Captain Blood: His Odyssey

Rafael Sabatini · *1922 · original English text*

Peter Blood, a doctor in an English country town, is arrested for treating a wounded rebel and sentenced to death by Judge Jeffreys. He is sold as a slave in Barbados, escapes in a Spanish ship, and becomes a famous buccaneer. His quarrel is with the cruel Colonel Bishop, and his heart is with Bishop's niece Arabella. The story ends with a change of kings and a governorship.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Can a man who has been wronged by the law make his own law, and still end as an honest man?

Sabatini's answer is a gentleman's romance. Blood becomes an outlaw because a court ruined him, and he keeps a code in the pirate trade: he is bold, he keeps his word, and he serves no cruelty. The book makes pirate life brisk and attractive, and the care is that it passes lightly over what real piracy did to its victims. It ends as a tale of honor restored.

KEY CHARACTERS

Peter Blood
A physician turned pirate captain.

Arabella Bishop
Colonel Bishop's niece.

Colonel Bishop
A hard planter and Blood's enemy.

Jeremy Pitt
Blood's young friend and fellow convict.

Lord Julian Wade
An envoy of the king.

Don Miguel
A Spanish admiral who hates Blood.

Levasseur
A cruel French buccaneer.

Lord Willoughby
The governor who is Blood's ally.

Grades 7–12

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01

The Doctor of Bridgewater

CHAPTERS I–III

Peter Blood, a physician who has given up soldiering, treats the rebel Lord Gildoy and is arrested. Judge Jeffreys sentences him to death for treason.

- Blood tends a wounded rebel and is arrested by Kirke's dragoons.
- Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys tries him.
- Blood is sentenced for treason though he took no part in the rising.

02

A Slave in Barbados

CHAPTERS IV–VI

The sentence is changed to transportation. Blood is sold in Bridgetown to Colonel Bishop for ten pounds, and Arabella Bishop takes his side.

- Blood is sold in the slave market.
- Colonel Bishop is a hard master.
- Arabella Bishop speaks for him.
- He cures the governor's gout and wins his favor.

03

The Escape

CHAPTERS VII–IX

During a Spanish attack on Bridgetown, Blood and the other convicts seize the Spanish ship Cinco Llagas and sail away.

- Spanish ships attack the island.
- Blood and the convicts take a Spanish ship.
- They are outlaws and choose to be pirates.
- Blood is their captain.

04

The Buccaneer

CHAPTERS X–XVIII

From Tortuga, Blood wins fame, wrecks the plans of Levasseur, and outwits Spanish fleets. The Spanish admiral Don Miguel has a private score with him.

- Blood meets Don Diego and other Spaniards.
- Levasseur's plans are foiled.
- The Spanish fleet is outwitted at Maracaybo.
- Don Miguel pursues him.

05

Arabella and the Envoy

CHAPTERS XIX–XXIII

Blood takes Arabella and Lord Julian Wade from a Spanish ship. Lord Julian offers a royal pardon, and Arabella calls Blood a thief and a pirate.

- Arabella and Lord Julian are on a Spanish ship.
- Lord Julian offers a pardon.
- Arabella calls him a pirate.
- Colonel Bishop treats him as an enemy at Port Royal.

06

Cartagena and the French

CHAPTERS XXIV–XXVIII

Blood serves the French under M. de Rivarol and takes Cartagena. Rivarol slights him and the buccaneers and sails to attack Jamaica.

- Blood joins Rivarol's expedition.
- Cartagena is taken.
- Rivarol slights the buccaneers.
- He sails for Jamaica.

07

The Service of King William

CHAPTERS XXIX–XXXI

King James has fallen. Blood joins Lord Willoughby and the Dutch admiral against Rivarol, wins the last fight of the Arabella, and is made governor of Jamaica.

- Word comes that King James is gone.
- Blood rescues Lord Willoughby.
- He and the Dutch admiral defeat Rivarol.
- Blood is made governor.
- Arabella confesses her love.

Justice and law | Pirate honor | Love | Freedom | Loyalty to a king

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 7–12

1. How Blood is arrested and what he is sentenced for.
2. How the convicts take the ship.
3. How Blood and Arabella change their minds about each other.
4. How Blood's code differs from other pirates'.

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