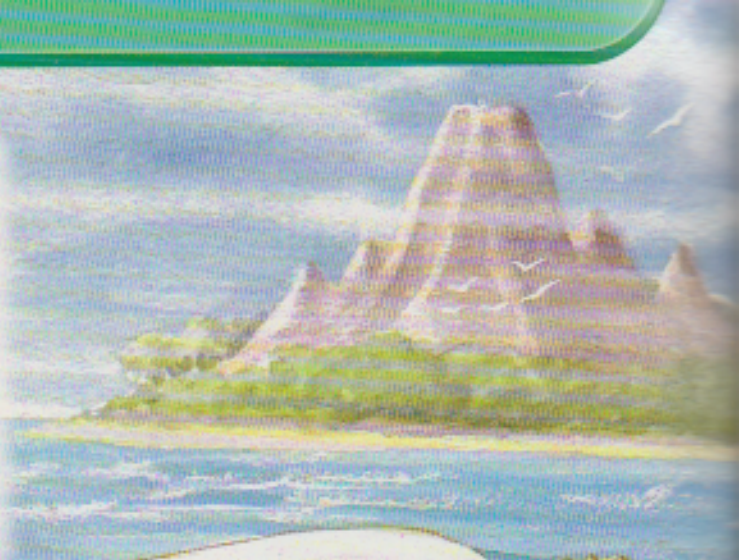


Treasure Island

This is the famous story told by young Jim Hawkins of how he finds a treasure map belonging to the notorious pirate, Captain Flint. Jim sets sail on the good ship *Hispaniola* with Squire Trelawney and Captain Smollett to find the treasure. The ship's cook, Long John Silver, plans to double-cross them.



Treasure Island looked a gloomy, forbidding place. The lower parts were wooded, with rocky peaks jutting above the trees. Even in the sunshine, with birds soaring above, I hated the thought of it. We were anchored in an inlet where trees came down to the water. The air was hot and still, and the men were restless and grumbling. Captain Smollett gave leave for the men to go ashore, which raised their spirits. I believe the silly fellows thought they would break their shins over treasure as soon as they landed. Long John Silver was in charge of the two boats taking the thirteen men ashore. I knew I should not be needed on board so I decided to go ashore too.

I ran up the beach into the woods, glad to be free and alone. I sat quietly hidden in the bushes. Hearing voices, I moved nearer to catch the words. I could see and hear Long John Silver bullying a sailor to join him and the pirates. The sailor angrily refused. Silver's answer was to plunge his dagger into the man and leave him lying dead in the forest. I felt faint and the whole world swam around me in a whirling mist. When I pulled myself together, Silver, crutch under his arm, was wiping his knife on a tuft of grass. I feared for my life if I should be found, and ran and ran, not caring where.

When I stopped I was at the foot of a stony hill. My eye was caught by a movement on the hillside. I could not tell if it was a man or an animal. Here was a new danger I felt I could not face, and I began to run towards the shore. But the creature was faster than me and, darting from tree to tree, he came closer. I could now see that it was a man, but so wild and strange that I was afraid. As he neared me he threw himself on the ground, and held up his hands as if begging for mercy. I have never seen such a ragged creature. He was dressed in patchwork of odd clothes and goat skins, and his blue eyes looked startling in a face burned black by the sun.

Adapted from the story by Robert Louis Stevenson

