

The Last Voyage of The Donna Isabel

By Randall Parrish

Author of Bob Hampton of Placer.

Illustrations by Deaborn Melvill

be easier to bear than this awful doubt."

"But I hardly know myself," I confessed desperately. "I have had no observation for several days, and can only guess the rate of progress of the Sea Queen, or our drift during the storm. I will be perfectly honest with you, though, and give you my best judgment. I believe we must be between four and five hundred miles to the east and north of Dougherty island, and not yet beyond the limit of drift ice. There would be no use in our attempting to turn back for that point of land, as it is nothing but a rock, and we could never find it by the mere guidance of a compass. Our only chance is to bear away to the northeast toward land and the track of ships."

"How far? What land?"
"The western coast of South America; at least 1,500 miles."
I felt her shudder, and scarcely realizing that I did so, or the significance of the action, impelled by an impulse beyond all control, I drew her hand within both my own as though in pledge of protection.

"It can be done," I insisted. "Such boat voyages have been accomplished."

She made no effort to draw away, her eyes still upon mine.

"Not through such a sea as this; not at this season of the year."

I could not answer, my lips dry, my throat parched.

"You know the utter hopelessness of it," she went on, stimulated by my silence. "You know we can never survive the cold, the closing in of the ice, the certainty of storm. You are a sailor, and a brave man—trust me with the whole truth."

"It would be almost a miracle," I faltered, the words fairly forced from my lips by her insistence. "This is the beginning of winter in the stormiest ocean on the globe. God could do it, but not man."

Her head sank, the white cheek touching my sleeve, but the fearless gray eyes were still open, gazing straight into mine.

"Then it is the certainty of death," she said soberly. "Death together."

My heart leaped as though it had received an electric shock.

"Together! you mean—"

"That I should rather be here, facing death with you, than anywhere else alone," she exclaimed swiftly. "Oh, I can say it frankly now; say it here before you and God; say it in all purity and honor. Perhaps to-night, perhaps to-morrow, somewhere amid this awful waste of waters we will go together into eternity. What are the dictates of men to us now? What meaning is there any longer to the hideous requirements of the world? We are beyond them all. Here, now, we can be ourselves, ourselves. To-night we are free; to-night I can hear you speak what I have already read in your eyes, and am not afraid to hear it."

"You—you love me?"

"With all my heart and soul."

With everything else blotted out, with all else forgotten, I sat speechless, gazing down through the mist of tears into her eyes.

CHAPTER XXII.

In Which I Understand My Lady.

She rested motionless, her cheek barely touching my sleeve, her eyes filled with love, her hands in mine. Then I heard her voice, soft as a whisper, the breath of her lips on my cheek.

"You will not misjudge me; surely you can not. Those words would never have been uttered in any other circumstances. Not that I am afraid, not that I am ashamed or regretful; but nothing else could ever have set me free. Now we must know, understand each other—we must die with our hearts open, our souls clean. You really love me? trust me? believe me to

be a worthy woman?"

"With all my soul I do."

"Oh, I know you do. It is because I know you do that I wish to tell you my story. It is my love which makes me so anxious that you should understand, so when the end comes we can go together, loving each other, and not afraid. Do you recognize me? Have you ever realized who I am?"

I could only shake my head, wondering at the strange question.

"No? And yet I have known you ever since that first long talk we had together in the cabin. It seemed so odd, such a strange freak of destiny, that you should have been associated in any way with my old life, and yet the very fact that you were, first created the bond that has since drawn us together. You were no longer a mere sea-adventurer, but an old-time friend and equal. From that day all was different. I could fight it back, but could never conquer what that discovery meant. Oh, how small this world is! Did you ever hear of Doris Winslow?"

A moment the vague, clouded memory eluded me, tantalized me. Then in a flash the revelation came.

"My sister's chum at Wellesley?"

The tears sprang glistening into her eyes, her handclasp tightening.

"Yes; does it seem possible? You never knew me, except by that name. My father died during the second year of my attendance there; then mother and I went abroad, and my education was completed on the continent. I am not finding fault, but—but it was all most unfortunate; it brought me into real life with a false understanding of everything—wrong ideals, wrong standards. We were known to be wealthy, many considered me beautiful; my mother's one ambition was to achieve recognized social standing in Europe, and from the first I was destined to be a means to that end. My education, surroundings, social environment, were all shaped with this purpose in view. In spite of myself the result was accomplished.

"I was merely a girl of 17, desiring little but a good time, and accustomed all my life to the guidance of others. Lord Darlington joined our party in Italy, and we journeyed together for a week through the Italian Alps, finally going on board his yacht as invited guests for a cruise in the Mediterranean. He was most attentive to me, yet I gave it scarcely a thought. I hardly realized what was taking place—what it all meant, but—but one day we went ashore, and—and we were married at the British legation in Athens. That day I was a careless girl; the next morning found me a woman, regretful, aroused from a dream, yet yielding to the inevitable. Whatever I suffered was borne alone; not even my mother ever heard me complain."

