

dearest anastasia for dearest you are and ever will be to me i feel sure that your heart will go out to meet my heart in what i am saying; that your kindness will support me in the important step which has now to be taken. anastasia shook her head, though there was no one to see her. there was a suggestion of fate overbearing prudence in westrays words, a suggestion that he needed sympathy in an unpleasant predicament, that jarred on her intolerably. i have known you now a year, and know that my happiness is centred in you; you too have known me a year, and i trust that i have read aright the message that your eyes have been sending to me. for i shall happiest be to night, or saddest in the town; heaven send i read their message right, those eyes of hazel brown. anastasia found space in the press of her annoyance to laugh. it was more than a smile, it was a laugh, a quiet little laugh to herself, which in a man would have been called a buckle. her eyes were not hazel brown, they were no brown at all; but then brown rhymed with town, and after all the verse might perhaps be a quotation, and must so be taken only to apply to the situation in general. she read the sentence again, i have known you now a year; you too have known me a year. westray had thought this poetic insistence gave a touch of romance, and balanced the sentence; but to anastasia it seemed the reiteration of a platitude. if he had known her a year, then she had known him a year, and to a female mind the sequitur was complete. have i read the message right, dearest is your heart my own message what message did he speak of what message did he imagine she had wished to give him with her eyes he had maoris. feeling that i was not likely now to be called upon to act offensively, i considered myself at liberty to make numerous excursions round our fortress, not only to admire this fertile and beautiful country, but to visit some of my old friends. i was very much astonished and shocked at seeing several very beautiful young women, whom i left only a few months back in perfect health and strength, now reduced to mere living skeletons, and also to hear of the death of others by consumption. this disease seems to be the scourge of the young; and when they are once seized with its symptoms, they are very speedily brought to the grave. the natives say, it is atua, the great spirit, coming into them, and eating up their inside; for the patient can feel those parts gradually go away, and then they become weaker and weaker till no more is left; after which the spirit sends them to the happy island. they never attempt any means of curing or of alleviating the pains caused by this cruel complaint; and all those under its influence are tabooed. i procured from the brig all my remaining stores of tapioca, sago, arrowroot, and sugar, and distributed them in the best way i could amongst my sick friends. they were anxious for wine; but that portion of my sea stock, as well as spirits, had been long since expended. it seems unaccountable that the natives of an atmosphere so dry as this is a country in which there are no marshy bogs, and where, though there is an abundance of water, it is generally seen in clear and sparkling rills rushing down from the mountains into the rivers should be subject to so fatal a disease as galloping consumption. the only cause to which i can attribute such an affliction other houses it was nothing remarkable that a slave should run away, but in the senators it was more than twenty years since such a thing had occurred, and yesterday the goat herd miriam had disappeared. this was vexatious, but the silent sorrow of his son polykarp was a greater anxiety to petrus. it did not please him that the youth, who was usually so vehement, should submit unresistingly and almost indifferently to the bishop agapitus, who prohibited his completing his lions. his sons sad gaze, his crushed and broken aspect were still in his mind when at last he went to rest for the night; it was already late, but sleep avoided him even as it had avoided dorothea. while the mother was thinking of her sons sinful love and the bleeding wound in his young and betrayed heart, the father grieved for polykarps baffled hopes of exercising his art on a great work and recalled the saddest, bitterest day of his own youth; for he too had served his apprenticeship under a sculptor in alexandria, had looked up to the works of the heathen as noble models, and striven to form himself upon them. he had already been permitted by his master to execute designs of his own, and out of the abundance of subjects which offered themselves, he had chosen to model an ariadne, waiting and longing for the return of thescus,