

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DONNA ISABEL

BY RANDALL PARRISH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEARBORN MEYER

CHAPTER I.

In Which Begins Adventure.

Some may question the truth of this narrative, yet they will scarcely be found among those who "go down to the sea in ships." To them the unfathomable mystery abiding upon the face of the great deep, the constant marvel of huge, heaving leagues of watery solitude, secret and profound, must ever remain so vast, so inexplicable, as to be beyond any interrogatory of the finite—the strange, the unexpected, lurking everywhere. To others, mere landsmen, confidently imagining that all phenomena can be reduced within the contracted limits of human comprehension, I need say no more than that witnesses still survive to corroborate the principal incidents of this story, which I now purpose writing in the full glow of a memory still dominated by the events to be recorded.

It had come to be the 5th day of April, the year 1879. I, John Stephens, aged 24, occupied a rather comfortable seat upon the shaded balcony of that large, ultra-fashionable hotel at Valparaiso, which, as travelers will recall, clings to the steep hillside overlooking both the city and harbor beneath. I was alone, not having as yet ordered the serving of the evening meal.

A gayly attired military band was playing noisily in a near-by plaza, and through the intervening distance I was able to distinguish plainly the patriotic notes of national music. I even believed that a medley of shouting voices, mingled with an echo of cheers, was borne to me on the rising night wind, and I leaned above the low railing to gaze down, slightly interested, as a regiment of Chilean infantry—regulars of the line, from their white trousers and stiff hats—swept swiftly past the hotel corner in rapid time, to disappear suddenly over the steep crest in the direction of the quay. Far away, toward the right, where the long row of gray-stone barracks was still dimly visible against the darker background of surrounding hills, was to be discerned a glimmer of steel, as squadrons of cavalry and artillery engaged in dress parade, their numerous banners flapping against the sky. At the moment these several occurrences served to awaken the merest interest, tending rather to bring home to memory a freshening knowledge of the desperation of my situation.

It can all be told in few words: I was persona non grata to the Chilean authorities, with apparently every possible avenue leading forth from the country fully and effectively barred. While personally unknown to those officials, thus far successful in making my movements under the guise of a foreign gentleman of leisure temporarily resident at a fashionable hotel, I nevertheless discovered it impossible to break through the cordon of watchful government spies and shake the Chilean dust from off my feet. A rapid explanation will suffice. A native of Massachusetts, of excellent family connections, together with prospects of future wealth, I early developed the unrestrainable propensities of a rover, and after a vain effort to turn my reluctant ambition toward one of the learned professions my parents, despairing of ever doing better, finally consented to apprentice me to the sea. Unfortunately for the realization of their more secret hopes, I took to that hard, adventurous life as a duck to water, so that, at the end of five years' service, I had risen, through the various grades, to the honorable position of first officer in the old Leyland line, my steamship being the Vulcan, trading between New York and South American ports.

Soon after I attained this berth my father died suddenly, leaving behind him a fair amount of property, a goodly share of which came to me in cash. It chanced that, during a previous voyage, a passenger on board had succeeded in interesting me deeply in certain mining operations which he was conducting under a Bolivian concession. Finding myself in possession of abundant means, and experiencing that occasional disgust for sea life common to all sailor-men, I embarked with boyish enthusiasm in this new enterprise, not only investing a considerable amount of money, but likewise giving the company my personal services as assistant superintendent.

Beyond doubt our concession was an extremely valuable one, but, as we were soon destined to discover, it came to us with an unfortunate flaw in the title, there developing a spirited controversy between the constituted authorities of Bolivia and Chile, over which country the territory involved belonged. From harsh words in public, and the private exchange of diplomatic notes, the argument rapidly advanced to blows, and was finally referred to the arbitration of the rifle. As our financial interests were entirely Bolivian, and our invested money at stake, it was no more than natural that we should openly ally ourselves with that struggling faction which the Chilean authorities promptly de-

nounced as insurgents, and proceeded to crush.

