

**THE 'LADY MAUD': SCHOONER  
YACHT. A NARRATIVE OF HER LOSS  
ON ONE OF THE BAHAMA CAYS,  
FROM THE ACCOUNT OF A GUEST ON  
BOARD. IN THREE VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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The 'Lady Maud': Schooner Yacht. A Narrative of Her Loss on One of the Bahama Cays, from the Account of a Guest on Board. In Three Volumes, Vol. II by W. Clark Russell

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**W. CLARK RUSSELL**

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# THE "LADY MAUD:"

SCHOONER YACHT.

A NARRATIVE OF

HER LOSS ON ONE OF THE BAHAMA CAYS,  
FROM THE ACCOUNT OF A GUEST ON BOARD.

BY

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"THE WRECK OF THE 'GROSVENOR,'" ETC.

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# THE "LADY MAUD."

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## CHAPTER I.

By half-past ten I was very sleepy. Miss Tuke had come on deck, and kept Sir Mor-daunt and me company in a few turns; but Norie, who made one of us, managed to hook her arm under his, pretending that the deck was not safe walking, as though *he* (whose gait was a convulsive stagger compared with her beautiful, elastic, buoyant tread) could prop her up. But she was disposed to be complaisant, and presently he sneaked her over to the lee side of the deck. If this did not delight me, I was solaced by remembering that she had often snubbed him briskly enough, and I construed her

kindness into a little compliment to his amiable reception of her mild derision.

But, as I say, at half-past ten I felt very sleepy. There was nothing in sight, the wind was piping grandly, and the yacht having been put about for a short board, so as not to miss the wreck by going to leeward of her, had settled down on the port tack, and was yerking along, her weather leeches shivering and her sharp nose biting an opening through the short, black, foam-topped surges. It seemed a pity to be cruising about after a kind of phantom ship when we could have lain our course at nine knots an hour, and made perhaps a fair run out of these humbugging latitudes. But there was too much humanity, though based methought on a somewhat airy foundation, in my friend's resolution, to allow me to utter a word against it.

I was awakened by a sharp rapping on my door, and on opening my eyes was surprised to find the daylight broad upon the



scuttle, for it did not seem to me that I had been asleep above an hour. I asked who that was, whereupon the steward put his head in and told me that the wreck was close by, and Sir Mordaunt would be glad if I'd come on deck. I immediately rose and dressed myself. It was easy to judge without going on deck that there was a considerable sea running and a very strong wind blowing, for the yacht was plunging sharply, and every now and again I could hear the sharp rattle of spray upon deck, while the washing of the sea against the side of the schooner was exceedingly heavy and noisy. In less than five minutes I was out of my cabin.

Sir Mordaunt stood close against the companion, gazing to leeward, and when he saw me he pointed with great excitement to the sea, crying, "There she is, Walton! I told you the signal was not put into the sky for nothing. How are we to rescue them?"

I looked, and saw a large water-logged

vessel—apparently a barque—upon our lee beam. She was a complete wreck, and recalling the features of the mirage we had beheld on the preceding day, I perceived that this was the vessel that had painted the reflection in the air. Her foremast was gone just under the top, though the foreyard still swung upon it, supported, it seemed to me, by the truss. Her main topmast was standing, but her mizzen-mast had carried away short off at the deck, and stood up like a huge bunch of sharp, jagged, white splinters about two feet high. Portions of her deck forward were blown out. Only a sailor can figure to his mind the image of confusion and wreckage aloft, masses of black rigging hanging over either bulwark, the maintop-gallant-mast swinging over the topsail-yard, upon which the furled sail lay in rough heaps of canvas, with the gaskets hastily and clumsily passed, as though by men who had worked in an extremity.

But this was not the spectacle that fixed

my eyes. The hull of the vessel was sunk to about six inches below her washboard, so that nothing but her bulwarks prevented the water from standing to that height upon her decks; but about three feet abaft the starboard fore-rigging the bulwarks were smashed level with the decks, making a fissure about twelve feet wide, through which, as the hull slowly rolled, with the most sickening, languid movement that can be imagined, the water flashed out in a roaring coil of foam, as though a sluice-gate had been opened. She had apparently had a deck-load of timber, for though most of it was gone, a number of planks still littered the decks, lying one athwart the other in hideous confusion, with fragments of the galley and fore-deck-house, which had been split to pieces, lying amongst them, together with such a raffle of gear, broken spars, pieces of canvas, and the like, that no description could give you the barest idea of the dreadful picture of shipwreck that immersed hull presented.