

BILINGUA — ТЕКСТ НА ДВУХ ЯЗЫКАХ



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Martin Eden

Lingua



LECTA

Bilingua (АСТ)

Джек Лондон

**Мартин Иден / Martin Eden
(+ аудиоприложение ЛЕСТА)**

«Издательство АСТ»

2020

УДК 811.111(075)

ББК 81.2Англ-9

Лондон Д.

Мартин Иден / Martin Eden (+ аудиоприложение ЛЕСТА) /
Д. Лондон — «Издательство АСТ», 2020 — (Bilingua (АСТ))

ISBN 978-5-17-113918-6

Перед вами самый известный роман Джека Лондона «Мартин Иден», рассказывающий о человеке из низов, добившемся признания, но разочаровавшемся в этой насквозь фальшивой жизни. Текст произведения адаптирован и снабжен параллельным переводом на русский язык. Для проверки понимания прочитанного в книге даны упражнения с ответами и англо-русский словарь. Английский текст полностью озвучен носителями языка и бесплатно доступен для прослушивания на сайте российской цифровой образовательной платформы ЛЕСТА (lecta.rosuchebnik.ru). Пособие адресовано всем, кто изучает английский язык и хочет читать литературу на языке оригинала.

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Джек Лондон / Jack London
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Martin Eden

Chapter 1

He opened the door with a key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap. He wore rough clothes of a sailor. He did not know what to do with his cap.

The wide rooms seemed too narrow for him. His heavy arms hung at his sides. He did not know what to do with those arms and hands. He watched the easy walk of the other in front of him, and for the first time realized that his walk was different from that of other men. The sweat burst through the skin of his forehead in tiny beads, and he paused and mopped his bronzed face with his handkerchief.

“Hold on, Arthur, my boy,” he said, attempting to mask his anxiety with facetious utterance. “This is too much for me now. You know I didn’t want to come, and I guess your family doesn’t want to see me at all.”

“That’s all right,” was the reassuring answer. “You mustn’t be frightened at us. We’re just homely people – Hello, there’s a letter for me.”

He stepped back to the table, opened the envelope, and began to read, giving the stranger an opportunity to recover himself. And the stranger understood and appreciated.

An oil painting drew his attention. There was beauty, and it drew him irresistibly. He forgot his awkward walk and came closer to the painting, very close. He did not know painting. He had seen oil paintings, it was true, in the show windows of shops, but the glass of the windows did not allow him to come closer.

Then he saw the books on the table. He glanced at the titles and the authors’ names, read fragments of text, caressing the volumes with his eyes and hands, and, once, recognized a book he had read. He took a volume of Swinburne and began to read. Twice he closed the book on his forefinger to look at the name of the author. Swinburne! he must remember that name. But who was Swinburne? Was he dead a hundred years or so, like most of the poets? Or was he alive still, and writing? He turned to the title-page . . . yes, he had written other books; well, he will go to the library in the morning and try to get some Swinburne’s books. He went back to the text and lost himself. He did not notice that a young woman had entered the room. Suddenly he heard Arthur’s voice saying:

“Ruth, this is Mr. Eden.”

He closed the book. “*Mr. Eden!*” Everybody called him just “Eden,” or “Martin Eden,” or just “Martin,” all his life. And “*Mister!*” It was something!

And then he turned and saw the girl. She was a pale, ethereal creature, with wide, spiritual blue eyes and a wealth of golden hair. He did not know how she was dressed, except that the dress was as wonderful as she. She was like a pale gold flower upon a slender stem. No, she was a spirit, a divinity, a goddess. She looked him straight in the eyes as she shook hands, frankly, like a man. The women he had known did not shake hands that way. Never had he seen such a woman.

“Will you sit down, Mr. Eden?” the girl was saying. “Arthur told us. It was brave of you – ”

He waved his hand and muttered that he had done nothing at all. He sat down on the edge of the chair, greatly worried by his hands.

“You have such a scar on your neck, Mr. Eden,” the girl was saying. “How did it happen?”

“A Mexican with a knife, miss,” he answered. “It was just a fight.”

“Oh,” the girl said, in a faint, far voice, and he noticed the shock in her sensitive face.

He felt a shock himself. There was a brief pause in the conversation.

“This man Swineburne,” he began.

