

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue

Fascination 1

Chapter One

A Very Idle Boy 7

Chapter Two

The Mulberry Tree 17

Chapter Three

Captured! 25

Chapter Four

The Fight 37

Chapter Five

Pirate Hunger 47

Chapter Six

Left for Dead 55

Chapter Seven

Still Hungry 67

Chapter Eight

A Rappahannock Battle 73

Chapter Nine

The Way Back 85

Chapter Ten

Mulberry Pie 97

Chapter Eleven

Pearl of Great Price 103

Epilogue

Deliverance 113

Prologue
FASCINATION

A number of years ago, probably when your grandfather was a little boy, there was another young boy named Jim Monroe, who lived alone with his mother. Her name was Sandra, and she was by nature a very pleasant woman, although somewhat harried and distracted with the responsibilities of providing for her son and managing the remains of an estate that at one time had been prosperous. Jim's father had been killed in the Korean War, and Jim could not really remember him. He and his mother lived somewhere in the Tidewater area of southern Maryland or northern Virginia—I don't want to give away too much about the pirate treasure—because this story is about pirate treasure.

Pirates—Jim Monroe was absolutely fascinated by the whole subject of pirates. Whenever he had a free moment, his thoughts would drift naturally and easily back to his favorite

pirate caves and coves, pirate treasures, pirate battles and crimes, and of course to the great pirate captains. He did not admire them at all, but they did thrill him. On rainy afternoons especially, he would seek out his favorite books in order to read and reread some of the stories.

This fascination had descended upon him one day in the previous school year when his teacher, Miss Robinson, mentioned in passing that the great pirate Blackbeard had once landed several miles from where the school was, and just a very short distance from Jim's house. For some reason, the fact that Blackbeard had landed on the banks of a creek that close to his house made the whole thing very close and very real, and that is when his interest in pirates seized Jim by the throat.

That very afternoon he had checked out a book on Blackbeard from the school library, and that night he read about how Lieutenant Maynard had sailed against Blackbeard down in Caroline, and fought a glorious battle with him, and brought the pirate's head back to Virginia hanging from the bowsprit of his ship. Jim had set the book carefully down on the floor beside the bed, turned out the light, and for the next several hours had been too excited to sleep.

Sandra and Jim lived in a house that had been built around 1910, in a red colonial brick, but the Monroe family had been living on that same property since the early eighteenth century. All that was left of the estate was nothing compared to what it had once been.

Because she could only work part-time, Jim's mother had not been able to keep up with the property taxes for the fifty acres they still owned, land that ran down to an inlet south

of their home. Sandra sometimes felt that it would be far easier to just sell everything and buy a house in town—but when she reflected on the fact that Jim was the last of the family with the name Monroe, and that the family had been on this land for hundreds of years, she kept trying to work out a way to stay. She had not been born a Monroe, and she did not feel right making that kind of decision for Jim. When he was grown, he could move away if he wanted, but she did not want the responsibility of trying to explain to him why she had not kept their land. And so she determined to remain until there were no choices left.

There were no relatives to help them and no one to borrow money from. But one day Sandra had an idea. The attic contained a few notable family heirlooms, objects she would never part with. But the attic also contained much older furniture, significant to no one, but which might attract the attention of antique dealers. So she decided to have a sale and emptied most of the furniture out of the attic down into the garage. The dark, wooden attic now seemed enormous and very dusty, and it somehow looked older and far less familiar than it had been before.

When they had cleared everything out, Jim and his mother found a trunk of old books in a back corner. Most of them were history books, but there were also a few books of theology and some old grammars. Sandra gave Jim the job of sorting out any books that he might want and setting the others aside for the sale. And that is how Jim found the old letter in the attic on a very rainy day. On both ends of the

attic, small windows opened up to a gray sky, and Jim did not know why exactly, but all of it seemed very appropriate.

As he rummaged through the box, the title of one book caught his attention immediately. It was called *A General History of Pirates* by a Captain Robert Johnson. The date of publication was 1852, but the book had been written a century before that. The pages on the side had that rough cut which old books sometimes have. Jim started to read through it and felt the familiar lump of excitement well up in his throat. But then he remembered he had a job to do and reluctantly set the book aside to take down to his room later. But as he did so, he noticed a piece of paper sticking out the side, near the back of the book. At first he thought it was one of the rough cut pages that had come loose. But when he looked closer and opened the volume again, he saw that it was an old letter.

