

Treasure Island

3. Long John Silver and the *Hispaniola*

Narrator: Three weeks after Jim Hawkins escapes the pirate gang with Billy Bones' treasure map, he arrives in Bristol on a hot Sunday morning. What a city. The gateway to the Oceans of the World. Tea, sugar, cotton, coffee, slaves - aye, slaves - fill the streets and the docks. The great masts of a dozen fleets tower over the quays. Sailors, travellers, the rich and the poor throng the busy streets all of them hungry for money or food - or adventure.

Jim has a note - he must find a Mr Silver who will show him to the Squire's ship. Jim finds him all right down on the quayside - and there's a shock, for as he comes up behind the man, he sees he has only one leg. Could this be the pirate, so feared by Billy Bones?

Jim: Mister... Silver... sir?

Long John Silver: Silver? Long John Silver you be intending to say, I'm sure, and who may you be?

Narrator: Jim stares up. Tall and strong, with a face as big as a ham, intelligent and smiling, Long John Silver winks down at him. Jim relaxes - this man's no pirate.

Jim: Jim Hawkins, sir. Cabin boy to the new ship.

Long John Silver: Is that so?

Jim: Squire Trelawney's ship. Sir.

Long John Silver: Well, pleased I am to see you my boy. I'm ship's cook - and now you're come, we must go aboard. Hop in now.

Narrator: With a graceful turn and a jump, Silver's down into a little boat, untying the rope and preparing to row. Jim joins him - and off they go into the teeming waters of the docks. Silver rows strongly, the oars biting at the choppy sea, till at last they tie up to a ship - as pretty a schooner as you could ever want to sail the world in.

Long John Silver: There she is, boy. Your home for the next year - if we're lucky.

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- Jim: What's she called?
- Long John Silver: The *Hispaniola*. Does she please you?
- Jim: Wow!
- Long John Silver: First voyage?
- Jim: First time on a boat, sir!
- Squire: Ahoy, Silver!
- Long John Silver: I'll soon make you a pirate, sailor.
- Squire: Bravo, young Jim. Welcome aboard! The ship's company's complete!
- Jim: When do we sail, Mr Trelawney?
- Squire: Tonight, my boy, on the midnight tide!
- Sailor: Heave, heave ho.
- Long John Silver: Up you go...
- Jim: Wo-ho!
- Sailor: Put yer backs into it, ya bunch of milk-sops!
- Narrator: Jim scrambles aboard, finds his hammock and stows his stuff.
- Sailor: Mind yer heads you idle dogs!
- Narrator: Then he climbs up the rigging to watch the ship being readied.
- Sailor: Black powder twenty barrels!
- Narrator: Barrels, crates, boxes, chickens...
- Sailor: Watch what you're doing with that goat yer scrawny no good landlubber!
- Narrator: ...goats - the crew stow everything frantically below decks as the sun sets.
- Sailor: Pull lads pull!



- Narrator: And what a crew they are: men, women, pigtails, shaven heads, terrifying tattoos, pierced ears and tongues, hooks for hands, wooden arms; the whole lot representing every race, every nation, every colour in the known world.
- Squire Trelawney appears at his side.
- Squire: What charming chaps they are, don't you think, young Jim?
- Jim: Hello, sir. They look rather frightening to me.
- Smollett: Aye, my thoughts entirely.
- Squire: Captain Smollett - I don't care for him. He does go on...
- Smollett: I wouldn't take a single one of those blackguards on a trip like this...
- Squire: Told you!
- Smollett: But then - I'm just the captain - my voice doesn't seem to count for very much on this matter.
- Squire: Now, now, Smollett. Beggars can't be choosers as you well know. Every one of these fine sailors has been hand-picked by Long John Silver himself. And as far as I'm concerned the man's an absolute gem.
- Narrator: As if on cue, Long John Silver appears in the hatchway below, grinning. On his shoulder sits a large green parrot, its button eye staring coldly. Silver takes off his hat in an extravagant salute:
- Long John Silver: If it please you good gentlemen, the provisions is stored and we be all ship-shape and ready to cast off. Sir.
- Smollett: Thank you, Silver. Prepare to cast off - forward and aft! All ashore who's going ashore!
- Sailor: Steady, steady, let her be.
- Narrator: Jim breathes deep with excitement, the salt-wind blowing his hair. Behind him Long John Silver leans against a mast, and nods to himself, smiling. His parrot calls out: 'Pieces of Eight! Pieces of Eight!'
- That parrot's cry would echo in Jim's dreams for many years to come.

