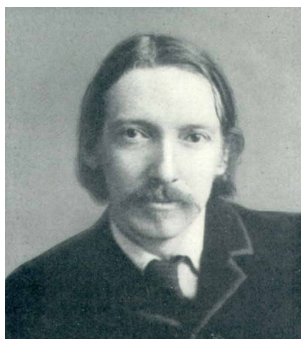


THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE

by Robert Louis Stevenson



THE AUTHOR

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson (1850-1894) was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, to staunch Presbyterian parents who were appalled when he turned to agnosticism in his early twenties. Stevenson suffered from respiratory problems throughout his life. During his childhood illnesses, he spent his time reading and particularly enjoyed the novels of Sir Walter Scott, with which his adventure tales are often compared. He was drawn to writing early in life, but his parents encouraged him to undertake a more profitable profession, so he studied engineering and eventually turned to law, even passing the bar exam. He soon turned to writing, however, beginning with magazine essays and two travelogues describing his trips to the Continent to seek relief for his ailments. In Europe he met Fanny Osbourne, a married American woman who soon divorced her husband to marry Stevenson. They lived for a while in San Francisco, then moved back to Scotland and eventually settled in Samoa, where Stevenson found some relief for his tuberculosis, but died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1894 at the age of 44.

Stevenson is best known as a writer of adventure stories. His reputation was established with the publication of *Treasure Island* in 1883, followed by *The Black Arrow* (1884), *Kidnapped* (1886), and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889). All but the last were published first as serials in the boys' magazine *Young Folks* and had much more in common with the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) than contemporaries of Stevenson like Charles Dickens and George Eliot. The work generally considered to be his masterpiece, however, is a novelette written in a mere three days in 1886 - *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

The Master of Ballantrae is a complex mixture of adventure tale along the lines of *Kidnapped* and psychological thriller like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Unlike the latter, its contrasting main characters are distinct individuals. They are not, however, unadulterated representations of good and evil. James Durie, the title character, is a ne'er-do-well and manipulative, unlikeable figure through most of the novel, but by the end even gains the grudging respect of the narrator, who clearly favors his brother Henry. Henry, on the other hand, is solid and respectable through most of the book, suffering quietly the torments visited upon him by James, but by the end has lost his wits and is determined to destroy James if he can succeed in finding him. Both brothers, then, are mixtures of good and evil. The plot is somewhat secondary, and serves largely as a vehicle for developing the personalities of the two main characters.

PLOT SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1 - Summary of Events During the Master's Wanderings

The story, which is narrated by Mackellar, the steward of the Durie estate in Durrisddeer, begins in the year 1745 at the time of Bonnie Prince Charlie's rebellion. We meet the Durie clan, headed by the Old Lord, who is decrepit with age, and his sons, James and Henry. James, the Master of Ballantrae, is wild and unpredictable but possessed of extraordinary good luck. The younger son, Henry, Lord Durrisddeer, is quiet, solid, and takes more of an interest than his brother in the management of the family estate. The fourth member of the household is Alison Graeme, a high-spirited orphan left a fortune by her father and who is destined to marry James, the heir of the estate. When the rebellion breaks out, James and Alison favor the cause of the rebels, the former largely seeking to improve his fortunes and pay off his substantial debts while the girl sees the young prince as a romantic hero. The Old Lord and Henry favor a moderate stance. After days of discussion, they decide that one son should support each side in the conflict in the hope that, whoever wins, the family will be able to retain their estate. Henry, as the younger son, believed it was his duty to leave and fight with the rebels, but James could not agree to stay home when he so strongly favored the cause of the Jacobites. Henry argues with his brother, even stating that James should stay at home because he is their father's favorite, but James will not hear of it. He accuses his brother of jealousy and brings up the story of Jacob and Esau. Finally they decide to settle the matter by the toss of a coin, which results in James going off to fight with the rebels and Henry staying home. James is thrilled with the outcome, but Alison is distraught at the prospect of losing her betrothed.

James gathers a dozen men from among the tenants of the estate and goes off in drunken high spirits to join the rebellion. The next day, Henry offers his sword to King George. As long as the rebellion lasts, the two brothers have no communication with each other, though news filters southward that James has fought bravely and gained a place of favor with the young Prince. Henry remains at home to manage the estate, but soon word comes that James has been killed in the battle of Culloden. Alison is inconsolable and blames Henry for the rift between the brothers.

The Old Lord is now determined that Alison and Henry should marry. Such an outcome would have been highly unlikely apart from the malicious gossip spread by Tam Macmorland, one of the tenants who had accompanied James. He accused Henry of treasonously deserting the rebel cause and repeated the accusation often enough that the ignorant came to believe it, so that the tenants honored James as a hero and treated Henry as the worst of villains. This unjust treatment, along with Henry's silence and refusal to strike back against his calumniators, earns Alison's respect, and she agrees to marry him. The two are wed in 1748.

