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WHY?

Why do I love you? I don't know! They say love never gives a reason, But that he has one I don't doubt.

Do you? Do you? That's downright treason.

Not always, let me tell you, sir.

Love practiced such excess of prudence; 'twas once in custom to explain,

The why and wherefore to his students.

And how to solve each puzzling case

He taught by rule and instructions;

But skeptics, such as you, have made

Love shy of giving demonstrations.

Why foolish mortals love at all,

Why we two hold each other dearest;

How long 'twill last, and whither 'twill end,

You'd like to know you precious quer-

ist!

You never will, I'll tell you that,

Yet still remains my first assertion;

Love understands what he's about,

And binds you first, for his diversion;

Ah, why I love you, If I knew,

I would not tell you—no, no, never!

For souls like ours are made to seek,

And mine to hide, you see, forever.

There's little, sir, you didn't find out,

But since that little makes life pleasant,

I think I'll keep it secret still,

And so keep you, too, for the present.

ONLY ONCE.

From "only one word" many quarrels begin, And "only this once" leads to many a sin—"Only a penny" wastes many a pound, "Only once morn" and the diver was dround, "Only one drop" many drunkards have made, "Only in play" many gamblers have said, "Only a cold" opens many a grave, "Only resist" many devils will save, "Only use rightly" makes the weak to grow strong, "Only think clearly" will keep you from wrong.

OTTALIE'S HUSBAND.

THE waves are rolling in slowly; the rows of cottages and the one hotel are bathed in an unbroken and grayish flood of light; the beach is dotted with the usual specimens of "the humau foim divine" that one sees at the seashore; while the inevitable small child trots around ubiquitously, overshadowed by a large amount of hat, and displaying an amazing brevity of skirt, and much (oh, very much!) of bare, mottled leg.

Lastiy, here am I, uncomfortably seated on a pile of wood, the centre of a swarm of gnats, trying to look as if I enjoyed it, and conscious that I am failing miserably.

It is not one of our populous places, resorted to by fashion, but a little primitive beach, sought by those who require sheepness or privacy.

"If," I meditate, "I could only think of an appropriate poem, perhaps I might be able to get enthusiastic over that dreary sweep of water. There's nothing else for me to do."

Poetry is not my strong point, and I rack my brain for at least three minutes. At last the lines come:

The sea, the sea, the open sea!

The blue, the fresh, the—

A woman's voice, close at hand says, "roast veal." What else I hear not, for those two words carry my thoughts forward to dinner. But no—vain hope—dinner is still a thing of the future.

At this point the aforesaid small child sits up a dismal howl, and flies in abject terror from "some real monster of the deep" (length one inch and a half) that its grubbing has disturbed. Its fright gives me malicious pleasure; but even that doesn't last long, and after a long yawn, I rise to go. But at this moment a figure in lilac gingham comes in sight, and I sit down to wait.

She comes along with light, easy steps, and presently she drops down silently beside me. She is a girl of twenty-two, with wavy, auburn hair, and a pair of deep set, gray eyes, with dark brow and lashes; her mouth is somewhat white, and her nose short and retrousse; but the light gown shows off every curve of a superb figure, and her skin is prettily tinted. Somehow people always look twice at her.

"Well?" I say, lazily interrogative. "Well?" she echoes. "Look here, Deborah. If I get 's' bore'd in this place that I drown myself, just remember, please, that you brought me here."

"Why, Ottalie—" I begin, with aggrieved sharpness.

"Perhaps you didn't," she interrupts, contradictorily but placidly. "That is what you are going to say, and I dare say it's true. I did not want to come to the seaside; and—and as we had to bury ourselves somewhere, this ante-deluvian place, Sone, was as good as any other. And the sea is always nice, you know, only"—her big eyes turned wrathfully seaward—"there is a little to much of it here, and nothing of anything else! Such a bad place people could not have collected at any place but Sone."

"As for the people, Ottalie, I had an idea we wanted to avoid society. Besides, Sone is cheap—"

"And nasty," puts in my sister.

"And do you indulge in these words, Ottalie? Sone is not bad, though there is no circulating library," I go on; "nothing to eat, and no sleep to be had for the gnats." I end by making a frantic lunge at one of the enemy—of course I miss him. I always do. Ottalie laughs.