It was something of a comic opera war, resulting in two or three skirmishes wherein ill-equipped and poorly officered paisanos were pitted against regular troops of the line, and, as we received from Bolivia no more substantial aid than vague promises, our resistance, though rather stubborn, was soon overcome. When the final wild stampede for safety came, I discovered myself, as quartermaster general of the late revolutionary forces, still in possession of a considerable sum of money, to which no one else possessed any better claim, the unhealed scar of a Chilean bullet in my shoulder, and an exceedingly flattering chance of being summarily shot by drumhead court-martial if caught. All opportunity for retreat across the Bolivian frontier was already effectively blocked, but, after several weeks of excessive hardship, skulking amid the dark recesses of Indian huts in the mountains, I succeeded in stealing unobserved into Valparaiso, feeling confident that, as a sailor, I should be able to discover in that busy seaport some early opportunity for escape.

This confidence was doomed to bitter disappointment. The Chilean authorities were especially desirous of apprehending me, inspired doubtless by visions of the war-chest, rumored to be of far greater value than truth could justify. They were both alert and suspicious. The American consul was obdurate to pleading, refusing peremptorily to become involved in the affair, while no war vessel floating the flag of the United States, to which I might flee for protection, entered the harbor. Manifestly it was impossible for me to depart on any foreign vessel as a passenger without possessing the necessary papers properly vided, nor could I even ship as seaman before the mast without running the gantlet of numerous suspicious officials especially warned to apprehend me. In brief, though possessing ample means, I was a helpless prisoner, my only safety the keeping out of sight from all in authority within the narrow confines of the hotel.

Sitting there in solitude that evening I thought it out all over again for the hundredth time, bitterly cursing myself for a stupid fool, yet utterly unable to discover any venturesome prospect of ultimate escape. I was trapped as securely as though the hand of actual arrest was about to be placed upon my shoulder. I might, by thus continuing to skulk in the dark, delay the result, yet the final ending was inevitable. Beyond doubt I was cornered, and the time was ripe for the eager acceptance of any reckless opportunity. Yet, desperate as I was, I could perceive none; everywhere arose the same blank wall of Chilean power, impassable, unassailable, insurmountable. Saint Andrew's mine was a situation to chill the blood.

The stars began to gleam in the black void of sky overhead, those brilliant, scintillating stars of the south in their unfamiliar constellations, forever reminding me that I was an alien and a stranger. The city itself, wrapped within the deepening folds of this early night mantle, appeared unusually noisy and demonstrative. I dimly wondered at it. There was a ceaseless blare of bands, a medley of inarticulate cries, mingled with the continuous disorder of shuffling feet along the roughly paved streets. I could distinguish nothing definite as I hung curiously over the balcony rail, staring idly down, yet it was plainly evident that the entire population was astir with some increasing excitement. Far out toward the distant mouth of the harbor a fortress battery was firing salvoes of artillery, the swift flames of discharge cleaving the black shadows in vicious spurts of yellowish red the sullen reverberations of sound shaking the hotel casements. Some Holy Saint's day, I imagined, wondering idly what special devotion of the church could be responsible for so much of uproar, so general an outpouring of enthusiasm. Still, the thought held me barely for a moment; my own personal affairs were far too serious and insistent for any wasted attention upon the saints.

I turned back from the rail and glanced carelessly within. The great dining hall was already brilliantly illuminated, and a number of the tables were surrounded by guests. It formed a cosmopolitan scene, the grouped faces being representative of a wide variety of races, the scraps of conversation which floated to me through the open window revealing half the languages of Europe. Swarthy Spaniards, volatile Frenchmen, silent sons of Albin, talkative Yankees, bewiskered and bespectacled Germans, blonde, rosy-cheeked Swedes, together with representatives from half a dozen South American countries, were indiscriminately mingled in sudden brotherhood. This motley, interesting company was composed principally of men, exhibiting here and there the glitter of military uniforms, or some peculiarity of attire attesting the presence of the inevitable globe-trotter, though the majority were plainly

interested in various lines of trade, and drawn into this vortex from the four corners of the globe in the wild scramble after gold. No foreign passenger steamer had entered the harbor within the past 24 hours, and I had already studied those faces before in the vague, shadowy hope of discovering a friend. I lit another cigarro, out of sheer nervousness, and sat silently watching a Chinese attendant lighting the colored lanterns suspended along the balcony roof. A sudden rocket went swiftly and sizzling up from out the center of the great plaza below, and my eyes followed its swift flight into the black sky until it burst into a thousand miniature stars.

