

Acting Edition

Ken Ludwig's Treasure Island

Based on the Novel by
Robert Louis Stevenson

This sample is an excerpt of a
Concord Theatricals title.

Samples of Concord Theatricals titles
are for perusal and cannot be used for
performance or downloaded, printed,
and distributed in any way.

This sample may not reflect the version
of the play currently in print.

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

Copyright © 2008 by Ken Ludwig

All Rights Reserved

Cover image by Joel Peter Johnson, created for the Alley Theatre

All Rights Reserved

TREASURE ISLAND is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all member countries of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Universal Copyright Convention, and/or the World Trade Organization conforming to the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-65098-7

www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

info@concordtheatricals.com

1-866-979-0447

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk

020-7054-7298

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals Corp., depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *TREASURE ISLAND* may not be licensed by Concord Theatricals Corp. in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Concord Theatricals Corp. office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *TREASURE ISLAND* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a license to perform this title(s), which license must be obtained from Concord Theatricals Corp. prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of federal law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to civil penalties. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Concord Theatricals Corp.

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals Corp.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, scanned, uploaded, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, digital, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall share this title(s), or any part of this title(s), through any social media or file hosting websites.

For all inquiries regarding motion picture, television, online/digital and other media rights, please contact Concord Theatricals Corp.

MUSIC AND THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music and/or other copyrighted third-party materials (e.g. artworks, logos) in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music and materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, including without limitation music, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Corp., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees. For music, please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

Treasure Island had its world premiere at the Alley Theatre, Gregory Boyd, Artistic Director, Dean R. Gladden Managing Director, on May 18th, 2007. The Scenic Designer was Eugene Lee, the Costume Designer was Constance Hoffman, the Lighting Designer was Clifton Taylor and the Original Music and Sound Design were by John Gromada. The Stage Managers were Elizabeth M. Berther and Terry Cranshaw. The production was under the direction of Gregory Boyd with the following cast:

JEMMY RATHBONE	Noble Shropshire
BLACK DOG	Jeffrey Bean
ISRAEL HANDS	John Tyson
EZEKIELHAZARD	Chris Hutchison
JOB O'BRIEN	James Belcher
JUSTICE DEATH	David Rainey
GEORGE MERRY	Mark Shanahan
CAPTAIN FLINT	John Felch
JIM HAWKINS	Elizabeth Bunch
JIM'S MOTHER	Melissa Pritchett
THE BAILIFF	James Belcher
REVEREND MAINWARING	Noble Shropshire
TOWN DRUNK	James Black
DR. LIVESEY	John Felch
BOY WITH BARROW	Chris Hutchison
BILLY BONES	Charles Krohn
BLIND PEW	John Tyson
SQUIRE TRELAWNEY	James Belcher
A CUT PURSE	Chris Hutchison
JOSIAH BLAND	Noble Shropshire
LONG JOHN SILVER	James Black
TOM MORGAN	Chris Hutchison
CAPTAIN SMOLLET	Jeffrey Bean
BEN GUNN	Noble Shropshire

PLACE AND TIME

The action takes place in England and the West Indies.

The time is 1774

CAST

Jim Hawkins		<i>Actor One</i>
Long John Silver		<i>Actor Two</i>
Jim's Father		
The Civilians	The Pirates	
Dr. Livesey	Captain Flint	<i>Actor Three</i>
Squire Trelawney	Job O'Brien	<i>Actor Four</i>
The Bailiff		
Captain Smollet	Black Dog	<i>Actor Five</i>
Reverend Mainwaring	Jemmy Rathbone	<i>Actor Six</i>
	Ben Gunn	
	Josiah Bland	
Jim's Mother	Anne Bonny	<i>Actor Seven</i>
Widow Drews	Justice Death	<i>Actor Eight</i>
Bailiff's son	Blind Pew	<i>Actor Nine</i>
Israel Hands	Calico Jack	
Bailiff's Son	George Merry	<i>Actor Ten</i>
Inn Guest	Ezekiel Hazard	<i>Actor Eleven</i>
Boy with Barrow	Tom Morgan	
	Cut Purse	
Bristol Sailor	Billy Bones	<i>Actor Twelve</i>