“Who?”

“Swineburne,” he repeated, with the same mispronunciation. “The poet.”

“Swinburne,” she corrected.

“Yes, that’s the chap,” he stammered, his cheeks hot again. “How long since he died?”

“Why, I haven’t heard that he was dead.” She looked at him curiously. “Where did you meet him?”

“I never saw him,” was the reply. “But I read some of his poetry out of that book there on the table just before you come in. How do you like his poetry?”

And she began to talk quickly and easily upon the subject that he had suggested. Here was intellectual life, he thought, and here was beauty. He forgot himself and stared at her with hungry eyes. The books were true. There were such women in the world. She was one of them.

“Now Longfellow – ” she was saying.

“Yes, I’ve read it,” he was glad to say so. “‘The Psalm of Life,’ ‘Excelsior,’ and. . . I guess that’s all.”

She nodded her head and smiled, and he felt, somehow, that her smile was tolerant, pitifully tolerant.

“Excuse me, miss. I guess that I don’t know much about such things. But I will know it...”

It sounded like a threat. His voice was determined, his eyes were flashing.

“I think you will know it,” she finished with a laugh. “You are very strong.”

“Yes, I’m not an invalid,” he said. “But most of what you were saying I can’t digest, you see. I like books and poetry, but I’ve never thought about them. That’s why I can’t talk about them. How did you learn all this?”

“By going to school, and by studying,” she answered.

“I went to school when I was a kid,” he began to object.

“Yes; but I mean high school, and lectures, and the university.”

“You’ve gone to the university?” he demanded in frank amazement.

“I’m going there now.”

At the same moment a woman was entering the room. The girl left her chair and came to the woman. They kissed each other. That must be her mother, he thought. She was a tall, blond woman, slender, and stately, and beautiful.

Chapter 2

Their journey to the dining room was a nightmare to him. But at last he had made it. The array of knives and forks frightened him. Well, he must be careful here.

He glanced around the table. Opposite him was Arthur, and Arthur's brother, Norman. How they loved each other, the members of this family! His nature wanted love. It was an organic demand of his life. He had not known that he needed love.

He was glad that Mr. Morse was not there. The father is too much for him, he felt sure. He had to eat as he had never eaten before, to handle strange tools.

He was unaware of what he ate. It was merely food. Eating was an aesthetic function. It was an intellectual function, too. His mind was stirred. He heard words that were meaningless to him, and other words that he had seen only in books. He said, "Yes, miss," and "No, miss," to her, and "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," to her mother. And when she or her mother addressed him as "Mr. Eden," he was glowing and warm with delight.

"It was brave of you to help Arthur – and you a stranger," she said tactfully.

"It was nothing at all," he said. "Those boys were looking for trouble. They began to insult Arthur, and –"

He paused. Arthur continued the story, for the twentieth time, of his adventure with the drunken hooligans on the ferry-boat and of how Martin Eden had rescued him.

Martin Eden nodded. He began to tell the company about his sea life, what he saw and what he knew.

For the first time he became himself. And while he talked, the girl looked at him with startled eyes. His fire warmed her. She wanted to lean toward this burning, blazing man that was like a volcano full of strength, and health. Ruth saw horror in her mother's eyes – fascinated horror, it was true, but none the less horror. This man from the darkness was evil. Her mother saw it, and her mother was right. She will trust her mother's judgment in this as she had always trusted it in all things.

Later, at the piano, she played for him. And she, glancing at him across her shoulder, saw something in his face.

"The greatest time of my life, you see. . . It's all new to me, and I like it."

"I hope you'll visit us again," she said, as he was saying good night to her brothers.

He pulled on his cap, and was gone.

"Well, what do you think of him?" Arthur demanded.

"He is interesting," she answered. "How old is he?"

"Twenty – almost twenty-one. I asked him this afternoon. I didn't think he was that young."

And I am three years older, was the thought in her mind as she kissed her brothers goodnight.

Chapter 3

Martin Eden took out a brown rice paper and a pinch of Mexican tobacco. “By God!” he said aloud, in a voice of awe and wonder. “By God!” he repeated. And yet again he murmured, “By God!”

