

# TREASURE ISLAND



**Author - Robert Louis Stevenson**

Adapted for The Ten Minute Tutor by: Debra Treloar

## BOOK FIVE – MY SEA ADVENTURE

### CHAPTER 24.

#### THE CRUISE OF THE CORACLE

It was a new day when I woke up and found myself bobbing at the south-west end of Treasure Island. The sun was shining but I was still in the shade of the cliffs of the Spy-glass. The cliffs were forty or fifty feet high and covered with huge mounds of fallen rock.

I was not that far out and my first thought was to paddle in and land. But I gave up that idea because among the fallen rocks



the waves spouted and roared with heavy spray flying and falling every second. If I went any closer I would be crushed to death on the rough shore or trying to scale the huge cliff face.

I could also see sea lions and even though they were pretty harmless, they looked like too big an effort to take on. I had a better chance, to head north, where at low tide, I could get to the yellow sand.



To the north of that, again, there was a cape. The Cape of the Woods, as it was marked upon the chart. It was covered in tall green pines, which grew down to the edge of the sea.

I remember Silver saying the current goes northward along the whole west coast of Treasure Island. As I seemed to be heading that way anyhow, I decided to save my strength and stay lying down to look for the safer, Cape of the Woods.

The breeze was gentle and the swell on the sea was smooth. I started to grow very bold and sat up to try my skill at paddling. But even a small shift in my weight would make big changes in how the Coracle travelled. I had hardly moved when the boat, ran straight down a slope of water so steep, I got giddy.

With a spout of spray, it fell deep into the side of the next wave. I was soaking wet and terrified. I fell right back into my old position, as the Coracle settled again and kept going. It was plain she was not to be disturbed. I wondered what hope had I left, of reaching land? Moving just a tiny bit and with great care, I started to slowly bale out the salty water with my sea-cap. Then I found each wave, instead of being big, was now becoming smoother and glossy.

"Well, now," I thought, "it is clear I must lie where I am and not disturb the balance."

Very slowly, I could see I was making my way in. It was lucky too, as now I was dying of thirst. With the hot sun above and the sea-water drying into salt on my lips, it made by throat burn. As I came around the next point, I suddenly saw something that changed all my thoughts.

Right in front of me... not even half a mile away, was the HISPANIOLA under sail. I was so thirsty for water, that I didn't know whether to be glad or sorry at seeing her. I



could only stare in wonder. The HISPANIOLA had her main sail up and the beautiful white sails shone like snow in the sun. When I first saw her, she was headed on a course north-west and I thought the men on board must be going around the island back to the anchorage. Then she began to head more westward, so I thought they had spotted me and were after me.

At last, though, she faced right into the wind and stopped helpless, with her sails flapping.

"Clumsy fellows," I said. "They still must be as drunk as owls."



Captain Smollett would have set the sails right, I thought.

In the mean time, the ship sailed swiftly for a minute or so and then ended up dead in the water. Again and again this happened... to and fro, up and down, north and south, east and west. The HISPANIOLA sailed by swoops and dashes. It looked clearly to me, that nobody was steering. Where were the men? I thought they were either, dead drunk or had left her. Maybe if I could get on board, I could return the ship to her Captain.

The current was taking the Coracle and ship in the same direction at an equal rate. If only I was game enough to sit up and paddle. I was sure that I could catch up to her. The plan had an air of adventure that I liked. As I got up, another cloud of spray hit me, but this time I stuck to it and paddled toward the HISPANIOLA. I was gaining fast on the ship and couldn't see anybody on the decks.



I hoped she was deserted but if not, the men were likely to be drunk below deck. I thought I could batten them down to take over the ship and then, at last, I had my chance. The breeze fell for some seconds and the current slowly turned her. The HISPANIOLA showed me her stern, with the cabin window still open and the lamp over the table still burning. The main sail hung like fallen banner. She was standing still, except for the current.

I was only one hundred yards from her when the wind came up again. In a clap, the sails filled and she was off again, rising and diving like a swallow. At first, my heart sunk but then I was glad, as she had come around again and I could see the white wake of water behind her.

Then, all of a sudden, I knew. I hardly had time to act and save myself. I was on top of one wave, when the ship came up and over the next one. I sprang to my feet and leaped, pushing the Coracle under water.

With one hand I caught the rope from the sail and I stood there panting. A dull thud told me that the ship had come down off the wave and had struck the Coracle.

Now I had no way to get back off the HISPANIOLA!