

# MILLY THOMPSON

'Do you think that too, that I have slept too long in the moonlight?' and still he did not look at her, but went on with his drawing of the heron.

'It seems you have been spying upon my ship', he said.

'It's you have been sleeping in my bed.'

**Hot burnt bread**, Hot coffee and rolls and melting butter. '...coffee is delicious', the golden ferns and the silver ferns, the orchids, the ginger lilies and roses, the chaise longue and the blue silk sofa, the jasmine and honeysuckle, ...a hammock... full of gold sunlight and shadows of trees moving quietly. The hot noon passed, hazy with the high east wind, and the long hours of afternoon

'**The creek is yours.**' But always music, music I had never heard before. '**We might swim... in the cool of the evening, before the sun goes down.**'

'Yes',

'we may do as we please.'

Two wreaths of frangipani lay on the bed. **The sun had gone behind the trees, and the creek was in shadow.** the scent of the river flowers was overpoweringly strong. I felt giddy. **The ship, with its bold colouring, its raking masts, looked remote, unreal, a thing of fantasy.**

'You look like a king, an emperor.'

half full of rum. **He sat down at the table, tearing off a leg from the chicken,** the sky and the distant sea on fire – all colours were in that fire and the huge clouds fringed and shot with flame.

'Have all beautiful things sad destinies?' **she drank her wine, watching him over the rim of her glass.** She had lit all the candles and the room was full of shadows.

The light changed her.

'**Do you always have the devil's own luck, Frenchman?**' the night swallowed up the feeble light. There was a very strong scent of flowers – the flowers by the river that open at night she told me – and the noise was deafening. 'Crac-cracs',

**She put her arms behind her head, and closed her eyes. He came and sat down on the bunk beside her, whistling a ditty under his breath. 'This is the best moment for a pirate', he said.** the sight of a dress on the bedroom floor

adjusting the lace at his wrists.

**She unfastened the bracelet and pendent,**

The rum punch was very strong

**watchful still, like a sleek cat, his narrow eyes turned upon her in greed and curiosity.**

Her mouth

'**And then... I have my fun, my spice of excitement.**'

'Die then! Die!' I watched her die many times. In my way, not hers. In sunlight, in shadow, by moonlight, by candlelight. In the long afternoons when the house was empty. breathless and savage with desire.

When I was exhausted I slept,

**she**

Nothing. Silence. Heat. It was five minutes to three. **the ship took form, and she had raking crimson masts, and her sails were full.**

**Then out of the sea, like a ball of fire, the sun came, hard and red.**