***Treasure Island***

***Chapter 7:***

# *I go to Bristol*

***Brief Summary:***

* So preparations begin for their sea voyage, but nothing goes quite as planned.
* Doctor Livesey goes to London to find another doctor to cover for him while he's away, and Squire Trelawney goes to Bristol to arrange for their ship.
* Jim is left behind to imagine what the map is going to lead them to.
* Finally he gets a letter from Squire Trelawney.
* The letter is addressed to Doctor Livesey, but there's a note that says Jim can open it if Doctor Livesey is away.
* Squire Trelawney has found them a ship. It's called the *Hispaniola*, named after the Caribbean island that's home to the modern states of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
* Unfortunately, in hiring this ship, Squire Trelawney has *also* told everyone in Bristol that he's on a treasure hunt.
* Jim knows that Squire Trelawney's chattiness won't make Doctor Livesey happy.
* Tom Redruth, one of the squire's servants, who is reading the letter alongside Jim, thinks Squire Trelawney should be allowed to do whatever he wants since he's a squire.
* Jim reads on: Squire Trelawney has had some trouble finding a crew for the ship.
* One day, Squire Trelawney got lucky: an elderly sailor with one leg approached *him*.
* The man is a cook and wants to go out on one last sea voyage.
* The man tells Squire Trelawney that his name is Long John Silver.
* Squire Trelawney is impressed that the sailor has lost his leg in a British naval battle. He's sure that Long John Silver is honest.
* Long John Silver helps Squire Trelawney find the rest of the necessary crew, all tough-looking guys.
* In fact, Long John Silver is so very helpful that he convinces Squire Trelawney to fire two of the guys he had already hired because they seem to be "fresh-water swabs" (7.7) – in other words, bad sailors.
* Squire Trelawney seems to be in a great mood. He encourages Doctor Livesey to come down to Bristol as soon as possible, along with Jim and Tom Redruth, the servant.
* Squire Trelawney adds one small detail: his servant Blandly is going to send a search party after the *Hispaniola* if he doesn't hear from the squire and Doctor Livesey by August. It's now March.
* All in all, Squire Trelawney seems to be regarding this whole thing as a kind of game on the high seas, and he's very excited to get going.
* Finishing the letter, Jim is also thrilled. He's so excited that he despises the servant, Tom Redruth, for grumbling next to him.
* The next morning, Jim goes (with Tom Redruth as a guard) to the Admiral Benbow Inn to visit his mother one last time.
* Squire Trelawney has had the whole inn repainted, and his mother looks happy and comfortable.
* The next morning, Jim sets out on his first real trip away from home.
* Tom and Jim arrive at Bristol the following morning.
* Squire Trelawney is staying at an inn near the docks.
* The smell of the sea fills Jim with exciting dreams of sailors and voyages and distant places.
* Squire Trelawney appears in front of Jim all dressed up like a naval officer.
* He announces that they are going to set sail the next day.

***Synopsis:***

After a frustrating delay in preparations for the journey to Treasure Island, Jim is pleased to hear that Dr. Livesey has received a letter from Squire Trelawney describing the ship and crew that he has obtained. The ship has been procured through one of Trelawney’s acquaintances in Bristol, a man who seems all too ready to help him and has a poor reputation in the city.

The ship is called the Hispaniola. Trelawney relates that he had some trouble finding a crew for the voyage until he had the good fortune to meet up with an old one- legged sailor named Long John Silver. Silver tells Trelawney that he misses the sea and wishes to set sail again as the ship’s cook. Trelawney hires him, and Silver helps arrange the rest of the crew as well.

After a sad farewell with his mother, Jim sets out the next morning for Bristol, accompanied by Tom Redruth, another man who will be on the ship’s crew. At the inn in Bristol, they meet up with Trelawney, newly clothed in a sea officer’s outfit. Trelawney informs them that they will sail the next day.

***Critical Study:***

As Chapter 7 ("I Go to Bristol") begins, Jim is staying at the squire's Hall for his protection and that of the map, while Dr. Livesey is in London to arrange for someone to take over his medical practice and Squire Trelawney is in Bristol to buy and outfit a ship. After a few weeks, Jim and Tom Redruth, the squire's trusted servant and head gamekeeper, receive a letter from Trelawney that informs them he has bought a schooner, the Hispaniola, and has hired a crew (with the help and advice of a man called Long John Silver, whom he has engaged as ship's cook). He directs them to come as soon as possible to Bristol. So, after a day's visit with Jim's mother at the inn (repaired now and refurnished by the squire), Jim and Redruth set off by stage for Bristol, an overnight journey. Trelawney greets them and says they will sail the next day.

