

PLAYS FOR
New Audiences

A Division of Children's Theatre Company

Treasure Island

by Toby Hulse

Based on the story by Robert Louis Stevenson

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Our hero, **EMILY**, a girl young enough to have dreams, but old enough to be slightly embarrassed by them.

The **PIRATES**, inhabitants of the tavern in **EMILY**'s imagination:

MORGAN BLOOD
JACK ABRAHAM
CAPTAIN HENRY PAYNE
ONE-EYED BART
MARY ANN EVANS

The **PIRATES** play, in turn, the characters in *TREASURE ISLAND*:

BILLY BONES
JIM'S MOTHER
BLACK DOG
DOCTOR LIVESEY
BLIND PEW
CAPTAIN SMOLLETT
LONG JOHN SILVER
ISRAEL HANDS
PATRICK O'BRIEN
BEN GUNN
SAMUEL HUNTER
GEORGE MERRY
DICK JOHNSON
TOM MORGAN
JOB ANDERSON

For the first production at the Watermill, Newbury, the doubling was as follows:

MORGAN BLOOD	Blind Pew, Long John Silver
JACK ABRAHAM	Billy Bones, Ben Gunn, Samuel Hunter, Tom Morgan
CAPTAIN HENRY PAYNE	Black Dog, Captain Smollett, George Merry
ONE-EYED BART	Doctor Livesey, Israel Hands, Dick Johnson
MARY ANN EVANS	Jim's Mother, Patrick O'Brien, Job Anderson

The action of the play begins in **EMILY**'s living room, but soon moves to the tavern in her imagination. Once there it never really leaves – the various locations for the story of *TREASURE ISLAND* are created from the tavern furniture and fittings – and at several points, in particular during the songs, we should feel that we are definitely back in the tavern. The pirates stay onstage throughout, lurking in the shadows when they are not immediately part of the action.

ACT ONE

Christmas.

A modern living room, decorated for the season.

EMILY is on stage, possibly lit only by the flicker of a TV set, the amber glow of a gas fire and the lights on the Christmas tree. Perhaps she is watching a DVD of Pirates of the Caribbean.

She is dressed in a rather poor quality pirate dressing up outfit. It is too small for her.

She pauses the DVD.

EMILY

'What do you want to be when you grow up?' Grown ups are always asking you that, aren't they? 'What do you want to be when you grow up, Emily? Hey, maybe you want to be a fairy princess ballerina vet like all the other girls in your class?'

As if.

I just say business woman. That really shuts them up. Not much they can say about that, is there? It sounds safe and secure and that's all that they're after. But I don't want to be a business woman; I don't even know what business women do...

I've given up saying what I really want to be, because grown ups just laugh at me: 'Oh Emily, how sweet, how totally adorable. But you can't be that when you grow up, because they're not real, they're only in stories and picture books and films. And anyway, that's just for boys.'

Sweet? Totally adorable? Just for boys? No way!

No way because, and you've got to promise not to laugh as well, because, when I grow up, I want to be a pirate. A proper, blood'n'guts, swashbuckling, swinging-from-a-rope pirate. With a deadly cutlass, a bloodied knife and a pair of loaded pistols, maybe an eye patch, a big hooped earring and a golden tooth glinting in the sun.

And there were girl pirates. I think, in fact, girl pirates were the most ferocious pirates of them all.

I want to sail with them. I want to go to Madagascar, and Malabar, the Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. I want to be at the fishing up of the wrecked Plate ships and at the boarding of the Viceroy of the Indies. I want to smell powder!

So that's it – my dream – to be a pirate. Every other job seems so dead and dull compared to that. That's why I'm wearing these clothes. Yes, I know they're rubbish, but it's the best ASDA can do. They wouldn't last five minutes in a fight to the death with a fearsome enemy and as for the sword...

EMILY shows us a Styrofoam cutlass.

Useless! The sword's even got a sticker on – look. *[She reads.]* 'This is a toy and intended for play purposes only. Do not poke at people or animals.'

She looks ruefully at the Styrofoam sword. Perhaps she tries a few cuts and thrusts with it, and watches it wobble.

Pathetic.

A smile.

But you've got to have some kind of dream, haven't you? You should always dream. Especially at Christmas.

She flicks the DVD forward a couple of chapters.

This is the best bit.

We hear the introduction to a fast, ragged, disrespectful, modern rendition of Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest.

This is where I want to be.