He had met the Woman. He had sat next to her at table. He had felt her hand in his, he had looked into her eyes. This feeling of the divine startled him. He had never believed in the divine. He had always been irreligious. There was no life beyond; it was here and now, then darkness everlasting. But what he had seen in her eyes was soul – immortal soul that never dies. Nobody had given him the message of immortality. But she had. She had whispered it to him the first moment she looked at him. He did not deserve such fortune. He was like a drunken man, murmuring aloud: “By God! By God!”

He caught a car that was going to Berkeley. It was crowded with young men who were singing songs. He studied them curiously. They were university boys. They went to the same university that she did, they could know her, could see her every day if they wanted to.

The car came to the two-story building with the proud sign, HIGGINBOTHAM’S CASH STORE. Bernard Higginbotham had married his sister, and he knew him well. He climbed the stairs to the second floor. Here lived his brother-in-law.

He entered a room, where sat his sister and Bernard Higginbotham. Martin Eden never looked at him without repulsion. What his sister had found in that man was a mystery.

“Good night,” said Martin. “Good night, Gertrude.”

“Don’t bang the door,” Mr. Higginbotham cautioned him.

Martin controlled himself and closed the door softly behind him.

Mr. Higginbotham looked at his wife exultantly.

“He is drunk,” he proclaimed in a hoarse whisper. “I told you. A fine example to the children! If he does it again, he’s got to get out.”

His wife sighed, and shook her head sorrowfully. Mr. Higginbotham asked:

“Has he paid last week’s board?”

She nodded, then added, “He still has some money.”

“When is he going to sea again?”

“He was over to San Francisco yesterday looking for a ship,” she answered. “But he’s got money at the moment.”

“I can give him a job: to drive the wagon,” her husband said. “Tom went away.”

“I told you you’d lose him,” she cried out. “You paid him very little.”

“Now look here, old woman, for the thousandth time I’ve told you to keep your nose out of the business. I won’t tell you again.”

“I don’t care,” she said. “Tom was a good boy.” Her husband glared at her.

“Your brother – ” he began.

“He pays his board,” was the retort. “And he’s my brother, what do you want?”

“I will charge him for gas: he is reading in bed,” her husband answered.

Mrs. Higginbotham made no reply. Her husband was triumphant.

Chapter 4

Martin Eden entered his room, a tiny hole with space for a bed, a wash-stand, and one chair. Mr. Higginbotham was too greedy to keep a servant when his wife could do the work. Martin placed the Swinburne and Browning on the chair, took off his coat, and sat down on the bed. He murmured, "Ruth."

"Ruth." He had not thought a simple sound could be so beautiful. This name delighted his ear. "Ruth." It was a talisman, a magic word to conjure with. Each time he murmured it, her face shimmered before him. The very thought of her ennobled and purified him, made him better. This was new to him. He had never known women who had made him better.

He got up abruptly and tried to see himself in the dirty looking-glass over the wash-stand. It was the first time he had ever really seen himself. He saw the head and face of a young fellow of twenty. The brown sunburn of his face surprised him. He had not dreamed he was so black. His arms were sunburnt, too.

He sat back on the bed with a bitter laugh, and took off his shoes. He took the Browning and the Swinburne from the chair and kissed them. She told me to come again, he thought. He looked at himself in the glass, and said aloud:

"Martin Eden, tomorrow you go to the library and read up on etiquette."

Chapter 5

He awoke next morning in a steamy atmosphere. As he came out of his room he heard the slosh of water, a sharp exclamation. The squall of the child went through him like a knife. How different, he thought, from the atmosphere of beauty and repose of the house wherein Ruth dwelt. There it was all spiritual. Here it was all material.

“Come here, Alfred,” he called to the crying child. He put a quarter in the youngster’s hand and held him in his arms a moment. “Now run along and get some candy, and don’t forget to give some to your brothers and sisters.”

His sister looked at him. The tears welled into her eyes.

“You’ll find breakfast in the oven,” she said hurriedly.

Martin went into the kitchen. Then he went downstairs and out into the street. He had debated between the Berkeley Library and the Oakland Library, and chose the latter because Ruth lived in Oakland. He wandered through endless rows of books, and did not know what to ask the man at the desk.

“Did you find what you wanted?” the man at the desk asked him as he was leaving.

“Yes, sir,” he answered. “You have a fine library here.”

The man nodded. “We should be glad to see you here often. Are you a sailor?”

