

TREASURE ISLAND



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BOOK FIVE – MY SEA ADVENTURE

CHAPTER 22.

HOW MY SEA ADVENTURE BEGAN

The mutineers did not return that day and not another shot was fired. We had time to help the wounded and get dinner. Squire and I cooked outside, even with the danger. All we could hear were the loud groans from the Doctor's patients. Out of the eight men who had been wounded, only three were still alive. Hunter, Captain Smollett and one of the pirates.

In the end, the pirate died and Hunter found it hard to breathe all day. The bones in his chest, had been crushed by the blow. During the night Hunter passed away quietly. The Captain, had pretty bad wounds to his shoulder and leg but his lungs and heart were all good. The Doctor said he would get better but he must not walk or move his arm and get lots of rest.

My own cut across the knuckles was nothing and Dr. Livesey put a bandage on it. He gave my ears a gentle tug and smiled at me.

After dinner the Squire and the Doctor sat by the Captain's side talking. Then just after midday, the Doctor put on his hat, pistols and cutlass then put the map in his pocket. With a gun over his shoulder he set off through the trees.

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the log-house, so we couldn't hear what they had to say. Gray took his pipe out of his mouth and forgot to put it back again, he was so surprised at what he just saw.

"Why, in the name of Davy Jones," he said. "Is Dr. Livesey mad?"

"No way," I said.

"Well, shipmate," said Gray, "he may not be mad but if he's not, then I must be."

"I think the Doctor has an idea and if I am right, he's going to see Ben Gunn," I replied.

The log-house was very hot and the sand inside the fence was burning with the midday sun. I got another thought in my head, about the Doctor walking in the cool shadow of the forest with the birds about him and the nice smell of pine trees.

I wasn't enjoying sitting around with so much blood about me and so many poor dead bodies lying here. I was washing out the log-house and the things from dinner. All the time, my need to escape grew stronger. When nobody was looking, I filled both my coat pockets with biscuits. I was foolish, but I was going to be as careful as I could and the biscuits would stop me from starving for at least one day.

The next thing I took, were two pistols and as I already had gun powder and bullets, I felt I was ready. My plan was to go and find the white rock and see if the boat that Ben Gunn had hidden, was there. As I was pretty sure I would not be allowed to leave, the only way to do it was to slip out while they were not looking. I knew it was wrong, but I had made up my mind.

When the Squire and Gray were busy helping the Captain with his bandages, the coast was clear. I made a run for it over the stockade and into the thick trees. It was only then, that I realised I had left only two men to guard the log-house.

I made my way straight for the east coast of the island to avoid all chance of being seen from the ship. It was now late afternoon and I could hear the wind from the sea breeze in the top of the trees. Then I saw the blue sea and the surf with its foam along the beach. I walked along the sand beside the surf feeling very happy.

I had now gone far enough to the south and I hid under some thick bushes and crept out to the point. From here, I could see where the HISPANIOLA was with the Jolly Roger flag flying and the open sea behind it. I could see one of the boats with Long John Silver in it and the pirate with the red scarf.



He was leaning over the stern talking and laughing with Silver. I could not hear what they were saying, as I was too far away.

All at once I heard a horrid, scream, which made me jump but then I saw it was the voice of Captain Flint, the bird was sitting on Silver's wrist. Not long after, I saw the boat leave the HISPANIOLA for the shore and the man with the red scarf and another man stayed on deck.



Fog was starting to come down and it would soon be dark, so I had to get moving if I was going to find the boat that day.

I could see the white rock, but it took me a good while to get to it. I had to crawl among the bushes and it was almost night by the time I put my hand on it. Right below the rock there was a small area of green grass, hidden by the thick low bushes. Sure enough, in the middle, was a little tent made of goat-skins.

I dropped into grass and lifted the side of the tent. There was Ben Gunn's boat. It was very "home-made". A crooked frame made of tough wood and a cover of goat's skin with the hairy side on the inside. The boat was very small, even for me, and I didn't believe it would float with a full-sized man.

There was also a double paddle for rowing. It was like the worst boat I had ever seen made by man. But what it did not have in beauty, it made up for by being light and easy to carry.

Well, now that I had found the boat, you would think I had done my job and could return to the log-house. But then I had another thought. I liked the idea of sneaking out under the cover of night, to cut the HISPANIOLA loose and let her run ashore wherever she liked.

In my mind, I thought the mutineers, after their fight that morning, would want to pull up their anchor and sail away to sea. I thought it would be a good idea to stop them.

I could see the watchmen did not have a boat, and so I could row out without much risk. I sat down to wait for dark and made a good meal of biscuits. It was the perfect night for my plan. The fog had now come down and all Treasure Island was covered in blackness.

I lifted the goat-skin boat (Coracle) on to my back and made my way out of the grass.



There were only two things I could see.

One was the big fire on the shore, where the pirates were all talking and drinking. The other was a hint of light in the dark, which showed me where the ship was. She had swung around with her bow towards me and the only lights on were in the cabin.

The tide was going out and I had to wade through a long patch of swampy sand. I sank a few times above the ankle before I got to the edge of the water. After a lot of effort, I waded a little way in to the water and put my new boat down.