

The Last Voyage of The Donna Isabel

By Randall Parrish

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Illustrations by Deaborn Melvill

timers in these seas. From the look of her she must have been locked up in the ice south there for a century."

"Do you expect to sail her northward?"

"I hardly know yet what to expect; that remains to be seen. She seems to ride the water stanchly enough and there is fully 30 feet of mast standing yonder. Anyhow, this deck at present is better than an open boat."

"But—but it is all so ghastly, so ghost-like—Celeste is fairly crazy from the horror."

"It is merely the effect of the moonlight glimmering on the ice; everything is ice wherever your eyes turn.



"Don't Lose Your Nerve, Man, You've Seen Dead Men Before."

But you are safe enough here, and with daylight the ghostliness of it will vanish."

"Where are you going now?"

"To break into the cabin; then we will have a decent place in which to stay—perhaps a chance for a fire. It is not likely to prove a long job, and I will be back to you shortly. Don't let the night shadows frighten you."

She smiled back into my eyes bravely enough, although I realized the effort of will that it cost; and so I left her endeavoring to cheer the girl, who was sobbing wildly, with her face buried in her hands.

The men joined me as I stepped without, crunching the light snow under their heavy boots, and staring uneasily about them as though the whole adventure was a dream. Lord! and no more could I shake off that same impression as I surveyed the scene aft. A boat, bottom up, the planks smashed beyond repair, lay against the starboard rail. The after-cabin, built like a house, extended the entire width of the deck, a lumping affair, overhung with huge, projecting timbers, topped by ornate carvings, and having two companionways leading up, one of them crushed into splinters. The forward shutters were tightly closed, and the whole front appeared a solid mass of glittering ice, so obscured by frozen particles of snow as to render any discovery of the door an impossibility. We began hacking at it with our knives, judging the opening would naturally be at the center, but the sheathing of ice proved so thick and solid that we made little impression.

"It will take us a week to cut our way in with these things," I said at last. "De Nova, I think I saw an ax frozen in at the left of the galley. Take a man with you and pry it out."

It proved an odd-looking instrument—a meat-cleaver, I imagine—but was sufficiently strong and heavy. Kelly swung it vigorously, cleaving off the ice in cakes, until we were finally able to trace the fitting of the door. Suddenly, striking at the upper panel, he dislodged a considerable chunk, thus revealing half a dozen letters painted across the front. Dade pried off a few inches more with his knife-blade, and we stared up incredulously at the words:

Donna Isabel
Cadiz

"Holy Mother of God!" and De Nova, in his excitement, danced about recklessly, forgetting the slipperiness of deck underfoot. "It was ze treasure ship! It was ze tree million pesos! Sacre dam!"

As they labored feverishly, their breath steaming in the frosty air, the moonlight silvering them and gleaming weirdly on the scattered ice-fragments, the haunting mystery of that hermetically sealed cabin brought to me a feeling of unutterable horror. Heaven! how long had it been thus frozen in? What awful tragedy of another century was about to be revealed? What years of loneliness, of darkness, of polar night and cold had this derelict of the grim Antarctic experienced? Where had it been? What of those who had sailed on board out of Guayaquil that fair June day of 1753, dreaming of the glad welcome awaiting them in sunny Spain? What of the crew, hardy seamen all, black-bearded, the gold loops in their ears? What of the passengers? What of the five women who had walked these decks? Where had they died, and how?

I clenched my hands, my nerves throbbing, tramping from rail to rail in excitement as the men hacked, yet I was first to grasp the exposed latch, and force the released wood backward in its grooves. Through the narrow opening thus attained there came whistling a blast so frigid as to drive us headlong back, gasping for breath. Cold as it was without there on the

(To be Continued)

Prices Sometimes Talk—Our's Shout

Our July Clearance Sale is a "warm one"—almost as hot as the weather. Piles of goods distributed to cheerful buyers. Saturday a red letter day in point of sales. Our force worked to the limit. Some lines are depleted, but we are still strong on Underwear, Single Pants for Men Boys and Children, Hosiery, Straw Hats, Shirts, all kinds and sizes, Boy's and Children's Suits, Men's Suits and Night Gowns, Kerchiefs and Neckwear. The public is solicited to examine these goods and avail themselves of these clearance prices:

5c Men's full-size hemstitched white handkerchiefs. See them in our east window. Also turkey red and indigo blue. Also at this price men's and boy's straw hats.

