

**The Shipwreck**  
**by B. R. Flynn**

*From a logbook found in the Caribbean...*

1st May, 1764

We had been adrift for two days when we saw the shipwreck and - more importantly - land. It was full dark out, the moon high above us partially obscured by clouds. Captain Quinlan cast a weary eye on the island, and the wreck; a large, armed merchant vessel by the look of it. He seemed to sense something was wrong, even then. The wreck was partially submerged in a small cove of the island. I wondered out loud what island it was. First mate Kelly shook his head. He had no idea.

Captain Quinlan was still silent, which worried me. He looked out towards the island, and especially the wreck, with what looked like fear. But what were we to do? The *Queen's Shame* was gone, blown apart by the Royal Navy two days past, and our longboat was taking on water more and more, ever since Captain Quinlan shot Quartermaster Edwards when he suggested killing and eating me for food. "We're none of us resorting to cannibalism, not on my watch! Sleep softly, young Robert." I was well pleased, but the pistol slug was lodged in the floor of the boat. We plugged it as best we could but, without proper tools, it was inevitable that the boat was going down soon enough.

So the cove it was. And the wreck. Pirates like myself and the men I called shipmates couldn't resist a good shipwreck. Who knows what loot was hidden in such a prize?

We steered the longboat towards the wreck, Captain Quinlan still silent but not stopping us. He wanted what was possibly inside the wreck just as much as we did, weary though he was. We anchored the longboat to the wreck and climbed aboard. I stood on deck and looked out towards the bay, and the

land beyond. The beach was covered in palm trees, lush and dense. There would be food there, water, and shelter could be made from the trees. But, first was the wreck, and whatever treasures lay within. If any of us had known what we were to discover there, none of us would have stepped foot on the wreck.

I looked around the deck of the shipwreck. It hadn't been submerged for long, I could tell. Kelly had poked his head over the other side of the ship and came up with the name of the vessel: The *Mary Veil*. None of recognized the name. Captain Quinlan looked out towards the island, like I had been before, stroking his full beard.

"There may be treasure, captain," I said. He nodded but still didn't speak.

"Something worries you?" I asked.

He looked at me, finally. "There be dangers in shipwrecks, young Robert, especially in coves. You're too young to know of such things." And that was all. He turned and began to explore the wreck with the rest of us.

Finding nothing on deck, we headed below. The crew quarters were the first thing we came upon. No flooding here, but I could hear the water below us, on the gun deck, sloshing around with the tide. I wandered to the stern of the ship, to the officer's quarters, and opened the door. I nearly jumped at what I saw.

A young woman sat in the center of the room. She was covered in water, her fair hair dripping. She was practically naked, only a slip covering her. She shivered. I immediately took off my coat and draped it around her. "It's all right," I said. "I won't hurt you. Captain! All of you, come here!"

The rest of them, five in total, came rushing towards me, joining us. They all stood above me, slightly away, while I was on my hands and knees attending to the girl. She was extremely pretty, though obviously not at her best at the moment. I looked at my crew-mates and frowned. Why were they holding back? Why were none of them comforting her? Even if their ultimate motive would be bedding the young woman, at least they would seem sincere for a moment. It made no sense to me.

Captain Quinlan was the one to finally make a move.

He took two steps towards me and the young woman and spoke softly: "Step away from her, lad."

I was confused and gaped at him. "She's cold and possibly hurt!" I said.

"We can't help her, son," he said.

I shook my head and turned back to her. "What happened?" I asked her.

"We didn't stand a chance," she said. The cabin creaked in the water and I looked around. There was more than one hole in the floor behind her, great broken slats of wood sticking out at mad angles. I frowned. What had happened here?

"Get away from her," Kelly said.

"She's dangerous!" the gunner, Clark, said. Captain Quinlan was done talking and he pulled his pistol, pointed it at her and, by extension, me.

"She's hurt!" I said. "Someone's attacked her!"

"Not someone," Captain Quinlan said. "Something." I shook my head.

"What happened?" I repeated to the girl.

"They were in the water," she said. And then, amazingly, she started to laugh. "In the water! In the water! In the water!" Great, loud laughter that became screams.

I put a hand to her cheek. She was deathly cold. I pulled my hand away, alarmed, and a large chunk of her hair came with it, tearing out of her head like it wasn't even attached. She continued to laugh and scream as she tore at her hair, pulling it out in large clumps.

