

# Full Glossary for Treasure Island

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**a-blowing like a garding** blooming like a garden.

**aboveboard** in nautical terms, above deck; here used figuratively to mean still alive.

**ague shakes** trembling from a fever.

**alow and aloft** nautical terms for "below and above" meaning thoroughly, in every possible place.

**already ambushed** already waiting in ambush.

**ankecher** handkerchief.

**apoplexy** a stroke.

**assizes** court sessions held periodically in each county of England to try civil and criminal cases.

**astern** behind a ship.

**back to back** facing away from each other, with backs touching, as in holding off attackers or opponents.

**backstay** a stay (heavy rope or cable used for support) extending aft (toward the rear) from a masthead to the side or stern of a vessel.

**batten down your hatches** to fasten canvas over a ship's hatchways (covered openings in the deck) as in preparing for a storm; here Silver simply means "shut your mouth."

**Ben Gunn is fly** Fly is thieves' slang, originally, meaning "alert and

knowing; sharp, quick."

**biscuit** ship biscuit or hardtack, unleavened bread made in very hard, large wafers.

**blocks** pulleys or systems of pulleys (in this case, for manipulating the sails).

**a blue mug** a blue face; apparently Flint's habitual heavy drinking of rum had resulted in broken capillaries in his face, making his skin in those areas appear to be purplish or blue.

**boatswain** a ship's warrant officer or petty officer in charge of the deck crew, anchors, boats, etc. (pronounced and often spelled bosun).

**booms** spars extending from the masts to hold the bottoms of the sails outstretched.

**broom** any of a group of flowering shrubs of the pea family.

**buccaneer** a pirate, a sea robber.

**bulkhead** any of the upright partitions separating parts of a ship.

**by the stone** A stone is a British unit of weight equal to fourteen pounds; hence, Jim is saying Ben Gunn may have all the cheese he wants.

**calker** a variant spelling of caulker: a substance, as a puttylike sealant or oakum, used to stop up cracks in a boat. Silver calls his drink of cognac a calker, because he is using it to prepare for trouble from his crew, figuratively rough weather.

**cannikin** a small can; a metal drinking cup.

**capstan** an apparatus around which cables or hawsers are wound for hoisting anchors. The device resembles a tuning peg on a stringed instrument, so the captain's voice sounds as if it had been tuned too tightly and broken.

**careen** to cause a ship to lean or lie on one side, as on a beach, for cleaning.

**carpet bowls** a game played by rolling a weighted ball at a target ball or jack, as in lawn bowling but played indoors on a carpet.

**catechism** a handbook of questions and answers for teaching the principles of a religion.

**cession** ceding; giving over.

**chuck farthen on the blessed gravestones** Chuck-farthing is a game, usually called "penny-pitch" in the United States, in which small coins are tossed or chucked to bank off a wall or obstacle of some kind, with the player whose coin lands closest to the obstacle winning and taking the others. Ben Gunn is saying his career in vice began with this mild form of gambling, apparently using gravestones in a churchyard as backboards. (Later, in a conversation with Livesey, Silver will use "playing chuck-farthing with my life" to mean gambling with his life.)

**clove hitch** a kind of knot used to fasten a rope around a pole, spar, or another rope; used figuratively here, it means a tight spot, a very difficult situation from which there seems to be no escape.

**the cocks of his hat** Sailors of the period wore hats whose brims they rolled on three sides to form a stiff triangle; the Captain's hat has come unrolled on one side.

**conned the ship . . .** To conn a ship is to direct its movements, specifically by giving directions to the helmsman, who operates the tiller and actually steers the ship.

**contrariety** the condition of being contrary (in opposition); here, the wind and current are in the same direction.

**coracle** a short, roundish boat of skins or waterproofed canvas stretched over a wood or wicker frame.

**cordage** cords and ropes collectively, especially the ropes in a ship's rigging.

**cove** a small bay or inlet.

**coxswain** a person in charge of a ship's boat and usually acting as its helmsman.

**crosstrees** two short bars across a ship's masthead to spread the rigging that supports the mast.

**cutlas** an old spelling of cutlass; a short, thick, curving sword with a single cutting edge, used especially by sailors.

