

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DONNA ISABEL

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the introduction of John Stephens, adventurer, a Massachusetts man marooned by authorities at Valparaiso, Chile. Being interested in mining operations in Bolivia, he was denounced by Chile as an insurrectionist and as a consequence was hiding. At his hotel his attention was attracted by an Englishman and a young woman.

CHAPTER II.

In which I meet his Lordship. Chilean officers, largely naval, to judge from their rather resplendent uniforms, occupied this second table, and it was evident that they had been drinking to excess. It was their loud voices and boisterous laughter which first attracted my attention, and I soon caught sufficient of their incoherent speech to discover they were bawling one among their number to carry into execution a tipsy boast he had just made over the wine. The special officer thus singled out as butt for the boisterous wit of his reckless companions was a naval lieutenant, a rather tall, cadaverous fellow, sallow faced, his short black hair standing erect and bristling, his mustaches drooping so as to shade the corners of his mouth. His cheeks were flushed with temper from the rough sallies at his expense, and his lips uttered a burning Castilian curse, as he arose somewhat unsteadily to his feet, and glared about into the expectant faces of his laughing tormentors.

"Sacro Cristo! you will see, camaradas; you will see!" he declared, brandishing himself for the effort. "Caramba! what sailor fears in presence of beauty?—puff! not I!"

He turned short about, his sword chains rattling, and strode directly across toward the unconscious Briton, who stared up at him over his roared beard in petrified astonishment. Fumbling awkwardly at his belt, the intruding officer finally brought forth a card, and placed it ostentatiously upon the table, bowing low as he did so.

"I would myself to introduce to the senior," he announced with drunken gravity, and in amazingly broken English. "I Teniente Lieutenant Sanchez, Chilean navy; one of the first family in this country. Maybe you know me, hey? I was with de Almirante Cochran, when the capitano call on you in the leetle ship. Now I would the better acquaintance make with the great ladies, an' the ladies, the most bootful ladies," and his sunken eyes rested gleefully on the surprised face of the girl, who had half turned, the better to observe him.

It was all so swiftly, so impudently done that the astounded Briton could only stare, his lean face reddening with annoyance. This hesitancy, as well as something in the constrained attitude of the younger woman, seemed to encourage Sanchez; his expression changed to a satisfied smile, while his lank figure bent in another ceremonious bow, this time directed toward her.

"Ah, I knew it would so be," he said, insinuatingly. "It was so I told it to my bravas camaradas. Si, si, it was so ever—the uniform make us welcome with the ladies. They love the brav; is it not so, senoritas?"

By this time the outraged paternalist had stiffened into rock, his eyes cold and hard behind his glasses. In frigid contempt he deliberately turned his back upon the fellow, saying icily:

"You impudent scoundrel! I am accustomed to selecting my own guests, and you are certainly not one of them."

The Chilean laughed, perhaps not wholly comprehending the words, and remained twisting his mustache between long white fingers. He was far too drunk for fear, besides being upheld by a military contempt for civilians.

"Pah! 'tis a pig of a papa," he sputtered, half turning to witness the approval of his laughing companions behind. "But the smile of beauty still invites, and Juan Sanchez fears not before man or devil."

He strode around the table, his scabbard clanking on the stone floor, drew out the single vacant chair and planted himself in it, his back toward me, his impudent face leering across the white cloth toward the startled, indignant woman seated opposite. I watched her gray eyes widen from astonishment, only to darken with indignation. She pushed back her chair, half rose to her feet, and sank down again, her cheeks flushed, her bosom rising and falling tumultuously. Her evident contempt for the fellow would have utterly crushed any one less befuddled into embarrassed silence. But Sanchez merely grinned, his hands still toying with his mustaches.

"Sangre de Cristo, was it not so, mees?" he questioned, insinuatingly, utterly ignoring the helpless man sputtering at the head of the table, who could only glare at him with open mouth. "The uniform of valor is the best introduction to the favor of the



"Make the Slightest Uproar and I'll

Hoist You Over the Railing."

ladies. Si, you vera soon be pretty good amiga de me, the Lieutenant Juan Sanchez. I show you the vera best society in Valparaiso, the opera, the grand ball, everything that pleases the senoritas in my country. I have the entree, an' it is easy. I take you to the dance on the warship—bueno! all vera fine. Si, was it not so, mees?"

