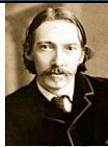




## The Author



Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson (Robert Louis Stevenson) was born November 13, 1850, Edinburgh, Scotland. He died December 3, 1894, in Vailima, Samoa. He was a Scottish essayist, poet, and author of fiction and travel books, best known for his novels *Treasure Island* (1881), *Kidnapped* (1886), *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889).

Stevenson was the only son of Thomas Stevenson, a prosperous civil engineer, and his wife, Margaret Isabella Balfour. His poor health made regular schooling difficult, but he attended Edinburgh Academy and other schools before, at age 17, entering Edinburgh University, where he was expected to prepare himself for the family profession of lighthouse engineering. But Stevenson had no desire to be an engineer, and he eventually agreed with his father, as a compromise, to prepare instead for the Scottish bar.

*Treasure Island* was written by Robert Louis Stevenson after returning from his first trip to America where he was married. In 1881 in Braemar, Scotland, in spite of bouts of illness, Stevenson embarked on *Treasure Island* and then became a serial in *Young Folks*, under the title *The Sea-Cook*, in October 1881. Still a relatively unknown author, inspiration came one summer in Scotland when bad weather kept the family inside. To amuse his 12-year old stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, he used the idea of a secret map as the basis of a story about hidden treasure.

Taking inspiration from his travels, childhood, and trips around Scotland visiting lighthouses, as well as finding character's inspiration in his friends, Stevenson sat down and wrote the adventure that became one of the most beloved pirate tales of all time. It gave Stevenson fame and was the first of many classic stories told by him.

## Adventure Fiction Conventions

### Hero

In an adventure story, the hero is more than just the main character. They have a clear goal and they are active about achieving it. They don't just sit around and wait to get their own way; they do something about it. Throughout the story the hero usually develops or grows as a person, learning something about themselves or the world that they inhabit.

### Villain

In adventure stories, there is often an antagonist who works against the protagonist. Physical risk. One of the key conventions of this genre is that risk and physical danger forms the backbone of the storyline.

### Rising tension

Adventure stories are characterised by high stakes and rising tension. A reader is less likely to care about whether your protagonist succeeds if there is no struggle. But if your character faces and overcomes some tough challenges, then a reader is more likely to connect with him and there will also be a greater emotional payoff at the end when the protagonist ultimately succeeds.

### A race against time

Giving your character time constraints is a great way to increase the tension in your story. Time is the important element in any action adventure story. In fact, you get the action and adventure out of the element of time.

### Plot twists

When you are writing an adventure story, ensure you surprise yourself and your reader with the series of events in your story. Don't get too excited, though, plot twists that are too unbelievable or inconsistent with the world of your story or your characters, will just put your reader off.



## Context

### Piracy

1700's tradition of seafaring. Britain a maritime nation. A time of exploration – ships exploring the east/America etc. The golden age of pirates – 1650-1680. Often in the Caribbean and Pacific Oceans. There were many real life pirates e.g. Blackbeard, a notorious pirate probably born in Bristol and died in battle. Colonial powers (Britain, France, Spain) were trying to expand their colonies by sailing around the world and trading valuables. As a result of this, they engaged in several battles with pirates who were after the same.

### Bristol

An important seaport famous for designing and building docks and harbours. Bristol also famous for its ship-building skill which started the famous saying 'ship shape in Bristol Fashion' – meaning 'well-built craftsmanship' If you wanted a great sailing ship, Bristol was the place to go.

### Golden Age

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.



## Plot Summary

### PART I: 'THE OLD BUCCANEER'

An old sailor, calling himself 'the captain'—real name 'Billy Bones'—comes to lodge at the Admiral Benbow Inn, paying Jim Hawkins, a few pennies to keep a lookout for a one-legged 'seafaring man'. When Billy dies; Jim finds a sea chest, containing money, a journal, and a map. He and Dr Livesey decide to mount an expedition to find buried treasure.

### PART II: 'THE SEA COOK'

Jim and friends travel to Bristol to find a ship (*Hispaniola*) and crew for the journey. We are introduced to 'Long John' Silver and Captain Smollett, are to lead the trip. During the voyage Jim—concealed in an apple barrel—overhears Silver planning a mutiny. Jim alerts his friends.

### PART III: 'MY SHORE ADVENTURE'

They arrive at the island and Jim sneaks ashore. While exploring he overhears Silver plotting a mutiny and sees him murder a crewman who refuses to join. Jim flees into the heart of the island and meets Ben Gunn who was marooned on the island by Silver and he agrees to help Jim. Ben had once served in Flint's crew.

### PART IV: 'THE STOCKADE'

Meanwhile, Jim's friends have abandoned ship and come ashore to occupy an old stockade. There is a battle for the stockade between Captain Smollett and the loyal crew, and the pirates. Jim finds the stockade and joins them. The next morning, Silver appears under a flag of truce. Jim and friends refuse to hand over the map and Silver threatens attack: another battle begins.

### PART V: 'MY SEA ADVENTURE'

After the battle several of Jim's friends are either killed or wounded. Jim escapes and finds the pirate ship abandoned, which he then takes control of. Once on board he realises a pirate still remains. They reach a truce but in the end the pirate betrays Jim. There is a battle which Jim wins. Jim returns to the stockade to find Silver has taken it over.

### PART VI: 'CAPTAIN SILVER'

Silver and the others argue about whether to kill Jim, Silver finds out that Jim knows the whereabouts of the ship. Silver and the others set out with the map, taking Jim along as hostage. On their way to find the treasure, they are ambushed. They realise that Ben Gunn has had the treasure all along. Jim and friends, with Silver as prisoner get back on board the *Hispaniola* and head back to England. Silver escapes...



