

Name _____ **Character**



The Pirate's Secret

Captain Henry Beanbaum was known throughout all the lands south of the equator as the most ruthless pirate ever to sail the seven seas. When in port, he liked to visit the local taverns, and there he entertained the other customers with the gruesomely exciting tales of how he had lost his hand in a fight with a shark, and how he'd willingly allowed his leg to be sawed off and replaced with a wooden peg "so he'd always have something handy to bludgeon a man with". He could subdue a man with a mere glance, and he subdued many a waiter over the matter of whether or not he was expected to pay his check. It was rumored that in his cabin on his ship, his bed was a thin mattress laid atop six trunks full of gold. Captain Henry Beanbaum was so powerful and so frightening that he couldn't even get a parrot to take a cracker from him. When Captain Beanbaum set foot on a sandy treasure island, it was said, the parrots all flocked to the tops of the highest trees. No one but Captain Beanbaum's crew had ever seen him anywhere but on land, in a tavern, telling these stories. But everyone knew that they were true, because of the ferocity with which the Pirate Captain told them.

Such was his reputation, and everyone believed it hook, line and sinker. No one had a clue about Henry Beanbaum the private man. And this was by design, for Captain Beanbaum had a terrible secret. It was the most awful, unfortunate and debilitating secret that any pirate captain could have. Hardly did his ship ever get fully underway, heaving over the rough and swelling ocean, rising and falling with the waves, before Henry Beanbaum the private man had his head out of his cabin porthole and was heaving up his breakfast. He was not, in fact, a rich man, because whenever he did manage to find a buried treasure, or raid another ship, he had to pass out gold coins to his crew to keep them from telling his terrible secret. It was a mutually satisfying relationship, and Beanbaum's crew did all that they could to see that it would last, by telling everyone they met about their dangerous and successful pirate captain.

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1. Pretend you've just come from a tavern where you shared a mug of grog with Captain Beanbaum and his crew, and now you've run into a friend. Describe Captain Beanbaum to your friend.

2. What is Captain Beanbaum's "awful, unfortunate and debilitating secret"? Quote passages from the text to support your answer.
