

"You don't know my name yet. Miss Dare; you see, I have the advantage over you."

"Have Tritons names; you know you have not denied that you are one."

"If I were one I would wish you to be a mermaid."

"What! and have my poor little feet curled into a horrid scaly tail?"

"It would be a pity." He bent forward to look at the "poor little feet"; they were certainly little, and more certainly pretty; he put his hand for one moment across them, and again that strange electrical thrill shot through Desdemona's veins.

"They are too small to be anything but feet; the tail would be a failure."

"Let us come back to sense," said Desdemona, with a sudden change to coldness, and a slight withdrawal from his side.

"Do you like my name," you know the first English settlers in America were Dares."

He didn't know, but he said "yes."

"Aunty has a theory that all people of the same name are related; it is rather an uninteresting theory, but then theories are always that."

Again he said "yes." He wasn't following her at all; he was thinking how wonderfully bright and winning she was; the thought showed in his eyes and he seemed about to speak.

"Tell me your name now," she went on hurriedly.

"Carey—what do you think of that?"

"Carey; it has a soft pleasing sound. If I were a Swinburne I would immediately find a rhyme for it, as it is —"

"As it is —?" he queried.

"I like it." She spoke dreamily, softly; then in a moment she was a different creature; fire came to her eyes; every line of her body seemed to speak of suppressed action; this was one of her peculiarities, this sudden transformation from dreaminess to life, and it was bewildering, dazzling!

"I think," she said, "as we are such utter strangers we would get on better together if each of us gave a short biographical sketch of ourselves."

He smiled. "My name is Carey, as you know; my godfather and godmother are responsible for endowing me with the christian name of Walter; I have been brought up to no profession, simply because my father wished me to be a doctor, and my mother wished me to live on my means; I detested the thought of being a doctor, I prefer killing on a larger scale, killing time, in fact; that is my profession."

"One overstocked, I should fancy."

Desdemona spoke coldly; his words had given her a chill.

"We, my aunt and I, live in the States,"—she paused, expecting, hoping, he would wish her, ask her to be more minute, but as he said nothing, she went on:

"My father and mother died when I was quite small, fortunately, aunty was fond of me, and more fortunately, my father had amassed a large fortune; he made it in pork—it's so strange, I never see a pig without thinking of papa."

Walter Carey laughed.

"Don't; dont," cried the girl; "I didn't say it as something funny, something to be laughed at; but the ridiculous follows one's thoughts and feelings so closely, I always see the ridiculous, don't you?"

Walter Carey could not say that he did; he saw a joke when there was one, but it was always plainly a joke to him; there was no mixture of pathos; his nature was not of the highly-strung sensitive sort that sees many sides in a flash of time.

"You haven't told me your object in life yet. Miss Dare."

"Oh, mine: to be happy!"

"I should have imagined your profession otherwise: to make people unhappy."

Again that strange chill struck her spirit: when she spoke it was not to allude to his remarks.

"My baptismal name is Desdemona: Aunty bestowed it upon me, poetry was her hobby at the time of my birth; I must be forever grateful to

Providence that I was born in her poetical period; fancy, if I had been born now, or her hobbies had come in different succession. I might have been condemned to the short and euphonious appellation of 'Slap-her-on-the-back,' or 'Hit-her-on-the-shoulder.'"

They both laughed; afterwards there was a silence, and then it was they reached the remarks first recorded.

"I don't so much mind being dust in the end, if before I come to that delightful state of nothingness I have had my fun."

"But do you think we die like—like dogs?"

"Most men live like dogs."

"How can you say such horrible things; what do you mean?"

Did you never in your younger days read the old fable about the dog and the shadow?"

He was smiling quietly under his golden moustache; "Most men want more than one bone—that is all I meant."

"What do you call bones?"

"Well—not bones!"

He laughed again. His was a very merry and infectious laugh; it infected Desdemona; she had to drop her horror and join in his merriment.

"Don't you think the lake looks tempting for a paddle this morning; won't you come for one, Miss Dare?"

"What; without aunty?"

"Three's a crowd."

"But I thought men liked more than one bone."

She said this airily, and sprang up as she said it, showing her objection had been merely a momentary one.

He helped her very carefully into the light canoe, cushioned in crimson, and then took his place, and lifted the paddle in the air—a slight push! a stroke! and they were off.

Desdemona dragged her hand through the water like a delighted child, holding it up to let the clear drops splash from the tips of her fingers into the lake again.

"Do you know this is the first time I have ever been in a canoe; I believe I am something of a coward about the water."

"But you are not afraid now?" He bent forward the better to meet her eyes; there was a caress in the movement.

"No; I am not afraid now."