CHAPTER 2 - Summary of Events (Continued)

Six months after the wedding, Mackellar arrives to serve the family, so the narrative at this point is part of his personal experience. In his role as steward, he grows close to Henry; he soon observes that he is unhappy, largely because of his rivalry with his presumably dead brother James, who is favored by his father, his wife, and most of the servants. Only a servant named Macconochie joined the steward in favoring Henry over his brother. One day Henry asks his steward to take some money to a woman in the village named Jessie Broun. She curses him roundly for his trouble, and he later finds out that she had been ill used by James, though she obviously retains a sense of loyalty to him. Alison considers herself a martyr for marrying Henry, and she and the Old Lord often

exclude Henry from their nightly conversations. Henry, for his part, loves his wife dearly and cherishes any small act of kindness on her part.

In April of 1749 a stranger arrives at Durrisdeer. He introduces himself as Colonel Francis Burke, an Irishman from the company James had joined, and presents three letters to be delivered to each of the family members. He informs them that James is still alive and is living in Paris, at which point Alison almost faints. Eventually she burns her letter unopened.

CHAPTER 3 - The Master's Wanderings: From the Memoirs of the Chevalier de Burke

Mackellar derives the following chapter from information supplied by Colonel Burke, a companion of James Durie. The two men met after the failure of Bonnie Prince Charlie's rebellion while they were fleeing the king's forces. Burke is surprised to encounter James, who had been rumored to have been killed at the battle of Culloden. The two take an immediate dislike to one another, and after some discussion decide to toss a coin to determine whether they will be friends or enemies. The coin falls for peace between the two, and they soon take ship to escape Scotland and head for Ireland. The incompetent captain sails them into the teeth of a storm so severe that they fear for their lives. Their damaged ship is set upon by pirates led by Captain Teach (not the notorious Blackbeard), and Burke, James, and two others volunteer to join his crew; the rest of the sailors are made to walk the plank. Conditions aboard the pirate ship are chaotic and undisciplined. One day they encounter a ship of the royal navy, at which point Teach hides in his cabin. After this show of cowardice, James takes over the ship and institutes some discipline among the men. He is named quartermaster by the crew, who decide to get rid of Teach. James prevents them from doing so, arguing that the captain still has his uses despite the fact that his power no longer exists. This arrangement continues for the next twelve or fifteen months, during which their acts of piracy are extremely profitable. As they approach port, Ballantrae drugs the members of the crew, ties Teach to the mast, and he and his three companions escape with the most valuable of the booty. A heavy fog hides them from the boats of a naval vessel and they escape to land with their treasure.

They find themselves in a treacherous swamp, and only Burke and Ballantrae survive the trek; one of their companions sinks in quicksand with his booty, while another threatens them with a pistol and is killed by Ballantrae. That night they reach the end of the morass. In the morning they quarrel and almost come to blows over the loss of two parts of the treasure. A stranger comes upon them while they are quarreling, and they quickly gather their belongings and flee the scene. As they wander about the peninsula, they encounter the crew of a vessel from Albany, New York, and ask if they might come on board as passengers. When they identify themselves as Jacobite fugitives, the merchant agrees to take them along. For the payment of a substantial sum, he agrees to take them to Albany and point them in the direction of a French settlement. When they land, they find themselves in the middle of the French and Indian War. From Albany they head westward in a canoe, guided by a young man named Chew. They manage to elude Indian raiding parties through Chew's experience and the liberal application of their stock of rum. One day, however, Chew suddenly took sick and died. They now find themselves in the Adirondacks without a guide. Three days later, as they carry their canoe between bodies of water, it slips from their grasp and is smashed to pieces, taking most of their supplies with it. They now have only as much food as they can carry, their pistols, and their treasure. Ballantrae grows increasingly angry, making liberal use of the language he learned aboard the pirate ship and acting like anything but a gentleman. He roundly curses Burke, but saves his greatest ire for his brother, whom he accuses of stealing his land and his wife. For days they wander, choosing direction by tossing a coin, until one day they come upon a

dead body of a man devoid of his scalp. After hiding from an Indian raiding party, the two men separate. By their separate ways, each arrives at Fort St. Frederick. Ballantrae had meanwhile buried his treasure, but Burke generously paid for his passage to France.