When I turned once again, now half inclined to beckon a waiter and order the serving of dinner, a newly arrived company of guests had taken possession of the small round table just within the open window. Three were in the party, apparently father, mother and daughter, beyond question of high social class. Paterfamilias, sitting in stately dignity at what might be considered the head of the board, a broad napkin spread across his right knee, was typically aristocratic, of spare figure, stern lean face, with iron-gray hair, and mustaches trimmed to perfect point, his eyes, cold and emotionless, gleaming like steel points behind gold-rimmed glasses—a man certainly over 60, possessing to the extreme that irritating hauteur possible only to an Englishman of recognized family and position. The lady occupying the seat opposite him, whom I naturally presumed to be his wife, was fleshy enough to own an ample double chin, which drooped to a vaster expanse below; most expensively gowned, her fingers laden with diamonds, and a longnette at her eye, through which she deliberately surveyed the assembled company. Her evident attempt at duplicating the calm haughtiness of her emotionless companion was nevertheless somewhat of a counterfeit, as it failed to conceal wholly a slight twinkle of amusement curving the corners of her mouth, and a certain slight vulgar uneasiness of manner. His ideal was evidently that of a marble statue, cold, immaculate, his slightest movement revealing the frigidity of one born to the purple, while my lady retained some semblance to flesh and blood, although well veneered by long social artifice. He was nature, while she had evidently been developed by skill; yet the matron, to my thinking, proved far the more interesting specimen of the two.

I must confess, however, wasting precious little attention upon either, for my eyes early rested upon the younger woman seated between the two, and hence directly confronting me. I will not say I never saw a fairer picture of womanhood just when the lovely flower becomes a blossom fully blown, yet assuredly none other ever possessed for me the same indefinable fascination, the same ineffable charm. Twenty-two, possibly, although her age was difficult to guess, with oval face and clear, fresh skin, the rich, red blood of perfect health crimsoning the rounded cheeks; eyes of deepest, darkest gray, the kind of



Three Were in the Party, Apparently Father, Mother and Daughter.

eyes pledging a thoughtful soul behind to yield them such rare power of expression; a face reflecting the joy of living, yet responsive, and, in moments of quietness, saddened beyond its years; an entrancing dimple visible in the rather broad chin; the lips moist and rosy with health, sufficiently parted to reveal a tantalizing glimpse of white, regular teeth behind; the forehead low and broad, the wealth of shadowing hair of darkest brown, yet with an odd gleam of reddish gold, causing the gathered masses to seem an aureole of beauty. But it was not the outward face alone, nor any combination of pleasing features, which yielded such rare and indescribable charm—it was rather a distinct and unusual personality which gave to these both life and attractiveness. Her slightest glance or movement, natural and unaffected, seemed a new revelation of self, the outer expression of a secret inward life which I instinctively longed to penetrate, the guarded mystery of which was invitation.

The three conversed little, speaking English with that lack of restraint common to those who have been accustomed to having discreet servants behind their chairs, the man grumbling idly over the quality of food furnished and the indifferent service, my lady commenting with audible distinctness on the personal appearance of the various people present, the girl contenting herself with an occasional monosyllable when directly addressed.



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RAIN BRINGS MUCH NEEDED RELIEF

Settles the Dust and Nature Takes on Spring Raiment

This section was treated this morning to a light shower, the first real spring shower of the year. The rainfall was very light being but little more than enough to lay the dust but such as it was it was very welcome as it resulted in brightening vegetation and causing the dust covered leaves to be washed clean and shine out resplendent in beautiful spring tints. The rainfall was accompanied by vivid lightning and some genuine spring thunder which rolled and reverberated in the heavens.

