



Charlotte Brontë

Tales of the Islanders

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Tales of the Islanders

(The Complete 4 Volumes)

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FIRST VOLUME OF TALES OF THE ISLANDERS

JUNE 31 1829

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Tales of Islanders

The play of the Islanders was formed in December 1827 in the following manner. One night about the time when the cold sleet and dreary fogs of November are succeeded by the snow storms & high peircing nightwinds of confirmed winter we where all sitting round the warm blazing kitchen fire having just concluded a quarrel with Taby concerning the propriety of lighting a candle from which she came of victorious no candle having been produced . a long pause succeeded which was at last broken by Branwell saying in a lazy maner “ I don’t know what to do.” this was reechoed by Emily and Anne T wha ya may go t’bed’

B I’d rather do anything than that & C your so glum tonight C well suppose we had each an Island B if we had I would choose the Island of Man C & I would choose Isle of Wight E the Isle of Arran for me’

A & mine should be Guernsey C the D of Wellington should be my cheif man B Herries should be mine E Walter Scott should be mine A I should have Bentinck here our conversation was interrupted by the to us dismal sound of the clock striking 7 & we where sumoned of to bed. the next day we added several others to our list of names till we had got allmost all the cheif men in the kingdom.

after this for a long time nothing worth noticing ocured. In June 1828 we erected a school on a fictitious Island which was to contain 1000 children. the maner of the building was

as follows: the Island was 50 miles in circumference & certainly it appeared more like the region of enchantment or a beautiful fiction than sober reality. in some parts made terribly sublime by mighty rocks rushing streams and roaring cataracts with here and there an oak either scathed by lightning or withered by time & as if to remind the lonely passenger of what it once was a green young scion twisting round its old grey trunk. in other parts of the Island there were greensward's glittering fountains springing in the flowery meadows or among the pleasant woods where fairys were said to dwell its borders embroidered by the purple violet & the yellow primrose and the air perfumed by the sweet wild flowers and ringing with the sound of the cuckoo & turtle dove or the merry music of the blackbird & thrush formed the beautiful scenery.

One specialty? around the palace school was a fine large park in which the beautiful undulations of hill & plain variegated the scene-ery which might otherwise have been monotonous shady Groves crowning the hills pure streams wandered through the plains watering? the banks with a lovelier verdure as4 clear lakes whose borders are overhung by the drooping willow the elegant larch the venerable oak & the evergreen laurel seemed the crystal emerald framed mirrors of some huge Giant. often at times it is said of one of the most beautiful of these lakes that when all is quiet the music of fairyland may be heard and a tiny barge of red sandalwood its mast of amber its sails & cordage of silk and its oars of fine ivory may be seen skimming across the lake & when its small crew have gathered the water lily plant back again & landing on the flowery bank spread their transparent wings & melt away at the sound of mortal footsteps like the mists of the morning before the splendour of the sun.

from a beautiful grove of winter roses & twining woodbine towers a magnificent palace of pure white marble whose elegant & finely wrought pillars & majestic turrets

seem the work of mighty Geni & not of feeble men. ascending a flight of marble steps you come to a grand entrance which leads into a Hall surrounded by Corinthian pillars of white marble. in the midst of the hall is a colossal statue holding in each hand a vase of crystal from which rushes a stream of clear water and breaking into a thousand diamonds & pearls falls into a basin of pure Gold & disappearing through an opening rises again in different parts of the park in the form of brilliant fountains these falling part into numerous rills which winding through the ground throw themselves into a river which runs into the sea.

at the upper end of the hall was a grove of orange trees bearing the golden fruit & fragrant blossoms often upon the same branch, from this hall you pass into another splendid & spacious apartment all hung with rich deep crimson velvet & from the grand dome is suspended a magnificent lustre of fine gold the drops of which are pure crystal, the whole length of the room run long sofa's covered also with Crimson velvet, at each end are chimney pieces of dove colour Italian marble the pillars of which are of the Corinthian order fluted and wreathed with gold. from this we pass into a smaller but very elegant room the sofas of which are covered with light blue velvet flowered with silver and surrounded with small white marble columns.

& now from fine halls splendid drawing rooms I must begin to describe scenes of a very different nature, in the Hall of the fountain behind a statue is a small door over which is drawn a curtain of white silk. this door when opened discovers a small apartment at the farther end of which is a very large iron door which leads to a long dark passage at the end of which is a flight of steps leading to a subterranean dungeon which I shall now endeavour to describe.

it has the appearance of a wide vault dimly lighted by a lamp asphaltas which casts a strange death like lustre over part of the dungeon & leaves the rest in the gloom &