

# Treasure Island

## 8. The pirates parley and the black spot

**Narrator:** Night is falling again on Treasure Island. Jim Hawkins wades ashore from the good ship *Hispaniola*, having seized it single-handed from the pirates. Now, as he walks through the darkness back to the stockade he fancies he's going to get a hero's welcome - for there's not many boys can fight pirates to the death and get away with it.

He reaches the stockade and everything is quiet. Approaching the block-house all that can be heard is snoring. Jim tip-toes through the sleeping figures stifling a chuckle, then trips on a foot. The figure groans, and then:

**Parrot:** Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!

**Long John Silver:** Who goes there?

**Jim:** Silver?

**Long John Silver:** Bring a torch! Quickly now!

**Jim:** Who did? Who did you? How did you? What happened to?

**Long John Silver:** Jim Hawkins, shiver me timbers!

**Narrator:** Jim is grabbed and a torch is brought - illuminating the block-house and showing in its light the ragged faces of six desperate pirates. Silver motions for Jim to sit down, then takes a pipe and lights it. Jim sits.

**Long John Silver:** Now I shall explain. And when I've finished ye shall decide whether ye be with us - which will be good - or agin us - which will be not so good.

**Narrator:** And Silver explains that as soon as they all saw the ship had gone he and Livesey had made a deal. The pirates got the stockade - Livesey and the Squire got their freedom. Although, Silver says, Livesey didn't seem to mind much about Jim.

**Long John Silver:** 'As for that boy,' he says, 'I don't know where he is, nor do I much care. Confound him. We're about sick of him.' These was his words, Jim, and that's all there is to hear.



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- Narrator:** Jim has listened carefully through all this, his back pressed hard against the wall. Now his cheeks burn and his heart beats painfully in his chest.
- Jim:** Here you are in a bad way. Ship lost, treasure lost, men lost. Your whole business gone to wreck - and if you want to know who did it - it was I!
- Long John Silver:** You? Ha, ha, very good, oh very good. Hear that lads - tis Jim we needs be scared of. Pirate Jim no less!
- Jim:** I heard your plans from the apple barrel; I cut the schooner's cable; I killed the men on board; and I hid her where you'll never see her again. The laugh's on my side, eh? I no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me if you please. You'll do yourselves no good. But if you spare me, then when you lot are in court for piracy I'll save you all I can.
- Narration:** Jim finishes his speech and sits back, quite amazed at himself. This is not the boy who sat in The Admiral Benbow Inn waiting for an adventure. This is a soul who's lived and is proud of it. The pirates mutter and moan - then step outside for a parley. Silver takes Jim to one side.
- Long John Silver:** Looke here, Jim Hawkins, you're within half a plank of death - or worse, torture. But I'll cut a deal with ye. I'll protect you from the pirates, but only if you look out for me.
- Narrator:** Of course, he can't promise anything - not one man against the mob. When the pirates come back in, they've made their minds up. And it's just as Silver fears.
- Pirate:** Now then, Silver. We've had our parley. And this is what we've decided. The boy - Jim Hawkins - is a meddler. And meddlers is bad as any pirate will tell ya. So it's time he went. To his death, that is.
- Long John Silver:** I see. And be that all?
- Pirate:** Not quite. There be one more thing. We'd like you to have...this.
- Narrator:** The pirate walks slowly towards Silver - his hand clasped round something small. He hesitates.
- Long John Silver:** Step up - I'll not eat you. Thank you, what have we here? The black spot. I thought so. But look at this, you half-wits! Oh this ain't lucky. You've gone and cut this out of a Bible. What fool's cut a Bible?



- Pirate: It weren't me...it were Dick.
- Jim: Black Spot cut from a bible?
- Long John Silver: Don't you lads know that them two counts each other out? Dear oh dear. Now, for one, we're not killing Jim because we shall need him yet as a hostage. And, for another, you're not killing me because I have something you want.
- Pirate: Oh yes? You've bungled the entire voyage, Silver. You've got nothing!
- Long John Silver: Oh, but I do, gentlemen. Part of my deal with the good Doctor Livesey. For his freedom he gave me the stockade...but he also gave me...this.
- Narrator: And with a dramatic flourish Long John Silver takes from his waistcoat a folded piece of parchment. Slowly he opens it. And throws it on the floor.
- Pirates: The map, the map, the treasure map!
- Narrator: The pirates link arms and sing in joy. Silver leans across and whispers into Jim's ear:
- Long John Silver: That's as close to your death as you'll come in this lifetime, young Jim. I'll appreciate it if you'll not forget my hand in your salvation.

