

# 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 mentioned 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. Stephens rescued the young woman from a drunken officer. He was thanked by her. Admiral of the Peruvian navy confronted Stephens, told him that war had been declared between Chile and Peru and offered him the office of captain. He desired that that night the Esmeralda, a Chilean vessel, should be captured. Stephens accepted the commission. Stephens met a motley crew, to which he was assigned. He gave them final instructions. They boarded the vessel. They successfully captured the vessel supposed to be the Esmeralda. Through strategy, Capt. Stephens gave directions for the departure of the craft. He entered the cabin and discovered the English woman and her maid. Stephens quickly learned the wrong vessel had been captured. It was Lord Darlington's private yacht, the lady's wife and maid being aboard. He explained the situation to her ladyship. Then First Mate Tuttle laid bare the plot, saying that the Sea Queen had been taken in order to go to the Antarctic circle. Tuttle explained that on a former voyage he had learned that the Donna Isabel was lost in 1723. He had found it frozen in a large mass of ice on an island and contained much gold. Stephens consented to be the captain of the expedition. He told Lady Darlington. She was greatly alarmed, but expressed confidence in him. The Sea Queen encountered a vessel in the fog. Stephens attempted to communicate. This caused a fierce struggle and he was overcome. Tuttle finally squaring the situation. Then the Sea Queen headed south again. Under Tuttle's guidance the vessel made progress toward its goal. De Nova, the mate, told Stephens that he believed Tuttle, now acting as skipper, insane because of his queer actions.

## CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

The slight change of voice perceptible in this final sentence might have excited the utterance of the question trembling on my lips, yet I set my teeth, and remained silent.

"It is odd how our lives are influenced," she continued, thoughtfully. "I feel that the charm of the sea has been the one great impelling force which has molded mine. I wonder is it destined always to be so? Are these waters even now bearing me on as fate will? Ever since I can remember I have permitted the ocean to take that place in my heart which, perhaps, should be otherwise occupied. It has been my master, my strongest love. But I must not think this, much less say it," hastily awakening, and pointing forward. "See, Mr. Stephens, how those clouds and the waters blend yonder in such fantastic forms; they appear an army of sheeted ghosts bearing down to block our passage into the Polar sea."

I looked in the direction indicated, scarcely noting the phenomena, but wondering what was the real meaning concealed behind her veiled utterance. In truth Lady Darlington was not a woman easily interpreted. She was by no means a creature of moods, yet behind her effort at outward cheerfulness I was constantly aware of something hidden, some haunting memory of the past, more to be dreaded even than her present environment.

Sometimes I even thought she deliberately played with me; yet this was not so. There was nothing of the coquette in her nature, nothing of purposeful deceit in either words or action, and I cast the unworthy thought from me with the indignation it deserved. Still, her method was most strange, most peculiar. Indeed, she was like two women, ever keeping me on the qui vive, alive with expectancy, yet never quite bringing to me that open-heartedness I so much desired. One second, as though by purest accident, I looked down into her soul; the next I saw nothing but the outer covering. Without in the least meaning to be so she became a teasing puzzle, an enigma of womanhood, before whom I was beginning to worship, unable to analyze even my own feelings, half-hopeful, half-fraid.

Hence it was that on this day I remained leaning against the piano, listening to her really brilliant execution of difficult music, gazing down upon her unconscious face, the awning of the deck under my feet, but with a heavy heart behind the smile upon my lips. The music finally ceased, yet we lingered there conversing over the memory aroused by its rendition, when Tuttle emerged from his room, prepared for his turn of service on deck. He stopped and stared across at us, his hand on the knob of the closed door.

"Such songs are most unseemly under our present circumstances," he said, solemnly, apparently addressing the lady only, for his glance never met mine. "In presence of death and the hereafter, madam, prayer is the natural outlet of the soul."

Her sympathetic face whitened, the expression of her eyes changing instantly.

"What—what do you mean, Mr. Tuttle? Are we in any special danger?"

"In the midst of life we are in death. What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him? Death rides upon the wind, races upon the waters. Place not your trust in princes, nor



"Oh, God! There's Another! Another, But I'll Kill That One, Too!"

in any of the powers of earth, but upon the mercy of the Most High. Be warned, madam; be prepared for his early coming, for already has it been given unto me to behold the End."

