

The Last Voyage of The Donna Isabel

By Randall Parrish

Author of Bob Hampton of Placer.

Illustrations by Deaborn Melvill

toward De Nova, who stood staring silently down at the dead man, and at Dade, almost yellow with terror, peering cautiously in through the open door.

"He is beyond further trouble," I said, solemnly. "The poor devil. Help me lift him back into his berth."

Dade held aloof, but De Nova took hold with me, and together we straightened out the body, covering it decently with a sheet. Then we passed out into the main cabin and closed the door.

"What sort of weather have we outside, Mr. De Nova?" I questioned, endeavoring to quell the beating of my heart.

"Clear an' col', monsieur, ze win' nor'west."

"Then we are holding our course?"

"Oul, oul," gesticulating, "but w'at we do now? w'at we do now?"

"Well, that depends entirely upon you and the crew," I returned, shortly. "Mr. Tuttle is dead, beyond recall. I am the only competent navigator left on board. For the sake of my own life, as well as the safety of those women in our care, I propose assuming command. Have you anything to say?"

The creole stood motionless, grasping the edge of the table, his black eyes still fastened on Tuttle's closed door.

"Well, you had better decide," I went on, stoutly, "and anyway the only thing for us to do is to put this matter straight before the crew. Keep quiet about what has happened until after breakfast—you, too, Dade—and then have the whole crew piped aft. Go on about your work until then, and keep your tongues still."

I sat down on the divan, watching Dade as he bustled about from the table to the pantry, ever casting furtive glances toward the silent stateroom in which the dead man lay. Finally I got up, and, to Dade's horror, re-entered the mate's room, returning with the chart upon which our course had been pricked up until noon of the previous day, and spread it out across my knees. I was still engaged in studying it when Lady Darlington, fully dressed, emerged from her cabin. She touched me before I was even aware of her presence.

"Is Mr. Tuttle still ill?" she questioned, anxiously, "and have you been on duty all night?"

"The first officer is dead," I answered, and made her sit down beside me. "I will tell you all the facts."

She listened silently, her breath quickened from excitement, her face colorless. I dwelt upon the man's mental condition, his ghostly hallucinations, my discovery of him in the main cabin, and his final mad act of self-destruction. The very relating of the tragic story served to clear my own mind and strengthen my resolve.

"What—what will this mean to us?" she questioned, her lips trembling. "Will it release us from our bondage? Will it result in abandoning this crazy search after treasure?"

"Honestly I do not know, Lady Darlington," I acknowledged with reluctance. "The present attitude of the crew remains to be discovered. Practically we are as helpless as before. My one advantage lies in the fact that I am the only navigator on board. Yet they have power to compel me to do their will. I cannot battle against them alone."

"But you no longer believe in Tuttle's story?"

"I never have really believed it. But this is not a question of what I believe; it all hangs upon the faith of the men forward."

"But if they realize he was insane, surely they must also decide that his treasure ship was likewise a delusion."

I shook my head, gravely doubting her conclusion.

"I regret to say I possess no such expectation. The average sailor, Lady Darlington, is not given to reasoning; he is more a creature of impulse. I fear we are already too close to our goal to now be turned back by the mate's death. The men will insist on completing the voyage. I intend to have the entire crew piped aft after breakfast, and will talk to them. I wish you to go on deck with me at the time, and hear all that is said."

I paused, intently watching the expression of her face. "Whatever decision I may be driven to, I hope it will not forfeit me your respect."

"Oh, no."

"You will retain confidence in me, even if the bow of the Sea Queen continues to point southward?"

She lifted her gray eyes to mine in unshaded frankness.

"Whatever you think best, Mr. Stephens, I shall believe to be right," she responded, softly. "Will my trust help you?"

"It is the one thing needed. Thus armed I can fight it out."

The meal following was far from cheerful, although the bright sun streamed down through the deck transom to fall in golden bars along the table, as one thought the still constant

ly recur to that silent figure lying in the near-by bunk, while our conversation was largely about him, and the consequences of his death.

