

Lake In The Clouds By Sara Donati

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"Recensione PRAISE FOR SARA DONATI: Donati's engaging characters, her strong sense of place and the lively escapades pull readers along.--Rocky Mountain News?The author [has] a gift for capturing the history and the lives of the people of that time and place.--The Tampa TribunePRAISE FOR **INTO THE WILDERNESS**: Exemplary historical fiction, boasting a heroine with a real and tangible presence.--Kirkus Reviews?My favorite kind of book.--Diana Gabaldon, bestselling author of **The Fiery Cross** L'autore **Sara Donati** is the pen name of Rosina Lippi, a former academic and tenured university professor. Since 2000 she has been writing fiction full-time, haunting the intersection where history and storytelling meet, wallowing in nineteenth-century newspapers, magazines, street maps, and academic historical research. She is the internationally bestselling author of the Wilderness series (Into the Wilderness, Dawn on a Distant Shore, Lake in the Clouds, Fire Along the Sky, Queen of Swords, and The Endless Forest) as well as The Gilded Hour, the first in a new series following the descendants of characters from the Wilderness series. She lives between the Cascades and Puget Sound with her husband, daughter, Jimmy Dean (a Havanese), and Max and Bella (the cats). Estratto. © Riproduzione autorizzata. Diritti riservati. Chapter OneIn the spring of Elizabeth Middleton Bonner's thirty-eighth year, when she believed herself to be settled, secure, and well beyond adventure, Selah Voyager came to Paradise. It was the screaming of the osprey that brought the women face to face, just past dawn on a Sunday morning. Elizabeth and her stepdaughter Hannah were skirting the marsh at the far end of Half-Moon Lake when the birds started up, making so much noise chasing each other in great diving swoops that the two of them stopped right there to watch. Weary as she was, Elizabeth was glad of the excuse to rest. On the edge of New York's endless forests the winter gave way reluctantly to warm weather, but when the osprey came back to the lake it was a certainty that the last of the ice would soon be gone. And there were other signs as well, all around them: a red-winged blackbird perched on a cattail; wood frogs hidden among the rushes, their queer duck-clack call echoing over the water; reeds flushed with new green. Elizabeth was looking over the lake and taking comfort in what the day had to offer when Hannah caught sight of a clutch of small white flowers in first blossom. Bloodroot gave up a deep scarlet dye, and it was highly prized. Elizabeth said, "'Can't it wait?'" And knew it could not; Hannah simply could not walk away from such a useful growing thing. That she had gone a night without rest was immaterial: she could have run up the mountain and trotted back down again without stopping, or needing to. With an apologetic look, Hannah pulled a small spade from her basket and knelt down to lift the plant. And froze, as still and attentive as a deer who comes upon a hunter in an unexpected place. Almost directly before her was a pair of shoes, sitting atop a low oak stump in the early morning sun, as if put there to dry after a walk through the bush. Roughly cobbled and worn down to almost nothing, with scratched blue buckles. Elizabeth had never seen such shoes on anybody in Paradise. A stranger on the mountain then, and not far off. The thing to do would be to walk on. It was foolish to even consider confronting a stranger (a trespasser, Elizabeth reminded herself) on the mountain, no matter how curious the footwear such a person might wear. Not with the solemn charge entrusted to her this morning; not as weary as she was. The men would see to it. With the osprey still screeching and wheeling over the lake, Elizabeth was staring at the shoes and arguing silently with herself when Hannah took things into her own hands and pushed the hobblebushes aside. In a little hollow under an outcropping of stone, a woman lay curled into a ball. Her skin was darker and richer in color than the earth she had slept on; under a homespun jacket her belly was round and taut: yet another child getting ready to fight its way into the world. The vague curiosity that had come to Elizabeth at the sight of the blue buckles was replaced immediately with dread as the woman pulled away from them, her face blank with fear. It was more than eight years since Elizabeth had last encountered an escaped slave, but she knew with complete certainty that this young woman had run away from someone who considered her to be property. She said, "'You needn't fear us. Have you lost your way?'" For a moment she didn't move at all, and then she scrambled up into a sitting position, looking from Hannah to Elizabeth and back again. Under a high forehead her eyes were luminous with fever, and a tripping pulse beat at the hollow of her throat, as frantic as a bird's. "'I am Elizabeth Bonner. This is my stepdaughter Hannah.'" Some of the fear left the woman's face. Her mouth worked without sound, as if language were a burden she had left somewhere on the trail behind her; when her voice finally came to her it was unusually deep and hoarse. "'The schoolteacher. Nathaniel Bonner's wife.'" She stifled a cough against the back of her hand. "'Yes,'" said Elizabeth. "'Do you know my husband?'" "'I heard stories, yes, ma'am.'" Hannah said, "'You're ill.'" She nodded and the turban wrapped around her head slipped; the girl's hair had been shaved to the scalp not so long ago. With trembling fingers she set it to rights. "'Been sleeping on the wet ground.'" "'Were you trying to find someone in the village?'" It was as close as Elizabeth could come to asking what she really wanted to know, but it was Hannah who

