

# The Last Voyage of The Donna Isabel

By Randall Parrish

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Illustrations by Deaborn Melville

empty sea. Had I done what was right in all these circumstances? Under God, I was not really certain; yet I could perceive no other action possible.

A slenderly built, stoop-shouldered young fellow, who shuffled about like a waiter ashore, was in the pantry, and I noticed a white cloth spread over the table, which had been lowered from its stanchions and now occupied the center of the main cabin, and a swinging shelf suspended above.

"Ever act in this capacity before, Dade?" I asked, sizing him up in the dim light.

"Oh, yes, sir," a slight lisp to his tongue; "I've done cabin work on the coast liners."

"Then you should surely understand your business. Lay covers for four."

"Four, sir?" in surprise.

"That is what I said, Dade; two ladies, Mr. Tuttle, and myself. That makes four to my figuring. Now step lively, my lad. When will breakfast be ready to serve?"

"In about 15 minutes, sir."

I waited until he became busy with his work, his face still filled with amazement over my revelation, then walked around the end of the piano, and rapped softly at the after-cabin door. Celeste opened the door with a dainty courtesy and a quick uplifting of frightened eyes to my face. She had been crying, and in some way her very manner made me suddenly aware how poorly I stood in the estimation of her mistress and herself. Yet, for the moment, I did not seriously care, stepping quietly within, cap in hand, intent merely on the rapid completion of my visit. Lady Darlington arose instantly from her chair, steadying herself to the roll of the vessel with one hand on the brass rail of the bed, and fronted me silently, the expression of her face expectant but reserved. Gazing upon her, I felt the fully revealed power of her beauty, as the sunlight streaming through the open port illumined her hair and outlined the delicate oval of her face. Troubled as she was, surrounded by a terror no less real because she failed thoroughly to comprehend it, facing one she must distrust and secretly fear, her first utterance, friendly and courteous, merely exhibited a heart which beat warmly beneath its slight armor of pride.

"I am exceedingly glad to greet you again, Mr. Stephens," she said, pleasantly, even endeavoring to smile; "you were absent so long we had begun to expect evil news."

"I regret to say, Lady Darlington, that I bring you only very little of any kind," I replied, striving earnestly to imitate her self-possession. "Arrangements on board have not yet assumed definite shape, so that I can make no promise concerning your future. I can merely assure you present safety, and pledge you every comfort the yacht affords while you remain with us."

She continued to gaze at me strangely, her eyes filled with questioning.

"Then you—you refuse to tell us our fate?"

"Merely because I do not know it. As I said before I am only one man pitted against 20."

She pressed her hand over her eyes, as though she would hide from me the sudden horror pictured within their depths.

"What are you?" she exclaimed, suddenly, her lips trembling. "Into whose hands have we fallen? I beg that you answer me honestly—why have you stolen this yacht? What real purpose underlies this terrible outrage?"

I made no effort to disguise the deep sympathy I felt for her, yet there was nothing I could answer but must have sounded both harsh and cruel.

"The motive animating the men in control is similar to that which renders possible most of the desperate deeds of the world—the search after treasure."

"Treasure!" she gasped, thoroughly bewildered. "Where do you propose going to search?"

"Far south, into the Antarctic."

The expression on her face was pitiful, yet I stood helpless to comfort.

"Merciful God! And you actually mean to bear us with you into that forsaken sea of ice? Oh, surely you

jest, you seek to frighten; you cannot be earnest in such act of cruelty. Whom can I believe? What can I hope? You have told me you were the captain of this crew of buccaneers, and yet you say you can accomplish nothing with them to forward our release. Then take me to those who can! Let me beg upon my knees for mercy. Surely, surely we are of no value to you in your search after treasure. We are only weak, helpless women. Think of what this must mean to me, and be merciful."

There was no trace of tears in her eyes, but it was the white, agonized face, the unconsciously outspread arms of appeal, that smote me. I felt all my limbs tremble, my lips falter, as I made swift response.