Finally, bidding both mistress and maid prepare themselves for an early call to the deck, I went forward to the bridge, relieving De Nova while he descended to the main cabin for his breakfast. The crew had already completed their meal and swarmed out of the fore-cabin, apparently aware that something was in the wind. I noticed big Bill Anderson circulating among the various groups, talking earnestly, and felt convinced the crew was endeavoring to settle upon some united course of action. Brutal and unlearned as he was, the boatswain was a thorough sea-lawyer, understanding well how to influence his mates, and with enough at stake in this game to render him desperate. The second mate joined me.

"Call all hands aft, Mr. De Nova," I said, after a glance into his face, "every man Jack of them, except the two at the wheel. I will talk to them from the rail."

"All here, monsieur." Then lowered his voice. "Mapes was dead in ze fo'c'astle."

"Mapes! Oh, he was the man who fell from the foreyard?"

"Oul, an' it all makes ze crew feel scarce."

I glanced at the group, and around at the stern vision of sea. Altogether it formed a dismal, disheartening picture—the men, bundled up in their heavy clothing, stamping their feet on the deck, their ragged beards forking out, their eyes gleaming beneath the peaks of woolen caps drawn low, shuffling impatiently, and occasionally moving over to the rail to spit; the yacht, long battered by the seas, stripped of every unnecessary adornment, her hatches battened down, her funnel rusty, her sails close reefed, her forward deck a sheet of glistening ice, the sharp wind whistling through the frozen rigging as she staggered through a cold, gray, wintry sea, straining and groaning in every timber as the gleaming surges struck her quarter and the relentless wheel held her to the course. The whole view photographed itself indelibly upon my mind, and I clung to the rail, gazing about and down into those upturned faces below.

"Men," I said, finally, shadowing my lips with one hand to keep the words from being blown away, "I am no sea orator, and what I have to say will be short. No doubt you know pretty well already what has happened on board during the night. All I need say is, that Mr. Tuttle is dead; he went crazy and shot himself. Now, the reason I called you aft is this. You are no regular article crew, on an ordinary voyage between ports. None of you have signed papers, and you have no lawful officers to take charge. It happens I'm the only navigator on board, and so I've called you aft, after talking with Mr. De Nova about it, to get your ideas on what ought to be done. Some of you speak up until we can find out what your notions are."

No one among them made any response, the long row of eyes staring dully up at me, the feet shuffling in uneasiness.

"Come, Anderson, open up. You've been sounding the men for an hour past. What's your plan?"

The boatswain, thus directly singled out from the others, pushed his way to the front, glancing sideways into the faces of his mates.

"Well, we have talked about it a bit, Mr. Stephens, but I dunno as we've quite decided," his gruff voice borne to us on the wind. "How far are we from the islands what Mr. Tuttle told about?"

"Nearly 200 miles to the northwest."

The big sailor cast his eyes over the side at the sea view, slowly turning the quid in his cheek.

"An' the wind right. Tain't much of a run, sir, after what we've already had gettin' here. I reckon you could find that p'int o' sea?"

"Yes," I acknowledged, almost reluctantly. "I can find it, unless the ice shuts us in first. But what's the use in taking such a chance, Anderson? Tuttle was probably just as crazy about that matter as he was over other things. To my mind he never saw any islands where he said he did. Government ships have surveyed all these waters again and again, and the charts show no land anywhere along that latitude. I'm for calling it a poor job, and turning back before we get nipped. Look where we are now; we haven't a mile of clear water either side of us, and a shift of wind will crush our sides like an eggshell."

The silent men stared gloomily out at that grim expanse of sea, ice and sky, but Anderson only scowled up into my face, slapping his mittened hands together.

"To hell wid that sort o' rot, Mr. Stephens," he broke forth, fiercely. "We're sailor-men, an' the most of us have seen ice before. This channel's wide enough for the hooker, an' w'at

the de ill do we want more? Maybe the ol' man was a bit nutty, but he knew how to sail these seas, an' he told a dam' straight yarn about that Spanish ship, just the same, an' I'm for findin' out whether or not it was a lie. Maybe there ain't no pesos awaitin' for us out yonder, but, by God, sir, I want to know it for sure. An' so do my mates. Now, you say we're within 200 miles of findin' out the truth, an' I'm hanged if I'll consent to go back like a whipped cur without takin' even a squint along that latitude."

He stamped on the deck, glowering about him like a mad bull, evidently daring the others to contradict. I leaned farther out over the rail.

