

Then it came upon Captain Jean that he was either talking to a lunatic or some wealthy woman with a craze. His sails were taken aback and he was left wallowing in a heavy ground sea of the mind with a smell of spice islands tinging the air.

*La Belle Arlesienne*, his old boat, was not worth a thousand pounds. Under the hammer heaven knows what she would have fetched, but she was his wife, or the only female thing that stood in that relationship to him. He tapped the dottle out of his pipe, then he took a pouch from his pocket and began to refill and the girl, seeing his condition, drew him aside, asking Raft to wait for her.

They went to another bollard and there, the mariner anchoring himself, she began to talk. She introduced herself. He knew all about the *Gaston de Paris* and Mademoiselle de Bronsart. He put his pipe in his pocket, finding himself in such famous company. She went on. In ten minutes she told him her whole story, told him just what Raft was and just how they stood related, and just how he had been treated in the hotel.

"It's as though they had turned out my father or my brother," said she, "we two who have fought and faced everything together have grown into companions. Friends who cannot be parted, Captain Bontemps. If he were a woman or I a man it would be easier. As it is things are difficult.