

# Treasure Island



## INTRODUCTION

famous American tales [The Adventures of Tom Sawyer](#) and [Adventures of Huckleberry Finn](#).

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Robert Louis Stevenson was born into a family that expected him to continue the family profession of civil engineering. While he attended Edinburgh University to study engineering, a series of illnesses and general frailty prevented him from becoming either an engineer or pursuing his second choice, law. Instead he began to write, beginning with essays and travel narratives. In 1879 Stevenson traveled to California and there married Fanny Osbourne, an American woman he had met in France. After the couple returned to Scotland, Stevenson continued his career as a writer, turning now to children's stories of adventure, and writing *Treasure Island* for his stepson, a boy named Lloyd Osbourne. The couple returned to America in 1887 and ultimately settled in Samoa, where Stevenson died at the age of 44. He is best known for his works *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and [Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde](#).

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As the literary context of *Treasure Island* makes clear, Victorian writers were fascinated by tales of pirates. Stevenson set his novel sometime in the eighteenth century, which was a kind of golden age for piracy, given that European ships were transporting large amounts of goods and wealth (often gained from slavery) between the New World and Europe. The Jolly Roger, the pirate flag mentioned in the novel, was historically an iconic image used by many pirates to force other ships to surrender. Blackbeard, who is equated with Captain Flint in the book, was also a real historical figure who sailed around the West Indies in the late seventeenth century.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Robert Louis Stevenson explicitly acknowledged his debt to a number of British and American writers: the poem that precedes the beginning of *Treasure Island* includes references to W.H.G. Kingston and R.M. Ballantyne (both lesser-known writers of adventure stories) as well as James Fenimore Cooper, an American author best known for [The Last of the Mohicans](#) and his Leatherstocking Tales of the American frontier, but who also wrote a number of historical romances of the sea. *Treasure Island* can also be fit into a longer history of adventure tales, as well as of the novel itself: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, often considered the first novel, deals with a shipwreck and adventures on a Caribbean island as well. As an adventure story for boys, the book is inspired by Mark Twain's

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Treasure Island*
- **Where Written:** Scotland
- **When Published:** 1881-1882
- **Literary Period:** Victorian Literature
- **Genre:** Novel, children's adventure story
- **Setting:** Britain (on the Bristol Channel) and Treasure Island (apparently somewhere in the Caribbean, although the plants on the island make that unclear)
- **Climax:** Having found the x-marks-the-spot, but with no treasure to be seen—merely an excavation site—the pirates are ready to mutiny against Long John Silver (and kill Jim along with him) when Silver kills George. The doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn then emerge from their hiding place in the woods and they send the other pirates racing off.
- **Antagonist:** Long John Silver is the most prominent antagonist, though he's an ambivalent one: less important pirates like Israel Hands are also the most decidedly evil.
- **Point of View:** Most of the novel is told in the first person from the perspective of an older Jim Hawkins who is setting down the tale of *Treasure Island*. For several chapters, however, the point of view shifts to that of Dr. Livesey, who relates a number of events happening while Jim was elsewhere and thus couldn't have known what was going on.

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Shipwrecks and silver.** Hispaniola, the name of the ship that carries the characters to *Treasure Island*, is also the old name for the island now divided between the nations of Dominican Republic and Haiti. There, a sunken Spanish ship carrying a great deal of treasure was discovered by a notorious adventurer, William Phips, who left some gold for others to find.

**Bringing the book to life.** Among the American artist and illustrator N.C. Wyeth's most famous works are the vivid illustrations he made for *Treasure Island*, which are often considered to be his best.



## PLOT SUMMARY

The protagonist of *Treasure Island*, Jim Hawkins, has been asked by his acquaintances Doctor Livesey and Squire Trelawney to write down his recollections. He begins by discussing the

“Admiral Benbow” inn that his family owned when he was a boy, not far from the English port of Bristol. One day a strange, ragged-looking, and intimidating man arrives: he asks only to be called captain, and asks Jim to keep a lookout for a man with only one leg. The captain spends much of the time drunk on **rum**, and after a pirate named Black Dog comes to see him, he is so nervous that he has a fainting fit. Afterwards, he tells Jim that Black Dog was after something in his sea chest: if he ever dies, he tells Jim, the boy should find what’s in it and follow the instructions inside.

Soon Jim’s father falls ill and dies. The very day after the funeral, a blind man (Pew) arrives and gives the captain the **black spot**, which deposes him from power among the other pirates. Shocked, the captain falls down dead. Since he hasn’t paid his rent for months, Jim and his **mother** decide to break into his sea chest and seize what they’re owed, even though they’re now afraid of being alone at the inn, given the various people who have pursued the captain. But they succeed in opening the chest: Jim’s mother counts out some of the gold, while Jim grabs a small oil-cloth packet. Hearing voices, they rush out of the house and hide by the road: it’s a group of pirates who seem to be looking for what Jim has seized. Later, Jim makes his way to the squire and doctor, who help him open the oil-cloth bag: there’s a **map** of an island with a place marked on it that holds treasure. The squire and Dr. Livesey are thrilled: they decide to get a ship together and travel to the island in order to find the treasure, enlisting Jim as the cabin boy.

The squire is responsible for discreetly hiring a responsible, loyal crew, though he’s been unable to keep quiet about the purpose of the ship’s journey. Still, he’s optimistic about the crew and especially about the ship cook, Long John Silver. Jim is initially suspicious when he hears that Silver has only one leg. But once he meets the man, Silver’s clean-cut appearance and kindly demeanor reassures him that Silver can’t have anything to do with the other pirates. He much prefers Silver to Captain Smollett, who is strict and rule-abiding—the squire, too, is displeased with the captain. Nonetheless, after the ship, called the *Hispaniola*, embarks on its voyage, little goes wrong initially—other than that the mate, Mr. Arrow, proves useless, and eventually drinks so much that he falls overboard.

Jim enjoys being included on the voyage, and especially appreciates the welcoming attitude of Long John Silver, who often invites Jim into his cabin to sit with him and his parrot, named Captain Flint (after an infamous pirate). But one evening, Jim manages to overhear Silver talking with the other crewmen about a plan to mutiny: Silver will lead other members of the crew—many of whom, it turns out, are pirates—in taking over the ship and obtaining the treasure for themselves. As soon as he can, Jim tells the squire, doctor, and captain about these plans. When the ship soon arrives at Treasure Island, the captain decides to allow a few of the pirates to go to shore in order to gain time for them to plan a defense. Jim, too, sneaks

off to the island, where in the midst of exploring he meets a former pirate named Ben Gunn, who has been marooned there for three years.

The crewmen loyal to the captain manage to sneak off the *Hispaniola* and make it to an old log house, which they make into their fort—while the pirates have secured the ship, even though there’s not one of them who can satisfactorily steer it. Long John Silver comes to the log house to propose that the captain surrender and allow the pirates to get the treasure, but the captain staunchly refuses. Silver angrily retreats, and the first battle takes place not long after—while the captain’s group kills more pirates than vice versa, they are still at a disadvantage in terms of numbers.

The doctor goes off to meet Ben Gunn, and Jim begins to grow restless. Although he acknowledges that he is acting immaturely, Jim decides to sneak off and attempt to find the small white boat that Gunn had mentioned to him. He does find it, and once he sees the lights of the *Hispaniola*, now captain-less and rocking side to side, he paddles out to it. Finding aboard a pirate, Israel Hands, who is wounded and has killed his mate, O’Brien, in a drunken rage. Jim and Israel initially work together in order to navigate the ship back to shore, but the pirate soon begins to plot to kill Jim too. After a fight, Jim manages to shoot Hands dead and get the ship ashore, where he docks it, hidden in an out-of-the-way part of the island. When he arrives back to the log house, it turns out that the pirates have taken it over, and he’s taken prisoner. But after Jim declares his lack of fear, Long John Silver seems to take a greater liking to Jim, and defends him from the other pirates. It also becomes clear that the pirates are growing dissatisfied with Silver as their leader, and now debate giving him the black spot. At the same time, the pirates continue to allow the doctor to stop in periodically in order to tend to their wounds. The doctor gives Jim and Silver an enigmatic message about the treasure. He’s finally given the treasure map to the pirates, though Jim and Silver can’t imagine why.

The pirates, though, are not concerned about this, and—dragging Jim by a rope—they march across the island. After hearing a voice mentioning Darby (one of Captain Flint’s pirates) they’re almost too scared to go on, until Silver cries that it’s the voice of Ben Gunn. Finally the pirates reach the x-marks-the-spot on the map—but there’s only a hole with no treasure. Quickly recognizing his own peril, Silver immediately begins to back away with Jim at his side, and when one of the pirates, George Merry, starts to declare mutiny against Silver, Silver shoots him and another. The other pirates race away through the trees, just as the doctor and Ben Gunn emerge themselves.

As they walk back to their hiding place, they tell Jim that, in fact, Ben Gunn had found this treasure during his time on the island, and had hidden it elsewhere—which is why the doctor had given the treasure map to the pirates. After the crew loads up

the *Hispaniola* (thanks to Jim's ability to hide it out of sight), they sail away, leaving the remaining pirates ashore. While Jim feels more positively about Long John Silver, the others continue to be suspicious of him, and none of them is surprised when Silver slips away at the first port where they stop. The rest of the crew makes it back to Bristol unscathed, where each spends his part of the fortune according to his own character. Jim vows never to return to Treasure Island.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Jim Hawkins** – The protagonist of *Treasure Island* is a boy whose family owns the Admiral Benbow inn, presumably somewhere in Scotland. Jim is used to having a certain amount of responsibility at the inn, where he helps out his father and mother, but he's still not quite prepared for the adventures that await him on board the *Hispaniola*. Jim, however, is naturally clever and quick-witted: he is able to think fast and hide from danger when he needs to, such as from the pirates on the road or in the apple barrel on the ship deck. At the same time, Jim has a streak of the rebel's attitude and finds it difficult to always accept authority—even if he tends to feel guilty about breaking the rules later on. Robert Louis Stevenson portrays Jim as a special but not superhuman boy: he cries when he becomes overwhelmed, for instance, and must deal with the fear and confusion that arise from his adventures. As an adventure story “for boys,” *Treasure Island* creates a main character who is relatable but also, when thrown into exciting, extraordinary conditions, proves himself worthy of them.

**Long John Silver** – The sea-cook on board the *Hispaniola*, Long John Silver soon turns out to be a notorious pirate, who has lost his leg in some kind of unspoken battle when he was part of Captain Flint's group of buccaneers. We're first introduced to the man only in rumor, through Billy Bones's fear of a one-legged man. Jim, for his part, immediately likes Silver, who treats him kindly and invites him into his confidence. Soon, though, it becomes clear that what Silver excels at is precisely manipulating people into trusting him. Silver cares more than anything else about ensuring his own survival, and will do whatever it takes to save himself—even if that means betraying one group, then turning around and betraying another. Jim is initially repelled by this behavior and disillusioned by Silver's pragmatic lack of morals. Ultimately, however, he (and the book as a whole) maintain a certain respect for this man, who is clever and nimble enough to evade death or punishment just by plotting and conniving.

**Billy Bones (“the captain”)** – The first pirate we meet in *Treasure Island*, Billy Bones stays at the Admiral Benbow inn for a length of months. He is often drunk on **rum** and scares the other patrons with his tales of life on the sea, but Jim thinks this

is rather good for business. While he cuts a frightening figure himself, Billy Bones is even more afraid of other pirates, including Captain Flint and Long John Silver, and he's well aware that still others, including Black Dog, are scheming to get at the knowledge of Treasure Island hidden in his sea chest. This captain serves as Jim's introduction to the world of pirates and the treasure they oversee.

**Doctor Livesey** – The doctor responsible for taking care of Jim's father is also one of the first to recognize the significance of the **treasure map** that Jim has taken from Billy Bones' possession. He, along with Squire Trelawney, outfits the *Hispaniola* in order to sail after the fortune. The doctor is an intelligent man, loyal to those loyal to him, and he isn't exempt from the fascination with wealth and treasure that motivates so many characters in the book. He thinks of pirates as uniformly low, crude, murderous creatures, and has far less sympathy for them than Jim does, for instance.

**Squire Trelawney** – A good friend of Dr. Livesey, Squire Trelawney is also present at the unveiling of the **treasure map**, and it is he who tells everyone just how frightening and powerful a pirate Captain Flint was known to be. It's the squire who takes on ownership for the *Hispaniola*, and he does feel a great deal of responsibility for the voyage, but he can also be a little too wont to gossip and chatter. This leads Long John Silver (as well as many others at the Bristol port) to hear about the treasure hunt, giving him the chance to manipulate Trelawney such that much of the crew ends up being composed of pirates loyal to Silver.

**Captain Smollett** – The captain hired by Squire Trelawney to head the *Hispaniola*, Smollett is stern and strict. Immediately he is suspicious of the sea voyage, partly because he hasn't been in charge of everything, but partly because he (rightly) senses that some subterfuge is afoot. At first, Jim despises Smollett, who seems bent on ruining his fun, but after Jim learns of Long John Silver's treachery, the captain can suddenly be seen in a much better light. For the rest of the book he is a dependable ally, though by being wounded he loses his ability to guide the enemies of the pirates directly.

**Jim's mother** – Also responsible for the Admiral Benbow inn, especially after her husband's death. Jim's mother has a sharp sense of fairness: when she and Jim discover some of Billy Bones' gold, she insists on counting out exactly what he owed her, not a cent more. While Jim clearly loves his mother, he also realizes that, once she hires an apprentice to help at the inn, she doesn't really need him any more, encouraging him to find his own way in the world.

**Captain Flint** – While this character never appears in person in *Treasure Island*, Captain Flint, a notorious pirate, haunts its pages (as he haunts the fears of many of the characters within it). It was Flint who buried the notorious treasure on the island, before killing all six of the pirates who helped him hide

it—presumably so that they wouldn't be able to go back and find it. Although he is dead by the time of the events, many of the pirates continue to fear him, wondering if he's still able to wreak havoc on those who are alive.

**Captain Flint (parrot)** – Long John Silver named his pet parrot after the notorious pirate captain. Silver seems genuinely fond of the creature, who, according to him, has traveled all around the world with the pirates. In the book, the parrot also serves as a means of alerting Jim and his friends to the presence of Silver, as he constantly squawks, “Pieces of eight!” and other pirate phrases.

**Ben Gunn** – Formerly a member of Captain Flint's crew, Ben Gunn was abandoned on Treasure Island three years before Jim and the *Hispaniola* arrived. It was he who found and hid the treasure, a mystery that Jim discovers only at the end. Gunn is so grateful to have met Jim and found him friendly that he pledges full loyalty to his side.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Jim's father** – The owner of the Admiral Benbow inn, Jim's father is only alive for the first part of the novel: soon after Billy Bones arrives, he falls sick and then dies. In his absence, Jim will spend much of the rest of the novel looking for other male authority figures.

**Pew** – The blind pirate who visits Billy Bones and later plots to get his hands on the **treasure map**; he is trampled underfoot and killed by horsemen after a group of pirates tears apart the Admiral Benbow, looking for clues and gold.

**Mr. Dance** – The tax collector who accidentally tramples and kills Pew, and who accompanies Jim to see the squire and doctor afterward—he has a full-time occupation and so cannot join the sea voyage.

**Black Dog** – A pirate who is the first to accost Billy Bones at the inn in search of the **treasure map**. Bones stabs him and Black Dog flees.

**Mr. Arrow** – Initially the first mate of the *Hispaniola*, Mr. Arrow turns out to be lacking in authority and generally useless aboard; early on in the voyage he drinks too much and falls overboard.

**Abraham Gray** – The carpenter's mate on the *Hispaniola* who remains loyal to the original crew and fights on their side.

**Israel Hands** – The coxswain who is loyal to Long John Silver, though he mainly looks out for himself; he is killed by Jim in the battle for control over the anchored *Hispaniola*.

**Tom** – A pirate shot dead by Long John Silver on Treasure Island when he won't go over to Silver's side, giving Jim proof of Silver's brutality.

**Alan** – Another pirate shot dead by Long John Silver on Treasure Island.

**Tom Redruth** – A gamekeeper and a member of the crew who remains loyal to the captain. He is killed by the pirates.

**Joyce** – A member of the crew who remains loyal to the captain.

**Hunter** – Another member of the crew who remains loyal to the captain.

**O'Brien** – A pirate killed by Israel Hands on the anchored *Hispaniola* deck during a drunken fight, while they're supposed to be keeping watch.

**George Merry** – Another of Silver's pirates, and one of the more cowardly ones—he's terrified of the voice that he assumes to be that of Captain Flint's spirit.

**Job Anderson** – The boatswain and another of Long John Silver's pirates.

**Morgan** – Another of Long John Silver's pirates.

**Dick** – Another of Long John Silver's pirates.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



### FORTUNE AND GREED

The plot of *Treasure Island* is structured around the hunt for a fortune of massive proportions. The existence of this fortune tempts nearly all the characters in the novel—few are exempt from such a dream, from Long John Silver and Captain Smollett to Jim Hawkins himself. Importantly, the story never really challenges this desire. The pirates might be the murderous enemies of the protagonist, but not because they are greedy while the others remain selfless and unconcerned with money. Treasure is instead, throughout the book, considered as an unquestioned good. It's something that can be sought and striven after without this search implying greed or sin.

Still, the idea of treasure functions in another way in the book, too, playing off the double meaning of the word “fortune,” which can mean both “wealth” and “fate.” At one point, Israel Hands declares that the voyage on the *Hispaniola* might always have been cursed with bad fortune—that death and destruction were, perhaps, fated to follow all those on board the ship. The fact that some sailors perish while three mutineers, not to mention the five survivors of the captain's side, survive is due in part to their ingenuity but also to whether they enjoy good fortune or bad.