He strode past us, stony-faced, his gaunt form outlined against the gray sky without as he pushed back the companion door. Lady Darlington watched his disappearance with parted lips and eyes filled with fear.

"The fellow has gone crazy over his spiritistic theories," I endeavored to explain. "Do not permit such folly to affect you."

"But—but, Mr. Stephens, he means it, he believes it. What is it he has seen?"

"Some vision of his insanity, no doubt—nothing that need worry you who are sane."

Her fingers pressed tightly upon my hand.

"But if he is really insane how much more dangerous it makes our position! Do you really think he is?"

"Only along that one line, Lady Darlington, my voice growing firm with conviction. 'Otherwise he seems as sane as most men. We must humor him to that extent, but regarding all other matters there is no occasion for you to worry. The man is a magnificent seaman, and handles the Sea Queen with remarkable skill. He will bring us out safely, and you must not permit his prophecies of disaster to influence your mind—they are only the ravings of a diseased brain.'

I do not know how much of what I said she actually believed, yet as I talked on in apparent confidence her expression gradually changed, and finally I had Celeste bring her wraps, and I escorted her forth upon deck. The fresh, stinging air soon served to drive from her brain the last vestige of terror, although at first she watched Tuttle on the bridge very closely. However, the fellow had left his weird fancies all below, and his sharp orders, coupled with the able manner in which he sailed the vessel, rapidly brought back even my own evaporated faith.

Lady Darlington did not appear again after supper, although Celeste sat in the main cabin and chatted vivaciously with De Nova while he ate. They appeared so deeply engrossed in each other that I finally took my pipe and went on deck, leaving them undisturbed, their laughter echoing to my ears as I slid to the companion door. There was a taste of snow in the wintry air—delicate, scattered, whirling flakes that cut the exposed flesh like needles, while the wind whistled through the frozen rigging in shrill music. The decks were as gloomy and dark as the surrounding sea was desolate and gray, the endless vista of circling water and sky merely merging imperceptibly into the haze of distance—everywhere the white-capped waves frantically chasing each other, crest following crest, the deep hollows between as black as death.

It got upon my nerves at last, and I went below, striving manfully to shake off all memory of the depressing picture. Ten minutes later I was securely braced in my bunk, so soundly sleeping I forgot to dream.

I could never tell what awoke me; some strange noise, no doubt, for I sat straight up, staring through the blackness toward the closed door. Almost at the very instant I heard the smash of glass in the main cabin. I was only partially undressed, and, with one spring was at the latch, the fierce pitching of the yacht making me instantly apprehensive of accident. At the first glance I perceived nothing unusual under the dim light, then I saw a man sprawling on the floor in midst of a litter of glass from a broken mirror. I leaped across toward the fellow, twisting my hand into the collar of his pea-jacket, and whirling him face upward to the light. It was Tuttle, and he shrank away from me covering like a whipped cur, his hands thrust out, his eyes staring. It was an appalling face, ghastly, terror-stricken.

"What is it, Mr. Tuttle?"

"Oh, Christ! Christ!" he shrieked, apparently never seeing me at all, his teeth gnashing, a foam on his lips. "I saw it again—right over there! But I killed that one! I killed that one! It will go back to hell ahead of me! Oh, God! there's another! Another, but I'll kill that one, too!"

Straight toward me he came with the fierce, unexpected leap of a wild animal. Half-dazed I grappled him. It was the contest of man against beast, for he fought clawing and snapping, snarling forth curses. The necessity of saving myself stiffened me to it, and I struck out hastily, landing twice before we came to the grip. It seemed to me he possessed the strength of a dozen men, yet I got my fingers in his neckband, and we went crashing down together on the deck. As we struck he went suddenly limp, his fingers shaking, his eyes staring dully at the light. I held him thus in my grip an instant, suspecting some trick; then, as he never moved, I drew him up until his shoulders rested against the support of a chair.

"What is it, man?" I questioned, anxiously. "What has happened? Are you sick?"

He made no response, gave not the slightest sign that he even heard me. I poured out a glass of liquor, held it to his lips, and he gulped it down, but seemingly in a stupor.

