

Treasure Island

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Adapted and illustrated for young readers
by Archer White-Hillfort & Mara Seronda



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ISBN: 9798177820415

Revised Edition — September 2026

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Prologue

Many years have passed since then. But the sea hasn't changed. Not really.

Sometimes, when the wind blows in from the coast, I stop for a moment and listen. I'm not quite sure what I'm listening for. Maybe just to make sure it's still there.

On nights like these, images come back uninvited. A stretch of white sand edged by dark forest. The creak of a ship moving through the night. A fire burning deep among the trees, and the faces of the men around it. I remember them clearly. Not all of them were friends. Not all of them were enemies. I learned that early.

I was fourteen when it all began. I was no longer a child, but not yet who I am now. I cleared tables, watched the road, and dreamed without quite knowing what about.

What happened that year changed me in ways I took a long time to understand. It wasn't the treasure—though there was treasure. It wasn't the sea—though the sea was there too. It was the people. What I learned from them—and what I learned about myself when there was no choice but to keep going.

Some people show you what you want to become. Others show you what you don't want to be. And some—the hardest to forget—show you both.

I hesitated for a long time before writing this. Some things are easier to keep to yourself. Names best left unspoken. Memories that still hurt if you look at them too closely. They stay with you longer than you expect.

For years, I thought it was enough to remember it in silence—that putting it into words would change nothing. But silence can change things. It can make some moments seem bigger than they were, and others smaller. Sometimes much smaller.

In the end, I came to believe this story should be told as it happened. Without distortion. Just as it was.

Not because it is an adventure—though it is. But because it is a story about growing up. About trusting the wrong people—and the right ones. About learning that the world is more complicated than it seems from the window of an inn.

My name is Jim Hawkins.

And this is what happened.



Chapter 1 – The Old Sailor at the Inn

Our inn was called the Admiral Benbow. It stood by the coastal road, in a lonely place where the wind carried the sound of the sea and the waves broke against the rocks.

I lived there with my mother and helped her with the work, serving more drink than food and clearing tables when I could.

Not many people came along that road. Sometimes a fisherman early in the morning, or a traveler passing through. But most of the time, there was no one. And when someone did come, you noticed it right away.

Until the day he came.

I saw him coming down the path along the cliffs. He walked slowly, carrying a large sea chest over his shoulder. It was wide and heavy, with worn corners.

When he came closer, I looked at his face. His skin was weathered by the sun, and a long scar ran across his cheek. His clothes were dirty and worn.

He was not the kind of man you'd want to meet on your own. I certainly wouldn't have.

He stopped in front of the inn.

He let the chest drop with a dull thud.

First, he looked at the sea.

Then the road.

And finally, the inn.

“Is this the Admiral Benbow?” he asked.

“Yes, sir.”

He went inside without waiting for an answer and pointed to a table by the window.

“Rum.”

I went to fetch it. When I came back, he was still looking toward the road.

He set a few coins on the table.

“Take what you need.”

He took a long drink and set the mug down.

“I like this place.”

He tapped the table with his knuckles.

“Not many people come along that road, do they?”

“Not many.”

He nodded slowly.

“Good.”

He kept looking outside for a moment longer. Then he turned and pointed at me.

“Hey, boy.”

I went over.

“Listen carefully.”

He leaned toward me. His breath smelled of rum.

“If you see a seafaring man coming along that road... you come and tell me.”

“Yes, sir.”

He narrowed his eyes.

“Not just anyone. A particular one.”

He held my gaze.

“A man with one leg.”

I felt a chill. I didn’t know why, but I didn’t like the way he said it.

“Do you understand?”

“Yes, sir.”

Suddenly, he grabbed my arm. Hard.

“Say it.”

“A seafaring man... with one leg.”

He held me for a moment, then let go.

“That’s it.”

He nudged the chest with his foot.

“Take that up to my room.”

It took effort to drag it up the stairs. It was heavier than it looked.

The sailor came up behind me and set it down beside the bed.

Before leaving, he stopped me again.

“Boy.”

“Yes?”

“If that man appears... you come straight to me. Don’t talk to anyone.”

“Yes, sir.”

He looked at me closely.

“You’d better.”

From that day on, he stayed at the inn.

The customers began to call him the Captain. No one knew his name, and he never gave it. The name spread quickly. Even my mother used it. So did I.

He spent hours sitting by the window with a mug of rum in front of him. From there, he watched the road through his old spyglass.

Every time someone appeared, he lifted his head.

“Boy.”

“Yes?”

“Who’s that?”

“A fisherman.”

“And that one?”

“A farmer.”

He would grunt and go back to his drink.

Sometimes he would go outside and stand in the doorway, watching the road for a long time. Or walk a few steps toward it and then return without a word.

If he heard footsteps, he would turn his head sharply.

At night he drank and sang sailors’ songs in a harsh voice that filled the whole room. Some customers left early. No one wanted trouble.

If anyone spoke too loudly, he would strike the table.

“Silence!”

And everyone obeyed.

One afternoon, he made me sit in front of him. He took out several coins and set them on the table.

“One each month,” he said. “For watching the road.”

He pushed one toward me.

“And for remembering what I told you.”

I took it. It was more than I earned in a week.

The Captain turned back to the window.

But the road was empty.

He stayed there for a while, his eyes fixed on the coast.

Waiting.

From that day on, whenever someone appeared on the road, the first thing I looked at was not his face.

Not his clothes. Not what he was carrying.

I looked to see if he had both legs.



Chapter 2 – The Black Spot

For several weeks, life at the inn went on much as before. But it no longer felt the same. The Captain had changed something in the air.

Although the road was still almost always empty and the wind carried the sound of the sea, there was now a constant sense of waiting, as if something might happen at any moment.