The treasure chest, rather than making up part of a larger

system of morality in the book, simply lies in wait, ready for the lucky ones who discover it. Similarly, the fortunes of the characters in *Treasure Island* are subject to the whims of treacherous life on the sea.



### FATHER FIGURES AND “BECOMING A MAN”

While *Treasure Island* is certainly an adventure story, it’s also about Jim Hawkins growing up and learning to navigate a dangerous, unfamiliar world. Jim’s father dies near the beginning of the novel, leaving him without a figure who can guide him through this process. As we are reminded midway through the book, Jim is “only a boy” at the time of this tale. Some of the more questionable decisions he makes, like sneaking away from camp late at night, can be understood as part of his process of growing up.

The book doesn’t tend to consider Jim’s mother as able to set an example of “manhood” for Jim—indeed, Robert Louis Stevenson made the active decision to exclude nearly all women from the entire tale, as part of writing an adventure “for boys.” As a result, Jim is left to align himself with a number of different adult men over the course of the novel. At first, he mimics the behavior of others on the *Hispaniola* in considering Captain Smollett a fun-hating, overly strict authority figure; only little by little does he come to respect him as a leader. Dr. Livesey is another male role model for Jim, and certainly the most straightforward in terms of guiding him to make good decisions.

Most surprising, perhaps, among the potential father figures in Jim’s life is Long John Silver. As a pirate and would-be mutineer, Silver is not exactly an obvious role model—and yet Jim, and correspondingly the book’s readers, come to admire the pirate in his courage and ultimately his fondness for Jim. More than anything, Long John Silver is independent, refusing to play by anyone else’s rules, and he is strategic in his decision-making. It is this independence and quickness of spirit that inspires Jim. Growing up, in this book, is not quite a matter of learning what is right and wrong, or learning to be responsible for other people; instead, it’s about becoming a clever, independent person who can be responsible for him- or herself.



### DECEPTION, SECRECY, AND TRUST

From the very beginning of *Treasure Island*, the reader is thrust into a realm of valuable secrets, conniving plots, and betrayal. Jim is remarkably successful at navigating this world of deception. From concealing himself with his mother beside the road while pirates ransack the Admiral Benbow to hiding in an apple barrel and spying on Long John Silver as he spins plans for mutiny, Jim often gains knowledge by spying and overhearing. We are not meant to judge Jim negatively for his ability to deceive: instead,

we admire him for using the logic of deception to his own advantage.

Nevertheless, this fact about the world of the novel does mean that it’s never easy to know exactly whom to trust. Even after learning of the planned mutiny of the *Hispaniola* crew, for instance, Jim hears them cheer the captain’s announcement of drinks for everyone and finds it hard to believe that they actually desire his death. When Long John Silver approaches his enemies’ camp on Treasure Island, holding a Flag of Truce, everyone must still remain suspicious of the brief peace, never knowing if it’s all a ploy.

In order to survive in such a world, a person must always remain one step ahead of his enemy—like Jim on the deck of the *Hispaniola* with Israel Hands, as the latter pretends to work with Jim while really plotting to kill him. Only by using deception himself (rather than being fooled, or even prizing honesty) can Jim enter the world of adults and begin to play by their game.



### COURAGE, ADVENTURE, AND PRAGMATISM

If there’s anything that makes Long John Silver admirable despite his despicable qualities, it’s his courage in the face of danger. Jim notices this aspect of Silver’s character as he watches the pirates threaten to mutiny once again, this time against Silver, who remains calm and cool even though he is outmatched. Jim watches and learns from Silver how to act in a real adventure. Indeed, Jim has sailed with the crew of the *Hispaniola* in search of adventure itself, even if he’s not initially certain what that means—and even if he sheds tears at leaving what he knows in pursuit of the exciting unknown.

The titles of the various sections, including “My Shore Adventure” and “My Sea Adventure,” help to structure the book around this very category. In the majority of these cases, the adventures can be understood as isolated, detachable events, less important in terms of driving the plot forward than as lively episodes in Jim’s life. It is through these events, nonetheless, that he makes the leap from childhood to adulthood. He realizes, fighting Israel Hands, that the pirate games he once played back home in Black Hill Cove have now become reality, and it only is by following the lesson of Long John Silver and becoming courageous himself that he can hope to survive.

In an adventure story like this one, then, what is right and wrong is less important than the courage and resourcefulness with which one responds to danger. It may be Israel Hands who claims not to see what’s “good” about goodness, but Jim too embraces a pragmatic, realistic attitude to challenges. To outwit his enemies requires a survival-first attitude, one that Jim masters gradually over the course of the plot.



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



## THE BLACK SPOT

Jim begins to hear rumors about the black spot from the very beginning of *Treasure Island*, but only gradually does he come to understand what it means. When pirates want to depose their leader, they burn a piece of paper until it's charred with a black spot and then hand it to their captain, usually giving them a period of time until their authority is no longer good. This happens to both Billy Bones and Long John Silver over the course of the novel. While the black spot is thus a real, material object, it also serves to represent the entire logic and system by which the pirates organize their lives. In many ways the pirates are outside society, escaping (as much as they can) the laws and restrictions governing civilized life, but the black spot is their way or ensuring some kind of order and standards in their own, independent realm. At the same time, however, the black spot can also portend disorder and destruction—not only danger for the leader, who is about to lose all authority, but also for all the other pirates, since it signals discontent and resentment and may lead to violence for all.



## RUM

Many of the pirates throughout *Treasure Island* could well be identified as alcoholics in today's terms. At the very least, rum is highly important for them, and some pirates are clearly addicted to it—including Billy Bones, who begs Jim to slip him some even when the doctor forbids it. On *Treasure Island*, meanwhile, many of the pirates stay up late and have drunken revelries organized around drinking rum. The drink is thus associated with the wild lawlessness of piracy. In contrast, Jim, the doctor, and the squire are not just sober but sober-minded, able to outwit the pirates who are weakened by their addiction. Interestingly, Long John Silver is one of the few pirates who seems relatively uninterested in rum, and is certainly unaffected by its power, allowing him to outwit any enemy, including his own men. Jim is only a boy, but he is educated early on into some of the more insidious dangers of adulthood—not just deadly plots and dangers at sea, but also the ways that something like rum that can destroy a person from within. This is a lesson that would have been familiar to many readers in late-nineteenth-century Britain, where Victorian writers often insisted on the immorality of alcohol and alcoholism.



## THE MAP OF TREASURE

While most of the novel is taken up with the voyage to and search for treasure, at the beginning the search is for the map itself that will lead its reader there. Treasure is the guiding motivation for most of the characters in the novel, the one goal that is never questioned or challenged. The map, in turn, represents this search—the quest for an avowed desire that triggers an entire novel's plot. In some ways, this search is straightforward, requiring resources and courage, to be sure, but not exactly complicated. However, the treasure map itself is not exactly clear: it includes several red crosses which are too large to pinpoint a specific place, as well as a set of directions that could be interpreted in a number of ways. The search after one's desires, the treasure map seems to suggest, is more complex than it seems at first, and requires not only persistence but the ability to interpret and respond to various challenges along the way.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *Treasure Island* published in 1999.

## Chapter 1 Quotes

☝ 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!"*

**Related Characters:** Billy Bones ("the captain") (speaker)

**Related Themes:**

**Related Symbols:**

**Page Number:** 2

## Explanation and Analysis

Billy Bones, though we don't yet know his name, has arrived at the Admiral Benbow inn, fascinating Jim and the guests. The captain looks ragged, has black, broken nails, and drags a sea chest behind him. The song that he sings makes up another of the attributes by which Jim, who is relating the tale of *Treasure Island* retrospectively, remembers him. The song reflects a number of important features of pirate life: death and danger, hidden treasure, and the bottles of rum that so many pirates are constantly guzzling down. The song thus foreshadows what Jim and the other characters in the book will doggedly pursue. The song, however, will also

serve to forewarn Jim of the presence of pirates: when he hears it, he knows he must keep a look out for danger.

### Chapter 3 Quotes

☛ Now, if I can't get away nohow, and they tip me the black spot, mind you, it's my old sea-chest they're after; you get on a horse—you can, can't you? Well, then, you get on a horse, and go to—well, yes, I will!—to that eternal Doctor swab, and tell him to pipe all hands—magistrates and sich—and he'll lay'em aboard at the 'Admiral Benbow'—all old Flint's crew, man and boy, all on 'em that's left. I was first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate, and I'm the on'y one as knows the place. He gave it me at Savannah, when he lay a-dying, like as if I was to now, you see.

**Related Characters:** Billy Bones (“the captain”) (speaker), Captain Flint, Doctor Livesey, Jim Hawkins

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 16

#### Explanation and Analysis

This is the book's first explicit mention of the black spot, the name for the blackened piece of paper that a group of pirates hand to their captain in order to replace him with another—a sign of no trust, and a symbol as well of the fickle, ever-changing desires of pirates throughout the novel. Billy Bones had been chosen as one pirate ship's leader at an earlier point, and now he fears that he will be deposed in turn. He suspects, as he tells Jim, that the pirates want what's in his sea chest, and that's why they're replacing him, since he has vowed to keep Captain Flint's secret until his death.

Only later does this passage begin to make more sense, once we learn that there is a treasure map inside the chest, and that Captain Flint is a famous pirate who hid treasure on a far-away island. Billy Bones thus wants Dr. Livesey to get a crew together to hunt down this treasure. But as he's developed a liking for Jim, and because Jim is close by, it's through Jim that the doctor will receive this message—thus implicating Jim for good in the hunt for treasure, and establishing the precedent of considering him like a man rather than a boy.

### Chapter 6 Quotes

☛ The doctor opened the seals with great care, and there fell out the map of an island, with latitude and longitude, soundings, names of hills, and bays and inlets, and every particular that would be needed to bring a ship to a safe anchorage upon its shores. It was about nine miles long and five across, shaped, you might say, like a fat dragon standing up, and had two fine landlocked harbours, and a hill in the centre part marked "The Spy-glass." There were several additions of a later date; but, above all, three crosses of red ink—two on the north part of the island, one in the south-west, and, beside this last, in the same red ink, and in a small, neat hand, very different from the captain's tottery characters, these words: "Bulk of treasure here."

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Doctor Livesey

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 33

#### Explanation and Analysis

Jim knew enough to seize the oil-cloth packet that held this map, but at this point he doesn't understand what the doctor (and most readers) would easily recognize: that the piece of paper is a treasure map, and thus clarifies the captain's rambling message to Jim before he died. The island is carefully and intricately described, and the description exudes an atmosphere of exoticism and excitement. The doctor certainly grasps that this ragged piece of paper is actually enormously valuable—it is none other than directions to a fortune of untold proportions, one that will trigger a treasure hunt and ultimately a battle, for many to death, that will structure the rest of the book.

### Chapter 8 Quotes

☛ Now, to tell you the truth, from the very first mention of Long John in Squire Trelawney's letter, I had taken a fear in my mind that he might prove to be the very one-legged sailor whom I had watched for so long at the old "Benbow." But one look at the man before me was enough. I had seen the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like—a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Pew, Billy Bones (“the captain”), Black Dog, Long John Silver

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 42

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim had been told by the captain to look out for a one-legged man, and that is the first piece of description by which the squire identified Long John Silver, the ship's cook whom the squire hired as part of the sea voyage crew. Nonetheless, while Jim hasn't seen much of the world outside of the Admiral Benbow inn, at this point he has encountered a number of pirates, and understands them to be ragged, drunken, and at times frightening creatures. Judging by his experience, then, there's little possibility that Silver could have anything to do with such men.

Soon enough, of course, Jim will be proven wrong. Silver possesses a remarkable capacity to adopt whatever attitude and to make whatever statements necessary in order to obtain what he wants, and in order to ensure his own survival—no matter how much lying or treachery it takes. In time, Jim will learn to admire such quick wit and attempt to mimic it himself. For the moment, however, Jim has just lost his father and now thinks he finds an ideal male paternal figure in Silver.

## Chapter 10 Quotes

☛☛ All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each, and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind; and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin; the dishes hanging up burnished, and his parrot in a cage in one corner. "Come away, Hawkins," he would say; "come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news."

**Related Characters:** Long John Silver, Jim Hawkins (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 54

### Explanation and Analysis

Once on board the *Hispaniola*, Long John Silver is even more skilled at winning over everyone on board—a skill that even the captain himself does not exactly master. Jim is the youngest person on the ship, and sailing is new to him: Silver's welcoming attitude thus makes him feel at home in a way he would find it difficult otherwise. Jim visits Silver in

his galley as he would visit a friend or, perhaps more properly, a kindly uncle, and the clean, bright galley is another way that Jim feels welcomed. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see Silver's behavior as coldly calculating. He knows exactly what it takes to make others like and admire him, and he does exactly that for just as long as needed, so that he can be sure of their loyalty and obedience later on. He is an excellent actor, so much so that his penchant for deceit will only become evident to Jim by accident.

## Chapter 11 Quotes

☛☛ "Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise is done, why, it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets. Now the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay."

**Related Characters:** Long John Silver (speaker)

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 58

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim has been accustomed to listening to Long John Silver talk like a gentleman. Now that he's hiding in an apple barrel and listening to Silver speak to a number of other crewmen, Silver has slipped effortlessly into their way of talking, using bad grammar and sailors' slang. Here he gives the crew an overview of the strategy for "gentlemen of fortune," that is, pirates, who greedily seek after fortunes only to spend them on rum and women, before going back out to sea.

Silver, though, wants to win the others' confidence by making a case that although he might be familiar with the ways of such "gentlemen," he is different. Silver wants to be thought of as responsible, cool-headed, and rational, rather than hot-headed and lusting after gold. If he succeeds in convincing the others of this, they'll be much more likely to betray the captain's loyalty and join Silver's plans of mutiny. Silver has clearly spent a great deal of time planning and plotting this attack, and he's willing to be patient in order to be certain of success.

☞ “But mark my words here: I’m an easy man—I’m quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it’s serious. Dooty is dooty, mates. I give my vote—death. When I’m in Parlyment, and riding in my coach, I don’t want non of those sea-lawyers in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers. Wait is what I say, but when the time comes, why let her rip!”

**Related Characters:** Long John Silver (speaker)

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 61

### Explanation and Analysis

As John continues to spin his yarns among the crewmen, one of them asks what they are to do with the captain and those loyal to him after they mutiny and take over the ship. Here, Silver shows just how cold and vicious he can be—an attitude that Jim has never yet witnessed, and which he might not have believed if he weren’t hearing it himself. Silver claims that he’s willing to kill them all, just in order to ensure that no one will be able to testify against him or the other pirates at court one day—murder, then, is the safest bet.

This declaration convinces Jim that the man he so admired is in fact a terrifying criminal, causing his respect for Silver to evaporate. Still, it’s impossible to know, after reading the entire novel, how sincere anything Silver says could be. He can indeed be ruthless and calculating—he’ll kill men in cold blood on the island—and he may well have little concern about murdering the whole crew. But it’s also possible that Silver is very aware of the other pirates’ own thirst for blood and taste for violence. In order to ensure their loyalty to him, rather than to the captain, it’s important for him to convince them that he’s just like them, and such a speech could well function to do precisely that.

## Chapter 12 Quotes

☞ “Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you,” added the squire. I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet, by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came. In the meantime, talk as we pleased, there were only seven out of the twenty-six on whom we knew we could rely; and out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were six to their nineteen.

**Related Characters:** Squire Trelawney, Jim Hawkins (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 66

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim has just finished relating to the squire, doctor, and captain what he overheard in the apple-barrel. It’s thanks to him, therefore, that the rest of the crew is aware of the planned mutiny at all, and the squire is obviously grateful for this. For most of the sea voyage, Jim has been grateful in turn for being treated like more of a man than a boy. Now, though, he’s realizing just what that means when graver challenges arise than sailors’ tasks on deck. Jim is learning to plot and plan just like Silver, but here his reasoning only makes him more concerned, since it underlines how disadvantaged his side is against the pirates—especially since, as he now reminds himself, he’s only a boy. Jim is still in the process of learning what it means to have courage in such times of danger.

## Chapter 13 Quotes

☞ Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our lives. If six men were left by Silver, it was plain our party could not take and fight the ship; and since only six were left, it was equally plain that the cabin party had no present need of my assistance. It occurred to me at once to go ashore. In a jiffy I had slipped over the side, and curled up in the fore-sheets of the nearest boat, and almost at the same time she shoved off.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Long John Silver

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 72

### Explanation and Analysis

The ship has neared the shore of Treasure Island, and the captain, aware of the plans of mutiny, has decided to allow only some of the pirates to go ashore, hoping that this will tame their restlessness and give him and the others enough time to hatch a plan of defense. With only six aboard the ship, as Jim now realizes, his side has little chance of defeating the pirates, but nor would the pirates be able to wipe out the captain and crew. As a result, he reasons his way into finding it an excellent idea to leave and explore the island.

Jim often finds ways of justifying his desires for adventure

and exploration by appealing to a more generous cause. Often, indeed, his adventures do prove useful and even life-saving to others. This passage helps clarify, nonetheless, that one of Jim's most salient characteristics is a boyish adventurousness, motivating him to seek out new things and places, and preparing the way for bravery when the stakes later become higher.

## Chapter 14 Quotes

☞ I now felt for the first time the joy of exploration. The isle was uninhabited; my shipmates I had left behind, and nothing lived in front of me but dumb brutes and fowls. I turned hither and thither among the trees. Here and there were flowering plants, unknown to me; here and there I saw snakes, and one raised his head from a ledge of rock and hissed at me with a noise not unlike the spinning of a top.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 74

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim has left the *Hispaniola* and paddle ashore on a small boat, where he is able to explore and wander alone, with none of the daily chores and responsibilities of life as a sailors' hand. That this is the first time Jim has felt the "joy of exploration" reminds us that, until this sea voyage, he (like many young boys who have only read adventure stories, not lived them) had seen very little of the world outside his town. Here Jim is impressed by anything that is new and novel, and he is thrilled rather than afraid—a response that helps make sense of his personality. Even while Jim's love of exploration makes him somewhat more mature than many other children, his carefree joy at being left alone without responsibilities makes him not quite an adult either.

