

# The Last Voyage of The Donna Isabel

By Randall Parrish

Author of Bob Hampton of Placer.

Illustrations by Deaborn Melville

with that. See! here I possess the commission, all signed and sealed by my government, of a captain in the Peruvian navy. Only is the name left blank for me to write in. I write in your name; that makes you an officer of the Peruvian navy. See you what it means? Chile dare not touch you except as prisoner of war. Is that not right, señor? But I not stop even with that—no, no! When the Esmeralda comes safely to Peru, the government pays you five thousand American dollars in gold. I pledge you that, I, Emilio de Castillo, admiral."

I walked the floor twice from wall to wall, thinking swiftly, the sodden cigar clinched tightly between my teeth. I could perceive no reason why the deed might not be accomplished if luck favored, and I was sufficiently young so that the danger rather appealed than repelled. Suddenly I wheeled and faced him, still seated at the table.

"You may fill out the blank, señor," I announced, quietly. "I will try a throw of the dice."

## CHAPTER IV.

### In Which I Meet My Crew.

The polite hotel clerk halted me as I passed his desk on the way out with information that a drunken naval officer—evidently Sanchez—had been there twice already seeking me, had also asked for Lord Darlington, and would return again at ten o'clock. I thanked him, smiling to myself, wondering if the English nobleman was to be challenged also, and promptly disappeared into the night without. The unfortunate affair with the aggrieved lieutenant had become a small matter no longer troubling me.

I have wandered by night through most of the seaports of the world, knowing well the intricacies and dark places of Port Said, Melbourne and Calcutta, but I doubt if even the unspeakable orient can equal for dirt, squalor, crime and peril those narrow, crooked alleyways where sailors most do congregate against the Valparaiso water-front. Here gather in bestial rioting the scum of the South seas, and here flourish their parasites. Any night a trip alone through those foul lanes is of the kind to test strong nerves; but on this special occasion, the way filled with pandemonium and drunkenness, the entire city a riot of noisy violence, the populace aroused to fierce hate toward all foreigners, the passage was one of constantly recurring danger. The street lights, few and far between, were mere blotches of color winking feebly at the surrounding darkness, the rough cobblestone pavement underfoot was irregular and deceitful, while drunken crowds, either quarrelsome or mauldilly affectionate, surged aimlessly about, gesticulating and yelling with Latin fervor. However, I knew the way well, and kept myself hidden from observation by hovering close beneath the protecting shadows of the buildings, drawing well back within doorways to permit the noisier parties of revellers to pass, and then hurrying forward along the deserted streets. I stumbled over the body of more than one drunken man, while sounds of quarreling were borne to me through the open door of every low taproom I passed. The scum of Valparaiso had come to the top, the fires of hell burning fiercely.

Pedro Rodrigues' den stood somewhat back from the narrow lane it fronted, flanked and concealed by taller buildings on either side. It was a ramshackle, wooden affair, sagging sadly at one corner, the half dozen steps leading to the open door being only dimly lighted. As it was a well-known resort, frequented almost entirely by foreign seamen who would scarcely be safe on the streets such a night as this, it was no surprise to discover the taproom densely crowded with sailor-men, and to distinguish a voice singing lustily in vigorous English, to an accompaniment of glasses pounding upon the rough tables. Indeed, a wild, hilarious mob greeted me loudly as I pressed aside the heavy curtain and stepped within. I cast a quick, comprehensive glance over the faces, upturned through the enveloping haze—Swedes and Finns from the North sea, Dutchmen of the Baltic, hairy Englishmen from the channel, Yankees of the West Atlantic, beach-combers from out of the South seas, with here and there a negro or brown-faced Kanaka to add to the variety. Faith, it was a choice collection, as though the wide waters of the world had been skimmed to bring together that rare crew of beauties. Perched high upon a table, his long legs encased in sea boots, seated astride a chair, sat the singer, his mop of coarse red hair standing erect, his jaw that of a bulldog, the scar of a recent knife wound showing ghastly across one cheek, his blue shirt open at the throat to reveal a hairy chest; beneath thatched brows his eyes glinted and gleamed in a ferocious attempt at good humor.

