

SECTION 3.

Edited by Leonard Thornton and Priscilla Munchian

It took much longer than the squire expected before we were ready to sail, and none of our first plans worked out the way we thought they would. The doctor had to go to London to find another physician to run his practice. The squire stayed busy in Bristol. I remained at the hall with old Redruth, the gamekeeper. I felt like a prisoner, but my mind was full of dreams of the sea, strange islands, and exciting adventures.

I studied the map for hours. I remembered every detail. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room, I imagined sailing toward the island from every direction. I explored every inch of it in my mind. I climbed the tall hill called the Spy-glass again and again and looked out at the ocean from the top. Sometimes I imagined the island full of wild natives we had to fight. Other times it was full of dangerous animals that hunted us. But in all my dreams, nothing was as strange or frightening as what truly happened later.

Weeks passed. Then one fine day, a letter arrived for Dr. Livesey. On the outside it said, "*To be opened, in the case of his absence, by Tom Redruth or young Hawkins.*" Since the doctor was not there, Redruth and I opened it.

Dear Livesey,

I do not know whether you are still in London or back at the hall, so I am sending this letter to both places.

*The ship is bought and fully prepared. She is anchored and ready to sail. You have never seen a finer schooner — even a child could sail her. She is two hundred tons, and her name is the **HISPANIOLA.***

I bought her through my friend Blandly, who worked very hard for me. Everyone in Bristol helped once they heard where we were sailing — I mean, after they heard about the treasure.

"Redruth," I said, stopping for a moment, "the doctor will not like that. The squire has been talking again."

"Well, what do we care?" Redruth growled.

I kept reading.

Blandly found the ship and got her for a very low price. Some people in Bristol dislike him and say he would do anything for money. They even claim the ship belonged to him and that he sold it to me for too much. These are lies. Still, everyone agrees the ship is excellent.

The workers were slow, but that problem passed. The real trouble was finding a crew.

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson
abridged by the Middle School's "Off the Page" Book Club

I wanted twenty men, in case of natives, pirates, or enemies. I could barely find six. Then luck brought me the perfect man.

*I met him by accident at the dock. He was an old sailor who kept a small inn. He knew all the sailors in Bristol. He had lost his health on land and wanted to return to sea. He had come just to smell the salt air. I felt sorry for him and hired him on the spot as cook. His name is **Long John Silver**. He has lost one leg in service to his country. He receives no pension.*

Silver did not only become our cook — he helped me find a crew. In a few days we had gathered the toughest sailors I have ever seen. They may not look pretty, but they are strong and fearless. I believe we could fight a warship.

Silver even convinced me to dismiss two of the men I had hired before. He said they were not fit for such an important adventure.

I feel healthy and strong, but I will not rest until we sail. Come at once. Let Hawkins visit his mother with Redruth, then both come quickly to Bristol.

Your friend,
John Trelawney

Postscript: Blandly also found us a sailing master named Arrow. Silver found a good mate as well. We even have a boatswain. Everything will be run like a warship.

The letter filled me with excitement. I could hardly sit still. Redruth only complained, but everyone else would gladly have taken his place.

The next morning we walked to the Admiral Benbow. Mother was well. The old captain was gone. The squire had repaired the inn, repainted it, and bought new furniture, including a fine chair for Mother. He even hired a new boy to help her while I was away.

Seeing the boy made me realize I was truly leaving. I had not thought about home until then. I cried for the first time.

The next day Redruth and I left. I said goodbye to Mother, the inn, and my home. Soon it was out of sight.

That night we rode the mail coach. I slept deeply. When I woke, we were in **Bristol**.

We walked to the docks. I saw ships from all over the world. Sailors sang, climbed ropes, and worked the rigging. Though I had lived near the sea all my life, I felt as if I was seeing it for the first time.

I was going to sea to hunt for treasure.

Suddenly, we met the squire.

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"We sail tomorrow!" he cried.

The squire sent me to deliver a letter to John Silver at the sign of the Spy-Glass. The tavern was small and neat. The customers were sailors, talking loudly.

Then I saw Long John Silver. He stood on one leg, using a crutch, moving quickly. He was tall and strong, smiling and cheerful.

I gave him the letter.

"You are our new cabin boy," he said warmly.

At that moment, a man ran out of the tavern. I recognized him.

"It's Black Dog!" I cried.

Silver sent men after him, but he escaped.

Silver questioned a sailor named Morgan and warned him not to associate with such men.

Silver acted so honestly and angrily that I believed he was innocent.

He walked with me to the inn and told the story to the squire and doctor. They believed him.

The **HISPANIOLA** was anchored among many ships. Mr. Arrow greeted us, but the captain, Smollett, looked unhappy.

He said plainly, "I don't like this voyage, the crew, or my officer."

He explained that everyone knew about the treasure. He feared trouble.

He asked that the weapons and powder be moved closer to the cabin and that the squire's men stay nearby.

The doctor understood: the captain feared a mutiny.

The changes were made. The crew worked hard. Long John Silver arrived and went below to cook.

The captain sent me away to help. I heard him say he had no favorites.

At that moment, I hated him deeply.