

# Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

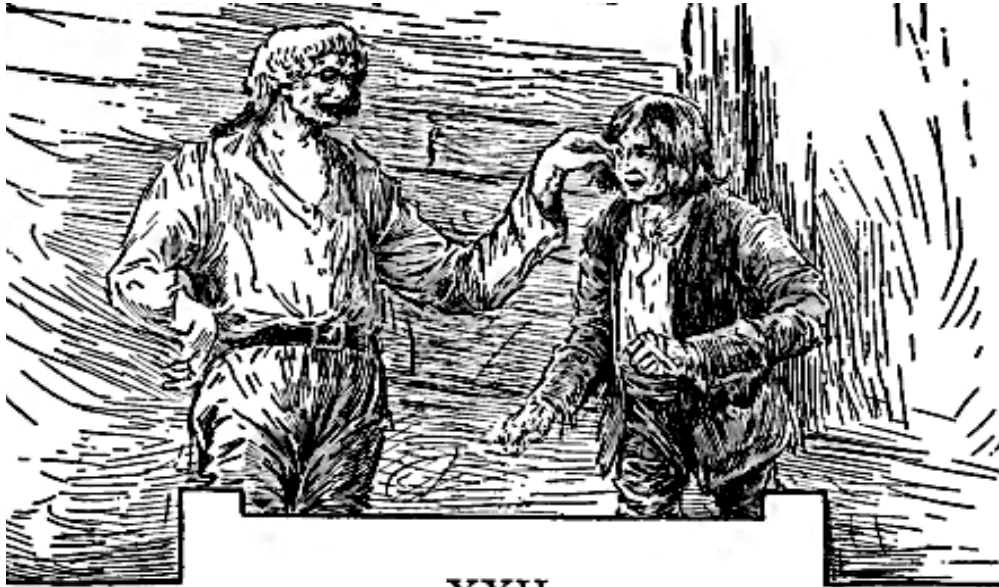


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## PART FIVE: MY SEA ADVENTURE

### 22. How I began my sea adventure



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The mutineers did not return that day. We had a quiet time to treat the wounded and get dinner. Squire and I cooked outside, in spite of the danger. Even outside we could hear the loud groans from the doctor's patients.

Hunter never recovered consciousness. He died that night.

Captain Smollett's wounds were serious, but not life-threatening. "He'll recover," the doctor told us, "but he will need to rest for a few weeks."

Doctor Livesey patched up my own cut across the knuckles with plaster.

After dinner the doctor took up his hat and pistols. He put on his cutlass, put the chart in his pocket, and with a musket over his shoulder crossed the fence. He then set off briskly through the trees.

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the block house

"Has Dr Livesey gone mad?" said he.

"Why no," says I. "I think he's going now to see Ben Gunn."

I was right, as it later turned out. But in the stifling heat of the midday sun, blood and many poor dead bodies lying all around, I began to get a very wrong idea into my head.

When nobody was looking at me, I took the first step towards my adventure. I filled both pockets of my coat with biscuit. The biscuits would at least keep me for a few days. I also took a couple of pistols and some bullets.

## Foolish

My plan was to where I believed Ben Gunn had hidden his boat.

I knew Captain Smollett would not have allowed me to leave the enclosure. The only option to slip out when nobody was watching. I know now that was wrong. But I had made my mind up.

My opportunity came when the squire was busy helping the captain with his bandages. I jumped over the stockade and ran into the woods. Before my absence was noticed I was out of earshot of my companions.

I headed straight for the east coast of the island. It was already late in the afternoon, although still warm and sunny. As I continued through the tall woods, I could hear the continuous thunder of the surf.

Soon I came to a gap in the foliage. I saw the sea, blue and sunny to the horizon. The surf was tumbling and tossing its foam along the beach.

I never saw the sea quiet round Treasure Island. Even when the surface of the sea was smooth, the waves came thundering day and night.

Walking along beside the surf, I used the cover of some thick bushes to creep up to the ridge of the beach.

## Unearthly screaming

The harbour was in front of me. Out at sea in the distance, I could see the *Hispaniola*, now flying the Jolly Roger flag.

Silver and two other men were standing next to a small boat. I could see that they were laughing, but could hear no word of what was said.