“Yes, sir,” he answered. “And I’ll come again.”

Now, how did he know that? he asked himself as he went down the stairs.

Chapter 6

Martin Eden was afraid that he might visit Ruth too soon. He spent long hours in the Oakland and Berkeley libraries. He burned the gas late in the servant's room, and was charged fifty cents a week for it by Mr. Higginbotham.

He read many books; every page of every book was a hole into the realm of knowledge. His hunger increased. He read more of Swinburne than was contained in the volume Ruth had given him. Then he studied Kipling's poems. Psychology was a new word in Martin's vocabulary.

He dared not go near Ruth's house in the daytime, but at night he was lurking like a thief around the Morse home.

He had undergone a moral revolution. Her cleanness and purity made him clean, too. He began to brush his teeth, and used a nail-brush. He found a book in the library on the care of the body, and promptly decided to have a cold-water bath every morning.

The reform went deeper. He still smoked, but he drank no more. He was drunken in new and more profound ways – with Ruth, who had fired him with love and with a glimpse of higher and eternal life; with books, and with the sense of personal cleanliness.

One night he went to the theatre, and from the second balcony he did see her. He saw her with Arthur and a strange young man with eyeglasses.

He left his seat before the curtain went down on the last act. He wanted to see her again. Suddenly two girls appeared. One of them was a slender, dark girl, with black, defiant eyes. They smiled at him, and he smiled back.

"Hello," he said.

It was automatic. The black-eyed girl smiled, and showed signs of stopping. At the corner where the main stream of people flowed onward, he started to follow the cross street. But the girl with the black eyes caught his arm, and cried:

"Bill! Where are you going?"

He halted with a laugh, and turned back.

"What's her name?" he asked the giggling girl, nodding at the dark-eyed one.

"You ask her," was the response.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded, turning on the girl in question.

"You didn't tell me yours, yet," she retorted.

"You never asked it," he smiled. "But, true, it's Bill, all right, all right."

"Oh," she looked him in the eyes. "What is it, honest?"

Oh, he knew those girls, and knew them well, from A to Z. They work hard, they are nervously desirous for some happiness in the desert of existence.

"Bill," he answered, nodding his head. "Sure, Bill and no other."

"He isn't Bill at all," her friend noticed.

"How do you know?" he demanded. "You never saw me before."

"No need to, to know you're lying," was the retort.

Those girls from the factory... The cheap cloth, the cheap ribbons, and the cheap rings on the fingers. He felt a tug at his arm, and heard a voice saying:

"Wake up, Bill! What's the matter with you?"

"What were you saying?" he asked. "There's only one thing wrong with the programme," he said aloud. "I've got a date already."

The girl's eyes blazed her disappointment.

"To visit a sick friend, I suppose?" she sneered.

"No, a real, honest date with – " he faltered, "with a girl. But why can't we meet some other time? You didn't tell me your name. And where do you live?"

“Lizzie,” she replied, her hand pressing his arm, while her body leaned against his. “Lizzie Connolly.”

He talked on a few minutes before saying good night. He did not go home immediately; and under the tree he looked up at a window and murmured: “That date was with you, Ruth.”

Chapter 7

A week of heavy reading had passed since the evening he first met Ruth Morse, and still he dared not call. He did not know the proper time to call, and he was afraid of a blunder. He left his old companions, and has no new companions. Nothing remained for him but to read, and long hours he devoted to it. But his eyes were strong, and they were placed on a strong body.

It seemed to him, by the end of the week, that he had lived centuries, so far behind was the old life. He attempted to read books that required years of studying. One day he read a book of philosophy, and the next day one that was ultra-modern. It was the same with the economists. On the one shelf at the library he found Karl Marx, Ricardo, Adam Smith, and Mill.

Poetry, however, was his solace, and he read much of it, finding his greatest joy in the simpler poets, whom he could understand. He loved beauty, and there he found beauty. Poetry, like music, touched him profoundly. The pages of his mind were blank, so he was soon able to extract great joy from chanting aloud. He enjoyed music and the beauty of the printed words he had read.

The man at the desk in the library had seen Martin there so often that he had become quite cordial, always greeting him with a smile and a nod when he entered. One day Martin asked him:

“Well, there’s something I’d like to ask you.”