The young girl, her fine eyes contemptuous and loathing, turned aside from the leering, drunken face confronting her. An instant only her glance rested on the sputtering old man at the head of the table, then swept, almost beseechingly, about the great room. Apparently no one present had taken the slightest interest in the affair, with the exception of the small party of Chilean officers who were laughing uproariously over their wine, and the girl's gray eyes, now almost black from excitement, came back to her persecutor.

"The dance on the warship, senorita," he insisted, "the gran' dance of my country; it will please you mucho. Dios! w'at care we for papa?"

She perceived me plainly now, leaning forward just outside the window directly behind the fellow's back. I know not what message of encouragement she may have read in my face, but into her eyes there instantly swept a mute, passionate appeal. For the fraction of a moment I hesitated, feeling convinced that any action on my part would only serve to hasten my own fate. Yet it was not in my nature to hold back. Half rising, and bending forward, I reached through the open window, twisted my fingers into the fellow's coat collar, and the next instant he was lying flat upon his back on the balcony floor, nothing remaining to show his recent presence in the dining hall except an overturned chair.

It was rather smartly, prettily done, the astounded lieutenant possessing neither wind nor opportunity for the slightest outcry, and once without, I promptly throttled him, meanwhile muttering a few important admonitions into his ear in well-selected Spanish.

"Lie still there, you drunken idiot. Make another attempt to bite me, and I'll pound your head on these stones. Bah! save your threats, senior, and if you make the slightest uproar I'll hoist you over the railing yonder, and it's 30 feet to the pavement below. Now stand up! Do you see this, senior?" and I pressed the cold muzzle of a revolver against his swarthy cheek. "Oh, you do! Well, you probably know also how it works. Now listen to me—there are stairs at that corner yonder; you go down them quietly and disappear—disappear; do you understand that? If you dare return to that dining room to-night, or attempt again to address that young woman, I am going to kill you, senior."

My voice was cold and low, but it carried weight. Panting still from the fierce choking, his eyes hot with anger, his lips trembling, he endeavored to speak.

"Nombre de Dios!" he burst forth at last, his face full of murder, yet standing helpless before my gun-barrel. "I cut your heart out! You insult me, a Chilean sailor. I have revenge for my honor. You fight me for this, senior."

"Oh, certainly, anything to oblige," I returned, indifferently. "Only you get out of here now, and sober up, Sanchez."

"Caramba! you know my name, senior; but I know not yours." I drew a card from my pocket across which had been written the cognomen I had assumed at the hotel.

"You possess it now," I said somewhat tartly. "Besides, senior, that happens to be my dinner coming yonder, and I prefer eating it undisturbed. You either go down those stairs quietly at once, or I'll kick you down."

I was obliged to smile while watching him back away. Beyond question the fellow was an ardent coward and bully, yet sufficiently angry and outraged to have fought gladly, if only opportunity served. I followed him to the head of the stairs, watching him closely while he descended, cursing fiercely to himself at every step until he finally vanished into the blackness below. The chances were strong that I should hear from him later, but in the meantime my interest veered to the excellent dinner being served. The lieutenant would have his turn, and perchance, bring me swift release from all my troubles on the morrow.

The English party still remained at their table, lingering over the dessert, but I noticed that conversation had lapsed, and precious little eating was being done. Evidently only the requirements of good form held them to their places, the elderly gentleman especially denoting his nervousness by continual side-glances about the long room. I overheard him mutter something indistinctly regarding having left his pistol upstairs, and it was plainly apparent he felt thoroughly ashamed of his late passiveness under insult. Madame was flushed and uneasy, angry still over the episode, and greatly inclined to sputter now that all real danger had passed; but the younger woman merely toyed with her spoon in silence, her eyes downcast, her cheeks devoid of their previous color. She made a fair picture, the brilliant light overhead flooding her dark hair, and it was not in young human nature to refrain from gazing at her through the invitingly open window. Finally they all pushed back their chairs to retire, and, as she glanced up while rising to her feet, our eyes met fairly, and a warm wave of color swept across the uplifted, sensitive face. The next instant, yielding apparently to some sudden impulse of gratitude, she stepped through the open window, and stood beside me with extended hand.

"Senior," she said, speaking a broken Spanish very prettily, "it was extremely kind of you to assist in removing that horrible man, and I cannot leave without some expression of my gratitude."

I was upon my feet instantly, bowing before her as to a queen, yet feeling a strange embarrassment.

"That incident was nothing, seniorita," I insisted, yet venturing to look directly into the depths of those dark gray eyes, so intensely studying my face under the dim light of the lanterns. "I did no more than any man would consider a privilege. I realized you had no younger protector at hand."