Suddenly there was a horrible scream. It was Silver's parrot, Captain Flint. The bird was perched upon her master's wrist. Soon after, the two crew members sailed off in the rowboat towards the *Hispaniola*.

Fog was closing in and it was rapidly getting dark. I knew I had little time in which to find the boat that evening.

I searched around the white rock, where I first saw Ben Gunn. It was almost dark when I came across a goat skin tent hidden in the bushes.



I LIFTED THE SIDE OF THE TENT, AND THERE WAS BEN GUNN'S BOAT

I lifted the side of the tent. There was Ben Gunn's home-made boat, a [coracle](#) with a double paddle. The thing was extremely small, even for me. It could not have floated with a full-sized man but it was very light and portable.

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At this point, I had another very foolish idea. "I'll slip out under cover of the night and cut the *Hispaniola* adrift," I told myself. "That will stop them escaping by sea."

I sat down and made a fine meal out of my biscuits. The light dwindled and disappeared. Absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island.

The time had come. I lifted the coracle onto my shoulder and groped my way out of the hollow. I saw that only two lights were visible in the harbour.

The defeated pirates were sitting around a fire on the beach. The other light came from the cabin of the anchored ship.

The tide was going out as I waded through the sand. Several times I sank up to my ankles. At the edge of the retreating sea, I climbed aboard my coracle.

### 23. The Ebb-tide Runs



The coracle was a very safe boat for a person of my height and weight. She was also very difficult to sail. She turned in every direction but the one I wanted to go in. Luckily, the tide carried me directly to the *Hispaniola*.

The anchor rope was pulled tight and the strong current pulled upon the anchor. In the blackness I could hear the rippling current like a little mountain stream. One cut with my knife and the *Hispaniola* would float away with the tide - but would this also [capsize](#) the coracle?

I stopped, about to abandon my plan. Then a breeze caught the *Hispaniola*, and forced her up into the current. To my great joy, I felt the rope slacken in my grasp.

That made my mind up. I took out my knife and opened it with my teeth. Then I began cutting the strands of the rope. Soon only two secured the ship to the anchor.

From the cabin I heard the sound of loud voices. One I recognised as that of Israel Hands. The other was my friend with the red night-cap.

Both men had been drinking rum. They were arguing furiously. One of them, with a drunken cry, opened threw an empty bottle overboard.

On shore, I could see the glow of the great campfire burning warmly through the shore-side trees. Someone was singing an old sailor's song.

Finally, I managed to cut the last fibres through and the rope snapped.

### **Dangerous Neighbour**

I was instantly swept against the *Hispaniola*. The ship began spinning slowly across the current. I struggled to keep my little boat afloat.

I expected every moment to be swamped but eventually managed to grasp a rope that was trailing overboard from the *Hispaniola*.

I can't explain why I did this. It was instinct at first, then curiosity. I wanted have a look through the cabin window.

By this time, the *Hispaniola* was gliding swiftly through the water. We were now level with the camp-fire. To my surprise, the watchmen had not spotted us.



IT SHOWED ME HANDS AND HIS COMPANION LOCKED TOGETHER IN DEADLY WRESTLE

I then saw that Hands and his companion were locked together in deadly wrestle. Each had a hand upon the other's throat.

I dropped back into the coracle — just in time for I was nearly overboard. I could see nothing for the moment but these two furious, crimson faces swaying together under the smoky lamp.

From the camp-fire came the sound of the chorus I had heard so often:

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

Then the coracle swerved sharply and changed her direction.

## Troubles

All round me were little ripples. The *Hispaniola* was still being swept along by the tide. I glanced over my shoulder, and my heart jumped against my ribs. There, right behind me, was the glow of the camp-fire.

The current had turned at right angles, sweeping round along with it the *Hispaniola* and the little dancing coracle. We were spinning out into the open sea.

