

INTRODUCTION

Treasure Island is a story about pirates. Pirates are robbers who steal from ships at sea. Between 1680 and 1730 there were many pirates on the Atlantic Ocean. During this time, ships carried goods and money between Europe and America. Pirates stole from these ships. They also worked for countries that were at war. They attacked their enemy's ships.

Pirates put a special flag on their ships. It was called the Jolly Roger. It was a black flag with a white skull and bones.

Pirates were clever. They did not want to fight. They used this flag to frighten sailors on other ships. Frightened sailors would give up without fighting.

Pirates were thieves but they had their own laws. They voted on who was to be captain. They divided the things they stole evenly among themselves. They had strict rules against stealing from one another. A pirate who lost a leg or an arm in battle was given extra money. Pirates who broke these laws could be marooned: left alone on an island to die.

Few pirates buried their treasure. They usually spent it right away. Captain Kidd was a famous pirate who buried his treasure. He did not want people to know he was a pirate. Later, they found out and he was hanged. People are still looking for his buried treasure.



About Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1850. He studied to be a lawyer, but he never practised law. Instead, he travelled the world. He wrote about his adventures in different places. While visiting France in 1876, he met and fell in love with an American woman, Fanny Osbourne. He later followed her to America. They were married there in 1880.

Stevenson and his wife returned to Edinburgh. His health was bad and he had to stay at home. During this time, he wrote many of his most famous books: *Treasure Island* (1883), *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), and *The Black Arrow* (1888).

Later, he travelled to the South Pacific. He settled on the island of Samoa. He made friends with the Pacific islanders. He died there in 1894. He was buried at the top of a mountain.

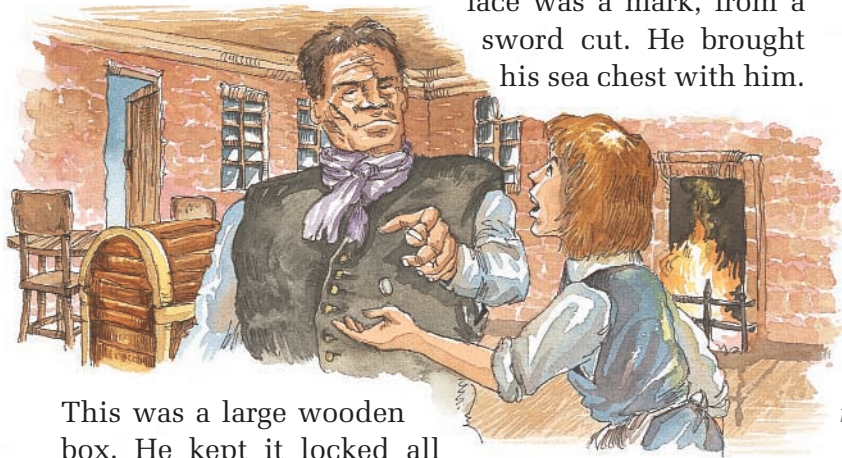
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THE ADMIRAL BENBOW INN

The Captain

My name is Jim Hawkins. When I was a boy, I lived with my mother and father in an inn called the Admiral Benbow. My father was the owner of the inn.

One day, an old seaman came to stay with us. I remember him well. He was a tall, strong man. On his face was a mark, from a sword cut. He brought his sea chest with him.



This was a large wooden box. He kept it locked all the time. We called this rough old man 'the Captain'.

One morning the Captain spoke to me. He said he wanted me to watch for a seaman with a wooden leg. As soon as I saw this man, I had to tell the Captain. If I did this, he would give me a silver coin every month.

In the winter a man did come. But not the man with a wooden leg.

This man looked very rough. He had only three fingers on his left hand. He carried a knife. I asked him what he wanted to drink. He said, 'Rum.'