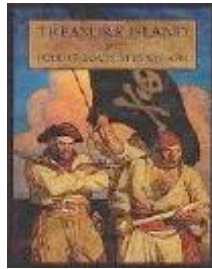


TREASURE ISLAND



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BOOK THREE – MY SHORE ADVENTURE

CHAPTER 13.

HOW MY SHORE ADVENTURE BEGAN

When I came up on deck the next morning, the look of the island had changed. The wind had died down during the night and we were now only a short distance to the coast. I could see yellow beaches, then tall trees and higher up were big hills of bare rock. The tallest hill on the island called the Spy-Glass, had a flat top like a hall table you could put a vase on.

The HISPANIOLA was creaking and groaning as it was rolling on the waves. I had to hang on tight to stay on my feet and I was not feeling too good with an empty belly.

I should have been excited at seeing land again after so long at sea.

Maybe it was my belly or the look of the island with its waves crashing on the beach but I hated the thought of going on to Treasure Island.



All the small boats had to be untied and made ready to go ashore. We were now going on a trip up the narrow passage to a safe cove behind the island. I helped with one of the boats but it was really hot and the men were not happy doing their work. Bob Anderson was in charge of my boat and rather than keep the crew working hard, Bob was complaining more than his crew!

"Well," he said under his breath, "at least it's not forever."

I thought this was a very bad sign. Up until today, the men had done their work quite happily and well. Long John was steering the ship as it made it's way closer in, because he already knew the way like the back of his hand.

We stopped just where the anchor was marked on the chart. At the bottom of the water was clean sand. When the anchor dropped into the water, clouds of birds flew up out of the trees with the noise of the splash.

When we made it to the cove, it had trees growing from the hills right down to the beach.



We could see two little rivers running down into the water and it looked like no one had ever been here before.

The air was very still and we could not hear the waves crashing out on the beach any more. We were fully protected in the still water.

The Doctor started sniffing at the air and said, "I don't know about treasure, but I'll bet my wig there is fever and sickness here."

If the men had been grumpy getting the boats ready, they were even worse when they came back to the main deck. Mutiny was starting to hang over our heads like a thunder-cloud.

We were not the only ones who were worried. Long John was hard at work going from man to man trying to smile and keep them all calm. If Captain Smollett gave an order, Silver would be on his crutch quickly with an "aye, aye, sir!". When the job he had ordered was finished, Silver started singing a song, one after another.

The Captain called a meeting in the cabin.

"Sir," said the Captain, "if I give one more order to the crew, the whole ship will end up in a fight and a mutiny could begin.

If we don't do something about it, we will all be in trouble. Right now we have only one man we can rely on to fix this."

"And who is that?" asked the Squire.

"Silver, sir," replied the Captain. "He is as nervous as you and I. He does not want things to get out of hand yet either. So, I have a plan. I think we should let the men go on to the island for the afternoon. But..., the plan could go, three ways...

If they all go, we can fight for the ship.

If none of them go, then we will have to lock ourselves in the cabin and try to hold them off.

If some of them go and some of them stay, then I think Silver will go too and have a hard word with them. Then when he brings them back on board, he will make sure they follow our orders again. "

So, that is what they would do. They gave out loaded pistols to all the Squire's trusted men, such as Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth. Then Captain Smollett went on deck and spoke to all the crew.

"My good men," he said, "it has been a hot day and I know you are all tired and out of sorts. A trip ashore might be what you need. As you have got the boats ready in the water, you are all free to go on to the land for the afternoon. I will fire a gun half an hour before the sun goes down so you know when to come back on board."

Everyone gave, such a big cheer, it sent the birds up in to the air again. They were so excited.

I think, the silly men thought they could find the treasure on their own as soon as they landed.

The Captain left the deck straight away. He wanted Silver to arrange the men to go ashore. It was as plain as day to me, that the men thought Silver was the Captain.

But this was a chance to see who were the trusted men on board and who was going to follow Long John Silver. It was one thing to like the idea of a mutiny, but it was quite another, to take over a ship and murder the Captain and Gentlemen on board.

At last, a group was made up to go ashore. Six men were to stay on board, and twelve would go with Silver.

Just then I had a mad thought; to try and help save our lives. Now that the group was split in two, the chance of a fight happening now, was not very likely. If the Captain did not need my help right now, then I could sneak away with Silver and keep an eye on them.

I slipped over the side of the ship and curled up inside one of the nearest boats just as they were pulling away from the ship.

"Is that you, Jim? Keep your head down," said one of the oarsmen.

But Silver, from the other boat, looked over and called out to ask if Jim was on board. Right then, I started to regret what I had done. The boats raced for the beach, but the boat I was in was lighter and we hit the shore first. I grabbed a branch and swung myself out and in to the nearest bushes.

"Jim, Jim!" I could hear Silver shouting from the boats as they were still rowing in.

I ran as fast as I could into the bushes until I could not run any more.