

Treasure Island is one of the most popular pirate stories of all time. What makes this book such a popular one across generations? Read on to find a summary of the book itself as well as information on the main characters and the author, Robert Louis Stevenson.

Summary of *Treasure Island*

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson tells the story of Jim, a young boy who watches over an inn in an English seaside town with his mother and his gravely ill father. A new guest at the inn, Bill, terrifies everyone at the inn with his raunchy sea songs and threats of violence.

Bill falls ill and dies just as pirates descend on the inn to kill Bill and to ransack his things. Just before the pirates can burst in and find Jim and his mom, the two of them escape with a number of coins and a pouch. Jim finds out that there is a treasure map hidden in the pouch.

After showing this map to the doctor that waited on his father and Bill, Dr. Livesey, the doctor and his friend Squire Trelawney decide to set sail to uncover the treasure. Jim goes along as a member of the crew.

The squire and doctor hire a number of men to head the voyage, including Long John Silver as the ship's cook. Along the journey at sea, Jim falls asleep inside a barrel and awakes to hear that Long John Silver has planned a mutiny along with most of the crew!

Once they reach the island with the treasure, Jim slips onshore with Silver and some of the mutineers. After the mutineers kill two men that don't want to join the mutiny, Jim runs away into the jungle on the island. While there, he meets an abandoned man, Ben Gunn.

Meanwhile, Trelawney, the doctor, and the other men get ashore and find a stockade, or a giant wooden enclosure, something like a mini-fort. Eventually, after a meeting between Silver and the captain of the ship in the stockade, there is a battle. While a number of mutineers are killed, two men die and one is injured within the stockade, and Dr. Livesey goes out to find Ben Gunn and enlist his help.

Jim sneaks out of the stockade and cuts the ship loose, crashing it on the beach, securing it for the crew, and killing a pirate left on the ship in self-defense. Jim sneaks back to the stockade where, to his surprise, Long John Silver and his men are now staying! Silver explains that the captain and Dr. Livesey agreed to give up the map and the stockade for free passage. However, when the mutineers get to the treasure, they find that someone has already dug it up! Before the angry mutineers can attack Silver and Jim, the original crew pop up and ambush them with guns, having already dug up and hid the treasure.

Though Silver slips away from the crew during the journey back to England, evading a trial and hanging, Jim still has terrifying dreams of him for many months afterward.

The Main Characters

Jim Hawkins: The young son of the owners of the Admiral Benbow Inn, Jim is impulsive and adventurous by nature. He agrees to spy for Bill the pirate, helps his mother get her deserved payment from Bill's room even as they know pirates are coming for them, and twice slips away from the crew to explore the island or to try and hurt the mutineers.

Dr. Livesey: The doctor is fairly brave as well; he is the only one who dares to stand up to Bill at the inn, and he goes out to track down Ben Gunn and trick the pirates by digging up the treasure and giving them the now-worthless map. He is also very principled; even though he finds Bill and the mutineers to be scummy, he still treats their illnesses and injuries to the best of his ability.

Long John Silver: Long John Silver is the dreaded one-legged pirate that Bill asks Jim to watch out for at the beginning of the book. He is friendly to Jim initially; his charisma is usually enough to get anyone to like and follow him. He is also a schemer; he arranges the mutiny and then manages to stay alive when the mutineers want to dispose of him. He is also clever enough to escape imprisonment at the end of the book as the surviving crew sails back to England with the treasure.

Ben Gunn: Gunn is a stranded Englishman who was left on the island by his former crew because he failed to help them find the treasure. He is desperate to get off the island, and he agrees to help Jim and the crew in exchange for some of the treasure and passage off the island. He is a major help to the crew, killing a mutineer and helping to ambush the rest of the mutineers near the end of the story.