answered. "She was looking for Curiosity," she said, evoking the name of Elizabeth's closest friend, a woman she loved and trusted as well as any of her own family. To hear Curiosity Freeman's name in connection with a runaway slave in Paradise made complete sense--and was utterly alarming. And what was Hannah's role in this? Elizabeth might have asked, but her stepdaughter had already turned her attention to the stranger and spoke to her directly. "Curiosity wasn't where she was supposed to be, was she? She had a birth to attend to, but you couldn't know that. So you left again." The rest of the fear drained from the young woman's face, and Elizabeth saw that she was burning with more than one kind of fever. There was fierce purpose and an acute intelligence in those dark eyes. She reached into the pocket tied by a string around her waist and held out her hand to them. In the center of her work-hardened palm lay a thin round disk of wood, its edges carved in a geometric pattern, and a white stone lodged at its center. The sight of it made Elizabeth's heart leap in her chest. "Where did you get that?" She coughed again, and her fingers swept to a close over the bijou, a gesture as elegant as the folding of a wing. "Almanzo Freeman set me on the path. He gave it to me." "Almanzo? But he lives--" "In New York City, yes ma'am. More than two weeks now I been on my way. Last stopped just outside of Johnstown." The last time Elizabeth had made the journey from New York City to Johnstown, it had taken a full seven days by boat, stage, and wagon. To walk this far from Johnstown would require another two days at the very least; perhaps more, with the April muck at its worst. She could hardly imagine what this young woman had managed on her own, in strange countryside. "Daughter." Elizabeth spoke in the Mohawk language of Hannah's mother's people. "What do you know about this?" "I know enough," answered Hannah calmly, in the same language. "But there's no time to explain right now. She's sick, and we can't take her through the village by day." It was a question, and it wasn't. In her usual competent fashion Hannah had already decided what must be done, and she simply waited for Elizabeth to come to the same conclusion. And how was she to put a coherent thought together with the osprey screaming and two women staring at her? One of them young enough never to give her own safety a thought; the other with good reason to fear for her life. A young woman in need of help, sent here by Curiosity's son Almanzo, a free man of color living in the city. There were people in Paradise who would take pleasure in returning this woman to whatever punishment waited. Perhaps they would take her child from her. Elizabeth was aware of the fragile bundle in her arms, suddenly as heavy as iron. She said, "We will take you home with us, Miss--What is your name?" The young woman straightened her shoulders and took a hitching breath. "Selah Voyager." And then: "I'm thankful for your kindness, ma'am, but I'll just wait here till dark." "Nonsense," said Elizabeth, more sternly than she intended. "You are hungry and fevered, and this is not such an isolated spot as you might think, so close to the lake. You are much safer at Lake in the Clouds. As are we." Before they were even in sight of the cabins, the sound of children's shrieking laughter came to them. Selah Voyager jerked to a sudden stop and turned toward Elizabeth. Hannah said, "There's nothing to fear. The children dive into the water in the mornings and the cold makes them howl." But it wasn't the children's laughter that had brought Selah up short: her gaze was fixed at a point behind them. Elizabeth knew without turning that someone stood there, and that this young woman had ears keen enough to have heard him, although Elizabeth had not. Nathaniel said, "I went down to ask after you two, and here you are almost home without me. I see you've brought us some company." The truth was, her husband's voice had such power over her that Elizabeth's anxiety simply gave way, replaced by relief and pleasure. His hand was on her shoulder and she covered it with her own as she turned to him. "This is Miss Voyager," Elizabeth said. "She is a friend of Curiosity's." The young woman curtsied, stifling a cough in her fist. "Glad to make your acquaintance." Nathaniel's tone was easy, but his expression was equal parts concern and interest. Hannah said, "We came up the west way, Da. She's chilled through and I want to get her inside." "Better see to it, then." He was looking hard at Hannah, reading what she had not said from the set of her shoulders and her guarded expression. "We'll follow directly." Selah Voyager drew herself up to her full height. "Mr. Bonner sir, I am grateful for your help." Nathaniel managed a smile. "Don't know that I've been any help to you, but you're welcome on Hidden Wolf." Hannah put out her arms, pointing with her chin to Elizabeth's bundle. When she had taken it and walked on with Selah, Nathaniel pulled his wife closer to examine her face. "Another stillbirth?" She nodded, leaning into him. "I feared as much when you were so long. Kitty's out of danger?" "Curiosity thinks she will survive, but the child was too small. We said we would bury her next to the others, and then on the way home--" Her voice went suddenly hoarse. Nathaniel took her by the arm. "You're so tired your knees are wobbling. You can tell me what there is to tell sitting down as well as standing." The high valley was an oddity, a triangle cut into the side of the mountain at sharp angles. At its far end a waterfall dropped into a narrow gorge; at the widest point two L-shaped cabins stood among blue spruce and birch trees. Three generations of Bonners lived in the east cabin, nearest the falls, and in the other, slightly to the west, lived some of Nathaniel Bonner's Mohawk relatives by his first marriage. Nathaniel and Elizabeth came out of the woods into the cornfield on the outer apron of the glen. The smell of the earth waking to the spring sun was strong in the air; the stubble of last year's corn crunched underfoot. At the edge of the field a single stunted pine tree had fought its way up through a spill of boulders. Nathaniel sat there and pulled Elizabeth down to sit in the vee of his legs, the back of her head resting on his shoulder and his arms around her waist. Her hair smelled of lavender and chalk and ink, of the tallow candles that had burned all night in a birthing room crowded and tense enough to make her sweat. That was one story she did not have to tell: he had heard others like it too often. The sound of the waterfall and the children's voices echoed against the cliffs, coming to them in fits and starts: Lily and Kateri scolding, and the boys' laughter in response. Elizabeth was content to be quiet and let him talk, so he told her what had passed while she was in the village, about Hawkeye and Runs-from-Bears going out to walk the trap lines and the fox Blue-Jay killed with his sling shot when it came after the hens. Matilda Kaes had stopped by with five yards of linen, in lieu of cash payment for her grandson's