***Critical Analysis:***

This part begins while Jim is staying at the Hall, the squires' estate, supervised by old [Redruth](https://www.gradesaver.com/treasure-island/study-guide/character-list" \l "redruth), the gamekeeper, while [Dr. Livesey](https://www.gradesaver.com/treasure-island/study-guide/character-list#dr-livesey) is in London finding someone to take over his practice and Trelawney is in Bristol finding a ship and crew. A letter comes from Trelawney, indicating that the ship, the Hispaniola, is ready to sail. Jim is troubled by the fact that Trelawney has let everyone in Bristol find out about their treasure hunt. Trelwaney writes that he has purchased a ship. As a ship's cook, the squire has engaged a one-legged old sailor named [Long John Silver](https://www.gradesaver.com/treasure-island/study-guide/character-list#long-john-silver), who, in turn, found a crew of very tough sailors. Trelawney instructs Jim to go visit his mother before coming to Bristol. Jim is thrilled by the news and goes the next day to the Admiral Benbow to say goodbye to his mother. The squire fixed dup the inn and found a boy to take Jim's place at his mother's side. Feeling sad at the realization that he is leaving home, Jim is extremely critical of the boy.

The next day, Jim and Redruth travel to Bristol by coach. Jim, never having seen Bristol before, is enthralled by the sights, the sea, the tall ships, and the old sailors. In front of an inn, they come upon [Squire Trelawney](https://www.gradesaver.com/treasure-island/study-guide/character-list#squire-trelawney), who is dressed like an officer and has adopted the walk of a sailor. He informs the pair that the ship will sail the next day.

The most symbolic figure in this chapter is the boy that Squire Trelawney has hired to help Jim's mother. It is not until Jim sees this boy, whom he treats very harshly, that he realizes that he is indeed going to be gone for a prolonged period of time. The boy symbolizes Jim's childhood and the fact that no longer will he merely be a help at the family's inn, but he has been forced to grow up through circumstances that were of no fault of their own. The boy, therefore, represents what Jim used to be, something that he cannot return to.

In this chapter, again, [Robert Louis Stevenson](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/robert-stevenson) is a master of using foreshadowing in order to increase the suspense of the novel. Several clues are dropped that indicate to the reader that treachery is ahead of the adventure seekers. Readers can infer that Flint's desperate crew has realized that Trelawney has the treasure map, since the squire has not kept it secret. In addition, readers can guess that the sailor with one leg, Long John Silver, is probably the same one-legged seaman that [Billy Bones](https://www.gradesaver.com/treasure-island/study-guide/character-list#billy-bones) worried about.

Another foreshadowing element is added to the plot when Trelwaney informs the others that Long John Silver probably wants to sign on as a cook to get away from his wife "of color." This comment is not only racist, but can also be viewed as a sign that Long John Silver is actually a pirate, since readers of Robert Louis Stevenson's day would know that pirates often had their headquarters in the islands of the Caribbean, which had a large black population, and often married the women of the islands.

Analysis:

Preparations for the journey take longer than expected. At last a letter from [Squire Trelawney](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Treasure-Island/character-analysis/#Squire_Trelawney) announces that a fine ship, the *Hispaniola*, has been purchased and outfitted for the journey. Also, an excellent crew has been hired with the help of a seafaring man he had the good luck to meet. He is a one-legged tavern keeper named [Long John Silver](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Treasure-Island/character-analysis/#Long_John_Silver) and will serve aboard as ship's cook.

Jim's melancholy on leaving his mother is soon displaced by renewed anticipation of adventure when he and Redruth arrive in Bristol to meet Squire Trelawney. Aboard the schooner *Hispaniola* he soon will be "bound for an unknown island, and to seek for buried treasures!"

The clash of dreams with reality is spotlighted as Jim describes his imagined adventures, featuring a tropical paradise and made-up dangerous encounters with savages and wild animals. Clouds of foreboding overshadow these bright, romanticized daydreams when Jim explains that the reality of what happened on Treasure Island was far stranger and more tragic than anything he could have imagine.

This shift from bright dream to darker reality is repeated later in the chapter when Jim visits his mother before the voyage. He is in high spirits when he arrives and finds that [Squire Trelawney](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Treasure-Island/character-analysis/#Squire_Trelawney) has provided well for his mother. But soon his thoughts turn from adventure to what he is leaving behind. As he leaves, there is the sense that he is saying good-bye to childhood. Nevertheless, it is a necessary step if he's going to grow up. Delightful dreams of adventure return as soon as Jim reaches the port town of Bristol.

Information in Squire Trelawney's letter foreshadows trouble on the voyage. Though Jim makes no comment to Tom Redruth, he knows full well that Billy Bones greatly feared a one-legged seaman. Furthermore, this man Silver has taken over hiring the *Hispaniola*'s crew, even firing two sailors previously hired by Trelawney. However, the squire seems to trust Silver implicitly, which casts doubt on the idea that Silver is Billy's one-legged man.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) stays at the [doctor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/doctor-livesey)’s residence under the charge of the gamekeeper, [Redruth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters), while preparations are taking place, and spends a long time brooding over the [map](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/symbols/the-map-of-treasure) and wondering about this strange island.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Jim indulges his imagination as he wonders what kind of adventures await him, as he’s only known life at the inn so far.