The Captain spent his mornings walking along the cliffs with his spyglass. Sometimes he would stand still for a long time, watching the horizon. At other times, he walked along the coastal road, watching anyone who approached from a distance. Always watching. Never at ease.

When he came back, he would sit by the fire and call for rum. If there were customers, he made them listen to his stories of storms and mutinies. Some nights he ended up singing in that harsh voice of his that made the glasses rattle on the table.

“All of you, with me!” he would growl. “Louder!”

No one refused.

I kept watching the road for him. The Captain paid me four pennies a month to warn him if I saw a seafaring man with one leg. None ever did, but I began to look for him everywhere.

Sometimes, when the road was covered in mist, I thought I saw figures moving slowly toward the inn. Shapes that stopped, then disappeared. I would blink—and there was no one there.

One cold winter morning, something different happened. I was alone in the main room when the door opened without a sound.

A man came in whom I had never seen before. He was not as tall as the Captain, but there was nothing trustworthy about him. He had a scar across his cheek, and two fingers were missing from his left hand. His eyes moved quickly.

“Is there any rum?” he asked.

“Yes, sir.”

I went to fetch the bottle, but before I could move away, he gestured to me.

“Come here, boy.”

I went over.

“That man who always sits at that table,” he said, pointing to the corner. “Is he still here?”

“Yes.”

“Is he in the inn now?”

“No. He’s gone out to the cliffs.”

The man smiled. It was not a pleasant smile.

“Good,” he said. “Then I’ll wait.”

He sat down at the Captain’s table.

“Bring me the rum. I only want to greet an old friend.”

I brought the bottle. He drank slowly, never taking his eyes off the door. He waited.

After a moment, I heard footsteps outside. The door opened, and the Captain came in. When he saw the stranger, he stopped at once.

The other man raised his head.

“Hello, Bill.”

The Captain stood still.

“Black Dog,” he said.

“The same.”

For a few seconds, neither of them moved.

“Sit down, Bill,” the other continued. “We need to talk.”

The Captain set down his spyglass and sat opposite him.

“Who else knows I’m here?”

“No one... for now.”

They spoke in low voices. I could not hear their words, but I saw the Captain’s face grow tighter.

Suddenly, he struck the table.

“No!”

Black Dog jumped to his feet.

“Then you’ll have to!”

The chairs scraped, and both of them drew knives. I backed toward the counter without taking my eyes off them.

The Captain struck first. Black Dog dodged and struck back. The blades met with a clash. They moved quickly, forcing each other between tables and chairs.

“Bill, listen to me!”

But the Captain did not listen.

He drove forward, forcing him back toward the door. Black Dog tried to escape. The Captain lunged one last time. The blade caught him in the shoulder.

Black Dog cried out and bolted.

The Captain took two steps after him... and stopped. He looked at the blood on the door. Then he turned back to the table.

“Rum,” he said.

I went for the bottle. When I came back, he was pale and leaning on the table. He tried to speak, but put a hand to his chest.

And fell.

We sent for Doctor Livesey at once.

“He is not dead,” he said after examining him. “But he has had a stroke. If he goes on drinking like this, he will not live long.”

During the days that followed, the Captain seemed more restless than ever. He was no longer only watching—he was afraid. Every sound made him turn. Every step on the road set him on edge. He drank more than he should.

One afternoon, as the sun was beginning to set, I was alone in the room.

Then I heard it.

Tap... tap... tap...

A stick tapping on the ground.

The door opened, and an old blind man came in. A cloth was tied over his eyes, and he wore a long, dirty coat.

He moved slowly, feeling his way with his stick.

“Is anyone here?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Boy, come here.”

I went over.

The moment his fingers touched my wrist, he gripped it with a strength I did not expect.

“Take me to the Captain,” he whispered. “And don’t try to trick me.”

When we reached him, the Captain looked up. And his face went pale.

“No!”

The blind man smiled.

“Hello, Bill.”

“What do you want, Pew?”

“Only to do what I must.”

He held out his hand.

“Put yours here.”

The Captain hesitated.

The stick tapped the floor again.

“Do it.”

The Captain obeyed.

Pew placed something in his palm and closed his fingers around it.

“Tonight.”

He turned and left.

Tap... tap... tap...

The sound faded away.

The Captain opened his hand.

A small black disk.

“The Black Spot...” he said.

I knew what the Black Spot meant. Among pirates, it was a sign of judgment: the man who received it knew the others had condemned him.

“I reckon I have until ten...” he muttered.

He looked up toward the window.

“There is still time.”

Suddenly, he stood up.

“Jim!”

“Yes, Captain.”

“They will come tonight.”

“Who?”

“The crew.”

He looked toward the door.

“They’ll come for my chest.”

“For the money?”

“No.”

He shook his head.

“For the papers.”

He struggled to breathe.

“If they get here before I am ready...”

He pressed a hand to his chest.

“Curses...”

He tried to move toward the table, but his legs failed him. He took an unsteady step and had to grip the back of a chair.

“Jim... the chest!” he said hoarsely. “We have to—”

He stopped. His face changed color.

“Captain...”

He opened his mouth as if to say more, but only a choking sound came out.

He clutched the table with both hands.

“Rum...” he whispered.

He did not finish.

His fingers began to loosen. He tried to hold himself up, but his arm gave way.

The glass on the table fell and shattered on the floor.

The Captain swayed.

“Captain!”

I stepped toward him, but it was too late.

His knees gave way, and he fell sideways, striking the floor. For a moment, I thought he might try to rise.

But no.

His eyes remained open, fixed on nothing.

I knelt beside him.

“Captain!” I said.

He did not answer.

I placed my hand on his chest. Nothing.

The heart of Billy Bones had stopped.