

Treasure Island



This is an abridged extract from Chapter 2 of Robert Louis Stevenson's book 'Treasure Island'. Jim Hawkins, a young boy, runs an inn called the Admiral Benbow with his parents outside of Bristol in 18th century England. They've had a strange guest, who calls himself 'the captain', staying with them for several months. He's a rough, old pirate and appears to be trying to hide out or escape from someone.

It was one January morning, very early — a pinching, frosty morning — the sun still low and only touching the hilltops and shining far to seaward. The captain had risen earlier than usual and set out down the beach, his cutlass swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat, his brass telescope under his arm, his hat tilted back upon his head.

Well, I was laying the breakfast-table when the parlour door opened and a man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before. He was a pale, tallowy creature, wanting two fingers of the left hand, and though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter. I asked him what was for his service and he sat down upon a table and motioned me to draw near. I paused where I was with my napkin in my hand.

"Come here, sonny," says he. "Come nearer here." I took a step nearer.

"Is this here table for my mate Bill?" he asked with a kind of leer.

I told him I did not know his mate Bill, and this was for a person who stayed in our house whom we called the captain.

"Well," said he, "my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like as not. He has a cut on one cheek and a mighty pleasant way with him, has my mate Bill. Now, is my mate Bill in this here house?"

I told him he was out walking.

"Which way, sonny? Which way is he gone?"



And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was likely to return, "Ah," said he, "this'll be as good as drink to my mate Bill."

The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door, peering round the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. When the captain returned, the stranger backed along into the parlour and put me behind him in the corner so that we were both hidden by the open door. I was very uneasy and alarmed, as you may fancy, and it rather added to my fears to observe that the stranger was certainly frightened himself. He cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath; and all the time we were waiting there he kept swallowing as if he felt what we used to call a lump in the throat.

At last in strode the captain, slammed the door behind him, without looking to the right or left, and marched straight across the room to where his breakfast awaited him.

"Bill," said the stranger in a voice that I thought he had tried to make bold and big.

The captain spun round on his heel and fronted us; all the brown had gone out of his face, and even his nose was blue; he had the look of a man who sees a ghost, or the evil one, or something worse, if anything can be; and upon my word, I felt sorry to see him all in a moment turn so old and sick.

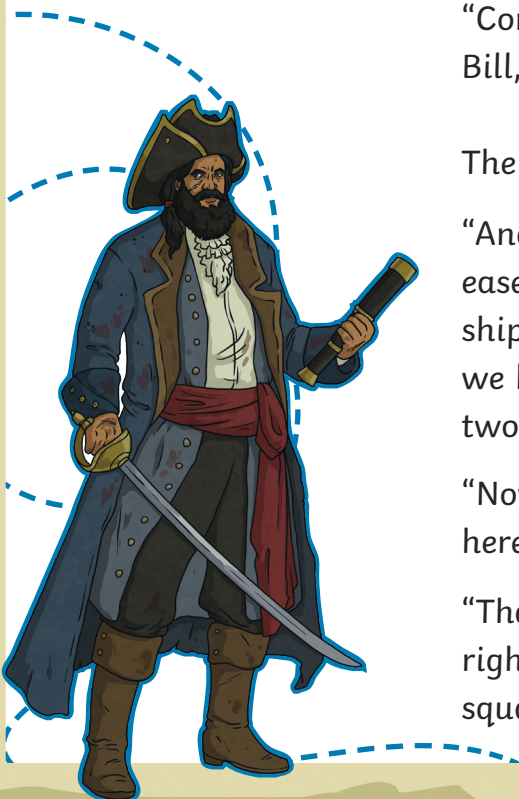
"Come, Bill, you know me; you know an old shipmate, Bill, surely," said the stranger.

The captain made a sort of gasp. "Black Dog!" said he.

"And who else?" returned the other, getting more at his ease. "Black Dog as ever was, come for to see his old shipmate Billy, at the Admiral Benbow inn. Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since I lost them two talons," holding up his mutilated hand.

"Now, look here," said the captain; "you've run me down; here I am; well, then, speak up; what is it?"

"That's you, Bill," returned Black Dog, "you're in the right of it, Billy. We'll sit down, if you please, and talk square, like old shipmates."



Questions

1. Draw **four** lines and match each name to their description.

Jim Hawkins

The author of
'Treasure Island'.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A pirate who has
come looking for his
old shipmate.

Black Dog

The narrator of the story.

Bill

A pirate who is hiding out
at an inn.

2. What is the name of the inn where the story takes place? Tick one.

- ☐ Admiral Bristol
- ☐ Admiral Black Dog
- ☐ Admiral Bill
- ☐ Admiral Benbow

3. What does Black Dog call Jim in the story?

4. Fill in the missing words.

"Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since I lost them two _____,"
holding up his _____ hand.

