

Leo watched him. "You know best, lad," he said. "Tell me of your home, Carl. Is your mother living?"

"Yes. Did you see that house on the cliff by itself?"

"Yes, to the north of the seaport."

"That is my home."

"A strange, out-of-the-way place I thought it was."

"Yes, it appears so, but it is a dear old house."

"Too dreary, I should say."

"Some people think so. I don't. You wouldn't, sir, I am sure, if you lived there. From the window you can see away out to sea, the cliffs and the sandy beach. I have sat for hours looking through my bedroom window late at night, with the full moon reflected upon the water in front, hearing the waves splash against the rocks below. I have a skiff of my own. On calm days I sail her around the headland."

Leo sat on his sea-chest attentively watching him. "Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"No."

"Poor lad!" he said, absently.

Carl glanced up.

"Why, sir, I was always happy."

"Only I was thinking how lonely it would be without any. There are seven of us. All boys. I am the fifth."