The man smiled and paid attention.

“When you meet a young lady and she asks you to come, how soon can you come?”

“Why, any time,” the man answered.

“Yes, but this is different,” Martin objected. “She – I – well, you see, it’s this way: maybe she won’t be there. She goes to the university.”

“Then come again.”

“If I could ...,” he said.

“I beg pardon?”

“What is the best time to come? The afternoon? Or the evening? Or Sunday?”

“I’ll tell you,” the librarian said with a brightening face. “You call her up on the telephone and find out.”

“I’ll do it,” he said, picking up his books and starting away.

He turned back and asked:

“When you’re speaking to a young lady – say, for instance, Miss Lizzie Smith – do you say ‘Miss Lizzie’? or ‘Miss Smith’?”

“Say ‘Miss Smith,’” the librarian stated authoritatively. “Say ‘Miss Smith’ always – until you come to know her better.”

So it was that Martin Eden solved the problem.

“Please, come any time; I’ll be at home all afternoon,” was Ruth’s reply over the telephone to his request as to when he could return the borrowed books.

She met him at the door herself, and her woman’s eyes noticed the certain slight but indefinable change in him for the better. Also, she was struck by his face. She felt the desire to lean toward him for warmth.

Once they were seated in the living-room, they talked first of the borrowed books, of Swinburne, and of Browning. Ruth wanted to help him. His neck was near, and there was sweetness in the thought of laying her hands upon it. She did not dream that the feeling he excited in her was love. She thought she was merely interested in him as an unusual type.

She did not know she desired him; but with him it was different. He knew that he loved her, and he desired her as he had never before desired anything in his life. He had loved poetry for its beauty; but since he met her the gates to the vast field of love-poetry had been opened wide.

His gaze wandered often toward her lips, and he yearned for them hungrily. But there was nothing gross or earthly in it. They were lips of pure spirit, and his desire for them seemed absolutely different from the desire that had led him to other women's lips. He did not dream how ardent and masculine his gaze was, her spirit was affecting him. Her virginity exalted and disguised his own emotions, elevating his thoughts to a chastity.

"I wonder if I can get some advice from you," he began. "You remember I said I couldn't talk about books and other things because I didn't know how? Well, I've done a lot of things ever since. I never had any advantages. I've worked hard ever since I was a kid. I was never inside a house like this. When I come a week ago, and saw all this, and you, and your mother, and brothers, and everything – well, I liked it. I'd heard about such things and read about such things in some of the books, and when I looked around at your house, why, the books come true. And I liked it. I wanted it. I want it now. I want to breathe air like you get in this house – air that is filled with books, and pictures, and beautiful things, where people talk in low voices and are clean, and their thoughts are clean. When you were crossing the room to kiss your mother, I thought it was the most beautiful thing I ever seen. I've seen a lot of things in my life, but I want to see more.

But listen, here it is. I want to enter the kind of life you have in this house. There's more in life than drinking, and hard work. Now, how to begin? I can make most men sick when it comes to hard work. Once I get started, I'll work night and day. Maybe you think it's funny, when I ask you about all this. I know you're the last person in the world I ought to ask, but I don't know anybody else I could ask – unless it's Arthur. Maybe I must ask him. If I was – "

His voice died away. Ruth did not speak immediately. She had never looked in eyes that expressed greater power. Here was a man who could do anything. Her face was all sympathy when she began to speak.

"What you need, you realize yourself, and it is education. You should go back and finish grammar school, and then go through to high school and university."

"But that takes money," he interrupted.

"Oh!" she cried. "I had not thought of that. But then you have relatives, somebody who could assist you?"

He shook his head.

"My father and mother are dead. I have two sisters, one married, and the other'll get married soon, I suppose. I have brothers, – I'm the youngest, – but they never helped anybody. The oldest died in India. Two are in South Africa now, and another is travelling with a circus – he does trapeze work. All what I want to know is where to begin."

"I should say the first thing of all is the grammar. Your grammar is – " She wanted to say "awful," but she finished, "is not particularly good."

He flushed and sweated.

"I know I talk a lot of slang and words you don't understand. But then they're the only words I know – how to speak. I've got other words in my mind, I found them from books, but I can't pronounce them, so I don't use them."

"It isn't what you say, so much as how you say it. I can be frank, can't I? I don't want to hurt you."

