

SECTION 2.

Edited by Caleb Van Buren

I lost no time, in telling my mother everything, and probably should have told her long before, and we saw ourselves at once in a difficult and dangerous situation. Some of the Captain's money — if he had any — was owed to us, but it is not likely that the Captain's shipmates or especially the two others Black Dog and the blind beggar, would be inclined to give up any money. We decided at last to go together and seek help in the neighbouring village.

No sooner said than done.

As helpless we were, we ran out in the gathering evening and into fog. The village was about a hundred yards away and I was encouraged that it was in the opposite direction from which the blind man had come.

It was evening when we reached the village. The more we told of our troubles, the more people stayed in the shelter of their houses. In telling our story, I used the names "Billy Bones", "Black Dog", and "Captain Flint". All of the men in this village were scared of the names. Not one would help us to protect the inn from the pirates that we on the way.

I said I would go with my mother alone and help defend the inn and of course they all cried out at our foolishness. All they would do was to give me a pistol in case we were attacked.

We walked sadly along the street, returning to the inn.

"Close the blinds and lock the doors, Jim," whispered my mother; "they might come and watch outside. And now," said she when I had done so, "we have to find the key to the chest. We can take the Captain's money and leave the inn to the pirates."

I dropped down on my knees at once and began looking for the key to the chest. I felt in his pockets, one after another. A few small coins, a thimble, and some thread were all that they had in them.

"Perhaps it's round his neck," suggested my mother.

I tore open his shirt at the neck, and there, sure enough, hanging to a bit of greasy string, we found the key.

At this triumph we were filled with hope and hurried upstairs to the little room where he had slept so long and where his box had stood since the day of his arrival. It was like any other seaman's chest on the outside, the initial "B" burned on the top of it.

"Give me the key," said my mother; and though the lock was very stiff, she had turned it and thrown back the lid in a moment. Nothing was to be seen on the top except a suit of very good

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clothes, carefully brushed and folded. They had never been worn, my mother said. Under that, random things appeared — a small tin can, an old compass, two pistols, a tiny bar of silver, an old Spanish watch and some other trinkets of little value.

Then, my mother pulled up the last item in the chest: a bundle tied up in cloth.

I suddenly put my hand upon her arm, for I had heard in the silent air a sound that brought my heart into my mouth — the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road outside.

It drew nearer and nearer, while we sat holding our breath. Then it knocked sharp on the inn door, and then we could hear the handle being turned and the bolt rattling as the wretched old man tried to enter the locked door. There was a long time of silence both inside and outside the inn.

"Mother," I whispered, "let's take what we can and try to escape!" I was sure that the locked door would not keep the blind man and the pirates out for very long.

"I'll take what I have," she said, jumping to her feet.

"And I'll take this too," said I, picking up the bundle we had found.

We ran downstairs and out through the backdoor.

It was not a moment too soon. The moon was very bright and lit up the heavy fog. We looked towards the road and we could see a large group of men on horses approaching the inn.

"My son," said my mother suddenly, "take the money and run on. I am old and will slow you down."

This was certainly the end for both of us, I thought. But, I knew that I had to be brave, save my mother, and not give up.

Near the inn, there is a river that empties into the cove. Over that river is a bridge. I grabbed my mother's hand and pulled her under the bridge.

From beneath the bridge, along the river's bank, we could see three men climb down from their horses. Two of the men held the arms of the third. The third man was the old blind man. The next moment his voice showed me that I was right.

"Down with the door!" he cried.

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered two or three others; and a rush was made upon the Admiral Benbow Inn's door. It cracked and fell down, leaving the inn open to all.

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"In, in, in!" the blind man shouted.

Four or five pirates obeyed at once, running inside. There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from inside the inn, "Bill is dead!"

But the blind man yelled, "Search him for the key, you shirking lubbers, and the rest of you get the chest," he cried.

I could hear their feet rattling up our old stairs, so that the inn must have shook. The window to the Captain's room was thrown open and a pirate leaned out into the moonlight, head and shoulders, and addressed the blind man on the road below him.

"Pew," he cried, "someone already has the key. They opened the chest and took everything!"

"Scatter and find 'em! Burn the whole town down if you must!" screamed Pew (for that was the blind man's name), striking with his stick upon the road.

Just then a loud whistle blew twice. I realized that it was a signal from the hillside towards the village, and from its effect upon the pirates, a signal to warn them of approaching danger.

