***Treasure Island***

***Chapter 33:***

# *The Fall of a Chieftain*

***Brief Summary:***

* With this disappointment, the pirates turn against Long John Silver again.
* Long John Silver quietly hands Jim a pistol and tells him to prepare for trouble.
* Meanwhile the pirates have jumped into the pit looking for any traces of the treasure.
* All they find is a two-guinea piece – worth just over two British pounds.
* George Merry accuses Long John Silver of having known all along that the treasure was gone.
* The pirates climb out of the pit and approach Long John Silver.
* George Merry is about to charge when three shots from the forest take him down.
* Doctor Livesey, Abraham Gray, and Ben Gunn join Long John Silver and Jim.
* They set off quickly to stop the pirates from getting away in their rowboats.
* Eventually they realize that they're already between the three remaining pirates and their rowboats, and that the pirates are running away from their boats rather than toward them, so they settle down for a rest.
* It turns out that it was Ben Gunn who first found the skeleton pointer and figured out where the treasure was.
* Ben Gunn carried all the gold from the treasure chests to his cave two months before the *Hispaniola* even arrived on the island.
* That's why Doctor Livesey gave Long John Silver the treasure map – he had heard from Ben Gunn that the treasure had already been moved, so he knew the map was useless.
* Doctor Livesey also explains why they gave up the fort to the pirates: Ben Gunn has plenty of salted goat meat stored away, so Doctor Livesey and his friends didn't need the supplies they had brought. What's more, Doctor Livesey didn't think it was safe to stay at the fort with its marshland and malaria (a bad fever you can get from mosquitoes, which breed in damp places).
* Doctor Livesey admits that he felt bad about abandoning Jim to his fate, but Jim left without telling anyone, so what was he supposed to do?
* However, once Doctor Livesey realized Jim would be there when the pirates discovered that the treasure was gone, he knew that Jim would probably be killed.
* To save Jim, Doctor Livesey ran to get Abraham Gray and Ben Gunn (leaving Squire Trelawney to guard the injured Captain Smollett).
* Ben Gunn ran ahead to spook the superstitious pirates, which so distracted them that they didn't notice the sounds of Abraham Gray and Doctor Livesey approaching with their guns. That's how they were able to successful ambush them.
* The group reaches the two rowboats the pirates have been using.
* Doctor Livesey destroys one with a pickax and they use the other one to row the eight or nine miles to the cove where the *Hispaniola* is beached.
* Squire Trelawney greets Jim politely, then tells Long John Silver he's a liar and a villain.
* Squire Trelawney says he won't try Long John Silver for murder right now, but he wishes he could.
* The group enters the cave where Captain Smollett is lying by a fire.
* There are huge stacks of gold in the cave.
* Jim starts thinking about how much death and loss has happened just to find this gold.
* Captain Smollett greets Jim. He says Jim's a good boy by and large, but he doesn't want to go to sea with him again.
* Captain Smollett says Jim is too much "the born favorite" (33.41) for him. This wasn't a common expression even back in the 19th century, but we think Captain Smollett means that Jim is too independent and lucky to be trustworthy.
* They eat a fine dinner that night.
* Long John Silver helps out whenever needed and laughs at their jokes – just as he had when he was playing the loyal cook on their voyage out.

***Synopsis:***

Silver and his men are astonished that the treasure is gone. Silver hands Jim his gun, realizing that he needs the boy after all. Jim coldly accuses Silver of changing sides again. The men dig in the pit and find a few coins. One of them accuses Silver of having known all along that the treasure was gone. The angered pirates suddenly seem united against Silver and begin to move upon him. Suddenly a gun fires from somewhere in the surrounding thicket, cutting down several of the pirates. Silver draws his pistol, killing the pirate who had accused him. Dr. Livesey, Ben Gunn, and Abraham Gray emerge from the trees, their muskets smoking.

Silver thanks Livesey for saving him from the uprising and greets Ben Gunn affectionately. We learn that Ben, in his wanderings about the island, had come across the skeleton, dug up the treasure, and moved it to a cave. Livesey found out about Ben’s actions and gave the map to Silver only after he knew it was useless. Learning that Jim would be among the disappointed treasure-seekers, Livesey sent Ben off to imitate Captain Flint’s voice, playing on the pirates’ superstitions and slowing their progress.