"Lady Darlington, believe me, I have no desire except honestly to serve you. The actual truth is, I have consented to retain what is a purely nominal command of this vessel, with no other purpose except that such outward authority yields me some opportunity to assist and protect you. Otherwise I would spurn the whole affair and defy these outlaws to do their worst. It was a deplorable accident that brought me here and placed me in this situation. Practically I am as much a prisoner on board as yourself. Later, if the opportunity ever be given, I shall relate you my story, and then, perhaps, you will appreciate how perfectly helpless I am to overrule the decision of this vessel's crew. They are mad with the lust of gold, crazed by the prospect of suddenly achieving vast wealth through a single bold stroke. Would the tears of a woman influence them



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now? would the impotent threat of a single, helpless man? They are armed, organized, determined, desperate.

"The only thing I can do is apparently to yield to them, trusting thus to persuade them into some measure of mercy; and the only thing you can do is patiently to abide my efforts to release you from such companionship. I mean to do my best, even to the sacrifice of my life. The very thought of bearing you with us into the fogs and dangers of that storm-lashed ocean is misery to me. God knows I would do anything possible to spare you such a fate. But I wish you to understand, realize fully, how difficult my own position is. I do not bid you hope; only pray, and, above all, retain your courage. I promise nothing, because I dare venture no pledge. But I beseech you not to break down, not to exhibit open fear. In any event our first effort should be to awaken confidence in the minds of our captors and arrive at a frank understanding between ourselves. Lady Darlington will you be guided in this by my judgment?"

"Oh, I wish to believe," she sobbed, only half aloud, "I need some one, some one in whom I feel confidence, in whom I may repose faith. I beg of you not to consider me weak, a nerveless creature, but this situation is intolerable. I will endeavor to do what you ask. I will strive to be brave, helpful, appreciative. I—I think you are what you say. See, I give you my hand in promise."

I clasped it instantly within both my own, bending low above the white fingers, my lips set in firm resolve. I retained it still when I lifted my head, and our glances met.

"What is your first desire of me?" "Breakfast has been prepared, and is now awaiting us in the cabin," I answered, knowing well that some form of action must strengthen her more quickly than any further talk. "And I wish you to join us at the table exactly as though this was an ordinary voyage."

"I know the food will choke me. Does Celeste sit with us?"

"I believe you would prefer having her in the circumstances. You would not feel quite so much alone."

"I should like it; it was most thoughtful upon your part. Shall we be alone at table?"

"With the exception of the first officer, who is really the leader on board."

It was evident plainly enough that she shrank from the ordeal, the delicate lines hardening about the mouth, the gray eyes eloquent of disinclination. A moment she hesitated, her form away as though buffeted by a storm; then she slowly bent her head.

"I am at your service, Mr. Stephens."

In the main cabin we discovered the table already set and waiting, appearance cheerful with a brave array of cloth and glittering

silver. The wall shelf above adorned with flowers and a vase of flowers.

"Call Mr. Tuttle, Dade," I ordered, quietly. "Then hurry back and serve."

CHAPTER XII.

In Which I Endeavor to Ascertain Authority.

I was on deck again at noon, and shot the sun, returning below to work out our position. The Sea Queen still held closely to her course, almost directly west, and, realizing my helplessness, I forbore asking useless questions. Indeed, I was secretly pleased that Tuttle still held to that point of the compass, for we were now in the direct path of Australian commerce, and hence much more likely to raise a sail at any moment than if we veered farther to the southward. If any such vessel appeared I had determined to pit my strength against the crew, even to the point of physical danger.

At one o'clock Dade called the women, and soon the four of us were seated at table again. My lady's manner weighed upon my spirits, which had been none of the lightest before her appearance. I felt profoundly that the faint influence my previous words had inspired within her mind had already evaporated; that she now held me as at one with the remainder of the yacht's crew. I arose as they retired from the table, but received no reward of recognition from her averted eyes. Feeling deserted, almost humiliated, I smoked my pipe alone on deck under the lee of the cabin. But it was perfectly useless loitering there, with no duties to perform, and the sea all about bare to the far horizon. Besides, some sailor instinct told me a storm was brewing yonder to the

northward which might keep me upon the bridge all night, so, in preparation for such a possibility, I went below and lay down in my bunk. I was a long time getting asleep, finally dropping off only to be aroused by the rattling of dishes when Dade arranged the table for the last meal of the day.

