A lesson

Jack’s hands pulsated with fear as he unraveled the brittle parchment, his eyebrows dotting with sweat. He gently placed the faded map down on his oak table. The door creaked open and his father hobbled into his dull room. Thunder laughed evilly outside. His father widened his eyes as he stared at the parchment. “By Neptune’s beard,” he whispered, his voice slightly trembling, “you’ve found Captain Flint’s map. It’s real boy. You now have the curse. Are you worthy enough to adventure into the Skeleton Isle?” I traced my finger over the skeleton-shaped island, its tormenting eye sockets burning into my eyes, a vine splintering into my body. “Yes,” I replied. The thunder crackled outside.

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As the Salty Maiden creaked and groaned as she battled against the powering, Long John Silver grunted behind me. “A red sky in the morning, a sailor’s warning.” Jack glanced up to see the blood-red clouds merging above the untouched horizon. Even though his fear grew in his gut, his excitement battled it off.

Jack awoke to panicked shouts. Clambering to the deck, he saw a massive Kraken-like nightmare attacking the ship. As the slimy tentacles threatened to submerge them, Jack remembered a crucial detail from the map. He grabbed a nearby lantern and shone it at the Kraken’s eye. With a treacherous roar, it released the ship’s hull and faded into the depths. “Nice trick,” grunted Silver Jack knew the curse was chasing them, and the second testament was still to come.

Chaos erupted on the deck as the crew struggled to fight against the mutineers. He found himself back-to-back with the captain, hopelessly fending them off. “We can’t win this lad!” he shouted, the slightest tremble in his voice. I’ve never seen him this afraid before. It made me feel afraid too, because I knew he was afraid of nothing when I was a kid. “Abandon ship!” he shouted. He dived into the unknown. I had no choice. With the parchment clutched to my beating heart I made a dive, the freezing water clashing against my body. Skeleton Isle loomed on the horizon, a dark promise of the horizon.

Jack flickered his eyes open and spit out gritty sand. He looked up. He had arrived. Finally. The black sands of Skeleton Isle escaped from under his foot as he placed them in the hot sand. Mist gathered around as he trudged deeper into the cave. Then, he heard panting behind him. Salty Maiden’s Captain. “I’m with you now,” he panted, “It’s all going to be alright.” he noticed bleached bones scattered across the beach and failed attempts from others. A skeleton arm bulged from the sand, its scrawny finger directioning towards a dark jungle path.

He stood before the mountain of gold, Silver’s piston put behind his vulnerable head. “You’ve led us well lad,” sneered Silver, “but this is when your precious little journey ends lad.” Without warning, the cave began to shake. The final testament has sprung. He had seconds to react. He grabbed the amulet from the pile and collapsed it around his neck. Visions flashed before his eyes - the greed and cruelty of those who all sought the cursed treasure. He understood now. The true treasure wasn’t gold, but it was the wisdom that he gained throughout the adventure. With the urge of will, he shattered the amulet. Dark magic swirled around him and began to descend to the floor. The curse has been lifted. He knew.