"Come along," I said, sternly, realizing that my will must dominate his, if I would move him to action. "I am going to take you to your berth, and make you lie down. You are sick, and need rest. Get up, now."

He attempted no resistance as I lifted him, even clinging to the chair for support, his entire body shaking like a jelly fish. I braced him in through the open door, tumbled him over into the bunk, and he lay there, staring straight up with unwhinking eyes, his face as yellow as parchment. He was completely dressed for the deck, his pea-jacket buttoned to the chin, his heavy sea-boots on. I loosened the one, drew off the others, but the door, and left him there alone.

It was clear enough he had again been seized the ghost, but how came he to be so dressed, his clothing still wet

with the salt spray? Breathing hard from the exertion, I glanced curiously at my watch to note the hour. Barely two o'clock. Why, it was his trick on deck; he had deserted his position to come below. The Sea Queen was rushing through the gloom with no officer on the bridge. De Nova would be in his bunk asleep. I sprang to my own room, and hastily finished dressing, fully determined on standing out Tuttle's watch on deck. As I came forth again into the main cabin, winding a muffler about my throat, a vision in white fronted me, grasping the table to keep from falling.

"What is it, Mr. Stephens? What has happened?"

"Nothing that need in any way alarm you," and as the vessel gave a sickening plunge, and her eyes opened in apprehension, I caught her arm firmly. "Truly, believe me, there is no danger. Mr. Tuttle has been suddenly taken ill, and I am going to relieve him on watch. You have confidence in me, have you not?"

Her eyes searched my face earnestly, the gray depths full of anxiety.

"Oh, yes."

"Then now is the time to show it. I shall remain on deck, probably, until morning. I wish you to go back, lie down and rest. Let me assist you to return to your stateroom."

I held her closely to me, so closely I could feel the throb of her breathing, the warmth of her flesh, realizing that she was clinging to me in utter forgetfulness. Only at the door did she draw away slightly, yet even then with her hands clasping my arm, her hands clasping my arm, her eyes gazing directly into mine.

"You have told me all?"

"All of the slightest importance; the details can wait daylight. I ask you to confide in me now, and sleep. May I have your promise?"

There was something mystifying in those gray eyes I had never perceived before, and she caught her breath in a quick sob.

"Yes," she replied, simply, her lashes drooping, "you may have my promise."

On deck I discovered the yacht laboring desperately in a heavy cross sea, the sky clear, and two men straining at the wheel. In spite of the starshine, they were so bundled up that I was compelled to stare directly in their faces before I could recognize either.

"Mr. Tuttle has been taken sick and gone to his berth," I explained briefly. "I will serve out his watch. What course have you?"

"Sou'-sou'-east by sou', sir."

I glanced inquiringly at the compass-card, and then forward, sweeping the seas with my glasses. There was no ice in sight, but the bitter cold of the air was sufficient proof of plenty not far away.

"When did Mr. Tuttle go aft?" I asked.

"'Bout 30 minutes ago, sir."

"Did he leave any word?"

"He never said nothin', did he, Bill? He'd been actin' queer, an' a-talkin' to hisself, an' all at once he ran down the steps, an' went aft. Bill an' I figured it out as how maybe he was cold, an' wanted a drink."

At four o'clock, the sky already beginning to mist as if from thickening frost, I dispatched one of the hands aft to rout out De Nova. He came stumbling up the steps, perhaps ten minutes later, still rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, but became wide awake enough when he recognized me.

"Sacre, w'at was zis, Mons. Stephen? W'ere was ze mate?"

Crouching behind the tarpaulins out of the keen sweep of the wind, I explained in rapid detail what had occurred since he went below.

"It will probably have to be watch and watch with us, De Nova," I ended, firmly. "Tuttle is no longer fit to be left in charge of the deck. You agree to that?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"By gar, it look like zere was nossing else for it."

"No; it is the only way. Call me at the end of your trick. I'll look in on Tuttle again as I go below."

I did so, discovering him still upon his back, his eyes wide open, staring straight up at the deck-beams above.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Tuttle?"

He wet his parched lips with his tongue, turning his head ever so slightly at sound of my voice.

