

## READING

### Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson was a famous 19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish writer. He was born on November 13, 1850, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was the only son of Thomas Stevenson, a prosperous civil engineer, and his wife, Margaret Isabella Balfour.

When he was seventeen, Robert Louis Stevenson started studying engineering, but he didn't like it. He stopped and started studying law. During his summer holiday, he travelled to France. There he met young artists, both writers and painters. He finished his studies in 1875, but he didn't want to be a lawyer. He wanted to become a writer.

Stevenson often travelled abroad, most frequently to France. In 1878, he published *An Inland Voyage*, a book about his trip from Antwerp to northern France, which he made in a canoe. In the 1880s, Stevenson's health got worse. He had to stay in bed and writing was one of the few things that he could do.

*The Treasure Island* (1883) is a pirate adventure story. It is a book for children, but adults can enjoy it too. Long John Silver, one of the main characters in the book, is one of the most famous fictional pirates of all time. By the end of the 1880s, it was one of the period's most popular and widely read books.

*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) is a novella about good and evil. The story is told by Gabriel Utterson, a London lawyer and a friend of Dr. Henry Jekyll. Dr. Jekyll is a respectable man, but he sometimes changes into a bad person called Mr. Hyde. Mr. Hyde does terrible things and is wanted in London for murder. In the end, Dr. Jekyll kills himself, but the body found at his house is that of Hyde's.

In 1888, Stevenson and his family sailed from San Francisco to the South Seas. They built a house in Samoa and stayed there. It was good for Stevenson's health. He continued writing and produced important books such as *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889).

Robert Louis Stevenson died on December 3, 1894, at his home in Vailima, Samoa.

#### 1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How many brothers did Robert Louis Stevenson have? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 How old was Stevenson when he started studying engineering? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What is *An Inland Voyage* about? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Who did Stevenson meet in France? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Who is Long John Silver? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Who is Gabriel Utterson? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Where did Stevenson and his family sail in 1888? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Stevenson's father was an engineer. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Stevenson studied engineering and law. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Stevenson travelled from Antwerp to northern France by train. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 In the 1880s, Stevenson wasn't very healthy. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 *The Treasure Island* is a children's book. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Dr Jekyll is wanted for murder in London. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Stevenson didn't spend the end of his life in Britain. \_\_\_\_\_

## KEY

### 1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How many brothers did Robert Louis Stevenson have? **he didn't have any brothers**
- 2 How old was Stevenson when he started studying engineering? **seventeen**
- 3 What is *An Inland Voyage* about? **about Stevenson's trip from Antwerp to northern France**
- 4 Who did Stevenson meet in France? **writers and painters**
- 5 Who is Long John Silver? **a famous fictional pirate**
- 6 Who is Gabriel Utterson? **a London lawyer and a friend of Dr. Henry Jekyll**
- 7 Where did Stevenson and his family sail in 1888? **to the South Seas**

### 2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Stevenson's father was an engineer. **T**
- 2 Stevenson studied engineering and law. **T**
- 3 Stevenson travelled from Antwerp to northern France by train. **F (he travelled by canoe)**
- 4 In the 1880s, Stevenson wasn't very healthy. **T**
- 5 *The Treasure Island* is a children's book. **T**
- 6 Dr Jekyll is wanted for murder in London. **F (Mr Hyde is wanted for murder)**
- 7 Stevenson didn't spend the end of his life in Britain. **T (he spent it in Samoa)**