



Robinson Crusoe

Danial Defoe



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My Ambition

I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, where I was educated. My father wanted me to become a lawyer but my only desire was to go to the sea. My father was a serious, wise man and he advised me strongly against it.

When I was eighteen, I talked to my mother about it, hoping that she would convince my father to let me go. I soon realized I would never have their consent.

I resisted another year, until one day, a friend of mine invited me to sail with him on his father's ship. So it was that I left home without asking permission and began my life at the sea.

The Voyage

After various adventures, which I will not recount here, I found myself on a ship sailing for the African coast. One day, a violent tornado took us by surprise and for twelve days our ship was driven here and there by the fearful winds. We could do nothing except hope, although our chances of survival were very few.

One morning, one of the men shouted, "Land!" and at the same moment the ship ran on to some sand and stopped. The waves broke over her and we all thought we were going to die. We had no idea where we were or whether this was mainland or just an island. We were in a terrible situation. We did not know what to do.



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What was Robinson Crusoe's desire? Did his parents agree?

thing I saw was the ship; she had rolled off the sand and was lying against the rocks only about a mile from the beach. I realized sadly that if we had remained on board we would all have lived. I felt very **lonely** at that moment.

The first thing I decided to do was to swim out to the ship and get as many things as I could. The weather was extremely hot, so I took off all my clothes and went into the sea. Inside the ship, I was happy to find that most things were dry. I collected together lots of food, **tools**, ammunition and arms, and other things that I thought might be of use to me.

Now my problem was how to get all these things to the shore. I decided to build a kind of **raft** with four large pieces of wood that I found on board.

Having tied them together with some rope, I put all my things on and **set off**. Fortunately, I had two **oars** with which to guide my raft and it was easy to reach the land.

My New Home

My next job was to look at the country and decide where to make my home. I saw a hill about two kilometers away and walked in that direction. When I reached the top of the hill, I realized that I was on an island. It seemed uninhabited, except for wild animals; I saw lots of birds, but could not recognize the different species. I



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Why did Crusoe collect stuff from the ship?

that I was fortunate to possess. The only thing that I did not consider was how to get the boat into the water, **seeing** that I would have to make it from a tree quite a distance from the shore.

I cut down a great cedar tree; this took me twenty days! Then I spent another fourteen days cutting away the branches. After this, it took me about a month to make it into the shape of a boat and three more months to cut out the inside. In the end, I had a beautiful boat and I was very satisfied. But it was about one hundred meters from the water and the land went uphill at first. I made a road, digging into the surface of the ground but, having completed it, I found that the boat was much too heavy to move. I, then, decided to try making a **canal** and bringing the water to the boat; but having calculated that it would take ten or twelve years, I had to give up the **whole** project.

A Footprint in the Sand

I had now been on the island several years and I had never seen a single human being.

One day – it was about **noon** – I was walking along the beach when I saw a footprint in the sand. It was clearly that of a man!

I stood completely still, like a man who has seen a **ghost**. I listened but could hear nothing; I looked around me but saw nothing. I climbed to the top of the hill and looked down, but there was only that one mark.

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What footprint did Crusoe find in the sand?



While I was watching, they pulled two poor men out of a boat; I realized they were going to kill them. As they prepared to kill the first with an axe, the other man, seeing that he was free, turned and began running - in my direction!

I was afraid that they would all chase after him and discover me and my home, but, fortunately, only three of them did and he ran much faster. I knew that I had to save this poor man.

There was a small river that they had to cross and the prisoner swam across very quickly. One of his pursuers obviously could not swim because he remained on the other side, the other two swam more slowly and the prisoner gradually gained ground. Now it was my turn to react.

I went down toward the river, called to the prisoner to stop running, and approached the other two as they came out of the water. I did not want to fire my gun so I knocked one of them on the head with it. As he fell to the ground, I saw that the other was going to shoot me with his bow and arrow, so I was obliged to fire my gun. At the sound, the prisoner stopped, terrified.

I called to him and slowly he came toward me and fell on the ground at my feet. He spoke strange words, but they sounded pleasant; they were the first words I had heard for twenty-five years!

