

Ballad: The Mystic Selvagee

Sir Blennerhassett Portico, a renowned Navy Captain, esteemed Baronet, and decorated K.C.B., harbored an unwavering belief—instilled from his formative years—that Lord Rodney was the quintessential naval hero far outshining any other. Sir Portico revered Rodney's naval prowess above all and dedicated himself to emulating the legendary seaman's every habit, from speech to posture. In this pursuit, he managed to uncover Jasper, a weathered sailor who once sailed under Rodney's command during the victorious fray of 'Eighty-two, granting him peerage. In exchange for his tales and counsel, Sir Portico provided Jasper with an annual stipend and comfortable lodgings.

Jasper was instructed to critique Sir Portico's approach to command wherever it deviated from Rodney's esteemed methods. Initially hesitant, Jasper eventually pointed out several modernizations Sir Portico had adopted which, though not inherently flawed, strayed from Rodney's traditional techniques. These included the usage of iron-capped peak halliard blocks and the addition of selvagees to the maintop-stay—a practice unknown in Rodney's era, suggesting a shift towards equalizing the stays of the vessel which, according to Jasper, would be disdainful to a ship prized by Rodney.

Through Jasper's critiques, Sir Portico's infatuation with mimicking Rodney becomes a canvas showcasing the tension between historical admiration and the inevitable evolution of naval practices. Sir Portico's character is painted as one caught between the reverence of past glories and the practicalities of modern seafaring, revealing his struggles to perfectly embody the essence of his idolized figure, Rodney, in a world that has moved beyond the latter's time-tested methods.