

**BLACK
SHEEP'S GOLD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649172382

Black Sheep's gold by Beatrice Grimshaw

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

BEATRICE GRIMSHAW

**BLACK
SHEEP'S GOLD**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SANDS OF ORO
EYES IN THE CORNER
WRECK OF THE REDWING
PARADISE POACHERS
ETC., ETC.

BLACK SHEEP'S GOLD

By
**BEATRICE
GRIMSHAW**



*Publishing
since 1812*

**HURST & BLACKETT, Ltd.
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, E.C.4.**

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY PURNELL AND SONS
FACITON (SOMERSET) AND LONDON

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. WILD SEAHORSES	7
II. THE BREAKING OF THE DREAM	19
III. THE MANGROVE WALL	49
IV. A SECRET SHARED	80
V. FIRST MOVES	110
VI. THE DARK DAY CLOSES	122
VII. THE ONE WHO FOLLOWED	141
VIII. HEART OF FLAME	158
IX. GOLDEN GRAVEL	185
X. THE BROODING STORM	202
XI. THE RECKONING	225
XII. MEASURE OF THE MOON	247
XIII. THROUGH THE CANYON	267
XIV. DAWN AT TATATATA	277

BLACK SHEEP'S GOLD

CHAPTER I

WILD SEAHORSES

THE cigar was unwontedly good; it had made me peaceful and dreamy—that, or the reaction after the fuss of getting aboard and away. At all events, I leaned in the cushioned smoke-room chair, and gave myself up to enjoyment; let the sounds and sights and the smells of the great liner flow pleasantly over me. A girl was singing a little, exquisite French song with a merry ripple in the notes; through panels of plate glass that gave on the music-room, one could see the sparkle of gilding, gloss of satins and brocades; in the smoke-room, where I sat, there was smell of tobacco and pleasant drinks, murmur of well-bred voices, slap and rustle of cards, calls for the "boy". . . . Up the companion, rising like an incense to the gods of modern shipping, came that immemorial, mixed ship-smell that travellers know; chilled fruit in it, rubber carpeting in it, paint, soap, upholstery; last, not least to me, suggestion of good meals.

They were all there, the things that I had known and forgotten. And the beat, beat of the great steamer heart, that was to carry on, day an night, until Hong-Kong; and the barely-heard, long wash of the

Black Sheep's Gold

Coral Sea, as we ran north from Cairns in Queensland up towards Torres Straits, through all the sapphire and topaz glory of a tropic winter day. . . .

Who is able to write the eclogue of those tropic winters, along Australia's and New Guinea's opposite coasts—the air like golden wine just breathed on by a hint of distant cold; the seas blue blue beyond any epithet or comparison discoverable in books—light that makes all the lights of colder latitudes seem penny-farthing candles; light striking from above and below, and slaying all shadow with its crystal sword; so that a man dressed in white seems to walk in it almost invisible. . . . Days, in midwinter of July and June, that hold a secret intoxicant, nameless, incredible to all who have not tasted it; something that keeps in its depths the very spring of life, hints at the existence of delights just over the edge of our poor five senses, some day, perhaps, to be explored by a wiser race. . . . Love of the sun, craving for tropic glories, are not ignorable, not vain. Did not the race of man take birth in the sunlands? Those who come after us will formulate that debt, collect it. We of to-day scarce know its existence; but we look, we finger, we hanker—and are reprov'd by the too-wise. For it remains a truth, that worldly prosperity haunts the lands of winter dark.

. . . It cannot have been the cigar, that sent all this skimming and balancing through my mind, as the last of the gulls of Cairns were skimming and balancing about the ship. Or yet the one good whisky I had had. I think it was the much stronger stimulant of one hundred and seventy two solid pounds, mine since yesterday, and now in the care of the ship's majestic purser. There's nothing makes a man feel

so innocently drunk, as a hatfull of cash, when he has been a long time short. This cash of mine was the result of a lucky win in a sweep on the English Derby; nothing more respectable than that—but the strictest purist could hardly have found fault with my way of spending it. I was down in Cairns upon business (very small business and cheap) when the windfall came; and wisely, I decided to go home at once, instead of waiting for the monthly B.P. boat. For, after all, I wasn't out of my twenties and Cairns is rather unnecessarily full of bars, also of little sly shops that are not what they pretend, or ought to be; and money flies; and I didn't want mine to fly. One treat I must have, I decided; and the call of the *Catacara* suggested its kind. I would spend eight of my precious pounds on a two-day run to Thursday Island, and get back thence to New Guinea by cutter. For two days, I would dream that I was back in the spacious days of Home and riches; the years when my father owned a fine country house, and a smallish town house, and I had been going to be an English squire, some time or other, and life and society and the "right people", and what one was going to do with oneself after Harrow and the 'Varsity, had all been changeless, solid as fixed stars.

Nothing solider than that house, the long avenue with the firs and the crackling gravel, the cottages and farms that were ours, the garden and its strange old-fashioned roses—rice roses, Scotch yellow, moss roses, cabbage, "Glory-John",—and its flowering currant that clambered over the palings, and made pungent scent in spring-time, scent strong to carry through ten thousand miles and twenty years. Nothing more sure than the passing for ever and ever the