## Chapter 15 Quotes

☞ "I were in Flint's ship when he buried the treasure; he and six along—six strong seamen. They was ashore nigh on a week, and us standing off and on in the old *Walrus*. One fine day up went the signal, and here come Flint by himself in a little boat, and his head done up in a blue scarf. The sun was getting up, and mortal white he looked about the cutwater. But, there he was, you mind, and the six all dead—dead and buried. How he done it, not a man aboard us could make out. It was battle, murder, and sudden death, leastways—him against six. Billy Bones was the mate; Long John, he was quartermaster; and they asked him where the treasure was. 'Ah,' says he, 'you can go ashore, if you like, and stay,' he says; 'but as for the ship, she'll beat up for more, by thunder!' That's what he said."

**Related Characters:** Ben Gunn (speaker), Long John Silver, Billy Bones ("the captain"), Captain Flint

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 82-83

### Explanation and Analysis

During his explorations on the island, Jim has encountered Ben Gunn, a former member of Captain Flint's crew, and Gunn is explaining to Jim how he's been marooned on the island for the past three years. His saga began when Flint decided to bury his treasure, and here Gunn relates the cold-blooded murders of six seamen by the captain. Like Long John Silver, Flint apparently cared little for sparing others, and instead was single-minded in his own desires, ready to sacrifice anything, including other people's lives, so that no one might be able to divulge where the treasure was located. By mentioning Billy Bones and Long John Silver, Gunn underlines once again the close connections between all these pirates and helps Jim understand the sources of the treasure hunt in which he's participating.

## Chapter 20 Quotes

☞ “Now you’ll hear me. If you’ll come up one by one, unarmed, I’ll engage to clap you all in irons, and take you home to a fair trial in England. If you won’t, my name is Alexander Smollett. I’ve flown my sovereign’s colours, and I’ll see you all to Davy Jones. You can’t find the treasure. You can’t sail the ship—there’s not a man among you fit to sail the ship. You can’t fight us—Gray, there, got away from five of you. Your ship’s in irons, Master Silver; you’re on a lee shore, and so you’ll find. I stand here and tell you so; and they’re the last good words you’ll get from me; for, in the name of heaven, I’ll put a bullet in your back when next I meet you. Tramp, my lad. Bundle out of this, please, hand over hand, and double quick.”

**Related Characters:** Captain Smollett (speaker), Long John Silver, Abraham Gray

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 107-108

### Explanation and Analysis

Long John Silver has come to the log-house bearing a flag of truce, and wanting to strike a bargain with Captain Smollett: he has proposed that the captain and his crew allow the pirates to find the treasure, and they’ll win a safe passage back. But here, the captain refuses to be cowed by Silver and, instead, makes a proposal of his own. He shows that he too can play Silver’s game of cold bravery and rational, logical calculation: one by one, he goes through all the reasons that his side, in fact, possesses the advantage.

Just as Jim has learned certain postures and behaviors from Silver, he can now witness the captain’s courageous speech and be inspired by it in turn. Earlier, Jim had found the captain overly strict and authoritarian: now, though, he can see the advantage in the captain’s attitude.

## Chapter 22 Quotes

☞ As for the scheme I had in my head, it was not a bad one in itself. I was to go down the sandy spit that divides the anchorage on the east from the open sea, find the white rock I had observed last evening, and ascertain whether it was there or not that Ben Gunn had hidden his boat; a thing quite worth doing, as I still believe. But as I was certain I should not be allowed to leave the enclosure, my only plan was to take French leave, and slip out when nobody was watching; and that was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. But I was only a boy, and I had made my mind up.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Ben Gunn

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 118-119

### Explanation and Analysis

In the slow, boring waiting periods between battles, Jim has grown restless, not to mention jealous of the doctor, who has slipped out to meet with Ben Gunn. Gunn had told Jim that he’d hidden a small boat under a large white rock by the shore, and this gives Jim the seeds for a plan, even if he doesn’t think about what he’ll do after he finds the boat. As he’s looking back on his younger self, the Jim narrating the story recognizes that this desire to slip out secretly and betray the others was immature and not worthy of a man who had responsibilities to others. But he also implicitly forgives his younger self for his immaturity, suggesting that he was still in the process of growing up. Jim’s actions can also be forgiven because he’s clever enough to hatch ideas that might prove useful to the others—he can think creatively and act courageously in a way that older men sometimes cannot.

## Chapter 25 Quotes

☞ “If that doctor was aboard,” he said, “I’d be right enough in a couple of turns; but I don’t have no manner of luck, you see, and that’s what’s the matter with me.”

**Related Characters:** Israel Hands (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 133

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim has made it aboard the *Hispaniola*, where he sees a wounded Israel Hands, who has just fought with another pirate, O’Brien, and killed him. Although the doctor is the pirate’s enemy, Hands recognizes that he would be grateful for some professional expertise in order to survive.

Here, Hands helps Jim to recognize the significant role that fortune and luck play in determining what happens to people. In the world of the novel, many things are indeed left up to luck, with no overarching reason or fate behind them. People can only identify events as based on luck rather than on anything else (skill or aptitude, for instance) in order to try to understand them. Jim will take up this use of luck and fortune in thinking through his own experiences.

Hands, however, has a particular viewpoint on luck—for him, luck is permanently tied to certain people or objects in a superstitious way, which also helps him to explain himself and the world around him.

“I was greatly elated with my new command, and pleased with bright, sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast. I had now plenty of water and good things to eat, and my conscience, which had smitten me hard for my desertion, was quieted by the great conquest I had made. I should, I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck, and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face. It was a smile that had in it something both of pain and weakness—a haggard, old man’s smile; but there was, besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of treachery in his expression as he craftily watched, and watched, and watched me at my work.”

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Israel Hands

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 134-135

### Explanation and Analysis

Once in a while, Jim is able to evade the dangers of the treasure hunt and battles with the pirates in order to full-heartedly embrace the joy of adventure. This joy is compromised for him when he knows he’s been acting as he shouldn’t, in this case having snuck off without telling anyone—even if he’s won over the ship as a result.

However, even this pure joy of adventure, Jim learns, must be qualified by the constant presence of possible danger. Israel Hands’ smile and eyes are what alert Jim to the possible plans for treachery lurking in the pirate’s mind. It’s impossible for Jim to know exactly what Hands is plotting just by recognizing that Hands is watching him, but he knows enough by now to be vigilant in order to stave off any unpleasant surprise.

## Chapter 26 Quotes

“This here’s an unlucky ship—this *Hispaniola*, Jim,” he went on, blinking. “There’s a power of men been killed in this *Hispaniola*—a sight o’ poor seamen dead and gone since you and me took ship to Bristol. I never seen sich dirty luck, not I.”

**Related Characters:** Israel Hands (speaker), Jim Hawkins

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 136

### Explanation and Analysis

Once again, Hands shares his theories about luck and fortune with Jim, while the two of them are still bound together by their mutual interests in reaching the shore safely. And once again, Hands seems to have a superstitious, even mystical view of luck—luck, in this view, can be tied to something like a ship for good. Hands’ ruminations on this topic help to underline the general drift of the novel towards accounting for certain events not out of a coherent, over-arching and motivating causality but rather simply in terms of the whims of fortune. At the same time, however, Hands’ insistence on the *Hispaniola*’s bad luck implies a forgetting of the very careful plotting, deceit, and betrayal that has led to so many “seamen dead and gone” since the crew embarked. It may be an unlucky ship, but the destruction that has happened on and around it is also the result of specific people’s choices and plans.

“Israel could move about; he was now armed; and if he had been at so much trouble to get rid of me, it was plain that I was meant to be the victim.”

[...]

Yet I felt sure that I could trust him in one point, since in that our interests jumped together, and that was in the disposition of the schooner. We both desired to have her stranded safe enough, in a sheltered place, and so that, when the time came, she could be got off again with as little labour and danger as might be; and until that was done I considered that my life would certainly be spared.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Israel Hands

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 137-138

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim has been suspicious of Hands all this while, and finally, after Hands makes a weak excuse for why he would like Jim to go below deck, Jim takes advantage of the opportunity to spy on Hands and sees him grab a knife and hide it in the folds of his clothing. Jim hasn’t been able to stop Hands from arming himself, but now Hands doesn’t have as much of an advantage of surprise over his enemy as he might

think.

At the same time, Jim reasons his way through his new, dangerous situation as he tries to determine how to respond to Hands's treachery. Jim has learned from figures like Silver and the captain to respond coolly and rationally to such scenarios, and this skill proves useful as he recognizes that, at least for a little while longer, his and Hands's interests are actually the same. Jim looks ahead to the courage he'll certainly have to show at some point, but he also realizes that even deceit has its limits, and that with enough scheming himself he can identify those limits and work with them.

## Chapter 28 Quotes

“I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land, and I heard you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, and Hands, who is now at the bottom of the sea, and told every word you said before the hour was out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her where you'll never see her more, not one of you. The laugh's on my side; I've had the top of the business from the first; I no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me, if you please, or spare me.”

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Israel Hands, Dick, Long John Silver

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 153-154

### Explanation and Analysis

Jim has reached the log-house but, instead of finding his friends there, he has been taken captive by the pirates. Long John Silver has then once again attempted to use all the rhetorical skills at his disposal to trick Jim into joining their side, suggesting that he would be rejected by his friends as punishment for sneaking away. Here, however, Jim objects to Silver's attempts to use and manipulate him. He wants Silver and all the other pirates to know that he's learned from some of the most powerful authority figures on board to hide, scheme, and plot just as well as they can. He may be only a boy, but, as he lists his actions here, he's been central in thwarting the pirates' desires, and so he demands to be treated as that importance suggests. He may not be feeling as brave as what he says—he certainly hopes they'll spare him and not kill him—but the posture of courage is, he's learned, just as important as true courage.

“Understand me, Jim,” he said, returning. “I've a head on my shoulders, I have. I'm on squire's side now. I know you've got that ship safe somewhere. How you done it, I don't know, but safe it is. I guess Hands and O'Brien turned soft. I never much believed in any of *them*. Now you mark me. I ask no questions, nor I won't let others. I know when a game's up, I do: and I know a lad that's staunch. Ah, you that's young—you and me might have done a power of good together!”

**Related Characters:** Long John Silver (speaker), Jim Hawkins

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 156-157

### Explanation and Analysis

Long John Silver was impressed by Jim's show of bravery, which has convinced him even more to abandon the side of the pirates and join the squire's team (although this also may have more to do with his own recognition that the pirates are growing restless under his watch).

Understanding that Jim has hidden the *Hispaniola* somewhere, Silver also recognizes that his best chances for leaving the island lie with Jim and the others, so he's willing to switch sides entirely with no concern for loyalty or trust.

Silver also expresses some regret that he and Jim weren't on the same side for longer. He implies, even, that Jim might have been a successful pirate if Silver had been able to convince him to join forces. In general, however, Silver seems to see some of himself in Jim, from his stubbornness to his ability to trick others to his courage in the face of danger. Indeed, it's been from Silver that Jim has learned many of these traits, even if his view of Silver is now far more compromised than ever before.

## Chapter 30 Quotes

“There is a kind of fate in this,” he observed, when I had done. “Every step, it's you that saves our lives; and do you suppose by any chance that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be a poor return, my boy. You found out the plot; you found Ben Gunn—the best deed that ever you did, or will do, though you live to ninety.”

**Related Characters:** Doctor Livesey (speaker), Ben Gunn, Jim Hawkins

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 168

**Explanation and Analysis**

Just as the pirates had recognized that Jim was crucial in working against them, the doctor now understands more fully that Jim has saved the lives of the captain's loyal men, despite being only a boy. The doctor has a far better developed sense of loyalty than does Long John Silver, for instance: to him, it is only fair that he now work to save Jim's life in turn. In congratulating Jim, the doctor also muses on the workings of luck and fortune in such events, and the ways in which Jim happens to be present at every moment of danger, thus giving them all a greater chance of survival. The doctor is impressed by Jim, just as Jim has in many ways learned how to act and which values to espouse from the doctor.

**Chapter 31 Quotes**

☛ Should the scheme he had now sketched prove feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor, would not hesitate to adopt it. He had still a foot in either camp, and there was no doubt he would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from hanging, which was the best he had to hope on our side.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Long John Silver

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 171

**Explanation and Analysis**

As Jim trudges along towards the treasure as a prisoner of the pirates, he begins to worry about just how earnest Long John Silver was in his commitment to Jim and the captain's crew. Silver has just sketched out a plan to the pirates that would involve killing off each of their enemies and racing away on the *Hispaniola*. On one hand, Jim recognizes that Silver may just be pacifying the pirates, convincing them that he's still on their side—but on the other hand, it's quite possible that Silver is actually speaking in earnest here and would not hesitate to kill Jim and the others if he thought it would end up better for him. With Silver, it's impossible ever to know what he truly thinks or believes. Given his pragmatic attitude, in fact, it may be that Silver refrains from believing anything too deeply—a position that allows him to change positions so quickly and adeptly.

**Chapter 33 Quotes**

☛ In a far corner, only duskily flickered over by the blaze, I beheld great heaps of coin and quadrilaterals built of bars of gold. That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek, and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the *Hispaniola*. How many had it cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Captain Flint

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 185

**Explanation and Analysis**

Finally, after a near-endless search, Jim has laid his hands on the treasure. His first reaction is one of amazement and awe. Soon, though, Jim's thoughts turn to the violence and destruction enacted by the pursuit of such fortune, both that he has witnessed and that has taken place before his time. In the novel, this reality does not exactly make the fortune less worth seeking: indeed, it is a triumph for the captain and his crew to have gotten their hands on it. But it is powerful in part precisely because it is so connected to the fortunes of other people. In surveying such wealth, Jim learns one final lesson about the sacrifices and suffering that can stem from single-minded pursuits in adulthood—pursuits that are no less worth seeking, nonetheless, for it.

**Chapter 34 Quotes**

☛ Of Silver we have heard no more. That formidable seafaring man with one leg has at last gone clean out of my life; but I daresay he met his old negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint. It is to be hoped so, I suppose, for his chances of comfort in another world are very small.

**Related Characters:** Jim Hawkins (speaker), Captain Flint (parrot), Long John Silver

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 190

**Explanation and Analysis**

Long John Silver had escaped from the crew at the port where they docked after leaving Treasure Island. As Jim

thinks back on the pirate, he imagines a life for him in a characteristic mix of fondness and suspicion. Such mixed feelings have characterized Jim's attitude towards the pirate for much of the novel. Initially idolizing Silver, Jim soon realized the depths of his evil character, but then came to understand that his cruelty coexisted with bravery, quick

wit, and remarkable pragmatism. Although Jim has not followed in Silver's footsteps himself, and has no desire to become a pirate like Silver, he recognizes that there's much that Silver has taught him—including the skills of deception and secrecy that help make Silver such a troubling figure.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## CHAPTER 1. THE OLD SEA DOG AT THE “ADMIRAL BENBOW”

The narrator, Jim Hawkins, has been asked by a few men, including Squire Trelawney and Dr. Livesey, to write down all the details of their adventure to Treasure Island, beginning sometime in the eighteenth century (though we’re not given the exact year). Jim begins with the setting of the Admiral Benbow inn, owned by his father, where one day an old seaman comes to lodge.

The man is strong and heavy, with long hair and ragged hands: he breaks out now and then into a “sea song,” ending “Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!” He drinks lots of **rum**, and tells Jim’s father to call him captain, but doesn’t share details about himself, only asking each day if any seamen had come up the road.

Jim is not as afraid of the captain as others: he sees how often the captain drinks himself into a stupor. Other guests are scared by the captain’s stories about hangings, walking the plank, and other sea adventures. Jim’s father worries that the captain will drive away business, but Jim thinks the fascination he inspires in others is good for them.

For months the captain stays, eventually no longer paying: when Jim’s father asks for payment, he roars and scares him away. Jim’s father’s health begins to decline.

One day Dr. Livesey stays for a drink after checking on Jim’s father, and grows annoyed at the captain’s sailor songs about a “dead man’s chest.” He tells the captain that he’ll drink himself to death if he keeps up with the **rum**, and the captain, furious, draws a knife against the doctor. The doctor remains calm, however, and simply tells him to put it away or he’ll be hanged. As a magistrate, he says, he’ll keep his eye out for the captain.

*The narrator of the novel, we learn, is the same person as the protagonist. But the adult Jim Hawkins has the benefit of hindsight, as he is looking back onto his past adventures and will be able to contemplate what he has learned—as well as foreshadow certain key elements that his younger self could not know.*



*The newest guest to the Admiral Benbow inn is somewhat of an enigma: Jim’s father isn’t able to clarify the mysteries of his character to his son, leaving Jim to figure it out on his own.*



*This is Jim’s first realization of both the power and danger of rum, which so many pirates drink to great excess. Jim is beginning to learn that even frightening characters have their weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and he internalizes this knowledge.*



*Jim’s father doesn’t seem to have the same kind of pluck and quick wit as his son—he is a flat character who doesn’t last long.*



*Dr. Livesey knows what Jim has already intuited, that rum can wreak havoc on a person’s health. Dr. Livesey, too, is not as afraid of the captain as other people at the inn are: he is confident in his own expertise. Still, Dr. Livesey seems to pick up on some of the significance of the “dead man’s chest.”*



## CHAPTER 2. BLACK DOG APPEARS AND DISAPPEARS

One cold January morning, Jim is setting the breakfast table when the door opens and a pale man, two fingers on his left hand missing, enters. He beckons Jim over and asks if he's setting the table for his mate, Bill. Jim says he only knows of "the captain" who will be eating there. The man asks a few more questions, then lingers on the threshold, telling Jim about his own son, until he sees the captain approach.