CHAPTER 4 - Persecutions Endured by Mr. Henry

Even before Burke finishes his tale, Henry draws Mackellar aside and confides his concern regarding the estate's finances. Ballantrae has sent a letter demanding an exorbitant sum of money, and the estate has little to spare. While Henry is glad to hear that his brother is alive, he worries that his possession of the estate will not pass muster in a court of law. He and Mackellar count out all the money they have on hand and send it to James by the hand of Burke. After Burke sets sail, Mackellar goes to Edinburgh to secure a loan needed to keep the estate afloat. When he returns, he discovers that Alison is behaving much more civilly toward her husband and showing more interest in Katharine, her daughter, though Henry reads these changes as the result of guilt for her earlier coldness; he fears that the news concerning James may in the end cost him his wife as well as his estate.

In the seven years that follow, James repeatedly sends messengers with demands for additional funds, which Henry promptly supplies while containing his rage at his brother's behavior. Meanwhile, he cuts expenses on the estate to the bone. Alison resents the economies and the two become even further estranged. Finally Mackellar explains to Alison the reason for the frugality to which they have been forced; she was completely unaware that James had drained their coffers of eight thousand pounds in the last seven years. Alison immediately apologizes to her husband and intends to write to James concerning their situation, while Henry determines to send no more money to Paris.

Soon Mackellar receives a letter from Burke, explaining that James, after a period of great prosperity and advancement, had suffered a reversal of fortune, spent some time in the Bastille, and lost both his regiment and his pension. He now intends to go to India, but needs funds to make the trip. Within a week, however, James himself appears at Durrissdeer. Mackellar sees him land and begs him to go back to France, or at least to give him time to prepare the family for his arrival, but he refuses. The steward runs home to warn the Old Lord and Henry. Henry goes to meet his brother and tells him that he is welcome, but makes no attempt to hide his dislike. At dinner, James behaves admirably, much to the surprise of his hosts. When they are alone, however, he treats Henry as the younger brother who, persecuted as a child, is persecuted still. Both Mackellar and Henry see the sharp contrast between his public and private behavior, but don't know how to respond without appearing to the remainder of the family to be churlish. Indeed, the Old Lord and Alison see the open friendliness of James and the cold reserve of Henry and blame the latter, while James continually reminds them of the peril in which he stands at the hands of the government because of his involvement in the rebellion eleven years earlier. Mackellar is tempted to denounce him, but knows that Henry would be blamed and James would then become a martyr in his family's eyes. Meanwhile, James' return becomes known in the neighborhood and he soon becomes the object of the attentions of Jessie Broun, whom he had misused many years earlier. He attempts to make Mackellar a go-between to chase her away, but the steward refuses. James tries to force Henry to fire him, but he declines. Finally he gives the woman money and sets her up in a house far from Durrissdeer.

James then turns his attentions to Alison, courting her favor openly while before he had acted circumspectly as no more than a brother. Part of his strategy is to make a friend of young Katharine,

playing with her as often as possible. All this makes Henry jealous and has the effect of drawing Alison and James closer together. James' goal in all this is to obtain money for a venture in the French Indies. Henry, pressured by his father, goes so far as to sell off a part of the estate simply for the pleasure of being rid of his pestilential brother. Nonetheless James continues on at Durrisdeer for several more weeks. Henry becomes suspicious and, through personal contacts, discovers that James is now in the government's favor, presumably because he had changed sides and was engaged in spying on the rebels, and that his tales of being in mortal danger were mere fabrications. Alison then distances herself from James as much as possible. In a matter of days, however, all is forgiven and the two are closer than ever. Henry is at a loss for how to deal with the threat to his marriage and family.

CHAPTER 5 - Account of All That Passed on the Night of February 27, 1757

James begins to travel around the countryside, though he tells no one where he is going. One night the brothers, along with Mackellar, are playing cards, and James begins to insult Henry for no good reason. When he taunts him by saying that Alison prefers him to her husband, Henry strikes him, upon which James challenges him to a duel. They take up swords and prepare for combat in the garden. Mackellar tries to intervene, but James threatens him and he backs down. Henry, a trained fencer, gains an immediate advantage and eventually runs his brother through. Mackellar pronounces James to be dead and Henry, distraught, rushes into the house, followed by the steward. Henry's first thought is how he is to break the news to his father. Mackellar undertakes the task because Henry is too shaken up by the tragic events. He goes upstairs and wakens Alison, whom he blames for the disaster because she has shown such a marked preference for James over her husband. Mackellar goes to inform the Old Lord while Alison descends to comfort Henry. The steward prepares the old man by telling him of the endless insults Henry has suffered at the hands of his brother - something of which the father was completely unaware. The Old Lord has clearly shown a preference for James, but now his mistreatment of Henry is added to his deception concerning his supposed danger at the hands of the authorities. The old man is about to rush downstairs to prevent violence between the two when Mackellar finally gets up the courage to tell him about the duel and its outcome. The Old Lord hastens to the window and hears boats in the bay - the smugglers are abroad. While the father gets dressed, Mackellar goes out to the garden and finds Henry's sword near a pool of blood. The body is gone, and so are the smugglers. Soon Alison joins him in the garden and takes the sword, intending to clean it. Perhaps, she says, James is not dead after all. She goes inside to comfort Henry, who is inconsolable. When his father enters, he begs his forgiveness, professing his love for James despite the treatment he received at his hands. He then turns to Alison and asks her forgiveness as well. Mackellar and the old man decide to hide all evidence of the duel and put about the word in the neighborhood that James had left that night with the smugglers. When Mackellar goes up to James' room, intending to conceal his baggage, he finds that most of it is already packed. He then realizes that James intended to leave that night in any case and probably provoked the duel, knowing that he would not be around to deal with its consequences. The steward then takes the Master's possessions and conceals them in the loft, but not before he looks through the papers and finds damning evidence of the espionage in which James had been involved. Six months later, they discover that James indeed survived and was transported to France, though he never told the smugglers about the duel because he was too embarrassed at having been bested by his despised younger brother.

