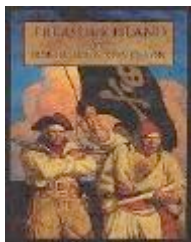


# TREASURE ISLAND



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## BOOK SIX – CAPTAIN SILVER

### CHAPTER 30.

#### ON PAROLE

We were all woken up by a clear, hearty voice calling us from the edge of the forest.

"Log house, ahoy!" it cried. "It's the Doctor here."

Although I was glad to hear his voice, I felt ashamed to look him in the face after leaving them behind. He must have walked in the dark, as the sun had hardly risen. I could see him standing, like Silver at another time, up to the mid-leg in the creeping fog.

"Doctor! Top of the morning to you, sir!" cried Silver, awake and beaming. "Bright and early. To be sure it's the early bird, that catches worm, as the saying goes. George, shake your timbers, son, and help Dr. Livesey over the stockade."

He stood on the hill with his crutch under his elbow and one hand on the side of the log-house. He seemed just like the old Long John in voice and manner.

"We've got a surprise for you too, sir," he continued. "We've a little stranger here... ha! ha! We've a new boarder and lodger, sir. He slept like a log last night, he did, right alongside old John, and he looks as fit as a fiddle."

By this time, Dr. Livesey was across the stockade and pretty close to the cook. I could hear the change in his voice as he said, "Not Jim?"

"The very same Jim, as ever," said Silver.

The Doctor stopped still, although he did not speak.

"Well, well," he said at last, "duty first, as you say yourself, Silver. Let me see to these patients of yours first."

A moment later he had entered the log house and with one nod to me, went to work among the sick. He seemed quite calm even though he must have known that his life hung by a thread, among these dangerous men. I suppose he made them feel at ease, as though he was still the ship's Doctor and they were still the faithful crew of the ship.

"You're doing well, my friend," he said to the man with the bandaged head, "if ever any person had a close shave, it was you. Your head must be as hard as iron. Well, George, how goes it?"

You're a pretty colour. I'm sure, your liver, is upside down. Did you take that medicine? Did he take that medicine, men?"

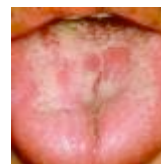
"Aye, aye, sir, he took it," returned Morgan.



"Because, you see, since I am a mutineers' Doctor, or prison Doctor as I prefer to call it," said Dr. Livesey in his nicest way, "I make it a point of honour not to lose a man for the King (bless him!) and the gallows."

The pirates looked at each other but swallowed the truth in silence.

"Dick doesn't feel well, sir," said one.



"Doesn't he?" replied the Doctor. "Well, step up here, Dick, and let me see your tongue. No, I would be surprised if he did feel well! The man's tongue looks bad enough to frighten the French. Another fever!"

"Ah, there," said Morgan, "that's what you get for spoiling bibles."

"That's what you get," replied the Doctor, "for not knowing good air from poison air, and dry land from swampy infectious holes. I think you'll suffer before you get that malaria out of your system. Why would you camp in a bog? Silver, I'm surprised at you! You are smarter than many, but you don't seem to have any idea about the rules of health."

"Well," he added after he had given them all his medicine, "that's done for today. Now I would like to have a talk with the boy, please."

He nodded his head my way. George Merry was at the door, spitting and spluttering over some bad-tasting medicine. But when he heard the Doctor's request, he swung around with a deep flush and cried "No!" and cursed. Silver struck the barrel with his open hand.

"Silence!" he roared and looked around like a lion.

"Doctor," he went on in his normal voice, "I was thinking about how you like the boy. We're all very grateful for your kindness, and put faith in you and your medicine. I have an idea that will suit us all. Hawkins, will give me your word of honour, as a young gentleman, not to run off?"

I readily gave my word that I would stay.

"Then, Doctor," said Silver, "you just step outside the stockade, and when you're there, I'll bring the boy down on the inside. I reckon you can talk through the timbers. Good day to you, sir, and our regards to the Squire and Captain Smollett."

The noise of protest, which got nothing but Silver's black looks, broke out as soon as the Doctor left the log house. Silver was accused of playing both sides. As it seemed so obvious, in this case, I could not see how he was going to stop their anger.

But he called them all the fools and said that I needed to talk to the Doctor, as he floated the chart in their faces. He asked them if they could afford to break the treaty on the exact day they were going treasure hunting.

