of course, I knew she wanted us to perform: we're singing pirates.

Baronet Clive: Privateers, please.

Yes, that too.

Lord Peter: It is a wonderful thing to be a pirate king?

Well, it's not too shabby now that you mention it.

Baron Celsius: Perhaps a demonstration sir?

Since you asked - [sings] It is, it is a glorious thing to be a pirate king...

Baronet Clive: Didn't it complicate matters after finding out you were a pirate king, when Catherine declared herself your pirate queen?

Yes, that was rather interesting. Poor woman, quite insane of course, but very interesting appetites for blue cheese. This led to an immediate problem in that we were running short of sopranos. Cabin boys having this dastardly tendency to grow up. Except for one Bob, brilliant, brilliant soprano voice. But he may have been lying about his sex. We didn't say anything about that as we needed our sopranos. Altos, well their quite easy to come by. What, you think there is a story in that?

Baron Celsius: I do sir, but I'm looking at my meagre purse.

[Baronet Clive Masterly spots Celsius a coin]

Baron Celsius: Why were Altos so easy to come by? Especially during the Tuning Fork strike?

The Tuning Fork strike was indeed something of an issue because before any attack, of course, we have to sing our aria. It's a bit difficult if you don't have the right note to begin with, the whole attack

just goes south very badly. Tenors are easy to come by, basses are fairly straight forward. Sopranos are difficult, most pirates being men, apart from Bob.

Hon. Hyacinth: Surely there was also the impact of the noble cold, as you need your voice?

That was indeed a problem, all of my crew being noblemen.

Lady Floria: And orphans.

Oh you heard that, did you?

Lord Peter: Frequently.

On the good ship Manly Physique, many of the cabin boys find themselves naturally turning into altos in later years, I still haven't worked out why. Maybe that's why they won't let me into their part of the ship. Be that as it may.

On the good ship Manly Physique, with our one soprano, pulled into the port of St. Petersburg where indeed we were met by Tsarina Catherine and her flock hunting rabbits. I never worked out why.

We were asked to perform, which I did. It was very well received by the people of St. Petersburg, and indeed Moscow for some reason. The Tsarina called me up and asked me about the name of my ship, the Manly Physique. I explained about the strange port in the southern continent and she didn't seem interested. She seemed oddly distracted by my manly chest.

Lady Floria: It was probably all the treasure.

Which she immediately took for her own purposes. I found myself in the unenviable position of having my ship, the Manly Physique, taken, confiscated, commandeered, appropriated by Catherine - and I and my crew were set to strange manly tasks.

Hon. Hyacinth: Was this when you discovered that it was all part of a plot by Rasputin?

Yes. Now Rasputin was a strange, strange man. Some kind of monk, supposedly, I never believed it. He was attempting to persuade the Tsarina that the state dish of Moscow should in fact be Vulture A L'Orange. Possibly because he owned the biggest vulture ranch in Russia at the time. It did turn out that he was trying to lure a better class of vulture to the shores of Russia through listening to our manly singing. Vultures are attracted to fine voice.

Baronet Clive: What had this to do with the cargo of giant-sized cucumbers the Tsarina had just seized?

Well, the poor women appeared to have a vitamin deficiency or something. She seemed to be attracted to all fruit and vegetables. You know, carrots, cucumbers, bananas, marrows, anything of a long and slender nature. Possibly on her doctor's advice.

So, well, Rasputin was there, trying to get his Vulture A L'Orange restaurant chain up and running and they'd commandeered my ship to do so. Strange, strange man. None of this made any sense to me at the time.

There are ladies present, so I won't go into the full details, but lets just say, Catherine and I, and the

horse... I turned her head, shall I say. She then proceeded to release our ship despite the failure of Rasputin's Vulture A L'Orange restaurants.

And that is the story, with no detail whatsoever because there are ladies present.

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