Additional Pirates as needed

In addition, everyone except Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver doubles, variously, as the customers at the Admiral Benbow Inn, the sailors in Bristol, a lady at the dock, etc.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the world premiere production of my adaptation of *Treasure Island*, Jim Hawkins was played by a woman. This was my intention when I wrote the piece because it seemed to me at the time that the best way to find an actor who can play a 14-year-old boy who, in the course of the play, experiences the adventure of a lifetime, is to cast a woman of 20 or 30 who has enough acting experience to really knock the socks off such an enormously demanding role.

However, I can also well imagine the role being played by the right young man, in which case the play would grow in other directions and preserve different aspects of Stevenson's tale of boyhood. In England, in particular, there may be dangers in casting an actress as Jim, as it might suggest Pantomime, which is not, of course, the world of this play. Indeed, as I write this Note, a West End production of the play is being planned for London and we'll probably cast a boy as Jim. All in all, future producers should feel free to cast the play as they see fit.

Regardless of casting, it seems to me that the key to understanding *Treasure Island* is to recognize that the story created by Stevenson is not just a swashbuckler, though it certainly is that. It is primarily a story of the heart; a story about a boy growing up; and a story about all of us finding out who we are. The relationship between Jim Hawkins and John Silver as created by Stevenson (I take no credit) is a love story of genuine emotional depth. We care about these complex souls from the moment we meet them, and we watch their relationship grow with an almost breathless sense of anticipation. Will they become friends or foes? Will Silver ever be honest with Jim? And will Jim ever forgive the old rogue and admit him back into the shadows of his heart?

As a lover of Shakespeare, I was delighted to discover while writing this adaptation that while Stevenson never makes Shakespeare explicit in his novel, *Treasure Island* is infused with Shakespeare from beginning to end. I find this in everything from the poise of the plotting to the power of the characters; from the drama of the scene structure to the richness of the language. The narrative voice that Jim assumes in the novel has some of the same clear-eyed lushness that we hear in Shakespeare's middle voice, in plays like *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, *Henry V* and *Julius Caesar*. Moreover, Jim's boyish jauntiness reminds me of *Rosalind* and *Viola*, two characters who also go on voyages of self-discovery, both of them women dressed as men who,

once upon a time, were played by boy actors. I tried to highlight these Shakespearean themes by emphasizing Jim's devotion to his father, and making the elder Hawkins into a man who loved his son so much that he spent hours every week teaching him to recite Shakespeare by the page-full. (I've spent the past several years teaching my own children large swaths of Shakespeare, so I cannot claim disinterest here.)

Also by way of casting: I believe that the play can hold as many pirates as the producer can find. So if a particular production has the luxury of a large cast, please feel free to eliminate the doubling that I outline on the casting page. The goal of the production should be wild, rollicking, frightening, breathless and moving. Any means to that end should be embraced – and if that means more actors and more pirates, then all the better. Equally, if it means fewer actors and even more doubling than I suggest on the casting page – and if the director is ingenious enough to figure out how to do it – then I'm all for that as well. Large cast or small, it's all a matter of preserving the spirit of the piece.

Finally, for me, one of the marvels of *Treasure Island* is that virtually all of the characters that Stevenson created in the book are flamboyantly larger than life. Pew is the epitome of evil, just as Bones is the quintessence of frightened bravado. Livesy is the stalwart friend we all dream of having, while Trelawney is a loveable booby. Jim is all eagerness and boyish joy, just as Silver has the heart of a hero and the ruthless cunning of a politician. These are roles made in heaven – or the heaven created by Stevenson's pen – and the play is meant to glitter with the gold of their inner lights.

A NOTE ON THE PARROT

There's an old saying in show business suggesting that you should always avoid working with children and animals. There are no children in this play, but there is, unavoidably, a parrot because he was just too famous to leave out.