***Summary:***Discovering that the treasure is gone (Chapter 33, "The Fall of a Chieftain"), the men are dumbstruck. Silver recovers first, hands Jim a pistol, and leads him to a position across the excavation from the other five men, who now, after their first shock is over, turn openly on Silver. George Merry begins to lead a charge against Silver and Jim, but is shot down by a musket from the nearby forest, as is the wounded man. The other three turn and run, and Silver finishes Merry off with his pistol. Then Livesey, Gray, and Ben Gunn appear, with their muskets, and the doctor leads the others, including Jim and Silver, in a chase after the three pirates to keep them from reaching the boats. But soon, realizing that they are between the still-running men and the boats, they stop to rest, and Dr. Livesey explains what has taken place. Ben Gunn had long ago found the treasure and had, little by little, removed it to his cave, as he had told the doctor on their first meeting. Thus Livesey, when he discovered the Hispaniola removed from the anchorage, had given the map and stores to the pirates, for he knew the map would now be useless and Ben Gunn had plenty of food — salted goat meat — for the squire's group. That morning, after returning to Ben Gunn's cave, he took Gunn and Gray across to the original treasure site in order to meet the pirates. The ghostly voice had been Gunn's idea.

They reach the boats, destroy one, and take the other to where Jim has left the ship. After replacing the anchor and leaving Gray to guard the Hispaniola, the rest go to Ben Gunn's cave, where the squire, who reluctantly tells Silver that he has promised not to prosecute him, meets them. And then they see the treasure, huge mounds of coin and gold bars. Captain Smollett greets them and they all, even Silver, celebrate with a hearty meal.

***Critical Study:***Naturally, the pirates are stunned by the lack of the fortune. The first to recover is Long John Silver, who hands Jim a pistol and moves so that the hole is between the five seaman and Jim and himself. Silver now behaves in a friendly manner toward Jim, a stark change from his early antagonistic behavior. The seaman jump into the pit and dig with their fingers, searching frantically for any gold at all. In a frenzy, George Merry screams at Silver and accuses him of knowing all along that the treasure was gone from the spot on the map.

Bravely, Silver faces the five remaining men and as Merry prepares to lead a charge against him , there are three musket-shots from the thicket. Merry tumbles, wounded, into the pit, another man falls down dead, and the three left alive turn and run. Silver shoots and kills Merry, just as the doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn appear. The doctor urges everyone to chase the seamen and head them off from the boats.

The doctor proceeds to explain the events that Silver and Jim do not know. Two months before the Hispaniola appeared, Ben Gun already had the treasure safely stored away in a cave. He had come upon the skeleton, rifled the positions, found and dug up the treasure, and carried it to his cave. After the doctor heard Gunn's story, Livesy allowed Silver to have the treasure map and the stockade - the rest of the party moved to the cave to guard the treasure. That morning, the doctor realized that Jim would be in great peril when the pirates discovered that the treasure was missing. Livesey desperately ran back to the cave to get Gray and Gunn and take them with them. Fearing that they might not make it on time, he sent the faster Gunn ahead, and Gunn ingeniously devised the idea of imitating Flint's voice. That trickery gave the doctor and Gray enough time to hide in ambush near the site before the treasure seekers arrived.

When the men reach the boats, they destroy one and then row the other toward the Hispaniola. Leaving Gray to guard the ship, the rest return to the cave where the captain lies beside a fire and coins and bars of gold, obviously Flint's treasure. At this point in the narration, the narrator points out that seventeen men from the Hispaniola died for this treasure. Everyone enjoys a hearty meal, including Long john Silver, who is as polite and as cheerful as he as initially on the journey to the island.

It is a standard and necessary device in this kind of adventure story, that of a quest, that the fortunes of the hero should be at their most critical point at the very moment when help arrives. Jim and Long john Silver face the wrath of the five pirates alone, and their fate seems sealed, but a last minute rescue is effected by the Doctor, seaman Gray, and Ben Gunn, whose action is, of course, appropriately prepared for and explained.

It is important that at this critical juncture in the story Jim and Long John Silver are joined together against the five pirates, even though Silver is - or was ­himself the leader of the pirates. The careful way in which Stevenson maneuvers Silver into this position is another of his devices for keeping the reader's sympathy on the side of the picturesque, even though the picturesque is intrinsically tied up with evil. Circumstances force Long john Silver to range himself on the side of Jim and his friends against the others, and huts we are able to contemplate and enjoy the good points in Silver's character without feeling that we are letting our sympathies fall on the wrong side.