CHAPTER 6 - Summary of Events During the Master's Second Absence

After James departs for the second time, Henry becomes seriously ill, largely because he believes that he has killed his brother. While Henry is incapacitated, Mackellar takes over the estate's finances. He preserves all the relevant papers and shares them with his mistress. Included among the papers are twenty-seven letters from James to the Undersecretary of State, which Alison promptly burns. Mackellar is distraught because these letters provided their only concrete protection against James and his unconscionable behavior. She argues that James cares nothing for the family's reputation and would not be intimidated or controlled by the letters, therefore it is better that they be destroyed.

In the weeks that follow, Henry slowly improves. His attitude toward his wife is surprisingly positive, and she reciprocates. He says nothing, however, of the events surrounding James' visit or the duel that resulted from it. Henry never fully recovers from the fever; he shows little interest in the running of the estate. One day he is alone with Mackellar and asks where James is buried. The steward tells him that James is in all likelihood still alive, but Henry, instead of being relieved, cries out that his brother is a burden that he is destined to bear on his back forever. He asks Mackellar to inform him of any word regarding James that he may hear; the steward is saddened that his master appears not to regret the duel, but rather to regret its failure. In fact, only the Old Lord is cheered by the apparent survival of his elder son. The old man suffers a rapid decline, both physically and mentally. He redraws his will, makes Mackellar his executor, and soon dies. The doctor is of the opinion that both Henry and the Old Lord have suffered strokes, but that the younger man was largely able to recover, though not fully, while his father was carried off by his brain injury. Henry now inherits his father's title and handles his position honorably.

In 1757, Alison gives birth to a son, Alexander, who thus becomes the heir to the title and the estate. Henry is delighted; he spends most of his time with the boy and becomes preoccupied with ensuring his future. Mackellar generally avoids the part of the garden where the fateful duel took place, but one day he discovers Henry and Alexander standing in the very spot. The father is explaining to the son that, years before, the devil tried to kill a man there, but that the man almost succeeded in killing the devil instead. Mackellar tells Alexander that he should always offer a prayer of thanksgiving whenever he passes by the place. They recite part of the Lord's Prayer, but Henry admits that he is unable to forgive. The steward later agrees that he, too, is unable to forgive James for the offenses he has committed. As time passes, Henry becomes more and more obsessed with his son and more neglectful of his wife, his daughter, and the estate. Alison, who for so many years had been cold toward her husband, now feels the pain that he had earlier experienced. Mackellar finds himself trying to compensate for his master's neglect by spending time with Alison and Katharine. He is afraid that Henry is spoiling the boy, though succeeding years prove that his concern was unfounded. One day he confronts Henry with his treatment of Alexander, warning him that he courts the danger of making the young man very like James, who was spoiled by his father. Henry becomes so angry that he has a seizure. From that point on, Mackellar determines never to broach the subject again.

CHAPTER 7 - Adventure of Chevalier Burke in India: Extracted from His Memoirs

The narrative now returns to the memoirs of Colonel Burke to describe the adventures of James in India. Burke narrates one incident only. He and a sepoy were on the run from Englishmen and drop into a garden, where they encounter none other than James Durie and his Indian friend

Secundra Dass. Burke cries out to his old friend, who ignores him. Secundra claims that James speaks no English and translates Burke's words into Hindi. Burke has no idea why James should behave in such a manner, and he and the sepoy leave in a state of considerable puzzlement.

