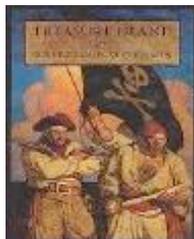


TREASURE ISLAND



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BOOK TWO – THE SEA-COOK

CHAPTER 8.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SPY-GLASS

WHEN I had finished my breakfast the Squire gave me a note addressed to John Silver, to be delivered to the tavern with the sign of the Spy-glass. He told me I would find the place easily, by following the line of the docks and keeping a lookout for a little tavern with a large brass telescope as a sign.

I set off, happy for a chance to see some more of the ships and seamen. I weaved my way along the busy dock and among a great crowd of people and carts and cargo, until I found the tavern.

The sign was newly painted and clean. There was a street on each side with large open doors, which made the large, low room pretty easy to see into.



The customers were mostly seafaring men, and they talked so loudly that I hung at the door, almost afraid to enter. As I was waiting, a man came out of a side room and I was sure he must be Long John.

His left leg was cut off just under his hip and under his left shoulder he carried a crutch, hopping about with it like a bird. He was very tall and strong, with a pale, smiling face. He seemed very happy, whistling as he moved about the tables, with a joke or a slap on the shoulder of his guests.

Now, to tell you the truth, when I first saw the words one-legged sailor in Squire Trelawney's letter, I was worried it was the same one I had been keeping my weather-eye open for at the Old Benbow.

But looking at this man I knew it could not be the same. I had seen the Captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man, Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer looked like.

This was a clean and happy Inn Keeper. This gave me the courage to go in and walk right up to the man propped on his crutch, talking to a customer.

"Mr. Silver, sir?" I asked, holding out the note.



"Yes, my lad," he said, "that is my name, to be sure. And who are you then?" Then he saw the Squire's letter and he seemed to me to almost jump.

"Oh!" he said, quite loudly, and put out his hand. "I see. You are our new cabin-boy... pleased to see you."

And he shook my hand with his large firm hand.

Just then one of the customers on the far side of the room got up quickly and ran for the door. He was out in the street but it was his hurry that had caught my eye. I knew it was the pale-faced man, who was missing two fingers that I had seen at the Admiral Benbow.

"Oh," I cried, "stop him! It's Black Dog!"

"I don't care who he is," cried Silver. "But he hasn't paid his bill. Harry, run and catch him."

One of the others who were near to the door jumped up and chased after him.

"Who did you say he was?" he asked. "Black what?"

"Dog, sir," I said. "Didn't Mr. Trelawney tell you about the Buccaneers? He was one of them."

"So?" cried Silver. "In my Inn! Ben, run and help Harry. One of those sailors, was he? Were you drinking with him, Morgan? Step up here."

The old grey-haired man who he had called Morgan came up looking pretty guilty.

"Now, Morgan," said Long John very sternly, "you had never seen that Black, Black Dog before, had you?"

"No sir, not I," said Morgan with a salute.

"You didn't know his name, did you?"

"No, sir."

"Well, Tom Morgan, it's lucky for you!" exclaimed the Inn Keeper.



"If you had been mixed up with the likes of him, you would not be allowed to put another foot in my Inn. What was he saying to you?"

"I don't really know, sir," answered Morgan.

"Have you got a head on your shoulders? You don't really know, don't you! Maybe you didn't know 'who' you were talking to, but come on, 'what' was he saying... voyages, captains, ships? Speak up! What was it?"

"We were talkin' of fishin'," said Tom Morgan.

"Fishing, were you? That's a mighty fine thing to talk about too. Go back to your seat, Tom."

As Morgan walked back to his table, Silver whispered to me, "He's quite an honest man, Tom Morgan, only stupid, you know. And now," he ran on again, aloud, "let's see... Black Dog? No, I don't know the name. Yet I kind of think I've... Yes, I have seen him before. He used to come here with a blind beggar."

"I bet he did, sir," I said. "I knew that blind man too. His name was Pew."

"It was!" cried Silver, now quite excited. "Pew! That was his name for sure. Ah, he looked like a shark, he did! If we catch this Black Dog, now, that will be news for Captain Trelawney! Ben's a good runner. He should run him down easily! He talked of fishing, did he...? I'll fish him!"

The whole time he was talking, he was stomping up and down the tavern, slapping tables.

I was now on alert, having found Black Dog at the Spy-glass Inn and I watched the cook with care. But he was too ready and too clever for me. By this time, the two men had come back, out of breath and said that they had lost track of him in a crowd. Long John Silver growled at them and then turned to me.

"See here, Hawkins," he said, "this does not look good for me. What is Captain Trelawney to think?"

I have this shark sitting in my own Inn, drinking my own rum! Then you come and tell me who he is and then I let him get away from us! Now, Hawkins, you need to help me with Captain Trelawney. You are smart, you are. I could see that when you first came in. Now, here we are. What could I do, with this old timber leg I hobble on?"

And then, all of a sudden, he stopped, and his jaw dropped as though he had remembered something.

"The bill!" he burst out. "Three glasses of rum! Why, shiver my timbers, I forgot his bill!"

And falling on a bench, he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. I could not help joining in and we laughed together, until the Inn went back to normal.

Wiping his cheeks at last he said, "You and me should get on well, Hawkins, but come now, we must get ready. I will put on my old cockerel hat, and go with you to Captain Trelawney, and let him know what just happened."



And he began to laugh again so much, that even though I did not see the joke, I again laughed with him. Walking along the dock, he told me all about the ships, their rig, tonnage, and where they were from.



He told me how one was unloading, another taking on cargo, and a third one was getting ready for sea. He told me about ships or seamen and made me repeat sailing words until I had learnt them well. That was the best.

Long John told the Squire and Dr. Livesey the story about Black Dog, with a great deal of spirit and truth. "That was how it was, now, wasn't it, Hawkins?" he would say, now and again, and I would always agree with him.

The two gentlemen were not happy that Black Dog had got away, but we all agreed we could not have done any more. So Long John took up his crutch and left.

"All hands aboard by four this afternoon," shouted the Squire after him.

"Aye, aye, sir," cried the cook on his way out.

"Well, Squire," said Dr. Livesey, "I don't always trust you, but I think John Silver will suit us."

"That man's a good find," said the Squire.

"Now then, Jim, get your hat and you may come aboard with us, to see the ship," said the Doctor.