Clark was the first one to run. He bolted from the cabin and ran towards the stairs to get on deck. I finally got away from the girl and fell on my backside, pushing myself away. Captain Quinlan fired his pistol. The report was deafeningly loud in the small cabin and there was a ringing in my ears for sometime after. The pistol slug was true and found its mark: the chest of the girl. She fell onto her back, unmoving, a large hole in her chest. I gasped in fear and shock. "It won't be enough," Captain Quinlan said, stowing away his pistol and pulling his sword.

He took another step closer to the girl, sword raised to strike. He didn't make it. The first of those horrid things came crawling out of one of the many holes in the floor and grabbed him by the ankle.

It was, quite simply, the most terrible thing I had seen in my short life. It was shaped like a man but was hairless and grey skinned. I was reminded of a shark's deadly skin. It had pointed ears and sharp claws which it dug into Captain Quinlan's leg. It looked up at him, smiling hideously. It had sharp fangs both in its upper palette and lower jaw.

Captain Quinlan screamed in pain and brought his sword down on the thing's head, splitting it partially down the middle. Horrid black blood pumped out of the creature's head wound and it let go of the captain, clutching at its wound. As it shook and struggled, screaming a terrible cry all the while, Captain Quinlan struck again, severing the thing's head from its shoulders. It stopped moving and collapsed to the ground, its head rolling about the cabin until disappearing down a hole in the floor.

It was no victory, however. Three more of the things came crawling out of the holes, all of them smiling and licking their lips in hunger. Captain Quinlan managed to stab one of them, but his sword became stuck in the creature's chest and the other two pounced on him, biting into his neck from both sides. He screamed and went down.

We all started running. In the chaos that followed, I was on my feet in an instant and, as I left the cabin, I saw the girl sit up, her hair gone now, spread out on the floor about where her head had been,

like a golden halo. She looked at me and smiled and tore her slip off, reveling in her nudity, like the other creatures. Then I ran.

"Cove vampires!" Kelly said as we ran up, out of the ship and onto the deck.

It was eerily quiet. I looked around for Clark but saw nothing. One of the other men looked over the side and reported that our boat was still there. We made for it when one of the men was snatched out of the air by a pair of clawed hands reaching down from above. I looked up in horror and saw a sight that I will never forget: descending down from the masts and the crow's nest, finding their way down the rigging, were scores of vampires, all of them thirsting for our blood. Hung about the rigging was Clark, his throat torn open, blood dripping onto the deck.

As we ran, another one of us went down, then another. Now it was only Kelly and myself. We practically jumped over the side and climbed down the rope to the longboat. Both of us in the boat, Kelly cut the rope so that none of the vampires could follow. We both grabbed oars and started to paddle towards land as fast as we could. We were nearly there when Kelly's oar seemed to suddenly stick in the water. He pulled at it again and again but it wouldn't budge. He leaned over to see what the problem was and a hand came out of the water, sharp claws for fingertips, and sliced his throat with one fatal swipe of its thumbnail. He fell back into the boat, clutching his neck as he bled out. He tried to scream but couldn't make any noise.

A figure climbed onto the lip of the boat, laid its arms on the edge like it was just resting partly in the water, partly out after a good swim. It was the girl, smiling at me. I backed as far away as I could while still staying in the boat. I looked at Kelly. He reached out for me with one blood-stained hand.

To my great shame, I did not try to help him. He was already dead. I took another look at the girl, smiling horribly at me, and jumped from the boat into the water. Land was close and I swam faster than I had ever swam before. I knew that the girl was close behind me the whole time. Was she playing with me? Surely, she could have caught me anytime she wanted.

I reached the shore and didn't stop; I ran into the jungle, not noticing the escalating pain in my legs and chest.

I ran for what felt like miles but I was still in dense jungle. Finally, exhaustion overtook me and I dropped to the ground and fell into a restless, disturbed sleep.

I dreamed that I was on the beach, sleeping there under the stars. The girl came to me, coming out of the water like a goddess. She was normal once again and naked. She laid down on top of me and put a hand to my cheek. She kissed me. I closed my eyes as she did this and when I opened them she was that horrible creature again. She bit down on my neck and I screamed, and woke up. There was nothing.

I found this old log book on the ground near where I lay. Though the opening pages have been torn out, I fear that it the logbook of the *Mary Veil*.

I write this now, on the morning after it happened, so there's some kind of record. I'm going to head farther inland today. I hope it's far enough. I hope I reach a town or some kind of civilization. But what if I don't? Worse, what if I do and it doesn't matter? What if she still comes for me when it turns dark tonight? And, this is the worst of all: what if I don't mind it? What if that's what I'm meant to become, like my shipmates? Oh, God, please deliver me from this Hell. Because I can hear her, even now, laughing and calling.

Calling my name.

Wanting me to join her under the waves.

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