She glanced around toward the others of her party, now also upon their feet, and gazing out at us in undisguised amazement.

"No," she explained, as though in unwilling apology; "he has passed the age where he can safely measure strength with ruffianism. It is not lack of courage, senior, but of bodily vigor."

"A time of life which must come to all of us," I returned, hastily, "and prudence is not necessarily disgrace. Yet believe me, seniorita, I already feel amply repaid for my little part in this comedy of errors by your smile of recognition and words of thanks. You are English?"

Her eyes fell slightly, the long lashes clearly outlined against the white flesh.

"Yes, senior," she replied, softly, "we are English travelers for pleasure. Our yacht lies anchored in the harbor below."

I imagined she was tempted to inquire who I might be, but, while she stood hesitating, uncertain of the propriety of so personal a question, the spare, stiff figure of the Englishman appeared suddenly in the open case. For a moment of silence his cold eyes surveyed us both with manifest disapproval.

"Doris," he spoke at last, his words cold and stern, "it would have been proper to permit me to express our natural gratitude to this young gentleman."

She drew aside quietly, making no response, and he stood directly facing me, bowing slightly with a staidness of manner scarcely courteous, his language immediately changing to Spanish, doubtless assuming that to be my native tongue.

"The gallant action of the senior was greatly appreciated by all of us," he began formally; "the more so because I was so astounded by the fellow's unparalleled impudence as to be, for the moment, helpless to resist insult. I trust the senior has not suffered during the encounter?"

"Not in the slightest."

"That is most gratifying," the calm staidness of his features slightly relieved by the flicker of a smile, as he drew forth a gold-mounted case and extended toward me an engraved card. "Permit me, senior; and we shall feel greatly honored to receive you at any time on board our yacht in the harbor. The length of our stay at this post is uncertain, yet we shall surely remain for several days. And let me add," he concluded, drawing himself up with an air that compelled my admiration, "that I hold myself personally answerable for any consequences which may follow upon your timely interference. I shall so inform him by a special letter immediately."

I bowed, giving utterance to a word or two of formal thanks, believing I read a far more cordial invitation in the depths of the suddenly uplifted gray eyes behind his shoulder. But he yielded her no further opportunity for expression, and I remained there alone, watching them move slowly across the brightly illuminated dining room, instantly the cynosure of all eyes at the numerous tables, my heart pulsing to a new emotion as she turned swiftly, beneath the half-concealing shadow of the portieres, and cast one quick, sweeping glance backward. "Doris"—the name lingered softly pleasant upon my lips in memory, seeming to bring before me the haunting vision of her face. I held the card up to the light and read:

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(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Sensation in "Mystery Ship." Sydney, Australia, has had a novelty in the shape of a "mystery ship." An American steamer, the Coronet, arrived by night in the harbor unannounced and unannounced. It was peopled by a strange-looking crowd of men, women and children. The officers were dressed in clerical attire—long coats and white ties. Nobody was allowed on board save the government medical officer and the harbor master. The Sydney reporters ascertained that the ship is connected with the newest American sect, the "Holy Ghost and Us," whose head, a man named Stanford, claiming to be the reincarnated Elijah, is on board. The Coronet has been cruising for some months among the Pacific islands.

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Wilbur Wright was discussing in Dayton a very imaginative magazine story about aeroplanes.

"The story," he said, "was full of errors. Aeroplanes can't do what this chap claims. He doesn't understand them."

"In fact, he's like old George Kettle of Trotwood. George rushed into the Trotwood telegraph office the other day with a small package wrapped in a newspaper under his arm."

"Telegraph this to my wife down to Dayton, Harvey," he said to the telegraph clerk, thrusting the package through the little window.

"No, no, George; we can't do anything like that," laughed the clerk.

"Drat ye," said George, angrily, "ye got to do it. It's my wife's teeth."

Ready with Explanation.

A rector of Eltham once gave out the words: "Who art thou?" and, as he paused for a moment, an officer in uniform, who had just entered the church, suddenly halted, and taking the question as personal, promptly replied: "Sir, I am the recruiting officer of the Sixteenth Foot, and, having my wife and daughter with me, should be glad to make the acquaintance of the clergy and gentry of the neighborhood."

The Doctor's Fault.

Judge—I am led to understand you stole the watch of the doctor who had just written a prescription for you at the free dispensary. What have you to say to this charge?

"Well, your honor, I found myself in a desperate quandary. His prescription said 'a spoonful every hour,' and I had no timepiece."

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Stella—What is the law of heredity? Bella—That all undesirable traits come from the other parent.

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