tuition at Elizabeth's school, and Daniel and Blue-Jay had brought a world of trouble upon themselves by eating a pan of stolen cornbread soaked with maple syrup from the last tapping. Nathaniel wondered to himself why, if the boys had made up their minds to eat themselves sick, they hadn't let their sisters in on it, an oversight which had sent Lily and Kateri straight to Many-Doves to report the larceny. Elizabeth laughed a little at that picture. Nathaniel said, "You make a man work mighty hard for a smile, Boots." She twisted in his arms so that he could see that she was capable of smiling, or trying to. They had lost many things in the last year that could not be replaced, and Elizabeth's easy smile was not the least of them. Her sorrow was as clear as the gray of her eyes. In August a putrid sore throat had come down on the village out of nowhere. Richard Todd and Curiosity had known straight off what they were dealing with, but it took some weeks before the rest of them came to understand. Even after Hannah read them an extract from one of her books, there was no way to really take in the nature of the beast she called malignant quinsy--not until he saw it in the throat of his youngest son. Hannah made him look, and to this day he wished he had refused. He would no more be able to forget the membrane growing in the soft tissues of the throat than he could forget the boy it had choked to death. Nathaniel thought of the disease as a living thing, a stranger come among them to steal, quick and cruel and unstoppable. When it was done, not one family had escaped. At Lake in the Clouds they had buried two of their own: Hannah's grandmother Falling-Day, and cradled against her chest for safekeeping, Robbie Bonner, just two years old. Nathaniel still expected to hear the boy's voice whenever he opened his front door. She said, "Kitty's little girl never even took a breath, Nathaniel. At least we had Robbie for a short while." "Too short," he said, sounding angry, because he was and always would be. Angry at himself, for letting the boy slip away. The truth was, Nathaniel could not make Elizabeth put down her grief any more than he could put aside his own."

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Lake of the clouds resides in ontonagon county in the upper peninsula region of michigan it s nestled within the 58 000 acres of porcupine mountains wilderness state park the lake is situated in a, credit john j mosesso usgs public domain thumbnail medium original detailed de, lake of the clouds this is a hike in fishing opportunity that requires a 3 4 mile hike light water craft can also be carried in and out the lake is 240 acres type of fishing shore boat typical fish species available smallm.

The bonners take selah desperately ill to lake in the clouds to care for her and with that simple act they are drawn into the secret life that curiosity an

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The lakes of the clouds are a set of tarns located at the 5 032 ft 1 534 m col between mount monroe and mount washington in the white mountains of the u s state of new hampshire the lakes form the source of the ammonoosuc river a tributary of the connecticut river the lakes of the clouds hut a rental hut and lodge for hikers operated by

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