CHAPTER 8 - The Enemy in the House

This chapter begins early in the spring of 1764. Mackellar wakes one morning with a sense of foreboding and goes downstairs to find James Durie and Secundra Dass together in the drawing room. James introduces his Indian friend, though Mackellar is clearly displeased at the presence of both men in the house. Soon Henry enters and orders breakfast for his unexpected guests. While breakfast is being prepared, Henry finds the servant who let his brother in and peremptorily dismisses him while Mackellar goes to wake Alison. She wants to depart immediately for America by the back door and leave James in charge of an empty house, but Henry will not hear of it. Mackellar takes him to task for his treatment of his wife, who has been doing everything she can to make amends for the past. Henry gives in and summons Alison, then agrees to her plan.

They go down to breakfast and act as if nothing unusual has occurred. After breakfast James confides in Mackellar that he intends to extort more money from Henry by threatening to reveal a scandal. The next day Henry summons a lawyer and makes over the estate in trust to Mackellar while he is gone; he intends to go to America, but wants to be sure that James neither knows of his departure nor is aware of his destination. James is to have use of the house, but is to receive no money from the estate. Mackellar fears that, before the family leaves, James will worm himself into the favor of young Alexander, which he indeed attempts to do. That night, after James and Secundra Dass go to bed, Henry and his family quietly slip away from Durrisdeer, never intending to return.

When James rises the next morning, Mackellar informs him that the family has departed. He refuses to tell him where they have gone, and James is clearly upset to find that he is to receive no allowance. He swears that he will discover their destination within a week, pursue them, and force them to pay him what he desires. For the next three weeks, James and Mackellar barely tolerate one another. Then James announces that he and his Indian friend intend to depart the next day for New York, and that Mackellar is welcome to accompany them. How the secret was discovered, the steward has no idea.

CHAPTER 9 - Mr. Mackellar's Journey with the Master

They travel by coach to Glasgow in a miserable rain, then take a ship bound for America. For the first week they encounter fair weather, but then a storm arises and the trip becomes an exercise in misery. Mackellar's only company is the detested James, which keeps him in a perpetually black mood. The storm then turns into a hurricane, and Mackellar's only comfort is that, if the ship should go down, his mortal enemy would finally be dead and gone. He would dearly love to kill the Master, but lacks the courage. Instead, he goes so far as to pray that he and the Master would die and the crew be spared. When the hurricane passes, the captain mistakenly credits Mackellar's prayers for their salvation.

As they sail, James tells Mackellar a story. An Italian count had an enemy, a German baron who was at the time visiting Rome. The count is out walking one day and discovers an ancient catacomb that leads to a well built in Roman times. He decides to use it to destroy his enemy. The next day he is riding with the baron and tells him of a dream of which the baron was the subject. The superstitious baron is taken in by the story, in which the count describes the cave, the passage, and

the well, but tells the baron that in the dream he had received a secret communication from deep in the well. A few days later the count takes them past the entrance to the catacomb, but says nothing of it. The next day the baron goes out by himself. Later his horse is found tethered near the entrance to the cave, and the baron is never seen again.

Mackellar, inspired by the tale, attempts to throw James overboard, but James anticipates the move and dodges the effort. He then demands that Mackellar swear not to make any further attempts on his life, and the steward agrees and apologizes for his attack. James tells him that he respects him much more for his assassination attempt than he otherwise would have and trusts his word that nothing of the sort will happen again. He then berates James for his brutal treatment of his brother, but James insists that, had Mackellar known him as a youth instead of Henry, he would have stood firmly on his side - something that the steward strongly doubts. Despite Mackellar's pleading, James refuses to give up his intention of destroying his brother. James insists that he has a good side and uses his relationship with Secundra Dass, whom he treats like a son, as an example. Mackellar refuses to believe that he has any good in him, however. James insists that, should Henry and Alison beg on bended knee for him to leave them alone, he would disappear from their lives forever. Eventually, the two men begin to treat one another with kindness and approach something akin to friendship. They finally arrive at New York and part, destined to be enemies once more.

CHAPTER 10 - Passages at New York

Mackellar intends to find Henry before James is able to do so. He finds his lord prepared to meet his brother. Henry has arranged for leading men of the colony to be present when James arrives, and when he does, Alison takes the children and quickly goes inside the house. James addresses Governor Clinton and lays claim to the title and estate that should have been rightly his. The Governor, having been informed of the state of affairs by Henry, rejects James' claims, and Henry offers to pay his passage back to England, or even allow him to stay in New York with a reasonable allowance as long as he stays away from the family. James chooses to remain, opening a tailor shop and having access to income from the labors of Secundra Dass, who is a skilled goldsmith. He hopes eventually to amass enough money to travel into the wilderness and retrieve the pirate treasure he buried long years before. Slowly he gains public sympathy, while poor Alison is shunned by her neighbors.