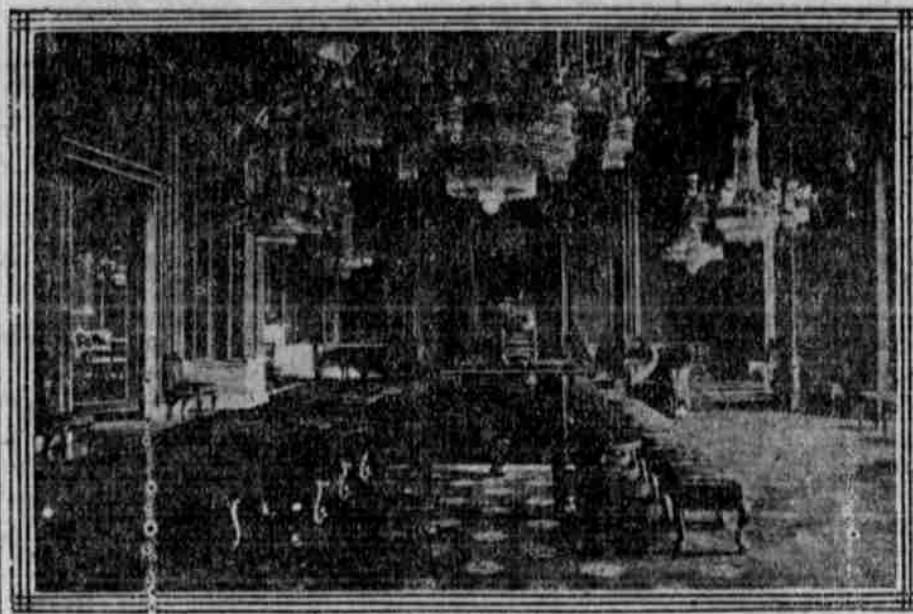
"Another drink of brandy," he muttered, thickly. "I don't see what is the matter with my legs; they won't move."

I brought him the liquor, lifting his head so he might drink more easily, and expressing a hope that he would feel much better by morning. He returned no answer, and I went across to my own berth and turned in.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"The average man," says Mr. Taukaway, "believes that a great man is just a man like himself, who is appreciated."—Kansas City Times.

## Being Presented at Buckingham Palace



THE THRONE ROOM

ANY lady wishing to attend one of their majesties' courts at Buckingham palace must first find some one to present her. This lady must be personally acquainted with and responsible for any whom she presents, though at the same time the acquaintance may be of the most perfunctory order.

For instance, the two may not have met until the day they attend the court, but in spite of that the lady undertaking the presentation will, in a way, know all about the lady presented, and will have made all inquiries as to her antecedents, etc. Did she fall to do so the consequences might be very unpleasant, and she would certainly not be invited to court again were it to be afterward discovered that she had presented some one not entitled to the honor.

Having secured an introduction to some lady of position, the next business is to beg of her the favor of presentation.

This granted, the lady presenting writes to the lord chamberlain, board of green cloth, St. James' palace, expressing her wish to attend at a forthcoming court, indicating the precise date—if the dates have been announced—and giving the name and other particulars of the lady she wishes to present.

If the latter be unmarried, her father's name and occupation (if any) must be given, his address, that of his property (if any), and so on, by no means omitting to state the nationality of the family.

One often has to wait for an answer. The lord chamberlain may wish to prosecute inquiries on his own account, and the application may or may not be followed by invitations.

Each lady who is applying has to state whether she wishes to attend the first or second court of those about to be held, but it is not expected that any applicant should ask permission before Easter to attend one of the courts held in May.

Nowadays no one is allowed to present more than one lady in addition to her daughters or daughter-in-law.

Should her application be accepted, she will receive the necessary cards from the lord chamberlain's office; but if any circumstance should interfere with her being able to present herself on the date arranged, she can make her excuses in writing to the Lord Chamberlain, who will, if possible, and should she wish it, transfer her name to the list for a future court in the same season.

The invitations are always for 10 p. m., but most of the guests have already arrived and are in their places by that hour.

The unaccustomed visitor sometimes wonders how she will know exactly what to do when she gets to the palace, and feels rather troubled lest she should be guilty of some solecism.

