

# The Last Voyage of The Donna Isabel

By Randall Parrish

Author of Bob Hampton of Placer.

Illustrations by Deaborn Melvill

I should greatly have preferred Lady Darlington to remain below during the ceremonies. There is much depression about such burial scenes at sea, especially so in our circumstances and surroundings. But she insisted upon being present, and so at the last moment I returned to the cabin and escorted both her and Celeste to the deck. It was a dismal, melancholy scene, and I did not wonder at the slight shiver which her ladyship glanced about. The swiftly descending snow, the whitened decks, trampled beneath the feet of the men, the bare spars overhead; the low-flying, dun-colored clouds; the gray, tumbling waters; the low growl of the ice as the waves battered its front; the silent semicircle of men standing motionless except for their shuffling feet; and those two white-draped figures lying extended along the rail—all combined to form a grim sea-picture the memory of which can never dissolve.

Protected somewhat from the sharp wind by the cabin the men had flung aside their mufflers, so that their weather-beaten faces, most of them heavily bearded, were plainly revealed. I could not but be impressed with the motley crowd, as the lineaments of negro, Kanaka, and every variety of white degenerate were thus exposed. Their uneasy, shuffling feet, and the impatience depicted on their faces, aroused me to the requirements of the moment. I advanced to the rail, standing beside the corpse of the mate.

"Lads," I said, soberly, "when we bury shipmates at sea there is a solemnity about the simple ceremony unknown to the land. Far away from friends and home we give the body up to the great ocean to keep for eternity. Yet we are sailors, long accustomed to the vicissitudes and perils of the deep; we have parted with shipmates before in many seas, and not a few among you look forward to the time when comrades will be called upon to perform a similar service of respect over your bodies. Even now we sail forward into great danger, and none among us can prophesy what the morrow may bring of either life or death. Yet the sea is the sailor's sepulcher, the roar of the great waves his requiem. I am no sea preacher, able to address you upon the hereafter, or fitted to eulogize the spirits of those whose bodies we are about to bury. You desire nothing of the kind. Neither can I read over these forms the usual burial service, for I can find no book containing it on board. Is



Her Voice Arose, Low Yet Distinct, Trembling to the Accent of Reverent Prayer.

there any one among you, mates, who will voice a prayer before we drop these bodies overboard?"

I looked along the semi-circle of faces, expecting nothing from the members of the crew; yet faintly hopeful that some one or two might be led to respond. No one stirred, however, the only sound on board the wind whistling through the rigging and the heavy breathing of the men.

"Well, then," I added, regretfully, "nothing remains but to commit their bodies to the deep, and may God have mercy on their souls!"

I lifted my hand in signal, but even as I did so Lady Darlington spoke, the men who were about to tilt the planks pausing in wonderment.

"Wait, Mr. Stephens; not without one word of prayer. Let me speak it, if no one else will."

She came forward, throwing back her veil, and grasping my sleeve to retain steady footing on the heaving deck. For an instant there was an impressive silence; then her voice arose, low, yet distinct, trembling to the accent of reverent prayer. I know not what she said; merely the simple breathing upward of a petition to the Almighty Father for pardon and guidance; yet never before did faith lay such mighty hold upon me. It was short, only a few faltering sentences, but the honesty of it, the faith so clearly evidenced in both words and

face, impressed the roughest there. She paused, her head still lowered; I heard some one say "Amen" solemnly, and raised my hand in signal. Noiselessly the ends of the planks were up-tilted, and the two shrouded figures slid downward into the gray water. Instantly they disappeared beneath the unfathomable depths. So silently and expeditiously was this accomplished that she even failed to note the action, lifting her eyes wonderingly to the bare planks, and with a choking sob burying her face in her hands. Without venturing a word I led her gently to the companion. Five minutes later I stood again upon the bridge, the deck beneath throbbing to the pulse of the released engine, as the Sea Queen raced recklessly forward through the ice-girded waters in desperate effort to attain her goal.

