

sounds that she could hear. ^{Her eyes searched the dark corners of the alley and she could not see the negro.} Where was he? she wondered. She opened her mouth to call him but the words would not come; they had stuck in her throat. Suddenly a warm hand touched her arm and a ^{kind} negro woman's voice broke the stillness.

"Come here child. Let mammy look at you."

The hand took hers and led her to the carriage. She heard Boss's voice again.

Step up please, miss.

The negro woman helped her into the closed carriage. As Louetta leaned back into one of the leather seats, she could hear the woman take her place on the seat opposite.

"Here, child take this."

Louetta could feel a quilt comforter being placed over her lap. She heard the snap of Boss's tinderbox and a small lighted reed was handed through the window. The negro took the reed and lit one of the small carriage lanterns. She handed it back to Boss, who lit his lantern. Louetta felt the carriage rock as Boss mounted to the driver's seat. Her eyes moved to the shiny brown face of the woman opposite her.

"Yes, you are a pretty child. I just knowed you would be," the negro smiled. "It's your mammy" and it's a gonna look afta' you from now on. You is my child from now on honey. You rest easy now. It's a long way home."

Her words were so soft and comforting.

"Why are not my aunt and uncle here ~~then~~?" Socquette asked.

The negro looked thoughtfully at her and said. Mrs. Roberts has taken down with the misery and the master wished to stay with her.

There was a hint of bitterness in his words that Socquette did not understand.

"The way home is a long one, miss, and it is getting dark.

There is my baggage to be ----

"That has been taken care of," the negro said abruptly.

Socquette could tell that he was anxious to return home and even though his words were cordial and polite they were said with a nervous urgency. What could be wrong she thought. What has happened to my aunt and uncle.

"The mentioned which ~~is~~ a finger to an alley between the ware houses. The carriage is waiting for you, then, miss.

She was suspicious of the situation but to return to the ship seemed worse than following the negro to the alley. It was dark now as she looked ^{at the dark space} between the ware houses but there partially illuminated by the dock torches was the black shape of a carriage. She followed him across the mud and smelly docks watching him as he led the way. She could not keep up with his long strides and he disappeared into the alley a head of her. She entered the alley and the quiet darkness folded about her. All was so still here. The hollow sound of water dripping into a cistern barrel and the creaking of harness leather were the only

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The hot evening air whirled forlornly about her as she stood alone and helpless on the docks. Insects did her best to keep the quaking thoughts of desertion out of her mind but when she let her guard down they crept upon her and stung her with their painful anticipation. She was so alone and helpless here, even though the crowded wharves crackled with the activity of busy people. Those whom she saw passed her by without as much as a side glance in her direction. People on such shores here she thought as angry blood began to rush to her head. Now and then sailors would pass by and their glances and mutterings showed that they meant no good either. She glared back at them with a fire that kept away any advances. She was pretty. She knew she was attractive but beauty could be a handicap for a woman alone on the wharves of a foreign city. What humiliation it was for her to bear the hungry looks of sailors as they passed.

By the heaven eternal she would throw something at the next man who looked at her.

they did really care much about her.

The hot evening air whirled furiously about her as she stood on the docks alone and helpless and with dreading thought of desertion growing in her mind. She tried not to think of such thoughts, but they crept by her unheeded defenses and stung her with their painful forebodings. She was so alone, so helpless here, even though the crowded wharves cracked with the activity of busy people. They brushed by her, each unaware of her presence, each with problems of her own. Angry blood rushed to her head as those whom she saw passed her by without as much as a side glance in her direction. At home she had been spoiled with attention, her every wish an inspiration to her father, but she was far away from that now. She had come to America not as a rich traveler coming to see the country, but as a poor refugee seeking shelter in the home of relatives. She was not a beggar. She could not bring herself to believe that, but because of her situation she was not deserving of much attention either. (It would be a fight to keep her dignity and self respect, but she and her Gallic energy would win.)

She heard the sound of laughter as a group of sailors passed her. They looked back over their brawny shoulders laughing at her and making gonkhe jokes ~~at her~~. She kept looking straight ahead, ~~she was~~ trying not to notice them, spraying that her redened face would not betray her embarrassment. She was beautiful. She knew she was beautiful, but

beauty was a handicap for a woman alone,
here in the wharves of New Orleans. Another
group of sailors passed. What humiliation
it was for her to bear the hungry looks of the
men as they eyed her.

By the Heaven eternal she would throw
something at the next man who looked
at her, she thought as she stared nervously
ahead at the warehouses. Where are my aunt and
Uncle? Where are they?

Her courage was ^{almost} spent, for she had no
way to fight this. She felt as tired and
as bewitched as those black slaves toiling
near the ships; their sad song seemed to
carry her unhappy feelings with them. There
was nothing for her to do, except return to
the ship. She was about to turn for the
ship when she noticed a negro dressed
in fine clothes standing under one of the
warehouse eaves. The approaching darkness
partially obscured his face but she could
tell that he was looking at her. He looked
as though he were deliberating whether or not
to approach her.

Now, who could this man be? she wondered
with a slight tinge of fear and curiosity
growing within her.

The negro stood looking at her and then
at length as if with ^{some} inner prompting on
his part stepped out from under the
warehouse eave and walked toward
her.

Lucette's heart fluttered as she nervously
watched the man approach her. She wanted
to run; she wanted to hide from the stranger
but she remained where she was, and nervously
fingering the corner of her throat.