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What did Crusoe do to help the prisoner?

The next day, we went back to the beach. As we passed the place where he had buried the two men, he showed me that he wanted to uncover them and eat them. He soon understood from my gestures that I was disgusted at the idea, so he did not insist.

On the beach, we saw a terrible sight – at least, for me it was terrible. There were human bones and pieces of half-eaten **flesh** everywhere, and the sand was red with blood. My man Friday seemed still **inclined** to eat some of the remains, but I made him understand that I would kill him if he continued this habit. He explained to me that there had been a great battle between two kings and their subjects and that the victors had taken many prisoners, all of whom had probably been eaten.

My Faithful Servant

Back at the camp, I looked for somewhere for Friday to sleep and decided to make him a tent on an open place inside my fence. I, then, made a door to my store-room where I went to sleep, taking all my weapons with me. I **barred** the door from the inside so that it could not be opened from the outside. All this was **quite** unnecessary because I soon realized that Friday was the most **faithful** servant. He really loved me and I am sure that he would have sacrificed his life to save me from any danger. He also



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18 What did Friday want to do? Did Crusoe agree?

I fired at them, and so did he. He killed two of them and loaded three more. I killed one and wounded two.

The savages were completely taken by surprise. They did not know what to do or where to look.

We loaded our guns and fired again. Only two fell this time but many were wounded.

We re-loaded the guns we had fired and came out from the trees. The savages started running toward their boats and, while I went to the prisoner tied up on the beach, Friday fired at them.

I cut the prisoner's ropes but he did not move. He obviously thought he was going to be killed.

"Friday!" I called. "Come and tell him that he is saved."

When Friday looked down at the man, he began to laugh and cry. He kissed the man and danced with joy.

"My father! My father!" he cried.

Friday and I took care of his father for some days until he seemed well enough to travel. Then, he took the boat that his enemies had left behind and set sail for home.

"Are you sure you do not want to go with him?" I asked Friday.

"No, Master," was his reply, " I promised I would serve you all my life and so I shall."

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Who did the prisoner turn out to be?

Post-reading Activities

1. Complete the following:

- a. Robinson's birthplace:
- b. Robinson's date of birth:
- c. Robinson's ambition:
- d. The age he went to sea:
- e. The ship's destination:
- f. The duration of the storm:
- g. The number of survivors:
- h. My birthplace:
- i. My date of birth:
- j. My ambition:

2. Answer the following questions.

- a. Make a list of the things Robinson did not have.
- b. Make a list of the things he had.
- c. List the things he got from the ship.
- d. Say which objects you think he needed most. Give reasons.

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Glossary

- **accidentally:** by chance
- **amazement:** surprise
- **as well as:** and
- **barred:** blocked
- **breeding:** growing and reproducing
- **buried:** put under the ground (to bury; buried; buried)
- **canal:** wide ditch to make water flow through
- **cave:** natural opening in rock
- **choice:** selection
- **crop:** a large quantity of one kind of plant, usually a cereal
- **delight:** pleasure
- **dreadful:** terrible
- **driven:** pushed (to drive; drove; driven)
- **drowned:** dead in the water
- **enchanted:** magical
- **faint:** lose consciousness
- **faithful:** loyal
- **farther:** more to the
- **fearful:** terrible
- **fellows:** men
- **fence:** enclosure made of wood
- **flesh:** the soft parts of human bodies (never called meat !)
- **ghost:** phantom
- **hide:** put in a place where it cannot be found (to hide; hid; hidden)
- **inclined:** wanting
- **lawyer:** man who studies law
- **loaded:** put the ammunition
- **lonely:** in need of company
- **longed:** desired, wished
- **made up my mind:** decided
- **meaning:** significance
- **mind:** worry, care
- **mood:** humor, state of mind
- **mutinied:** rebelled against the captain of the ship
- **noon:** midday, 12pm
- **oars:** long, flat pieces of wood used for moving a boat through the water
- **off:** away
- **on board:** on the ship
- **over:** finished
- **perform:** carry out
- **plains:** wide, flat areas



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