From the Garrett of Robert Louis Stevenson

(On a recent trip to Savannah, I spent my nights reading Treasure Island. It is what inspired me to jump into this book and share it with my children. This was originally posted on the blog Jump Into A Book)

While I was in Savannah, Georgia recently I discovered a place called the "Pirate's House". Once an inn and now a restaurant, I had to go in to see for myself.

Hanging on the walls in the Captain's Room and The Treasure Room are frames containing pages from an early, very rare edition of the book Treasure Island. Savannah is mentioned several times in this classic by Robert Louis Stevenson. In fact, some of the action is supposed to have taken place in The Pirate's House! Tis' said that old Captain Flint, who originally buried the fabulous treasure on Treasure Island, died here in an upstairs room. In the story, his faithful mate, Billy Bones, was at his side when he breathed his last, muttering "Darby, bring aft the rum". Even now, many swear that the ghost of Captain-Flint still haunts The Pirate's House.

All of this mention of pirates got me thinking about the book Treasure Island. I was trying to think back to the last time I had read it and then it dawned on me that I had only seen the movie. So upon leaving, I went to the nearest and oldest bookstore near-by and bought myself a copy. There is no better place to read Treasure Island than in Savannah. It lends itself to the imaginings for such a story.

When Robert Louis Stevenson wrote this tale he created a world so complete and memorable that I was ready to sign-up to go treasure hunting.

Treasure Island is a story set in the 18th century. It's about pirates, hunting for treasure, l looted and hidden gold, sailing, murder, and complete and deplorable treachery. Completing many of these acts are some of the most memorable characters of all time, Long John Silver with his one leg, the very brave Jim Hawkins, and a pirate story wouldn't be complete without a talking parrot who cries," Pieces of eight!

Robert Louis Stevenson had a life quite different than the one portrayed in Treasure Island. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Stevenson studied law but really just wanted to be a writer. Later he married an American woman and lived in the United States. Where this story gets really interesting is how Treasure Island came to be. First, as a writer, there was the tradition of writing stories about men and/or boys at sea. He felt he was fulfilling the writing tradition. Secondly, his stepson Lloyd Osborn requested him to do so. They were spending a very rainy summer in Scotland. Young Lloyd drew a map of an Island, even giving names to some of the places, like Skeleton Island. His stepfather, Robert, was very intrigued by the map and started to create characters to go with the places and this was the beginning of Treasure Island.

As Mr. Stevenson wrote each new chapter of the tale, he would read it out loud to his wife, step children, and his parents. It is told the Stevenson gave great dramatic readings of his story and his family was so involved with the development of his story that they would make suggestions. It was Lloyd

who suggested that there be no females in the story. There is only one and that is Jim's mother who dies rather early on.

In writing Treasure Island, Robert Louis Stevenson greatly wanted to please his stepson Lloyd. Not only did he accomplish this but as I read this book I took part in the adventure of Jim Hawkins and his search for treasure. The story is alive in all of it's imagined imagery, non-stop excitement that has made us all rich in the quest for adventure.

If you have never read Treasure Island do not waste another second to discover this cherished gem for yourself.