**dared not beach her** Because Jim has cut away the anchor, they must beach the ship (ground it on a beach) in order to keep it stationary, but they must wait to do this until the tide has come in enough so that they can steer close to shore where the ebbing tide will not wash the ship back out to sea.

**Davy Jones** in folklore, the spirit of the sea, or the sea personified; used by sailors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**dead-eye** a round, flat block of wood with three holes in it for a lanyard (short rope or cord), used in pairs on a sailing ship to hold the shrouds and stays (ropes for moving the sails) taut.

**deadlights** windows of heavy glass set in the side of a ship; nautical slang for "eyes."

**depytation** deputation, a group of persons or a person appointed to represent others.

**die a gentleman** a gentleman of fortune, a pirate.

**dingle** a deep, wooded valley.

**dirk** a long, straight dagger.

**dogwatch** nautical term for either of the two duty periods (from 4 to 6 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m.) that are half the length of a normal duty period.

**doldrums** equatorial ocean regions noted for dead calms; a sailing ship in the doldrums may be becalmed indefinitely for lack of wind.

**don't hang so long in stays** "In stays" or "in irons" is said of a sailing vessel that is headed into the wind with no way on, one that has failed to come about (to change course so that the sails shift); the captain is using the phrase figuratively to urge Gray to change his loyalty from Silver to his rightful captain; he uses "in irons" in much the same way during his later parlay with Silver.

**don't vally bullying a marlinespike** don't value [appreciate] bullying at all; a marlinespike is a pointed metal tool for separating the strands of a rope in splicing.

**the downhaul** a rope for hauling down a sail; the sail Jim wants to bring in is in the water, so that Jim is not strong enough to move it.

**Dry Tortugas** a group of small islands of Florida, west of Key West.

**England** In Silver's conversation with Dick and Hands, England is the name of a pirate captain he has sailed with. (Edward England was a historical pirate; he died in the early 1720s, and one of his companions, a one-legged man, is said to have been the model on whom Stevenson based the character Long John Silver.)

**environed** surrounded.

**Execution Dock** a wharf on the north bank of the river Thames at Wapping, in London, the traditional place for execution by hanging of pirates.

**the fable of the mountain and the mouse** This is in reference to a saying ("a mountain labored and gave birth to a mouse") and means, roughly, "you seemed to be going to say a lot more than you finally did

say."

**figurehead** a carved figure on the bow of a ship.

**Fo'c's'le council** forecastle council; the man is citing rules that allow the crew to take council among themselves.

**foc's'le** forecastle; the area of a ship ahead of the foremast.

**forefoot** the meeting point of the keel and the stem of a ship.

**forehold** storage space below the front part of a ship's deck.

**French leave** an unauthorized, unnoticed, or unceremonious departure.

**fried junk** a casual or slang term for fried salt pork.

**gallipot** a small pot or jar of glazed earthenware, especially one used by druggists as a container for medicine; Dr. Livesey uses this figuratively of the jolly-boat because of its small size.

**gamekeeper** a person employed to breed and care for game birds and animals on private estates, releasing them for hunts.

**gaskin** a legging or gaiter (a cloth or leather covering for the instep and ankle).

**a gay lot to look at** Silver means something like "a nice lot," spoken ironically; "gay" had not in Stevenson's time taken on a widely known sexual meaning.

**gig** a long, light ship's boat.

**gill** a unit of liquid measure equal to  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint or 4 fluid ounces.

**good divinity** sound religious doctrine.

**grog** diluted alcoholic liquor, especially rum.

**guinea** an English gold coin (last minted in 1813) equal to 21 shillings (a little over a pound).

**gully** a large knife.

**the gunwale was lipping astern** The gunwale (pronounced GUN-ulh) is the upper edge of the side of a boat; water was touching the edge of the jolly-boat's gunwale at the rear (stern).

**the Hall . . . the squire** The squire is the principal landowner of a district; the Hall is his place of residence, usually a large, old house.