"Poor, old Deb, you are getting on bravely. Novels, eating and drinking—sure sign of spinsterhood! Don't think I say it reproachfully. I wonder—claspings her hands fiercely—"why people ever marry?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"If aunt Rebecca would only die, and go to heaven," she goes on meditatively, "we should be rich."

"And what if we were rich?"

"We could go away ever so far, where nobody would ever see or find us."

"Afghanistan is a very good place," I said dryly.

"Yes!" she says, with a short laugh. "My aunt Rebecca won't. Though she is not a bit of use down here—except to sing hymns."

"You ought to be ashamed, Ottalie."

"I'm not," she says, cheerfully. "You are always wishing yourself, that aunt Rebecca was gone somewhere."

I wisely affect not to hear.

"Let us go over to the inlet," she adds, jumping up; "anything's better than sitting here."

The inlet is a small bay, chiefly remarkable for its calmness, solitude and quiet. But why it should have been named the inlet, nobody seems to know.

"Sometimes I think all this must be a dream," Ottalie says, as we saunter along in the heat, "how things have changed! What a contrast it presents to the days when we were with papa, and he was flourishing. This is a wretched life."

"Not Micheal's daughters!" he repeats. "Then who the dev—I beg your pardon. Then who are you?" But he spoke with a ring of mockery in his tone. What with that, and what with Ottalie's black looks at me I turn back to speak again.

"We did not go after you—to fetch you—we knew nothing about you. Ottie—this lady got into the boat for pastime, believing it to be at liberty, and she was foolish enough to row over to the opposite side of the inlet. We are ladies."

"It is a little better than your life last year, Ottalie."

She turns away quickly; but presently begins to hum a tune. Wretched I know it is for her; but any reference to the past she will not hear from me. Five minutes later we stand on the edge of the water.

Ottalie points to a small rowing boat.

"S—e," she says, "that boat is what I've been trying to get ever since we came here. We'll borrow it for a little while, Deb."

"Borrow it?"

"Just to set in," she says, jumping in.

"Oh, it is cool and pleasant sitting here! Come in, Deb."

I don't know why I always obey her; she knows that she tyrannizes over me. In I get. "The least little push—so—Deb well run it off into the water."

The boldness of the assertion locks my lips, and almost before I understand the situation we are skimming away from shore. People have said Ottalie rows well; I know the fact does not comfort me in the least. I close my eyes and cling to the boat-side.

Ottalie laughs, and begins to sing; so I am left in peace to indulge my fears. I always was a coward on the water.

"Won't you put back, Ottalie?"

But Ottalie only smiles, and sings the louder. Presently I find myself almost a mile out.

"Four o'clock!" I say, drawing out my watch.

"It is?" Ottalie asks, lazily. "I know what an inquiring mind you have, Deborah, and I am taking you to explore the Isle of Shoals!" Her eyes flashed at me as I expostulated:

"It is dinner-time. At least it will be by the time we get back."

"My dear Deborah," she says coolly, backing water. "I am not a well-regulated individual like you; my appetite does not depend on the clock!" And, as she spoke, she runs the boat into land. "Now, let us explore," she says, preparing to get out.

"And let the boat drift off?" I asked, a figure in lilac gingham comes in sight, and I sit down to wait.

She comes along with light, easy steps, and presently she drops down silently beside me. She is a girl of twenty-two, with wavy, auburn hair, and a pair of deep set, gray eyes, with dark brow and lashes; her mouth is somewhat white, and her nose short and retrousse; but the light gown shows off every curve of a superb figure, and her skin is prettily tinted. Somehow people always look twice at her.

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for me yet awhile. Tell your father to send you as long as I am helpless—that is, if you want to come. Do you?"

There is a little pause, and then Ottalie answers, in her old, care-for-nothing tone, "Yes."

I hold my breath; but nothing more is said. He only laughs. So he takes us for Micheal's daughters, whosoever he and they may be.