But she need have no fear on that score. From the moment she alights she will find every step of the way made smooth. Her cards in her hand, she is guided by gorgeously-uniformed officials to the cloak room, and, having left there her outer wrap, she is conducted by other officials up the grand staircase, always banked with beautiful growing flowers and bordered with tall palms on either side.

Arrived at the top, she hands her cards to one of the group of attendants, and is conducted to an ante-chamber, where she awaits the moment of her presentation.

Peereesses are led to the ballroom and conducted to their seats there, but all who are to be presented, whether on accession to title, on marriage, or merely as debutantes, remain in ante-chambers till the presentations begin.

They miss the sight of the procession of royalties entering, of course, but have an opportunity of seeing it retire later in the evening.

Courts are not now held in the throne room, as in Queen Victoria's day, but in the beautiful ballroom of Buckingham palace.

At about 10:30 the royal family enters, preceded by many officials in brilliant uniforms, the latter all walking backward with staves and wands. The king wears a field marshal's uniform and the Ribbon of the Garter, with other orders. The queen, always exquisitely dressed, also wears the Blue Ribbon of the Garter and other orders, among which her own Danish (a deep carnation red) usually ap-

pears. Her majesty's jewels are magnificent.

The procession includes any other members of the royal family who may happen to be in town, and there is very often a distinguished guest.

The peereesses and ladies of the diplomatic corps are ranged on either side, standing in front of the gilt chairs to which they have been conducted on their arrival. Among them are men in military or naval uniform, or court dress (black velvet, silk stockings, and buckled shoes), and the scene is one of great beauty.

The national anthem is played and the royal party passes to the dais, before which debutantes and other ladies to be presented pass.

Directly the sovereigns have seated themselves a red silk cord is drawn across about four yards in front of them. On the other side of this cord the ladies presented have to pass, make a deep obeisance, and gracefully back out without tripping themselves in their gowns.

When the court is at Buckingham palace, the normal regime of affairs is quite altered on Sundays.

The members of the household rise an hour later on Sunday, and the number of ladies-in-waiting on the Queen and the equerries in attendance on His Majesty is reduced usually by one-half. The non-resident members of the household, except on special occasions, such as when some foreign royal guest is being entertained by their Majesties, do not as a rule attend at court on Sunday.

Divine service is held in the private chapel at 11:30 a. m., which the king and queen always attend. The chapel is not open to the public, but members of the household are allowed to bring their friends to services on certain occasions.

A very strict rule is that the whole congregation must be in their seats five minutes before the service begins, and this regulation is scrupulously observed by their Majesties themselves.

After service the royal party, which frequently include the prince and princesses of Wales and their children if they are in London, takes a walk in the palace grounds before luncheon; after which, the queen generally goes to Marlborough House, where she constantly dines on Sundays.

Both the king and queen dislike anything being done on Sunday that entails extra work on the servants of the establishment at which they may be guests.

In this connection a story is told of a mild reproof administered by the king to a certain peer with whom their Majesties stayed for the week-end last year.

Shortly before church time, three powerful motor cars came round to the hall door to convey the party to church, which was by road about a mile from the peer's residence; by taking a short cut, however, through the park, the distance was lessened by more than half. Directly the king discovered this fact, he determined to walk to church. "I really thought," said His Majesty to his host, "when I saw these motor cars that we were going to a church in the next county."

King Edward and Queen Alexandra probably prefer to spend Sunday at Sandringham than anywhere else; as a matter of fact, they are, comparatively speaking, seldom able to do so; it is, indeed, doubtful if their Majesties are at Sandringham on more than a dozen Sundays in the year.

Sunday at Sandringham is observed by their Majesties as it is in many country homes, but perhaps the king and queen spend the Sabbath more in accordance with traditional English ideas than others.

Among the Sunday guests at Sandringham is frequently some well-known cleric who comes to preach at morning service in the quiet, homely little chapel where so many crowned heads and other distinguished persons have worshipped.

Their Majesties always make a point of joining their guests at breakfast on Sunday when at Sandringham, which, on ordinary occasions, is served to the sovereign and his consort in their private apartments.

A feature of Sunday at Sandringham is the assembly of the whole house party that takes place in the great hall a quarter of an hour before church time. Their Majesties join the gathering and chat to their guests until it is time to set out for church.