De Nova was pacing the bridge and emerged from the companion. I could not see the seaman who hailed, the mist held so thick, and his words seemed like a weak echo.

"Sail, almost directly ahead, sir."

"Whereaway?" asked De Nova, peering anxiously forward. "I can see nothing. Fo'e'st's! zee—you see zee ship?"

"Nothin' in sight from here, sir."

The mate stared up into the vapor overhead.

"Ware was it you see it, you fellow on ze foreyard?"

The odd echo of a voice came back out of the sky.

"I only caught her through a hole in the fog, sir, one point off the weather-bow."

With a swift bound I was up the steps to the bridge and beside the second officer, recklessly determined to assume command. Before he clearly realized my presence I jangled the bells in the engine room.

"Hold her steady as she is," I said sternly to the fellow grasping the wheel.

De Nova wheeled and faced me, his black eyes full of sudden anger.

"What ze hell you mean?" he exclaimed, so surprised he stuttered. "I was officer of ze deck."

"And I am commanding the yacht, Mr. De Nova," I retorted quickly, pushing back his hand from the signal, "I propose speaking that vessel yonder, and transshipping our passengers. Port a little, my man—no, port, you fool!—now hold her so; steady."

De Nova grasped my arm, his fingers like steel, but I broke away, pressing in between him and the rail.

"Lay your hands on me again," I threatened, sternly, "and I'll floor you to the deck. I'll take that grin off your face, De Nova, if you attempt any interference with me now."

He understood quickly enough what I meant, and evidently had no relish for attacking me alone, for with one swift, searching glance into the fog, he leaped down the steps and ran hastily aft. I knew he was seeking the backing of Tuttle, and armed myself with a belaying pin, peering eagerly meanwhile for the near-by sail and cursing the fellow at the wheel for not holding her up to the point directed. They came up together, two steps at a time, Tuttle in his shirt sleeves, and, as they attained the bridge, Bill Anderson swung himself out of the hatch and started after them. I backed away, the ugly iron pin grasped in my hand.

"You'd better keep back," I warned.

(To be Continued)



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## VERY BEAUTIFUL HOME WEDDING

### Nuptials of Mr. Walter J. Downing and Miss Jeanette K. Pickens Celebrated

A quiet but very pretty home wedding was solemnized this noon at the home of Mrs. A. B. Swarthout on Pearl street when Rev. J. H. Salsbury spoke the words which united for life Miss Jeanette K. Pickens of River Forest, Ill. and Mr. Walter J. Downing of Junction City, Kas.

The wedding was entirely a home affair, those in attendance being confined to the immediate relatives of the contracting parties and a very few personal friends of the bride.

For the occasion the house had been splendidly decorated, the parlors of the charming Swarthout home being tastefully adorned with white roses and the handsome bloom of the syringa. The large and commodious bay window in whose recess the ceremony was performed was banked with palm and syringas making it a veritable bower of beauty.

Promptly at the noon hour the happy couple took their place within the shelter of the window, to the strains of the beautiful "Spring Song" of Mendelssohn played by Mrs. Parker—a joyous air well suited to so auspicious an occasion. The bride was charmingly dressed in white lawn carrying the pretty white bride roses and with handsome sweet peas adorning her hair, while the groom wore the conventional black. The bridesmaid Miss Helen Swarthout, a cousin of the bride, was also attired in white and carried a lovely bouquet of pink roses. The groomsmen, Willie E. Pickens, a brother of the bride, was attired in the usual black.

As the strains of the "Spring Song" died away, Rev. J. H. Salsbury spoke the words for the ring ceremony uniting these two loving young hearts until the end of this life. Mrs. Parker throughout the ceremony played music softly in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

Following the ceremony, the entire wedding party sat down to a wedding dinner in the commodious dining room of the Swarthout home, the room and table being decorated in a rare and beautiful combination of pink and green. The dinner was of three courses.

