

Daniel Defoe

ROBINSON CRUSOE

TOLD TO THE CHILDREN

BY

JOHN LANG

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I HOW ROBINSON FIRST WENT TO SEA; AND HOW HE WAS SHIPWRECKED

CHAPTER II ROBINSON WORKS HARD AT MAKING HIMSELF A HOME

CHAPTER III THE EARTHQUAKE AND HURRICANE; AND HOW ROBINSON BUILT A BOAT

CHAPTER IV ROBINSON BUILDS A SECOND BOAT, IN WHICH HE IS SWEEPED OUT TO SEA

CHAPTER V ROBINSON SEES A FOOTPRINT ON THE SAND, AND FINDS TRACES OF CANNIBAL FEASTS

CHAPTER VI ROBINSON FINDS A CAVE; HEARS GUNS FIRED BY A SHIP IN DISTRESS

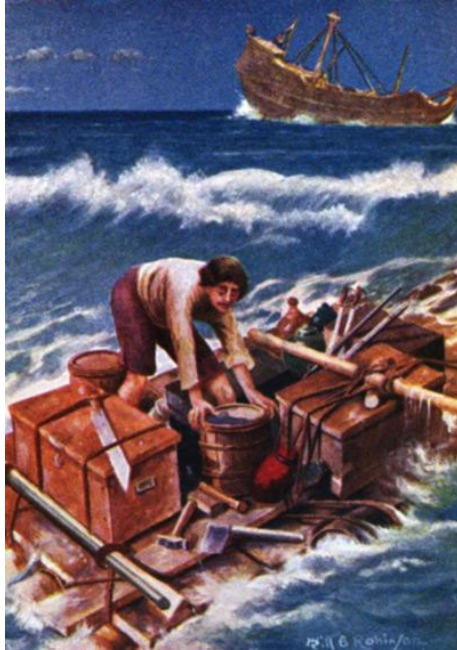
CHAPTER VII ROBINSON VISITS THE WRECKED SPANISH SHIP; RESCUES A PRISONER FROM THE CANNIBALS

CHAPTER VIII HOW ROBINSON TRAINED FRIDAY

CHAPTER IX ROBINSON AND FRIDAY BUILD A LARGE BOAT; THEY RESCUE TWO PRISONERS FROM THE CANNIBALS

CHAPTER X ARRIVAL OF AN ENGLISH SHIP; ROBINSON SAILS FOR HOME

ROBINSON CRUSOE



Slowly the raft drifted nearer and nearer the shore

TO

ALEC CORSE SCOTT

MY DEAR ALEC,

When Defoe wrote Robinson Crusoe, nearly two hundred years ago, boys had more time on their hands, fewer books and fewer games than they have now, and they, as well as their fathers, read it and loved it. And when your father and I were boys—though that is rather less than two hundred years ago—we too used often to read it.

But boys nowadays do not seem to read Robinson Crusoe as they used to do. It is too long, they think, and there is much in it that they have not time to read. That is why I have written here, in as few words as possible, the tale of Robinson's twenty-eight years in his Island, and I hope that you, and other boys, will like it.

The sea that lay round Robinson's island is not like the one you know—the grey North Sea, stormy and cold; but it is blue like a sapphire, and where the rollers break in white foam on the coral reefs it seems as if it were edged with pearls. On the shores of the islands, cocoa-nut palms wave their feathery fronds in the breeze; butterflies of wondrous colours hover about; and in and out amongst the thick-leaved trees dash birds, chattering and screaming, all crimson and blue and yellow and green.

Often there are snakes too, and it was lucky that no snakes on Robinson's island troubled him. For on some islands that I have seen there are snakes—black and white, the most poisonous of them—that swim about in the sea and come up on the beach, and you have to be careful that you do not sit down on the top of one, for they are not always very quick at getting out of the way.

When you are a man, perhaps some day you will go to one of those tropical islands. And if you take a boat and row out to the inside of the reef of coral that lies round the island, and put your face close down, and look through the quiet, crystal clear water, you will know what Fairyland beneath the sea is like. You will find there gardens of a beauty never seen on land, only the branches of the trees are of coral, and in and out amongst them, instead of bright-coloured birds, you will see fishes swimming, some of a vivid yellow and black, others blue as the sky. That is where the mermaids used to play, when the world was younger than it is now.