"No, no," he cried, while he secretly blessed her for her kindness. "You was right! I want to know these things from you than from anybody else."

"Well, then, you say, 'You was'; it is not correct. You must say, 'You were.' You often say 'I seen' instead of 'I saw.' You use the double negative – "

"What's the double negative?" he demanded; then added humbly, "You see, I don't even understand your explanations."

"I'm afraid I didn't explain that," she smiled. "A double negative is – let me see – well, you say, 'never helped nobody.' 'Never' is a negative. 'Nobody' is another negative. It is a rule that two negatives make a positive. 'Never helped nobody' means that they helped somebody."

“That’s pretty clear,” he said. “I never thought of it before. I never thought of it before, and I’ll never say it again.”

She was pleased and surprised with the quickness and surety of his mind.

“You’ll find it all in the grammar,” she went on. “There’s something else I noticed in your speech.”

Martin flushed again.

“You say ‘ben’ for ‘been,’” she continued; “‘come’ for ‘came’; and the way you chop your endings is something dreadful.”

“How do you mean?” He leaned forward. “How do I chop?”

“You don’t complete the endings. ‘A-n-d’ spells ‘and.’ You pronounce it ‘an’. ‘I-n-g’ spells ‘ing.’ Sometimes you pronounce it ‘ing’ and sometimes you leave off the ‘g.’ ‘T-h-e-m’ spells ‘them.’ You pronounce it – oh, well, what you need is the grammar. I’ll get one and show you how to begin.”

She arose, and he stood up awkwardly, worrying as to whether he was doing the right thing.

When she returned with the grammar, she sat down beside him. She turned the pages of the grammar, and their heads were inclined toward each other. He could scarcely breathe, and his heart was pounding the blood up into his throat and suffocating him.

Chapter 8

Several weeks went by, during which Martin Eden studied his grammar, and reviewed the books on etiquette. He forgot about his friends. The girls of the Lotus Club wondered what had become of him and worried everybody with questions. Martin made another discovery in the library. He found books that helped him to learn metre and construction and form.

During those several weeks he saw Ruth six times, and each time was an inspiration. She helped him with his English, corrected his pronunciation, and started him on arithmetic. But their intercourse was not all devoted to elementary study. They were talking about the last poetry he had read, the latest poet she had studied. And when she read aloud to him her favorite passages, he delighted a lot. Never, in all the women, had he heard a voice like hers. The least sound of it was a stimulus to his love, and he thrilled and throbbed with every word she uttered.

The situation was obscured to Ruth. She had never had any experiences of the heart. Her knowledge of love was purely theoretical, her idea of love was not clear. She did not dream of the volcanic convulsions of love. She knew neither her own powers, nor the powers of the world; and the deeps of life were to her seas of illusion.

Strength! Strength was what she needed, and he gave it to her in generous measure. To come into the same room with him, or to meet him at the door, was to take heart of life. And when he had gone, she returned to her books with fresh store of energy.

Her interest in Martin increased, and she wanted to rebuild his life.

“There is Mr. Butler,” she said one afternoon, when grammar and arithmetic and poetry had been put aside.

“He had comparatively no advantages at first. His father was a bank cashier, but he died in Arizona, so that when he was dead, Mr. Butler found himself alone in the world. His father had come from Australia, you know, and so he had no relatives in California. He went to work in a printing-office, and he got three dollars a week, at first. His income today is at least thirty thousand a year. How did he do it? He was honest, and faithful, and industrious, and economical. He denied himself the enjoyments that most boys like. He saved some coins every week. Of course, he was soon earning more than three dollars a week, and he saved more and more.

“He worked in the daytime, and at night he went to night school. He always thought about the future. Later on he went to night high school. When he was only seventeen, he had a good salary, but he was ambitious. He wanted a career, not a livelihood. He entered father’s office as an office boy – think of that! – and got only four dollars a week. But he had learned how to be economical.”

She paused for breath, and to note how Martin was receiving it. His face was lighted up with interest in the youthful struggles of Mr. Butler; but there was a frown upon his face as well.

“Poor young fellow,” he remarked. “Four dollars a week! How could he live on it? Like a dog, I guess. The food he ate – ”

“He cooked for himself,” she interrupted, “on a little kerosene stove.”