The newly wedded couple will leave the city this evening for their future home at Junction City, Kas., where they will be at home to their friends. Among those present at the wedding from out of the city were

W. H. Pickens, father of the bride, Willie E. Pickens, brother of the bride and Miss Bessie Willis all of River Forest, Ill. Mrs. Parker, a cousin of the bride of Houston, Tex. Mrs. Downing, mother of the groom, and Mrs. Myers, sister of the groom, of Junction City, Kas. Mrs. Thompson aunt of the bride, of North Platte, and Don C. Despain and wife of Lincoln, Neb.

The bride is a young lady born in this city, a most charming and accomplished young lady with many friends wherever she has lived. During her early childhood she lived in this city and the rudiments of her education were absorbed in the city schools of this place. It has been eighteen years since she was taken from this city by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Pickens, who removed at that time. During the interim visits to this city and renewing the acquaintances of her childhood but a few years past. As her girlhood days have dropped away from her and the full bloom of womanhood has come upon her, she has grown in personal attractiveness and in intellectual worth until now she is a young woman of rare attainments. Those who have known her since early childhood have learned to appreciate the lovely qualities which she possesses and they hasten to extend their congratulations and best wishes for a long and happy wedded life.

The groom is a prominent young man of Junction City, Kas., a gentleman of much sterling worth and of high character who stands justly high in his community and who has many friends who tender him the best of wishes upon his advent on matrimonial seas.

There were numerous telegrams of congratulations received by the happy couple today immediately following the ceremony from friends in Chicago, Arizona, California and other places.

Puts the Train Back.

After a brief experience with the evening train to Omaha the Burlington has again revised its time card and changed the time of this train going back to an afternoon train service to Omaha. The new train time will be just about 2 o'clock, exact figures not being out.

No. 92 from the west will run as at present, the train being immediately turned at the Junction and

leaving that place for Omaha at 1.45 p. m.

The evening train was found to be a failure and resulted in a big loss of revenue to the Company. The business which formerly went to Omaha at noon failed to go up except in greatly diminished numbers on the morning train. There will possibly be other changes in train time as the new schedule which is to be effective June 27, provides for a cut of one half hour in the time of No. 5 from Chicago to Omaha. This may make No. 15 due here at 8.08 a. m. come through earlier in the day probably about 7.45. This is not definitely known, however.

The Omaha Bee speaks of the proposed changes as follows:

Many additional miles of train mileage will be added by the Burlington to its Nebraska lines on a new schedule effective June 27 and which will be supplemental to the changes made May 23. These changes are for the betterment of the service and will be a great help to the residents of hundreds of towns in Nebraska.

A half hour is cut off the running time between Chicago and Omaha on the fast trains Nos. 5 and 12. The Chicago morning train will thus reach Omaha at 8 a. m. instead at 8.30 a. m. and will arrive in Chicago at 8:30 instead of 9 o'clock.

The morning local train for Lincoln and intermediate points will leave at 8:20 instead of 8:45 and will arrive at Lincoln at 10:10. The fast train between Omaha and Lincoln will leave Omaha at 9:15 a. m. and will carry passengers only for Lincoln and points beyond.

To meet the demands of the residents of Pacific Junction and Plattsmouth for an afternoon shopping train to Omaha, the evening train has been changed to leave Pacific Junction at 1:45 p. m. and arrive in Omaha at 2:40 p. m. The train will remain in Omaha and leave for Lincoln at 7:25, as now.

No. 4 will be made a continuous local train into Lincoln and Omaha from Seneca and will be a great help to people living along the northwest line. The train will leave Seneca at 4:15 a. m.

Passenger train service will be installed on all the lines in the Big Horn basin country to take the place of the mixed trains which are now used. These trains are put in service in response to the rapid development of that new country and will be a great boost to the Cody gateway into Yellowstone park.

To accommodate the people living along the line between Red Cloud and McCook, the Omaha-Denver train No. 13, will make a few additional stops between Red Cloud and McCook.

Alfalfa Seed.

I have a number of bushels of alfalfa seed for sale. Anyone wishing same will find it at my farm.

Z. W. Shrader.