39c Here we offer you a big line of soft shirts, with or without collars, in light blues, fancy stripes and polka dots. Full cut, well made. Everyone less than cost to make. They're going fast.

8c Men's fast color fine gauge brown cotton socks. Good for dress or work wear, regular 15c value, all sizes 9½ to 11.

48c All stragglers from our 75c and \$1.00 and \$1.25 straw hat lines, go at this remarkable low price. Better come quick.

12c Here's a bargain in wash ties we just received from New York Saturday. They are full size four-in-hands, in light and dark colors, and only 12c each.

49c Boy's wash suits, in either blouse or Buster Brown style, knickerbocker pants. All new goods this season. Another big bargain for a busy mother. Sizes 2½ to 8 years.

16c Boy's black ribbed stockings, Tom Sawyer brand, almost indestructible, fast colors, will out wear two pair ordinary hose. Sizes 6 to 8½ all that's left.

54c Here's where we put you to sleep. Men's full size bell shape night gowns, either with or without collars, nicely trimmed. Were about 200 of these Saturday morning but the pile is fast melting.

23c Boy's blue cheviot shirts, with soft collar attached, sizes 6 to 12 years. All made and ready to put on for what the cloth is worth.

69c Here's the big shirt bargain. People have gone wild over this lot. We bought a manufacturer's sample line, in shirts that sold at \$1.25 to \$1.50 and give your choice at 69c. Sizes 14 to 17.

25c All remnants of medium priced straw hats lines are bunched at this one price to close. Includes helmets and fisherman hats.

99c If you want a good yacht straw hat—this season style, in hats that sold for \$1.50 and \$2.00, better get one of these at this low price to move them out.

26c Boy's knee pants, plain and knickerbocker in all wool and wash goods. A big bargain for a busy mother. Sizes 3 to 8 and a few large sizes.

\$1.45 Here's pants, good pants, some of them all wool, some, part wool, some of them Dutchess. Pants that will give you twice the wear of any ordinary cheap pants. To close \$1.45.

29c A few boy's fine waists left at this price in sizes 11 to 15. Also at this price choice of fine line of 50c silk 4-in-hand. A real snap.

\$1.99 This lot of pants has made a stir. It was the first lot we put out, mostly Dutchess. Some light colors; most dark and medium. Such pants as you will pay \$3 and \$4 for elsewhere. Now here for cash \$1.99.

Many other bargains we cannot list including pants at \$2.48, suits \$7.69, raincoats \$9.98, fur hats \$1.48, etc. Everything just as advertised. No monkey business. No cash register tickets. No sale goods charged.

C. E. Wescott's Sons

"Where Quality Counts."

THE HOME OF SATISFACTION!

Fifes Papers of Drainage District. County Clerk Rosencrans is in receipt of the papers regarding the newly organized Ashland drainage district. This district which comprises considerable territory in the northwestern part of the county, extends up the Salt Creek valley from the mouth of the stream to Lincoln. The papers have to be filed in the

several counties which are included in its territory which are: Lancaster, Cass and Saunders. The organization was formed in Saunders county and the papers filed, include the petition and plat filed with the Saunders County board, the petitioners bond, the notice of election, the order of the county commissioners of Saunders county, the proof

of publication of the election call in the Wahoo Democrat and the Plattsmouth Journal, the notice to assistants on the canvassing board, the oath and report of the canvassing board showing the district to have been duly approved by the voters of the district.

Daily Journal, 10c per week.

"Surely you do not mean it, Jack?" almost pleadingly, her hand reaching blindly out for mine. "You can not bring me to such shame, such trial?"

