

Treasure Island

Series Bible Entry

Series Bible Entry: *Treasure Island*

1. Book Overview

Treasure Island is a first-person adventure novel narrated by Jim Hawkins, a young boy who becomes entangled in a dangerous quest for buried pirate treasure after a mysterious sea captain dies at his family's inn. The tone is tense and propulsive, blending boyhood wonder with genuine moral darkness—mutiny, murder, and betrayal are treated with unflinching seriousness. The story is set in coastal England and on a remote, fever-ridden Caribbean island during the early eighteenth century (year given as 17—, with internal dates suggesting the 1750s).

2. Major Characters Introduced

- **Jim Hawkins** — The narrator and cabin-boy, a resourceful and impulsive boy whose instinctive courage repeatedly saves the honest crew, though he acknowledges his own recklessness and insubordination throughout.
- **Long John Silver** — One-legged former pirate quartermaster under Captain Flint, now operating as ship's cook and secret ringleader of the mutiny; morally ambiguous, politically brilliant, and ultimately spared prosecution in exchange for his protection of Jim.
- **Dr. Livesey** — Ship's doctor and magistrate, the most strategically capable of the honest officers; calm, courageous, and willing to make hard moral calculations, including negotiating with Silver and abandoning the stockade.
- **Squire Trelawney** — Wealthy landowner and the expedition's financier; brave but dangerously indiscreet, prone to speaking carelessly and making impulsive judgments of character.
- **Captain Smollett** — Master of the *Hispaniola*, a rigidly principled and professionally excellent officer who distrusted the crew from the outset and was vindicated; ends the book wounded and unable to command.
- **Ben Gunn** — A marooned former pirate who discovered and secretly moved Flint's treasure before the *Hispaniola* arrived; eccentric, unreliable in company, but ultimately the decisive factor in the honest crew's survival.

- **Abraham Gray** — Carpenter's mate who defected from the mutineers to join the honest crew at the last moment; steady and reliable in combat.

3. World-Building Established

- **The Admiral Benbow Inn** — Jim's family inn at Black Hill Cove on the English coast; repaired and refurbished by Squire Trelawney after the events of the story, with Jim's mother still in residence and an apprentice boy hired to assist her.

- **Treasure Island** — A remote island approximately nine miles long and five miles across, shaped like a fat dragon; features two land-locked harbours, Captain Kidd's anchorage (sheltered behind Skeleton Island), North Inlet, and a central plateau dominated by the Spy-glass hill (300–400 feet taller than surrounding hills). The island carries endemic marsh fever and is never quiet due to constant ocean swell on its exterior coast.

- **The *Hispaniola*** — A two-hundred-ton schooner purchased in Bristol by Squire Trelawney through his agent Blandly; ends the book beached on her beam-ends in North Inlet, main-sail wrecked, but otherwise salvageable.

- **Ben Gunn's Cave** — A large, airy cave with a spring and pool of clear water on the two-pointed hill at the north-east angle of Treasure Island; used as the treasure repository and the honest crew's final stronghold.

- **The Stockade and Log-house** — A pre-existing fortification built by Flint, consisting of a log-house loopholed for musketry, enclosed by a six-foot paling, with a spring inside; ceded to the pirates by Dr. Livesey as part of his negotiated treaty.

- **The Pirate Code ("Gentlemen of Fortune")** — Active pirate culture with formal customs including the black spot (a written notice of deposition or death sentence, traditionally cut from a Bible), forecastle councils, and articles; the black spot is rendered invalid if cut from scripture due to superstition about desecrating the Bible.

- **Captain Flint's Treasure** — Approximately £700,000 in coin and gold bars accumulated by the pirate Flint over roughly twenty years; the coin is of mixed international denomination (doubloons, louis d'ors, guineas, pieces of eight, and others). The treasure was buried on the island by Flint using six crewmen, all of whom Flint subsequently killed; it was later discovered and moved by Ben Gunn to his cave two months before the *Hispaniola*'s arrival.

- **The Treasure Map** — Originally drawn by Flint; the copy held by Billy Bones (and later Jim) is on yellow paper with three red crosses and detailed written instructions referencing landmarks including "Tall

tree, Spy-glass shoulder," "Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E.," and "Ten feet." The map does not show where the treasure was moved to; it only marks the original excavation site.

- **Blandly's Consort Ship** — A rescue vessel arranged by Squire Trelawney's Bristol agent Blandly, due to be dispatched if the *Hispaniola* has not returned by the end of August.

