

AN ISLAND STORY:  
VARIATIONS ON AN OLD THEME

for

A.D.Hope

'It little profits that an idle king . . .'

-Alfred Lord Tennyson

I tell you, Jack, it was the sort of set-up  
A man would give his right ball for a piece of Wrecked  
on this island, see, and no-one there  
But this fantastic bird, stacked like Bardot  
And Burton rolled in one; with piles of loot,  
And a luxury weekender-all to herself.  
The blind bloke in the bar was telling me  
It happened to a mate of his. You couldn't say  
How old she was-but on the nest each night  
She'd make you feel as randy as a colt  
Let loose for the first time in a paddock full  
Of mares in heat. Some women are like that.  
And some blokes-Christ! They never seem to know  
When they're well-off. This tin-arsed character  
Hasn't been there six months before he starts  
To fidget, gets to grizzling in his beer  
About the wife and kids, and how it's years  
Since he's been home. Natural enough in some  
Ways I suppose. But, talk of luck! This sheila  
Turns out to be a really decent sort-  
She has a little weep, up in the scrub,  
Then, when she sees he means it, helps him fix  
His rotten boat and patch his sail. She packs  
His lunch, throws in a bottle of rum for luck,  
And sends him on his way. He staggers home  
Eventually-and Jesus! What a mess!  
The house is full of urgers sniffing round  
His poor old lady like a pack of dogs  
-Milkmen, the Mayor, the H.P. boys, the man  
Who comes to read the meter (she must be  
A bit of all right, too, the blind man says,  
This same old lady). You can guess the rest-  
His wandering mate takes one quick butcher's, then  
Goes through the homestead like a dose of salts,  
Clears out the bludgers, gives his loving wife  
A touch of the big stick, and everything  
Is apples. 'Nothing like the quiet life,'  
He says-so each weekend he mows the lawn,  
Keeps mother happy, slips down to the pub  
For a couple of beers-What's that? You know the bloke?  
The chap who bought your boat? Well, Jack, I'll bet  
My other bollick that's one thing the wife  
Will be the last to hear of. It's your shout.

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