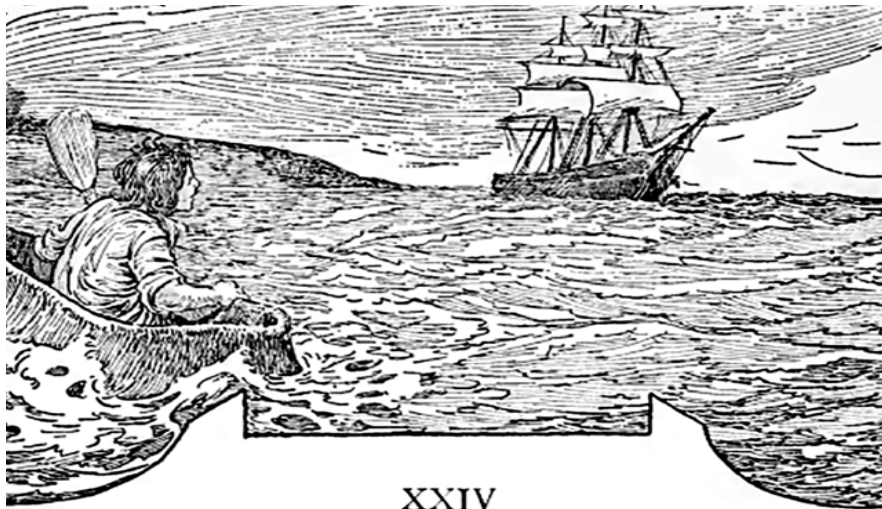
Suddenly the *Hispaniola* turned violently. Almost at the same moment, one shout followed another. I could hear feet pounding on the companion ladder.

We were heading to rapid water where all my troubles and certain disaster. I lay down flat in the bottom of the coracle and prayed.

So I must have lay for hours, continually tossed by the waves. I expected death with every plunge. Gradually weariness grew upon me: a numbness and stupor.

Only sleep relieved my terror. In my sea-tossed coracle, I lay and dreamed of home and the old Admiral Benbow.

## 24. The Cruise of the Coracle



It was daylight when I awoke. The coracle had drifted to the south-west end of Treasure Island. The sun was up but was still hidden behind the Spy-glass. Descending to the sea were tall cliffs. Below them were great masses of fallen rock.

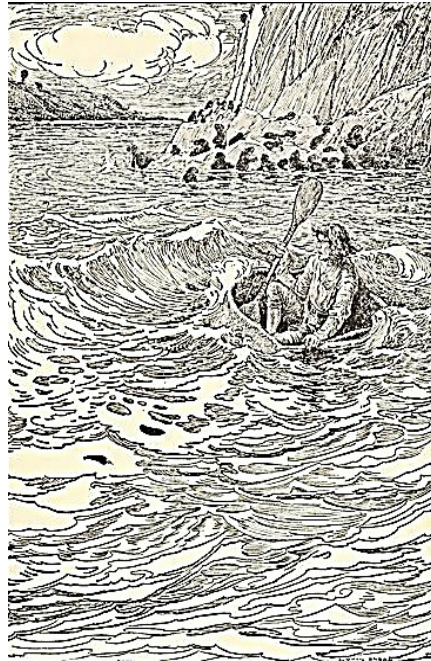
I was close to the shore. Could I paddle in and land? No, the fallen rocks would smash the coracle.

The current carried me further north. It surprised me how easily my little and light boat could ride the waves. The coracle danced as if on springs.

The boat ran straight down a steep slope of water. Drenched and terrified, I managed to stabilise the coracle, but I could not change her direction.

How could I turn her back to reach land?

I was horribly frightened, but I kept my head. Somehow, I managed to find a way of steering the coracle towards the shore.



It was slow, exhausting work and I began to feel a terrible thirst. The sun reflected off the waves making it a thousand times stronger. Sea-water fell and dried upon me, caking my very lips with salt. My throat burned and my brain ached.

Then I saw the *Hispaniola*.

### **Deserted?**

Confused by my thirst, I did not know whether to be glad or sorry. I could do nothing but stare in wonder. Had they seen me? Would they chase me down?

Why were they sailing an uneven course?

The ship was drifting: up and down, north, south, east, and west. Was nobody steering? Where were the men? Had they deserted her?

Perhaps I could get on board and return the vessel to her captain.

I set out to paddle after the *Hispaniola*. The coracle bounced on the waves. Once I had to stop and bail water from her. My heart was fluttering like a bird.

Gradually, though, I guided my coracle among the waves. Every now and then, I felt a heavy wave against the side of the boat and a dash of foam in my face.

I was now gaining rapidly on the *Hispaniola*. Still nobody appeared upon her decks. Had she been deserted? If not, were the men lying drunk below?