The stranger makes Jim hide with him behind the door, which makes Jim uncomfortable, though he's not sure what to do. When the captain marches in, the man calls out, "Bill," and he spins around as if he's seen a ghost. The captain gasps, "Black Dog!" and Black Dog greets him jovially, referring to their past adventures. The two go into the bar alone.

Though Jim tries his best to eavesdrop, he can't hear the two: finally he hears the captain repeat "No!" followed by the crash of the chair and table. Then Black Dog races out, bleeding, with the captain following him behind and trying to knife him again. But Black Dog escapes and the captain stops, staring after him.

The captain asks Jim for **rum**, but soon falls to the floor, his face ashen. Jim's mother races downstairs and they try to treat him, but soon Dr. Livesey arrives to treat Jim's father, and says the captain has had a stroke just like he warned. He looks at the captain and sees the name "Billy Bones" tattooed on his arm, assuming that's his name. After asking if Jim is afraid of blood, he has the boy help him drain a vein.

Finally the captain opens his eyes and cries out asking where Black Dog is. The doctor begins to lecture him about the dangers of drinking **rum**, and once they get the captain to bed, he tells Jim that another stroke would kill the man.

## CHAPTER 3. THE BLACK SPOT

Jim goes to check on the captain, who tells him how grateful he is for the boy's loyalty, and asks him for just a bit of **rum**, despite what the doctor said. He claims he's lived on rum and one glass won't hurt. Seeing how agitated he's become, Jim says he'll get him just one glass.

*The captain's life and history is growing even stranger, as this new mysterious figure enters. These scenes also remind us that already, before his adventure, Jim possesses a good deal of responsibility as he helps out at the inn, especially with his father's illness.*



*Jim is witness to this scene of reunion, which seems to be much happier on Black Dog's side than on the captain's. It appears that the captain is troubled by more than an addiction to rum, though we still don't know exactly what.*



*Black Dog seems to have given the captain some kind of message or announcement that upsets him. Although the captain is more afraid of Black Dog, he can clearly be violent enough himself.*



*In the captain's fit, it becomes clearer than ever that the rum addiction has only been a sign of a more profound anxiety or affliction with which the captain has been dealing. The doctor now treats Jim like someone much older than his years, and Jim has little choice but to acquiesce.*



*Once again the doctor proves that he has little fear even of pirates, since he sees how their dangerous habits can cause them to harm themselves more than anyone else.*



*The captain has attempted to bring Jim into his confidence, and now he tries to use that relationship to his advantage in order to get what he wants. Jim is not exactly loyal to the captain, but he does feel pity for him.*



The captain drinks the **rum** in one swallow, then tries to get up but falls back down. He tells Jim that Black Dog was after his old sea chest. The captain says that if he ever gets the “**black spot**,” Jim should tell Livesey to find a crew and follow the instructions in the chest: the captain then says he was once first mate of the pirate Flint.

That evening, Jim’s father dies suddenly, so Jim doesn’t have time to think about the captain. The captain never does seem to regain his strength, though his temper grows even more violent, even while he also becomes more absent-minded and lost in thought.

The day after the funeral, a blind man with an eye patch comes up the road, calling out and asking where he is. Jim says he’s at the Admiral Benbow in Black Hill Cove, and leads him inside, before the man asks to lead him to the captain. Jim begins to say that the captain is too weak, but he is soon scared by the man’s cold, cruel-sounding rebuke, and leads him to the captain, whose face grows pale when he sees him.

The man slips something into the captain’s hand and then quite nimbly races out of the house and back down the road. The captain opens his hand, cries, “Ten o’clock,” which is six hours from that moment, and then falls to the floor, dead of apoplexy (internal bleeding from another stroke). Jim bursts into tears, even though he had always found the captain disturbing.

## CHAPTER 4. THE SEA-CHEST

Jim tells his mother everything he knows, and they realize that the blind man and Black Dog probably won’t be willing to settle the captain’s debts to the inn. They’re also both increasingly scared to be alone in the house, so they decide to seek help in a village nearby.

They walk together to the village and arrive by evening, and yet no one agrees to return with them to the Admiral Benbow to help: the name of Captain Flint terrifies many of them, and cowardice, Jim realizes, is infectious. But Jim’s mother makes a speech vowing to get back the money that belongs to her fatherless son, so they’ll open the chest on their own.

Jim and his mother return, still frightened, and enter the parlor with the dead captain still lying there. Jim goes to his knees and sees that the captain was clutching a blackened piece of paper, which he imagines to be the “**black spot**.” It says, “You have till ten tonight.” It’s now six in the evening.

*Although the captain must know that Livesey has little regard for him, here it seems that given Black Dog’s plotting, he’d rather someone else entirely find whatever it is the instructions imply.*



*Jim’s father has not played a major role thus far, but now Jim is left entirely without a male authority figure—and the captain is not exactly a proper replacement.*



*Yet another mysterious character now shows up at the Admiral Benbow—the captain seems to draw all these figures to him, though now we know it may be his sea chest that proves so alluring. Jim has become a bit protective of the captain, almost as if the captain is the child.*



*The captain’s second fit is, as the doctor has warned, fatal to him. Even as he dies, the mysteries surrounding him are only increasing. This is the first of only several times that Jim cries, reminding us that he is only a boy though thrust into adult circumstances.*



*Having refused to pay rent for months, the captain has now left Jim and his mother scrambling to make ends meet themselves, not to mention afraid for their safety and well-being.*



*This event serves as another lesson for Jim—that in life, most people fail to live up to the ideal of courage in the face of danger, especially, as he now realizes, when the terror of piracy is involved. But Jim’s mother loves her son enough to risk such danger.*



*It now makes more sense why the captain shouted “Ten o’clock!” before he died: Jim can imagine that the black spot was what the captain had feared, though he’s still not sure what that means.*



Jim feels through the captain's pockets and finally finds a key hanging around his neck. Jim and his mother then hurry upstairs to where his chest is lying. They open it: there are new clothes inside, some tobacco, a watch, and some compasses. Below all these things, however, is a canvas bag that holds gold, along with an oil-cloth packet. Jim's mother says that she'll only take exactly what she's due, and begins to count out the coins, while Jim takes hold of the packet.

Jim then starts to hear the tapping of a blind man's stick, and he begs his mother to leave, but she's now even more frightened to take more than she's owed. Then they hear a whistle; they jump up, Jim grabbing the oil-cloth bag, and race downstairs and outside back to the village. As they look behind them, they see a stranger carrying a lantern. Jim curses the neighbors' cowardice as his mother faints, and he drags her under a bridge to hide.

## CHAPTER 5. THE LAST OF THE BLIND MAN

Curious even while afraid, Jim peers out from the bank to see seven or eight men racing towards the Admiral Benbow: half of them break down the door while the others wait outside. From inside one shouts that Bill is dead, and then that someone has reached the chest before themselves, though the money's still there. Someone cries that it's the innkeeper's family, and they should turn the place out to find them.

The men tear the inn apart, but then another whistle sounds, and one man says they must leave, though the blind man, Pew, still says it doesn't matter that they've found gold—there's still something that they're lacking. Pew begins to fight with another man: meanwhile, the sound of galloping horses comes from over the hill, and the buccaneers race off, abandoning Pew. Several riders gallop down and one of them accidentally runs over Pew, who is in the road.

Jim springs up and goes to the riders, who have halted, realizing Pew is dead. They carry Jim's mother to the hamlet and revive her. One of the riders, a tax collector named Mr. Dance, accompanies Jim back to the inn, which is in a state of total disarray. Jim tells Dance that he believes the men were after the very packet he has. Together they ride to Dr. Livesey's house to discuss the contents of the bag.

*Some of the mysteries held by the captain while he was alive are now becoming accessible to Jim and his mother. Initially, however, it's not entirely clear why he so zealously guarded this sea chest: though there is some gold inside, it doesn't seem to warrant all the terror and plotting associated with it.*



*The tapping of the blind man's stick suggests to Jim that he is not yet free of the mysterious visitors associated with the captain. Jim's mother, meanwhile, had enough courage to try to seize the gold, but her wits give out on her when she's faced with this overwhelming situation, leaving Jim to act as an adult and manage it.*



*Jim and his mother have left the Admiral Benbow just in time, as they're soon replaced by a group of what must be pirates, who are similarly in pursuit of the sea chest about which the captain (Billy Bones) confided to Jim. Now it's Jim and his mother who have become their targets.*



*The mysterious "something" that is absent from the sea chest seems to be the secret around which the entire plot has turned thus far. Dying in a horrendous accident, Pew is a reminder of the general rule throughout the book that some people simply suffer worse luck, bleaker fortunes, than others.*



*Jim has luckily now been able to find a group of temporary caretakers who can help him look after his mother as well as help him understand the significance of the small packet that he has been clutching all the while, and that the pirates seem to have been after themselves.*



## CHAPTER 6. THE CAPTAIN'S PAPERS

Mr. Dance and Jim arrive to Dr. Livesey's house, where Squire Trelawney, a tall, rough-faced man, is also sitting by the fire. Mr. Dance tells the story, and Jim pulls out the oilskin packet.

*Livesey and Trelawney are more stable authority figures than the captain, though they too are fascinated by the contents of the bag.*



First, though, they eat dinner, and the squire talks about Captain Flint, the most violent and bloodthirsty pirate of all time. Dr. Livesey asks if Flint had money: the squire exclaims that his treasure is well-known. The three then open the bundle. On the first page there are only a few scrawled lines; the next few pages include latitude and longitude and some accounts of debts. The squire exclaims that this must be Billy Bones' account book, including the ships sunk and towns plundered.

*The captain (Billy Bones) had mentioned Captain Flint to Jim: now Jim learns the importance of Flint's name, as well as the connotations it has with treasure. The bundle, though, seems at first only to yield day-to-day, humdrum pirate operations—even if these operations include great acts of destruction and violence.*



The final page is folded and sealed. When Dr. Livesey pries open the seal, a detailed **map** of an island falls out. There's a hill in the center marked "the Spy-glass" and a careful mark signaling where treasure is located, along with directions written on the back.

*What so many figures have up until now been pursuing turns out to be a mere piece of paper, though one that indicates far greater fortune to be found elsewhere.*



Jim isn't sure what all the fuss is about, but the squire and doctor are thrilled. Squire Trelawney cries that they'll draw up a crew, bring Jim on as a cabin-boy, and set out on the next ship available. The doctor, however, is a little concerned, realizing that the other pirates know about the existence of this **map** too—the three of them must not breathe a word to anyone, and must never be alone until they set sail from Bristol.

*For Jim, it's unclear why a simple map causes such glee: he's still processing the wild tales of treasure, shipwreck, and intrigue related to Captain Flint and Billy Bones. Already, it is clear that the treasure hunt will be an intense competition between competing parties.*



## CHAPTER 7. I GO TO BRISTOL

Jim stays at the doctor's residence under the charge of the gamekeeper, Redruth, while preparations are taking place, and spends a long time brooding over the **map** and wondering about this strange island.

*Jim indulges his imagination as he wonders what kind of adventures await him, as he's only known life at the inn so far.*



In March, Jim and Redruth receive a letter from the squire saying that the ship is ready, and that everyone in Bristol has been most helpful once they realized that the crew is in search of treasure. Jim realizes that the doctor won't like this news. The rest of the letter recounts how the squire met a ship-cook by chance, who had been sick but is now yearning to get back to sea. The squire hired him—Long John Silver, who lost a leg in the army—and Silver helped him recruit another six or seven crewmen. He learned that Silver has a bank account that's never been overdrawn, as well as a wife, who is black, which he imagines is also a reason Silver wants to get back to sea.

*The doctor had already warned the other members of the party not to breathe a word of their task to anyone else, since the pirates who ransacked the Admiral Benbow would almost certainly be aware that someone else had gotten their hands on the treasure map. The squire, however, is confident in his choices. Today we read his view of race and of women as prejudiced and unsavory: his assumption would have been a casual stereotype at the time.*



The next morning Redruth and Jim head back to the inn so that Jim can spend one final night with his mother. He finds her cheerful, with an apprentice-boy who has been helping her as Jim used to. At this Jim begins to cry, finally realizing that he is leaving home, not just going out in pursuit of adventures.

*As Jim witnesses his mother and the new apprentice boy who seems to be taking his place, his tears once again signal that he has been thrown into adulthood perhaps before he is quite ready.*



The next morning Jim and Redruth travel to Bristol and walk to the port, where Jim revels in the smell of tar and salt and in all the magnificent ships. The squire meets them and announces that they'll be leaving the next day.

*Nonetheless, by the time he reaches the port, Jim is feeling enamored with his new life and excited to embark on his new adventure, which seems to be already beginning.*



## CHAPTER 8. AT THE SIGN OF THE "SPY-GLASS"

After breakfast, the squire gives Jim a note addressed to Long John Silver and sends him to the tavern, which is full of loud, chatting sailors. Since receiving the squire's letter, Jim has been anxious that the one-legged man would be the one that Billy Bones so feared, but when he sees this clean, pleasant seaman, he thinks he couldn't possibly be a pirate.

*The pirates Jim has seen so far are ragged, drunken, unmannered men, so he believes he can identify them when he sees them. Long John Silver doesn't seem to fall into this category at all: he's more like the squire or doctor, men (and father-figures) Jim trusts.*



As Jim approaches, Long John Silver sees the letter, gives a slight start, and then loudly greets him as the new cabin-boy. Just then a customer rises and hurries outside: Jim catches sight of him and realizes that it's Black Dog, and cries out that someone should catch him. Silver says that name means nothing to him, but that someone should catch him to make him pay his bill. Another sailor runs out and fails to capture him: Silver sternly asks the man, Morgan, if he knows the name of Black Dog, and Morgan says he doesn't.

*While Jim is willing to grant Long John Silver the benefit of the doubt, there are several clues that something more is going on here: Silver seems to want to alert someone else of Jim's presence as the cabin-boy, and immediately afterward Black Dog runs away. Still, Silver acts entirely ignorant of Black Dog, and it's difficult to know how much to trust him yet.*



Silver tells Jim that the man used to come to his tavern with a blind beggar: Jim says he knows this man, Pew, and Silver remembers that was his name. Jim remains suspicious, but soon enough Silver's cheerful attitude, laughing, and joking convince Jim of his innocence.

*Clearly, Long John Silver's strange behavior hasn't escaped Jim, but Jim is also still influenced by how different this man is from the pirates Jim has come to recognize.*



Silver declares that he and Jim will get along well. They walk through the quays together, and Silver explains the ins and outs of seafaring to Jim. When they arrive to the squire's inn, Silver tells the story about Black Dog, and they all agree that there's nothing more to be done.

*Silver has taken Jim under his wing, introducing him to the new world around him—which makes Jim trust him even more. The squire's trust in Silver also makes the latter seem all the more benevolent.*



## CHAPTER 9. POWDER AND ARMS

The group heads towards the ship, the *Hispaniola*, and they greet the mate, Mr. Arrow, as well as a sharp, angry-looking man, Captain Smollett. Smollett declares that he doesn't like the trip, the men, or the officer. In response to Dr. Livesey's questions, he says that everyone seems to know more than he does about where they're going and what they're after.

Smollett has overheard talk of treasure, which doesn't please him, and he is upset at not having a role in choosing the crew. Mr. Arrow is also too familiar with the crew, he adds. He suggests a number of changes he'd like, and the squire agrees cheerfully.

Then Captain Smollett says he's heard that they have a **map** of the island where the treasure chest's location is marked. The squire cries that he never told anyone about this: Jim knows that he is a blabber, and yet in this case still believes him. In any case, it remains a mystery. The doctor declares that Smollett and Silver are, at least, two honest men that the squire found for the crew: the squire, though, declares that the captain is "unsailorly" and "un-English."

Jim is pleased with the ship's new arrangement, following Smollett's requests, which will allow him a berth to himself. As Jim is examining the ship's cannons, though, the captain barks at him to get to work, and Jim decides he agrees with the squire about Smollett.

*While Jim's first impression of Silver was of a good-natured, kindly man, Captain Smollett is immediately introduced as mean-tempered and stubborn. He does, though, have his own suspicions about secrets that are being kept from him.*



*A hunt after treasure, in the book, seems sometimes and to certain characters like a fools' errand. But the squire is undeterred by the captain's doubts.*



*The squire has evidently shared the details of the sea voyage with a number of people in Bristol, but in this case Jim still has the sense that there is more to the story, even if he can't quite put his finger on what there is. The squire does seem to feel as if he's made a mistake with one crew choice.*



*Jim is excited to begin this new adventure, and to him the captain's only role is preventing him from reveling in this new life—the worst kind of parental authority.*



## CHAPTER 10. THE VOYAGE

It's late at night and Jim is tired, but he doesn't want to leave the deck since he's fascinated by everything going on. Long John Silver begins to sing the sailor song ending, "Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!", which recalls to Jim the tunes of Billy Bones. But Jim is soon distracted by the preparations for departure: the anchor is pulled up and they sail off.

Mr. Arrow soon turns out to be a disappointment: he lacks authority and command, and begins to spend most of the day drunk, though no one can figure out where he gets the liquor. One night he disappears overboard, neither shocking nor saddening the others.

*This is another clue that Long John Silver is more closely tied to the pirates Jim met than he thought, or at least tried to convince himself. Nonetheless, these points of similarity are not strong enough to cause Jim to worry.*



*To be a respectable authority figure on a ship, it seems, one must be careful not to lose the respect of the other people on board—a lesson that it appears Mr. Arrow was unable to follow.*



The coxswain Israel Hands begins to take on some of the mate's duties in place of Mr. Arrow. Hands is a confidant of Silver, and shares with Jim that Silver once used to be able to fight four men singlehandedly, before he lost his leg.