Henry, meanwhile, falls increasingly into black despair. For the most part he stays home, but each day he takes a journey into town, never revealing his destination. One day Mackellar decides to follow him. He travels the same route each day, which eventually takes him past his brother's workshop, where he finds delight in observing the low estate to which James has been reduced. Mackellar finally confronts him, warning him that nursing his hatred for James will ultimately poison his soul. Henry, however, openly admits that his purpose is to break his brother's spirit. During all this time, the brothers speak not one word to each other. Finally one day James breaks the silence and tells Henry that he intends to retrieve his buried treasure, but requires a loan in order to hire a carriage. The loan will be repaid from the treasure, after which James promises to leave Henry and his family alone forever. Henry refuses even to answer the request and later tells Mackellar that he cannot be expected to believe a man who had deceived him so often in the past. The steward offers to pay James' way himself if Henry will advance him the funds, but the latter accuses him of connivance with his brother's treachery. Mackellar then goes directly to James and offers him the money if he is willing to wait for it to arrive from the Scottish bank where it is on deposit. James refuses.

As he prepares to leave, Mackellar observes the arrival of a ship that will ultimately prove destructive to the entire family. The ship bears pamphlets which, when Henry receives them, responds with fury and locks himself in his room. Mackellar fears that Henry's bouts of madness have finally overcome him. He and Alison sit all day outside Henry's room; they even get young Alexander to knock on the door, but he too is refused entrance. Finally that night Henry opens the door, hands Mackellar a letter, and asks for his dinner. The letter is addressed to one Captain Harris, a disreputable Indian trader. Harris accompanies him home and converses privately with Henry far into the night. Mackellar notices that Henry is in possession of a hundred pounds, which eventually finds its way to James. After this, Henry no longer takes his daily strolls into town. Mackellar tries without success to discover the content of the pamphlets that caused so much trouble. [Eventually after Henry's death he finds the offending pamphlet, which declares that the Durie family is to be deprived of its lands and titles because of James' involvement in the Jacobite rebellion; i.e., the entire reason for the split between the brothers - to preserve the estate in the family no matter which side came out on top - went for naught because both James and Henry were blackened by the same brush by the Whig government. Mackellar immediately realizes that the pamphlet could not possibly be true, but Henry, in his madness, could not discern its obvious falsehood.] Soon thereafter Henry announces his intention to leave for Albany and demands that Mackellar accompany him.

CHAPTER 11 - The Journey in the Wilderness

Henry and Mackellar reach Albany, and the steward realizes that his master intends to keep him with him at all costs; he constantly fills his day with busy work. Meanwhile, Mackellar receives news that James and Captain Harris are traveling deep into the wilderness. While James goes in search of his treasure, Henry remains in Albany and is often drunk. He intends evil toward his brother, and Mackellar is determined to stop it if he can. Finally Henry and Mackellar strike out into the wilderness. After a week in the wilderness, they encounter John Mountain, a trader who had been traveling with James and Secundra Dass. He informs them that James had been traveling with a party of nine men, scoundrels all, whose intention is to allow James to lead them to the treasure, then do away with him. Secundra Dass, unknown to the conspirators, understood English and communicated their plot to James. Harris, on the other hand, knew Hindi and discovered that James and his Indian companion intended to slip away from the group and strike out on their own. They attempt escape twice and twice are thwarted. James and Secundra conceal from the conspirators their knowledge of the plot, but avoid giving direct answers to questions about the exact location of the treasure as they approach it.

One night James manages to escape alone. The conspirators torture Secundra in search of information, but he has none to give. Mountain, the tracker, leads them in pursuit and catches up with him half a day later. At this point James voluntarily returns to the group and tells them to put away their weapons lest they lose their chance at the treasure. He attempts to talk Mountain into siding with him rather than the brutal Harris. After dinner, he turns the group against Harris by accusing him of misrepresenting what had passed between him and Secundra because he intended to keep all the treasure for himself. Furthermore, he had already been paid by Henry to kill James when the opportunity presented itself. He urges the others to kill Harris, but they refuse, threatening instead to kill James unless he immediately reveals the location of the treasure. Under threat of death, he promises to lead them to it the following morning.

That night James takes ill, and within three days he dies after having given directions to the treasure to his companions. They bury him and proceed to look for the treasure. Each night one of

the conspirators is murdered and scalped, and they fear they have been set upon by fierce Indians. Eventually only Mountain and Secundra are left.

