

# Title Page

Stories by Mid CoastMaine Writer  
Compiled by Eva Morris

Publisher  
Year

She Come to Her Senses © 2018 Isabel Tutaine  
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Third Title © 2018 Third Author

Eva Morris ???

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Book layur by Isabel Tutaine

Printed in the United States of America



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# Coming to Her Senses

by Isabel Tutaine

–1894–

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Each day, she knitted more compulsively with thinner and thinner yarns until she abandoned yarn. She began knitting with silk thread on steel needles no thicker than toothpicks. The resulting shawls were spectacular beauties, as sheer as gauze, as shimmery as moon light upon the ocean, constructed more of thoughts than thread.

Beyond the shawls, her external life was a performance. The people around her were the audience of her recital, but Captain Littledove remained the audience of her thoughts. Of

him, she spoke to no one. Eliza walked the hallways of her father's house as if Littlelove did not exist, letting everyone think he was some ridiculous sea monster. But as time passed, she became more and more desperate to end her performance.

Despite the lovely weather encouraging her to walk on the beach, she was finishing the current row of a shawl in the parlor. A footman appear in the doorway, but she knew he would not speak until she look up, which she eventually did.

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She was not surprised he had taken so long since she arrived to ask to speak to her. He had barely acknowledged her presence, not even to ask questions about how she was or what had happened.

He liked to play such games to make her fester and become nervous. But his forced silence had given her time to study him with a new perspective that came from fresh understandings. All the same, she approached his office with a familiar dread churning in her stomach.

Her father looked her up and down the moment she walked through the doorway. "Why are you wearing that dress?"



Eliza was immediately certain he would not be able to describe her dress if she disappeared in a puff of smoke, despite his eye movements over her. Another game. For years, she accepted his condemnation at face value about what she was wearing or how imperfectly she had put up her hair.

Now a mysterious enlightenment overcame her, as she discerned he simply liked to pick at something, anything, no matter how insignificant, to make the person before him feel uncertain. He took pleasure in such intimidations. The shocking clarity of this realization made Eliza wonder how it eluded her all these years.

"My other dresses were ruined," she eventually answered, referring to why she wore what she was wearing. Any answer would do, she now understood. He would find a way to peck at it.

"All of them? You ruined all of them?"

"They were ruined during the travels," she said as if floating aimlessly for a month on a ship pirates wrecked could be considered travel.

"I expect you to change out of that thing the minute you leave this office. Before someone sees you! Is this another one of those cheap dresses? Like the one you wore when you came home? You looked like a streetwalker. I thought I told you to throw it out."

"I gave it to a maid," said Eliza, fully aware the dress she now wore cost more than what the scullery made in one year. She felt a prick of discomfort over her displeasure when someone gave her the dress because the fine one she was wearing was filthy and ripped.

"Who gave you that vulgar dress?"

"I purchased it," Eliza lied not to implicate anyone. She

hunkered down for the storm she knew was coming. Her icy insouciance always incited her father.

"You purchased it, you say? How could you have done so? You have no money! Any money you have comes from me! And you are to return what you have left from the trip right now! Especially because you do not even know how to purchase dresses with the money I give to you. Hand it over! Before you waste it on more cheapness."

"The pirates took the rest," Eliza lied. She was not giving up the money. Her father gave her almost anything she wanted except money she could use to implement her decisions. While stranded on the ship, she learned being wealthy without choices was a glorified way to be poor, although anyone suffering the hunger she suffered would scoff at this notion. But poverty came in many forms, depending on what was severely lacking.

Her father glared at her with contempt. "A cheap and useless purchase! Bring the jewelry."

"The pirates took the jewelry," Eliza lied again. She would never again return her jewelry to him. She had sewn the jewelry and money into her petticoat. Not even her father would look at her petticoats as long as she was wearing them.

"It's you the pirates should have taken!"

They took everyone, even those they left behind, Eliza thought, recalling Captain Littledove almost dying in pools of his blood; his devastation when she confirmed his crew had been massacred; his determination to keep her safe despite her ignorance.

She recalled the men she "buried at sea" by cutting the rigging and letting their bodies fall into the water without touching them. Her disgust at their putrefaction never honored their hard lives.

Her anger flared. Her father knew nothing, understood even less. Of some subjects, she now felt she knew infinitely more than he was ever capable of learning. She despised him, she realized with a new hardness.

She remembered once wanting to love him. For years she believed he was a hapless madman who needed to be endured and valued. But now, she understood he was made mean by an impulse to control that he could not conquer. At that very moment, as a reward for years of unfulfilled tolerance, Eliza ejected her father from her life with a finality that made her feel strangely clear headed and composed.

"No jewelry! No money! Fine lot you are." her father shouted when she did not respond. "They should have taken and kept you! Had they not realized how useless you are."

Eliza emerged from her thoughts in a flinch, knowing he was building up to strike her. She held her silence. She flinched again when he stood from the chair and walked to the window overlooking a vast lawn that rolled to the edge of the woods where he hunted partridge and pheasant.

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"Love! A stupid concept invented by useless poets. Only stupid women like you take it seriously. You shall marry for financial security. What makes you think you have a right to refuse him? Do you think the paths of women like you are paved with suitors? Especially after you spend month on a ship with a sailor? Refuse him! Who the hell do you think you are?"

Fully enraged, he stomped right up to her, hand raised to slap her. Eliza ducked under his arm and grabbed the ancient

ivory statue of Venus off his desk. She froze, holding the brittle stature under its breasts in both hands as she would hold a posy, its cold breasts resting on one index finger. She waited for her father to strike her so she could drop the statue, when it would surely crack, if not turn to powder. The opportunity was perfect. The statue was his favorite, and she hated him.

"Put that down! You are not worthy to touch that!" He stepped toward her but lowered his hand.

Eliza clutched the statue, feeling his spittle in her face as he continued shouting, his rage carrying him like a feather in a whirlwind, more so now that he could not strike her because she would drop his Venus.

"You stupid cow! The second you say no to Eli, you'll find yourself on the street. In whatever clothes you are wearing at that moment. I don't care if you have to make ends meet by working in a whorehouse."

Eliza stopped staring at the Venus in her hands. She leaned forward and blew a sharp puff of air into her father's eye that made him slap one hand over his face and turn away. In the time he took to take his hand away, Eliza abandoned the ivory Venus on his desk, leaving it to gently rock back and forth.

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## About the Writers

ISABEL TUTAINE writes with the compulsion of people who smoke. She lives in mid Coast Maine where she listens to the ocean and writes what it tells her in her novels.

ELMER FUDD writes the way people smoke.. She lives in mid Coast Maine where she listens to the ocean and writes what it tells her in her novels..

ERNEST HEMINGWAY writes the way people smoke.. She lives in mid Coast Maine where she listens to the ocean and writes what it tells her in her novels.



EVA MORRIS collects short stories by gifted writers when she starts to get twitchy.

