

THE CLAW OF THE SEA-PUSS

because you're a man—all four square sides of ye. You didn't want to hurt Miss Jane, and no more did I. That's why I passed Archie there in the street; that's why I turned round and looked after him when I couldn't see sometimes for the tears in my eyes; and all to save that *thing* there that ain't worth savin'! By God, when I think of it I want to tear my tongue out for keepin' still as long as I have!"

Lucy, who had shrunk back against the wall, now raised her head:

"Coward! Coward!" she muttered.

The captain turned and faced her, his eyes blazing, his rage uncontrollable:

"Yes, you're a *thing*, I tell ye!—and I'll say it ag'in. I used to think it was Bar's fault. Now I know it warn't. It was yours. You tricked him, damn ye! Do ye hear? Ye tricked him with yer lies and yer ways. Now they're over—there'll be no more lies—not while I live! I'm goin' to strip ye to bare poles so's folks 'round here kin see. Git out of my way—all of ye! Out, I tell ye!"

The doctor had stepped in front of the infuriated man, his back to the closed door, his open palm up-raised.

"I will not, and you shall not!" he cried. "What you are about do to is ruin—for Lucy, for Jane, and for little Ellen. You cannot—you shall not put such a stain upon that child. You love her, you——"