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Cap'N Eri, a Story of the Coast

joseph lincoln



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Joseph C. Lincoln was a prolific and popular writer at the turn of the last century. This story from 1904 is set in the fictional seacoast town of Orham, Massachusetts. Lincoln does a good job of sweeping us into the action. Three crusty aging sea captains share a house. Eri is the main character and through his commontouch leadership shows he is fearless in facing both the facts and kind in the way he handles those in his life. His housemates are Jerry and Perez, all confirmed bachelors. When the chores of running a house seem to be too much for these outdoorsmen, they get the bright idea to advertise for a wife for one of them who will then come and keep house for all three. Being a product of the last century, the story is a bit dated, particularly in the use of the "N" word. One thing is described as "being darker than a N's pocket." While offensive in modern context, one must realize the time in which the book was written in order to appreciate the fine qualities that are there. Mrs. Snow answers the ad the men place in a magazine and comes to town on the train. All three are at the depot to meet her. A Black woman leaving the train accidentally takes Mrs. Snow's bag. Seeing the bag marked with Snow's name on the side, all three bachelors run like the wind, assuming that they have mistakenly brought a person of a different race to town for matrimonial purposes. The misunderstanding is resolved and the snow white Mrs. Snow arrives. The story unfolds episodically over period of about eight months, as I recall. A fire injures a buddy of Eri's named John Baxter on the first night of Mrs. Snow's arrival in town. Cap'n Jerry, who has about as cold of feet as a proposed bridegroom might get, welcomes Eri's invitation to Mrs. Snow to come to their house and stay as a nurse to Baxter and a housekeeper for the three until Baxter's health improves. Baxter's granddaughter arrives, placing two females into the formerly all male establishment. Adventures follow concerning t

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