“The food he ate was very bad, I suppose, worse than what a sailor gets.”

“But think of him now!” she cried enthusiastically. “Think of what his income affords him.”

Martin looked at her sharply.

“There’s one thing I’ll tell you,” he said, “Mr. Butler has had no joy for years, hasn’t he? I think his stomach is not very good now. I’ll bet he’s got dyspepsia right now!”

“Yes, he has,” she confessed; “but – ”

“And I bet,” Martin continued, “that he isn’t joyful when others have a good time. Am I right?”

She nodded her head in agreement, and hastened to explain:

“But he is not that type of man. By nature he is sober and serious. He always was that.”

“Three dollars a week,” Martin proclaimed. “And four dollars a week, and a young boy cooking for himself and saving money, working all day and studying all night, just working and never playing, never having a good time, and never learning how to have a good time – of course his thirty thousand came along too late.”

“Do you know,” he added, “I feel sorry for Mr. Butler. He was too young to know better, but he robbed himself of life for the sake of thirty thousand a year. Thirty thousand, a great sum, can’t buy for him right now what ten cents could when he was a kid.”

Such points of view were new to Ruth, and contrary to her own beliefs. But she was twenty-four, conservative by nature, and already crystallized into the cranny of life where she had been born and formed. It was true, his bizarre judgments troubled her, but she ascribed them to his novelty of type and strangeness of living, and they were soon forgotten. Nevertheless, Martin’s strength, and the flashing of eyes and earnestness of face thrilled her and drew her toward him.

“But I have not finished my story,” she said. “He worked, so father says, as no other office boy he ever had. Mr. Butler was always eager to work. He never was late, and he was usually at the office a few minutes before his regular time. And yet he saved his time. Every spare moment was devoted to study. He quickly became a clerk, and he made himself invaluable. Father appreciated him, and he went to law college. He became a lawyer. He is a great man.”

“Yes, he is a great man,” Martin said sincerely.

But it seemed to him that thirty thousand a year was all right, but dyspepsia and inability to be humanly happy robbed the value of this great income.

Chapter 9

Martin Eden's store of money exhausted, and he went to sea. He worked as a sailor for eight months. He earned enough money to stay on land for many weeks, and he did a great deal of studying and reading.

He mastered the grammar and noticed the bad grammar used by his shipmates. He took the dictionary and started to add twenty words a day to his vocabulary. He found that this was not an easy task. He repeated new words in order to accustom his tongue to the language spoken by Ruth.

The captain possessed of a complete Shakespeare, which he never read, and Martin had washed his clothes for him and received the permission to read the precious volumes.

He was touched by the exquisite beauty of the world, and wished that Ruth were there to share it with him. He decided that he would describe to her the South Sea beauty. But soon he understood that he would describe the beauty of the ocean for a wider audience than Ruth. And then came the great idea. He will write! He will write – everything – poetry and prose, fiction and description, and plays like Shakespeare. It is the way to win Ruth. The men of literature were the world's giants, greater than Mr. Butlers.

To write! This thought was fire in him.

So he entered his old room at Bernard Higginbotham's and set to work. He did not tell Ruth that he was back. He did not know how long an article he would write, but he counted the words in a article in the SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER. His writing lasted for three days. Also, he learned that first-class papers paid a minimum of ten dollars a column. So one hundred dollars! and he decided that that was better than seafaring.

He mailed the manuscript in a big envelope, and addressed it to the editor of the SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER. He had an idea that everything sent to a newspaper was published immediately. Then he decided to write an adventure story for boys and sell it to THE YOUTH'S COMPANION.

He wanted to write about the things he knew. It was easy work, he decided on Saturday evening. He had completed on that day the first instalment of three thousand words.

After breakfast he went on with his story. He often read or re-read a chapter. This was his programme for a week. Each day he did three thousand words, and each evening he studies stories, articles, and poems that editors saw fit to publish. One thing was certain: What these writers did he could do, and only give him time and he would do what they could not do. He was glad to read in BOOK NEWS that Rudyard Kipling received a dollar per word, and that the minimum rate paid by first-class magazines was two cents a word. THE YOUTH'S COMPANION was certainly first class, and at that rate the three thousand words he had written that day would bring him sixty dollars – two months' wages on the sea!

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