



# Stranded: Alaska's Worst Maritime Disaster Nearly Happened Twice

*Aaron Saunders*

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**The sinking of the Canadian Pacific steamship *Princess Sophia* was Alaska's worst maritime disaster — until it nearly happened again.**

In 1918, the Canadian Pacific steamship *Princess Sophia* left Skagway, Alaska, on her last trip of the season to Vancouver. She never made it. Battered by a raging snowstorm and sent dangerously off course, she ran aground on Vanderbilt Reef, a rocky shoal in Lynn Canal, North America's deepest and longest fjord. She would spend two days high and dry on the reef, with rescue ships standing by, unable to help, before she finally slid to her watery grave.

Seventy-six years later, another ship — the modern *Star Princess* — finds herself off course in Lynn Canal, and history nearly repeats itself. Weaving together events past and present, Aaron Saunders tells the story of two very different ships that set sail from Skagway at opposite ends of the century. Their common bond — the unassuming and often treacherous stretch of water known as Lynn Canal.

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