Yours affectionately,
JOHN LANG.

CHAPTER I

HOW ROBINSON FIRST WENT TO SEA; AND HOW HE WAS SHIPWRECKED

Long, long ago, before even your grandfather's father was born, there lived in the town of York a boy whose name was Robinson Crusoe. Though he never even saw the sea till he was quite a big boy, he had always wanted to be a sailor, and to go away in a ship to visit strange, foreign, far-off lands; and he thought that if he could only do that, he would be quite happy.

But his father wanted him to be a lawyer, and he often talked to Robinson, and told him of the terrible things that might happen to him if he went away, and how people who stopped at home were always the happiest. He told him, too, how Robinson's brother had gone away, and had been killed in the wars.

So Robinson promised at last that he would give up wanting to be a sailor. But in a few days the longing came back as bad as ever, and he asked his mother to try to coax his father to let him go just one voyage. But his mother was very angry, and his father said, 'If he goes abroad he will be the most miserable wretch that ever was born. I can give no consent to it.'

Robinson stopped at home for another year, till he was nineteen years old, all the time thinking and thinking of the sea. But one day when he had gone on a visit to Hull, a big town by the sea, to say good-bye to one of his friends who was going to London, he could not resist the chance. Without even sending a message to his father and mother, he went on board his friend's ship, and sailed away.

But as soon as the wind began to blow and the waves to rise, poor Robinson was very frightened and sea-sick, and he said to himself that if ever he got on shore he would go straight home and never again leave it.

He was very solemn till the wind stopped blowing. His friend and the sailors laughed at him, and called him a fool, and he very soon forgot, when the weather was fine and the sun shining, all he had thought about going back to his father and mother.

But in a few days, when the ship had sailed as far as Yarmouth Roads on her way to London, they had to anchor, and wait for a fair wind. In those days there were no steamers, and vessels had only their sails to help them along; so if it was calm, or the wind blew the wrong way, they had just to wait where they were till a fair wind blew.

Whilst they lay at Yarmouth the weather became very bad, and there was a great storm. The sea was so heavy and Robinson's ship was in such danger, that at last they had to cut away the masts in order to ease her and to stop her from rolling so terribly. The Captain fired guns to show that his ship wanted help. So a boat from another ship was lowered, and came with much difficulty and took off Robinson and all the crew, just before their vessel sank; and they got ashore at last, very wet and miserable, having lost all their clothes except what they had on.

But Robinson had some money in his pocket, and he went on to London by land, thinking that if he returned home now, people would laugh at him.

In London he made friends with a ship's captain, who had not long before come home from a voyage to the Guinea Coast, as that part

of Africa was then called; and the Captain was so pleased with the money he had made there, that he easily persuaded Robinson to go with him on his next voyage.

So Robinson took with him toys, and beads, and other things, to sell to the natives in Africa, and he got there, in exchange for these things, so much gold dust that he thought he was soon going in that way to make his fortune.

And therefore he went on a second voyage.

But this time he was not so lucky, for before they reached the African Coast, one morning, very early, they sighted another ship, which they were sure was a Pirate. So fast did this other vessel sail, that before night she had come up to Robinson's ship, which did not carry nearly so many men nor so many guns as the Pirate, and which therefore did not want to fight; and the pirates soon took prisoner Robinson and all the crew of his ship who were not killed, and made slaves of them.

The Pirate captain took Robinson as his own slave, and made him dig in his garden and work in his house. Sometimes, too, he made him look after his ship when she was in port, but he never took him away on a voyage.

For two years Robinson lived like this, very unhappy, and always thinking how he might escape.

At last, when the Captain happened one time to be at home longer than usual, he began to go out fishing in a boat two or three times a week, taking Robinson, who was a very good fisher, and a black boy named Xury, with him.

One day he gave Robinson orders to put food and water, and some guns, and powder and shot, on a big boat that the pirates had taken out of an English ship, and to be ready to go with him and some of his friends on a fishing trip.

But at the last moment the Captain's friends could not come, and so Robinson was told to go out in the boat with one of the Captain's servants who was not a slave, and with Xury, to catch fish for supper.

Then Robinson thought that his chance to escape had come.

