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HAUNTED ISLAND

by WILFRED BLANCH TALMAN



On a low, black isle in the Spanish Main
Strange things occur, 'tis said,
And night by night the moon gloats white
On the conclave of the dead.

In the dead of night when the wind is low
There are grim, white shapes that come and go—
Ghostly galleons drifting by
On the rolling sea where moon-tints lie;
Mist-hung shadows of masts and spars,
Hazy hulks under haloed stars;
The creak of block and the flap of sail
And ghastrly shapes on the after rail.

Raucous song in the forest dim;
Splash of oars at the beach's brim,
Boats beached high at the water's edge
And the gleam of sword on a shelving ledge;
Click of cutlas and rasp of spade,
Whispering voices in palm-fringed glade
Where ghostly forms in the dusk convene
With a chest full of treasure borne between.

A sharp command and a rush of feet;
A clash of arms in the dim retreat;
Muffled oaths and a musket's roar
And pale-hued lights on the moonlit shore;
Crimson sands 'neath a slim, red moon,
Ghosts of men by the green lagoon
And a formless shape that swings high and free
From a moldy rope on a gnarlèd tree.

In the dead of night when the wind is low
There are grim, white shapes that come and go;
Hazy barques on the pounding surf;
Rattle of spade in the sandy turf;
The tread of feet and voices low
And the gleam of gold in the lantern's glow
Till rising dawn's first cold, gray strand
Strikes flame from a shore of barren sand.

On a low, black isle in the Spanish Main
Strange things occur, 'tis said,
And night by night the moon gloats white
On the conclave of the dead.