4. Threads Left Open

- **Three surviving mutineers** — Morgan and two unnamed pirates fled toward Mizzenmast Hill during the final confrontation and were never captured, killed, or accounted for; they remain stranded on Treasure Island at the close of the book, having been deliberately left there by the departing crew.

- **Long John Silver's fate** — Silver escapes during the homeward voyage, taking a portion of the treasure (a bag of coins) and disappearing at a port of call; his current whereabouts and the identity of his wife (described as a woman of colour who managed the Spy-glass tavern) are unresolved.

- **The remaining treasure** — Not all of the treasure is recovered; the narrative implies the full haul is loaded, but the bearings of Treasure Island are deliberately withheld by Jim in his framing narration because "some of it still lies waiting"—explicitly stating unfound treasure remains.

- **Captain Smollett's recovery** — Smollett ends the book wounded, unable to walk, move his arm, or speak without pain; his long-term recovery and return to sea are unresolved, and he explicitly states he will not go to sea again with Jim.

- **Ben Gunn's fate ashore** — Ben Gunn is given his promised £1,000 and passage home but is described as having spent or lost the money within three weeks and subsequently living on charity; his current situation at the time of writing is left vague.

- **Jim's psychological aftermath** — Jim ends the narrative haunted by nightmares of the sea, the sound of surf, and Silver's parrot screaming "Pieces of eight"; the long-term effect of his experiences on his character and choices is unresolved.

5. Continuity Notes

- The narrative is framed as a written account composed by Jim Hawkins at the explicit request of Squire Trelawney, Dr. Livesey, and others; Jim is writing from a point significantly after the events.

- The year of the voyage is given as 17— (deliberately blank); the

squire's letter is dated March 1, 17—. Internal references place the story in the mid-eighteenth century (the squire references seeing Flint's topsails off Trinidad; Silver lost his leg in service under Admiral Hawke).

- Billy Bones's real name is confirmed through his arm tattoos by Dr. Livesey in Chapter 2; his tattoos read: "Here's luck," "A fair wind," "Billy Bones his fancy" on the forearm, and a gallows sketch near the shoulder.
- Billy Bones was first mate to Captain Flint; Long John Silver was quartermaster.
- Flint died of rum at Savannah; his last words aboard ship were "Darby M'Graw! Fetch aft the rum!"
- The *Hispaniola* crew numbered 26 total; of the 19 mutineers, at least 14 are confirmed dead by the end of the book (the narrative tracks losses carefully through Chapters 21–33).
- The loyal crew at the stockade comprised exactly 7 people: Captain Smollett, Dr. Livesey, Squire Trelawney, Jim Hawkins, Hunter, Joyce, and Abraham Gray. Hunter died of injuries following the attack; Joyce was shot dead during the attack.
- Tom Redruth was the squire's oldest servant, shot by a sniper during the evacuation to the stockade and buried there.
- The treasure map's key instruction reads: "Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E. Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E. Ten feet." The skeleton used as Flint's pointer was identified by Morgan as likely Allardyce, a crewman who owed Morgan money.
- Ben Gunn was marooned exactly three years before the *Hispaniola*'s arrival; he was left with a musket, a spade, and a pick-axe (the broken haft of which was found in the empty excavation).
- The Spy-glass tavern in Bristol, Silver's establishment, has been sold (lease, goodwill, and rigging); Silver's wife (a woman of colour) managed it and has since departed to meet him.
- Silver has banked savings of approximately £900 from service under Captain England and £2,000 from service under Captain Flint; these funds were moved from Bristol banks by his wife before the voyage.
- Israel Hands was Flint's gunner in former service; he is confirmed dead, drowned in North Inlet.
- O'Brien (described as "a rank Irishman" and "no seaman") is confirmed dead, killed by Hands before Jim boarded the *Hispaniola*.
- Pew (the blind beggar) is confirmed dead, trampled by Revenue Officer Supervisor Dance's horse outside the Admiral Benbow.
- The black spot Jim retains as a curiosity is cut from a Bible; one side contains verses from Revelation including "Without are dogs and murderers." The writing (in wood ash, spelling "Depposed") has faded to a single scratch by the time Jim writes his account.
- Captain Smollett's full name is Alexander Smollett. Dr. Livesey's first name is David. The squire's full name is John Trelawney.

- The *Hispaniola* was purchased through Blandly in Bristol; a consort rescue ship was to be dispatched by Blandly if the party had not returned by the end of August.