"Is that right, lads? Has Anderson spoken your sentiments? Do you really mean to proceed in this crazy search in spite of all that ice out yonder?"

No voice responded, although I could hear the hoarse grumbling in their throats and see their heads shaking affirmatively. I turned toward the mate, who was standing just behind me.

"The men are all tongue-tied. How is it with you, Mr. De Nova? Are you for further south, or a quick run home?"

I noticed him glance across toward Celeste, crouching beneath the shelter of the longboat, her face showing white against the darker background. I even imagined the girl lifted her hand as if in some form of signal; anyhow, the creole smiled confidently, his jet mustaches clearly outlined against his cheek.

"What I say, monsieur? Oh, oul, I was for get up ze steam in ze engine, and make a dash. By gar, maybe ze rare was ze monies to make us all mate joined me."

"Call all hands aft, Mr. De Nova," I said, after a glance into his face, "every man Jack of them, except the two at the wheel. I will talk to them from the rail."

"All here, monsieur." Then lowered his voice. "Mapes was dead in ze fo'c'astle."

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"To Hell Wid That Sort o' Rot, Mr. Stephens—We're Sailor-Men."

rich. W'y not? W'iz ze steam we cheat ze ice-field. Bah! I seen it worse as zat."

"True," I urged in final effort, "but the season is wrong. We are driving south in the face of winter, the ice-packs are forming, and not breaking up. I warn every one of you the chances are we'll be nipped."

"We can make it easy in three days, Mr. Stephens," broke in Anderson, loudly. "If we only have decent weather, we could rip up that old hooker, copper the swag and be north-bound in that time. It ain't goin' to be such a hell of a job."

I never glanced toward him, my eyes still on the mate.

"But the women, De Nova?"

He was looking at them, and, following his eyes, I turned also. Celeste was bending eagerly forward, her dark eyes sparkling with excitement; her mistress stood erect, grasping the edge of the longboat, her face flushed by the keen wind, her lips firmly pressed together.

"I sink zat maybe ze vote w'iz ze crew, monsieur," smiled the creole, pleasantly.

Lady Darlington reached one hand out for the rail, her skirts flapping, her hair blowing free beneath her hat.

"It will be best for us to go on, Mr. Stephens," she said, quietly. "The men will never be satisfied otherwise; and I do not blame them. Too much has been risked already to turn back at the last moment because of a little additional peril. Nor am I willing it should be done merely to spare us a few more days of discomfort. We must take our chances, and, as for myself, I trust absolutely in your seamanship."

There was a growl of appreciation from below, Anderson's voice shouting up hoarsely: "You're the right stuff!" but I stood there in silence, gazing at her in astonishment, feeling deserted by every one, and realizing that the entire responsibility was now mine. More clearly than any among them I comprehended the peril fronting us, the desperate chance we were about to take, the casting of dice with death. Yet what was there left for me to do? Absolutely nothing; the choice had been made.

"Is it understood I am in command?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Very well, then," I said, "you have chosen your bed, now you will lie in it. Mr. De Nova, get the stokers below and start the fires. We'll push her for it hard. You men stand by for a double funeral in an hour; we have a dead man fore and aft. Now step lively, my bullies!"

I watched them as they scattered like so many schoolboys at play, Anderson and De Nova driving them to their various tasks. A hand touched my arm gently.

"I hope you are not angry, Mr. Stephens. Did I do so very wrong?"

I looked down into her

(To be continued)

Louisville.

From the Courier. The Louisville base ball team was defeated at Elmwood again Wednesday by a score of 8 to 7.

Edward Eager was taken to the St. Joseph hospital in Omaha Wednesday, where he underwent an operation Thursday morning. He is reported as doing nicely.

Mrs. Joe Cox and children have returned to Louisville from Chickasha, Oklahoma. Mrs. Cox recently had the misfortune of losing all her household goods by fire.

There is talk of a wrestling match to be pulled off here on the Fourth for a purse of \$10. Louisville has a wrestler that is willing to go up against all comers, considering weight, and if the stunt is put on it will be a big drawing card.