"Slog, ye bullock!" he roared, after

world saints and sinners must indeed mingle bodily, yet not in any communion of spirit. It was for peaceful meditation that friend De Nova and I deserted yonder scene of revelry and sought this secluded spot. Truly the good book saith that where one or two are gathered together in his name there is he also in the midst of them."

The creole laughed outright, smiting the table smartly with his palm.

"Sit down, mate!" he exclaimed, genially, kicking up a chair. "After you know zis o' hypocrite as well as I do, his communion viz spirits won't bother you much. Help yourself to drink, an' wash the taste out you' mouth."

Tuttle wheeled about and stared at his companion, his thin jaw working savagely; but the creole went on rolling a cigarette indifferently between his brown fingers, his white teeth gleaming. I remained standing, my hand on the back of the chair, intently studying the pair.

"I come directly from Don Castillo," I said, quietly, facing the Yankee, and determined to get down to business, and desire to speak with you alone."

His glinting eyes narrowed perceptibly, and his jaws crunched down upon the tobacco in his cheek.

"Tis safe enough with him," he acknowledged rather ungraciously, his voice becoming nasal as he pointed his chin-beard toward the other. "De Nova is second officer."

I drew back the chair and sat down, realizing that I now possessed the attention of both.

"I have been appointed to assume Capt. Castellar's duties," I announced quietly. "Do either of you care to examine my papers?"

Tuttle spat silently into the sawdust, while De Nova exhibited his white teeth in a grin. The eyes of the two men met.

"I rather guess your papers won't cut much ice in this year affair," returned the former with deliberate insolence, "being as how we don't either of us give a tinker's dam' for Peru, if you'll pardon my sayin' so plain."

His mask had disappeared as by magic, and I realized instantly the real nature of the man.

"You mean no enlistment has been made, either by you, or the men under you?"

"That's just about the size of it, mister," his tone full of unconcealed contempt, his leg flung once again over the arm of the chair. "We agreed to do this one particular job fer a certain consideration, but we're none of us Peruvian sailor-men, and consequently don't give a hang for your papers. Ain't that about it, De Nova?"

The creole nodded, still smiling pleasantly, the blue smoke curling lazily up from the end of his cigarette.

Evidently the two were actively engaged in taking my measure, and this was to be a case of man against man,

rather than the exercise of any delegated authority. I might as well throw my commission into the fire for any real value it possessed here. All right; I had met and attended to their kind before.

"I am delighted to understand the situation so clearly and quickly," I

said, throwing a note of authority into my voice and manner. "It simplifies my task. Now listen to me, Mr. Tuttle," giving him his formal title, "and you likewise, De Nova. I probably care as little for those papers as either of you, but, nevertheless, I am in command. Do you both clearly comprehend that—I am in command! It will be just as well for you not to attempt any horse-play. I am no dago sea-officer, but a North American sailor, and I didn't come crawling into my first ship through a cabin window. I've tamed mutinous crews before now, and when I'm up against sea-scum I can hit as hard as the next fellow. If either of you decide to test my qualities as a bucko-mate, I'm here to accommodate you."

Neither answered, but I read their conclusion in their eyes.

"That's all I need to say now," I

went on. "It's up to you to fish or cut bait. You fellows have nothing to gain by opposing me, and I hope you possess sense enough to know it. De Nova, where have I ever met you before?"

"You are Ell Tuttle, then, formerly

of the whaling bark *Betsy*?"

"Even so, young man," his lean face perfectly emotionless, his long fingers outspread flat on the table. "Ell Tuttle of New Bedford, once the chief of sinners, but now communing with the higher life of the spirit world. Associate me not with yonder ungodly crew, blind to the truth of the beyond," and he snapped his fingers softly toward the closed door. "In this

I know you do business."