**halyards** ropes for raising or lowering flags, sails, and so on.

**hamlet** a small village.

**handspike** a heavy bar used as a lever, as in turning a capstan.

**hawser** a large rope used for towing or mooring a ship.

**hazing** in nautical terminology, punishment or harassment, often by forcing to do unnecessary work.

**head sea** an ocean current moving in a direction opposite that of the ship's motion; sailing would be rough here.

**his old negress** Silver's wife, as Squire Trelawney reported early in the book, is a woman of color. *Negress* was in Stevenson's day an acceptable, polite term to designate a woman of African descent, whereas Trelawney's phrase, correct in the early twenty-first century, was condescending in earlier times.

**his powder white as snow** Fashionable upper- and middle-class men in the 1700s wore various styles of wig; these were often bleached white and treated regularly with white talc.

**his tarry pigtail . . .** Sailors of the period commonly treated their braided hair with the same tar they used to waterproof ropes and sails.

**holus-bolus** all at once; in one lump.

**I have drawn blood enough** A common medical practice was to draw blood from a patient; this was standard treatment for a variety of ailments and was supposed to be effective.

**I leave it to fancy where your mothers was . . .** I leave it to imagination . . .; Silver is insulting their mothers without actually saying anything specific.

**I never seen a pack of fools look fishier . . .** gaping and goggle-eyed (like fish) in surprise.

**I'll gammon that doctor . . .** In nautical terms, to gammon is to lash up, make secure; Silver is using this figuratively, meaning something like "I'll make sure that doctor is acting in our interests."

**I'll have to strike** I'll have to strike my colors or take down my flag; Hands means he will have to give up and acknowledge that Jim has won.

**J. F. and a score below . . .** Flint's characteristic signature: his initials with a line drawn below them and a knot (clove hitch) drawn on the line.

**jib** a triangular sail secured to a stay forward of the foremast.

**jib-boom** the boom of the jib; the spar extending from its mast or stay to hold the bottom of the jib outstretched.

**Jolly Roger** a black flag of pirates, with a white skull and crossbones.

**jolly-boat** a sailing vessel's small boat, usually carried on the stern.

**keel-haul** to haul a person down through the water on one side of a ship, under the keel, and up on the other side as punishment or torture.

**keelson** a longitudinal beam or set of timbers fastened inside the hull of a ship along the keel to add structural strength.



**keg of pork** a barrel of pork cured in salt for preservation.

**a kind of a chapling** a kind of a chaplain; Hands implies that Silver is known for not carousing like the other pirates.

**lanyard** a short rope or cord used on board ship; a cord hung round the neck (by sailors) used to hang something.

**lay to . . . keep a bright lookout** to lie more or less stationary (as a ship, with the bow into the wind) and keep an alert watch.

**link** a torch made of tow and pitch; here, Silver uses the word simply to mean "a light" (for his pipe).

**the long nine** a large artillery piece mounted on the ship; this is primed with powder and wadding; loaded with nine-pound, round lead shot; aimed; and fired by a gunner by touching the powder with a lit match. Thus, in Chapter 17, the captain asks Trelawney, who is watching the gunner, to tell the others in the jolly-boat when he sees the match so that they can hold or back the boat, because the gunner will have aimed ahead of it.

**Long Tom** the "long nine," the ship's gun.

**look out for squalls** watch out for sudden storms; that is, for sudden trouble.

**"looped for musketry"** with small ports for firing weapons.

**lubber** an inexperienced, clumsy sailor.

**luff** to turn the bow of a ship toward the wind.

**lugger** a small vessel equipped with a lugsail (a four-sided sail supported by a spar — a slender wooden rod — that is fastened to the mast).

**made sure** was sure; Jim uses the phrase in this sense, rather than in the more modern sense of "took action to ensure."

**magistrate** a civil officer empowered to administer the law.

**mail** a vehicle by which mail is delivered (in this case, a stage coach).

**malaria** an infectious disease transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito; while malaria and yellow fever are two different diseases, their symptoms at the outset are similar, and the sailors would likely call either or both Yellow Jack.

**the man in the chains** . . . the crewman using fathoming lines to measure the depth of the water on either side of the ship's bow.

**a man who sailed before the mast** . . . a common sailor, not an officer; from the quarters of the crew ahead of the foremast.

**manufactory** factory; manufacturing plant. (The sort of factory Jim may have had in mind, in the eighteenth century, would have been something like a fabric mill, whose heavy looms operated with much noise and shaking.)