Silver himself treats Jim kindly, often welcoming him into the galley with his parrot, whom he's named Captain Flint after the pirate, and who repeats "Pieces of eight!" (a kind of silver coin) over and over. He tells Jim that the parrot has been to Madagascar, Surinam, and Providence: he's too fond of her even to stop her from imitating the swear words she's picked up.

Meanwhile, Captain Smollett and Squire Trelawney fail to hide their mutual dislike. Still, the *Hispaniola* sails well, and most of the crew seems content, especially because they're often given "double grog" (a rum drink), "duff" (a pudding), and there's a barrel of apples for anyone who'd like one. The captain disapproves of spoiling the crew this way, but Jim notes that it was this apple barrel that ended up saving all their lives.

Jim explains that on the last night before reaching land, he decides to grab an apple. He heads to the deck, climbs into the barrel, and is about to climb back out when he hears a few significant words spoken in Silver's voice, so he remains silent and listens.

*Jim begins to learn more about Silver's past and his remarkable courage: his lost leg is a sign not of weakness but rather of his eagerness to fight.*



*This is yet another instance of Silver's close ties to the world of pirates, piracy, and the hunt for treasure. The parrot Captain Flint will become a kind of motif that prepares the way for or signals the presence of Silver, who exerts as much power over the parrot as over other people.*



*Although the squire had hired the captain, the latter is too uptight for the squire's liking, unwilling to "spoil" the cabin crew and, the squire thinks, overly fearful. Here, though, with a bit of foreshadowing, the narrator-Jim suggests that this lack of trust was ultimately misplaced.*



*Jim has a good deal of freedom on the ship, and his ability to roam around is matched by his quick thinking when it seems that he might have something to learn or gain by spying.*



## CHAPTER 11. WHAT I HEARD IN THE APPLE BARREL

Long John Silver is relating the tale of the night he lost his leg and Pew lost his sight, during a sea voyage with Flint as captain. The surgeon that amputated him, one of the pirate Roberts' men, was hanged at Corso Castle. Now, Silver says, much of the good old men are scattered and weakened—before he died, Pew had become a beggar and robber and nearly starved. But Silver tells the youngest hand that he is smart and worth talking to frankly. Jim is appalled that Silver is flattering the boy in exactly the same way Silver had spoken to and flattered himself.

Silver says that "gentlemen of fortune" live roughly and dangerously, but it's worth it when they leave a cruise with hundreds of pounds. He, though, is careful with his money, hiding it to be safe. Now he's given it to his wife: soon she'll sneak off to meet him—but where, he won't tell. While gentlemen of fortune are wary of trusting people, he says, he has a certain way about him.

*Only now does it become entirely clear what Silver's relationship to piracy is: he is a pirate himself, who has traveled on pirate ships with Pew, Flint, and (presumably) Billy Bones. Jim is almost more offended by Silver's obvious manipulation of the young crewman (which makes his kindness towards Jim that much more inauthentic) than by his boasting about evil deeds.*



*Silver seems to enjoy his role as leader and lecturer. While he is a pirate himself, he's careful to distinguish himself from the others—he has managed to be so successful precisely because he is both deceitful and, when he finds it useful, trusting.*



Jim has realized that “gentleman of fortune” means simply a pirate, and that he’s witnessing perhaps the last honest crewman aboard being corrupted by Silver’s flattery. Jim then hears the voice of Israel Hands, who asks how long they’ll lie in wait—he’s sick of Captain Smollett. But Silver tells him not to act until he gives the word—they need someone to steer the course. Instead he’ll finish with “them” on the island: he’s seen too many plots failed because of hurry.

Another hand asks what they’ll do with the others once on the island—abandon them there or kill them—and Silver says he prefers death, if only to prevent the chance of them testifying at trial later. He claims Trelawney for himself. Then he asks the young sailor for an apple. Jim is terrified he’ll be discovered, but immediately Hands suggests they drink **rum** instead.

Jim also hears Hands whisper to Silver that a few crewmen still haven’t been brought over to their side. Suddenly the voice of the look-out cries, “Land ho!”

## CHAPTER 12. COUNCIL OF WAR

In the madness following the announcement of land, Jim slips out of the barrel and reappears on deck, joining the others and listening to Captain Smollett’s orders. The captain asks if anyone’s seen this island before. Silver says that the best place to anchor is on Skeleton Island, which used to be a pirate hold: the main hill is called the Spy-Glass and used to be a lookout. Smollett shows him a map, and Silver’s eyes light up, but Jim notes that he’s disappointed, since this is not the **treasure map**—it’s an exact copy with the exception of the x-marks-the-spot and the instructions.

Jim begins to feel terrified at the sight of Silver, even though he recognizes that Silver didn’t know he overheard him. Jim goes to the doctor and asks him for a private conference with the squire and Smollett. Dr. Livesey agrees, but first the captain draws all the hands on deck and congratulates them: they’ll all be given drinks to celebrate. At the crew’s cheer, Jim can hardly believe that they’re all plotting to kill them.

*By piecing together what Silver is sharing with the other members of the crew, Jim is able to understand the high stakes of the conversation and what it means for him and the others. They have until reaching Treasure Island, he realizes: then the planned mutiny will begin. This passage also introduces the important meaning of “gentleman of fortune”—as pirates, these men of the sea are deeply affected both by fate and chance (“fortune”) and the desire for wealth (the other meaning of “fortune”).*



*Silver’s cruelty and lack of concern for other people is evident here: he’s willing to do everything he can in order to survive, including killing off all those who might stand in the way of his own freedom. Jim, in turn, has enjoyed some good fortune of his own in escaping discovery.*



*Just as Jim is attempting to come to terms with what he’s heard, the moment of arrival (and mutiny) approaches.*



*Again, Jim is clever and discreet enough to evade capture or suspicious glances. Now Silver is becoming increasingly unconcerned with hiding his true character: he tells the captain exactly what he knows from having sailed to Treasure Island on a pirate ship himself. But Jim recognizes that Silver is still missing one crucial element for his plan: the treasure map.*



*While Silver had treated Jim kindly before, now Jim finds him many times more frightening than the much more obviously violent Billy Bones. Watching the crew rejoice, Jim is given another lesson in duplicity and the ability to hide one’s true feelings or intentions.*



Soon Jim is sent for and finds the squire, captain, and doctor in the cabin. He relates what he heard. The squire admits to the captain that he was wrong, and the captain accepts his apology. They all note that Silver is a remarkable man for managing the crew with no signs of mutiny. Captain Smollett says they can't turn back now, and besides, only a few honest crewmen seem to be left—Trelawney's three servants, plus the four of them. The squire tells Jim that he has great faith in him, but Jim is anxious: they are seven against nineteen, and he is only a boy.

*Jim has remained loyal to the men who took him under their wings and brought him aboard the ship. This moment of reconciliation between the captain and squire can take place now that they're facing a common enemy. This sense of adult strength and comradeship, however, is weakened by the squire's insistence that Jim will be able to play an important role in helping: he's again forcing Jim to act as an adult.*



## CHAPTER 13. HOW MY SHORE ADVENTURE BEGAN

The next morning the ship has floated to the south-eastern part of the island, and they can see hills and pine trees with the Spy-glass rising up strangely from among them. The *Hispaniola* lists from side to side in the swell, and Jim, feeling seasick, begins to hate the very thought of Treasure Island.

*The island is described vividly in this passage, reminding us of how eager Jim was to reach such novel, exciting places. That he's unable to enjoy it now speaks to just how much he's learned about the dangers awaiting him.*



Jim decides to help row one of the boats to land, and is made nervous by the way the crew is now grumbling. They row to shore, where there is no breeze and a strange smell of rotting—Dr. Livesey sniffs and declares that fever is certainly present.

*Jim knows that the crew has planned to mutiny once they've arrived at the island, but he doesn't know exactly when or how it will happen, so he's constantly on edge.*



Silver is the only cheerful one, as if he's masking the others' discontent. Jim, Smollett, the squire, and the doctor reconvene in the cabin that evening. Smollett proposes they allow the men to go ashore for the afternoon: if they all go, they can fight; if only some go, Silver will surely pacify them and bring them back aboard without anything coming to a head. They tell Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth (the faithful sailors) of the plan, and then the captain announces to the hands that they're permitted to go ashore.

*It's difficult for Jim and his friends to know how to respond—whether they acknowledge anything to be awry or not, or how long they wait before mounting a defense themselves. They can be confident that at least a few of the sailors aboard the ship will remain loyal to them, and yet for now all they can hope to do is buy some time to make longer-term plans.*



Thirteen men leave, with Silver, while six remain aboard. Jim realizes that with six enemies still aboard, they cannot hope to fight and keep the ship, while since it is only six, he himself isn't needed—so he can go ashore as well. He quickly rows to the beach, jumps out, and races into the island.

*Jim, in turn, is completing his own kinds of calculations. He is motivated both by a genuine desire to help out the captain and his friends, and by an innate sense of curiosity that propels him onto the island.*



## CHAPTER 14. THE FIRST BLOW

Jim crosses a marsh and reaches sandy terrain, with a craggy peak in the distance. Excited, he explores the unknown land with its strange plants and snakes. Once he catches sight of the Spy-glass, he hears a noise, and realizes that the ship-mates must be close. Afraid, he ducks behind a tree, but then decides that he should at least spy on the traitors.

*Jim's carefree feelings of excitement and novelty cede, soon enough, to a new anxiety that he'll be discovered by those he now knows to be his enemies. Still, he is able to make the most out of his decision to sneak ashore by once again spying.*



Jim sneaks towards the voices, and hears Silver saying that he only wants to save their lives. A red-faced crewman, Tom, declares he must do his duty to the captain. Jim hears a loud angry cry, and then a scream: Tom jumps, but Silver stays calm. Tom then realizes that Alan has been killed by Silver: Tom yells at Silver to kill him too if he must, but he defies him. He turns and heads back toward the beach, but Silver cries out and hurls a tree branch at Tom, who falls. Silver leaps upon him and stabs him several times. Jim is close to fainting: the world spins above him, and when he comes to he sees Silver calmly cleaning his knife.

Then Silver whistles: terrified, Jim creeps backward from the thicket and runs as fast as he can until he is entirely lost. In despair, he thinks he'll never make it back to the *Hispaniola*—he'll die here from starvation or be murdered by the pirates. He races towards the foot of a hill with two peaks, then, alarmed again, suddenly stops.

## CHAPTER 15. THE MAN OF THE ISLAND

From the side of the hill, Jim has caught sight of a dark, shaggy figure. He's now cut off on both sides, and Silver suddenly seems less terrifying than this unknown figure. Little by little, the man approaches, and then at once falls to his knees and clasps his hands in front of Jim.

The man says he's named Ben Gunn, and hasn't spoken to a "Christian" in three years. He is ragged, clothed in tatters. He says he's been marooned—a common punishment, Jim knows, for pirates—and has since lived on goats, berries, and oysters. He begs Jim for a piece of cheese, which he's been dreaming about. Jim promises it if he can ever get back aboard.

Ben Gunn tells Jim that he had a pious mother, though you couldn't tell it from his appearance, and from his stay on the island he's learned once again to be pious and believe in Providence. Now, with Jim's arrival, he swears to be good. He also whispers to Jim that he's rich, and that he'll reward Jim for finding him. He asks if Jim is on Flint's ship: Jim decides to tell the truth and says he's not, but some of Flint's crew are aboard—including a man with one leg. At this Ben gasps, but he tells Jim to trust him.

*Jim has stumbled in on a scene of attempted treason: Silver is trying to convince Tom that he should switch sides and support Silver over Captain Smollett. This sailor, though, refuses, even (or especially) once he learns that Silver has already killed another crewman, Alan, for refusing to switch sides. Jim is both appalled by Silver's sudden violence and amazed at Tom's bravery: both are extremes of adult behavior with which he's not yet familiar.*



*For the first time, Jim lacks any kind of a plan, no matter how ill thought-out, and so he really begins to panic—another reminder that he is so much younger than everyone else and trying to deal with new, shocking realities on his own.*



*Caught between two equally frightening figures, Jim finds the unknown to be even more terrifying than the known. But the stranger's gesture of supplication helps to reassure Jim of his harmlessness.*



*"Maroon" is the term for abandoning someone, on an island, for instance, while the rest of the ship continues on its way. Ben Gunn looks wild, but it's clear that he hasn't forgotten many elements of his former life that he once treasured.*



*It appears that Ben Gunn is a kind of reformed pirate, a change explained in this passage by his newfound religious faith. The suggestion about Gunn's wealth passes, for now, unnoticed (or perhaps taken for insane). And like Billy Bones, Gunn too finds Silver terrifying—but now, months later, Jim is finally equipped to understand why.*



Ben tells Jim that he was in Flint's ship when the treasure was buried by him and six seamen. Flint paddled back from shore to the ship, and had murdered all six. Then, three years ago, Ben Gunn was in another ship when they saw Treasure Island: for twelve days the crew looked for the treasure, but never found it—finally, the crew abandoned him, telling him to find Flint's money for himself. Now, Gunn asks Jim to tell the squire that Gunn is more a real gentleman than a "gentleman of fortune," and that most of the time he spent on the island was taken up with an important, confidential matter (though Jim can't understand what he's talking about).

Jim asks how he'll get back aboard: Gunn says he's built a small boat himself and keeps it under the white rock. Suddenly they hear the sound of a cannon, and Jim races towards the anchoring spot, crying out that the fighting has begun.

*Ben Gunn begins to explain his history and situation to Jim. It seems that the hunt for Flint's treasure is not a new one: Gunn too knew about it, and like both the pirates and their enemies, was equally committed to discovering it. Now, though, Gunn seems most eager to convince Jim that he shouldn't face punishment back in England for his former acts. But it seems Gunn still has a few secrets to divulge, even if Jim can't quite understand their implications.*



*While Jim has grown afraid of Silver and the other mutineer pirates, he still wants to be in the thick of the battle, more so than he is interested in learning Gunn's secrets.*



## CHAPTER 16. NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR: HOW THE SHIP WAS ABANDONED

This section is narrated by Dr. Livesey, who describes how he, Smollett, and the squire wondered if they could conquer the six pirates left on the *Hispaniola* and sail off, but there was no wind, and they realized Jim had slipped ashore too. Dr. Livesey decides to go ashore as well with Hunter: as they approach, several of the sailors catch sight of them and stop talking.

Dr. Livesey begins to explore the island and soon, atop a knoll, he comes across a log-house: it was, at some point, set up as a defense and shelter, and with easy access to a spring. Suddenly the doctor hears a death-cry and immediately fears it's Jim. He quickly returns to the shore with Hunter. They paddle back to the ship and begin to load the small boat with arms and food.

Meanwhile Smollett tells Hands, who has stayed aboard, not to make any signal or he'll be killed. Hands sees that Redruth is armed, and sneaks back down below-deck. Dr. Livesey and Joyce, this time, paddle back to shore and begin to stock the log-house with provisions. The doctor leaves Joyce there, confident that their side has the advantage in arms. Once he's back on the ship, the doctor hears the captain order Abraham Gray to leave the ship with him. He gives him thirty seconds, and finally Gray rushes out to deck and declares his loyalty to the captain. They all leave the ship behind.

*As the narration switches to the doctor's point of view, it becomes clearer just how thoughtless Jim's decision to slip away had been. Still, it gives the doctor and another crewman more of an opportunity to develop another plan.*



*Although the island had seemed austere and uninhabited, the presence of Ben Gunn, plus this log-house, proves that others have explored the place before. Now the doctor is preparing for a more drawn-out battle with the pirates.*



*The captain is playing a delicate balancing act: he and Hands both know that they are evenly matched aboard the ship, and now both sides recognize the other to be the enemy, and yet it makes more sense to hold off a real battle until better plans emerge later on. Although the captain's side is still disadvantaged in terms of numbers, Gray shows a last-minute sign of loyalty to the group.*



## CHAPTER 17. NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR: THE JOLLY-BOAT'S LAST TRIP

This time, the small jolly-boat is overloaded, and begins to list to and fro. Terrified, they all keep still, but Dr. Livesey can't manage to keep the boat going straight towards the stockade (the log-house). Smollett tells the doctor they must continue upstream, otherwise they can't know where they'll end up. Looking back to the *Hispaniola*, they realize that the long-gun (a cannon) has been left on the ship with Hands, who's a great shot. Dr. Livesey can hear Hands preparing the gun on deck.

Smollett asks Trelawney to pick off Hands: he shoots, but just at that moment Hands stoops down, and the bullet hits another one of the men, who screams—causing some of the pirates ashore to run out and climb back into their small boats. The captain cries that now they must get ashore however possible. They all duck just as the men on the ship shoot a cannon at them: it misses them, but the boat begins to sink. They all wade ashore, leaving the jolly-boat with all its loaded provisions and powder behind.

*As the captain and his men make their escape, the hastiness of their plan becomes evident, as they've left behind a powerful and lethal weapon that their enemies will now be able to use. On a rickety boat heading ashore, it's difficult to know how they'll avoid any shots fired by Israel Hands.*



*The captain hopes that by killing or wounding Hands immediately, they'll be able to buy some time without them all being killed themselves. But the plan backfires out of pure bad fortune, and, even worse, they've now called attention to themselves. Although the jolly boat was stocked with provisions, such preparation turns out to be mostly useless.*



## CHAPTER 18. NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR: END OF THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHTING

They dash onto the shore and through the trees, in the opposite direction from the pirates. Dr. Livesey hands Gray his knife, and Gray hurls it behind him. Soon they reach the stockade, and enclose themselves within it, just as seven of the pirates come into sight. They halt and Hunter and Joyce shoot, causing one of the pirates to fall—the others flee. They begin to rejoice at the triumph, but suddenly Redruth is struck by a bullet and falls to the ground.

