

Treasure Island

Query Letter Synopsis

TREASURE ISLAND is a young adult adventure novel in which an orphaned innkeeper's son, Jim Hawkins, discovers a pirate treasure map and must outwit a crew of murderous buccaneers to survive.

When a mysterious sailor named Billy Bones dies at Jim's family inn, Jim discovers a map among Bones's possessions marking the burial site of the pirate Flint's fortune — seven hundred thousand pounds in gold. Wealthy Squire Trelawney immediately organizes an expedition, hiring a Bristol crew and a one-legged ship's cook named Long John Silver. Too late, Jim discovers Silver is the ringleader of a mutiny: most of the crew are Flint's former pirates, intent on seizing the treasure and killing everyone who stands in their way.

What follows is Jim's education in the brutal gap between appearances and reality. Silver is charming, brilliant, and utterly ruthless — a man who can quote scripture and slit a throat with equal composure. Jim, who begins the voyage as a boy running errands and nursing nightmares, is forced by circumstance into acts of extraordinary courage: he eavesdrops on the conspiracy from inside an apple barrel, cuts the ship adrift in darkness, kills a man in single combat, and is captured by Silver's crew. At every turn, Jim's impulsive bravery saves the honest men even as it terrifies them.

The island itself becomes a crucible. The loyal party — Jim, the squire, the ship's doctor Livesey, and Captain Smollett — hold a fortified stockade against nineteen mutineers, suffering casualties and dwindling supplies. Their salvation comes from an unexpected source: Ben Gunn, a marooned castaway who discovered and secretly relocated Flint's treasure months before the Hispaniola arrived. When Silver's men reach the excavation and find it empty, Livesey's ambush breaks the mutiny. The treasure is recovered from Gunn's cave, the ship is reclaimed, and most of the pirates are dead or stranded. Silver, who played both sides throughout with cold-blooded pragmatism, escapes justice — slipping away in the night with a bag of gold, leaving Jim to reflect on a man he could neither trust nor entirely condemn.

TREASURE ISLAND is a story about the cost of growing up, the seduction of charisma untethered from conscience, and the discovery that survival sometimes requires becoming harder than you intended.

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