

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Many have been killed for pirate gold.
Now more will die, on

TREASURE ISLAND



Complete and Unabridged

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

TREASURE
ISLAND



A TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES BOOK
NEW YORK

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TREASURE ISLAND

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DEAD MAN'S GHOST

A thin, high, trembling voice sang:

*"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"*

I have never seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates. The color went from their faces like enchantment; some leaped to their feet, some clawed hold of others.

"It's Flint!" cried Merry.

"*Darby M'Graw*," the voice wailed. "*Fetch aft the rum!*"

"They was his last words!" moaned Morgan. "Flint's last words!"

Still, Silver was unconquered. "I'm here to get that stuff," he cried, "and I'll not be beat by man or devil."

"Belay there, John!" said Merry. "Don't you cross a sperrit."

"There's seven hundred thousand pounds not a quarter of a mile from here," Silver said. "Sperrit? I never was feared of Flint in his life, and by the powers, I'll face him dead!"

To
S. L. O.,
an American gentleman
in accordance with whose classic taste
the following narrative has been designed,
it is now, in return for numerous delightful hours,
and with the kindest wishes,
dedicated
by his affectionate friend, the author.

TO THE HESITATING PURCHASER

If sailor tales to sailor tunes,
 Storm and adventure, heat and cold,
If schooners, islands, and maroons,
 And buccaneers, and buried gold,
And all the old romance, retold
 Exactly in the ancient way,
Can please, as me they pleased of old,
 The wiser youngsters of today:

—So be it, and fall on! If not,
 If studious youth no longer crave,
His ancient appetites forgot,
 Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,
Or Cooper of the wood and wave:
 So be it, also! And may I
And all my pirates share the grave
 Where these and their creations lie!

The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on November 13, 1850, Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was a delicate, sickly boy who spent a great deal of his childhood doted on by his parents and confined to bed. He was tended as well by his faithful nurse, Alison Cunningham, to whom he dedicated *A Child's Garden of Verses*. His father, a strict religious Calvinist, hated books or what he called "the devious and barren paths of literature." He wanted his son to follow in the family profession, lighthouse engineering.

Predictably, when released from the rigors and protection of his home, young Stevenson became extremely rebellious. At the university he turned into a Bohemian and atheist, dressing oddly, spending a great deal of time in taverns and bars, and making friends his parents considered low and unsuitable. Though afterwards he made up with his parents, he refused to become an engineer, studying law instead as a compromise. But he never really practiced it. Instead, after he left the university, he lived for a number of years supported by his parents and

writing essays and stories for newspapers and magazines. He sold enough to keep up his interest in writing but not enough to actually live on until he turned to novel writing.

Treasure Island was his first novel, written as a game for his stepson. Still, long before he could support himself by his writing, he had gained a literary reputation in England from his occasional pieces. Important British writers like Andrew Lang and W.E. Henley became his friends. Henley, a well-known poet of the day, who had had a foot amputated as a child, was a particular friend of Stevenson's and the prototype for Long John Silver, the one-legged sea cook. Henley and Stevenson were inseparable friends until 1888 when a quarrel involving Henley's wife tore them apart.

In 1876, Stevenson was staying at Fontainbleau for his health and he met an American woman, Fanny Vandegrift Osbourne. She was ten years older than Stevenson and was separated from her husband. They fell in love, much to his parents' horror for, though Fanny's husband had deserted her, she was still a married woman. When she returned to California in 1878, the Stevenons were relieved. But Robert Louis, at twenty-eight, was not done with his courtship. After months of passionate letters back and forth, he decided to go to America to find her. He arrived in America penniless and perilously ill. Taking an immigrant train across the vast, wild American continent, he almost died. But he found Fanny and, in 1880 they were married.

The marriage made his parents relent, and Stevenson's father even wrote offering much-needed financial support. So after a honeymoon, they sailed to Scotland to reconcile with Stevenson's parents.

Stevenson's illness, now diagnosed as tuberculosis, needed prompt medical attention, so along with his wife and stepson, Lloyd, he went to Switzerland for a cure. They left there in April 1881, traveling to Scotland for

the summer where, despite his illness, Stevenson began writing *Treasure Island* in order to entertain the boy.

Even while so gravely ill, Stevenson was writing at full speed: short stories, essays, and full novels followed in rapid succession. Despite lung hemorrhages and fevers, he settled his family in the south of France where he worked on *Prince Otto*, *A Child's Garden of Verses* (first called *Penny Whistles*), and *The Black Arrow*.

But the awful illnesses continued unabated, and the family moved to the southern English town of Bournemouth in 1887 in the hopes that the sea air would cure him. It soon became clear that even the south of England was not warm enough for the enfeebled Stevenson. Yet sick as he was, he kept writing during this time, revising *A Child's Garden of Verses*, writing *Kidnapped* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Finally, in August, Stevenson, Fanny, Lloyd, and Stevenson's mother set sail for America in a desperate attempt to find a place where he might live in health.

When they arrived in New York City, Stevenson found—to his great surprise and delight—that he was famous. Newspapers clamored to interview him. Book editors offered him contracts. He holed up with his family in the Adirondacks where he began work on his novel *The Master of Ballantrae*.

