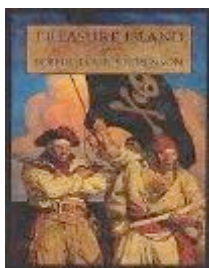


TREASURE ISLAND



Author – Robert Louis Stevenson

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar

BOOK FOUR – THE STOCKADE

CHAPTER 20.

SILVER'S EMBASSY BY: JIM HAWKINS

I looked through a hole in the wood and I could see two men just outside the stockade. One of them, was waving a white flag. The other, was Silver standing close by to him. It was early in the morning and still very cold. The sky was blue and the sun was just starting to come up. The men were just standing in the shadows and a low white fog hung around their legs.

"Stay inside, men," said the Captain. "I'll bet you this is a trick."

Then he called to the buccaneers.

"Who goes there? Stop, or we will fire!"

"Flag of truce," cried Silver.



The Captain was inside, keeping himself out of the way in case a shot was fired.

He turned and gave us orders, "Dr. Livesey watch on the north side, Jim, the east side. Gray, watch the west side. All men load guns. Hurry men, and be careful."

Then he turned again to face the mutineers.

"And what do you want, with your flag of truce?" he cried.

This time it was the other man who replied.

"Captain Silver, sir, asking to come on board and talk," he shouted.

"*Captain Silver!* I don't know him. Who is he?" cried the Captain.

We could hear him add under his breath, "Captain, is it? Over my dead body!"

Long John called out, "Me, sir. These poor lads have chosen me as Captain, after you 'left' them, sir"

"But we are willing to forget it, if we can come and talk. All I ask is your word, Captain Smollett. Let me leave again safe and sound, with a minute to get out of range before a gun is fired."

"My man," said Captain Smollett, "I do not wish to talk to you. If you wish to talk to me, you can come. If you try any funny stuff... may the Lord help you!"

"Good enough for me, Captain," shouted Long John cheerily. "You are a gentleman and true to your word."

We could see the man who carried the flag of truce, try to hold Silver back. Silver just laughed at him and slapped him on the back. Then he walked to the stockade, threw his crutch over, got a leg up, and with great skill got over the fence and dropped safely to the other side. I was so interested in what was going on, I had already left my lookout on the east side. I had crept up behind the Captain, who had sat down in the doorway. His elbows were on his knees, his head in his hands and his eyes watching the water boil in the old iron kettle.

Silver found it hard to get across the soft, steep sand with his crutch. He soon made it though, and he was wearing a new blue coat with big brass buttons and a fine lace hat.

"Here you are," said Captain Smollett, lifting his head. "You had better sit down."

"Aren't you going to let me inside, Captain?" complained Long John. "It's very cold this morning to be sitting on the sand, sir."

"Why, Silver," said the Captain, "if you wanted to, you could sit on your ship. It's your own doing. You are either my ship's cook or, Captain Silver. You are a common mutineer and a pirate. If you are a pirate, then you can go hang!"

"Well, well, Captain," replied Silver, as he sat down on the sand, "you'll have to give me a hand up again, that's all.

A pretty place you have here. Ah, there's Jim! Good morning Jim, Doctor. Why, everyone is here like a happy family, in a manner of speaking."

"If you have anything to say, you better say it," said the Captain.

"Right." replied Silver.

"About last night, some of you are pretty handy with a gun. Some of my people were a bit shaken. Maybe I was a bit shaken too and maybe that's, why I am here. But you hear me, Captain. I won't let it happen again! We will all have to take watch and ease off a bit on the rum.

Maybe you thought us all drunk but I was sober and it was only that I was dog-tired. If I had woken up a second earlier, I would have caught you in the act, I would. He wasn't dead when I got to him."

"Well?" said Captain Smollett as cool as can be.

Everything Silver said was a riddle to him, but you would never have guessed it, from the way he spoke.

I, on the other hand, had a slight idea of what he was talking about. I thought Ben Gunn had paid the buccaneers a visit while they were all drunk together, around their fire. I also reckon, happily, that maybe we only had fourteen enemies left to deal with.

"Well, here it is," said Silver. "We want that treasure, and we will have it! I am sure you would just like to save your lives. You have a map, don't you?"

"Maybe we do," replied the Captain.

"Oh, well, I know you have and we want your map," said Long John. "You needn't be so rough with me. I never meant you any harm. "

"You don't fool me," cut in the Captain. "We know exactly what you meant and we don't care! Right now, as you can see, you can't do it."

And the Captain looked at him calmly and started to fill his pipe.

"If Abraham Gray..." Silver started to say.

"Stop there!" cried Smollett. "Gray told me nothing and I didn't ask him anything. What's more, I would see you, him and this whole island, blown clean out of the water first! "

This little show of temper seemed to calm Silver down.

"Fair enough," he said. "Now seeing you are about to smoke a pipe, Captain, I will join you."

He filled a pipe and lit it. The two men sat quiet for a while, looking at each other in the face.



"Now," resumed Silver, "here's what I want. You give us the map to get the treasure. You also stop shooting at poor seamen and attacking them while they are asleep. If you do that, we'll offer you two choices.

One, you come back on board with us, and once the treasure is loaded, then I will give you my word of honour, I'll put you all back on shore somewhere safe.

Or two, you can stay here and take your chances. We'll share the supplies with you, man for man and I'll give you my word, again to speak to the first ship we see and send them back here to pick you up. Now, you have to agree, you could not get two better offers than that. Of course, what I say to you also applies to everyone else here, in this log-house."

Captain Smollett stood up and knocked out the ash in his pipe.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"That's it!" said John. "If you don't take one of those options, this is the very last time you will hear from me, except for cannon balls."

"Very good," said the Captain. "Now you will hear me. If you all come to me one by one, without your guns or pistols, I will put you all in chains and take you back to England for a fair trial. If you don't, my name is Alexander Smollett. I have sailed ships flying the flag of my country all my life and I will see all of you in Davy Jones – at the bottom of the ocean. You can't find the treasure. You can't sail the ship. You can't fight us... Gray, on his own, got away from five of you! Your ship is stuck in a low tide with the wind blowing the wrong way to sail right now, Silver. I stand here and say to you, these are the last words you will hear from me. I'll put a bullet in your back if I meet you again. Now, get up and get out of this place as fast as you can."

Silver's face looked very angry. He shook the ash out of his pipe.

"Give me a hand up!" he cried.

"Not me," snorted the Captain.

"Who'll give me a hand up?" he roared.

Not one of us moved. He growled as he crawled along the sand until he got hold of the edge of the log-house and up on to his crutch.

Then he spat into the fresh drinking water.

"There!" he cried. "That's what I think of you. Before the hour's up, I'll tear down your old log-house and laugh. Those of you that die will be the lucky ones!"



He stumbled off down the sand and after trying four or five times to get back over the stockade fence, was helped by the man with the flag of truce. They both took off in a flash back into the trees.