5. Look at the last paragraph in the text. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'fair'.

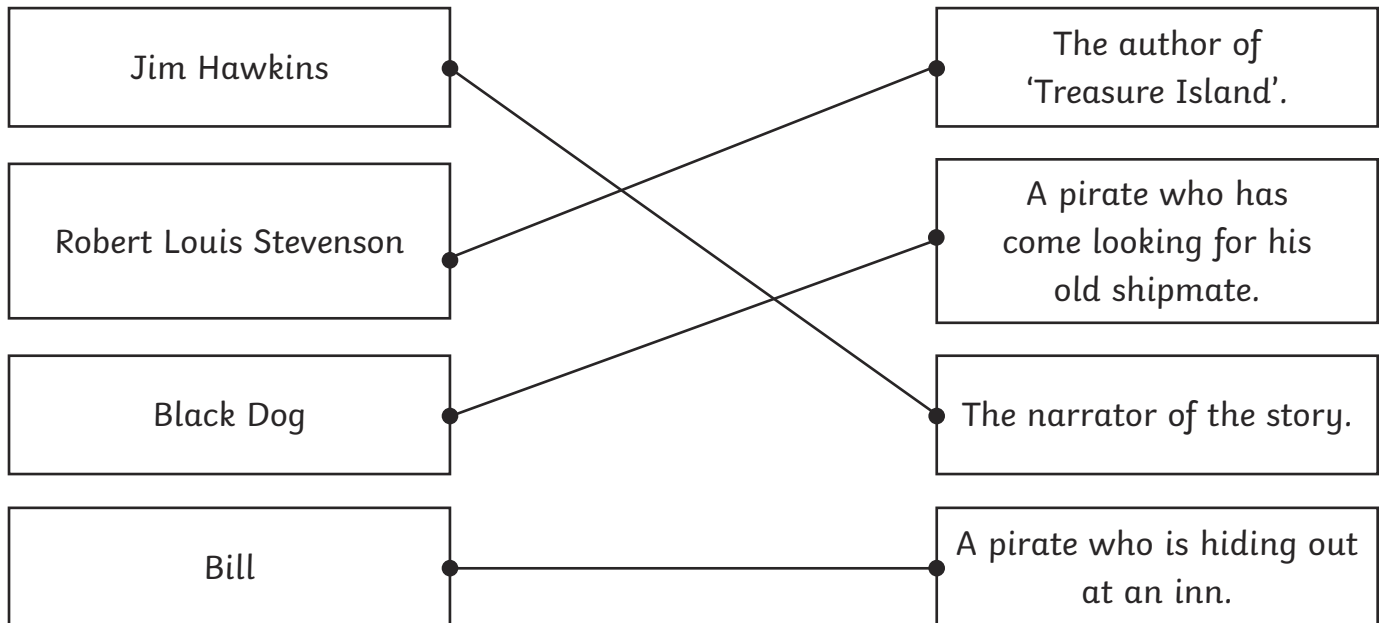
6. How do you think the captain is feeling at the beginning of the text and before he sees Black Dog? Explain your answer.

7. Look at the paragraph beginning, **The stranger kept hanging about...**
Is the captain expecting Black Dog? Explain your answer.

8. Look at the end of the text. Predict what you think will happen next.

Answers

1. Draw **four** lines and match each name to their description.



2. What is the name of the inn where the story takes place? Tick one.

- ☐ Admiral Bristol
☐ Admiral Black Dog
☐ Admiral Bill
☒ **Admiral Benbow**

3. What does Black Dog call Jim in the story?

Black Dog calls Jim 'sonny' in the story.

4. Fill in the missing words.

"Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since I lost them two **talons**," holding up his **mutilated** hand.

5. Look at the last paragraph in the text. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'fair'.

square

6. How do you think the captain is feeling at the beginning of the text and before he sees Black Dog? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think he is feeling confident and relaxed. It says in the text that he has his hat tilted back on his head. He isn't hiding his face and he doesn't look before he walks into the inn on his return either.

7. Look at the paragraph beginning, **The stranger kept hanging about...**

Is the captain expecting Black Dog? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I don't think the captain is expecting Black Dog. He becomes pale, sick and upset when Black Dog confronts him. He gasps as if he isn't happy to see him.

8. Look at the end of the text. Predict what you think will happen next.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they are going to have a conversation about why Bill has been hiding out and why Black Dog wanted to find him. I think he's going to ask for money or gold that Bill owes him.

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"Well," said he, "my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like as not. He has a cut on one cheek and a mighty pleasant way with him, has my mate Bill. Now, is my mate Bill in this here house?"