L. P. Sine of Lincoln was down last Sunday in his automobile to visit the old town. Mr. Sine was at one time editor of the Louisville Advertiser, long since gone to the happy hunting grounds. Mr. Sine is now a stockholder with the Carpenter Paper Company of Omaha.

Last Friday evening Mrs. John Ahl gave a masquerade party at her home in honor of Miss Mayme Heil, of near Plattsmouth, who has been visiting her the past week. Quite a number of young people were present and an enjoyable evening was spent. A light luncheon of ice cream and cake was served.

During the absence of the watchman, George McDonald, some sneak thief carried away about \$40 worth of brass from the steam shovel of the Calhoun Construction company at the quarry last Saturday night. Mr. McDonald says he has a pretty good idea who the thief is and an arrest may be made soon.

Nehawka.

From the Register.

Mrs. H. F. Kropp was suddenly called to Portsmouth, Ohio, Monday by the death of her mother whither she started, accompanied by Ernest, on the 12:15 train that night.

Two members of our share of Young America are each carrying a broken arm in a sling, Paul Schlichter and the son of Joe Lindsey. Both will be romping with their playmates again very soon.

Mrs. Vantine has been granted a pension by the government, notice and vouchers being received by her the other day. This was granted her in record breaking time, application having been made about the 15th of April.

Mary Kellberg informed us just after the paper was printed last week that the stork had left her a little nephew at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Carlson on June 11th. And Mary is proud of the young man as well as the parents.

The Nehawka High School corps of teachers for the ensuing school term is as follows: Mr. E. E. Collins of Brownville, Principal; Miss Lola Wilsie, of Parker, So. Dak., Asst. Prin.; Miss Hazel Jameson of Weeping Water, Intermediate; Miss Evelyn Stout of Lincoln, Primary. Under this force of instructors we cannot but expect results.

Theodore Carrol arrived here last Thursday morning called hither by the illness of his mother, and he was with her when she passed away. Mr. Carrol lives near Waco and since leaving Cass county has amassed considerable real estate and is on what you might call "easy street."

We had the pleasure of his acquaintance and while we regret the sad mission that caused him to visit our office we are glad to have formed his acquaintance.

Elmwood.

Mrs. Fred Ebinger of Plainview and Miss Anna Weidmann, of Plattsmouth, were guests the fore part of the week at the A. A. Wallinger home.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Stege, daughter Mary, and sons Will and Frank, went to Plainview last week to attend the funeral of their daughter and sister, Mrs. Julius Kirchoff.

Miss Bertha Langhorst of Wapakoneta, Ohio, who has been visiting Elmwood relatives for some time, went to Murdock Tuesday for a visit with other relatives after which she will go to Denver, Colo., to attend the national teachers' convention.

Henry Elckermann of near Greenwood and Mrs. Mary Schneider of Ithica were married Tuesday evening by Rev. Goetz at the German Evangelical parsonage in this city. Mr. Elckermann is a prominent farmer in his locality and well spoken of by his numerous friends.

L. B. Cunningham went to Nehawka Monday to attend the funeral of Mrs. William Carroll who died at her home Saturday. She was seventy years old and had lived in Cass county about forty years. She is survived by her husband and ten grown children, five sons and five daughters. Mr. Cunningham is an old time friend of the family.

Glen B. White and Miss Jessie B. Zellars were married at Des Moines, Ia., one day last week. While the many friends of this estimable young couple did not learn of the happy

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event until several days later, they will overlook their keeping it secret and join the Leader-Echo in extending hearty congratulations. The bride is the daughter of Calvin Zellars, living southeast of town, while the groom is the son of our good farmer friend who needs no introduction, James A. White.

Big Crowd for Lincoln.

It was quite impossible to get a list of the passengers this morning for Lincoln. No. 15 carried two cars of passengers, nearly all ladies who preferred to go up on the regular train to traveling on the excursion which leaves at 11 a. m. A partial list of those going includes Mrs. Thos. South, daughter and son, Mrs. John Gravett and children, Mrs. W. M. Gravett and guest Miss Mowrey of Watson, Mo., Mrs. C. Gravett, Mrs. E. Lambert and family, Mrs. George Lushinsky and family, Mrs. Frank Buttery and daughter, Mrs. John Schuhof and family, Mrs. William Ballance and daughter Ethel, Mrs. J. C. Dwyer and son, Mrs. C. M. Ford and aunt Miss Minnie Ford of St. Joseph, Mo., who is her guest, Mrs. S. S. Golding, daughter Miss Stella and son Everett, Mrs. William Shea and daughter Miss Elizabeth, Mrs. Henry Lahoda, Mrs. George Harasky, Mrs. D. B. Smith, Mrs. C. S. Forbes and a great crowd of other ladies. The male members of the families as a rule were passengers for Lincoln on the excursion at 11 o'clock.