"But I am unable to place you."

"No, not yet; maybe you will when I say more." He spoke rapidly, gesticulating with excitement. "It was a little ship off Hatteras; ze storm five days, an' all wreck. It was a steamer, white, wiss red stacks, zat took off ze crew, an' it was hell of a job. Zat was ze story, monsieur; I was mate of ze Cymbeline."

I knew him then instantly, my memory picturing anew the cold, gray dawn, the green, angry seas, the helpless, sodden hulk heaving sickeningly to its death, and those water-drenched forms we hauled over the sinking rail into our tossing boat. I held forth my hand, and his brown fingers, hard as iron, closed over it in a grip to be felt.

"Sure, it's come back, mate," I said. "I rather guess I can count on you."

His dark eyes met mine in frank honesty.

"Running arms for the Cuban revolutionists then, weren't you?" I asked, indifferently. "What since?"

He shrugged his shoulders, glancing across at Tuttle, and fingering his mustache.

"Ze last was sandalwood in ze South seas. I care little, so ze pay be good."

"Then we'll get down to facts," and I sat back in the chair fronting the two of them. "Mr. Tuttle, how many men have you enlisted for this affair?"

"Twenty."

"Those fellows out yonder?" and I nodded toward the closed door. He exhibited his yellow teeth, his eyes narrowing.

"They'll be about all ye'll want to tackle, I guess," he volunteered, with some assumption of cheerfulness, "unless maybe you decide to turn this expedition into piracy, an' give 'em half the spols. They're that sort, all right."

I straightened back in my chair, my jaws set hard, my gaze endeavoring vainly to catch and hold his shifty eye.

"Mr. Tuttle," I said, sternly, "as I understand matters I am captain this cruise, and you're mate. Whenever I desire your advice I'll probably ask for it. Just at present please confine yourself to my questions. What crew have you?"

The expression of his face was angry enough, yet he evidently thought best to answer civilly.

"First and second officers, boatswain and gunner, five coal-heavers, the rest seamen."

"Nationality?"

"Every mongrel race under the sky."

"You have no engineer?"

"Couldn't pick up any; however, there's one on board, and, no doubt, we can persuade him to stick to the job."

The man's manner and tone remained surly and insolent, but I gripped my indignation and held back the hot words burning my tongue. It was necessary that I make the best of it now, but after we were once safely at sea I intended very shortly to take the measure of this Yankee whaleman. My eyes wandered toward the olive-faced face of De Nova, barely visible through the enveloping smoke of his cigarette. The latter nodded cheerfully, as though he interpreted my thought.

"Oh, ze men was all right, monsieur," he put in, smilingly. "Maybee a bit rough, but, sacre, wat' would you?" his shoulders rising to the question.

"Mr. Tuttle be grumble, but it was all back. I know him, an' I razzer him soan he zoan hear him talk to ze spirits; w'en he do zat, it make me sick, by gar!"

"You blaspheming, mongrel infidel," the whaleman's nasal voice rising shrill with anger. "I don't have to count beads in order to lift my soul to the other world."

"There is liable to be fighting enough before morning," I interposed, sharply, fearing a quarrel, "without comrades falling out about their behe. Leave that for lubbers ashore to argue over. Now tell me what arrangements have been made for boarding the *Esmeralda*?"

Tuttle spat into the sawdust, his gaze still on De Nova.

"Two boats concealed beneath the piling of the Mercantile Company's coal wharf; a whaleboat and a cutter."

"Any arms?"

"A dozen rifles, six in each boat."

I arose to my feet, glancing at my watch in the dim light. He had not given me the customary "air" in any of his replies, yet I ignored the omission, willing for the time being to sink formality for the sake of action.