I told him he was out walking.

"Which way, sonny? Which way is he gone?"



And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was likely to return, "Ah," said he, "this'll be as good as drink to my mate Bill."

The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door, peering round the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. When the captain returned, the stranger backed along into the parlour and put me behind him in the corner so that we were both hidden by the open door. I was very uneasy and alarmed, as you may fancy, and it rather added to my fears to observe that the stranger was certainly frightened himself. He cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath; and all the time we were waiting there he kept swallowing as if he felt what we used to call a lump in the throat.

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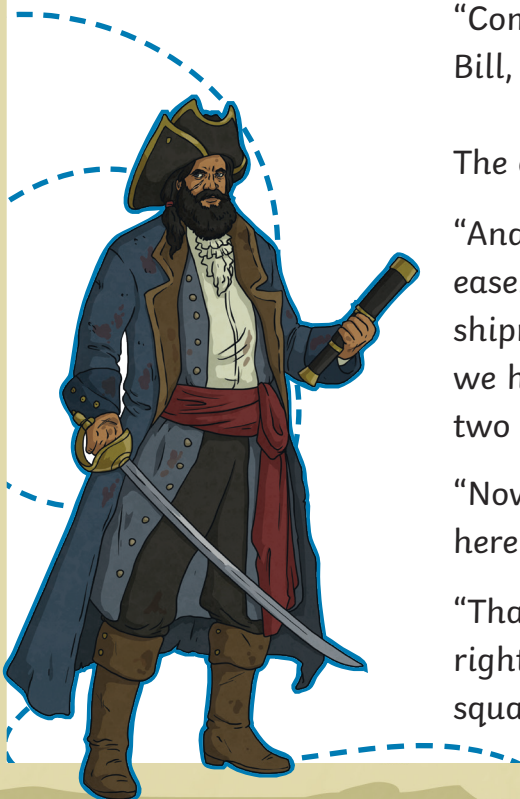
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"That's you, Bill," returned Black Dog, "you're in the right of it, Billy. We'll sit down, if you please, and talk square, like old shipmates."



Questions

1. Number the events from 1–4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Black Dog enters the inn.
- ☐ Black Dog asks about the captain.
- ☐ The captain goes for a walk.
- ☐ Jim is setting the table.

2. What is the captain's real name? Tick one.

- ☐ Bill
- ☐ Black Dog
- ☐ Benbow
- ☐ Mate

3. What month is it at the beginning of the story?

4. Look at the paragraph beginning, **At last...**

Find and copy two words that are similar in meaning to the word 'walked'.

- _____
- _____

5. Fill in the missing words.

He was a pale, _____, wanting two fingers of the left hand, and though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter.

6. Look at the beginning of the text. Why do you think the captain is carrying a telescope under his arm? Explain your answer.

7. Look at the paragraph beginning, **The captain spun round on his heel...**

Do you think the captain is happy to see Black Dog? Explain why.

8. At the end of the text, Bill recognises Black Dog. What do you think their relationship was like before the story takes place? Explain your answer.

9. Compare how Black Dog feels before and after he confronts Bill. Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Number the events from 1–4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 3** Black Dog enters the inn.
- 4** Black Dog asks about the captain.
- 1** The captain goes for a walk.
- 2** Jim is setting the table.

2. What is the captain's real name? Tick one.

- ☒ **Bill**
- ☐ Black Dog
- ☐ Benbow
- ☐ Mate

3. What month is it at the beginning of the story?

It is January at the beginning of the story.

4. Look at the paragraph beginning, **At last...**

Find and copy two words that are similar in meaning to the word 'walked'.

- **strode**
- **marched**

5. Fill in the missing words.

He was a pale, **tallowy creature**, wanting two fingers of the left hand, and though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter.

6. Look at the beginning of the text. Why do you think the captain is carrying a telescope under his arm? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the captain is carrying a telescope under his arm as he might be looking for pirate ships that he recognises or keeping watch on the road for anyone who might be searching for him.

7. Look at the paragraph beginning, **The captain spun round on his heel...**

Do you think the captain is happy to see Black Dog? Explain why.

Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I don't think the captain is happy to see Black Dog. He becomes pale when he recognises him and Jim thinks he looks 'sick'.

8. At the end of the text, Bill recognises Black Dog. What do you think their relationship was like before the story takes place? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think they used to be friends and that they have known each other for a long time. Black Dog knows Bill's habits and his face quite well when he describes him to Jim. He also refers to him as his old shipmate.

9. Compare how Black Dog feels before and after he confronts Bill. Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Black Dog was a bit scared of Bill before he confronts him. In the beginning, he is frightened and he keeps swallowing like he has a lump in his throat. At the end, I think he is more confident because the text says he is 'getting more at his ease' and he speaks to Bill more confidently.

