



Treasure Island

About the Book

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

When young Jim Hawkins discovers a map showing the way to Captain Flint's treasure, he and Squire Trelawney set sail on the *Hispaniola* to search for the gold. Little do they know that among their crew is the dastardly pirate Long John Silver. Silver has a devious plan to keep the gold all to himself. Can brave Jim outwit the most infamous pirate ever to sail the high seas? Will he escape from Treasure Island alive?

About the Author

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in 1850 in Edinburgh. He suffered from illness throughout his life and had to spend large parts of his childhood in bed. As a result, he didn't learn to read until he was seven or eight, but he loved to tell stories to his mother and nurse. Robert loved to travel and he spent a lot of time in his twenties travelling in Europe and writing about his experiences. When he was 26, Robert met an American woman called Fanny. They married in San Francisco in 1880 and returned to Britain with Fanny's twelve-year-old son Lloyd. That same year, during a rainy holiday in Scotland, Robert and Lloyd drew a treasure map for fun and it was this that inspired Robert to write *Treasure Island*. When the book was published in 1883 he dedicated it to Lloyd.

In 1888 the family set off for a three-year-long tour of the South Pacific which eventually ended when they bought a house in Samoa. Robert was loved by the Samoan people and continued to write until the day he died, very suddenly, aged just 44.



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Treasure Island

Draw a pirate

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

This is the wonderfully atmospheric description of Jim's first meeting with a pirate. Try drawing Billy Bones from the description above.



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Treasure Island

Names

The pirates in *Treasure Island* have wonderfully descriptive names

Billy Bones ✦ Long John Silver ✦ Blind Pew ✦ Captain Flint

Have a go at making up your own pirate name and then fill in this pirate passport for your pirate self

Pirate name: _____

Name of your ship (stolen of course): _____

Favourite activity: _____

Thing that most makes you angry: _____

Favourite scar: _____

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Read on to find out lots more about *Treasure Island*...

Is *Treasure Island* a real place?

Many people have speculated about whether *Treasure Island* is a real place. Legend has it that when Robert Louis Stevenson was a boy his mariner uncle told him about his travels to Norman Island in the Caribbean. Some say this might have inspired the image of a 'treasure island' in Robert's mind.

Were any of the characters real people?

Long John Silver himself was modelled on a real person called William Ernest Henley, who Robert met when he was 25. William had one leg but was very active, clever and full of vitality. Robert wrote to Henley after the publication of *Treasure Island* and said: 'I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot Long John Silver...the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you'.

Israel Hands was also the name of a real person – an 18th-century pirate. He is famous for working with the infamous pirate Blackbeard, also mentioned in *Treasure Island*. Robert Louis Stevenson brings Israel Hands to life as an evil, murdering pirate in his fictional version.



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Treasure Island

Make your own treasure map

'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 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 land-locked 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, besides 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'.

Use this empty map to draw your own island with buried treasure. When you've created your design you can make it look really old by cutting the edges out unevenly, rolling and scrunching it up and then covering it in cold tea. Once dried it will look as old as Jim Hawkins' own treasure map!



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