**marish** an archaic term for marshy, swamp-like.

**Master Pew's dead . . . if make it out they can** The revenue officer (tax collector) is unpopular and knows it; he wants to report Pew's accidental death (which he caused) to the magistrate (Livesey) before someone else misreports it as deliberate.

**mizzen** shrouds the ropes stretched from the ship's side to the head of the mizzenmast to offset lateral strain on the mast.

**mizzentop** the top of the mizzenmast, which is the mast third from the bow of a ship with three or more masts.

**musket** a smoothbore, long-barreled firearm, used before the invention of the rifle.

**my cock** my fine young man; the cock is the male of the chicken (in modern American usage, the rooster) and certain other birds, and in

another sense the word can mean leader or chief, especially one with some boldness or arrogance. Silver is addressing Jim with a semi-affectionate, semi-ironical pet name, probably in reference to Jim's having just admitted that he hid the ship and did away with Silver's old shipmate Hands.

**my davy** Silver means "my affidavit" or statement made under oath; later he will say "my affy-davy."

**my long home** the grave; a euphemism for death.

**my officer** my first mate; next in rank to the captain.

**my score** my take; the man did not pay for his rum.

**narrow and shoal** narrow and shallow.

**a noo boarder** . . . a new boarder; throughout, in the speech of Silver and others, the vowel sound in such words as *duty* and *new* is often rendered as *oo*, apparently to denote a difference in dialect between that of these uneducated men and that of the "gentlemen," Trelawney and Livesey. (While in American speech today this distinction is seldom made, in Stevenson's time the difference between the vowel sounds of "noo" and "new" would have been approximately the same as the difference made today in such pairs of words as "coot" and "cute.")

**painter** a rope attached to the bow of a boat for tying it to a dock (or to a ship) or for towing it.

**paling** a fence made of pales (narrow, upright pointed stakes; pickets).

**pieces of eight** obsolete Spanish and Spanish-American dollars.

**pig-nut** any of several bitter, astringent hickory nuts.

**pikes** weapons, formerly used by soldiers, each consisting of a metal spearhead on a long wooden shaft.

**play duck and drake with** waste, squander (from a game, "ducks and

drakes," of skipping flat stones across water).

**plum-duff** plum pudding, a rich dessert made of raisins, currants, flour, spices, suet, and then boiled or steamed.

**a pretty rum go . . .** a shame, a bad thing.

**priming** used here in the sense of the primer, the powder used to set off the pistol's shot.

**quadrant** an instrument (later replaced by the sextant) used in navigating.

**quartermaster** nautical term for petty officer or mate trained to steer a ship, perform navigational duties, and so on; on pirate ships, the next in line to the captain, elected by the crew as their representative.

**quid** a piece, as of tobacco, to be chewed.

**a rank Irishman** a low Irishman; "rank" may be used as an adjective in several senses, including "offensive-smelling" and "complete; utter;" Hands may be using it in either or both of these senses, to express his dislike of the Irish.

**a red ensign** a red flag or banner.

**rolling scuppers under . . .** Scuppers are openings in the sides of the ship that allow water to run off the deck; the *Hispaniola's* position and motion of the sea are causing it to roll back and forth sideways until the scuppers are under water.

**the rules** Throughout this part, Silver and the others are referring to a set of rules or code of honor by which gentlemen of fortune have agreed to be bound; this was slightly different from ship to ship and from pirate captain to captain, but was essentially a democratic code specifying rights and responsibilities.

**a rum puncheon** a wooden cask or barrel for holding rum.

**saber** a heavy cavalry sword with a slightly curved blade.

**sailing master** an officer in charge of navigation.

**salts** slang term for seasoned sailors.

**schooner** a sailing vessel with two or more masts.

**a score** twenty.

**sealed . . . thimble** Letters and documents were sometimes stuck shut with wax, which was then impressed with a seal, a device to ensure they had not been opened; the captain has sealed his packet using a thimble, a metal cap used to protect a finger when sewing.