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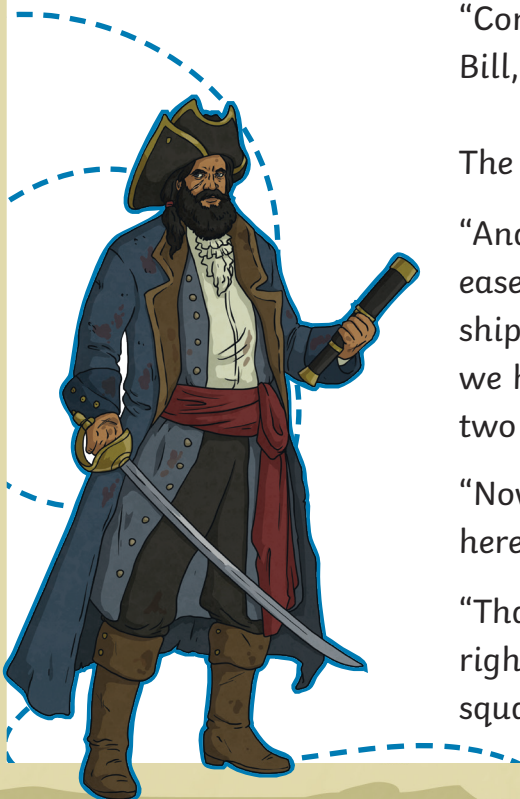
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Questions

1. Number the events from 1–4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Black Dog hides with Jim behind a door.
- ☐ Black Dog waits at the inn for the captain to return.
- ☐ The captain returns from his walk.
- ☐ Black Dog confronts the captain.

2. Where had the captain gone? Tick one.

- ☐ Bristol
- ☐ another inn
- ☐ the beach
- ☐ to see his shipmates

3. What time of day is it in the story?

4. Look at the paragraph, **The stranger kept hanging about...**

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'imagine'.

5. Fill in the missing words.

The captain had risen earlier than usual and set out down the beach, his _____
swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat, his brass _____
under his arm.

6. Look at the paragraph beginning with, **Well, I was laying the breakfast-table when...**

In the text, the narrator states that the pirate **did not look much like a fighter**. Explain what sort of appearance you think this pirate had to look like someone who is not much of a fighter.

7. Imagine you are Jim Hawkins witnessing this conversation between the two pirates. Explain how you would feel at the end of this text.

8. Look at the paragraph beginning, **The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door...**

Why do you think Black Dog hides Jim behind the door with him? Explain your answer.

9. Look at the end of the text. Why do you think Black Dog has been searching for Bill? Explain your answer.

10. Do you think Bill is really a captain or not? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Number the events from 1–4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 2** Black Dog hides with Jim behind a door.
- 1** Black Dog waits at the inn for the captain to return.
- 3** The captain returns from his walk.
- 4** Black Dog confronts the captain.

2. Where had the captain gone? Tick one.

- ☐ Bristol
- ☐ another inn
- ☒ **the beach**
- ☐ to see his shipmates

3. What time of day is it in the story?

In the story, it is the morning.

4. Look at the paragraph, **The stranger kept hanging about...**

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'imagine'.

fancy

5. Fill in the missing words.

The captain had risen earlier than usual and set out down the beach, his **cutlass** swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat, his brass **telescope** under his arm.

6. Look at the paragraph beginning with, **Well, I was laying the breakfast-table when...**

In the text, the narrator states that the pirate **did not look much like a fighter**. Explain what sort of appearance you think this pirate had to look like someone who is not much of a fighter.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think he may not look very aggressive in his face as later on it says he appears frightened and nervous before he confronts Bill. He also could be a bit thin and not look very strong or tall.

7. Imagine you are Jim Hawkins witnessing this conversation between the two pirates. Explain how you would feel at the end of this text.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would feel very nervous because it is obvious that these two don't like each other and that they might start fighting in the middle of my business. I think I also might be a bit curious about what they are going to say to each other too.

8. Look at the paragraph beginning, **The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn door...**

Why do you think Black Dog hides Jim behind the door with him? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Black Dog hides Jim with him because he doesn't want anything Jim says or does to give away his surprise or hint to the captain that he is there.

9. Look at the end of the text. Why do you think Black Dog has been searching for Bill? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Black Dog has been searching for Bill because Bill has either done something to Black Dog or cheated him out of something. Black Dog does not appear happy with Bill and Bill has been running and hiding from someone.

10. Do you think Bill is really a captain or not? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I don't think Bill is really a captain because Black Dog refers to him only as his old shipmate. He doesn't treat him with the expected respect for a captain.