Return of Treasurer Schlater.

County Treasurer Schlater returned last evening from an extended trip over New Mexico, Arizona and Western Texas. Frank reports everything very hot and dry in New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico especially in the latter country. Western Texas near El Paso is also very hot and suffering from drought. Oklahoma and Kansas crops are looking fine and he expects to see a great yield of everything in those two states. There are places in New Mexico where the indications are favorable for good crops, but southern Arizona and northern parts of the state of Sonora, Mexico are very dry and there is small likelihood of any large crops there. Mr. Schlater brought with him a bamboo cane which he cut while in Mexico at a point some eighty miles from a railroad. A. S. Will who was with his is expected to arrive home tomorrow.

A couple of young ladies of this city were taken down a notch or two the other day. They were discussing a party and the dress each should wear, over the telephone, when a gentleman called for the number he desired. He waited patiently then called busy, "Judging from the talk I've heard, I guess I am on a clothes line," and then hung up the receiver.

Grandma Sarah J. Atwood today celebrated her eighty-third anniversary at her beautiful home in this city. In addition to her children and many of her grandchildren being present, Mrs. C. H. Parmele and Miss Sarah Baker as well as a number of her neighbors called and extended their congratulations. A birthday dinner was partaken of by the children, grandchildren and Mrs. C. H. Parmele and Miss Baker. The day was delightfully spent.

A Dash for Life.

Our old friend Jack Reed, from the Iowa side, suffered a humiliating downfall this afternoon while racing madly down Main street in an effort to catch No. 23. Col. John had been detained by business up town and did not discover that the hour approacheth when the great Burlington Route train for Omaha was due. Now, it so happened that Col. John wanted by all means to catch this train and when he woke up and saw it standing at the station he exclaimed "Now, by my Halidone, I must get me a move on!" and he started for the station at limited express speed. All went merry as a wedding bell for several blocks and he had passed the store buildings and was within a block of the depot when a crenel approached. He had hit up a fine burst of speed and with his two hundred pounds of ad- verdupoise he was cleaving the wind like a thing of life, encouraged by the plaudits and shouts of the multitude, when his toe caught on a brick which rose above its neighbors in the walk and he spread himself about the surrounding landscape with lavish profusion. As he fell he exclaimed "Ye Gods, I Am Indeed Undone." But he was game and speedily gathered himself together on the pavement and made another spurt which landed him safely at the train, in one piece but sadly lacking in wind. Altogether John's dash for life and his grand exhibition of ground and lofty tumbling will mark an epoch in the events of the city.

Almost in Limbo.

Master Carpenter Hedengren came near to being lodged in jail this afternoon for purloining a wild and untamed steed. Mr. Hedengren as is well known, has been putting in much time lately trying to stop the ravenous Missouri river from eating up the Iowa side of the river, and leaving the big Burlington bridge on dry land. Today he discovered he would need some wire for use with the willows he was using and he made the borrow of a horse from one of his employes, said horse being hitched to a buggy and tied near the Burlington depot in this city. Taking a force of men with him he came over on two hand cars to carry out his plans. Finding the horse hitched to a rack here, he deliberately unhitched it and drove down to the sand bar where he commenced loading the wire into the buggy. The son of the man who owned the nag discovered Hedengren in his nefarious work and at once went after Chief of Police Rainey, who hot-footed it down to the river and was about to throw Hedengren into jail before he discovered his identity. As soon as he discovered who had the horse and had learned the circumstances he let him go, but for once in his life Mr. Hedengren came near wearing stripes. In the future he will get written orders before he purloins strange animals.

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.

Shorthorns for Sale.

Three good registered Shorthorn yearling bulls for sale. Also good fresh milk cows.

Mark White.