Dr. Livesey says to himself that it's this loyal, stoic servant, the oldest of the men aboard the ship, who is now to die. The squire asks Redruth to forgive him, and he does. He asks for a prayer to be read, and soon after dies. Meanwhile, Smollett has been busying himself with setting up the house, but he's been watching Redruth as well, and when he dies the captain lays a flag over his body in reverence. Still, he tells Dr. Livesey that it'll be easier to survive longer with one less mouth to feed.

They've raised the flag of England, which is proving to be a target for the pirates: bullets keep just missing the log-house. But they all decide that it would not be "seamanly" to take the flag down, so it will stay.

*The battle between the captain's men and the pirates continues, but it is hardly as well-planned an assault as either side might have hoped. Even though the captain's side can claim a small victory, since they've caused the pirates to flee, the loss of Redruth makes for a high cost of victory.*



*The doctor begins to realize just how much their side will have to sacrifice as a result of the pirates' mutiny. The captain's preoccupation with day-to-day tasks might seem cold, even if he does lay the flag over Redruth's body, but it is also the captain's good sense and willingness to think ahead that will prove vital to the team in order to survive.*



*Being "seamanly" is what distinguishes these men (in their minds, at least) from the pirates, who might otherwise seem to be pursuing largely similar interests.*



Smollett asks for volunteers to uncover the stores from the jolly-boat: Gray and Hunter volunteer themselves, but it's useless—the pirates had already found the boat and taken the provisions. The captain begins to log the day's events. Dr. Livesey wonders what may have happened to Jim Hawkins: suddenly, they hear a cry, and he runs to the door to see Jim Hawkins climbing over the stockade.

*As a result of having to flee the small boat, the captain and his men have now doubly lost: they no longer have the provisions, and the pirates can take advantage of them. This is the moment at which Jim had run to the shoreline after meeting Ben Gunn, allowing him to resume the narrative.*



## CHAPTER 19. NARRATIVE RESUMED BY JIM HAWKINS: THE GARRISON IN THE STOCKADE

With the point of view returned to Jim, he explains that Ben Gunn, seeing the flag, had said his friends must be there, though Jim thought it was more likely to be the pirates. But Gunn knows that pirates would prefer to fly the Jolly Roger flag. Gunn tells Jim that he can find him back in the same place: but whoever meets him will have to bear a “white thing” in his hand, and come alone, between noon and six. Gunn has reasons of his own for this proposal, he says.

*Jim has learned a great deal since his time at sea, and assumes treachery and betrayal at every turn: Gunn, though, knows the pirates even better, as he's been one of them for so long. The white thing probably refers to the flag of truce that is supposed to enable a meeting to take place peacefully.*



They hear a cannon ball and each rush off in different directions. Jim moves from one hiding place to another, and finally manages to creep towards the stockade. From a hill, he catches sight of pirates on the beach destroying something with axes (he'll later learn it was the jolly-boat). He also notices a group of pirates who, by the sound of it, have been drinking **rum**. Finally he is able to sneak into the stockade.

*Jim cannot know that the captain's crew was able to escape the ship, or that the boat they used is now useless thanks to the pirates' actions. Jim also registers once again how much the pirates can be weakened by drink, becoming less threatening but perhaps also less predictable.*



After greeting his friends, Jim tells his story and looks around him at the log-house, surrounded by tall firs and oaks. A fine layer of sand enters the house and coats everything within it, so that they're constantly coughing. Gray has a cut on his face and Redruth's body remains unburied. While everyone is tired, each is given a task: to dig a grave, to fetch firewood, and so on. At one point, Dr. Livesey confides in Jim that Smollett is a better man than he is.

*While Jim has been exploring, the others have been setting up for a long stay, and the realities of entrenched battle, with all their small indignities, are starting to become clear. Part of being welcomed as an adult in this group, Jim learns, is participating in the less exciting chores that need to be done.*



Dr. Livesey asks Jim more about Gunn. Jim isn't sure whether he's sane, but the doctor says a man in his condition can't expect to seem entirely sane. He'll bring a piece of Parmesan cheese to Gunn, he decides.

*Dr. Livesey seems to trust Ben Gunn more than Jim did at first, or at least is thinking strategically about the benefits of having Gunn on their side.*



The group buries Redruth in the sand, before eating pork and drinking brandy for dinner. They decide that their best hope is to battle the pirates whenever they can, until they either surrender or run off with the *Hispaniola*. All night, they hear the pirates roaring and singing under the influence of **rum**. But early in the morning, they hear a voice crying, “Flag of truce!”—it's Silver himself.

*Once again it becomes evident that the pirates may be a formidable force, but they do have a great weakness in their addiction to rum (even though the captain doesn't seem to want to explicitly take advantage of this weakness). Silver, of course, remains apart from such revelry.*



## CHAPTER 20. SILVER'S EMBASSY

Outside the stockade it's just Silver and another pirate. Smollett tells the others to stay inside, as it could well be a trick, and to keep a look out on all sides. Silver's servant says that "Cap'n Silver" has come to make terms. Smollett says that he'll allow Silver in—any treachery will be on the other side—but Silver laughs and says the captain is a gentleman.

Silver limps up the knoll to the log-house. When Silver asks why he won't be let inside, Smollett declares that he can either be an honest ship-cook or "Cap'n Silver," a mutineer and pirate, in which case he's worth nothing. Unfazed, Silver greets Jim cheerfully. He acknowledges that they made some good shots the night before, but that it can't happen again. Smollett doesn't let on how confused he is, though Jim suspects that Gunn had snuck up on the pirates and picked a few of them off.

Silver says that all the pirates want is the treasure, while Smollett and the others presumably want to save their lives. He demands that the captain give him the **treasure map**. The captain coolly refuses. They both light a pipe and silently sit, smoking. Silver again asks for the chart: if he gets it, they can either come aboard with the pirates and be left at another port, or they can stay on the island with provisions.

Smollett, in turn, says that if the pirates surrender unarmed, he'll take them back to England for a fair trial: if not, he'll see them "to Davy Jones"—that is, kill them. They can't find the treasure and there's none among them who can sail the ship. The next time he sees Silver, the captain concludes, he'll shoot him straightaway. Suddenly furious, Silver roars for someone to help him up: no one does, so he crawls to the porch and hoists himself up, then spits on the ground, saying that's what he thinks of them. In an hour, he'll be ready for battle, he says, and limps off.

## CHAPTER 21. THE ATTACK

When Smollett turns back inside, only Gray is still at his post, and while he's pleased with Gray, he's furious with the others. The captain is silent for a while, and then says that within an hour they'll be bombarded: they're outnumbered, but are better located defensively.

*The captain is well aware that Silver's protestations of truce and fairness don't mean that much, unless it's in Silver's own best interests to maintain the truce. Silver has little more than scorn for the captain's own sense of dignity and fairness.*



*Smollett creates an either-or choice for Silver: just as Silver has been trying to convince others to join his side, Smollett declares that Silver must choose one side or the other, rather than constantly play each group off each other. Silver is, as ever, able to adapt easily to any situation, and remains unaffected by others' suspicions of him.*



*Silver's suggestion is one possibility, which seems rather attractive, and yet it depends on the captain putting his trust in Silver and the other pirates—something that he's unwilling to do. Instead, each man continues to study the other, as if to predict the other's mind and moves.*



*Now the captain proposes his own plan, which Silver can take or leave. But the captain is eager to emphasize that Silver is at a disadvantage here. Ultimately, the captain refuses any kind of treaty or compromise: he will fight the pirates for the treasure. Seeing that his scheming has come to nothing, Silver immediately sheds all pretense of friendliness.*



*All the others, including Jim, have snuck over to listen to the captain and Silver, failing to remain at watch. That task will become increasingly important, as their main advantage is a defensive one.*



Captain Smollett tells Jim to eat his breakfast, and everyone to have some brandy. He directs each person to a specific task for the battle. As the sun rises, it becomes almost unbearably hot. An hour passes. Suddenly they hear a whistle, suggesting the attack is about to begin. Then several bullets strike the log-house, though none of them enter—Joyce returns a few shots, and then silence returns.

Suddenly, with a roar, a group of pirates races out of the woods and towards the stockade. They hurl themselves over the fence, and as the squire and Gray fire, three of them fall (though one soon rises and flees). Then they see Job Anderson, the boatswain, who has snuck up to the entrance. He and two others race into the log-house, and cries of confusion ring out. Smollett cries that they should go out and fight in the open. Jim grabs a knife, receives a cut across the knuckles, and races outside, seeing the doctor pursuing a pirate down the hill and managing to stab him.

Jim is suddenly face to face with Anderson, who roars and raises his knife: Jim leaps to the side, but slips and rolls down the hill. By the time he stands up, it's only been a moment, but his side has won victory: Gray had stabbed Anderson, and two others had been struck down too. Only one remains alive, and he clammers up and flees, managing to escape. The doctor, Gray, and Jim race back inside.

Hunter is motionless, stunned; Joyce is dead, shot through the head; and Smollett is wounded. But the captain rejoices to hear that five of the enemy have been cut down; the new odds are four to nine, having so recently been seven to nineteen.

## CHAPTER 22. HOW MY SEA ADVENTURE BEGAN

That night, both sides rest. One more of the pirates, who had been wounded, dies, leaving only eight left. Captain Smollett is also wounded: his wounds are serious but not fatal, requiring weeks of rest. Dr. Livesey patches up Jim's cut across the knuckles.

After dinner Dr. Livesey slips out and sets off through the trees. Gray is shocked and tells Jim he must be mad, but Jim suggests he's going to see Ben Gunn. Jim begins to envy the doctor, who's probably walking in the cool woods while he's stuck in the sweltering log-house doing mindless errands.

*The captain takes on the role of directing others on land just as he did aboard the ship. Jim is still growing accustomed to what battles are like—they involve a good amount of boredom and sitting still, but can be interrupted suddenly by terrifying action.*



*Here the first head-to-head battle between the captain's men and the pirates begins. The first onslaught of pirates seems to fail at overcoming the log-house, but given the pirates' advantage in numbers, they're able to mount various assaults at once. Even while Jim participates in the fight, he also remains acutely aware of the need to watch others, like the doctor, and learn from their tactics.*



*Jim's first face-to-face fight allows him to use his advantages of being young, small, and nimble, such that he can quickly slip out of the way of danger—here, he's able to avoid Anderson long enough for Gray to make use of the boatswain's momentary weakness and kill him.*



*Jim takes stock of the losses on his side. The captain, again, can seem coldly calculating, with little regard for suffering, but it's all in pursuit of survival for all of them.*



*During this night of rest, both sides recover from battle, and the captain's group realizes that Smollett will be unable to lead the party as directly as he once did.*



*Jim has been able to sneak out and explore in the past, and now he resents having to perform the boring, day-to-day adult tasks that nonetheless have to be done, while the doctor has his own adventure.*



The older Jim narrating the tale acknowledges that his next moves are those of a foolish young boy: he plans to go find the white rock mentioned by Ben Gunn and the boat hidden beside it—a worthy goal itself, but not worth slipping out in secrecy (since Jim worries he won't be allowed if he asks permission). Still, he's only a boy, though a clever one: he fills his pockets with biscuits to eat, and sneaks out the next afternoon while no one is looking.

Jim heads for the east coast of the island and finally reaches the sea, beginning to stroll beside the surf and enjoying the sea breeze. He catches sight of the *Hispaniola* with the Jolly Roger flag waving, and Silver and some of his men prowling the decks. Suddenly he hears horrible screaming: he is frightened, thinking of Flint, but then sees Silver's parrot, who's capable of mimicking anything.

The sun begins to set, and Jim continues towards the white rock, crawling on all fours through the brush so as not to be seen. Almost at nightfall, he finds it, and discovers Gunn's homemade boat of wood and goat-skin. It's so small that it looks like it would barely fit a grown man. Jim thinks of the coracle boats of ancient Britain, and thinks this is the worst version of the coracle he's seen—though it is light and portable.

Then it crosses Jim's mind to slip out at night and cut the *Hispaniola* adrift so that she runs ashore, preventing the pirates from escaping to sea after their defeat. He sits and waits for full darkness and eats his biscuits. Finally, when all is black, he gropes his way out of the hollow, catching sight of two points of light: one a fire on shore where the pirates are drinking and carousing, the other coming from the ship—Jim's target.

## CHAPTER 23. THE EBB-TIDE RUNS

Jim paddles the lop-sided but buoyant coracle towards the ocean, until the *Hispaniola* rises up in front of him. He manages to grab the hawser (mooring cable), but realizes that if he cuts the ship from the anchor, he and the coracle would be knocked right over by the ship. He slowly cuts one strand at a time and then waits to sever the final strands until a breeze will point the ship in the opposite direction than himself.

*This section reminds us that Jim is recording the tale of Treasure Island and looking back on the past, realizing all that this adventure made him learn—such that he's able to recognize moments at which he still acted like a boy, not a man (even if the younger Jim does have a natural instinct for survival).*



*Now Jim has followed the doctor, at least in spirit, and once again feels free and adventurous. He also uses this opportunity to learn more about what's happened elsewhere on the island while they've been at battle: the pirates have taken control of the *Hispaniola*.*



*A coracle is a small, round wicker boat associated with Scotland, but here it is especially useful to Jim given that it seems almost to be made for a young boy rather than a man. Rickety and not exactly seaworthy, the boat still gives Jim a chance to explore further and with more independence.*



*While the captain has, in the past, developed his own plans and given orders to the others, Jim now enjoys concocting his own plots, enabling him to potentially achieve glory while also being able to have an independent adventure. He paddles straight towards the danger, rather than away from it.*



*Jim has learned a great deal about how ships function and is aware of how powerful and dangerous they can be, especially when compared to the small, rickety boat where he finds himself. He's also developed enough expertise to know how to manage the ship's ropes and pulleys.*



Jim hears the voices of Israel Hands and another pirate, both drunk and apparently angry and yelling at each other. He can also hear someone singing a sailor's song on shore. Finally, a breeze comes and Jim cuts the final strands. The ship begins to spin around, following a current, while Jim struggles to get clear of it. He sees a small cord trailing overboard, and hardly knowing what he's doing, he catches hold of it and raises himself to peer through the cabin window. He sees Hands and his companion wrestling each other—helping him understand why they're not alarmed at the ship now moving briskly.

Jim drops back to his seat and hears the now-familiar sailor's song again from the shore. Suddenly the coracle lurches to the side, and the *Hispaniola* begins to tilt as well: it starts spinning not towards the shore but to the open sea. The two pirates aboard, by their shouts, seem to have realized what's happened. Meanwhile Jim lies down flat in his boat, certain he's about to die. But nothing happens, and as he rocks back and forth he grows weary, finally falling asleep.

## CHAPTER 24. THE CRUISE OF THE CORACLE

There's daylight when Jim awakens and the boat has drifted to the southwest part of Treasure Island. Jim wonders if he should paddle ashore, but rocks crowd the shoreline and he sees it's too dangerous—plus there are huge slimy monsters atop them (although later he'll learn that they're just sea lions). He decides to steer the coracle towards the northward current, to what Silver had told him is the Cape of the Woods.

Jim begins to float towards shore on his coracle, though every time he tries to paddle the boat rocks violently. He begins to be frightened that he'll never reach land, but decides to lie on his elbows, only giving one weak stroke every once in awhile to keep the bow pointed towards shore. Then he catches sight of the *Hispaniola* straight ahead of him—he realizes he'll be taken, but is so thirsty he almost doesn't care.

Jim assumes the ship, directed northwest, is heading back towards the anchorage, but then it halts against the wind: Jim assumes the sailors must still be drunk, but then realizes no one is steering. He uses all his strength to paddle after the ship. As he approaches, the breeze falls and the ship stands still. Then it picks up again, but the *Hispaniola's* side swings towards Jim: he leaps to his feat, catches the jib-boom (the part of the spar reaching beyond the ship), and hangs from it, the coracle sinking below him.

*Having observed the pirates' drunken antics for so long, Jim now can predict to a certain extent how they will act whenever rum is involved. Here, Jim simultaneously listens to the pirates and pays attention to the wind in order to find the best, safest way onto the ship possible—acting with exceptional resourcefulness yet again. Everyone is well aware that no one outside the captain's team has the ability to steer the ship, and now that fact is clearer than ever.*



*Although Israel Hands and his mate are both too drunk and too unfamiliar with the workings of a ship to pay close attention, even they can sense that something is wrong. Here, finally, Jim's courage escapes him, and he can think of nothing better to do than simply wait out the rocking until the situation improves.*



*Now Jim is both too wary of the danger to board the ship, and well aware that it would be impossible to paddle ashore now without the risk of bashing himself against the rocks. The appearance of the sea lions reminds us that Jim has learned a great deal in some ways, but there's still much he hasn't seen in the world.*



*Now the coracle seems almost as erratic as the ship, and requires Jim's constant vigilance in order to make sure that he survives. Once again, however, his plans must change as a result of changing circumstances, and he must deal with the reality that he's running right into his enemies.*



*Since Jim can no longer avoid the ship, he decides to position himself as best he can in order to ensure he has the best chance for survival aboard it. His ability to notice details and strategize comes in handy here, as he is able to recognize that no one's steering, and as he can use the specific parts of the ship to his advantage in navigating aboard—again displaying the resourcefulness of a more typical adventure "hero."*



## CHAPTER 25. I STRIKE THE JOLLY ROGER

Jim heaves himself onto the bowsprit, the spar jutting out from the deck, and crawls along it until tumbling onto the deck. He sees no one. The ship heaves to the side: suddenly Jim sees Hands and his mate sprawled on the after-deck. The ship bucks to and fro, causing foam to spray over the bulwark. Jim sees blood around them and is sure they've killed each other.