By 8 o'clock the sun had broken through the clouds and the shower had passed off to the southeast, Iowa being apparently treated to a genuine soaking as the clouds seemed heavier in that direction than here. The rainfall down the river is also apparently much heavier than in this vicinity. The hope is entertained now that the drouth has been broken and the first shower of the spring to be followed by warm weather has taken place, there will be many more as they are badly needed.

One of the prettiest sights after the shower was the hills along the river below the depot. They are covered with trees just bursting into leaf and bright green when fresh from the taste of the rain, and this morning when the sun came out, their green was at its most brilliant hue and the hills were brightened with a color which the art of the painter

could never hope to depict. Yesterday they were yellow and dirty with the color of the sand from the bars in the river and the transformation was a marvelous one. Passengers on the trains must have been struck with the magnificent sight along the river bluffs when vegetation, fresh and green with the morning's bath shone out beautiful in the sunlight.

The ground is very dry and wheat has been suffering considerably from lack of moisture. The dryness of the ground has also interfered very materially with planting and plowing and farmers have been especially uneasy over continued absence of rain. It will take a real, hard soaking rain of some twenty-four hours duration to put the ground into proper condition for planting and starting crops. The weather bureau today forecasts more showers for the day which helps considerably but a general rain is what the farmers want.

The frost and freeze of Monday night it is now believed, did any material damage to fruit in this section. Fruit growers interviewed state the several fruit crops were of a stage of growth which was such that the frost could not materially injure them although the freeze was a rather severe one. If this turns out to be correct, there is every indication that the fruit to be raised in this section during the coming year will be a bumper crop.

The Day of the "Fan."

Today is the day of the baseball "fan." The season starts in Omaha on this day A. D. 1909 and they will all be there to see. If Omaha does not have a record breaking crowd we miss our guess. Blue skies, a soft, warm air, ideal weather in every respect and the Wichita team which has been playing phenomenal ball since the season started ought to be a strong enough combination to fill the stands and cause a big overflow into the field. The game should be a hot one and doubtless will. The lure of the game called out a fair sized crowd of "fans" from this city and the court house looks like a deserted village. Register of Deeds Schneider who probably holds the penant as champion "fan" deserted at noon and saawseae rnbgbkagokqoikq and was a passenger on the mail. County Judge Beeson who disputes the championship vigorously with Schneider also raced away on the mail train for an early start while Court Reporter Earl Travis who insists he's in the running for the championship, also was a passenger on that train. Thom. Walling while while not strictly a court house man, is still so nearly one that he must be classed that way, also was a passenger at noon. Others who cast aside the cares of business for the national game were Claude Shumaker who left Manager Dunbar to run the hotel without his assistance this afternoon, Albert Scuttler, who has been wooing the flimsy tribe in the river for the past several days, found the temptation too great and he too went up to see the opening game, Clay Rosencrans deserted his chair at the Riley barber shop and is among those attending the game

also while the list of others is somewhat extended. They are all rooters.

Unable to Locate.

The Havelock city council met Monday and decided to issue four or five more licenses to applicants for saloons if these applicants can secure sites for their places. So far no petitions have been filed with the city clerk because none of the applicants have been able to secure a lease for the locations. Four men have been trying to locate, three of them Lincoln saloon keepers. It was said that Gus A. Gugenheimer had been fortunate enough to secure a building but later developments prove that the tenant now holding the location refuses to get out. The location is now occupied by a pool hall, the proprietor of which has no lease but has a license to operate in that location. He is said to be ready to fight to hold the location.

A petition was started among Havelock business men last night to ask the city council to grant no more licenses for saloons on main street licenses for saloons on the main street of the city. Three Lincoln men were arrested in Havelock yesterday on a charge of drunkenness. This fact is pointed at significantly by Havelock people. Some of them say they are willing to take the money of Lincoln thirsty ones but don't want them as citizens, and are going to see that they behave while they are in the shop city. kqjwyp are in the shop city.—Lincoln State Journal.

Peter C. Petersen departed this morning for Lincoln where he will remain all week as a delegate at the grand lodge of the A. O. U. W.

A Pleasant Affair.

