

Treasure Island



From the Introduction Once when his stepson was sick, Robert Louis Stevenson kept him company by making a map of an imaginary island. Thus was born the story of Treasure Island. The map they colored eventually appeared in the books first pages. Besides the mysterious map, the story had cutthroat pirates, chests of buried treasure, a scheming one-legged cook, and a wild-eyed castaway. If kids dont like this story, Stevenson once said, they have gone rotten. Treasure Island is like a popular old type of adventure story called a romance. This kind of romance is not about love, but the brave feats of heroes, such as King Arthurs knights, who strive for noble goals. Stevenson made Treasure Island different by making the hero of the story a fatherless boy, Jim Hawkins. Jim is not really grown up enough to know what to do when certain things happen to him and he sometimes acts without thinking very far ahead. Several characters in the story act like a father to Jim. One is among the most famous figures in literature, the charming and cunning Long John Silver. At times Long John protects and helps Jim, but sometimes they are rivals. Treasure Island is also different from older adventure tales because it is not about meeting dangers in order to do good for others. It is about getting money. Treasure seems to put all the grown ups under a spell and they imagine how happy they can be if they get it. To Long John, the treasure promises a rich, powerful life. To have it would be a dream come true. So why, then, as Jim tells the story, does he say it was like a nightmare? E. D. Hirsch Jr. Charlottesville, Virginia

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