

The Sailor's Tale

By M. G. Lewis

Landlord, another bowl of punch, and comrades fill your glasses!
First in another bumper toast our pretty absent lasses,
Then hear how sad and strange a sight my chance it was to see,
While lately, in the 'Lovely Nan,' returning from Goree!

As all alone at dead of night along the deck I wander'd,
And now I whistled, now on home and Polly Parsons ponder'd,
Sudden a ghastly form appear'd, in dripping trowsers rigg'd,
And soon, with strange surprise and fear, Jack Tackle's ghost I twigg'd.

—"Dear Tom," quoth he, "I hither come a doleful tale to tell ye
"A monstrous fish has safely stow'd your comrade in his belly;
"Groggy last night, my luck was such, that overboard I slid,
"When a shark snapp'd and chew'd me, just as now you chew that quid.

"Old Nick, who seem'd confounded glad to catch my soul a napping,
Straight tax'd me with that buxom dame, the tailor's wife at Wapping;
"In vain I begg'd, and swore, and jaw'd; Nick no excuse would hear;
"Quoth he,—'You lubber make your will, and dam'me, downwards steer.'—

"Tom, to the 'foresaid tailor's wife I leave my worldly riches,
But keep yourself, my faithful friend, my bran-new linen breeches;
Then, when you wear them, sometimes give one thought to Jack's that's dead,
"Nor leave those galligaskins off while there remains one thread."—

At hearing Jack's sad tale, my heart, you well may think, was bleeding;
The spirit well perceived my grief, and seem'd to be proceeding,
But here, it so fell out, he sneezed:—Says I—"God bless you, Jack!"—
And poor Jack Tackle's grimly ghost was vanish'd in a crack!

Now comrades timely warning take, and landlord fill the bowl;
Jack Tackle, for the tailor's wife, has damn'd his precious soul;
Old Nick's a devilish dab, it seems, at snapping up a sailor's,
So if you kiss your neighbour's wife, be sure she's not a tailor's.