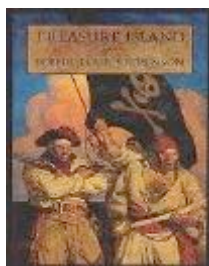


TREASURE ISLAND



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BOOK FOUR – THE STOCKADE

CHAPTER 16.

“HOW THE SHIP WAS ABANDONED”: BY THE DOCTOR

It was about half past one when the boats went to shore from the HISPANIOLA. The Captain, the Squire, and I (the Doctor), were in the cabin still talking about plans. If there had been just a breath of wind, we would have fought the six mutineers who were left behind and sailed back out to sea. But there wasn't any wind. On top of that, Hunter came down and told us Jim Hawkins had jumped into a boat and had gone to shore with the rest of them. We ran up to the deck, as we were worried if he would be safe and if we would ever see him again.

The smell was quite nasty and made me feel sick. I could smell fever and upset stomachs. The six men left behind were sitting under the shade of one of the sails and grumbling to each other.

On shore, we could see the two boats tied up and a man sitting in each one. We could hear one man singing to himself. It was hard just waiting around. So we all agreed, Hunter and I should take a jolly-boat and go to shore to have a look around. The two boats were to the right of the cove, but Hunter and I headed straight in. Looking at the chart, we were headed in the direction, of the stockade.



The two men guarding their boats seemed surprised when we showed up and stopped singing. I could hear them talking about what they should do. If they had gone and told Silver we were in a jolly-boat, things may have been different. But I guess they had their orders to stay and guard their boats.

There was a slight bend in the shore-line and we steered past it, before we pulled our boat in, out of sight of the men. I jumped out and ran as fast as I could, without losing my hat and carrying my belt of pistols ready for any danger.

The stockade was only a short distance away.

The stockade was on top of a small grassy hill and it had a small waterfall with fresh clean water. It was a small log-house made of wood to fit, at the very most, twelve people in it. There were gaps in the wood just big enough to put a gun through.



The space around this had been cleared and there was a very high fence without a door or a gate. The fence was too strong for anyone to pull down in a hurry but also, too open to hide behind.

If you stood in the log-house, you would be able to shoot at anyone who was caught behind the fence. The only thing you needed was food, so you could stay there a long time. What I liked most about the place was the fresh water. Although we had plenty of guns, food and good wines in the cabin of the HISPANIOLA... we did not have water.

I was thinking about what to do, when I heard a man's deathly cry from the island. It sounded as though he had come to a violent death.

My heart stopped as I thought, "Jim Hawkins is gone!"

There was no time to "dilly-dally" in our work. I made up my mind to get back to the jolly-boat and with strong Hunter pulling on the oars, we soon made it back to the ship.

I found all the men shaken, from the sound that they had heard too. The Squire was as white as a sheet! One of the six men was not much better.

"That man," said Captain Smollett, nodding to the one who almost fainted, "is new to this work. I think he is so scared, we could get him to join our side."

I told my plan to the Captain, and we quickly worked out how to go about it. We put old Redruth in the galley between the cabin and the bow, we three, loaded guns and a mattress for protection.

Hunter brought our boat under the stern of the ship, while Joyce and I set to work, loading her with gunpowder tins, guns, biscuits, barrels of pork, a cask of rum, and my medicine chest. At the same time, the Squire and the Captain stayed on deck, and spoke to Israel Hands.

"Mr. Hands," he said, "We both have a belt of pistols. If any of the six of you, make a signal of any kind, you are dead."

They all looked shocked. They were taken below deck where they saw Redruth waiting for them in the galley. Then one of them popped his head out again on deck.

"Down, fool!" cried the Captain.

The head popped back again and we didn't hear a peep out of the six worried seamen.

By the time, we had thrown as much as we could into the jolly-boat, Joyce and I got out through the stern port-hole and rowed for shore again, as fast as we could. This time, when we went past the two men guarding their boats on shore, they took a bit more notice.



Just before we turned the bend, I saw one of them jump out of their boat and run up the beach. I thought I should maybe change my plan and destroy their boats, but I was worried that Silver and the other men might be close by.

We landed in the same place as before and started taking the supplies up to the log-house. All three of us made the first trip, carrying as much as we could. Then Joyce stayed behind to guard the supplies with his guns.

Hunter and I kept loading up and going back and forth to the stockade until every thing was out of the boats and safe.

Then Hunter and Joyce stayed to guard the supplies and I rowed back to the HISPANIOLA.

It was very risky to load up the jolly-boat again. But while they had more men than us, we had bigger guns. Before they could get close enough for pistol shooting, we would be able to shoot at least some of them, with our guns.

The Squire was waiting for me at the stern window, looking a much better colour. We started loading the boat again as fast as we could. We could not take all of the gunpowder, so we dropped the rest overboard to the bottom of the water.



By this time the tide was starting to go out and we could hear voices coming from the two boats on shore. We had to hurry!

Redruth walked backwards from his place in the galley, making sure that he was not followed and dropped into the boat followed by Captain Smollett.

"Now, men," he yelled, "can you hear me?" There was no answer from the galley.

"It is you, Abraham Gray I am speaking to." No reply still.

"Gray," called Captain Smollett, even louder, "I am leaving the ship, and I order you to come with your Captain. I know you are a good man and not as bad as you make out. I am looking at my watch and I'll give you thirty seconds to join me."

All was quiet.

"Hurry up!" hollered the Captain, "I am risking my life and the lives of these good gentlemen every second."

We could hear a scuffle, the sound of blows, and then out burst Abraham Gray with a knife cut on the side of his cheek. He came running to the Captain like a puppy being called by its' owner.

"I'm with you, sir," he said, out of breath.

The next moment he and the Captain dropped down to the jolly-boat with the rest of us and we moved away from the ship. But we were not on shore safe in our stockade yet.