

This story is an adventure story in which Jim Hawkins narrates his tale of looking for treasure on a desert island. Whilst on the island, Jim witnesses a murder committed by the evil pirate Silver and his crew. At this moment, Jim has managed to run away from Silver, but suddenly finds himself confronted by an unusual and frightening figure.

FROM the side of the hill, which was here steep and stony, a spout of gravel was dislodged and fell rattling and bounding through the trees like coins from slot machines. My eyes turned instinctively in that direction, and I saw a figure leap with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine. What it was, whether bear or man or monkey, I could not tell. It was as dark as the yawning grave and the sight of this new terror brought me to a stand.

I was now, it seemed, cut off upon both sides; behind me the murderers, before me this lurking nondescript. And immediately I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not: I cursed my foolish ambitions for excitement and adventure and longed to be restored in my lodgings in Bristol. Silver and his band of thugs appeared less terrible in contrast with this figure of the woods, and I turned on my heel, and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boats.

Instantly the figure reappeared, and making a wide circuit, began to head me off. I was weary having not rested for some time and I could see it was in vain for me to contend in speed with such an adversary. From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer, running manlike on two legs, but unlike any man that I had ever seen, stooping almost double as it ran.

I began to recall what I had heard of savage islanders from the books that had entertained me in my school days. Lost in my nightmarish thoughts, I contemplated crying for help, but the mere fact that he was a man, however wild, had somewhat reassured me, and my fear of Silver began to revive in proportion. I stood still, therefore, and cast about for some method of escape; and as I was so thinking, the recollection of my pistol flashed into my mind. As soon as I remembered I was not defenceless, courage glowed again in my heart and I set my face resolutely for this man of the island and walked briskly towards him.

He was concealed by this time behind another tree trunk; but he must have been watching me closely, for as soon as I began to move in his direction he reappeared and cautiously took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated, drew back, came forward again, and at last, to my wonder and confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in prayer.

At that I once more stopped.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Ben Gunn," he answered, and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward, like a rusty lock. "I'm poor Ben Gunn, I am, and you're the first person I've seen for three years."

I could now see that he was a man who had endured all the hazards of the island and bore the marks to prove it. His skin, wherever it was exposed, was burnt by the sun; even his lips were black, and his fair eyes looked quite startling in so dark a face. Of all the beggar-men that I had seen or fancied, he was the chief for raggedness. He was clothed with tatters of old ship's canvas and old sea-cloth, and this extraordinary patchwork was all held together by a system of the most various and absurd fastenings, brass buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin. About his waist he wore an old brass-buckled leather belt, which sparkled like a jewel in the piercing sun and reminded me of my purpose on the island.

"Three years!" I cried. "Were you shipwrecked?"

"Nay, mate," said he; "marooned."