"Run!" cried Pew. "The police must be close! But also look for the thieves that stole our treasure! Oh, shiver me timbers," he cried, "if I had eyes! You fools have lost our riches!"

The sound of horses galloping was heard. Almost at the same time, there was a gunshot in the night. After hearing the gun, the pirates all ran, leaving the blind man behind, all by himself. He called out, "Johnny! Black Dog! Dirk! Don't leave old Pew, mates — not old Pew!"

Just then the policemen's horses arrived with the officers holding lanterns. But, poor Pew, blind as he was, could not see the horses or the lantern. He started to run. Thinking that he was running away, he ran right under the hooves of the first horse. The rider tried to stop but he could not and the horse trampled Pew, leaving him on the street.

I leaped to my feet and called to the officers. They were stopping, horrified at the accident. Pew was dead.

One of the police men that saved us spoke. "They got away," he said. "But, there's one less pirate now to cause to trouble."

I went back with him to the Admiral Benbow Inn, and you cannot imagine a house in such a state of panic. And though nothing had actually been taken, it would take weeks of work to make it right.

One of the officers asked: "Do you know what they were after? If there was no real money in that chest, what did they want so badly?"

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"No, sir; not money, I think," replied I. "In fact, sir, I believe I have the thing in my chest pocket; and to tell you the truth, I should like to get it put in safety."

"To be sure, boy; quite right," he said. "I'll take it, if you like."

"I thought perhaps Dr. Livesey —" I began.

"You right," he interrupted very cheerily, "perfectly right. And, now I come to think of it, I might as well ride round there myself and report to him of Pirate Pew is dead, when all's done; he's dead, you see, and people will make it against an officer of his Majesty's revenue, if they make it out they can. Now, I'll tell you, Hawkins, if you like, I'll take you with me."

I thanked him for the offer, and we walked back to the place where the horses were. By the time I had told mother of my plans they were already in the saddle.

"Dogger," said the officer, Mr. Dance, "you have a good horse; take up this boy behind you."

The party struck out at a bouncing trot on the road to Dr. Livesey's house.

We rode fast and made it to Dr. Livesey's door. The house was all dark. Mr. Dance told me to jump down and knock. The door was opened almost at once by the maid.

"Is Dr. Livesey in?" I asked.

"No," she said, "He's having dinner at a friend's house. Squire Trelawney."

"So there we ride," said Mr. Dance.

This time, as the distance was short to the house up the long, moonlit road to where the squire's house. Here Mr. Dance dismounted, and taking me along with him, was let into the house.

The servant led us down a matted passage and showed us at the end into a great library, all lined with bookcases, where Squire Trelawney and Dr. Livesey sat, on either side of a bright fire.

"Come in, Mr. Dance," the squire said.

"Good evening, Dance," says the doctor with a nod. "And good evening to you. What brings you here?"

The supervisor stood up straight and told his story. Long before it was done, Mr. Trelawney had got up from his seat and was pacing around the room, and the doctor, as if to hear the better, had taken off his hat and sat there.

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At last Mr. Dance finished the story.

"Mr. Dance," said the squire, "you are a very noble person."

"And so, Jim," said the doctor, "you have the thing that they were after. Right?"

"Here it is, sir," said I, and gave him the cloth bundle. The doctor looked it all over, as if his fingers were itching to open it; but instead of doing that, he put it quietly in the pocket of his coat.

"Squire," said he, "when Dance has had his tea, he must, of course, be off on his Majesty's service; but I plan on keeping Jim Hawkins here to sleep at my house, and with your permission, I suggest we should have up the cold pie and let him eat".

"As you wish, Livesey," said the squire; "Hawkins has earned better than cold pie."

So a big meat pie was brought in and put on a sidetable, and I made a filling supper, for I was as hungry as a hawk, while Mr. Dance was further complimented and at last dismissed.

"And now, Livesey," said the squire.

"You have heard of this Captain Flint or Billy Bones, I suppose?" questions Livesey

"Heard of him!" cried the squire. "Heard of him, He was the greediest buccaneer that sailed. Blackbeard the Pirate was a child compared to Flint.

"Well, I've heard of him myself, in England," said the doctor. "But the point is, had he money?"

"Money!" cried the squire. "Have you heard the story? What were these villains after but money? What do they care for except money? For what would they risk their lives for but money?"