Then Israel Hands moans and shifts. Jim walks over and calls out to him: Hands, in great pain, asks for brandy. Jim slips downstairs, where the cabin is in a state of disarray, empty bottles clattering over the floor. In the cellar all the barrels are gone, as are most of the rum bottles. He finds one, however, as well as some biscuit, fruits, raisins, and cheese. Jim returns to deck and eats while Hands downs the brandy. Jim tells Hands that he's come to take possession of the ship, and Hands can now consider him captain.

After eating, Jim cuts down the Jolly Roger and throws it overboard. Hands watches Jim slyly and quietly, then says he imagines Jim wants to get to shore. Hands nods towards his dead mate, O'Brien, and says now there's no one to sail the ship. If Jim gives Hands food, drink, and a scarf to tie his wound, he'll instruct Jim on how to sail it. Jim says he wants to go to North Inlet, not the anchorage from before. They strike a bargain, and soon Jim is steering the *Hispaniola* along the coast. He gives Hands one of his mother's handkerchiefs, and after Hands binds it up he begins to perk up and sit up straighter.

Jim is delighted that the weather and wind are good, and is fascinated by the new views of the coast. He no longer feels as guilty for having crept out in secrecy, since he's conquered the ship. Still, Hands continues to watch him about the deck, treachery in his eyes.

## CHAPTER 26. ISRAEL HANDS

Soon the wind turns, so Jim and Israel Hands stop the ship and rest. Hands asks Jim to push O'Brien overboard, rather than keep him on deck, but Jim refuses. Hands says that the *Hispaniola* is an unlucky ship—many men have been killed on it. He asks if Jim thinks a dead man can come alive again: Jim says the body is dead, but not the spirit, and Hands says he hasn't seen spirits do much danger.

*Once again, Jim is able to take advantage of the fact that the pirates are weakened by drink—and here, too, by the fight that has resulted from their drunkenness. At first, it seems that the combination has proved fatal to both of them.*



*Jim must balance his suspicions of Israel Hands with the knowledge that Hands might prove useful in navigating the ship into safety. Jim is faced, below deck, with concrete physical evidence of the pirates' revelry, which makes Hands seem much less threatening, and emboldens Jim to take on the position of captain—truly assuming an adult leadership role.*



*Ever since seeing the Jolly Roger flying from the shore, part of Jim's adventure has included the goal of getting rid of that flag, and thus reasserting the supremacy of the captain's crew. Now Israel Hands and Jim are intent on mutually benefiting from each other as long as they can, even while they're both aware that they're enemies and ultimately working towards opposite ends.*



*Jim's contentment at finally succeeding in having his own, independent adventure is beginning to be compromised by the deceit he now knows to recognize in pirates.*



*Throughout the book, it has become evident that some characters simply have better or worse fortune than others: here Hands further elaborates on this reality, though with a superstitious twist, given that it seems Hands is trying to decide how fearful to be of spirits.*



Suddenly Hands asks if Jim will get him some wine, since the brandy is too strong. Jim is suspicious of this excuse, especially as Hands keeps watching Jim closely. But he decides to hide his own suspicions, and cheerfully agrees. He slips downstairs, runs along the gallery, and peeks out of the fore. He then sees Hands rise from his hands and knees and painfully heave himself across the deck, where he pulls a bloodstained knife out of a coil of rope. He hides it in his jacket and crawls back.

Now knowing Hands is armed, Jim still is certain that the two of them both desire to beach the *Hispaniola* safely—only until then will his life be spared. Jim heads back to deck, where Hands asks him for some tobacco. Jim says if he were Hands, he's spend more time praying: Hands has betrayed the crew, has killed men, and has lived sinfully. But Hands answers solemnly that he has never yet seen any good come from goodness: whoever strikes first wins. Changing his tone, he says that the wind has now shifted.

With Hands directing, Jim steers around the banks and towards the shores of North Inlet. Hands points out a beach to Jim, and explains how he might get the *Hispaniola* back to sea again after docking her there. He issues Jim his directing commands, and they have almost reached the shore when suddenly Jim feels dread and turns around—Hands has leapt towards Jim with the knife in his hand.

Hands throws himself forward and Jim jumps sideways onto the open deck. He draws his pistol and shoots, but sea water has made the gun useless. He curses himself for not checking and reloading his weapons, and marvels at how fast Hands can move despite his injuries. He realizes it would be fatal to retreat—that would box him in at the corner of the deck—so he stands and waits, ready to dodge. Hands stops too, then feints, and Jim moves correspondingly. It's like the games he used to play at Black Hill Cove, Jim thinks, though never with his heart beating so hard.

Suddenly the *Hispaniola* rams into the sand and the deck tilts to 45 degrees. Jim and Hands both roll down, Hands slamming into O'Brien's body. Jim jumps into the mizzen shrouds (the rigging holding up the mast) and dodges Hands's knife hurled towards him. Jim quickly recharges his pistol, while Hands painfully pulls himself into the shrouds and begins to climb. Pistol in hand, Jim orders Hands to halt. The coxswain stops and Jim laughs out loud: Hands says that he's had no luck—the ship's lurch did him in. Jim continues to smile, but Hands once again hurls another knife into the air, pinning Jim's shoulder to the mast. Almost unconsciously, he shoots, and his pistol falls into the sea, along with Hands, head first.

*By now, Jim has learned enough about treachery and duplicity to know not to trust Hands, especially since he also is well aware of the pirate's penchant for rum over wine. Jim's suspicion proves to be well-founded, since his own quick thinking will allow him to be able to stave off what Hands thinks is the advantage of surprise.*



*While there's little Jim can do right away in response to Hands' treachery other than engage him directly in battle, he is able to strategize given his knowledge of the goal they both share as well as where their aims diverge. Here, again, Hands speaks for the pirates in general, but also many of the other characters, when he chooses pragmatism over goodness.*



*Jim is able to enlist Hands as his right-hand man in a kind of unofficial truce, allowing them both to survive as long as possible. Only when land is in sight does the pirate presumably decide that he's now able to survive on his own, and can try to take out Jim.*



*Although Jim has had time to prepare for this moment, he only now realizes that he's not quite as prepared as he could have been, having failed to check to ensure that his pistol was working. Still, Jim once again excels at quick thinking, learning from the games he played as a boy, even though now the stakes are much higher and his skills are literally a matter of life and death.*



*As Jim and Hands have been fighting, the ship has continued its forward march to the shore. Luck is now on Jim's side, as the interruption allows him to escape immediate danger and use the advantage of his small size to clamber up and away from Hands. Jim's newfound confidence turns out to be slightly misplaced, but only slightly, as he is able to kill Hands in defense—the first time he's killed a man, and a huge event in his young life, although in the immediate moment it mostly means that his own life has been spared.*



## CHAPTER 27. "PIECES OF EIGHT"

Hands bobs up to the surface once, then sinks again, not to reappear. Once Jim is certain he's dead, he begins to feel faint and frightened, sensing his own blood, and fearing his own fall into the water. He clings to the mast and shuts his eyes until he regains his composure. He can't manage to pull out the knife, but as he shudders he frees himself from the knife, which had mostly pinned his clothing. He eases out of his shirt, and lowers himself to the deck.

It turns out that Jim's wound is not too deep, though painful. Jim sees O'Brien sprawled against the bulwarks. His latest adventure has rid him of his fear of the dead, so he grabs O'Brien and throws him overboard, where he lies next to Hands on the sea floor. Then Jim cuts the halyards (ropes) so that part of the mainsail is no longer underwater: loose canvas floats down to lie across the surface, but Jim can't tug the downhill rope to move the mast any more, so he leaves it, trusting the *Hispaniola* to luck.

A chill begins to sweep the shore, and Jim looks about him, wading ashore and congratulating himself on rescuing the ship for his men (despite his sneaky behavior). He hopes that even Captain Smollett might forgive him. In high spirits, he sets off for the log-house, passing by where he had met Ben Gunn. Suddenly the light of a moonbeam reaches him, lighting up the Spy-glass hill, and Jim hurries on, the moon climbing higher and higher.

Finally Jim reaches the borders of the clearing: it's entirely silent. Beginning to fear that something has gone wrong, he crawls towards the house, and at the sound of snoring is relieved. He reaches the door, walks inside, and hits the leg of a man sleeping. Suddenly he hears a shrill voice shouting "Pieces of eight!"—it's Silver's parrot. With no time to run, Jim backs into a man, who grabs him and holds him while Silver has one of his men fetch a torch.

## CHAPTER 28. IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

With the light, Jim can see that the pirates have seized the stockade and all its provisions—he thinks his friends must all be dead. There are only six pirates left here, however: five have sprung up to see Jim, while one looks severely wounded. Silver looks paler and sterner than usual, but casually remarks that it's Jim Hawkins—what a pleasant surprise, he says.

*Jim has used all the quick wits and courage at his disposal during the fight with the pirate, but only now, with the immediate danger behind him, does he fully recognize the major stakes of what he's done. Still, he continues to be forced to find a way out of his predicaments alone, without the captain or other adults.*



*Earlier, Jim hadn't wanted to throw the body overboard, and Hands was too superstitious to agree to do so. This latest adventure has made Jim more mature in that he understands that living beings are far more potentially dangerous than dead bodies. He's also learned that in some affairs, it's luck more than skill or ability that will determine an outcome.*



*As Jim reaches the shore, he remembers that he was never given permission to leave the camp, and he may well face consequences or at least disapproval—but he hopes that the rescue of the *Hispaniola* might be enough to make up for his immature behavior, and he's confident enough in this possibility to renew his spirits.*



*Although Jim has learned not to be overly trusting, here his guard slips, as he assumes he is about to find himself safely back with his friends. Then, however, Captain Flint (the parrot) once again signals the presence of the fearful pirate, and it turns out that Jim is the unlucky one this time.*



*Faced with a new and newly dangerous situation, Jim takes stock of his surroundings, inferring from certain points of evidence that the pirates must be victorious. Silver, in turn, maintains as calm a façade as ever.*



Jim doesn't respond but only stares Silver in the face. He's always liked Jim, Silver says, as he tells him that the doctor has cursed Jim as a traitor, so he can't go back to his friends—he'll have to join the pirates. Jim believes that his friends are angry, but is relieved to know they're safe. Silver asks Jim what he thinks of the proposal, though he says Jim can take his time: no one will hurry him.

Emboldened by this, Jim demands to know how they've seized the house and where his friends are. Silver tells Jim that Dr. Livesey had met him the day before with a flag of truce, pointing out that the ship was gone, and it was time to bargain. This is the result: the pirates have the stores, brandy, log-house, and firewood. He doesn't know where the other side has gone. But Dr. Livesey hadn't included Jim in the bargain, Silver says—he no longer cared about him.

Jim declares that he cares little what might happen to him—he's seen too many die as a result of Silver's mischief. But he says that Silver is not exactly in a state of victory: he's lost the ship, treasure, and many of his men. Jim says it was he himself who hid in the apple barrel that night and informed the others of Silver's treachery; he cut the cable and killed the men aboard the *Hispaniola*; and he steered the ship into hiding. Now he's the one who can laugh—he has no more fear of Silver, who can kill him or spare him. He concludes by saying simply that if he's spared, he'll try his best to save the pirates in court as a witness.

The men are staring at Jim as he asks Silver to let the doctor know how he died, should it come to that. Silver agrees in a strange tone. Morgan, one of the pirates, remembers that it was Jim who recognized Black Dog, and who found Billy Bones's **map**: Jim has thwarted them at every turn. Morgan springs up and draws his knife. Silver orders him to stop, forbidding him to take another step, or he'll kill Morgan himself.

Morgan pauses, but the others murmur restlessly that Morgan is in the right. Silver bends forward, threatening them to have it out with Morgan, despite his disabled state. No one moves, so Silver says they must obey. He's never seen a better boy than Jim, he says—Jim is more a man than any of these pirates, and he forbids anyone from hurting him.

*Jim's former admiration for Silver has turned into defiant loathing. Silver, though, has spent enough time attempting to charm Jim into believing in his goodness that he's still confident Jim might turn to his side.*



*Jim is not exactly at an advantage here, but given Silver's friendly façade, he thinks he can use this act to his own advantage in gaining information about his friends. Silver, in turn, continues trying to convince Jim that the others consider him as a traitor, so there's no point in returning to them.*



*Jim, by now, recognizes Silver's conniving manipulations for what they are, and refuses to be affected by them. He wants to make it clear that he's not a naïve child, but rather a key player in the entire fight between the captain's men and the pirates. Still, his defiant speech ends with a small olive branch: Jim is calculating that this possibility may just be enough to make the pirates consider saving his own life.*



*Thanks to Jim's revelations about his own actions, the pirates now realize that, indeed, though just a boy, Jim has been able to manipulate them more than they ever recognized. Silver, too, seems to understand this, even though his reaction is entirely opposed to Morgan's.*



*This is the first moment at which we witness rumblings of discontent among the pirates regarding their new pledged captain. While Silver recognizes that Jim worked against them, he sees his own courage and quick wit in the boy and respects him for it.*



After a long silence, one of the men says that the crew is dissatisfied, upset with such bullying, and he asks for a council outside without Silver. One by one each man slips out, leaving just Silver and Jim. Silver whispers that Jim is close to death, but he'll stand by him if Jim does agree to witness for him. Jim begins to realize that all is lost—Silver confirms that the “fools and cowards” of the pirates are now mutinying against him. He's now on the squire's side, he tells Jim. He imagines that Hands and O'Brien turned soft—he never much trusted them, and he's always known when a game is up. Finally, he asks Jim why the doctor gave him (Silver) the **map**. Jim is flabbergasted, but Silver insists that he did.

*The pirates have followed Silver faithfully (though as part of their betrayal of the captain) until now, when it seems to them that Silver is preferring a boy, and part of the enemy besides, to his own crew. Suddenly and improbably, Jim and Silver find themselves on the same side again, and Jim struggles to understand Silver's easy betrayal of his crew. Something else the two share is confusion regarding the doctor's actions: neither understands why he would have given away their one advantage.*



## CHAPTER 29. THE BLACK SPOT AGAIN

After a long council, one of the pirates enters again and asks for the torch. Jim peers out, and sees a kneeling figure with a book and knife in his hand. Then they all march back towards the house, where one pirate slips something into Silver's hand and then steps back. It's the **black spot**—Silver declares that he's not surprised, but they've cut the paper out of a Bible, which is deeply unlucky. He asks who had a bible, and one says that it was Dick.

*Jim's observations initially remain obscure, but soon enough it becomes clear what the pirates were doing—preparing the black spot in order to depose Silver and replace him, now that they no longer trust him. Silver's talk about luck may be earnest, or may be simply be a way for him to try to gain time for himself.*



Silver continues to taunt Dick and George Merry, the pirate who wrote “deposed” on the slip, but Merry sullenly tells him he's no longer captain, and he now has to help vote. Silver says the rules are that he waits, still as captain, while the others air their grievances and then choose a new leader. Merry cries that Silver has ruined the voyage, has let the enemy slip away, and prevented the pirates from murdering them during the truce—besides, there's the boy Jim. One by one, Silver answers the complaints, identifying Anderson, Hands, and Merry as the pirates who have made mischief and meddled from the start. He says that “tailors” is a better word for these men than “gentlemen of fortune.” Finally, he says it's idiotic to kill Jim, a hostage, who might be their last chance, or to kill the doctor, who has been taking care of the wounded. Finally, he throws the **treasure map** onto the ground. Jim still can't imagine why the doctor gave it to Silver.

*Even while his own safety becomes ever more precarious, Silver continues to act cheerfully and treat the others scornfully, refusing to show fear or anxiety. He also uses his familiarity with the pirates' code skillfully, while Merry lets his emotions dictate how he responds to his frustrations with Silver. Silver's responses to these emotional complaints are, once again, rational and cool-headed, and reflect his pragmatic attitude towards their situation, as well as his remarkable capacity to evade guilt or blame for himself. Still, it's not entirely clear whether Silver really wants to save Jim and the doctor, or if he's just using them as he's used the pirates.*



But the pirates, with a cry, grab hold of the **map** and pass it from hand to hand. Merry wonders aloud how they'll get the treasure out with no ship. It was Merry's men who lost the ship and Silver's who found the treasure, Silver reminds them, saying that he now resigns for anyone to replace him as captain. But now the pirates cry that they do want him: satisfied, Silver tells Merry that he'll have to wait his turn a little longer. Silver tosses Jim the **black spot** to examine: one side contains a verse from Revelations, including “Without are dogs and murderers,” while on the other side has been scrawled, “Deposed.”

*The pirates, apart from Long John Silver, haven't exactly thought very far ahead beyond getting their hands on the treasure. They're also fickle and easily manipulated by Silver, who takes advantage of their frantic greed for the treasure to suggest that only he can lead them to it. Silver also returns to his role of educator and mentor to Jim, letting him look at the black spot and learn a little more about how the pirates' traditions work.*



Jim lies awake late that night, amazed by Silver's careful game, keeping the pirates content even while desperately trying to save his own life. Jim knows Silver is wicked but still feels sorry for the "gibbet" (gallows) that awaits him.

*Jim's feelings about Silver have shifted from admiration to hatred to confusion and ambivalence: he at once respects his intelligence and fears his double-sided nature.*



## CHAPTER 30. ON PAROLE

All are awakened the next morning by the doctor's voice. Jim is glad to hear it but also feels ashamed. Silver greets the doctor cheerfully, telling him that a little stranger has arrived. The doctor asks disbelievingly if it's Jim, and Silver concurs. The doctor pauses, shocked, but then says he'll do his duty first. He tends to Merry, saying he'll do all he can to save him for the gallows. He dispenses medications to the others before asking Silver to have a word with Jim outside: he leaves. Merry sputters, "No!" but Silver orders him to be silent, and asks Jim for his word of honor not to run away. Jim gives it, and he begins to head outside with Silver. But the pirates roar with disapproval, accusing Silver of playing double (a charge Jim can't imagine Silver will successfully evade). Still, Silver defends himself handily, saying he'll keep the doctor till he no longer needs him, then kill Livesey himself.

