



Now she was to take with love a new name. Could she take it? Yes. Love accepts love unasking, unthinking.

"Haven't been a good father to you, Mai!"

"The best—the best that could be. Did you father, did you make me search for any ship with a name having those three letters?"

"No, Mai! I never did. We didn't think of it. You were only a baby, mother was took sick and died, and there were so many things to think of I took you as a little girl just sent out of heaven for me to love, and I didn't do anything. I s'pose we ought to have done something 'bout it, but we were plain folks, and we didn't think it wasn't just, father. Sam does not care."

"No, Sam does not care. He loves you, and I guess he's contented. I be, so long as you stay near me."

"Then they fell into silence for a few moments. The old man was twice tempted to speak, but did not. There was more to tell—something he had never mentioned to any one, except to his wife, and she had asked him to keep it always a secret, and he had promised her."

"Mother was right," he said in his heart. "It would break the girl's heart if she knew it. Its best she should never know."

"Yes, dear. Government put the two-fathoms buoy just six fathoms east by south of the place where the ship went down."

"That night there came in from the sea one of those series of long mysterious rollers that hint of storms far off on the open ocean. The stars sparkled and quivered as if anxious to speak, and the vast sheet of light from the tower searched round and round the horizon, but found nothing. And the buoy moaned and moaned to itself in the dark—moaned for the dead secret of the sea."

"Mademoiselle Louise Rochet burst upon the hotel at breakfast the next morning in a new and more bewildering costume. Breakfast cakes were neglected and coffee grew cold that feminine eyes might mark, examine, and find fault with the details. The breakfast-room had not been closed an hour before the natural result appeared. There was a timid knock at Mademoiselle's door and the maid opened to a young girl."

"Could I see Mademoiselle Rochet?"

"I dare say, Mr. Manning's yacht sailed yesterday. I think Milly said it was only for a few days. She knows somebody who knows the regulations, and they are friends of the Manning's."

not be well enough to attend the hop that night. Mademoiselle had many patrons among society ladies in New York."

"Indeed! Not the wife of Judge Danville or Judge Choate?"

"No. There was one, perhaps madame may know her; Madame Gearing."

"Oh! you mean Judge Gearing, of the Superior Court. She was a Rochelle, married a Mr. Yardswick, and he died. She must be past forty now, but well preserved."

"I designed two habits for her."

"And I dare say they were not bad."

"I assure Madame Gearing's wife, Mrs. Gearing you call her, was greatly pleased—charmed. Madame may have observed her habits."

"Well, no. I'm not very well acquainted with Mrs. Gearing. My Milly has met her son."

"Has she a son? He must still be an infant."

"No. It was by her first husband. Milly admires him very much. He's lived abroad some time. Studied in Paris, was rather wild there, but of course quite reformed now."

"Will Mademoiselle the daughter permit me to examine her robes? It is possible I suggest something."

"Milly! Oh, Milly's young. She only came out this spring. Her things don't matter down here. There's nobody here of any consequence. We shall receive this fall for her, and then, if Mademoiselle can design a dress for her we shall be glad."

"Americans are so strange. What is it to come out?"

"Milly's a debutante. She is now a young lady, and can receive calls from young gentlemen."

think. The unexpected had happened. She had hoped to find him, to confront him in the hotel, and openly demand recognition."

"Months and months had passed since she had seen him, and she felt a certain melancholy pity for herself in finding in her dress the proof of how much she had changed to meet him publicly and to humiliate him in some striking and dramatic scene that would satisfy her sense of justice and the picturesque. He would fall on his knees, and she would pour out her wrath—no, he wouldn't do that. He would wince, perhaps, but would hold his head erect, and through it all she would feel the thrill of triumph."

"Mademoiselle's appearance on the beach did not attract special attention. She was dressed with what might be called elegant plainness. Her manner was ladylike and reserved, and, while many bestowed a passing glance upon her costume, none heeded the woman. The others were noisy and unamused, and she passed on, the crowd of the throng gathered on the beach and took the path towards the light-house without exciting comment. Lovers there were at intervals along the way, and now and then she met a party of children paddling and splashing with white foam about their heads, and the surf, the irregular line of the beach, and the white waves of the sea, and she felt a slight ripple on the water, yet the surf, the white waves, and the white mountains of the west, all appeared to her to rest to rest and think. There was only a slight ripple on the water, yet the surf, the white waves, and the white mountains of the west, all appeared to her to rest to rest and think."

"There was a shadow on the water. She looked to the west. The sun had disappeared behind one of the alpine heights of cumulus, leaving a faint glow of red on the sky and the irregular line of white silver that touched the edge of the cloud. Could it be forebodings of a storm? Was it a vague hint of more rain—more tears, perhaps lightning—in her stormy life?"

"The surf was most irregular in its pulsations. Three closely successive waves would advance, and, booming, break, and rush up the shingly slope, and then the beach would scream as the white water ran back. Then all would be quiet for a little space. It was in one of these pauses that there came to her ear a dreary cry like a moan. The color left her handsome face, and she looked far and wide over the sea. There was nothing, and the surf roared, and she screamed again. Once more she heard it. It made her heart beat fast, she knew not why. She had read of the mysterious sounds of the sea, of the moan that comes from the great storm, and she had read of the cry of a cricket. Peace everywhere, save for that moaning from the sea."