It was not a dark night, for the stars were out—such cold, dead stars they seemed—and a little later I knew the moon would come stealing up above the waste of waters, yet there was a haze hovering all about us, as though the entire surrounding atmosphere was thick with frost. I crouched down behind the slight protection of the tarpaulins, sweeping the horizon with my glasses, but discovering nothing to awaken alarm. I saw nothing of the watch, except as I called for them. Then they came, clawing their way out of the snug holes where they hid from wind and water. However, there was little enough for any of us to do; we could simply hold on, trusting in the strength of the keel under us, and sheering to eastward of the ice-pack. It was a wild, mad night, the wind freezing to the marrow, and every wave dashing its icy spray hurtling against the front of the wheelhouse. At eight bells I went below again, every muscle of my body aching, and my face tingling as though pierced by a thousand needles. I sat down before the red-hot stove in the cabin, thinking I should never get the cold thawed out of me. Yet inside of ten minutes, with head resting on the chair-back, and legs extended to keep my balance, I was sound asleep.

Whether a sudden leap of the vessel or some unusual noise aroused me I cannot say. Dazed, confused, I sat upright, staring about me, for the moment scarcely realizing where I was. I could hear the fierce pounding of the sea without, the shrieking of wind through the cordage, and the rattle and groaning of the woodwork as the struggling vessel dived into the hollows and fought her way back to the crests. A shower of hail lashed the windows, rattling like shot against the shutters. As I glanced backward across my shoulder, I heard, above all that hellish uproar, a hollow, unearthly groan. I was upon my feet in an instant, grasping at the edge of the table, striving vainly to place the sound. For some cause I could not keep my eyes off Tuttle's door, every nerve pulsing with agony. Was it imagination, illusion? By all the gods, I beheld a white visionary form glide noiselessly forth and disappear as though dissolved in mist. It was certainly there, yet, in another instant, had vanished. I knew not how. I stared about into the dim corners, then leaped toward the door, seeking to open it. It was locked; of course it was, for the key was in my own pocket.

Many times I have known fear, but not such fear as this which now smote me. Here was something intangible, something I could not reach and throttle, a dim, frightful shade, coming from God alone knew whence. I pressed my hands to my head, and endeavored to laugh, to woo back my courage. Great heavens, was I also losing my mind? Was I to be haunted and pursued by evil fancies? Had the curse of this ship now descended upon me? I staggered to my feet, holding on desperately to the table, seized the decanter from off the swinging shelf and drank deeply. Lord, what grim fancies a man may have when the physical organism is unstrung! I glanced at my watch, discovering I still had two hours below, and crossed over to my stateroom, nervously myself to play the man, yet glancing about fearfully into the dancing shadows. I laughed as I closed the door, but shot the bolt hard, and lay there for an hour listening, every nerve a-tingle, before fatigue finally closed my eyes.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### In Which We Lay the Ghost.

The coming of night found our situation less promising—a thick veil of clouds obscuring all gleam of stars, the wind veering more to the westward and growing bitterly cold. The barometer was falling slowly, presaging the approach of storm; yet nothing openly threatened with the exception of these thickening cloud-masses scudding up from out the southwest, their wildness reflected in the darkening sea, and the continuous thunder of waves along the ice-front blocking our passage. I visited the engine and boiler rooms, ordered half

speed and prompt attention to signals, took one last searching glance about the dimming horizon, and finally threw myself, without undressing, on my bunk for a brief rest below.

As I lay there, thinking of that wild scene without, I discovered sleep impossible. Was I doing right thus to hold on for further southing? My conscience was not altogether clear, for I realized that it would be luck rather than seamanship that would take us through and bring us safely out again. Only some mystery of nature had thus far given us passage, had held the wind to another point of the compass, beating back the invading flocks and yielding to us an open sea. But would such fortune last—a day, two days, more? We could race northward with the ice, but what about that vast field stretching to the northwest? If by some shift of wind it were to close in, the helpless Sea Queen would be crushed like an eggshell. And Lady Darlington had said she trusted me implicitly. Was I showing myself worthy by thus pushing the yacht deeper into danger?