The dual nature of Long John Silver's personality is again present in this chapter, as silver once again transforms himself, going again to the side of Jim and the doctor. Always, silver is pragmatic; not concerned in the least bit about principles or honor, he takes the way that he thinks will help him, at a minimum, survive and, at best, seize the treasure. At the end of the chapter, he is once again a humble, obedient, cheerful servant, while only hours before he had shown power, leadership, and a murderous rage.

***Critical Analysis:***Before the other pirates can grasp that the treasure is truly gone, Silver turns his thoughts to surviving the situation. Instantly, he aligns himself with Jim once more. Passing a loaded pistol to the boy, he whispers, "Stand by for trouble." At the same time he quietly moves to put the hollow between them and the other five men.

Accusations begin to fly that Silver knew all along that the treasure was gone. Silver is cool in the face of the men's rising fury. Prepared to lead the charge, George Merry calls Silver an "old cripple" and swears to have Jim's heart. But as he raises his arm, the crack of a musket is followed by two more shots. One pirate falls dead, and Merry tumbles into the hollow, still alive. Silver instantly fires "two barrels of a pistol into the struggling man." Simultaneously, [Dr. Livesey](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Treasure-Island/character-analysis/#Dr._Livesey), Abraham Gray, and Ben Gunn emerge from the woods "with smoking muskets." The last three living pirates turn and run for it.

It becomes clear now why the doctor surrendered the stockade and turned over the map to Silver. As Gunn gleefully explains, he had found and shifted the gold to a cave two months before the *Hispaniola's* arrival. The cave was clear of the malarial swamp, and Gunn had stocked it well with salted goats' meat. From the doctor's point of view—and knowing Gunn's secret—moving his party to the cave in exchange for a useless map was the perfect solution.

Now, hiking to the beach, the party destroys one of the gigs and takes the other to retrieve the *Hispaniola*. As they sail past Gunn's treasure house, they cheer [Squire Trelawney](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Treasure-Island/character-analysis/#Squire_Trelawney), who is standing guard. Leaving Gray to guard the ship, the others return to the cave. Inside are heaps of gold coins and mounds of gold bars glimmering in the firelight.

The theme of duty is again brought out in the chapter. Jim was initially cut out from [Dr. Livesey](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Treasure-Island/character-analysis/#Dr._Livesey)'s plans because he had deserted his duty. Yet, after learning the truth about Jim's desertion, the doctor feels duty-bound to protect him. Silver demonstrates his own selfish version of duty by switching his allegiance once again and siding with the honest men, who have the upper hand. However, as self-serving as Silver's motives are, his courage is never in question. He faces the five mutineers bravely.

Upon returning to Ben Gunn's cave, Jim finally sees the treasure and is struck by the untold blood and sorrow it had cost to amass. This touches on the theme of the consequences of greed as well as dreams versus reality. In all Jim's imaginings before the voyage began, he never considered the real-life horrors necessary to acquire such treasure.

At the end of the chapter Silver's remarkable ability to adapt to needs of a situation serves him well. A few short hours ago, he was the fierce, formidable leader of a pirate gang. Having rejoined the honest men, he transforms himself into the humble and helpful sea cook who shipped out from Bristol on the *Hispaniola*.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

Everyone is thunderstruck. [Silver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver) is the first to regain his composure and quickly think up a new plan. He slips a pistol to [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) and begins to quietly move away from the hollow. Then he nods at Jim, who whispers to Silver that he’s switched sides once again.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Although Silver had been just as focused on the treasure as the others, he quickly recognizes (as does Jim) that he’ll need to dream up a new plan as fast as possible in order to save himself.

***Summary part 2:***

The pirates leap into the pit, and [**Morgan**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters) finds one gold piece. He shakes it at [**Silver**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver), cursing at him for all their wasted efforts. [**Merry**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters) accuses Silver of knowing it all along, and while Silver casually makes fun of him, the other pirates are soon of Merry’s opinion. Soon they’re facing each other across the pit, two against the four (without [**Dick**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters)). Merry begins to make a speech, taking on his role of new captain, but suddenly Silver shoots into Merry’s body and he falls into the pit. The three others turn and run away.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Silver had quickly realized that the pirates would immediately turn against him once again, now that their guide to the treasure has proved useless. Now Silver is once again on Jim’s side, though he remains as merciless and cold-hearted as ever—it’s only thanks to luck that Merry, not Jim, is the one Silver kills.

