

## Chapter 19

### Silver's Proposal

Sure enough, there were two men just outside the stockade, and one of them was waving a white cloth. That man was Long John Silver himself.

The captain urged us all to stay inside and to keep our guns ready. He didn't trust Long John, and he suspected a trap of some sort. Then he turned to the two men and shouted to them in a loud voice to state their demands. Silver answered that he wished to meet with the captain to make terms.

The captain made it very clear that if there

was any treachery on Silver's part, he would pay with his life. Then he gave Long John a signal, and the one-legged mate slowly worked his way up the hill to the stockade. He had a terrible time getting up the steep incline, as his crutch slipped several times in the soft sand. But he stuck to it. At last he arrived before the captain and saluted in a formal manner.

The two men sat down on the porch and filled their pipes.

"Now here it is," said Silver. "We know you have the map and we aim to get it. If you give us the chart, we can stop all this fighting and killing. Once we've found the treasure, you can come aboard with us, and I give you my word you will be put ashore safely. Or you can stay here, and I promise I will send the first ship we meet to rescue you and your mates."

Captain Smollett rose from his seat and

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faced Long John. He made it very clear that if Long John and his men were willing to surrender to him, he would take the whole crew back to England for trial. Those were his only terms. He knew that the pirates could not find the treasure without the map, and he knew that none of them were expert enough to sail the ship safely back to England.

Long John grew angry, his eyes burned with wrath, and he put out his pipe.

"Give me a hand up!" he cried.

"Not I," answered the captain.

Not one of us moved to help Silver get back on his crutch. Growling and cursing, he crawled along the sand until he got hold of the porch and hoisted himself up on his crutch.

He spat on the ground and stumbled off to return to his crew.

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### The Attack

As soon as Silver was out of sight, the captain ordered us to return to our posts. He knew we had to prepare for an attack from Silver's crew. There was no time to lose. He urged us to eat a hearty breakfast, as we soon would be needing all our strength. Then we loaded our guns and began the wait.

After a long time, we heard the sound of gunfire. A bunch of Silver's crew leaped from the woods and ran straight for our stockade. At the same moment, fire opened from the woods, and a rifle shot sang through the doorway, knocking the doctor's gun to bits.

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The invaders swarmed over the fence like monkeys. The squire and the doctor fired again and again. Three men fell, but one wasn't hit. He got on his feet and retreated into the woods.

Four men were now within our territory. They ran straight towards us, shouting as they advanced. There was crossfire, but no one was downed. In a moment, the four pirates were upon us.

One pirate grabbed Hunter's gun by the muzzle, wrenched it from his hands, and threw it through the window. Then with one blow, he laid Hunter out cold. Meanwhile, another entered by a rear door and pulled his knife on the doctor.

The stockade was full of smoke, to which we owed our comparative safety, since it added to the confusion and blinded our enemy.

The captain shouted to us to fight out in the open. I snatched my sword from a pile, and at that moment someone gave me a cut across my knuckles. I dashed out into the sunlight. Someone was close behind me. I reversed my position and tried to run around the other side of the cabin. In a flash, I found myself face to face with one of the pirates. He roared as he lifted his sword above his head. As he did this, I jumped to one side, missed my footing, and rolled headlong down the hill. When I was back on my feet, I saw from the bottom of the hill that the fight was ending. The pirates were in retreat and the victory was ours!

I made my way carefully back up the hill. The house was somewhat cleared of smoke, and I saw at a glance the price we had paid for our victory. Hunter was still out cold, and Joyce had been shot through the head.

## Chapter 21

### My Sea Adventure Begins

There was no return of the mutineers—not so much as another shot out of the woods. They had accepted their defeat. As for us, we had a quiet time and saw to our own wounds. The captain had been badly wounded. Although no organ had been injured, his shoulder blade was broken, and this affected his lung. The doctor said he would be all right as long as he did not walk or move his arm for a few weeks. As for Hunter, do what we could, he never recovered consciousness.

My own accidental cut across the knuckles

was nothing, and the doctor patched it up in a few minutes. When he finished, the doctor informed me that he was going to see if he could find Ben Gunn. He had an idea that the old man could help us somehow.

In the meantime, the house was stifling hot and the little patch of sand outside was ablaze with the afternoon sun. I began to envy the doctor walking in the cool woods, with the birds and the smell of pine, while I sat grilling with my clothes stuck to me and the smell of death and dying all around.

It was at this time that I got it into my head to find Ben Gunn's homemade boat and return to the *Hispaniola* and cut her loose. I had the plan all figured out and I thought for sure it would work.

When no one was really looking, I made a run for it and escaped into the woods, leaving only two men to guard the stockade.

I trudged through the woods until I found



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my way to the shore. The cool air brushed against my face, and for a moment I almost imagined I was back home and this was all a horrible nightmare.

From the shore I could see the *Hispaniola* and could even hear the murmur of voices as the pirates walked along her decks. As night came, the pirates boarded a lifeboat and made for the shore. I knew this was my chance, but I still had to find old Ben Gunn's little boat.

It was almost dark when I finally spied the craft beached beside a large rock. It was tiny, but it had been well made and I knew it would serve my purpose. Before setting out, I ate the food I had taken with me before I left the stockade. The last rays of daylight dwindled and disappeared, and absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island.