He spoke to the servant, who was not very clever, and persuaded him to put more food and water on the boat, for, said Robinson, 'we must not take what was meant for our master.' And then he got the servant to bring some more powder and shot, because, Robinson said, they might as well kill some birds to eat.

When they had gone out about a mile, they hauled down the sail and began to fish. But Robinson pretended that he could not catch anything there, and he said that they ought to go further out. When they had gone so far that nobody on shore could see what they were doing, Robinson again pretended to fish. But this time he watched his chance, and when the servant was not looking, came behind him and threw him overboard, knowing that the man could swim so well that he could easily reach the land.

Then Robinson sailed away with Xury down the coast to the south. He did not know to what country he was steering, but cared only to get away from the pirates, and to be free once more.

Long days and nights they sailed, sometimes running in close to the land, but they were afraid to go ashore very often, because of

the wild beasts and the natives. Many times they saw great lions come roaring down on to the beach, and once Robinson shot one that he saw lying asleep, and took its skin to make a bed for himself on the boat.

At last, after some weeks, when they had got south as far as the great cape that is called Cape de Verde, they saw a Portuguese vessel, which took them on board. It was not easy for Robinson to tell who he was, because he could not talk Portuguese, but everybody was very kind to him, and they bought his boat and his guns and everything that he had. They even bought poor Xury, who, of course, was a black slave, and could be sold just like a horse or a dog.

So, when they got to Brazil, where the vessel was bound, Robinson had enough money to buy a plantation; and he grew sugar and tobacco there for four years, and was very happy and contented for a time, and made money.



Once Robinson shot a lion that he saw lying asleep

But he could never be contented for very long. So when some of his neighbours asked him if he would go in a ship to the Guinea Coast to get slaves for them, he went, only making a bargain that he was to be paid for his trouble, and to get some of the slaves to work on his plantation when he came back.

Twelve days after the ship sailed, a terrible storm blew, and they were driven far from where they wanted to go. Great, angry, foaming seas broke over the deck, sweeping everything off that could be moved, and a man and a boy were carried overboard and drowned. No one on the ship expected to be saved.

This storm was followed by another, even worse. The wind howled and roared through the rigging, and the weather was thick with rain and flying spray.

Then early one morning land was dimly seen through the driving rain, but almost at once the vessel struck on a sand-bank. In an instant the sails were blown to bits, and flapped with such uproar that no one could hear the Captain's orders. Waves poured over the decks, and the vessel bumped on the sand so terribly that the masts broke off near the deck, and fell over the side into the sea.

With great difficulty the only boat left on the ship was put in the water, and everybody got into her. They rowed for the shore, hoping to get perhaps into some bay, or to the mouth of a river, where the sea would be quiet.

But before they could reach the land, a huge grey wave, big like the side of a house, came foaming and thundering up behind them, and before any one could even cry out, it upset the boat, and they were all left struggling in the water.

Robinson was a very good swimmer, but no man could swim in such a sea, and it was only good fortune that brought him at last safely to land. Big wave after big wave washed him further and further up the beach, rolling him over and over, once leaving him helpless, and more than half-drowned, beside a rock.

But before the next wave could come up, perhaps to drag him back with it into the sea, he was able to jump up and run for his life.

And so he got safely out of the reach of the water, and lay down upon the grass. But of all on board the ship, Robinson was the only one who was not drowned.

CHAPTER II

ROBINSON WORKS HARD AT MAKING HIMSELF A HOME

When he had rested a little, Robinson got up and began to walk about very sadly, for darkness was coming on; he was wet, and cold, and hungry, and he did not know where to sleep, because he was afraid of wild beasts coming out of the woods and killing him during the night.

But he found that he still had his knife in his pocket, so he cut a big stick to protect himself with. Then he climbed into a tree which had very thick leaves, and there he fixed himself among the branches as well as he could, and fell sound asleep.

In the morning when he awoke, the storm was past, and the sea quieter. To his surprise, he saw that the ship had been carried in the night, by the great seas, much nearer to the shore than she had been when the boat left her, and was now lying not far from the rock where Robinson had first been washed up.

By midday the sea was quite calm, and the tide had gone so far out that he could walk very near to the ship. So he took off his clothes and swam the rest of the way to her. But it was not easy to get on board, because the ship was resting on the sand, and lay so high out of the water that Robinson could not reach anything by which he could pull himself up.