***Summary Part 3:***

Instantly, the [doctor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/doctor-livesey), [Gray](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters), and [Ben Gunn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/ben-gunn) emerge from behind the trees. The doctor cries that they must chase the pirates away from the small boats they’ve left in an inlet. After pursuing them through the woods, they realize that the pirates have headed in the opposite direction, towards Mizzen-mast Hill. Gunn and Silver greet each other, and the group proceeds down-hill, with Gunn relating the long tale.

***Analysis Part 3:***

It seems that these three men have been watching all the while, and have been waiting until the moment of greatest tension in order to emerge from their hiding place. Now, though, a new challenge arises: they must prevent the pirates from escaping on the boats meant for themselves.

***Summary Part 4:***It was [Gunn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/ben-gunn) who had found the skeleton and the treasure, and he who had dug it up and carried it to a cave on the north-east part of the island for safekeeping. The afternoon of the attack, the [doctor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/doctor-livesey) had gotten this information from Gunn, so the next morning, seeing the Hispaniola gone, the doctor had given [Silver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver) the [map](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/symbols/the-map-of-treasure) and the provisions, since Gunn’s cave was well-stocked, as well as the stockade, so that the doctor could be certain the group could safely leave for the hill to keep watch over the treasure.

***Analysis Part 4:***Now Jim finally begins to learn just what had happened during the time he was imprisoned with the pirates. The doctor had given Silver the map in order to trick him and the other pirates into thinking that the treasure was awaiting discovery—and so that the pirates’ enemies could know exactly where they would be at a given time.

***Summary Part 5:***

That morning, when the [doctor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/doctor-livesey) found out that [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) would be part of the pirates’ surprise (and might be in danger), he had taken [Gray](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters) and [Gunn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/ben-gunn) across the island to lie in wait. Gunn, who had gone out ahead, hoped to play with his fellow pirates’ superstitions. [Silver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver) says that it was lucky Jim was there—otherwise they would have killed Silver, too, without a thought. Dr. Livesey agrees with this, cheerfully.

***Analysis Part 5:***

It turns out that Jim’s skepticism about the curses and spirits is proven right, as Ben Gunn was the mysterious voice in the trees. Livesey’s response to Silver underlines just how little the doctor thinks of the pirate, even if Silver is now supposedly on their side.

***Summary Part 6:***The group reaches the boats and head out around the coast to North Inlet. Passing around the hill, they catch sight of the [squire](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/squire-trelawney) waiting outside [Gunn](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/ben-gunn)’s cave. They finally reach the Hispaniola, which is in good shape, apart from the cut mainsail that [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) had dealt with earlier. They drop anchor and pull around to Rum Cove, near the cave.

***Analysis Part 6:***

With the moment of greatest danger and excitement now over, Jim prepares to actually discover the treasure that Gunn had dug up much earlier. He also is able to show the others that his previous escape was worth it, as they now have the ship back.

***Summary Part 7***

They climb to the cave and meet the [squire](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/squire-trelawney), who treats [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) kindly and doesn’t mention his escapade. The squire tells [Silver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver) that he’s a villain and impostor, who deserves all the blame and guilt for the men who have died, even if he has been told not to prosecute Silver. Silver salutes and thanks him, to which the squire cries that this is against his duty, not something to be thanked for. Inside the cave lies [Captain Smollett](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/captain-smollett), resting, and surrounded by heaps of coins and gold—the treasure that had cost the lives of seventeen men, not to mention all the other lives and ships sunk by its allure.

***Analysis Part 7:***

While the doctor had lectured Jim somewhat regarding his escape from the group, the squire mainly seems content with their current situation, and more willing to cast the blame on Silver than on Jim for all the violence and strife. Silver, in turn, is just as plucky and unconcerned with morality as usual. Jim, though, as he surveys the treasure, is more aware of the high human cost of such wealth.

***Summary Part 8:***

[Captain Smollett](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/captain-smollett) tells [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) that he’s done well, but that neither of them should go to to sea again. He asks [Silver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver) what he’s doing there: Silver says he’s returned to his duty, and the captain simply says, “Ah!” They enjoy a feast that night, and Silver remains at a slight remove from the rest, acting like the same bland and polite sailor who had begun the trip with them.

***Analysis Part 8:***

The captain hasn’t played a role in the plots on the island since being wounded, but his casual response to Silver suggests that he’s not exactly shocked that Silver has switched sides once again—they all now recognize his remarkable abilities.