## Character list

### Jim Hawkins

The first-person narrator and protagonist of almost the entire novel. Jim is the son of an innkeeper near Bristol, England, and is probably in his early teens.

### Mrs Hawkins

Jim's mother, Mrs. Hawkins runs the Admiral Benbow Inn.

### Long John Silver

Long John Silver is a cunning and opportunistic pirate who hides his true intentions from Squire Trelawney while posing as the ship's genial cook.

### Billy Bones

The old seaman who lives at Jim's parents' inn. Billy, who used to be a member of Silver's crew, is surly and rude. He hires Jim to be on the lookout for a one-legged man, thus involving the young Jim in the pirate life. Billy's sea chest and treasure map set the whole adventure in motion.

### Black Dog

A pirate and enemy of Billy. Black Dog pays an unexpected visit to Billy and threatens him. Billy attacks Black Dog, who flees but remains a herald of coming violence in the novel. Black Dog is missing two fingers on his left hand and is very pale.

### Squire Trelawney

A local Bristol nobleman. Trelawney arranges the voyage to the island to find the treasure. The pirates trick him into hiring them as his crew demonstrates.

### Dr Livesey

The local doctor. Dr Livesey is wise and practical. Livesey exhibits common sense and rational thought while on the island. He is fair-minded, agreeing to treat the pirates with just as much care as his own wounded men.

### Ben Gunn

Ben Gunn is a marooned sailor Jim Hawkins finds on the island. He had been a part of Captain Flint's crew, like Long John Silver and Billy Bones.

### Captain Smollett

Captain Alexander Smollett is the captain of the schooner Hispaniola. He plays an important part in disciplining the main characters on the ship as the story progresses, and helps the protagonists survive against the pirates later on.

### Israel Hands

The coxswain (a sailor who steers) on the ship. A pirate and Long John Silver's second in command of the pirates.

### Captain Flint

Deceased pirate captain with a terrifying reputation

### Pew

Pew arrives at the Admiral Benbow in order to try and ambush Billy Bones and find the treasure map. He delivers the black spot to Billy, who dies on the spot.

## Key Themes

### Crime and Violence

this is a violent tale. Sword fights, knives, gun fights are all the order of the day. Jim is intimately involved, and has to kill as much as the men do. He is also pinned to the mast with a knife through his arm, and has to literally tear himself away. The historic setting lends distance however and somehow the 'classic' status will mean you're less likely to get complaints from parents. I feel it is suitable for the whole age group.

### 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.

### Father Figures and "Becoming a Man"

While Treasure Island is 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. 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.

### 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 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.

### 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.

### Honour

Whether it is the honour of gentlemen or the honour of thieves and pirates, this concept is interwoven throughout the story. Even though the pirates in this story steal other people's fortunes, killing many sailors and villagers in the process, they have a code of conduct and are expected to obey that code or lose honour among their peers. For example, when Long John Silver protects young Hawkins, Silver's mates grow suspicious of him. Likewise, there is a bond of honour between Hawkins and Silver. Hawkins gives his word to the old pirate that he will not try to escape with Dr Livesey who came to treat the wounded pirates.

## Quotes

- Jim Hawkins : "I no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me, if you please, or spare me."  
 Long John Silver: "There's never a man looked me between the eyes and seen a good day a'terward."  
 Captain Smollett: "Well, sir ... better speak plain ... I don't like this cruise; I don't like the men; and I don't like my officer. That's short and sweet."  
 Israel Hands: "Dead men don't bite."  
 Captain Flint: "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"  
 The Pirates: "Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum! Drink and the devil had done for the rest Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"



## Weekly spelling

Fourpenny	Chine	Aloft	Prodigiously	Accoutrement	Contrived	Civility	Reverberations	Circumspectly	Contemptuously	Precipice	Ambiguity
Seafaring	Lancet	Apoplexy	Confoundedly	Aperture	Acquiescence	Apoplectic	Infallibly	Gall	Incongruous	Skylarking	Supplication
Stabling	Leer	Dell	Unintelligible	Countenance	Doggedly	Carousing	Formidable	Truculently	Inexplicable	Irreverence	concession
Assizes	Hilt	Emboldener	Quays	Derisively	Reverent	Escapade	Intermittent	Apprehensions	Insolence	Conspicuous	dolts
Villainous	Gallows	Farthing	Trifle	Duplicity	Ricochet	Ascertain	Sidling	Daubed	Vehemence	Wretchedness	supplication
Connoisseur	Gabbling	Irresolute	Burnished	Extricate	Genteel	Foliage	Infernal	Infamous	Apprehension	Prodigious	nondescript
Diabical	Fawning	Languor	Grapple	Incongruous	Mainstay	Dolefully	Dilapidation	Tremulous	Insubordinate	Dereliction	resin
Ruffian	Prophetic	Malingering	Dexterity	Languor	Cavalier	Incessant	Disquietude	Furtive	Preponderance	Obsequious	draught
Abominable	Sheath	Repugnance	Mirth	Nondescript	Imprecations	Phosphorescent	Inclination	Incensed	Volubility	Sojourn	callous
Scoundrel	Sinewy	Squalling	Ticklish	Pinnacle	Inkling	Quaver	Perplexity	Ungainly	Alteration	Ample	notion
Personage	Talons	Weevil	Tottery	Qualm	Placidly	Supervened	Pretext	Warily	Arrant	Ingratiate	stupor
Suffice	Trebyly	Wrest	Relinquishing	supplication	Surmounting	Weltering	Volition	Staunch	Plateau	Onslaught	feasible