I feel dowdy; I feel that we both look just as Micheal's daughters might look. I am not much to boast of on orthodox occasions; but now my hat is over one ear, my cotton gown is rumpled, and I can tell that my nose is red, and my face a mass of freckles. Ottalie is also rumpled. Her lilac sleeves are rolled up, and her hat is lying at my feet. Yes, we might surely sit as models for these mythical daughters of Micheal. Next I look at our "face." He is a tall and broad shouldered; and clean limbed; his face is rather square, his features are irregular, and his mouth is covered by a black moustache; he is either very dark or much sunburnt. But there is something in his countenance that I like, something also in his voice, and he has the unmistakable bearing of a well-bred man.

Finding that he cannot make Micheal's daughters talk with him, he subsides into silence, enjoying his cigar. Then we reach shore.

I scramble out first, before he rises; he follows; then comes Ottalie. Once more on land my courage revives.

"Tell Micheal," he begins—but I interrupt him. In my opinion it is high time the farce should cease.

"You are mistaken sir," I say, tartly, trying to speak *de haut en bas*. "We are not Micheal's daughters."

"Not Micheal's daughters!" he repeats.

"Then who the dev—I beg your pardon. Then who are you?" But he spoke with a ring of mockery in his tone. What with that, and what with Ottalie's black looks at me I turn back to speak again.

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"Thanks," he answers, staring at both of us and raising his straw hat. My tones may not have impressed him—perhaps puzzled him; for there is slighting lightness about him, and anything but reverence in his face. "Thanks, for your kind exertions," he adds to Ottalie, who blushed furiously and makes no reply.

Raising his hat again, he walks his way, and we walk ours. Glancing back, I see a man in rough costume approach him.

"Good gracious, that must be Micheal!" I say. "He will want to charge us for the boat."

Ottalie turns upon me savagely. "Deborah, you are an idiot! Had you never found us out—ever. What does it matter if he did take us for the boat girls?"

"Did you not better tell me it was my fault; we took the boat at all?" I retort.

"I wish you would not do these things."

"What a good looking man he is."

We walk home-in silence, for I don't answer her. Ottalie hates reproach, but she is a little ashamed of the escapade herself.

In time we learn that the stranger's name is Daine; he is apparently well-to-do, and is supposed to have come to this little-out-of-the-world place, Sone, for a spell of quietness. He lives at the hotel, pays liberally, and "keeps himself to himself," occupying his time with boating and fishing. It is I who hears these items of news, and I try to impart them to Ottalie, but she will not listen. Meanwhile, if by chance we meet the stranger, he lifts his hat in silence, and gazes at Ottalie as he passes. Probably, just as we have heard his name, he has heard ours, and knows that we are not Micheal's daughters, but the Miss Peyres. And each time this meeting occurs, Ottalie's blushes grow more ridiculous. It makes me angry with her.

Three Sundays come and go. On the fourth we see our schoolboy cousin, Keith Harland, who has come down to Sone with his mother. Mrs. Harland looks frosty blue, and does not give us the tips of her fingers to shake. Of course she did not know we were at Sone, for we did not enlighten the world as to our movements. Her dead husband was our mother's cousin; so the relationship to her is not much, but what is it she is ashamed of. The scrambling, moving about, shabby kind of life Ottalie and I lead does not enhance our worth in her eyes. Let it be known, however, until the end comes and the "finis" is said. And then? Well, perhaps in the Great Hereafter Ottalie and I may attain to respectability.

On Monday morning Keith comes rushing into our lodgings, all excited.

"I say, Ottalie, what do you think?" he cries.

"Who do you think is here?"

"Who is?" asks she, from her place on the music stool.

"Jasper Daine. I have just seen him."

Ottalie runs away and does not answer.

She is red as the poppies outside.

"Who is Jasper Daine?" I question. "A regular brick," responds Keith.

"He was at college with Tom ages ago, and he came over to see Tom last autumn and get some shooting. He has a nice place of his own."

"And is well off?"

"Well off? I wish I was. Likely to be half as well. He is going to take me out fishing this afternoon. I told him you two were here, and that you were my place of his own."

"I drew the boy to me as Ottalie leaves

the room, and look into his eyes, speaking impressively:

"Keith, you must take care. No tales

out of school, you know, about past trou-