

had given her—what was here now, this moment, waiting for her. She felt, rather than saw, the duke standing motionless behind her, and knew that she dared not look upon his face.

"Celeste!" he said at last, and his voice was as quiet as the great deeps of the sea, that nevertheless are strong beyond all tides and all storms. "Heart of my heart," he said.

She could not move. Happiness so maddeningly near, so beyond all price, was too exquisite to be taken instantly. She dared not reach out her hand, lest, like the glance of Jove, its brightness kill her.

"Celeste!" came the voice again, this time insistent, compelling. Then she heard him laugh softly, his voice trilled through and through with its happiness. "Are you afraid to trust love, now that it is our own—at last? Are you afraid to trust me?"

"No, no, a thousand times no! Only afraid that what is so precious cannot be real and will vanish when I try to grasp it," and turning, she found his waiting arms were like a safe haven after a shipwreck.

Yet it was long before they could look into the face of love quietly, for its light upon their faces was still of a dazzling brightness when the white moon was close to the western shore. As the night had advanced the light breeze had fallen with it, and when dawn came they were still in the same place, under a canvas that hung limp and silent, failing to draw. Through all those hours the same story was told over and over—or held to be revealed only through the eyes, lest a word, however exquisite, might soil it. And so spent, those hours became marvelously fleet of foot and could never be fully recalled by either,