"O, if it would only speak plainly. It means so much and says so little. Ah! there is a man coming."

"The approach of any human being seemed a comfort, and she sat still, looking towards the hotel to where a tall, plainly-dressed man came slowly along the path."

"It's the two-fathom buoy."

She sat at a loss to understand why her pulse had raced with such speed. Could this strange, unearthly voice be a cry from the unknown bidding her pause? Was it a real voice? Did she hear it? Was it only a cry picked out by her heart from the mass of the sonorous thunder on the beach, as a sea shell picks out a tone from the plain to the poor little maid. All she could do was to assist her mistress into another ravishing robe, that she might go to dinner in a becoming costume."

"To the people in the big dining-room Mademoiselle was the picture of sweetness and light. Two gentle young things who carried their tender moustaches after soup declared she was a brunette angel."

"Rich? I should say!"

"Dressmaker?"

"Ab, yes. Pity. With all that money feller might do worse. Well, see! Hang tales!"

"Hop to-night?"

It is here, because if one life is saved by hearing the thing whistling in the dark it will pay to let it whistle all the time, even if it does sound like a siren to fall in with us."

"The sea is so soft. So soft, so soft, as here. Oh, pardon me! I should not detain you."

"Taint so matter. I've just been to the hotel with Mai. Nothing particular to do. Glad to show strangers over the light."

"With an instinctive grasp at the fact that through this simple and transparent nature she might obtain some information of value, she smiled sweetly and said—"

"I am a stranger in America."

"I have heard much of American politeness. I am quite alone; yet, if it is possible, I shall greatly admire to see the light-house. My home is Paris, where we have such a beautiful view of the city."

"Come right in. Guess father's round somehow."

"Are not the ladies of your house at home?"

"No; Mai's gone to the hotel. It's no matter. I've shown hundreds of 'em round the place."

"She had the wit to see that from a Parisian standpoint she could not possibly accept the invitation to see the light-house. It might be allowable. The situation would give her a wholly novel experience—that of unembarrassed and unaffected talk with a man of her own age, and she felt a slight ripple on the water, yet the surf, the white waves, and the white mountains of the west, all appeared to her to rest to rest and think."

"More than an hour passed in inspecting the light. The old captain took her in the light, and she returned with her beauty and gaiety. After all had been seen, the young man escorted her to the stile, and she might take the path back to the hotel. She had the wit to see that from a Parisian standpoint she could not possibly accept the invitation to see the light-house. It might be allowable. The situation would give her a wholly novel experience—that of unembarrassed and unaffected talk with a man of her own age, and she felt a slight ripple on the water, yet the surf, the white waves, and the white mountains of the west, all appeared to her to rest to rest and think."

"And all this to prevent people from being lost in wrecks?"

"'Bout the size of it, marm. For all that, there's been many a wreck along this shore in my day. Why some years ago there was a wreck right opposite the place where the hotel stands now. More'n twenty people were lost just about where those people are bathing on the beach. It was a terrible sight. They were laughing and playing just where men and women have died. How dreadful it all is!"

"Lor! that was nearly twenty years ago. I was only a small chap, but I remember the scene. He was a fine fellow, and the men all went down to the beach to help the few that were saved."

"Say no more, dear. I've sent for Sam. You'll be all right after a little supper, and then you can go home and rest for the night. You remember you promised to go with us?"

"Yes, I remember. I cannot go."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. That woman. The lightning lit up her face, and I saw it as plain as day. Forgive me, dear; I couldn't go; I couldn't meet her again."

"Why, you never saw her before?"

"No, never. I don't even know her name."

"Why, it's only a fashionable dressmaker who arrived here last night. Everybody in the house is talking about her wonderful dress. She was pointed out to me. Her name is Louise Rochet."

"It's very silly in me, I know, but somehow I cannot help it. Let me get up now. I must go home. You'll forgive me, dear; I could not come to the hop to-night. She—that Frenchwoman would be there."

"Mademoiselle Rochet, being a guest of the house, was invited to the hop. There was much interest excited over the affair, for there were many who looked for some new dress that would charm, astonish and interest."

"Mademoiselle Louise Rochet did not attend. The hop was not a success. The advancing season brought more people to Wilbraham's hotel, and the hotel was full. A few days after the hop the afternoon boat brought a gentleman and lady to the hotel, and from the landing they drove rapidly in a light wagon to the hotel. He was a man about sixty years of age, of massive frame and fine large head with abundant hair already white. She was much younger—a woman of soft feminine beauty, though well past middle life. In dress she was severely plain, the woman rich, almost ostentatious. Dress to her was a matter of profound importance, to him only a convenience."

"We shall wait four rooms—one for my wife, one for myself, one for my son and a parlor. By the way, I suppose my son is here?"

"No, sir; not just now. Mr. Royal Yardswick still keeps a room here, but he's away on Mr. Manning's yacht."

"The Judge seemed to be somewhat disturbed at the information given to him by the hotel clerk, though he calmly signed the register in silence, thus—"

"I. H. Gearing and wife, New York."

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