

nearly white, and the sea was a pale grey, flecked here and there with patches of white.

"This is like a June day of scirocco," said Artois, as he lit his pipe with the air of a man thoroughly at home. "I wonder if it will succeed in affecting Vere's spirits. This morning, when I arrived, she looked wildly young. But the day held still some blue then."

Hermione was settling herself slowly in a low chair near the window that faced Capri. The curious, rather ghastly light from the sea fell over her.

"Vere is very sensitive to almost all influences," she said. "You know that, Emile."

"Yes," he said, throwing away the match he had been using; "and the influence of this morning roused her to joy. What was it?"

"She was very excited watching a diver for *frutti di mare*."

"A boy about seventeen or eighteen, black hair, Arab eyes, bronze skin, a smile difficult to refuse, and a figure almost as perfect as a Nubian's, but rather squarer about the shoulders?"

"You have seen him, then?"

"Smoking ten of my special Khali Targa cigarettes, with his bare toes cocked up, and one hand drooping into the Saint's Pool."

Hermione smiled.

"My cigarettes! They're common property here," she said.

"That boy can't be a pure-bred Neapolitan, surely. And yet he speaks the language. There's no mistaking the blow he gives to the last syllable of a sentence."

"He's a Sicilian, Vere says."

"Pure bred?"

"I don't know."

"I fancy I must have run across him somewhere in or about Naples. It is he who made Vere, as I told her, look so insolently young this morning."

"Ah, you noticed! I, too, thought I had never seen her so full of the inner spirit of youth,—almost as he was in Sicily."

"Yes," Artois said gravely. "In some things she is very much his daughter."

"In some things only?" asked Hermione.

"Don't you think so? Don't you think she has much of you in her also? I do."

"Has she? I don't know that I see it. I don't know that I want to see it. I always look for him in Vere. You see, I dreamed of having a boy. Vere is instead of the boy I dreamed of, the boy—who never came, who will never come."

"My friend," said Artois, very seriously and gently, "are you still allowing your mind to dwell upon that old imagina-