She sat looking forth over the crests of the sea, the moonlight reflecting back into her face. The sail swung in and shadowed her.

"Within a month we went to England, to Darlington hall, where everything was at my command, and later to London, during the social season. I had all that the world seems to value at my feet and at first I managed to be happy after a fashion. The excitement and exhilaration kept me alive and interested, but in time the glitter and artificiality of it all wearied me; more and more deeply I realized the sordid manner in which I had been sold, and I grew to hate those things which had purchased me. It was not Lord Darlington—he was more father than husband, humoring me in every way, and secretly regretful for his part in the transaction. I became ill, begged for the sea, and we went aboard in his yacht. He was not unwilling, but to my mother it proved a constant hardship. Only her anxiety to prevent any rupture between us caused her to go on board. Yet even when I had recovered health I would not go back; that life would have killed me. Out in the open I could breathe and live; it yielded me courage to continue as I was."

She bent forward, bringing her face once again into the revealing moonlight, her eyes frankly open to mine.

"I only wish I could make you realize how drearily lonely that life became. There was no knowledge of love to complicate the situation, and at first I even felt a sense of gratitude toward Lord Darlington for many acts of kindness and the consideration shown me. This changed, however, as I began slowly to comprehend the selfishness of his motives—that his actions arose more from a certain pride in my youthful appearance and the advantages to be derived from my wealth. My mother soon alienated my affections by always allying herself with him. Finally I had no one to whom I could turn for comfort or advice. I felt entirely alone, and grew silent, suspicious, and adverse to all social pleasures. The vows of marriage rested lightly on Lord Darlington, but for that I did not greatly care, except that the knowledge snapped

the last weak bond between us. Almost wild to escape from Europe and its torturing memories I finally planned an extensive yachting trip around the world. I was impulsive, headstrong, even hopeful that I might be permitted to invite a few congenial friends and sail alone. To my surprise Lord Darlington expressed pleasure in the idea, and even persuaded my mother to accompany us."

Her face sank suddenly into her hands, her body trembling.

"I bore it all smilingly, and enjoyed the sea. But I was a woman now, bitterly resenting the manner in which I had been bartered in the matrimonial market. I knew nothing of love, except as I perceived it in the lives of others, but I was hungry, starving for it. We arrived at Valparaiso; this strange adventure occurred to me, and—then I met you."

Her hands went out again to me, and I caught them eagerly.

"That—that day in the cabin, I—I knew you for one of my own class; I knew you for a true man, a gentleman; I—I read the love in your eyes, and I should have been an angel not to have welcomed it. Oh, God knows I tried not to do so! I prayed for help to resist my own heart, but the help was not given me. Now I comprehend it was not meant that I should resist. The end was in sight even from the beginning. Love is more than

ceremony, and can make even death sweet. I have no sense of evil as I look into your eyes; I have come into my inheritance, the rightful inheritance of every woman—love. Even if it is only for a day, it is mine—mine by the gift of God. Oh, Jack, Jack, I have waited so long, so long, and now all I can say, all I desire to say, is, I love you!"

Oh, that scene! that desolate, dreary, God-forsaken, hopeless scene—the heaving waters, the cold sky, the ice-gleam, the awful expanse of barrenness all about. Did ever love come to mortal before or since in such a spot, or amid such utter helplessness? But I forgot all, though even as I bent to her lips she begged me, faltering, not to touch her yet. There, in the heart of that Antarctic sea, case always, drifting to what seemed certain death, we found in this confession a happiness that the world without would have sternly denied us. Ay! and we were stronger for it, braver

for it; our eyes glow, our hearts pulsing to the one great music of the universe.

"Tell it to me," she whispered smilingly.

"I love you."

"And I am happier than in all my life before."

We spoke but briefly as we sat thus, my hand firm upon the tiller, my eyes never forgetful of those great surges smiling us. Indeed, there was little to say, for we had no future to discuss, no plans to formulate. We could only live out the night, with the morrow a blank before us. Yet there was nothing of all this in the girl's face upturned and happy, nor did I permit my eyes to mar her happiness. We were together, understanding each other, and for the moment that was enough. Yet in some way my pulse beat stronger, my will to conquer this demon sea became mighty. God helping me, this love-life should not end here—end in mystery and oblivion; those restless waters should not overcome us forever. I would fight them for her sake and my own! The stars and waves defied such determination, yet I only stiffened in my seat, a new strength animating my body, a new faith stimulating my soul. Fifteen hundred miles! Father of Mercy, guide us! Yet it had been done, and it might be done again.

"What is it, Jack?" she questioned softly. "Of what were you thinking?"

