

Treasure Island

Robert Louis Stevenson

Set A/B

Chapter II, pages 11-12

Jim Hawkins lives and works at his parents' inn. A curious old sailor, known as "the captain", comes to stay. One day, he asks Jim to keep a look out for "a seafaring man with one leg" and let him know the moment he appears.

It was not very long after this that there occurred the first of the mysterious events that rid us at last of the captain, though not, as you will see, of his affairs. It was a bitter cold winter, with long, hard frosts and heavy gales; and it was plain from the first that my poor father was little likely to see the spring. He sank daily, and my mother and I had all the inn upon our hands; and were kept busy enough, without paying regard to our unpleasant guest.

It was one January morning, very early – a pinching, frosty morning – the cove all grey with hoar-frost, the ripple lapping softly on the stones, 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. I remember his breath hanging like smoke in his wake as he strode off, and the last sound I heard of him, as he turned the big rock, was a loud snort of indignation, as though his mind was still running upon Dr. Livesey.

Well, mother was up-stairs with father; and I was laying the breakfast-table against the captain's return, 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 had always my eye open for seafaring men, with one leg or two, and I remember this one puzzled me. He was not sailorly, and yet he had a smack of the sea about him too.

I asked him what was for his service, and he said he would take rum; but as I was going out of the room to fetch it 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, particularly in drink, has my mate, Bill. We'll put it, for argument like, that your captain has a cut on one cheek – and we'll put it, if you like, that that cheek's the right one. Ah, well! I told you. Now, is my mate Bill in this here house?"



Questions for *Treasure Island* Set A

Vocabulary:

1. Look at the paragraph beginning: 'It was one January...'

'... *the cove all grey* ...'

What is a cove? Circle **one**.

a river

a beard

a mountain

a bay

2. Look at the second paragraph.

'... *his cutlass swinging* ...'

What does the word *cutlass* mean in this sentence?

3. '*Is this table here for my mate, Bill?*' he asked, with a kind of *leer* ...'

What does the word *leer* mean in this sentence?

Retrieval:

4. In which month does this part of the story take place?

5. What was the captain carrying under his arm?

6. What did the stranger say was the captain's name?

Inference:

7. Why did Jim and his mother have more work to do than usual?

8. How do you know the weather was cold that morning? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

9. At first, why did Jim not know that the stranger was looking for the captain?

Summarise:

10. Here are some summaries of different events from the text. Number them from 1 to 4 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

- The captain goes out.
- Jim's father becomes ill.
- The stranger describes a cut on his mate Bill's face.
- The stranger sits on a table.

Meaning as a whole:

11. Find and copy a group of words which show Jim thinks twice about approaching the stranger.

Compare:

12. How do Jim and the stranger feel differently about the captain? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer.

Questions for *Treasure Island*

Set B

Vocabulary:

1. Look at the first paragraph. **Find** and **copy** a word that means *strange*.

2. Look at the third paragraph. '*...wanting two fingers of the left hand ...*'

What does this mean?

3. Look at the final paragraph. ... *my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like as not ...* What does *as like as not* mean in this sentence? Circle **one**.

unpopular

probably

for a joke

incorrectly

Retrieval:

4. What was the name of the local doctor?

5. Where had the captain gone that morning?

6. Which room in the inn did the stranger enter?

Inference:

7. *My poor father was little likely to see the spring.* What does this mean?

8. In what sort of mood was the captain when he set off that morning? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

9. How did the stranger suggest that Jim could tell, just by looking, that *his mate Bill* was the captain?

Meaning as a whole:

10. Draw lines to match each part of the story with the correct quotation from the text.

Past events

... the cave all grey with hoar-frost ...

Setting

... my mother and I had all the inn upon our hands ...

Dilemma

... he asked, with a kind of leer ...

Character

... I paused where I was with my napkin in my hand.

Predict

11. Based on what you have read, what do you think the stranger will do when he meets the captain?

Authorial intent:

12. *"Come here, sonny," says he. "Come nearer here."* How do these words create a feeling of unease?

