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opening extract from

Treasure Island

written by

Robert Louis Stevenson

illustrated by

Robert Ingpen

published by

Templar Publishing

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TREASURE ISLAND

Robert Louis Stevenson

Illustrated by Robert Ingpen

templar publishing

Dedication by Robert Louis Stevenson

To Lloyd Osbourne, an American gentleman, in accordance with whose classic taste the following narrative has been designed, it is now, in return for numerous delightful hours, and with the kindest wishes, dedicated by his affectionate friend, the author

Dedication by Robert Ingpen (as inscribed in an earlier edition of 1992)

Treasure Island was written for boys, but usually their fathers and grandfathers have the first reading of it. Robert Louis Stevenson dedicated the story to his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, in 1883. This edition, with its illustrations, is dedicated to the illustrator's grandson

For Peter James Arch

A TEMPLAR BOOK

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Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in November 1850. He originally entered Edinburgh University to study engineering, but later switched to law. It was writing that turned out to be his passion, though, and despite his parents' discouragement he pursued his dream. He was an avid traveller and published accounts of his tours through France and Belgium in the 1870s.

Stevenson began writing *Treasure Island* in 1881 while holidaying in the Scottish Highlands with his parents, wife and twelve-year-old stepson Lloyd. The story began as a simple amusement to keep the semi-invalid boy amused, but it so captivated Lloyd and Stevenson's father that they persuaded him to write it down. There followed several successful novels, poems and plays, notably *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *Kidnapped* and *The Master of Ballantrae*; however, it is his tale of 'a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a fine old Squire Trelawney, and a doctor, and a sea-cook with one leg…' that remains the best-known and best-loved of all his works.

Stevenson had suffered poor health since childhood, and in 1888 he left Scotland for good in search of healthier climes. He eventually settled in Samoa, where he died of a brain haemorrhage in December 1894 – aged just forty-four.

Illustrator's Note

There are stories and characters who transcend the original inspiration of their authors and take on a life of their own. They become classics against which all future books are measured. *Treasure Island* is, without doubt, one of these stories. Long John Silver, the sea-cook, is one of these characters, along with Jim Hawkins, Blind Pew and Ben Gunn.

The early chapters of *Treasure Island* remain the most compelling reading in adventure literature. It is often said by experts in literature for children that if a child can read and feel the drama of the happenings at the 'Admiral Benbow' Inn as imagined by Stevenson, then they will be readers forever.

But the island where later on most of the drama takes place is the most enduring creation. It lies, according to Stevenson, probably in the western Pacific Ocean, on the same latitude as the Bermudas, but closer to the east coast of the USA, not in the Caribbean as sometimes supposed. From seawards Treasure Island presents an ominous and discouraging appearance to navigators. A heavy surf breaks on the steep beaches along the rugged coastline. The island is approximately fifteen kilometres long and eight wide. Many tall pine trees, rising as high as sixty metres, grow singly or in shadowy clumps, with sandy stretches running palely between them.

The dominant features of the island are three strange hills, Foremast, Spy-glass and Mizzen-mast, along the west coast. Foremast Hill has a two-pointed pinnacle, and a cave once used as a refuge by Ben Gunn, a pirate marooned on the island for three years. There are three deep inlets, but the best harbour is that known as Captain Kidd's Anchorage. This lies on the south coast of the island between Haulbowline Head and the White Rock. Shipmasters should approach the anchorage to the south of Skeleton Island, which is linked to the main island by a sandpit exposed at low tide, and then alter course sharply to the north-north-west to enter the anchorage.

All in all, the richest territory imaginable for an illustrator.

Robert Ingpen



PART I

THE OLD BUCCANEER

CHAPTER 1

The Old Sea Dog at the 'Admiral Benbow'

Squire Trelawny, Dr Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island, from the beginning to the end, keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island, and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted, I take up my pen in the year of grace 17–, and go back to the time when my father kept the 'Admiral Benbow' inn, and the brown old seaman, with the sabre cut, first took up his lodging under our roof.