"It is not shame," I answered earnestly, all my soul revolting against the word, "it may be trial, but it is not shame. In the face of death you have confessed you love me, and in the face of death I shall endeavor to retain that love. I should be no man if I did less. Shame! Do not use that term between us. What was there holy or divine in the selling of you to that English peer? Why should that act of mere barter hold us apart? The law of God is paramount to the law of man. Doris, you are mine, although you yet withhold the pledge of the lips; mine everywhere and forever; mine here in this desolate reach of sea, and mine yonder in the great world, if we ever again attain it. I never will yield you up to another; never relinquish my claim. Against nature and man I shall endeavor to hold what is my own."

One moment I gazed down into her eyes, penetrating to the gray depths, and perceiving there a sudden outburst of passion which she did not even seek to conceal. It was a revelation absolute and complete, a revelation never to be forgotten. Yet she did not touch me, did not answer in words, and in another instant her glance turned away out over the grim desolation of waters. I was still looking at her, intoxicated by what I had seen, when she pointed excitedly forward.

"In heaven's name, what is that?"

Hardly had my glance shifted when Kelly leaped to his feet, his voice raised in a wild yell.

"Mither of God, sorr, there's a ship!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

In Which We Board a Derelict.

I saw the sleepers cast off their coverings and rise up startled and staring, but I could only gaze dumbly at the apparition before us, doubting the evidence of my own eyes and unable to utter a sound. At that first glance I believed the thing illusion, a mirage of the deep, a shadow-ship mocking us with semblance of reality. The cold silvery light played along her glistening side, causing the whole extent of the vessel to gleam back into our eyes like a great mirror, while the very shape and form of the silently gliding specter appeared a survival from out the dead past, a ghastly relic of centuries gone unlifted from those somber depths below. The silence, gloom, the dim outline of the great hull, the strange glimmer of it from bow to stern; all combined to make it seem a ghost-ship, sported with by the waves. It moved slowly under the impelling power of the wind beating against the broad high stern, the blunt bows scarcely rippling the water, passing almost directly across our track, appearing more like a painted picture than anything constructed of wood and iron. Out of the night, dim, visionary, it swam before us, a weird, uncanny thing, chilling the blood with its ghostliness. I rubbed my eyes, staring at the silvery reflection, my heart pulsing with a horror which set me trembling.

Yet, little by little, my mind began to apprehend the truth, my reason to grasp the details. Mist or reality, there directly before us floated what appeared to be the outlines of a ship—battered, wrecked, odd in form—yet a ship, moving upright upon the surface of the water. Good God! what a mad dream of the past was represented yonder! Those round, blunt bows, the broken bowsprit, heavy as a mast, forking straight upward; the great carven, shapeless figurehead beneath; the wide, elevated fore-castle deck; the seemingly tremendous thickness of the bulwarks; the strange slope of deck and rail amidships; the immense remnant of a foremast towering in splinters; the broad, square stern, even over-topping the height of the peaked fore-castle. That was a grim thing to meet with in those waters.

"Stand by, men!" I called, the tremble still in my command. "If the thing yonder be wood and iron we'll board her."

Not a voice responded, their bodies tense and motionless, every eye still on that dim, phantom gleam. With clenched teeth I pressed the tiller hard down, and the bows of the long-boat headed straight in. Suddenly De Nova leaped to his feet.

"Ship ahoy!" he yelled; the note of fear sounding shrilly.

In the intense silence I could plainly hear the heavy breathing of the excited men.

"There will be no use hailing," I said, strengthened by the sound of my own voice. "If that be a vessel, her crew are dead a hundred years."

"And by God, it is, sir!" ejaculated Johnson, who was on his knees in the bow. "It's a real ship, all right. That's ice that glitters; she's sheeted in it from stem to stern."

I saw it myself then, every doubt of

the real character of this dread visitant vanishing; my courage came back in a rush.