By heaven, for her sake, if for no other reason, I would play the man! Ay, and I comprehended exactly what such resolve would cost—realized fully what that mongrel crew would say and do the moment their ghostly terrors fled, and they knew I had given up search for the treasure. I should have to command by brute force, by threat and blow. There would be nutting aboard for every league until we made port. I knew the nature of that sea-scum forward—how they would whine and curse, how they would hate me for failing to hold them to their course in face of death! Well, let them hate; my love was worth by far the more, and the life and honor of Lady Darlington outweighed all else on board—ay, and the treasure of the Donna Isabel! "Implicitly"—I saw her eyes again as she said it, and sprang to the deck, fumbling in the darkness for the latch of my door.

The main cabin was dimly lighted and chill, the fire in the stove low. I paused to rattle it, and add a few lumps of coal from the scuttle standing near by. In spite of surrounding comforts what a grim, inhospitable place this was for any woman like her! The very snugness of the cabin served only to emphasize the gloom and peril without, the frightful polar mystery which surrounded us, which drives men mad amid its awful distances, its shrouded silence.

Suddenly, directly opposite where I stood, I saw it again—that same shapeless, white, gliding figure. An instant only I stood rooted to the spot, my blood like ice, my eyes full of horror. Then the swift reaction came, the reserve courage of a man ashamed of such weakness, and I leaped straight toward the misty object, grappling at it with my hands. I touched nothing but air, falling headlong with a violence jarring the entire cabin, and overthrowing a chair crashing to the deck. Dazed, confused, I staggered to my knees, staring about into the dim shadows. A white-draped figure was at my very elbow, and I sprang to my feet, only to take a quick step backward, grasping at the table, as I recognized Lady Darlington.

"Good God! was that you?" I gasped, the horror still possessing me.

"This certainly is," she answered, swiftly. "But what do you mean? What has occurred?"

"I hardly know," and I looked about me, and then into her face, breathing heavily. "I seem unable to separate the real from the unreal. I am half afraid I am losing my mind. Lady Darlington, it is not only the crew forward who are seeing ghosts on board. I laughed at my experience before, believing it a mere illusion that could never occur again. In that spirit I told you about seeing a white, misty figure in this cabin the night after Tuttle died. It vanished like a wreath of smoke, and daylight made me believe the vision was born of a tired brain. But I have seen it again now—yonder, as plainly as I can see you. It was no dream, no imagination; yet when I sought to grasp the thing, my fingers encountered nothing but air."

I saw her hands tremble, her white face turned whither I pointed; but she had not beheld what I had, and her mind remained clear.

"What was it you saw?"

"A shapeless white figure, misty, vanishing like a bubble."

"Yonder, you say? Just where you saw it before?"

I had not thought of that, yet it was true—there, beside Tuttle's door. An instant she stood motionless, her eyes searching the dim corners of the cabin, as though tracing some suspicion awakened within her mind. Suddenly she clasped my arm.

"We do not believe in ghosts, Mr. Stephens, you and I," her voice growing firmer with conviction. "Our education and training make such a conception impossible. There is a natural cause for this, a reason, an actual presence back of the shadow. There must be, and we must find it. Where did you stand when you saw this apparition?"

I stepped back to the spot beside the stove, realizing that she still clung tightly to me.

"Here, and I lifted my eyes like this."

She leaned eagerly forward, her breath on my cheek, her fingers clutching my arm.

"Why—why that is a mirror you are looking into! See! What is it reflected there? Turn up the light until I locate the spot. Oh, I see now—the open pantry door. Mr. Stephens, there is where your ghost stood—it was the shadow of a man reflected in that mirror."

Our eyes met, all my former terror fled, shame and anger dominating me. (To be Continued)



## Buy a Cool Pair of Trousers for the 4th

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### Where They Spend the Day.

Charles Ault at Lake Manawa. Miss Etta Hyde in Glenwood. Miss Agnes Foster at Glenwood. Mrs. Peter Evers at Glenwood. Miss Mary Kraeger in Omaha. Miss Ella Anderson in Glenwood. Tom Mack in the city of Murray. Will Sitzman and family at Omaha. Aug. Hofman and wife in Omaha.

