

**A DEADLY FOE: A
ROMANCE OF THE
NORTHERN SEAS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649037384

A Deadly Foe: A Romance of the Northern Seas by Adeline Sergeant

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ADELINE SERGEANT

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A Romance of the Northern Seas

BY

ADELINÉ SERGEANT

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LONDON
HUTCHINSON & CO.,
34 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1895

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CHAPTER I.

LOVERS.

It was as pretty a scene as in all England you could find. The quaint little village, perched on the slopes of a gradual ascent from beach to cliff, was in itself picturesque, and had been sketched a hundred times for the Royal Academy and minor exhibitions in London: the sea that bathed the sandy shore or dashed itself against the old-fashioned wooden pier was always, and in every mood, an element of beauty; and the fisher-folk, in their blue jerseys and knitted

caps, or scarlet handkerchiefs and striped petticoats, according to sex, were not the least noticeable features of the place. But village and cliff and sea seemed but accessories to the beauty of a girl on whose face the eyes of Frank Lovell were fixed, as he came, lightly enough, along the winding path which led from the main street to a little house and garden half-way up the hill, where Nelly Dene kept watch and ward for him.

They were lovers, of course: they had been lovers ever since their childhood, and they had plighted their troth before they were in their teens. Nelly was six and Frank eleven when they first promised each other that they would be man and wife "some day"; but now that Nelly was nineteen and Frank twenty-four, the day of their union still seemed almost as remote as it had done in those earlier years. For Nelly had not a penny to her fortune; and Frank had hitherto occupied no loftier position than that of third officer on board a merchant-vessel, which sometimes carried a few passengers between Hamburg and Hull. It

was a position which had many disadvantages; and among them was that of offering a very narrow prospect of advancement in the future to an ambitious young man, and of giving him only a very small income for the present.

It was also not the position which might have seemed most natural to him, for he came of a good family, many members of whom had served in the Royal Navy, and had bequeathed to him a love for a seafaring life, which even the merchant-service had failed to extinguish. But he was the sixth boy out of ten children of a not very wealthy country clergyman, and the Vicar of Combe was too sensible a man to set aside an evident vocation because it led his boy into scenes and among companions whose merit it was that they were honest, and whose fault it was not that they were unaristocratic.

But Frank Lovell's chance had come at last. Two or three acts of extraordinary courage had recommended him to the passengers in his vessel, almost as much as his more business-like qualities had endeared