As the music plays, and EMILY describes the tavern and its inhabitants, we begin to see them too on the stage. The PIRATES swing in on ropes, climb up through traps, pop out of barrels, emerge bleary eyed and drunken from under heaps of sail canvas. As each pirate enters they join the accompaniment to the song on a weird and wonderful selection of instruments, until they have all but drowned out the DVD.

A tavern in a hidden port on the Spanish Main. It is filled with smoke. Sitting at its rough hewn wooden tables, leaning against the walls, slumped across the barrels are the scurviest group of salty seadogs seen this side of Davy Jones's

locker. Pirates! Men and women from every nation in this world; drinking, singing, laughing; all thinking one thought, and one thought only – gold!

SONG: *Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest*

(Lyrics: Young E. Allison, Arranged: Mark Stahl)

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!
The mate was fixed by the bosun's pike,
The bosun brained with a marlinpike,
And cookey's throat was marked belike –
It had been gripped by fingers ten;
And there they lay, all good dead men,
Like break o'day in a boozing ken,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Fifteen men of 'em good and true,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Ev'ry man jack could ha' sailed with Old Pew,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
There was chest on chest of Spanish gold,
With a ton of plate in the middle hold,
And the cabins riot of stuff untold –
And they lay there that took the plum,
With sightless glare and their lips struck dumb,
While we shared all by the rule of thumb,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

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!
We wrapped 'em all in a mains'l tight,
With twice ten turns of a hawser's bight,
And we heaved 'em over and out of sight,
With a Yo-Heave-Ho! and a fare-you-well!
And a sudden plunge in the sullen swell,
Ten fathoms deep on the road to hell,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

*During the song, by the magic of theatre, **EMILY**'s clothes have transformed into the jacket, shirt, breeches, stockings and buckled shoes of an eighteenth century cabin boy. She is delighted.*

EMILY What did I say? The best bit! Look at them all – my dream crew...

She names and greets each pirate in turn, and they hail her back. There is a definite sense of competition amongst the pirates as to which of them can be the most piratical.

... Morgan Blood...

BLOOD Arrr!

EMILY ... Jack Abraham...

ABRAHAM Ahoy there!

EMILY ... Captain Henry Payne...

PAYNE Shiver me timbers!

EMILY ... One-Eyed Bart...

BART On'y one eye, but it be a good 'un!

EMILY ... and Mary Ann Evans...

MARY ANN *[Grunt.]*

EMILY *[Delighted with her clothes.]* And look at me! This is the real stuff. No more pretend dressing up for me. *[She turns to the **PIRATES.**]* Shipmates?

PIRATES Aye, aye!

EMILY *[To us.]* It's good, isn't it? *[To the **PIRATES.**]* What shall we do?

BLOOD Walk the plank?

ABRAHAM Drink a noggin of rum?

PAYNE Swing from the rigging?

BART Cuss like the devil hisself?

MARY ANN *[Grunt.]*

The PIRATES all cheer MARY ANN's suggestion.

EMILY What did she say?

PAYNE What do ye think she said?

EMILY Go on an adventure and dig up some gold?

Sudden silence.

PAYNE That is... exactly what she said!

More cheering.

EMILY Where shall we start?

BLOOD Well, my dear...

ABRAHAM ... that be up to you.

PAYNE Where do you think an adventure should start?

BART Think carefully – you're the one making all this up.

MARY ANN *[Grunt.]*

The PIRATES all murmur and nod in agreement.

EMILY What did she say?

PAYNE What do ye think she said?

EMILY That we have to start somewhere normal and boring, so the adventure is more exciting when we leave?

Sudden silence.

PAYNE That is... exactly what she said.

Cheering.

EMILY In that case this story starts with me at home.

BLOOD That it do.

PAYNE The Admiral Benbow inn.

BART A lonely tavern on the coast road to Bristol. That be your home now.

EMILY Okay.

MARY ANN *[Grunt.]*

The PIRATES all nod and slap each other on the back.

EMILY What did she say?

PAYNE What do ye think she said?

EMILY That the best adventures start with the arrival of a mysterious stranger?

Sudden silence.

PAYNE That is... exactly what she said.

Cheering.

EMILY A seafaring man?

BLOOD To be sure!

ABRAHAM And I'm the stranger.

EMILY But you can't be the stranger – I know you. You're Jack Abraham.

PAYNE Not in the adventure he ain't.

BART And he may be other people too.

EMILY Really?

BART No other way to do it.

MARY ANN *[Grunt.]*