Dave Amick doing some tall fishing. John Lindeman in Glenwood and Tabor. Will Simons and wife at Council Bluffs.

G. W. Glenn and family at Glenwood. L. E. Engle and family at Glenwood. Cliff Briggs in the city of Glenwood.

I. H. Sitzman with the people of Murray. Miss Helen Egenberger at Red Rock, Ia.

Mrs. Lette Bird and children at Glenwood. C. A. Däre in the thriving city of Glenwood.

Riley Jones with old friends in Glenwood. Earl Travis in his incubator at the court house.

Eddie Todd and wife with the Louisvillites. Mrs. M. E. Buttery and son in Council Bluffs.

John Richardson and son Floyd at Lake Manawa. Wade W. Windham with the people of Louisville.

Martin L. Friedrich and daughter with Murrays. Col. M. A. Bates among the good people of Murray.

Mrs. Charles Harvey and son Oliver at Omaha. Harry Smith, wife and two daughters at Glenwood.

George Schoerman with the good people of Louisville. Gus Olson taking pictures of the crowd at Glenwood.

Mrs. Wm. Howland and baby in the city of Lincoln. Mrs. N. H. Isbell and son John in the town of Omaha.

Councilman Mendenhall with the inhabitants of Glenwood. Lee Cotner and family and Miss Laura Tower at Glenwood.

Elson Jones, wife and daughters spent the day in Glenwood. Mrs. George Sayles and children in Cedar Creek with relatives.

Misses Ethel and Pearl Hayne at Pacific Junction and Lake Manawa. Ye scribe in Plattsmouth grinding out cold blooded facts for the people.

General Foreman Hayes of the Burlington at the dry town of Lincoln. W. C. Hamilton assisted Prof. Schulhof's musicians to play the national airs at Glenwood.

Senator Thomas and F. Clare Thomas in Council Bluffs stirring up the Jackson automobile people for more machines.

W. A. Tulene and family, J. W. Tulene and family and B. C. Tulene and family at late visiting today in Glenwood and duly celebrated the day.

Rey Thompson, Clyde Adamson, Miss Jennie Batton and Miss Lillian Thompson spent today with the people of Murray helping to celebrate the fourth.

Master Milton Austin, one of the brightest boys in the town tonight in "A China Doll" at the Parrale. Children free. Parents 5 and 10 cents.

### Mrs. Pickett Entertains.

Mrs. W. L. Pickett entertained a few lady friends at her home last evening. The evening was devoted to the always interesting game of bridge, the company filling two tables.

During the evening a delicious luncheon was served by the hostess, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the guests.

Those who comprised this party were Misses Mia and Barbara Gering and their guest, Miss Woodruff, Vera Leonard, Mesdames T. P. Livingston, W. J. Streight and A. E. Gass.

Mrs. Pickett was also hostess at a Kensington on an afternoon of this week. On this occasion the ladies had come prepared to ply the busy needle and (sew) they did while sociability reigned supreme. An appetizing luncheon was served which further augmented the pleasures of the afternoon.

The ladies present were Mesdames F. G. Fricke, C. G. Fricke, W. A. Wilson of Detroit, Mich., H. N. Dovey, W. K. Fox, W. S. Wendell, A. E. Gass, Misses Lena Fricke, Frances and May McKinley.

Is Shipping Many Cherries.

J. C. Peterson, the well known fruit raiser near the city, is creating a big market for his cherries. Hardly a train goes out of the city that does not carry some baskets of his products. Mr. Peterson is one of the kind of men who sees that what he ships out is high class fruit and in this manner he is rapidly making a market for fruits. He shipped twenty-nine baskets in one shipment the other day each bringing him about one dollar which is not a bad day's work in itself. Mention was made some time ago of the strawberries which Mr. Peterson raises and his cherries are at least equal in value and worth to the berries. If the other fruit growers of this section went after business as Mr. Peterson does there would be no trouble in making this city a big market.