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### Israel Hands

When at last I was sure that I could row out to sea without being spotted, I untied the tiny boat and rowed quietly towards the *Hispaniola*. The sea was calm, and this helped me manage the tiny boat and bring it into position beside the ship. When I was only a few yards from the *Hispaniola*, I could see the yellow lantern light shining out from the lower porthole. The ship seemed to be empty except for one member of Silver's crew—Israel Hands. This was the very same man I had overheard plotting with Long John while I

was hiding in the apple barrel. He was obviously wounded, and as I hoisted myself up to the porthole, I could see a dead man lying on the cabin floor. There had been a fight. Israel Hands had been the victor, but he was now badly wounded and alone. I knew this was a perfect opportunity to carry out my plan.

I managed to climb aboard the ship and silently pull out my knife and cut the rope which anchored the vessel. Once aboard, I lost no time in deciding to confront Hands in person.

When he saw me, Israel Hands nearly jumped out of his skin in surprise. But due to his condition, he could do little more than groan in pain. His leg had a great open bleeding stab wound and he could barely move. I soon informed him that I was now captain of this ship and I had come to take over. His only reply was a nod and a request for some

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brandy and food. I went below and brought up some supplies, then prepared a dinner for the two of us. I also bandaged his wound and helped him get on his feet. After some food and drink, Israel Hands sat up straighter, spoke clearer, and seemed well on his way to recovery.

I formed a pact with the wounded seaman. I agreed to dress his wounds if he would help me steer the ship to a secluded part of the island. In this way, Silver and his men would lose their only means of escape, and I would be able to help my friends flee the island in safety.

The wind was in our favor, and just as the sun began to rise on a new day, I had the *Hispaniola* safely on her course towards the far side of Treasure Island. When it was clear that the ship was in hand, Israel asked me to go down below and fetch him some wine. He claimed that the brandy had suddenly

become too strong for his taste. It was obvious that he wanted me to leave the deck. I knew he was up to something, but I agreed to go below. As soon as I was out of his sight, I removed my shoes and peered out from the lower deck.

He had risen from his position, and although he was still in great pain, it was clear that he once again had full use of his legs. In a minute he reached the supply box, pulled a long knife out from under some rope, and concealed it in his jacket. Now I knew that I must move fast or I would join the other mate whose body lay on the cabin floor.

Just at that time, the *Hispaniola* struck land, and both of us found ourselves rolling off the deck into the water. I was on my feet in seconds and waded slowly to shore. Hands was not far behind me, and despite his bad leg he moved quickly. When he was within range of my pistol, I stopped, waved the weapon in the air, and shouted:

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

He stopped instantly, and I could see that he was trying to think. At last he spoke and conceded that I had out-tricked him, and he was willing to give in.

I was drinking in his words and smiling away at my own cleverness when something flew through the air. In that instant Hands had thrown his knife, and I found my shoulder ripped open and bleeding. Without hesitation, I fired my pistol and a second later I heard a choked cry. Israel Hands plunged headfirst into the sea, never to breathe again.

## Chapter 23

### In the Enemy's Camp

I began to feel sick and faint. The hot blood from my wound was running over my back and chest. I made my way back to the ship, went below, and cleaned and dressed my wound. Then I made sure the ship was securely anchored on the beach. This done, I began to make my way back to my companions with the good news.

After a long walk, I finally came to the clearing that marked the stockade. I could see a fire burning, and my heart lightened when I realized that I would soon be with my friends again.

I made my way slowly to the door of the cabin. It seemed that everyone was fast asleep, and I blamed myself for leaving them so shorthanded that there was no one to stand watch.

I walked carefully inside the cabin and stepped silently over the sleeping bodies. Just then I heard a shrill voice break forth in the darkness.

“Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!”

It was Silver’s parrot. I had no time to move, for in a flash Silver himself was upon me, and I realized that I had been captured.

The buccaneers lit torches and gathered around me. Silver laughed as he saw the look of fear upon my face. He explained that early that morning the doctor had come to inform him that the *Hispaniola* had been set adrift. Neither of the two men knew where she was or what had happened. The doctor gave Long John the cabin, and he and his companions moved their headquarters to another part of



the island.

When he told me all this, I asked Long John if the doctor had asked after me. Silver nodded and said that Dr. Livesey was pretty angry that I had deserted them when the captain was ill and they needed all the men they had.

By this time the rest of the crew were demanding that Silver shoot me on the spot, but the old pirate would hear none of it. He still had a trick or two up his sleeve and said that I would come in useful as a hostage if and when the ship was found. Soon the men got hot-tempered and began to threaten Silver himself. They claimed that he was playing both sides and he could no longer be trusted.

In a dramatic moment, Long John reached inside his pocket and threw a paper on the cabin floor. It was Captain Flint's map of the treasure!

## Chapter 24

### The Plan

When the men saw the map, all talk of opposing Long John ceased. They were so anxious they could hardly sleep. As for me, I was still confused as to how or why the doctor had given up the stockade and the treasure map.

Early the next morning, my questions were answered, as the doctor himself came to visit us. He brought with him medicine and bandages to tend to the sick pirates. When he saw me, he only frowned and went on with his business. When he was through, he asked

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Long John if he might have a word with me. The old pirate readily agreed.

The doctor put his hand on my shoulder and asked where I'd been. When I told him about my adventure, his face lit up. He explained that this was good news. Now that he knew the ship was safe, we all had a good chance for escape. He said no more, only that I should trust him.

Just then, Long John came back and informed the doctor that he was going to begin the hunt for the treasure that very morning. The doctor smiled and warned him to be careful and to keep me at his side. Then he shook my hand, winked, and walked off into the woods.

Something was up, but I knew better than to doubt the doctor. If there was a plan—and I knew that there was—it would be best to go along with it and say nothing.