But please be warned! When producing this play, you must be careful that the parrot doesn't seem prominent or silly in any way. He shouldn't provoke laughs. Ever. He should be neutral. In the world premiere production of the play at the Alley Theatre we thought we had the perfect parrot: he was an exact reproduction of a real parrot, the right size, the right colors, with a real parrot's voice; but in the previews he got giggles from the audience. The solution was to have him appear in a cage (as indicated in the stage directions) and, whenever he had to be onstage, to have the cage placed in the shadows at the side of the stage where the parrot could barely be glimpsed. It was the only way we could prevent the audience from responding in the wrong way, and I highly recommend it. Otherwise the parrot will upstage everybody in the scene. And while the parrot may enjoy it, the rest of us won't. Many thanks.

Ken Ludwig

January 13, 2008

“O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home!”

Such were the notes that from the Pirate’s isle
Around the kindling watch-fire rang the while;
Such were the sounds that thrill’d the rocks along,
And unto ears as rugged seem’d a song!

* * *

He left a Corsair’s name to other times,
Link’d with one virtue, and a thousand crimes.

The Corsair, Lord Byron

For my two swashbucklers, Olivia and Jack.

ACT I
Scene 1

(Strong music attacks us in the darkness. Prokofiev, here and throughout the play. Then the lights come up on a pirate ship in 1774 in the middle of a desperate chase across the deck. The ship is rolling, as mighty waves slap the side of the vessel without mercy. Lightning flashes and thunder roars, as though the gods were playing roughly with their favorite toys. "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods? They kill us for their sport." Everything about this moment is dangerous and exciting.

The man being chased is named JEMMY RATHBONE. He's sly and filthy. The pirates chasing him include ISRAEL HANDS, BLACK DOG, ANNE BONNY, GEORGE MERRY, EZEKIEL HAZARD, JOB O'BRIEN and JUSTICE DEATH. With shouts and cries, they careen around the deck, in and out of the foc'sle, around the bowsprit and through the rigging. These pirates are after blood.)

HANDS.

Grab 'im!

DEATH.

'old 'im!

HANDS.

Trap 'im between you, ya dogs!

MERRY.

You miserable dolts! How far can he get?!

We're on a Ship!

BONNY.

I got him!

BLACK DOG.

Got him!

RATHBONE.

(Caught)

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

(The pirates tackle him and pin his arms behind him.)

BLACK DOG.

Bonny, hold him down!

BONNY.

Stop yer squirmin!

RATHBONE.

I ain't done nothin'!

Leave me alone!

MERRY.

Get up, you dog!

BLACK DOG.

Where is it?!

RATHBONE.

I never seen it!

HAZARD.

You lyin' filth, *where is it!*

RATHBONE.

Get Flint! He'll tell ya it ain't me!

Cap'n Flint!!!

BONNY.

I wouldn't do that if I was you.

RATHBONE.

(In tears, knowing he's about to be killed.)

I never seen it in me life, I swear!

FLINT! FOR GOD'S SAKE! COME OUT HERE!

FLIIIIINT!

HANDS.

Here he comes!

BONNY.

It's Flint.

DEATH.

Flint.

BLACK DOG.

It's Flint!

MERRY.

Get outa the way!

(CAPTAIN JAMES FLINT steps out of the foc'sle. He looks evil beyond description. He has a hideous scar on one side of his face. He has a mop of greasy red hair sticking out of the sides of his black, tattered hat. He's missing three fingers from his left hand. And he hasn't shaved in a week. He carries himself, however, with some daintiness, and he uses the fingers he has left to him with the delicacy that civilized people use to pick up fine jewelry or canapés.)

RATHBONE.

Oh, Cap'n Flint! Thank God above you's 'ere.
They was gonna kill me, Cap'n. Kill me fer
nothin'!

*(GEORGE MERRY brings his cutlass down towards
RATHBONE'S head and CAPTAIN FLINT parries the blow
with a flick of his wrist, saving RATHBONE'S life. Then, to
RATHBONE:)*

FLINT.

Where...is...the map?

RATHBONE.

Map, sir?

FLINT.

Little piece o' paper with lines on it.

RATHBONE.

I ain't got it, Cap'n. I never seen it.

FLINT.