The breeze fell for some seconds, very low. The current was gradually turning the ship towards me. I could see that the cabin window was open.

The lamp on the table was still burning, despite the daylight. The main-sail hung drooped like a banner. She was still but for the current.

Now, at last, I had my chance. I paddled nearer but the wind filled her sail. Despair turned to joy when the *Hispaniola* swung around until she was facing me again. She looked gigantic from down in the coracle.

I had no time to think. A big wave swung the bowsprit over my head.

Instinctively, I sprang to my feet and leaped, stamping the coracle under water. With one hand, I caught the pole.



As I clung to the bowsprit, the coracle crashed into the *Hispaniola* and broke up. A sudden movement almost threw me off into the sea.

Then I tumbled head first onto the deck.

## 25. I Remove the Jolly Roger

I was on board the ship flying the black flag-with no means of escaping her.

At first, I couldn't see anyone on the deck. An empty bottle, broken at the neck, rolled to and fro.



Then I saw that there were two watchmen. One had a red-cap. He was lying with his arms stretched out. His teeth were showing through his open lips.

Israel Hands was the other watchman. His chin was on his chest and his face was as white as a candle.

The sails were filling with wind, throwing the ship one way and then another. The mast groaned under the strain. Clouds of light sea spray came over the sides.

The man with the red-cap rolled to and fro across the deck. His fixed grin remained unaltered.. Around both men, there were splashes of dark blood.

Had they killed each other in their drunken rage?

### **Brandy**

Suddenly, Israel Hands turned partly round. With a low moan, he sat up. His jaw hung open.

I walked over to him. "Mr. Hands," I said.

He rolled his eyes round heavily. All he could do was to utter one word, "Brandy."

I went downstairs into the cabin. It was a complete mess. The floor was thick with mud.

Everything had been broken open by the pirates looking for the treasure map. There were dirty hand prints on all the walls. Dozens of empty bottles clinked together with the rolling of the ship. A lamp still glowed.

I went into the cellar. All the barrels of rum were empty. "They've been drunk since the mutiny began," I told myself.

I did find a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands. For myself, I took some biscuits, a bunch of raisins, and a piece of cheese. With these, I came on deck.

I put down my food well out of the coxswain's reach. Then I had a good deep drink of water. Finally, I gave Hands the brandy.

It was some time before he took the bottle from his mouth.

"Aye," said he, "I needed that!"

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat.

"How bad are you?" I asked him.

"If that doctor was aboard," he said, "I'd be fine."

I pointed to the man with red cap. "What about him?"

"Dead," said Hands. "He was no seaman, anyhow. Where have you come from?"

"I've come aboard to take possession of this ship, Mr. Hands," I said.

"Please regard me as your captain until further notice."

He looked at me sourly but said nothing. Some of the colour had come back into his cheeks, though he still looked very sick.

## Black flag overboard



“We can’t sail with under the black flag,” I said, pulling down the Jolly Rodger. I chucked it overboard. “God save the king!” said I, waving my cap.

Hands remained with his chin on his chest. He watched me very carefully.

“Cap’n Hawkins,” he said at last. “Shall we talk?”

“Yes, Mr Hands,” I said. “What would you like to tell me?”

“You need someone to help you sail this ship. You need my need my help.”

“And what do you ask in return?”

“Give me food and drink,” said Israel “And an old scarf or handkerchief to tie my wound up. Then I’ll tell you how to sail her.”

“I’m not going back to the harbour,” I said. “I’m sailing into North Inlet.”

“I understand,” he cried. “I’ve lost, and you are the master of me.”

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In three minutes, I had the *Hispaniola* sailing along the coast of Treasure Island. I then went below. From to my chest I got a soft silk handkerchief of my mother's. With this, Hands bandaged his leg wound.