"Very well, Mr. Tuttle. Have your men there in an hour from now. They

had better travel in parties of two; and see that they start out sober. You understand these orders clearly, I hope, sir—have them there in an hour, sober. De Nova, you must know how to bring sailor-men to their senses; get busy with that gang. Now work rapidly and quickly, both of you, for if we get caught, this is likely to be a hanging matter for all of us."

I stared at the two of them for just an instant—De Nova on his feet, Tuttle leaning forward in his chair—and stepped forth into the outer room,

closing the door behind me. A drunken yell greeted my re-entrance into the boisterous crowd, but ignoring everything, glancing neither to right nor left, I picked my way through the motley gathering out into the welcome blackness of the night.

## CHAPTER V.

### In Which We Gain the Deck.

I paused a moment amid the dense shadows to reflect more carefully upon some of the details of our night's work. For the first time I clearly



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### An Enjoyable Event.

The Ladies' Aid society of Mynard entertained the Ladies' Missionary society of Liberty at the hospitable home of Mrs. Charles Spangler, near Murray, last Wednesday afternoon, May 19.

Social conversation held sway during the greater part of the afternoon. Misses Gertrude Cole, Mae Barker and Eva Porter furnished several instrumental selections, and Miss Barker also gave a reading, all of which was greatly enjoyed by those present.

An elegant two course luncheon was served and as the sun neared the horizon the ladies departed for their homes all voting the Aid Society in general and Mrs. Spangler in particular, a splendid hostess.

Those who enjoyed this glorious occasion were Mrs. Albert Wetencamp, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. McCoy, Mrs. Propst, Mrs. Lair, Mrs. Marler, Mrs. Luke Wilen, Mrs. Ed. Spangler, Mrs. Fred Spangler, Mrs. Will Stokes, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Peter Perry, Mrs. Steve Barker, Mrs. Verner Perry, Mrs. Earle Cole, Mrs. Glen Verry, Mrs. Sporer, Mrs. Fleming, Mrs. Virgen, Mrs. Lloyd Gopen, Mrs. Osral Virgen, Mrs. John Spangler, Mrs. Charles Spangler, Mrs. Charles Perry, Mrs. Oscar Gopen, Mrs. Wilbur Cole, Mrs. Joe Cook, Mrs. Frank Young, Mrs. W. D. Wheeler, Mrs. Albert Wheeler, Misses Mae Barker, Lizzie Spangler, Eva Porter, Gertrude Cole, Glenna Barker and Lizzie Wheeler.

### A Nervous Man.

The modern style of life created the nervous man. He cannot stay for a long while in one place, cannot attend to business properly, cannot eat or sleep, hates society and amusements. His nerves are exhausted and need new food. The simplest and best way to feed the nerves is to compel the digestive organs to accept and digest enough nutritious food. Give the patient Triner's American Elixir of Bitter Wine, regularly for some time, to stimulate the appetite. As soon as this is done the digestive organs will resume their work, new blood will result from the assimilation of food and this new blood will distribute the food to every particle of the human body. The nerves will become strong. Use this remedy in all forms of nervousness and in disturbances of the digestion. At drug stores. Jos. Trinner, 616-622 S. Ashland avenue, Chicago, IL.

The Knights Templar last evening held the installation of officers at their lodge room in the Masonic building, the following being the officers installed, viz:

Justus G. Richey, Eminent Commander.

Dr. Cook, Generalissimo.

Dr. T. P. Livingston, Captain General.

James Robertson, Senior Warden.

W. L. Pickett, Junior Warden.

George W. Thomas, Warden.

John C. Paterson, Recorder.

Canon H. B. Burgess, Prelate.

Alfred W. White, Treasurer.

Fred T. Ramge, Standard Bearer.

Dr. L. F. Cummings, Sword Bearer.

John Bauer, Jr., Sentinel.

Homer Crippen of LaPlatte came

over this morning from his home to

do some shopping in the city, returning on the mail train at noon. Mr.