Answers for *Treasure Island*

Set A:

Vocabulary:

1. a bay
2. a (sort of) sword
3. a sort of (unpleasant) smile or sneer

Retrieval:

4. January
5. (brass) telescope
6. Bill

Inference:

7. Jim's father was very ill / dying.
8. *pinching, frosty morning, grey with the hoarfrost, breath hanging like smoke in his wake*
9. Because the stranger was talking about *his mate Bill* but Jim only knew him as *the captain*.

Summarise:

10.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The captain goes out. |
| 1 | Jim's father becomes ill. |
| 4 | The stranger describes a cut on his mate Bill's face. |
| 3 | The stranger sits on a table. |

Meaning as a whole:

11. ... *motioned me to draw near. I paused where I was ...*

Compare:

12. Jim did not like him

Evidence:

'...rid us at last of the captain...'

'...our unpleasant guest.'

The stranger wants to fight him

Evidence:

'...my mate Bill?' he asked with a kind of leer.'

'A mighty pleasant way with him...'

Talks about the cut on the cheek/knows all about the cut on the captain's cheek

Talks about him in a menacing way

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Answers for *Treasure Island*

Set B:

Vocabulary:

1. mysterious
2. He had lost two fingers of his left hand / two of the fingers on his left hand were missing
3. probably

Retrieval:

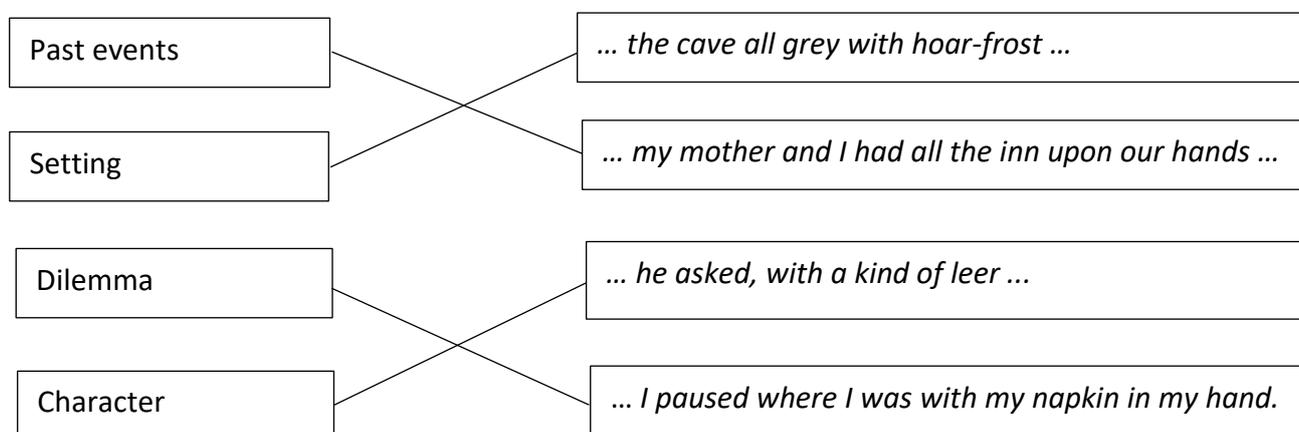
4. Dr Livesey
5. the beach
6. parlour

Inference:

7. Jim expected his father to die before the end of winter.
8. We know he was in a bad or grumpy mood because Jim hears him give a *loud snort of indignation*.
9. There was a cut on his cheek.

Meaning as a whole:

10.



Predict:

11. Accept answers that suggest they will have an argument or a fight. The captain has asked Jim to warn him if he sees someone like the stranger and the stranger describes the captain in a menacing way so we can guess that they are not good friends and there might be a grudge between them.

Authorial intent:

12. When a stranger asks someone to come nearer, it often sounds threatening rather than friendly, perhaps because it means the person will be close enough to be grabbed – especially when they are easily already close enough to have a conversation.

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