CHAPTER 12 - The Journey in the Wilderness (Continued)

When word reaches Henry and Mackellar of Indian hostilities, their companions attempt to convince them to return to Albany. Henry not only refuses to turn back, but also refuses to believe that James is dead. Sir William Johnson, their companion, is convinced that Henry is mad and asks Mackellar if he needs to be restrained. Finally he gives in and agrees to take Henry and Mackellar to see the place where James is buried, which is near Lake Champlain. As they draw closer, they hear the sound of digging. They suspect that Secundra Dass is digging up the treasure, but instead they find him unearthing James' body. As he digs wildly, he insists that he had buried James alive to protect him from the murderers who had conspired against him. He uncovers the face of his master and is shocked to find that he has a full beard, since he had been clean-shaven when he was buried. James, who has been in the ground for a week, opens his eyes and tries to speak, at which point Henry, in shock, falls down dead. Secundra continues for the next day to try to revive his master, but to no avail. Finally Mackellar chisels an inscription on a stone commemorating the resting place of the two brothers.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- James Durie - The Master of Ballantrae, he goes off to fight for Bonnie Prince Charlie during the rebellion of 1745 and subsequently travels the world. He makes life miserable for his brother and constantly seeks to obtain money from him. He buries a treasure obtained during his days as a pirate, but is unable to locate it before his death in the wilderness of upstate New York.
- Henry Durie - James' younger brother, he remains home and sides with King George during the rebellion. He is a good and kind master, but eventually goes mad out of hatred for his brother and dies in the New York wilderness while seeking James' destruction.
- The Old Lord - The father of James and Henry, he suffers from the disabilities of old age.
- Alison Graeme - A wealthy orphan taken in by the Old Lord, she has been promised in marriage to James but eventually marries Henry and gives him two children, Katharine and Alexander.
- Ephraim Mackellar - The steward of the Durie estate, he is the narrator of the story. He sides with Henry in the conflict between the two brothers.
- Francis Burke - An Irish colonel who is a companion of James Durie in his travels.
- Secundra Dass - An Indian who is a faithful companion of James Durie.
- Captain Harris - A disreputable Indian trader whom James accompanies into the wilderness of New York in search of buried pirate treasure.

- John Mountain - One of the cutthroats in Harris' company, he is the tracker who narrates the last part of James Durie's journey.
- Sir William Johnson - A diplomat whose expedition Henry joins in his search for James in the New York wilderness.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Two Duries in Durrisdeer,
 One to stay and one to ride,
 An ill day for the groom
 And a worse one for the bride.” (ch.1)

“We shall live to repent of this.” (Henry, ch.1)

“Nothing is mine, nothing. This day's news has knocked the bottom out of my life. I have only the name and the shadow of things - only the shadow; there is no substance in my rights.” (Henry, ch.4)

“How was [Henry] to respond to the public advances of one who never lost the chance of gibing him in private? How was he to smile back at the deceiver and the insulter?” (ch.4)

“You need insult me no more. I have hated you all my life.” (James, ch.5)

“Oh! father, you know I loved him; you know I loved him in the beginning; I could have died for him - you know that! I would have given my life for him and you.” (Henry, ch.5)

“Nothing can kill that man. He is not mortal. He is bound upon my back to all eternity - to all God's eternity!” (Henry, ch.6)

“Inside of a week, without leaving Durrisdeer, I will find out where these fools have fled to. I will follow; and when I have run my quarry down, I will drive a wedge into that family that shall once more burst it into shivers.” (James, ch.8)

“This will be an ill journey for someone. I think, sir, for you. Something speaks in my bosom; and so much it says plain - that this is an ill-omened journey.” (Mackellar, ch.8)

“I sat by my taper, looking on the black panes of the window, where the storm appeared continually on the point of bursting in its entrance; and upon that empty field I beheld a perspective of consequences that made the hair to rise upon my scalp. The child corrupted, the home broken up, my master dead or worse than dead, my mistress plunged in desolation - all these I saw before me painted brightly in the darkness; and the outcry of the wind appeared to mock my inaction.” (Mackellar, ch.8)

“You weary me with claiming my respect. Your brother is a good man, and you are a bad one - neither more nor less.” (Mackellar, ch.9)