Think very hard about this, Jemmy.

RATHBONE.

I swear to you on me life, sir!

FLINT.

"Your life?" Well that's a very appropriate
choice of language, now ain't it, Jemmy?

(To Death – and meaning it.)

Skin him alive.

(They drag RATHBONE away.)

RATHBONE.

Nooooooooooooooooo!

FLINT.

Tear the
Flesh from his bones, cut out his heart through his
Throat and throw the whole mess overboard!!

RATHBONE.

Sir I swear, I ain't got the map!

FLINT.

Who's got it then?

RATHBONE.

...Billy Bones, sir.

BONNY.

But Bones is dead.

RATHBONE.

No he ain't. Ya thought he was dead, we all did.
 But that night after the treasure was buried
 And the men what buried it put to death,
 Well I was watch that night and around about
 Three bells I hears a noise, and afore I knows it
 There comes Billy Bones a-clamberin' over
 The side o' the ship – 'e 'ad survived, ya see –
 And he limps to your quarters and he steals the map!

FLINT.

Bones does?

RATHBONE.

And then I-I stops him like, right here on this deck,
 And I says "Give me the map! That there belongs to
 Captain Flint, the very man what gave me
 Me start in this most noble o' professions."
 'Cause it's like I worships you, Cap'n. You're my
 Hero like.

FLINT.

And Bones?

RATHBONE.

(In tears.)

He threatens me, and says that if I ever
Says a word about it, then he'll track
Me down and kill me. And then he was over the side
Like that!

FLINT.

I see, I see.

And you didn't plan to meet up with him
Later and divide the spoils, now did ya?
All private like? Between old friends?

RATHBONE.

No, sir! The map is yours, sir! Like I said!

FLINT.

You're a good boy, Jemmy.

RATHBONE.

(Relieved)

Thank you, sir.

FLINT.

But you're a liar!

*(Whap! FLINT strikes RATHBONE across the face so hard that
it brings RATHBONE to his knees.)*

You were going to split it with him!

(Whap!)

And Bones is alive and he's got the map!

(Whap!)

Boys, kill him.

(The PIRATES grab him.)

RATHBONE.

Ahhh!

BONNY.

String him up!

DEATH.

Cut him to pieces!

MERRY.

Drownd him!

FLINT.

Oh just throw him overboard and be done with it!

RATHBONE.

Nooooooooooooooooooooo!

(As the PIRATES drag him toward the side of the ship, RATHBONE struggles with all his might. Suddenly, he gets away from them, grabbing a cutlass as he goes. He rushes straight for FLINT, who has turned his back on the proceedings –

– and plunges the blade deep into FLINT'S back.

FLINT cries out and falls to the deck. RATHBONE turns to face the other pirates.)

RATHBONE.

Stay back! Boys. Please. I done it for all of us.

MERRY.

(Approaching RATHBONE.)

Kill 'im!

BONNY.

Kill 'im!

BLACK DOG.

Kill 'im!

HANDS.

Kill 'im!

ALL THE PIRATES.

KILL 'IM!

RATHBONE.

Pleeeeeeeeeeease!

(The lights fade quickly and are out by the time the PIRATES reach him. With a crack of thunder, the scene ends and...)

Scene 2

(JIM HAWKINS appears. He's a boy of 14, wiser and graver than his years imply. He could well be played by a woman. As he speaks to us, the Admiral Benbow Inn forms behind him.)

JIM. I remember it all as though it were yesterday. The adventure of my life, that changed me from a boy to a man and is still changing me and will never stop. It began in the spring of 1775 and I, but 14 years old, was in charge of the family business, the Admiral Benbow Inn on Black Hill Cove on the south coast of England. I remember the date, for that was the year my poor dear father died, a blow from which I will never recover. It was during this illness that he went to London to find a specialist who might save him.

FATHER. "The doctors are better there, Jim. I'll get through this, I promise. And so will you."

JIM. "Please take me with you, Father! Please! *Please!*" I begged him day and night, but he wouldn't do it. Looking back, I can see that he was protecting me.

FATHER. “Take care of your mother, son. She needs you now.”