***Summary part 2:***

In March, [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) and [Redruth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters) receive a letter from the [squire](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/squire-trelawney) saying that the ship is ready, and that everyone in Bristol has been most helpful once they realized that the crew is in search of treasure. Jim realizes that the [doctor](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/doctor-livesey) won’t like this news. The rest of the letter recounts how the squire met a ship-cook by chance, who had been sick but is now yearning to get back to sea. The squire hired him—[Long John Silver](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/long-john-silver), who lost a leg in the army—and Silver helped him recruit another six or seven crewmen. He learned that Silver has a bank account that’s never been overdrawn, as well as a wife, who is black, which he imagines is also a reason Silver wants to get back to sea.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The doctor had already warned the other members of the party not to breathe a word of their task to anyone else, since the pirates who ransacked the Admiral Benbow would almost certainly be aware that someone else had gotten their hands on the treasure map. The squire, however, is confident in his choices. Today we read his view of race and of women as prejudiced and unsavory: his assumption would have been a casual stereotype at the time.

***Summary Part 3:***

The next morning [Redruth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters) and [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) head back to the inn so that Jim can spend one final night with his [mother](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-s-mother). He finds her cheerful, with an apprentice-boy who has been helping her as Jim used to. At this Jim begins to cry, finally realizing that he is leaving home, not just going out in pursuit of adventures.

***Analysis Part 3:***

As Jim witnesses his mother and the new apprentice boy who seems to be taking his place, his tears once again signal that he has been thrown into adulthood perhaps before he is quite ready.

***Summary Part 4:***

The next morning [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/jim-hawkins) and [Redruth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters) travel to Bristol and walk to the port, where Jim revels in the smell of tar and salt and in all the magnificent ships. The [squire](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/treasure-island/characters/squire-trelawney) meets them and announces that they’ll be leaving the next day.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Nonetheless, by the time he reaches the port, Jim is feeling enamored with his new life and excited to embark on his new adventure, which seems to be already beginning.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

Well, sir, I thought I had only found a cook, but it was a crew I had discovered. Between Silver and myself we got together in a few days a company of the toughest old salts imaginable--not pretty to look at, but fellows, by their faces, of the most indomitable spirit. I declare we could fight a frigate. (7.6)

***Explanation 1:***

This is an excerpt from Squire Trelawney's letter to Doctor Livesey. Unlike Doctor Livesey's three chapters of first-person narration, which don't seem that different in tone from Jim's, Squire Trelawney really sounds like a different character. His use of language helps characterize him, cluing us in to his misplaced overconfidence. His language is full of emphatic statements like, "I declare we could fight a frigate" (a kind of ship). He says he has found "the toughest old salts imaginable," fellows "of the most indomitable spirit." Well, of course they're tough – they're pirates.

***Quotation 2:***

I was monstrously touched--so would you have been--and, out of pure pity, I engaged him on the spot to be ship's cook. Long John Silver, he is called, and has lost a leg; but that I regarded as a recommendation, since he lost it in his country's service, under the immortal Hawke. He has no pension, Livesey. Imagine the abominable age we live in! (7.5)

***Explanation 2:***

Squire Trelawney is such an easy mark: tell him a sob story about a veteran with no pension and he'll hire him on the spot. Why does Stevenson decide to include Squire Trelawney's lengthy letter in the body of Jim's narration? What effect does this have on the tone of this section of the novel?

***Quotation 3:***

I forgot to tell you that Silver is a man of substance; I know of my own knowledge that he has a banker's account, which has never been overdrawn. He leaves his wife to manage the inn; and as she is a woman of colour, a pair of old bachelors like you and I may be excused for guessing that it is the wife, quite as much as the health, that sends him back to roving. (7.11)

***Explanation 3:***

This is a moment of casual racism from Squire Trelawney. Long John Silver's wife is a woman of color, which appears to be the reason (according to Trelawney) that Long John Silver might want to leave home. First of all, the joke's on Trelawney: Long John Silver's wife is going to help him set up comfortably somewhere once he retires from pirating. Long John Silver is actually earning money so that he can get back to her. Second, Squire Trelawney's prejudices are a large part of what gets him and his friends into trouble in the first place: it's his assumptions about veterans that make him initially trust Long John Silver, much to his distress later on in the novel. So to conclude: Squire Trelawney is an idiot.

***Quotation 4:***

It was on seeing that boy that I understood, for the first time, my situation. I had thought up to that moment of the adventures before me, not at all of the home that I was leaving; and now, at sight of this clumsy stranger, who was to stay here in my place beside my mother, I had my first attack of tears. I am afraid I led that boy a dog's life, for as he was new to the work, I had a hundred opportunities of setting him right and putting him down, and I was not slow to profit by them. (7.13)

***Explanation 4:***

Jim is leaving the nest, and even though he's ready to go, he still regrets it a little bit once he realizes that it's actually happening. "This clumsy stranger," his mother's apprentice, is a symbol of Jim's own childhood, which he is now leaving behind to go on a treasure hunt. We wish our own transitions from childhood to adulthood had come with gold bars.