What a morning it was. There were just enough soft white clouds in the sky to curtain the sun from their bright eyes now and then; a slight breeze sprang up from the west and stirred the water, so that it sounded in soft splashes against the boat. It brought the sound of the Angelus to their ears and made them know it was time to turn homeward.

When they reached the shore beneath the bank at the small white cottage they found Miss Stuart awaiting them with an opera glass in her hand.

"Gracious! child. I have been so scared I couldn't do anything but watch you; how could you trust yourself in that shell of a thing, and in such a gale, too?"

Walter hastened to calm her.

"I assure you this breeze is nothing, and my boat's perfectly safe; I would not have persuaded Miss Dare to come for a paddle otherwise."

Now that her niece was safely on shore, Miss Stuart's objections to boating vanished, as is so often the case with needlessly nervous people.

"It was perfectly delicious on the water and I'm going out again to-morrow."

Desdemona was radiant from the pleasure of the paddle—"and I'm perfectly ravenous, aunty."

"Dinner is on the table, dear; won't you join us, Mr. Carey, at our frugal meal?"

"Thanks, but I must take my canoe back to the boathouse; I will see you again soon though." He lifted his hat and disappeared down the bank. Miss Stuart caught hold of Desdemona and shook her in pretended displeasure as soon as they got into the house.

"Now, Desdemona, if you are up to any of your old tricks I will get mad, real mad this time. How long is it since you refused that nice young Morton? How long since you broke poor Jim Johnson's heart?"

Desdemona was intent upon arranging her hair to her satisfaction in the mirror: she was fluffing it out over her eyes with her white, long, slim fingers.

"I'm going to have a good time, aunty; you are enjoying yourself with your Indian relics, and I am going to enjoy myself with this Saxon relic if I have a mind to."

Weeks went by, but the monotony was over, for Desdemona at least.

Every day some amusement, some pleasure, presented itself. There were rides in the early morning while the lazy village slumbered; there were drives in the afternoon, when others found the heat too oppressive to venture outside the doors of their green-shuttered houses; there was always boating in the evening, except when it rained, and then the vine-covered corner of the cottage veranda was nearly as cosy and comfortable as any canoe.

Walter Carey was Desdemona's attendant cavalier on every occasion; her acquaintances had multiplied; she knew all the girls there were to be known, and they were many, and all the men, but there were few. However, one, for a wonder, seemed to content Desdemona.

Miss Stuart noticed this and was highly pleased. She had found out all about the Careys; they belonged to an old English family, and were people of considerable fortune. Besides, she had taken a personal liking to the young man herself and thought he was a very desirable nephew-in-law in every way. Though she believed in the bliss of old maidenhood for herself, she wished her niece to marry, and had been half despairing of the fulfilment of her desire. Desdemona liked men, encouraged their attentions, flirted with them outrageously, but when they proposed to her she was done with them; there was no more fun to be got out of them so she sent them away. In vain did Miss Stuart remonstrate with her; she always laughed lightly, "I'm going to have a good time, aunty, just as long as I can," this had always been her answer. No wonder, therefore, that Miss Stuart was pleased when she saw the interest Desdemona took in young Carey. She had never been so interested before, Miss Stuart was sure of that, and so she was satisfied.

One evening Walter Carey came for Desdemona after tea, as usual, to take her for a paddle. Miss Stuart smiled complacently as she watched their pilgrimage down the bank and noted how careful he was that the weeds should not come in contact with Desdemona's white gown.

They had often remained out until late before, but this evening eleven o'clock came and they had not returned. It was a perfectly still night and the moon was almost at the full, yet Miss Stuart began to fear something had happened.

Something, evidently, had happened, for when at last they landed, they did not wait as was their way over their farewell, did not even touch hands. Desdemona walked in very straight, very pale, passed her aunt and went up to her room without speaking.

"I shall know in the morning," said Miss Stuart to herself, but when morning came all she learnt was from one of the villagers. Young Carey had left by the early train, *en route* for the Northwest.

Desdemona made no remarks: she said nothing concerning him that day or the next, but on the third, the day before their own departure for home, Miss Stuart could contain herself no longer.

They were on the veranda, a book was open in Desdemona's hand, but it could be plainly seen she was not reading it.

"Will you tell me now, Desdemona, your objections to marrying that nice young Englishman, Walter Carey?"

Evangeline toyed with the bunch of daisies in her belt; her voice was very slow, very even.

"He never asked me!"

She paused for a moment and then broke into a low laugh.

"It is very ridiculous," she said, but as she looked across the blue lake to the old Fort by the rapids all was blurred by a mist of tears.

Montreal.

MAY AUSTIN.