“I have a kingly nature: there is my loss!” (James, ch.9)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Robert Louis Stevenson’s novels *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* both contain main characters that serve as foils for one another, though in the latter work the two are two sides of one individual. Compare and contrast the two pairs of characters, noting how each brings out aspects of the other by means of their differences.
2. Robert Louis Stevenson’s novels *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* both portray the good and evil that reside in the human soul, but do so in very different ways. Compare and contrast the two works in their analysis of human nature. Which is a more accurate portrayal? Which is more complex? Why do you think so?
3. Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Master of Ballantrae* and Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* both tell stories of brothers (or half-brothers) who are at odds with one another to the extent that one consistently plots against and seeks the ruination of the other. Compare and contrast the two examples of sibling rivalry. Be sure to consider personalities, motives, and the tactics used in the course of the conflicts.
4. Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Master of Ballantrae* and John Knowles’ *A Separate Peace* both focus on love-hate relationships between two young men, brothers in one case and close friends in the other. Compare and contrast the two sets of relationships. Be sure to consider personalities, motives, and the tactics used in the conflicts.
5. In Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Master of Ballantrae*, the author makes use of a variety of supposed written sources. While the primary narrator is the steward Mackellar, other characters contribute written documents as well. This gives the author the opportunity to tell his story from different perspectives and using different voices. Evaluate the trustworthiness of the various narrators. To what extent can they be believed? Does their bias in favor of either Henry or James Durie make the reader skeptical about the objectivity of their narratives? Why or why not?
6. In Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Master of Ballantrae*, the author makes use of a variety of supposed written sources. To what extent does he succeed in making these supposed sources sound different? Point out examples of differences in style and vocabulary that set the different narrators apart from one another.
7. In Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Master of Ballantrae*, the principal narrator is Ephraim Mackellar, the steward of the Durie estate. He clearly admires Henry Durie and hates his brother James. To what extent do his disparate feelings about the two brothers color his narrative? Do you consider him a trustworthy source? Why or why not? If he is not trustworthy, give examples of incidents where he may not be trusted with confidence.

8. To what extent does the desire for money drive the action and motivate the characters in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*? Give special attention to the two brothers at the heart of the novel, but consider the effect of greed on minor characters as well.
9. Robert Louis Stevenson, in evaluating *The Master of Ballantrae*, admitted that it was "imperfect in essence" because it "lacked all pleasurable-ness." He noted that no character in the story was completely admirable and that the overarching tone was one of pessimism. Evaluate his assessment, supporting your arguments with specific incidents, characters, and quotations from the novel.
10. In chapter four of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, James returns to Durrissdeer after his family believed him to have been killed at the battle of Culloden and proceeds to torment Henry in ways that the public cannot see. Henry quietly tolerates his brother's abuse, knowing that his reputation is being ruined in the process, to say nothing of his relationship with his wife and children. Evaluate Henry's response in the light of Matthew 5:38-42. Was "turning the other cheek" the right thing to do, or should he have stood up to his brother for the sake of his testimony in the community?
11. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae* makes significant use of foreshadowing, especially in the editorial comments of Mackellar, the primary narrator. Does this technique spoil the suspense for the reader, or does it help to place in context the events as they occur and anticipate their significance?
12. In chapter nine of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, Mackellar says to James Durie, "You weary me with claiming my respect. Your brother is a good man, and you are a bad one - neither more nor less." Is this an accurate assessment of the characters of the two brothers? Why or why not?
13. In chapter nine of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, James Durie says, "I have a kingly nature: there is my loss!" What does he mean by this comment? To what extent is it true and in what ways is it false? What are the consequences of James' self-evaluation, both for himself and for others?
14. The only significant female character in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae* is Alison Graeme, later Alison Durie. What is her role in the plot of the story? In what ways does she affect other characters? In what ways does she change over the course of the novel?
15. When Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *The Master of Ballantrae*, he wrote the opening chapters without having first determined how the story would end. He later admitted that the rather bizarre ending was the weakest part of the tale. Do you agree? Why or why not? What, in your opinion, would have been a more satisfactory ending to the story?

16. At the beginning of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, brothers James and Henry Durie devise a scheme to preserve the family's inheritance in the midst of a civil war the outcome of which is uncertain. Discuss the wisdom of their plan, whereby each brother took one side in the conflict, assuming that the one on the winning side would be able to keep the Durrisdeer estate safe. What factors did they ignore that brought their plan to ruin?
17. Imagine that Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae* took place during a time of peace rather than during the 1745 rebellion led by Bonnie Prince Charlie. Then James would have inherited the estate and married Alison. Would the brothers then have been able to live peaceably with one another, or would they still have wound up at odds? Support your conclusion with what you know about their respective personalities from the novel.
18. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, James Durie is pleased with the outcome of the coin flip because he favors the Jacobites and longs to fight for them, hoping to gain a material reward in the process. Why, then, does he spend most of the book torturing his brother when he for all practical purposes won the coin toss? What is his justification for doing so?
19. In the first chapter of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, James and Henry Durie quarrel over the appropriate response to the impending civil war. They compare their disagreement to the story of Jacob and Esau in the Bible. To what extent is the comparison valid? Discuss the ways in which James is like Esau and Henry like Jacob, both in terms of their personalities and their conduct throughout the story.
20. Sibling rivalry is a theme that appears in many works of literature. Compare and contrast the roles of conflict between brothers in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*. Consider the ways in which the brothers portray the conflict of good versus evil and how they demonstrate the respective authors' views of that conflict and its role in human life.