He gently opened it. There were five or six pages to it, and the paper was water stained and yellow. The paper creaked when it opened, and Jim had to handle it gingerly. The ink was smudged by the water in places, but fortunately most of it was legible. It took him a few moments to figure out who had written the letter and who had received it. But the date on it was 1935, and the name of the recipient was Leonard, and the one who had written it was your "affectionate grandfather." Jim's father's name was Leonard. There were no last names anywhere. For all Jim could assume at that moment, it was just an old newsy letter to his father that would make his mother cry. But even so, before he read a word of it, he knew that it was far more important than that. When he

thought about the moment of discovery later, he concluded that his knowledge had come from a combination of the gray sky, the pirate book containing the letter, and the desperate circumstances he and his mother were in. “It was just a pirate kind of day,” he explained to me later.

So it was probably a letter to his father when he was a boy, written to him by his grandfather. The letter told him how the family fortune had been made back in the first part of the 1700s. And it had been quite a fortune. “Dear Leonard . . .” the letter began.

But of course, now I have to back up for a moment. This letter that Jim found certainly did not contain everything that I am about to tell you. But the letter did lead to a number of other discoveries, and during the course of these discoveries, many other interesting facts came to light. For example, Jim’s mother remembered some things her father-in-law had once said, things she had not understood at the time. She also found some interesting comments written in some old family histories and genealogies. And a few of the family members in the early years had even been important enough to have had biographies written about them, and Sandra carefully read through them, trying to piece things together. Jim, for his part, not only had found the letter in the book but also was able to contribute what he knew about pirates. And he also played a very important role later on, which I will have to tell you about when we get to that place in the story.

I suppose I should introduce myself as well. I was a friend of Jim’s father in the war, and after the war I looked in on

Sandra and Jim from time to time to see how they were getting on. At first I did this because of my friendship with Leonard and a sense of duty I suppose. But as time went on I found that I had a keen interest in Sandra. But all that had already started some time before this adventure started, the adventure of Jim and the pirate treasure. Nevertheless, because I was close to Sandra, I am able to tell you the details of the story. And so I suppose I had better get to it now.

Chapter One
A VERY IDLE BOY

Thomas Ingle walked slowly down the street. The year was 1705, the third year of the reign of good Queen Anne, and Thomas was now fifteen years old. He had been born in the second year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, and he had grown so quickly he was almost ready to go out into the world. But the world was already very different from the one he had entered just a short time before.

Just like Jim Monroe, he lived alone with his mother, who supported them both by working as a day servant in the home of a wealthy tobacco merchant, a man named John Hutchins, who was a friend of the governor. Tom's father had been lost at sea five years earlier—whether to a storm or to pirates, no one knew. All they knew was that his ship had left the mouth of the Chesapeake in late spring, and that it had never arrived in England.

Thomas had stayed at home to finish his schooling, at the insistence of his mother. He had asked her many times if he could apprentice himself as a ship's boy, and she had always said, "Someday, Tom. But you must master your books first." And so he had worked hard, but felt bad because he was doing nothing to support his mother. She was only able to make about ten pounds of tobacco a day—tobacco was the currency in those days—and so they lived at a very modest level indeed. Thomas would tell her often that when he could go to sea, he would soon enough make their fortunes, and he would then come back, and they could buy a small farm. Land was not that expensive, but it was still beyond their means, and there was even more money to be spent in setting up a farm. She was glad for his desire to help but warned him more than once that fortunes are not obtained just by going to sea and that words on their own can't fill a bucket. Once he had pressed the point, and she had said, "Mere wishes are silly fishes." She was always saying things like that.

Thomas was a well-built boy, and handsome in appearance, as his mother told him once. He had sandy, blond hair, which was tied off in the back. His breeches and shirt were home-spun, but well kept up for all that. But his shoes were old and tattered, and the buckles on them were starting to come off. Shoes were expensive, and after his lessons were done every day, Thomas would spend many hours walking along the creek banks and in the woods, thinking and dreaming about the sea. His mother had told him not to be so hard

on his shoes, but it was difficult for Thomas to walk without being hard on them.

As he walked down the street, Thomas suddenly stopped in order to listen to a commotion that was taking place in the shop he had just passed. He turned around just in time to see a young man tumble headlong down the front steps of the candlemaker's shop—that candlemaker being one Mr. Jos. Whidby, as it read on his sign. He was a small, rotund man, but he was energetic, hardworking and strong. These were all characteristics that made him most impatient with his apprentice, Isaac Taylor—the young man who was now lying on the street at Thomas's feet. Mr. Whidby stood in the doorway of his shop with puffed out cheeks, which were purple and unused to this uncharacteristic temper. He then clambered down the steps, pulled Isaac to his feet, boxed his right ear, and said, "There! That's to send you off with! Tell your father that your apprenticeship is over, that you are a lazy no-account of a boy, and that if he wants to settle the money with me, he may come see me at his leisure." With that, Mr. Whidby hit him on the side of the head again, turned abruptly, and stumped up the stairs and back to his candles. Most of the time he was a jolly and pleasant man. Thomas heard him muttering as he went back into his shop, "It could rain porridge, and he'd have lost his bowl!" The door slammed tight.