"Ay, ay, lads, Johnson has hit it right. That's a ship for us, and now we'll see what she looks like on deck. Get a grip with your boat-hook, Johnson, on that raft of stuff trailing from the fore-chains, when I lay her alongside. Strike the wood if you can, the cordage is likely to be rotten."

He missed it at the first attempt, the hook slipping on the ice; but as I brought the longboat around once more, he succeeded in getting a grip upon something sufficiently firm and held on, the fellows staring up silently at the bulging side, and touching the thick sheathing of ice as though half demented.

"Make fast. Break the ice out of that ring, Kelly, and pass a stout rope through it. Now furl the sail, the rest of you. Fend her off, Cole; that's all right, keep your oar there. Mr. De Nova, you will remain in charge of the boat. I'll see what she looks like aboard; Johnson, come along with me."

I picked my way forward into the bows and stood up, striving to obtain some kind of a grip on the fore-chains which would enable me to haul myself up. Everything I touched was ice, so thick as to render objects shapeless.

"Give me a lift, Kelly; easy, now, until I get a handhold. There, that will do, my lad."

It was a slippery, dangerous perch, the vessel plunging somewhat, but the upper ice was slightly powdered with snow, yielding a little purchase, and I finally discovered a brace for my feet which enabled me to reach down and assist Johnson to scramble up beside me. Fortunately the bulwarks were not so high proportionately as wide, and we succeeded in sliding over them, coming down rather heavily on the solid deck. Here the snow made walking possible, although underneath the ice was thick and smooth, compelling caution. All forward was a terrible rattle of wreckage, a jumbled mass of tangled spars, with the great topmast and all its hamper right where it had fallen, a portion of the port bulwark smashed flat. A hummock of ice rose like a great hill from about the butt of the foremast, which stuck up maybe 30 feet, clear over the fore-castle deck, leaving everything shapeless and grotesque. Where the slope was steepest, the wind had swept away the snow leaving the ice beneath clear; and there, frozen completely in, like a painted picture, was the fully revealed body of a man. I never saw any sight more ghoulish than that ice-shrouded figure; the arms outstretched, the short, black beard rendering more ghastly the white, dead face. I gripped my hands onto Johnson's shoulder, and he was shaking like an aspen, his own face colorless in the moonshine. I wheeled him about savagely.

"Don't lose your nerve, man. You've seen dead men before. Come, there's nothing to do here; we'll try how she looks aft."

He followed me like a dog, casting uneasy glances backward over his shoulder. The deck was clearer of rattle beyond the foremast, a great gap in the port-bulwarks amidships showing where the wreckage had probably been swept overboard. The mainmast had been ripped out, leaving a great, ugly gash in the deck plank, and in falling had so smashed flat one corner of the cook's galley that we could look in through the jagged opening thus left. All the front portion was snow and ice, but the further extremity appeared dry enough, revealing a brick oven, a table screwed to the wall, and an overturned scuttle of coals littering the deck. It was not a desirable spot, yet would afford protection from the frosty night wind, and be much better than the open boat. Besides, I realized how those others must feel down there, hobbling up and down against those ice-aked sides.

"Johnson," I said, my eyes wandering toward the dimly revealed front of the after-cabin, which appeared utterly shapeless under its mantle. "We've got quite a job ahead of us to break through this wreckage. I'm for having the rest of the crew up to help us. Climb over into the main-chains and cut out some steps with your knife. We'll have them drop back there and unload. Then the women won't be obliged to see that dead man for'ard."

He was some minutes at the task, and I occupied the time in kicking aside some of the litter in the galley and making the dreary interior a bit more decent, having the men pass up some spare blankets, and spreading them out on deck. Finally Kelly and the negro scrambled up, and between us we succeeded in lifting Lady Dardington and Celeste over the icy bulwarks. The latter clung sobbing to De Nova, but my lady gazed about her wonderingly, her eyes full of questions. Without speaking we stowed them away under shelter.

"She is certainly a relic," I paused long enough to say, "one of the old