JIM. “Yes, Father. I promise.” A letter reached us, three months later, that he died in London – in that faceless city, alone and without his son. Here was the man I worshipped, ate with, slept with, laughed with; taken from me in a single instant, in the time it takes a beam of sunlight to disappear over the farthest hill. Farthest. Farther. Father. Gone. While he was alive, we went everywhere together, coupled and inseparable, like Juno’s swans. If that sounds Shakespearean, it is. My father was a simple man, but he loved reciting Shakespeare, which he’d studied as a boy. He kept a copy with him in the left-hand pocket of his jacket, and he taught me speeches from the great plays as we tramped the downs together, braced against the icy cold. “Friends, Romans, countrymen!” he roared against the wind; and I shouted back: “Lend me your ears!” and we’d laugh together and on we’d go, line after line, mile after mile. My best friend. Soon gone. Ever loved. So it was, in the year he died, that my mother said.

MOTHER. “You’re a man now Jim. I believe I can run the inn without your father, but I’ll need your help.”

JIM. “Of course, Mother. And I promise that you’ll never want for anything as long as I’m alive.” Bold words, but from the heart. And so we picked up the reins of the business and kept it pulling like an ailing dray as best we could. (*And now the inn comes to life behind JIM.*) Customers came, village folk, Old Widow Drews, who lost her astonished husband to the sea; the bailiff and his two sons, one good, the other not; the Reverend Mainwaring, who stood next to me at my father’s funeral and held my hand; and Dr. Livesy, the physician who ministered to my father in those months before his untimely death; – and

all the while, I delivered pints of ale and kept the tables clean and collected the bills, looking the other way when money was tight for this or that one; so on we rode, filling our lives with everything in existence that was routine and commonplace – until the day the pirate arrived.

(BILLY BONES appears on the horizon, approaching the inn. He's a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails; and a saber cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. He's followed by a boy pushing a hand barrow, and on the barrow is a seaman's chest.)

BONES.

(Singing)

FIFTEEN MEN ON A DEAD MAN'S CHEST –
 YO-HO-HO AND A BOTTLE OF RUM!
 DRINK AND THE DEVIL HAD DONE FOR THE REST –
 YO-HO-HO AND A BOTTLE OF RUM!

(To JIM.)

You! Boy! What's yer name?!

JIM. Jim Hawkins, sir.

BONES. Tell me, Jim Hawkinsir, d'ye get much company in this here grog shop o' yourn?

JIM. Very little, sir. The nearest town is some four miles off.

BONES. That's just what I was hopin' you'd say. Now move me in. I'll take that room up there with the pretty view o' the cove and the road. *(To the boy pushing the hand barrow:)*

You! Take the chest indoors! Shake a leg! And if ya even *think* of takin' a little peeky like inside that chest when I ain't lookin', I'll reach down yer throat and cut yer gizzard out!

BOY. Yes, Cap'n!

BONES. Now listen to me, Jim Hawkinsir. I need yer help.

JIM. My help?

BONES. I want you to keep a weather eye open for a seafarin' man with one leg. And you let me know the moment he shows himself. D'ya understand?

JIM. Yes sir. Is he a friend of yours?

BONES. Friend? The man is a friend to no livin' creature, and if he ever turns his back on ya – ya shoot him till you're sure he's dead and pray his ghost don't hunt ya down. You savvy?

JIM. Yes sir. (*To the audience.*) I need scarcely say how the one-legged man now haunted my dreams. On stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house, and the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs, I would see him in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg would be cut off at the knee, now at the hip; now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had six legs and scuttled over trees and houses like a giant spider, his face black and pointed like a beak. To see him thus leap and run and pursue me over the hedge and ditch of my own back yard was the worst of nightmares.

BONES. Hey! Stop yer daydreamin', boy, and get me some rum.

JIM. But it's breakfast time, sir.

BONES.

Rum, I say! *Now*, boy! And make it quick!

Rum! Rum! Rum! Rum!

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and anything theater-related, follow us on our social media channels.

@ConcordShows and **@ConcordUKShows** on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

concord
theatricals