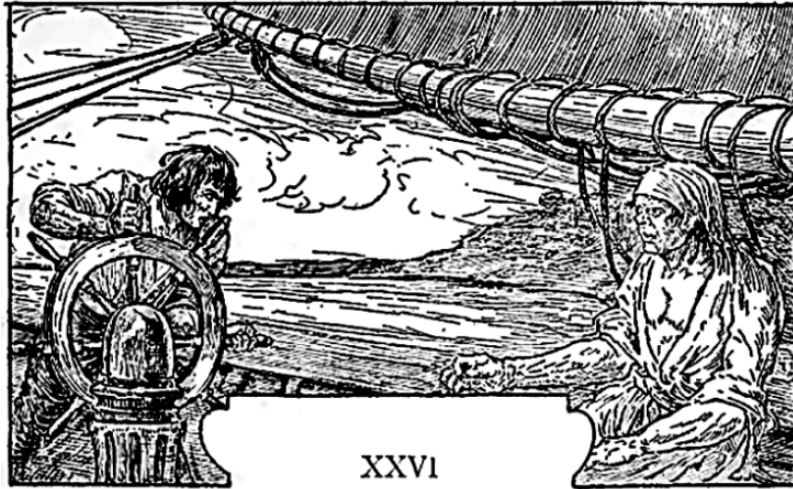
After eating a little and swallowing more brandy, Hands sat up straighter and spoke more clearly. He looked in every way another man.

The breeze helped us skim round the coast of the island. Soon we were past the high lands. We sailed beside low, sandy beaches in bright, sunshine. I now had plenty of water and good things to eat.

The eyes of Israel Hands followed me about the deck. An odd smile appeared on his face. It suggested both pain and weakness. It was an old man's smile.

I didn’t trust him for a moment.

## 26. Israel Hands



We sailed to the north-east corner of the island and waited for the tide to go out.

This meant spending more time with Israel Hands. We both sat in silence over another meal.

Eventually Hands spoke. “Cap'n,” he said, with that same odd smile. “What are we going to do with O'Brien? Perhaps you should throw him overboard.”

“I'm not strong enough,” said I.

“The *Hispaniola* is an unlucky ship, Jim,” he went on, blinking. “Many men have been killed since we sailed from Bristol. I've never known such bad luck!”

When I did not reply, he said, “Get me a bottle of wine, Jim. This brandy's too strong for my head.”

I didn't believe this. Why did he want me to leave the deck?

His eyes never met mine. They kept wandering to and fro. Up at the sky. Down upon the dead O'Brien.

I knew he was trying to trick me. I decided to pretend to play along with him.

“Some wine?” I said. “Far better. Will you have white or red?”

“It doesn't matter to me, shipmate,” he replied.

“All right, Mr Hands” I answered. “But it may take some time to find it.”

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I ran noisily down the stairs to the cabin. Then I slipped off my shoes and ran quietly along to the other side. I wanted to see what he was doing.

Hands rose to his hands and knees. Despite his wounded leg, he quickly crossed the deck. In half a minute, he collected his things from their hiding place.

There was a coil of rope and a cutlass, with dried blood on the blade. Concealing the knife in his jacket, Israel Hands moved back to where he had been sitting.

I now knew that Israel was armed and could move about. He obviously planned to kill me. What he would do afterwards — I did not know.

Yet I felt sure that he would not attack me yet. He needed my help to land the *Hispaniola*. Until that was done, I was safe.

Thinking this over, I quickly returned to the cabin. I slipped once more into my shoes. Then I grabbed a bottle of wine and climbed up to the deck.

### **Fight to the death**

Hands lay as I had left him. He looked up at my return.

Grabbing the wine, he knocked the neck off the bottle. He then took a good swig. “The tide is strong enough now. Let’s land this ship, Cap'n Hawkins.”

Landing the *Hispaniola* was very difficult but Hands was an excellent pilot. He got us through a very narrow channel onto a hidden beach.

We saw the wreck of a large ship, covered in seaweed. In my excitement, I forgot the danger I was in. I stood, watching from the deck, as we landed.

I do not know what caused me to turn my head. Perhaps I had heard a creak or saw his shadow moving from the corner of my eye.



I looked round to see that Hands was already half-way towards me. His knife was in his right hand.

Our eyes met. We both cried out. He threw himself forward.

I leapt sideways, letting go of the ship’s wheel. I think this saved my life, for it struck Hands across the chest. This stopped his advance for a moment.

Before he could recover, I took a pistol from my pocket. He turned and came at me. I pulled the trigger.

There was neither flash nor sound. Seawater water had jammed the gun.

### **Capsized**

Israel Hands charged at me again. Hair was tumbling over his furious red face. I dodged him but he kept coming.

