

Book Review:        Treasure Island

Author:                Robert Louis Stevenson

I first read this book whilst studying English at secondary school, many, many, years ago. I vividly recall a cover that featured a leering, one-legged man with a tricorne hat, a scarlet coat and a raucous-looking parrot on his shoulder. The man was Long John Silver and the story was Treasure Island.

I was captivated. I loved that the story was told from the perspective of a child looking at the world wide-eyed and filled with a mixture of boldness and caution. I loved the sense of unpredictable excitement, the exotic settings of a tall ship and a remote island, pictured with flamboyant descriptive language throughout.

I had tried to read so-called “classics” before and found them yawningly dull or dauntingly difficult, but Treasure Island wasn't like that.

Jim Hawkins' story gripped me from the first thrilling scenes at the Admiral Benbow inn. I was enthralled by exotic characters such as Silver, Blind Pew and Ben Gunn. Even though I knew much of the story already, the suspense remained powerful. The language was clear and expressive, the motives of the characters all too credible, and when I reached the end I was breathless with the excitement of understanding that Silver was still out there. And so was some of the treasure...

I have re-read Treasure Island twice more and it still holds my attention. I still find fresh delights in its pages. For me, it's a book that has everything. Stevenson was a master of so many different styles of writing. But for me, Treasure Island remains his masterpiece, and masterclass.

Reviewed by:        Mr. Newell