Isaac just stood there for a moment, rubbing his ear. He had a shock of disheveled brown curly hair, puffy lips, and an unpleasant complexion. Thomas did not like him, but he also felt sorry for him sometimes.

“What did you do, Isaac?”

Isaac looked up, startled. “Oh, hullo, Thomas.” He continued to rub his ear.

“What did you do?”

“I was just resting and thinking. Mr. Whidby seems to care more about his candles than important things.”

Thomas knew Isaac to be a very idle young man, and so he said nothing. They started to walk down the street together.

“My father told me that if this apprenticeship failed, then I had to make my own way. I can’t go home now.” Thomas knew that Isaac was seventeen, and that it was long past the time for him to be out in the world, and so he nodded silently. Mr. Taylor had tried three times before to set Isaac up in an apprenticeship, and now this was the fourth failure.

So then Thomas asked, “What are you going to do?”

“That is what I was thinking about when Mr. Whidby interrupted me. I didn’t like making candles. Who wants to make dumb candles? I am going to make my fortune, and I am not going to do it the way these stupid shopkeepers do—a penny a day. I met some gentlemen at the Oar and Compass last week, and they invited me to come to sea with them.”

“Oar and Compass? Isaac, those men were pirates and villains! Governor Seymour sent word to the tavern and ran them off.”

“Pah!” Isaac puffed his lips out further. “The governor here is hot and unhappy, just like Mr. Whidby. But these same men have dined with the governor down in Caroline. They are just gentlemen of fortune. And they have been most welcome in Pennsylvania.”

“Isaac, they are not gentlemen at all. They are buccaneers. If you go with them, you risk swinging.”

“All I know is that they have their fortune. You should have seen how they bought drinks for everyone, out of a sack of pieces of eight. They were generous and full of adventure—not like Mr. Whidby. And besides, Thomas, nobody really knows what a pirate is. Some folks call them pirates, but lots of them are privateers. And most everybody buys things from them sometimes—even Mr. Whidby did once.”

“That’s different,” Thomas said. “When the king says you can’t buy things you need from any place but England, and England doesn’t send it to you, and the pirates have it, I don’t think there is anything wrong with that.”

Isaac snorted, “Thomas, when you are as old as me, you’ll know better. If it isn’t wrong to be with the buyers, why would it be wrong to be with the sellers?”

“Because the sellers are stinking pirates! They kill people. They probably murdered my father.”

Isaac decided against arguing the point, and the two walked down the street together. After a few moments, Isaac spoke again. “I am going to go home—I have to get a few things. And I can say farewell to my mother before my father comes back.”

Thomas decided to try a different approach, but he had to think for a moment about how to do it. He had to appeal to Isaac’s laziness without calling him lazy. “Isaac, the pirates aren’t going to make you first mate when you get there. You’ll have to do a lot of work you won’t like. It’ll be worse

than Mr. Whidby. And my mother says that fair dealing brings wealth slowly.”

Isaac shook his head. “Yes, slowly. You didn’t talk to them, Thomas. These men know how to live. You should have seen them. I’m sure they will have a good place for me, Thomas. They invited me! I need some adventuring. It will be good for me.”

But Thomas thought to himself, “If an ass goes traveling, he’ll not come back a horse.” So he decided to stop arguing.

“And when I come back,” Isaac said, “the first thing I am going to do is take one of my gold pieces, go back to Mr. Whidby’s shop, and buy me a candle!”



Thomas told his mother about Isaac that night. Sarah Ingle was a very pretty woman, about thirty-three years old. Like many people in that day, she had had a case of the pox when she was younger, but it had barely left any scars at all. Unless she told you about it, which she was not likely to do, you wouldn’t know they were there. But still Thomas knew she was sensitive about it, and that she thought it was the reason she had not married again.

Thomas and his mother had two rooms off the back of one of the town’s thriving inns, a place called Reynold’s Inn. The owner and his wife felt sorry for them, and so they charged a very reasonable rent, and in exchange Sarah Ingle helped in the inn during busy times, when she could, and Thomas sometimes helped with the horses.