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow; a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails; and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cove and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

'Fifteen men on the dead man's chest –
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!'

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste, and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

'This is a handy cove,' says he, at length; 'and a pleasant sittyated grog-shop. Much company, mate?'

My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.

'Well, then,' said he, 'this is the berth for me. Here you, matey,' he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; 'bring up alongside and help up my chest. I'll stay here a bit,' he continued. 'I'm a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I see what you're at – there'; and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. 'You can tell me when I've worked through that,' says he, looking as fierce as a commander.



And, indeed, bad as his clothes were, and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast; but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the 'Royal George'; that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

He was a very silent man by custom. All day he hung round the cove, or upon the cliffs, with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the parlour next the fire, and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to; only look up sudden and fierce, and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day, when he came back from his stroll, he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question; but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman put up at the 'Admiral Benbow' (as now and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol), he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter; for I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms. He had taken me aside one day, and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my 'weather-eye open for a seafaring man with one leg', and let him know the moment he appeared. Often enough, when the first of the month came round, and I applied to him for my wage, he would only blow through his nose at me, and stare me down; but before the week was out he was sure to think better of it, bring me my fourpenny piece, and repeat his orders to look out for 'the seafaring man with one leg'.

How that personage haunted my dreams, I need scarcely tell you. On stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house, and the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs, I would see him in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg would be cut off at the knee, now at the hip; now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had never had but the one leg, and that in the middle of

his body. To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and ditch was the worst of nightmares. And altogether I paid pretty dear for my monthly fourpenny piece, in the shape of these abominable fancies.

But though I was so terrified by the idea of the seafaring man with one leg, I was far less afraid of the captain himself than anybody else who knew him. There were nights when he took a deal more rum and water than his head would carry; and then he would sometimes sit and sing his wicked, old, wild sea-songs, minding nobody; but sometimes he would call for glasses round, and force all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing. Often I have heard the house shaking with "Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum", all the neighbours joining in for dear life, with the fear of death upon them, and each singing louder than the other, to avoid remark. For in these fits he was the most overriding companion ever known; he would slap his hand on the table for silence all round; he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question, or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not following his story. Nor would he allow anyone to leave the inn till he had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed.

His stories were what frightened people worst of all. Dreadful stories they were; about hanging, and walking the plank, and storms at sea, and the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main. By his own account he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea; and the language in which he told these stories shocked our plain country people almost as much as the crimes that he described. My father was always saying the inn would be ruined, for people would soon cease coming there to be tyrannised over and put down, and sent shivering to their beds; but I really believe his presence did us good. People were frightened at the time, but on looking back they rather liked it; it was a fine excitement in a quiet country life; and there was even a party of the younger men who pretended to admire him, calling him a 'true sea-dog', and a 'real old salt', and such-like names, and saying there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea.

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us; for he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain blew through his nose so loudly, that you might say he roared, and stared my poor father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death.

All the time he lived with us the captain made no change whatever in his dress but to buy some stockings from a hawker. One of the cocks of his hat having fallen down, he let it hang from that day forth, though it was a great annoyance when it blew. I remember the appearance of his coat, which he patched himself upstairs in his room, and which, before

the end, was nothing but patches. He never wrote or received a letter, and he never spoke with any but the neighbours, and with these, for the most part, only when drunk on rum. The great sea-chest none of us had ever seen open.

He was only once crossed, and that was towards the end, when my poor father was far gone in a decline that took him off. Dr Livesey came late one afternoon to see the patient, took a bit of dinner from my mother, and went into the parlour to smoke a pipe until his horse should come down from the hamlet, for we had no stabling at the old 'Benbow'. I followed him in, and I remember observing the contrast the neat, bright doctor, with his powder as white as snow, and his bright, black eyes and pleasant manners, made with the coltish country folk, and above all, with that filthy, heavy, bleared scarecrow of a pirate of ours, sitting, far gone in rum, with his arms on the table. Suddenly he – the captain, that is – began to pipe up his eternal song:

'Fifteen men on the dead man's chest –
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest –
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!'