"Of the stiff battle ahead of us, dear; the fight for life and love across these leagues of ocean."

"For life and love! Do you mean you dream of reaching safety?"

"I mean to struggle for it; to do all a man and sailor may. If we die, now, sweetheart, it will be to lose more than ever before was possible."

Her cheeks flushed instantly, her lashes drooping.

"No, no; if we win safety it will only be to lose all else. But the thought is impossible; no skill, no courage, no strength of arm or heart could ever work such a miracle of deliverance. I will not dream it, for how could I go back, go back to that old life again with my heart full of love for you? That would be a fate worse than death; it would be dishonor."

I did not answer, did not even look into her face.

(To be Continued)

Prices Sometimes Talk--Our's Shout

Our July Clearance Sale is a "warm one"—almost as hot as the weather. Piles of goods distributed to cheerful buyers. Saturday a red letter day in point of sales. Our force worked to the limit. Some lines are depleted, but we are still strong on Underwear, Single Pants for Men Boys and Children, Hosiery, Straw Hats, Shirts, all kinds and sizes, Boy's and Children's Suits, Men's Suits and Night Gowns, Kerchiefs and Neckwear. The public is solicited to examine these goods and avail themselves of these clearance prices:

5c Men's full-size hemstitched white handkerchiefs. See them in our east window. Also turkey red and indigo blue. Also at this price men's and boy's straw hats.

39c Here we offer you a big line of soft shirts, with or without collars, in light blues, fancy stripes and polka dots. Full cut, well made. Everyone less than cost to make. They're going fast.

8c Men's fast color fine gauge brown cotton socks. Good for dress or work wear, regular 15c value, all sizes 9½ to 11.

48c All stragglers from our 75c and \$1.00 and \$1.25 straw hat lines, go at this remarkable low price. Better come quick.

12c Here's a bargain in wash ties we just received from New York Saturday. They are full size four-in-hands, in light and dark colors, and only 12c each.

49c Boy's wash suits, in either blouse or Buster Brown style, knickerbocker pants. All new goods this season. Another big bargain for a busy mother. Sixes 2½ to 8 years.

16c Boy's black ribbed stockings, Tom Sawyer brand, almost indestructible, fast colors, will out wear two pair ordinary hose. Sizes 6 to 8½ all that's left.

54c Here's where we put you to sleep. Men's full size bell shape night gowns, either with or without collars, nicely trimmed. Were about 200 of these Saturday morning but the pile is fast melting.

23c Boy's blue cheviot shirts, with soft collar attached, sizes 6 to 12 years. All made and ready to put on for what the cloth is worth.

69c Here's the big shirt bargain. People have gone wild over this lot. We bought a manufacturer's sample line, in shirts that sold at \$1.25 to \$1.50 and give your choice at 69c. Sizes 14 to 17.

25c All remnants of medium priced straw hats lines are bunched at this one price to close. Includes helmets and fisherman hats.

99c If you want a good yacht straw hat—this season style, in hats that sold for \$1.50 and \$2.00, better get one of these at this low price to move them out.

26c Boy's knee pants, plain and knickerbocker in all wool and wash goods. A big bargain for a busy mother. Sizes 3 to 8 and a few large sizes.

\$1.45 Here's pants, good pants, some of them all wool, some, part wool, some of them Dutchess. Pants that will give you twice the wear of any ordinary cheap pants. To close \$1.45.

29c A few boy's fine waists left at this price in sizes 11 to 15. Also at this price choice of fine line of 50c silk 4-in-hand. A real snap.

\$1.99 This lot of pants has made a stir. It was the first lot we put out, mostly Dutchess. Some light colors; most dark and medium. Such pants as you will pay \$3 and \$4 for elsewhere. Now here for cash \$1.99.

Many other bargains we cannot list including pants at \$2.48, suits \$7.69, raincoats \$9.98, fur hats \$1.48, etc. Everything just as advertised. No monkey business. No cash register tickets. No sale goods charged.

C. E. Wescott's Sons

"Where Quality Counts."

THE HOME OF SATISFACTION!

George Melsinger, the third, came in Saturday and attended to business in the city. While here he called upon the Journal and renewed the subscription of Adam Melsinger at Green Valley, Ill., to the paper. Mr. Melsinger is one of our best people and the Journal is proud to number him among its friends. He states that the crop outlook in

his section was never better and there is every indication that old Cass this year will have a bumper crop of everything good.

Miss Fannie Hildlecom of Lincoln spent Sunday in the city, the guest of Mrs. H. D. Travis and Miss Helen Travis, returning to her home this morning.

G. W. McKinney, formerly of this city, but now a resident of Silver City, Ia., was in the city today visiting with old friends and relatives. Mr. McKinney came in Saturday night and returned to Silver City this afternoon.

Ed. Schulhof spent Sunday in the city with his folks, returning to Glenwood this morning.