

CHAPTER 6

CAPTAIN SMOLLETT'S PLAN WAS TO LET SILVER AND HIS MEN go ashore and rest. Himself, the squire and the doctor would stay on the ship. They thought of taking the Hispaniola somewhere else, but there was no wind and they could not sail away. Plus, some of the pirates had stayed on board, and that was one more thing the men had to deal with.

So, they decided to wait for Silver to act first. Jim, however, didn't want to just sit and wait. Without telling his friends, he secretly grabbed a pistol and joined Silver's crew going to the island. As soon as the boat touched the shore, he jumped out and ran as fast as he could into the woods to get away from the pirates!

Jim didn't stop until he thought he was far from the pirates. Then he slowed down and began to look around. He was at the bottom of a steep hill. Then he noticed something jump behind a tree. He wasn't sure if it was a bear, a monkey, or a man, but it moved with the speed of a wild animal. Whatever it was, Jim wanted to get away from it, so he started running again! But the creature was too quick for him. Then Jim saw it was a man, though he was dressed in rags, had long, untidy hair, and looked wild. No longer afraid, the boy took out his pistol and walked towards the stranger. To his surprise, the man fell on his knees and lifted his arms.

"Have mercy," he said, "my name is Ben Gunn, and I haven't seen another man in three years."

"Three years?" cried Jim. "Were you shipwrecked?"

"No," replied Ben Gunn. "I was marooned." Marooning was a horrible punishment used by pirates. A man was left alone on a deserted island with a few supplies, where he then had to survive on his own. Ben Gunn put his hands together and begged: "You haven't got any cheese, have you? I've been dreaming of cheese for three years." Although Ben Gunn was strange looking, he seemed harmless. Jim decided to be friendly with him.