A very pleasant affair was the reception tendered District Deputy Skelton of the Knights and Ladies of Security last Monday evening at the comfortable home of Hon. R. B. Windham. The occasion was made a notable one by the members of the order who were present in large numbers to meet Mr. Skelton, and all those who were favored by going were made to realize that it was a time long to be remembered. There was a nice and attractive program for the occasion and refreshments followed in the course of the evening. The Knights and Ladies in this city have been enjoying a steady and substantial growth during the past year and are now one of the strongest fraternal lodges in the city.

Mrs. George E. Dovey and daughter Miss Catherine, are spending the afternoon in Omaha having been passengers for that city on the mail.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE.

In the District Court of Cass County, Nebraska. In the Matter of the Estate of Telltha Walling, Deceased. This cause coming on to be heard on the petition of W. E. Hand, administrator of the estate of Telltha Walling, deceased, to sell the real estate belonging to the said estate, to-wit: The Southwest Quarter (S. W. 1-4) of the Northwest Quarter (N. W. 1-4) and the Southwest Quarter (S. W. 1-4) of the Southwest Quarter (S. W. 1-4) of Section Twelve (12) Township Eleven (11), Range Eight (8), in Lancaster County, Nebraska, subject to a mortgage thereon of Fifteen Hundred Dollars (\$1500) now due to pay the debts allowed against said estate and costs of administration, it is ordered: That all parties interested in said estate be and appear before the undersigned Judge of the District Court of Cass County, Nebraska, at chambers in the Court House at Plattsmouth, in said Cass County, on the Twenty-fourth day of May, 1909, to show cause, if any, and why he should not be granted to the said W. E. Hand as such administrator to sell the above described property. And it is further ordered that this order be published for four weeks in the Plattsmouth Journal, a newspaper published and of general circulation in said Cass County, Nebraska. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 12th day of April, 1909.

Harvey D. Travis, Judge of the District Court.

LEGAL NOTICE.

State of Nebraska, County of Cass, ss. In County Court: In the matter of the Estate of John L. Axmaker, deceased. TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED: You are hereby notified that there has been filed in this court petition of Rosetta Axmaker, alleging among other things that said John L. Axmaker departed this life intestate in Cass County, Nebraska, and at said time as an inhabitant of said county, leaving an estate to be administered. The prayer of said petition is that Letters of Administration be granted to Rosetta Axmaker. You are further notified that a hearing will be had on said petition before this court in the County Court room at Plattsmouth, in said County on the 17th day of May, 1909, at 10 o'clock a. m. and all objections if any, must be filed on or before said day and hour of hearing. Witness my hand and the seal of the County Court of said County, this 21st day of April, 1909. (SEAL) By the Court, Allen J. Beeson, County Judge.

D. K. Barr, Attorney.

LEGAL NOTICE.

To James A. Dysart; a non-resident defendant. You are hereby notified that on the 1st day of May, A. D. 1909, Helena A. Dysart filed a petition against you in the District Court of Cass County, Nebraska, the object and prayer of which are, First, To obtain a divorce from you on the ground that you have willfully abandoned the plaintiff without good cause for more than two years last, and Second, that you have grossly and wantonly failed and neglected to support said plaintiff, and Third, To quiet the title to the Northwest quarter (N. W. 1-4) of Section ten (10), Township ten (10), Range twelve (12), east, in the County of Cass, State of Nebraska, in said plaintiff against you. You are required to make answer to said petition on or before the 14th day of June, A. D. 1909. Helena A. Dysart, Plaintiff.

By Ramsey & Ramsey, Her Attorneys.

ATTACHMENT NOTICE.

L. E. Ousley, will take notice, that on the 13th day of April, 1909, M. Archer, a Justice of the Peace of Cass County, Nebraska, issued an order of attachment for the sum of \$15.85 in an action pending before him, wherein Joseph Fetzner is plaintiff, and L. E. Ousley is defendant, that property of the defendant, consisting of money has been attached under said order, said cause was continued to the 23rd day of May, 1909, at 9 o'clock a. m. Joseph Fetzner, Plaintiff.