At last, after swimming twice round the vessel, he saw a rope hanging over, near the bow, and by its help he climbed on board.

Everything in the stern of the ship was dry, and in pretty good order, and the water had not hurt the provisions much. So he took some biscuits, and ate them as he looked about, and drank some rum, and then he felt better, and stronger, and more fit to begin work.

First of all, he took a few large spars of wood, and a spare topmast or two, that were on the deck. These he pushed overboard, tying each with a rope to keep it from drifting away. Then he went over the side of the ship, and tied all the spars together so as to make a raft, and on top he put pieces of plank across. But it was long before he could make the raft fit to carry the things he wanted to take on shore.

At last, after much hard work, he got on to it three of the seamen's chests, which he had broken open and emptied, and he filled these with bread, and rice, and cheese, and whatever he could find to eat, and with all sorts of things that he thought he might need. He found, too, the carpenter's tool chest, and put it on the raft; and nothing on the whole ship was of more use to him than that.

Then he set about looking for clothes, for while he had been on the ship, the tide had risen and had washed away his coat and waistcoat and shirt, which he had left lying on the sand.

Guns and pistols also, and powder and shot, he took, and two old rusty cutlasses.

Now the trouble was to reach land, for the raft had no mast nor sail nor rudder, and was too heavy and clumsy to be pulled by Robinson with the broken oars that he had found. But the tide was rising, and slowly she drifted nearer and nearer, and at last was

carried up the mouth of a little river which Robinson had not seen when he was on shore.

There was a strong tide running up, which once carried the raft against a point of land, where she stuck for a time, and very nearly upset all the things into deep water. But as the tide rose higher, Robinson was able to push her into a little bay where the water was shallow and the ground beneath flat, and when the tide went out there she was left high and dry, and he got everything safely ashore.

The next thing that Robinson did was to climb a hill, that he might see what sort of country he was in, and find out if there were any other people in it. But when he got to the top, he saw to his sorrow that he was on an island, with no other land in sight except some rocks, and two smaller islands far over the sea. There were no signs of any people, and he saw nothing living except great numbers of birds, one of which he shot. But it was not fit to eat, being some kind of hawk.

After this, with the chests and boards that he had brought on shore, he made a kind of hut to sleep in that night, and he lay there on the sand very comfortably.

Day by day now for some time Robinson swam out to the ship, and made fresh rafts, loading them with many stores, powder and shot, and lead for bullets, seven muskets, a great barrel of bread, three casks of rum, a quantity of flour, some grain, a box of sugar, sails and ropes and twine, bags of nails, and many hatchets. With one of the sails he made himself a good tent, in which he put everything that could be spoiled by rain or sun. Around it he piled all the casks and other heavy things, so that no wild beast could very easily get at him.

In about a fortnight the weather changed; it blew very hard one night, and in the morning the ship had broken up, and was no more to be seen. But that did not so much matter, for Robinson had got out of her nearly everything that he could use.

Now, Robinson thought it time to find some better place for his tent. The land where it then stood was low and near the sea, and the only water he could get to drink tasted rather salt. Looking about, he found a little plain, about a hundred yards across, on the side of a hill, and at the end of the plain was a great rock partly hollowed out, but not so as quite to make a cave. Here he pitched his tent, close to the hollow place in the rock. Round in front of the tent he drove two rows of strong stakes, about eighteen inches apart, sharpened at top; and he made this fence so strong that when it was finished he was sure that nothing could get at him, for he left no door, but climbed in and out by a ladder, which he always hauled up after him.

Before closing up the end, Robinson hauled inside this fence all his stores, his food and his guns, his powder and shot, and he rigged inside a double tent, so better to keep off the hot sun and the rain.

Then he began to dig into the rock, which was not very hard, and soon behind his tent he had a cave in which he thought it wise to stow his gunpowder, about one hundred and forty pounds in all, packed in small parcels; for, he thought, if a big thunderstorm were to come, a flash of lightning might explode it all, and blow him to bits, if he kept the whole of it in his tent.

Robinson was now very comfortable, and as he had saved from the wreck two cats and a dog, he did not feel quite so lonely. He had got, also, ink and pens and paper, so that he could keep a diary;

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

