TIMELESS CLASSICS

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The End of Billy Bones

Squire Trelawney and some of the other gentlemen have asked me to write down the story of Treasure Island. I, Jim Hawkins, gave them my promise to do so. So I will tell you everything that happened—from beginning to end. I will leave out nothing except the location of the island—for there is still treasure there.

I go back in time to the 1700's. This is when my father still ran the Admiral Benbow Inn. And this is the same year the old sailor came into the inn, carrying a battered old sea chest.

He was a tall, rough-looking man, brown as a nut. His hands were scarred. Across one cheek was a jagged old scar from the slash of a sword.

"Do many people come this way?" he asked.

My father said, "No, very few."

That was true. We lived on a lonely stretch of the English coast. Few travelers came our way.

One day, the old seaman took me aside. He promised to pay me a silver coin every month if I would keep an eye out for "a man with one leg." I was to tell him at once if I saw such a man.

People were afraid of the old seaman, whom my family now called Captain. At night, he would drink far more rum than his head could carry. Then he would sing wicked songs that made the house shake.

His bloodthirsty stories frightened everyone. My father said the Captain was ruining business at the inn.

And in one way, he did ruin us. Month after month he stayed—without paying my father a penny. I am sure the trouble and worry over this man caused the sickness that befell my poor father. In the days that followed, we paid little notice to the Captain. My father was getting worse, and my mother and I were busy with the inn.

One cold morning when the Captain was away, a stranger came to the inn. He was a pale man, with two fingers missing on his left hand. He wore a cutlass.

He said he was looking for a man with a scar on his cheek.

I told him the Captain had gone out walking, but would return soon.

An hour or so later, he walked in the door.

The stranger said, "Bill."

The Captain turned. He had the look of a man who sees a ghost. He cried out, "Black Dog!"

Black Dog said, "Yes, it's Black Dog come to see his old shipmate, Billy Bones. We'll sit down now, if you please, and talk square."

Black Dog sent me to fetch some rum. Then he told me to leave the room. Their voices grew louder and louder. Then all of a sudden an explosion of swearing erupted. I heard a chair and table tumble over. Then a clash of steel and a cry of pain. The next instant, Black Dog came running out, with the Captain right behind him. Blood was running

from his shoulder.

Just at the door of the inn, the Captain made a great swing with his cutlass. Such a blow might have split Black Dog to his chin! Instead, the cutlass hit the wooden sign that said "Admiral Benbow" and cut a notch in it.

The Captain reeled and leaned against the wall unsteadily.

I cried, "Are you hurt?"

"Rum!" he cried. "Bring me rum, Jim!"

When I returned with the rum, the Captain was lying on the floor. His breath was loud and hard. His eyes were shut and his face was a horrible color. My mother and I did not know what to do.

Luckily, Dr. Livesey came by to visit my father just then. We were glad to see him.

Dr. Livesey turned up Bill's sleeve. We saw that one of his tattoos read "Billy Bones." So that was his name!

Dr. Livesey cut open a vein. He bled Billy Bones a long time before the man opened his eyes.

"Where's Black Dog?" he asked.

Dr. Livesey said, "There is no Black Dog