Treasure Island

Robert Louis Stevenson



TIMELESS CLASSICS

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The End of Billy Bones

Squire Trelawney and some of the other gentlemen have asked me to write down the story of Treasure Island. I, Jim Hawkins, gave them my promise to do so. So I will tell you everything that happened—from beginning to end. I will leave out nothing except the location of the island—for there is still treasure there.

I go back in time to the 1700s. This is when my father still ran the Admiral Benbow Inn. And this is the same year the old sailor came into the inn, carrying a battered old sea chest.

He was a tall, rough-looking man, brown as a nut. His hands were scarred. Across one cheek was a jagged old scar from the slash of a sword.

"Do many people come this way?" he asked.

My father said, “No, very few.”

That was true. We lived on a lonely stretch of the English coast. Few travelers came our way.

One day, the old seaman took me aside. He promised to pay me a silver coin every month if I would keep an eye out for “a man with one leg.” I was to tell him at once if I saw such a man.

People were afraid of the old seaman, whom my family now called Captain. At night, he would drink far more rum than his head could carry. Then he would sing wicked songs that made the house shake.

His bloodthirsty stories frightened everyone. My father said the Captain was ruining business at the inn.

And in one way, he did ruin us. Month after month he stayed—without paying my father a penny. I am sure the trouble and worry over this man caused the sickness that befell my poor father. In the days that followed, we paid little notice to the Captain. My father was getting worse, and my mother and I were busy with the inn.

One cold morning when the Captain was away, a stranger came to the inn. He was a pale man, with two fingers missing on his left hand. He wore a cutlass.

He said he was looking for a man with a scar on his cheek.

I told him the Captain had gone out walking, but would return soon.

An hour or so later, he walked in the door.

The stranger said, "Bill."

The Captain turned. He had the look of a man who sees a ghost. He cried out, "Black Dog!"

Black Dog said, "Yes, it's Black Dog—come to see his old shipmate, Billy Bones. We'll sit down now, if you please, and talk square."

Black Dog sent me to fetch some rum. Then he told me to leave the room. Their voices grew louder and louder. Then all of a sudden an explosion of swearing erupted. I heard a chair and table tumble over. Then a clash of steel and a cry of pain. The next instant, Black Dog came running out, with the Captain right behind him. Blood was running from his shoulder.

Just at the door of the inn, the Captain made a great swing with his cutlass. Such a blow might have split Black Dog to his chin! Instead, the cutlass hit the wooden sign that said "Admiral Benbow" and cut a notch in it.

The Captain reeled and leaned against the wall unsteadily.

I cried, "Are you hurt?"

"Rum!" he cried. "Bring me rum, Jim!"

When I returned with the rum, the Captain was lying on the floor. His breath was loud and hard. His eyes were shut and his face was a horrible color. My mother and I did not know what to do.

Luckily, Dr. Livesey came by to visit my father just then. We were glad to see him.

Dr. Livesey turned up Bill's sleeve. We saw that one of his tattoos read "Billy Bones." So that was his name!

Dr. Livesey cut open a vein. He bled Billy Bones a long time before the man opened his eyes.

"Where's Black Dog?" he asked.

Dr. Livesey said, "There is no Black Dog here—except what you have on your own

back. You've been drinking so much rum you've had a stroke, just as I warned you. If you keep on drinking, you'll have another, and that will be the end of you."

Later, I took some medicines to Bones, who was lying in bed.

"Did that doctor say how long I was to lie here?" he asked.

"A week at least," I answered.

Bones said, "Thunder! I can't do that. They'll have the Black Spot on me by then. It's my sea chest they're after. If they come, you get on a horse and go—go to that doctor. Tell him to get all hands—magistrates and such. They can round up Captain Flint's old crew—all that's left of 'em. I was old Flint's first mate. I'm the only one who knows where the map is. Flint gave it to me at Savannah, when he lay a-dying."

Then Bones fell into a heavy sleep. I should have told the doctor what he said—all about his sea chest, and the crew from Captain Flint's ship who might come after it. But my poor father died quite suddenly that evening. I had little time to think about Billy Bones.

Though he seemed to grow weaker, he helped himself to rum from the bar. We did not dare try to stop him.

The day after the funeral, I was standing at the door of the inn. I was full of sad thoughts about my father. Then I noticed a blind man coming up the road. He tapped a stick in front of his feet. His back was hunched and he wore a huge, ragged cloak.

He stopped in front of the inn and said softly, "Will any kind friend tell this poor blind man where he is?"

I said, "Yes, sir. You are at the Admiral Benbow Inn."

"Will you give me your hand, my kind young friend, and lead me in?" he asked.

But when I held out my hand, he grabbed it in a grip as strong as a vise! I tried to pull away from him.

Suddenly his voice turned cruel and cold. He said, "Take me to Billy Bones. *Now,* boy—or I'll break your arm!"

I took him into Bones's room. Billy took one look at the blind man. The rum seemed to

go out of him in an instant. He tried to get up, but he could not.

The blind man said, "Now, Billy Bones—stay where you are. Hold out your left hand."

Then he turned to me. He said, "Boy, take his left hand by the wrist. Bring it near to my right."

I obeyed him. Then I saw the blind man put something in the Captain's hand.

The blind man said, "Now, that's done." Then suddenly he let go of me and hurried out of the inn without any help. I could hear his stick tap-tap-tapping into the distance.

Billy looked at his hand. He cried, "Ten o'clock! I have just six hours."

He sprang to his feet. Then he put his hand to his throat, made a strange sound, and fell with a crash to the floor.

I ran to him and called to my mother. But there was no need to hurry. Billy was dead. I had never liked the man, although I had begun to pity him. But when I saw he was dead, I burst out in a flood of tears. It was the second death I had known. The sadness of the first still filled my heart.

TIMELESS CLASSICS

Treasure Island

Jim and his friends have the treasure map but they're badly outnumbered. Do they have a chance against the bloodthirsty mutineers? Long John Silver says he's on Jim's side. But the one-legged old pirate is clever and wily—and Jim's very life is at stake!

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