But his health continued to deteriorate, and so in June 1888, he and his family sailed from San Francisco in a chartered yacht for what he hoped would be a few months excursion to nurse him back to health. Instead he discovered the South Sea Islands it was there that he was to spend the rest of his short, intense life.

They traveled in the yacht to the Marquesas, Tahiti, Hawaii, and finally on to Samoa where they established a household that consisted of Stevenson, his mother, his wife, her son Lloyd, and one of her two daughters. They called the house Vailima and Stevenson worked there

happily from 1890 until his death four years later. It was here that he completed, among other works, his novel *David Balfour*.

He died suddenly on December 3, 1894, not of tuberculosis but of a cerebral hemorrhage. He was forty-four years old. In that time, burdened by ill health and constantly traveling, he had written innumerable essays, stories, poems, and novels. And three of them—*A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Treasure Island*—alone would make him remembered forever.

—Jane Yolen

Foreword

Like so many of the best known English writers of adventure stories, Robert Louis Stevenson went to history for his subject matter. Though fine critics like John Rowe Townsend speak of his literary predecessors, saying "If there had been no *Robinson Crusoe*, there could surely have been no *Treasure Island*," it is even truer to say that if there had not been a grand and bloody history of pirating in England and America, *Treasure Island* would never have been written.

Stories of pirates, buccaneers, and even privateers (sailors under Letters of Mark from their king with official permission to raid ships belonging to enemies of their country) were already highly popular. Since 1724, when a small octavo volume by Captain Charles Johnson appeared entitled *General Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*, "piratania" was a subject often in the British presses.

Johnson's book was so popular that a second edition, considerably larger, was issued in the very same year, followed quickly by a third and then fourth edition in

1726. And though Johnson did not cite his references, scholars since that time have discovered that he was entirely accurate in his accounts of the pirates.

By the time Stevenson was growing up, over a hundred years had passed but the Johnson book was still popular, especially with young boys. Whether or not Stevenson's father, who was no friend of literature, let his sickly son read such a popular and trashy book is not known, but in the nineteenth century there was still a vital piratical trade going on though the scene had shifted from the near oceans to the China seas.

Certainly Stevenson had enough of an acquaintance-ship with pirate manners, morals, and management to write a fast-paced adventure story of buccaneers on the bounding main. The black spot on the Bible, the pieces of eight were real. But much of *Treasure Island* deals with pirate myth instead of pirate fact. The myth is much more exciting.

Myth one: that all pirates were rich from their adventures. In fact, the great majority of them died poor, hungry, and without a bit of buried treasure. True, there were some rich ships. Silver coins, jeweled crosses, gold doubloons have been found in the old pirate wrecks. But the loot was divided according to very strict laws and the ordinary pirate got little of it. Largest shares went to the captain and the quartermaster, next largest to the masters, then the ship's carpenter, the surgeon, and the man who first signalled the appearance of the prey. Whatever was left over was divided evenly among the crew.

Myth two: all pirates were lawless, robbing to no purpose but their own pleasure. In fact, there were a great many privateers whose purpose was political and patriotic. And aboard ship, the pirates adhered to a strict code of rules called ship's articles which they each signed. The articles was a constitution governing captain and crew. Examples of some of these laws comes from the

ship of Captain Bartholomew Roberts who sailed in the 1730s: *The lights and candles to be put out at eight o'clock. No striking one another on board, but every man's quarrels to be ended on shore, at sword and pistol. No person to game at cards or dice for money.*

Myth three: All pirates sailed under the Jolly Roger, the flag bearing the skull and crossbones. Sometimes they did. But as often the flag was a simple black square. Or a flag containing other pictures, like a skull and beer mug. Each ship voted on its own.

Myth four: All pirate captains were tyrants. A few—like the infamous Blackbeard—were not only tyrants but crazy as well. But most were elected by the democratic vote of the crew. A captain was chosen for his popularity, his ability to lead the others, and for being “pistol proof” in battle, that is, brave and wily. If the captain was considered to be unjust, the crew could vote him out again as quickly as they had voted him in.

Myth five: All pirates were men. In fact, some of the bloodiest, wickedest, and best pirates in the world were women. Of course, many ships, like Captain Roberts' ship, had specific rules banning women (*No women to be allowed. If any man . . . carries [a woman] off to sea disguised, he is to suffer death.*) But there were female pirates like Pretty Peg who sailed for love, Anne Bonney and Mary Reade who sailed for adventure, Jeanne de Belleville who sailed for revenge, and Madame Ching who led a battalion of 2,000 Chinese junks in the early nineteenth century.

Stevenson may or may not have read Captain Johnson's accounts of the lives of pirates when he was a boy, but he had a fine, searching mind and a good education. He must have done some reading about them. However, he added more to the myth than to the facts about piracy. Today, if you ask boys and girls in England or America to name three pirates, they would probably say: Captain Kidd, Bluebeard—and Long John Silver.

—Jane Yolen

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PART ONE
The Old Buccaneer