"That we shall know soon" replied the doctor. "What I want to know is this: Supposing that I have here in my pocket, this bundle from the chest, is some clue to where Flint buried his treasure, what will the treasure be worth?"

"Worth sir!" cried the squire. "It will amount to this: If we have the clue you talk about, I will get a ship in Bristol dock, and take you and Hawkins here along, and I'll find that treasure if I search for a year."

"Very well," said the doctor. "Now, then, if Jim agrees we'll open the packet"; and he laid it on the table.

The bundle was sewn together, and the doctor had to get out his tool case and cut the stitches with his medical scissors. It contained two things — a book and a sealed paper.

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"First of all we'll try the book," observed the doctor.

The squire and I were both looking over his shoulder as he opened it, for Dr. Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the side-table, where I had been eating. On the first page there were only some scraps of writing, such as a man with a pen in his hand might make for practice. One was the same as the Captain's tattoo, "Billy Bones"; then there was "Mr. W. Bones, mate," "No more tea," "Off Palm Key he got it," and some other snatches, mostly single words. I could not help wondering who it was that had "got it," and what "it" was that he got. A knife in his back probably.

"Not much instruction there," said Dr. Livesey as he passed on.

The next ten or twelve pages were filled with a curious series of entries. There was a date at one end of the line and at the other a sum of money, as in common account-books, but instead of explanatory writing, only a varying number of crosses between the two. On the 12th of June, 1745, for instance, a sum of seventy pounds had plainly become due to someone, and there was nothing but six crosses to explain the cause. In a few cases, to be sure, the name of a place would be added, as "Near Caraccas," or a mere entry of latitude and longitude, as "62o 17' 20", 19o 2' 40". The record lasted over nearly twenty years, the amount of the separate entries growing larger as time went on, and at the end a grand total had been made out after five or six wrong additions, and these words appended, "Bones, his pile."

"I can't make sense of this," said Dr. Livesey.

"The thing is as clear as noonday," cried the squire. "This is a pirate's account-book. These crosses stand for the names of ships or towns that they sank or plundered. The pirates are the scoundrel's share, 'Near Caraccas,' now; you see, here was some unhappy vessel boarded off that coast. God help the poor souls that manned her!"

"Right!" said the doctor. "Right! And the amounts increase, you see, as he rises in rank."

"And now," said the squire, "for the other."

The paper had been sealed in several places with a thimble by way of seal; the very thimble, perhaps, that I had found in Captain's pocket. The doctor opened the seals with great care, and there fell out the map of an island, with latitude and longitude, Surrounding, names of hills and bays and inlets, and every thing that would be needed to bring a ship to a safe stop 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 harbours, and a hill in the center 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 southwest — and beside this last, in the same red ink, and in a small, neat hand, very different from the captain's tottery characters, these words: "Most of treasure here."

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Over on the back the same handwriting was written with further information: Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N.N.E. Skeleton Island E.S.E. and by E. Ten feet. The bar silver is in the north chest; you can find it by the trend of the east hummock, ten fathoms south of the black crag with the face on it. The arms are easy found, in the sand-hill, N. point of north inlet cape, bearing E. and a quarter N. J.F.

That was all; but brief as it was, and to me unreadable, it filled the squire and Dr. Livesey with delight.

"Livesey," said the squire, "you will give up this practice at once. Tomorrow I start for Bristol. In three weeks' time — three weeks! — we'll have the best ship, and the best crew in England. Hawkins shall come as cabin-boy. You'll make an amazing cabin-boy, Hawkins. You, Livesey, are the ship's doctor; I am admiral. We'll take Redruth, Joyce, and Hunter. We'll have favourable winds, a quick travel, and no difficulty in finding the spot, and we'll have money to eat, to roll in, to spend ever after."

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "I'll go with you; and I'll go for it, so will Jim, and be a credit to the task. There's only one man I'm afraid of."

"And who's that?" cried the squire. "Name the person, sir!"

"You," replied the doctor; "for you cannot stay quiet. We are not the only men who know of this paper. These people who attacked the inn tonight — bold, desperate pirates for sure — and the rest who stayed aboard their jolly roger ship, and more, I dare say, not far off, are, one and all, through thick and thin, bound that they'll find this map too and get that money. We must not go alone till we get to sea. Jim and I shall stick together in the meanwhile; you'll take Joyce and Hunter when you ride to Bristol, and from here to there, not one of us must breathe a word of what we've found."

"Livesey," returned the squire, "you are always right. I'll be as silent as the grave."