

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S

# TREASURE ISLAND



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**What Are Adventure Stories?** Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is considered an adventure story. Adventure writing consists of:

- a brave main character;
- an exciting journey often to a faraway and unsafe land; and
- dangerous challenges and conflicts that must be overcome.

**Keep Reading:** Want to read more of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*?

- Visit: [Project Gutenberg](#)
- If you like *Treasure Island*, then you might also like to read these adventure texts:
  - *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
  - *Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan
  - *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* by Jacqueline Kelly

**Start Writing:** Inspired to write your own adventure story? Consider this prompt to get started:

- You discover an old, mysterious map. It shows the way to a secret treasure. You decide to follow the map—but you're not the only one searching for the treasure! Write a story about your adventure. Who goes with you? What dangers do you face along the way—storms, pirates, or rival hunters? What do you find?

TextProject's StoryLabs presents:

**ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S**

## **Treasure Island**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

# Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*

**T**reasure Island follows young Jim Hawkins who works at his family's inn in England. Billy Bones, an old sailor, visits the inn. Bones was once first mate to a pirate captain named Flint. When Bones dies at the inn, Jim finds a map among his things. The map shows where Captain Flint's treasure is hidden on far-away Treasure Island.

Jim seeks the advice of Dr. Livesey, the local doctor. Dr. Livesey is with Squire Trelawney, a wealthy landowner, when Jim shows up with the map. The three plan a trip to find the treasure together. They rent the *Hispaniola*, a sailing ship. They hire Captain Smollett and a crew. The crew includes a one-legged cook, named Long John Silver.

Once at sea, Jim overhears Silver and other crew members planning to take over the ship. They are really pirates who once worked for Captain Flint. They want the treasure for themselves.

When the ship reaches Treasure Island, the crew splits into two groups. One group is led by Captain Smollett, Dr. Livesey, and Squire Trelawney. The other group is led by Silver and is made up of the pirates. Jim gets caught



In 2015, a Spanish company discovered treasure in a shipwreck like the one pictured. It was worth \$17 billion in gold and silver!

Maybe someone had to bury the family jewels during times of war.

But it's not easy money. Most treasure hunters spend years finding nothing. They need expensive equipment. They need legal permits to search property. Some need special diving skills. In addition, many countries have strict laws about who can keep what they find. Sometimes governments claim everything.

Nevertheless, the treasure still calls to people. Any beach, battlefield, or harbor might hold secrets waiting to be discovered. Modern treasure hunters prove that adventure and fortune are possible. You just need the right tools and endless patience.



## TEXT REFLECTION

# Real Treasure Hunters Today

**A**t the heart of *Treasure Island*, there is the powerful pull of hidden treasure. It should come as no surprise, then, that real treasure hunting happens every day. But put aside what you read in *Treasure Island*; these aren't pirates. They're regular people with metal detectors, diving gear, and a lot of patience.

Take Mel Fisher. He spent all his money looking for a Spanish ship that had sunk in 1622. Stories told over generations claimed that this ship carried a fortune in gold and silver that had never been recovered. Fisher hunted for this ship for 16 years. Everyone said he was senseless. Then in 1985, he found the ship off the Florida coast. The treasure was tremendous. There were gold bars, silver coins, and jewels bigger than your fist. It was worth over \$450 million.

Today's treasure hunters use high-tech equipment. Underwater robots scan the ocean floor. Radar is used to find buried objects. Satellite images reveal ancient ruins from space. It's like having superpowers compared to old-time pirates.

Like Mel Fisher, some hunters focus on shipwrecks. The ocean floor is littered with thousands of sunken vessels. Some of them still carry gold, silver, and precious objects. Other treasure hunters search on land for lost stashes. Perhaps a criminal buried stolen money and never came back for it.



In *Treasure Island*, the discovery of an old pirate map leads to many adventures.

between both sides as he explores the island. He meets Ben Gunn, a lone pirate who has been stuck there for years.

Many fights occur between the groups. Silver changes sides when it helps him. Jim and his friends protect themselves in an old fort while the pirates search for the treasure.

Jim shows his courage through several brave acts. For example, he steals the *Hispaniola* and faces the pirates alone. Meanwhile, Ben Gunn tells them that he has already found and hidden Flint's treasure.

In the end, the good guys get the treasure. Silver manages to escape with some gold. Jim and his friends return to England rich but forever changed by their experience.



## AN EXCERPT FROM *TREASURE ISLAND*

### The Attack



Jim Hawkins and his companions had taken shelter inside a wooden fort, while the pirates surrounded them in the woods outside. In this big moment in the story, the pirates launch an attack.

Suddenly, with a loud cry, a small band of pirates leaped from the woods on the north side and ran straight at the fort. At the same moment, the gun fire was once more opened from the woods. A rifle ball flew through the doorway and knocked the doctor's gun into bits.

The pirates swarmed over the fence like monkeys. Jim's friends, led by the Squire, fired back again and yet again. Three of the pirates fell. But of these, one was clearly more frightened than hurt, for he was on his feet again



The pirate Edward Teach was known as "Blackbeard."