Suddenly the *Hispaniola* struck the ground and capsized.

We rolled, almost together along the deck. The dead O’Brien, with his arms still spread out, tumbled stiffly after us. My head crashed into Israel Hand’s foot. The crack made my teeth rattle.

I got to my feet. Israel Hands was untangling himself O'Brien's from corpse. I had to find some new way of escape.

The mast! I began climbing and felt a thrown knife land just below me. I looked back to see Israel Hands standing with his mouth open. His face was upturned towards mine.

I reloaded both my pistols. Hands climbed after me, with the knife in his teeth. His wounded leg slowed him. I was ready before he was.

With a pistol in either hand, I addressed him.

“One more step, Mr. Hands,” said I, “and I'll blow your brains out!”

He stopped instantly, taking the dagger from his mouth to speak.

“Jim! You and me are not enemies.”

Still smiling he lifted his right hand over his shoulder. Something flew like an arrow through the air. I felt a blow to my shoulder.



In the terrible pain and surprise of the moment, both my pistols went off. Both guns fell from my hands.

They did not fall alone. With a cry, Israel Hands plunged head first into the water.

## 27. Pieces of Eight



I looked down from the top of the mast. The body of Israel Hands rose once to the surface. Then it sank again, for good.

As the water settled, I could see his body lying on the clean, bright sand. Fish swam past. Sometimes he seemed to move a little, as if he were trying to rise.

But Israel Hand was dead. He was now food for the fish.

I began to feel sick, faint, and terrified. The blood was running over my back and chest. The knife pinned my shoulder to the mast.

I clung with both hands till my nails ached. Shutting my eyes to avoid looking down at the green water far below, I pulled out the knife.

The pain was terrible but I was free from the mast. My bleeding wound was painful, but neither deep nor dangerous. Nor did it prevent me from using my arm.

I looked around me. The ship was now my own.

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I decided to remove its last passenger—the dead man with the red cap, O'Brien.

He still lay on the deck like some horrible, life-size puppet. I took him by the waist. With one good heave, I pushed him overboard.

He went into the sea with a loud splash. The red cap came off and remained floating on the surface.

The two men were now side by side in the water. O'Brien's bald head lay across the knees of the man who had killed him. The was turning and the sun going down.

I was now alone upon the ship but it was too dangerous to stay onboard. I let myself drop softly overboard. The water was waist high and the sand was firm.

I waded ashore, leaving the *Hispaniola* on her side. The breeze whistled low in the dusk among the trees.

### To the Stockade

Back on land, I found our boat, clear at last from mutineers. It was ready to take us back to sea again.

I wanted to get back to the stockade and see my friends. I hoped that even Captain Smollett would forgive me — now that I had recaptured the *Hispaniola*.

I set off for the blockhouse and my companions. I soon came near to where I had met Ben Gunn. Now I walked more carefully, looking all around me.

It was now almost completely dark. I became aware of a glow against the sky. Was this Ben Gunn cooking his supper? Would Silver see this fire from where he camped among the marshes?

Gradually the night became blacker still. I struggled to keep moving in the right direction. I kept tripping among bushes and rolling into sandy pits.

Suddenly a kind of brightness fell about me. I looked up and saw the silvery moon behind the trees. With this to help me, I hurried on. Sometimes walking, sometimes running, I approached the stockade.

Right in front of me a red glow of a fire appeared among the trees.

I stopped, with wonder and terror in my heart. We had never built great fires because Captain Smollett wanted to preserve firewood.

Was something wrong?

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I got upon my hands and knees and crawled towards the corner of the house. As I drew nearer, the sound of snoring suddenly my heart filled with joy.

I got to the door and stood up. All was dark within and I could see nothing. The only sounds were the steady drone of the snoring.

I moved toward my sleeping place. How I would enjoy seeing the faces of my friends when they found me in the morning!

My foot struck something soft—it was a sleeper's leg. He turned and groaned, but without waking.

And then a shrill voice called out of the darkness: “Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!”

It was Silver's green parrot, Captain Flint!

The next moment the sleepers awoke. With a mighty oath, the voice of Silver cried, “Who goes?”

I turned to run, but it was too late..

“Bring a torch, Dick,” said Silver.

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