"No, by thunder!" he answered himself. "We must break the treaty when the time is right; and until then we obey that Doctor."

Then he ordered them to get the fire lit, and walked out on his crutch and his hand on my shoulder, leaving them confused, rather than sure.

"Slow, lad, slow," he said. "They might turn on us in a twinkle of an eye if we seem to hurry."

Very slowly we walked across the sand to where the Doctor waited for us on the other side of the stockade. As soon as we were within speaking distance, Silver stopped.

"You make a note of this also, Doctor," he said, "the boy will tell you how I saved his life, and how I was 'deposed' for it too. Doctor, when a man's, sailing as close to the wind as me... surely you would give him one good word wouldn't you? Please bear in mind, it is not just my life now, it's the boy's as well. I ask that you'll speak fairly of me, Doctor and give me a bit of hope to go on with."

Silver was a changed man once he was away from his friends and the log-house. His cheeks seemed to have fallen in and his serious voice trembled.

"Why, John, you're not afraid, are you?" asked Dr. Livesey.

"Doctor, I'm not a coward. Not SO much!" and he snapped his fingers. "Even if I was, I wouldn't say it. But honestly, I have the shakes for the gallows. You're a good man and I know you won't forget the good things I've done any more than you'll forget the bad. Write down that I stepped aside and left you and Jim alone."

So, he stepped back a little way, until he was out of earshot, and sat down on a tree-stump and began to whistle. He looked at us every now and then, to make sure he could still see us both, as well as the pirates he left busy lighting the fire and making breakfast.

"So, Jim," said the Doctor sadly. "Here you are. You have made your bed and so you must sleep in it, my boy. I do not blame you, but be it kind or unkind I have to say this. If Captain Smollett had been well, you should not have gone off but the fact that he was ill and couldn't help us, it was very cowardly!"

I began to cry. "Doctor," I said, "you might spare me. I have blamed myself enough and I should be dead by now if Silver hadn't stood up for me.

Doctor, I am ready to die... and I know I deserve it... but what I fear most is torture. If they come to torture me..."

"Jim," the Doctor interrupted, and his voice was quite soft,

"Jim, I can't have this. Climb over, and we'll run for it."

"Doctor, I gave my word," I said.

"I know, I know... We can't help that, Jim. I'll take it on my shoulders, holus bolus, blame and shame, my boy. But I can't let you stay here. Jump! One jump, and you're out, and we'll run like the wind," he cried.

"No," I replied, "you know you wouldn't do it yourself... neither would the Squire or the Captain. So neither will I. Silver trusted me and I gave my word. Back I go. But, doctor, you did not let me finish. If they come to torture me, I might let slip a word of where the ship is. I got the ship, part by luck and part by risk and she lies in the North river. She's on the southern beach, and just below high water. At half tide she must be high and dry."

"The ship!" exclaimed the Doctor. Quickly I told him my adventures, and he listened to me in silence. "There is a kind of fate in this," he said when I had finished. "Every step of the way, it is you who saves our lives. So, do you think by any chance, that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be bad, my boy. You found out the plot; you found Ben Gunn... the best thing you did, or will do."

Oh, by the moon and the stars, and talking of Ben Gunn! Why, this is mischief in person... Silver!" he cried. "Silver! I'll give you a piece of advice," he said as the sea-cook drew near again. "Don't be in any great hurry to find that treasure."

"Why, sir, I only do what's possible, which that isn't," said Silver. "I can only, save my life and the boy's by seeking that treasure for you."

"Well, Silver," replied the Doctor, "if that is so, watch out for bad winds when you find the treasure!"

"Sir," said Silver, "I don't know what you're doing, why you left the log-house, why you've given me the chart, do I? Yet I have done as you asked. Tell me what you mean, and I'll leave these men."



"No," said the Doctor thinking, "I can't say anymore. It's not my secret, you see, Silver. If it was, I'd tell you. I'll give you a bit of hope though Silver, if we both get out of this trap alive, I'll try my best to save you. But I won't lie in court."

Silver's face was glowing. "You couldn't be fairer, I'm sure, sir, if you were my own mother," he cried.

"Well, that's my first offer," added the Doctor.

"My second is a piece of advice. Keep the boy close to you, and when you need help, yell. I'm off to find **it** for you, and that will show I speak the truth. Good-bye, Jim."