

**AN ISLE IN
THE WATER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649056224

An Isle in the Water by Katharine Tynan (Mrs. H. A. Hinkson)

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KATHARINE TYNAN (MRS. H. A. HINKSON)

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BY

KATHARINE TYNAN
(Mrs. H. A. Hinkson)

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
NEW YORK: MACMILLAN & CO.

1896

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TO
JANE BARLOW
THESE UNWORTHY PRESENTS

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I

THE FIRST WIFE

THE dead woman had lain six years in her grave, and the new wife had reigned five of them in her stead. Her triumph over her dead rival was well-nigh complete. She had nearly ousted her memory from her husband's heart. She had given him an heir for his name and estate, and, lest the bonny boy should fail, there was a little brother creeping on the nursery floor, and another child stirring beneath her heart. The twisted yew before the door, which was heavily buttressed because the legend ran that when it died the family should die out with it, had taken another lease of life, and sent out one spring green shoots on boughs long barren. The old servants had

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well-nigh forgotten the pale mistress who reigned one short year ; and in the fishing village the lavish benefactions of the reigning lady had quite extinguished the memory of the tender voice and gentle words of the woman whose place she filled. A new era of prosperity had come to the Island and the race that long had ruled it.

Under a high, stately window of the ruined Abbey was the dead wife's grave. In the year of his bereavement, before the beautiful brilliant cousin of his dead Alison came and seized on his life, the widower had spent days and nights of stony despair standing by her grave. She had died to give him an heir to his name, and her sacrifice had been vain, for the boy came into the world dead, and lay on her breast in the coffin. Now for years he had not visited the place : the last wreaths of his mourning for her had been washed into earth and dust long ago, and the grave was neglected. The fisherwives whispered that a despairing widower is soonest comforted ; and in that haunted Island of ghosts and omens there were those who said that they