Thomas had a cot in one of the rooms, and his mother had a bed, slightly nicer, in the other. In addition to the cot, Thomas's room had a small table, where he kept his few things and his books. He was working through his last book now, a primer on navigation. His mother's room had a small writing desk, and a bookshelf where she kept her Bible, her prayer book, and her copy of Baxter's *Everlasting Rest*.

When Thomas had first gotten home that night, his mother was not there. He looked at the shelf and her prayer book was gone, so he knew she must be across the street at St Anne's. She would often go there for a few moments of quiet after her day of work. He waited, and after about ten minutes, she came in, and he told her about Isaac.

"It doesn't surprise me," Sarah Ingle said. "A cask savors of its first fill. He has always been a very idle boy—and he always brags of many good-morrrows."

"Mother, I don't know how he thinks he can find the pirates again."

"Mr. Hutchins said today that the pirates didn't leave the colony but just moved down the coast toward Virginia. They are just taunting the new governor. I am sure they know the king's frigate is at the northern end of the bay. Sure, Isaac can find them quickly enough. He probably has enough money to take him that far."

"Should we talk to Mr. Taylor?"

Mrs. Ingle shook her head. "No. We have nothing to say to him. Isaac is a lazy boy who wants to be rich. Mr. Taylor is the same way, only a little less lazy. If Isaac was a dog, he'd lean his head against the wall to bark. We can pray that God

has mercy on Isaac's soul, and that he learns from the pirates what he could not learn at home."

"How can he learn anything good from pirates?"

"He might learn that he doesn't belong there. And he might learn that Mr. Whidby is a wise and kind man."

"Still," Thomas said, "I feel sorry for Mrs. Taylor."

"The pirates are a wicked lot, and I feel sorry for Mrs. Taylor too. She married unwisely, and her son is a fool like her husband—he has a bone in his arm and so cannot work. But even so, there is still hope for Isaac. And, leaving the pirates out of it, there is only one thing worse than a boy who leaves home," she said, "and that is a boy who doesn't."

At these words, Thomas knew it was time to ask his mother again. He took a deep breath and held it for a moment. "Mother, I am almost done with my last book, the one on navigation. May I go down to the docks tomorrow and speak with Mr. Jenkins?" Mr. Jenkins was a harbor merchant they knew and trusted in the parish, and he would know which captains would be good to apprentice with, and he could give Thomas a letter recommending him. He owned a warehouse down by the harbor, and he had dealt with most of the men who sailed the Chesapeake for many years. He knew which were honest, and which were not, which obtained their goods by trade, and which by piracy, and which were harsh with their crews, and which were wise.

Sarah Ingle was quiet for many minutes. Thomas knew that something was different, because whenever he had asked before, she always said no right away. "Thomas, you know that the Ingle men have always gone to sea. I have

known since you were born that you would go to sea—you were bred to it, and you have the bent of your father’s bow. But I lost your father there, and I do not want to lose you as well.” With this her eyes filled up with tears. “I am very sorry, Thomas. I wasn’t going to cry. Yes, you may talk to Mr. Jenkins.”

Thomas didn’t know what to do. He had a lump at the top of his chest in sympathy with his mother, but his stomach was churning with excitement. So he just sat where was. After a few moments, he thanked his mother, took her hand in his, and promised her he would come home safely.

“I won’t require it,” she said, “but I would prefer that you ship with someone who trades with Jamaica or Bermuda, instead of England. That way you will be home more often, and I will know how it is with you.”

“Yes, ma’am,” he said.

“And promise me that you will stay away from rum and bawdy houses.”

“Yes, ma’am,” he said.

“And we will have to buy you a prayer book to take with you.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“And I hope the cold I feel in my bones is just the cold of late April. I hope this is just my blackthorn winter.” Thomas was silent.

Chapter Two

THE MULBERRY TREE

Thomas had not been able to speak with Mr. Jenkins for two days after his mother had given him permission. On the first day, Mr. Jenkins was too occupied in business, and on the second he was home ill. But on the third, Thomas presented himself to the merchant and made his request.

Mr. Jenkins rubbed the back of his neck. He was a grim but kindly man who had left Edinburgh ten years before. He had been a faithful covenanter in his days there, but everything was different on the Chesapeake, and so he was willing to offer his own form of dissenting worship at St. Anne's. Still, he was completely unrepentant about his past and had once told Thomas some stories about the killing times that had filled Thomas with a mixture of horror and delight. Once when the rector at St. Anne's had mentioned those days in a sermon (with his Anglican view of them), Mr. Jenkins had walked past