Blackbeard got his medicine chest and released all the hostages. No one was hurt. Then Blackbeard sailed away like nothing happened.

But Blackbeard's luck was running out. Six months later, the British Navy finally cornered him in Virginia. He died fighting. Some say he had suffered twenty-five sword cuts and five bullet wounds. Even today, people remember the pirate who held Charleston hostage for a medicine chest.

## TEXT CONNECTION

### A Real Pirate: Blackbeard

**L**ong John Silver was a storybook pirate, but real pirates did exist. One of the most famous was Blackbeard, an 18th-century English pirate. Blackbeard attacked and robbed ships along the American coast and Caribbean for two years. He used threats, raids, and theft.

In 1718, Blackbeard had a huge problem. His crew of pirates was dying. They were not dying because of wounds from battles but from fevers and infections. Life at sea was harsh. Bad food, dirty water, and infected wounds killed more pirates than sword fights ever did.

Blackbeard needed medicine fast. But there was one big issue. He was the most wanted criminal in the Americas. He couldn't just walk into a town and ask for medicine. So, he came up with a bold plan.

Blackbeard sailed his enormous pirate ship into the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. He blocked the entire harbor. No ships could get in or out. Trade stopped completely. Then Blackbeard started taking people hostage.

"Here's the deal," Blackbeard announced to the frightened city. "Give me a chest of medicine, or these people die."

People were angry but helpless. Six long days went by. The government had two choices: fight the most dangerous pirate alive or give him what he wanted. They chose to give him what he wanted. Charleston officials gathered expensive medicines worth hundreds of dollars, a fortune back then. They sent it out to Blackbeard's ship.

right away. He immediately disappeared among the trees. Two had died. One had fled. Four had gotten inside our defenses. From the woods, seven or eight men kept up a hot though useless fire of their guns on the log-house in which we were hiding. The pirates swarmed over the fence like monkeys.

The four who had made it successfully over the fence ran straight for the log-house, shouting as they ran. The men among the trees shouted back to encourage them. Several shots were fired. But such was the hurry of the shooters that not one appears to have hit its mark. In a moment, the four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us.

The head of Job Anderson, one of the pirates, appeared at the middle window of the log-house. "At 'em, all hands—all hands!" he roared in a voice of thunder.

At the same moment, another pirate grasped the gun of Hunter, the Squire's servant. Then, with one strong blow, he laid the man senseless on the floor. Meanwhile a third pirate, running unharmed all around the house, appeared suddenly in the doorway. He attacked the doctor with his cutlass.

Our position was completely reversed. A moment ago, we had been firing, under cover, at an exposed enemy. Now it was we who lay uncovered and could not return a blow.



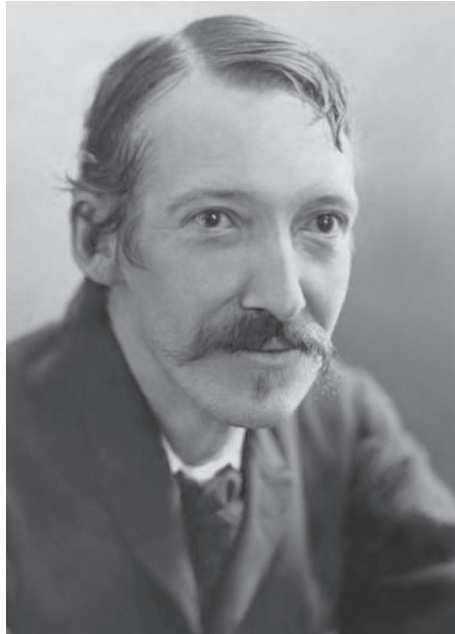
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# How Robert Louis Stevenson Made Pirates Cool

**R**obert Louis Stevenson was born in Scotland in 1850. His family expected him to become a lighthouse engineer like his dad and grandfather. But Stevenson had zero interest in building anything except stories.

As a child, Stevenson was often sick with lung problems. Stuck in bed, he used his time to read everything he could get his hands on and dream up adventures.

When he got to college, Stevenson rebelled against everything. He grew his hair long and hung out in the sketchy parts of town. His parents were shocked when he told them he wanted to be a writer instead of an engineer.



Robert Louis Stevenson

When he was 29, Stevenson sailed from Scotland to New York. He was on his way to California to marry the woman he had fallen in love with. The ship was dirty and crowded. Stevenson got ill and his lung problems got much worse, especially when going through the dust and heat of the Nevada desert. After traveling 6,000 miles, Stevenson described himself as a “a pile of cough and bones” when he finally met his bride in California.

Stevenson wrote 21 books in total. Some of his most famous books he wrote while stuck in bed because of his terrible health. *Treasure Island* came from a map he drew to entertain his stepson. His books are not just “kids’ books,” however. They are dark, complex stories about good and evil that readers still find interesting today.

Eventually, Stevenson moved to Samoa in the South Pacific. He died there at age 44. Following Stevenson’s request, the Samoans cut a path up a mountain to bury him at the top. Stevenson proved you could write adventure stories that were also serious literature. He showed that some illnesses do not have to stop you from living an epic life.