*As Jim prepares to meet the doctor for the first time since he's snuck away, he remembers just how immature it was for him to fail to ask permission and to leave his fellow crewmen behind, especially now that he is imprisoned rather than returning in triumph with the stolen ship. The doctor, like Silver, is able to hide his true feelings and act in according to his own best interests, while maintaining an attitude of cool, sometimes scornful indifference. While Silver had appeased the pirates' discontent earlier, now he nearly loses their loyalty once again, as the careful game he's playing continues to grow more complicated.*



Jim and Silver advance across the sand to where the doctor is waiting. Silver tells the doctor that Jim will tell him how Silver saved his life and was given the **black spot** for it: he hopes the doctor will take this into account in judging Silver. Never has the pirate seemed more in earnest: Dr. Livesey asks if he's afraid, and Silver declares he's no coward, but wants to avoid the gallows all the same. He leaves them.

*Now it seems to become clear what Silver's true, earnest desires really are—survival, pure and simple. Silver seems to have realized that the other pirates are not as clever as Jim, the doctor, and the captain, and that it's better for him to cast his lot with them.*



The doctor greets Jim sadly, saying he can't truly blame him, but it was cowardly for him to slip off while Smollett was unwell. Jim begins to cry, saying that he's blamed himself enough: he's willing, now, to die, but is only afraid of torture. In a changed voice, the doctor suggests that they run for it, but Jim says he's given his word, and cannot. He tells the doctor where he's hidden the ship, and that he worries he might let the location slip if the pirates torture him.

*Jim's fears come true to a certain extent as the doctor lectures him for his cowardly behavior—a rebuke that Jim can only counter with the revelation that he's stolen the ship and hidden it. His tears remind us of his young age once again, even though he's been thrust into very adult challenges.*



When Jim tells the doctor of his adventures, the doctor marvels that at every turn it's been Jim who has saved their lives. In return, he says, they'll be sure to protect him. Livesey also starts to mention Ben Gunn, but at that moment Silver returns, and the doctor tells him not to hurry after the treasure. Silver replies that only by doing so can he hope to save his life and Jim's. In that case, the doctor says, he must watch out for "squalls," or violent cries. He won't say any more, despite Silver's protest, but promises to do his best to save Silver if they both survive. Livesey sets off.

*While the doctor has called Jim's decision to flee cowardly, Jim's tale of his adventure makes the doctor (like the pirates, though from the opposite perspective) acknowledge what a crucial role Jim has played in the pursuit of the island's treasure and battle against their enemies. At the same time, the doctor continues to mystify both Jim and Silver with confusing statements and acts.*



## CHAPTER 31. THE TREASURE HUNT—FLINT'S POINTER

Silver tells Jim that he guessed Dr. Livesey told him to run for it, and he's grateful that Jim kept his word. Now they must follow Livesey's treasure hunt orders, though he has little idea what he meant. They eat breakfast, and Jim marvels at how wasteful and careless the pirates are—how ill-suited for a long battle. Silver pays their recklessness little heed, only cheering them up with grand notions of treasure. Then he says that they'll use Jim as hostage to get back the ship, and sail off in the ship with the treasure.

Jim's heart sinks, as he realizes that Silver won't hesitate to be a double traitor, and would probably prefer wealth and a pirate life to a mere chance he'll face the gallows. Jim also dreads the moment when he, a boy, and a one-legged man might have to face five bloodthirsty pirates. He's also still confused by his friends' abandonment of the stockade, and by the doctor's last warning about the "squalls."

A cord is strung around Jim's waist and he's led outside the log-house. The others carry the provisions with them, and march slowly to the beach. They discuss, on the way, the chart: the red crosses are large enough to be confusing, and the directions are somewhat ambiguous, mentioning a tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, the direction E.S.E. and Skeleton Island. They see a number of tall trees, and each man picks his favorite. Silver orders them to continue straight ahead anyway.

After about half a mile, the pirate furthest to the left begins to shout in terror, and the others run towards him. At the foot of a tall pine lies a human skeleton in an unnatural position, his feet pointing in one direction, his hands, raised and clasped, in the other. All are terrified, and Silver remarks that this body must be a kind of compass: indeed, it points E.S.E. It must have been Flint, having killed the six men, who dragged this one to the tree, Silver says.

The pirates begin to recollect about the frightful Flint and the men he killed: one almost thinks he hears Flint's sailor song. Silver chides him, saying Flint is dead and can't walk or sing, but still the pirates remain frightened.

*Silver has been watching Jim and Livesey's conversation from afar, and he now respects Jim even more for keeping his word (something that can not usually be said for Silver himself). Now Jim begins to recognize Silver's desire to bet on the captain's crew more than on his own pirates, given their revelry and various weaknesses.*



*Still, Jim recognizes that ultimately, Silver cares about himself more than about anyone else, and will casually use people to his advantage despite any protestations of loyalty. As a result, Jim understands that he must be similarly selfish and single-minded.*



*Still a prisoner, Jim is nonetheless able to pay attention to the pirates as they begin the search for treasure in earnest. While he still struggles to understand the doctor's decision to give the treasure map to the pirates, and Silver is similarly suspicious, the pirates themselves lend little attention to this strange choice.*



*The human skeleton is a reminder that other lives have been sacrificed in order to hide the treasure. If Flint was the person who hid this treasure, as Silver reasons, it's not entirely clear whether the body was meant to guide future treasure hunters, strike fear into them, or both.*



*As usual, the pirates are highly superstitious, and fear the dead as or almost as much as they fear the living—an attitude that contrasts with Silver's reasoned approach.*



## CHAPTER 32. THE TREASURE HUNT—THE VOICE AMONG THE TREES

The party climbs a hill and then stops to rest. Before them is a vista of much of the island, with Skeleton Island and the sea on the east, its emptiness underlining the sense of solitude on this island. Silver takes his bearings and cheerfully says they must be close to finding the treasure. But Morgan mutters that thinking of Flint has chilled him, and the other pirates agree.

All at once, a thin, high voice rings out, singing the classic sailor song, finishing “Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!” The pirates all go pale, and Merry cries that it’s Flint. To Jim, the voice sounded simply sweet, but Silver too seems shaken, though he tells the others that it must be someone trying to fool them. They’re cheered, but then the voice cries, “Fetch aft the rum, Darby!”—the final words, Morgan whispers, that Flint ever spoke. Even Silver mutters that no one on this island but them had ever heard of Darby—but he’ll still face Flint dead if he must, for the 700,000 pounds hidden close by are worth it.

Merry tells Silver not to cross a spirit, and the others seem ready to run, though they fear separating even more. Silver says that the voice had an echo—and just like no spirit has a shadow, so this must mean it was a living man. Jim thinks this is a weak argument, but Merry and Morgan seem cheered. Suddenly Silver shouts that it sounded just like Ben Gunn’s voice. But Dick says that doesn’t help, since Ben Gunn’s not on the island either—but Merry cries that Gunn doesn’t frighten anyone, dead or alive. They all feel more encouraged and they set off once again, only Dick still fearful, and, it appears, beginning to fall ill.

The group marches across the plateau and attempts to dig under several trees in their path, each turning up nothing. Finally they approach a huge, 200-foot tree, and the pirates’ eyes burn with excitement. Silver grunts and limps, glancing every so often to Jim shrewdly: Jim is certain that all Silver’s promises have been forgotten now that he’s so close to the treasure. As they speed up, Jim sometimes stumbles, and Silver pulls roughly at the rope. Jim is also troubled and sobered by thinking of Flint’s six-fold murder on the very plateau they just passed.

As they reach the tree, the pirates halt: the ground has been dug up, though not recently—grass has begun to sprout in the hole. Several packing-case boards are strewn about with the name *Walrus*, the name of Flint’s ship. The treasure is gone.

*Treasure Island, while the setting of much of the book, has remained mostly instrumental to most of the characters. Jim is seemingly the only one to have enjoyed its novelty for itself, while for the rest it is only the treasure hidden on the island that makes it alluring.*



*Jim is skeptical of the dangerous power of the voice, which the pirates seem to fear so much—usually he follows Silver in this rational perspective, although now even Silver isn’t sure how to reconcile what he hears with his knowledge that no one on the island has heard of the man cited by the voice. Still, Silver is not nearly as willing as the pirates to take this event as a sign to turn back.*



*Once again, Silver uses all the clever tools in his arsenal to try to have his own way among the other pirates, and despite Jim’s skepticism, Silver does seem to know what will work. Ultimately, however, his recognition of Ben Gunn’s voice is what proves most successful in convincing the pirates that they have little to fear, since both Silver and Captain Flint are far more frightening than Gunn to them.*



*Here Silver, too, is not exempt from the blinding greed and fascination with treasure that motivate the pirates. Jim is left as the only one thinking calmly and rationally, though in his case too he’s learned from Silver to focus on his own survival above anything else. It’s this potential for survival that Jim thinks might be threatened now that Silver is so close to the treasure he’s spent so long seeking.*



*Once again, things turn out to be more complicated than they first seemed—the confusing actions and words of Dr. Livesey perhaps have something to do with this development.*



## CHAPTER 33. THE FALL OF A CHIEFTAIN

Everyone is thunderstruck. Silver is the first to regain his composure and quickly think up a new plan. He slips a pistol to Jim and begins to quietly move away from the hollow. Then he nods at Jim, who whispers to Silver that he's switched sides once again.

The pirates leap into the pit, and Morgan finds one gold piece. He shakes it at Silver, cursing at him for all their wasted efforts. Merry accuses Silver of knowing it all along, and while Silver casually makes fun of him, the other pirates are soon of Merry's opinion. Soon they're facing each other across the pit, two against the four (without Dick). Merry begins to make a speech, taking on his role of new captain, but suddenly Silver shoots into Merry's body and he falls into the pit. The three others turn and run away.

Instantly, the doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn emerge from behind the trees. The doctor cries that they must chase the pirates away from the small boats they've left in an inlet. After pursuing them through the woods, they realize that the pirates have headed in the opposite direction, towards Mizzen-mast Hill. Gunn and Silver greet each other, and the group proceeds down-hill, with Gunn relating the long tale.

It was Gunn who had found the skeleton and the treasure, and he who had dug it up and carried it to a cave on the north-east part of the island for safekeeping. The afternoon of the attack, the doctor had gotten this information from Gunn, so the next morning, seeing the *Hispaniola* gone, the doctor had given Silver the **map** and the provisions, since Gunn's cave was well-stocked, as well as the stockade, so that the doctor could be certain the group could safely leave for the hill to keep watch over the treasure.

That morning, when the doctor found out that Jim would be part of the pirates' surprise (and might be in danger), he had taken Gray and Gunn across the island to lie in wait. Gunn, who had gone out ahead, hoped to play with his fellow pirates' superstitions. Silver says that it was lucky Jim was there—otherwise they would have killed Silver, too, without a thought. Dr. Livesey agrees with this, cheerfully.

The group reaches the boats and head out around the coast to North Inlet. Passing around the hill, they catch sight of the squire waiting outside Gunn's cave. They finally reach the *Hispaniola*, which is in good shape, apart from the cut mainsail that Jim had dealt with earlier. They drop anchor and pull around to Rum Cove, near the cave.

*Although Silver had been just as focused on the treasure as the others, he quickly recognizes (as does Jim) that he'll need to dream up a new plan as fast as possible in order to save himself.*



*Silver had quickly realized that the pirates would immediately turn against him once again, now that their guide to the treasure has proved useless. Now Silver is once again on Jim's side, though he remains as merciless and cold-hearted as ever—it's only thanks to luck that Merry, not Jim, is the one Silver kills.*



*It seems that these three men have been watching all the while, and have been waiting until the moment of greatest tension in order to emerge from their hiding place. Now, though, a new challenge arises: they must prevent the pirates from escaping on the boats meant for themselves.*



*Now Jim finally begins to learn just what had happened during the time he was imprisoned with the pirates. The doctor had given Silver the map in order to trick him and the other pirates into thinking that the treasure was awaiting discovery—and so that the pirates' enemies could know exactly where they would be at a given time.*



*It turns out that Jim's skepticism about the curses and spirits is proven right, as Ben Gunn was the mysterious voice in the trees. Livesey's response to Silver underlines just how little the doctor thinks of the pirate, even if Silver is now supposedly on their side.*



*With the moment of greatest danger and excitement now over, Jim prepares to actually discover the treasure that Gunn had dug up much earlier. He also is able to show the others that his previous escape was worth it, as they now have the ship back.*



They climb to the cave and meet the squire, who treats Jim kindly and doesn't mention his escapade. The squire tells Silver that he's a villain and impostor, who deserves all the blame and guilt for the men who have died, even if he has been told not to prosecute Silver. Silver salutes and thanks him, to which the squire cries that this is against his duty, not something to be thanked for. Inside the cave lies Captain Smollett, resting, and surrounded by heaps of coins and gold—the treasure that had cost the lives of seventeen men, not to mention all the other lives and ships sunk by its allure.

Captain Smollett tells Jim that he's done well, but that neither of them should go to sea again. He asks Silver what he's doing there: Silver says he's returned to his duty, and the captain simply says, "Ah!" They enjoy a feast that night, and Silver remains at a slight remove from the rest, acting like the same bland and polite sailor who had begun the trip with them.

## CHAPTER 34. AND LAST

The next day they get to work to load the *Hispaniola* with treasure. Jim is amazed by all the different kinds of coins, from different countries and in different sizes. On the third night, the doctor and Jim are walking along the hill, when they hear shrieking and singing: the doctor cries that it's the mutineers. Silver says that they're all drunk. Jim had noticed how everyone has been treating Silver no better than a dog, except for Gunn, who's still afraid of him, and Jim, who's still grateful to him (even though he hasn't forgotten the moment of final planned treachery on the plateau).

The doctor wonders if the mutineers are insane, rather than drunk, in which case he should go assist them. Silver tells him that there's no way the doctor could do so and hope to live. So they leave the last three pirates, deciding to abandon them on the island. Finally, they pull up their anchor and sail out of the North Inlet. As they sail away, they see the three pirates kneeling in supplication: they all feel a burst of pity, but in the interest of preventing another mutiny (not to mention the gallows that will surely await them) they leave the men behind. Seeing that they are leaving, one of the pirates shoots a bullet through the main sail, so the party ducks low on deck until at a safe distance.

At sundown, they anchor at a port where Mexican Indians and black people are selling sweet-smelling fruits and vegetables. The doctor, squire, and Jim meet an English man-of-war and spend some time aboard his ship. When they return to the *Hispaniola*, Ben Gunn says that Silver has escaped, with one of the coin sacks worth three or four hundred guineas. They all think it a cheap price to be rid of him.

*While the doctor had lectured Jim somewhat regarding his escape from the group, the squire mainly seems content with their current situation, and more willing to cast the blame on Silver than on Jim for all the violence and strife. Silver, in turn, is just as plucky and unconcerned with morality as usual. Jim, though, as he surveys the treasure, is more aware of the high human cost of such wealth.*



*The captain hasn't played a role in the plots on the island since being wounded, but his casual response to Silver suggests that he's not exactly shocked that Silver has switched sides once again—they all now recognize his remarkable abilities.*



*Once again Jim witnesses first-hand the drunken revelry of the pirates, and now he has proof that such revelry has only served them ill, while the more rational, strategic members of the captain's crew are now piling treasure into the ship. Jim continues to be of two minds about Silver, both admiring him and regarding him with suspicion, and aware that he'll never really be able to predict Silver's next move.*



*At first, the doctor's professional role triggers his sense of responsibility, but Silver has no similar sentiment, and once again is able to convince the doctor to act in the way he thinks best. Still, as the crew sails away, the pirates seem more pitiful than threatening, especially when weakened by drink. Throughout the book, indeed, they have shifted wildly between being terrifying and pathetic, and now the latter seems to win out.*



*The adventure at this port is much more low-key than on Treasure Island. While no one precisely expected Silver to run away, neither are they exactly surprised, and it certainly prevents them having to spend the sea voyage back studying him for any sign of a new plot against them.*



The *Hispaniola* has an uneventful voyage home, though it arrives with only five of the men who had left. Jim ends by relating how each man spent his fortune: Captain Smollett retired from the sea; Gray saved his money and became an owner of a ship himself, as well as married with children; Ben Gunn lost or spent his money in three weeks and returned to begging. They've never since heard of Long John Silver, though Jim imagines he met his wife and perhaps lives comfortably with her and the parrot.

Jim claims that he'll never again return to that island. His worst dreams include the loud waves on an island, and the sound of the parrot squawking "Pieces of eight!"

*Jim recognizes that it's difficult for characters to change substantially: fortunes of wealth tend to align with fortunes in the other sense of luck, as well as with the character traits that were present in each figure from the start. With time and the benefit of hindsight, Jim's view of Long John Silver becomes more benign than suspicious.*



*While Jim has clearly relished sharing his adventure with readers, he seems confident that he's learned all that he needs to through such events.*





## HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

### MLA

Baena, Victoria. "Treasure Island." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 6 Jan 2017. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

### CHICAGO MANUAL

Baena, Victoria. "Treasure Island." LitCharts LLC, January 6, 2017. Retrieved April 21, 2020. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island>.

To cite any of the quotes from *Treasure Island* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

### MLA

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. Penguin Classics. 1999.

### CHICAGO MANUAL

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. New York: Penguin Classics. 1999.