**sealed orders** orders that are to be accepted before the person being ordered knows their substance or contents (such as Smollett was given when he signed on as captain of the *Hispaniola* without knowing the destination of the voyage); here, Silver means that he has taken Livesey's warning without understanding what kind of trouble the doctor has in mind.

**sea-walk** a kind of rolling, swaggering gait; sailors, walking on the rolling decks of relatively small ships at sea for months on end, did not regain their land legs until they'd been back on shore for some time.

**separate peace** a treaty or agreement that affects only one individual or group within a larger group.

**the ship [had to be] warped . . .** To *warp* a ship is to move it by hauling on a line fastened to a pile, dock, anchor, and so on; in this case, the lines were fastened to the ship's boats and the ship hauled by its oarsmen.

**some by the board** Silver means that some who challenged him had been made to walk the plank; that is, they had been forced to walk blindfolded along a board extended over the water from the ship's gunwale until they ran out of board and fell to their deaths. Contemporary pirate

scholarship says there is no evidence that this was ever actually done.

**something of a butt** the object of jokes and teasing.

**the sort of man that made England terrible at sea** England was the strongest sea power among European nations of the period, both in its royal navy and its privateers; the man uses "terrible" in the sense of "terrifying, justifiably feared."

**Spanish Main** the Caribbean Sea, or that part of it adjacent to the northern coast of South America.

**split him to the chine** cut him through to the backbone.

**stanch** an old spelling of staunch: firm; steadfast; loyal. Silver is using the term in a figurative sense of the nautical meaning watertight and seaworthy.

**starboard. . . larboard** to the right . . . to the left.

**a stiff man . . .** a stern man, strict, unbending (Smollett will later be called the ship's captain, a higher rank than sailing master, so perhaps Trelawney is belittling him here).

**a strong scour with the ebb . . .** To scour is to wash or clear as by a swift current of water; here the ebb (outgoing) tide is very strong and has cleared away a channel deeper than it was when the chart was drawn.

**subaltern** a subordinate officer.

**supercargo** an officer on a merchant ship who has charge of the cargo and business dealings.

**swabs** enlisted men or common sailors; a derisive term as the captain uses it.

**their glim** their light, in this case their candle, whose wax or tallow is still warm.

**thwart** a rower's seat extending across a boat.

**tiller** a bar or handle for turning the rudder of a boat or ship.

**tip us a stave** start up a song for us; sailors sang to establish a rhythm for their work.

**to lose that much blunt, and be hanged into the bargain** Blunt is old slang for money, cash; Silver is saying he thought he had lost the treasure and on top of that would be brought to trial and executed.

**trades** trade winds; one of the winds that blows steadily toward the equator from the northeast in the tropics north of the equator and from the southeast in the tropics south of the equator.

**trim the boat** to balance the boat by ballasting, shifting cargo, and so on.

**a trump** a good fellow.

**two brace** two pair.

**two fathoms and a half** fifteen feet; a fathom is a unit of length used to measure the depth of water or the length of a nautical rope or cable, equal to six feet (1.8288 meters).

**Union Jack** the national flag of the United Kingdom.

**wain-ropes** wagon-ropes; the ties by which a wagon is secured and drawn; Jim is saying he couldn't be dragged by oxen to another such voyage.

**water-breaker** a small water keg.

**we'll fight the ship . . .** we'll fight from the ship, using its weaponry.

**we've split upon Jim Hawkins** Silver is opposing Tom Morgan's argument that Jim should be killed.

**What fool's cut a Bible?** To cut or tear a page out of a Bible is

apparently considered very bad luck.

**yard-arm** either side of a yard, a slender rod fastened at right angles across a mast to support a sail.

**yaw** to swing back and forth across its course, as a ship pushed by waves.

**Yellow Jack** yellow fever, an acute, infectious tropical disease caused by a virus and spread by mosquitoes.

**you ain't dumb** you are not silent; you can speak.

**you want to play booty . . .** Booty is used in the sense of any gain, prize, or gift; the man apparently accuses Silver of acting for his own gain rather than the common good of his crew.

**yunker** a youngster.

**your sauce** your impertinence, impudence.

**You're on a lee shore** A lee shore is a sheltered shore, out of the wind; thus Smollett means that Silver and his pirates are in a bad position with no good way out.