Judge Travis Holds Court.

Judge Travis came up from Nebraska City last night and today to hold a brief session of court at which he transacted the following business.

First National Bank of Plattsmouth vs. Hatt & Son et al. Objections to jurisdiction overruled.

City of Plattsmouth vs. Wescott et al. Defendants have leave to withdraw demurrer and answer within thirty days.

White vs. Sturm. Demurrer overruled. Plaintiff excepts.

Javorske vs. Javorske. Restraining order granted plaintiff.

State vs. Clarence. On application of the county attorney the hearing on the motion for a new trial is postponed to July 17, 9 a. m.

Pasture to Rent.

The undersigned has about 40 acres of good grass to rent for pasturing horses only. Good running water and plenty of shade. One dollar per month per head. C. Bengen, 7 1/2 miles south of Plattsmouth.

Don't Forget This.

Saturday evening, July 10th Philip Hill will give a barn dance at his home six miles west of Myard. Everyone is invited and a good time assured to all who attend.

Shortorns for Sale.

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

### Pleasant Birthday Surprise.

Miss Lillian Thompson, Saturday afternoon, was made the recipient of a more than pleasant surprise party, which had been secretly planned by Mrs. J. L. Thompson, the occasion being Miss Lillian's nineteenth birthday. The company consisted of the members of the Euterpean Glee Club, their leader, Mrs. E. H. Wescott and a few friends of the young lady. She was very much surprised when the guests came in on her but soon recovered and gave them a very pleasant afternoon.

The time was passed with music, both vocal and instrumental, and social conversation, until the early evening when a delightful birthday luncheon was served.

As a memento of the auspicious occasion, there were many handsome gifts left with Miss Lillian, who could not but feel other than highly pleased at the kind remembrances of her friends.

Those who participated in this last happy event were Misses Ethel, Edith, Carrie, Ecker, Mildred Cook, Lucille Randall, Marjorie Barhold, Alice Tucey, Helen Spies, Garnet Cory, Virgie McDaniel, Nora Batten, Jennie Batten, Ferris York, Aileen Rennie, Elizabeth Kerr, Myrtle Hall, Marie and Opal Fitzgerald, Hermie Spies, Marie Sharp, Della Moore, Florence Cory, Mabel Leasley, Dora Fekemberger, Verna Hatt, Minnie Heinrich; Mrs. E. H. Wescott.

For the North.

Rev. J. H. Salsbery departed this morning for Omaha where he will meet the incoming members of the Society of Christian Endeavor of this state and organize the Endeavors special train for St. Paul, Minn. Rev. Salsbery is president of the Society and as such he will have charge of the train which promises to be the largest ever sent out by the Endeavorers. One feature of the train will be a marriage, the ceremony to be performed by Rev. Salsbery free of charge. It is also expected and hoped that Hon. William Jennings Bryan will be a guest of honor on the train and deliver a short address. Those who will attend from this city include Mrs. J. H. Salsbery and son Russell, Mrs. Charles C. Parmele and daughter Hallie, Miss Alma Larson, Miss Alice Kerr, Misses Estella and Carrie Baird, Miss Pearl Staats, Miss Ruth Johnson and Miss Frances Wedman, all of whom departed for Omaha this afternoon.

Ladies Aid.

The Ladies Aid Society of the M. E. Church were most delightfully entertained at the home of Judge Allen J. Beeson Wednesday afternoon, with Mesdames Ed. Brantner and Beeson as hostesses.

In deference to the season, the decorations consisted largely of flags and flowers, carrying out the color scheme of red, white and blue.

A musical program was rendered during the afternoon all of which was most thoroughly enjoyed by those fortunate enough to be present.

The refreshment diversions in the form of ice cream and cake materially added to the social good time.

Much pleasure was expressed by the ladies, as they took their departure, at the cordial hospitality of Mesdames Brantner and Beeson.

Special services at the Christian church in Murray Sunday night, July 11. A lecture sermon. Subject, "Fools." Everyone come.