

## ROBINSON CRUSOE

Have you ever been alone for a long time? Could you live alone on an island for many years? Could you build yourself a house, learn to grow corn and make bread, learn to make your own clothes from animal skins?

Robinson Crusoe is bored with his quiet life at home in England. He decides to be a sailor, and to travel the seas of the world. He has many exciting adventures, and in 1659 he is in a ship sailing from Brazil to Africa. One day there is a terrible storm. The ship begins to break up, and soon Crusoe and his friends are fighting for their lives in an angry sea. All his friends die, but Crusoe lives and reaches land. He finds himself in a strange, wild country – alive, but alone on a small island, with no food, no boat, no way of escape.

He will be there for the next twenty-seven years . . .





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*Classics*

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# Robinson Crusoe

Stage 2 (700 headwords)

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DANIEL DEFOE

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The Life and  
Strange Surprising Adventures of  
Robinson Crusoe

*Retold by*  
Diane Mowat

*Illustrated by*  
Anthony Williams



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi  
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece  
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First published in Oxford Bookworms 1993

4 6 8 10 9 7 5

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ISBN 978 0 19 479070 3

A complete recording of this Bookworms edition of  
*Robinson Crusoe* is available on audio CD ISBN 978 0 19 478993 6

Printed in Hong Kong

Maps by: Anthony Williams

Word count (main text): 6,830 words

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# 1

## My first sea journey

Before I begin my story, I would like to tell you a little about myself.

I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York in the north of England. My father was German, but he came to live and work in England. Soon after that, he married my mother, who was English. Her family name was Robinson, so, when I was born, they called me Robinson, after her.

My father did well in his business and I went to a good school. He wanted me to get a good job and live a quiet, comfortable life. But I didn't want that. I wanted adventure and an exciting life.



*I wanted adventure and an exciting life.*

‘I want to be a sailor and go to sea,’ I told my mother and father. They were very unhappy about this.

‘Please don’t go,’ my father said. ‘You won’t be happy, you know. Sailors have a difficult and dangerous life.’ And because I loved him, and he was unhappy, I tried to forget about the sea.

But I couldn’t forget, and about a year later, I saw a friend in town. His father had a ship, and my friend said to me, ‘We’re sailing to London tomorrow. Why don’t you come with us?’

And so, on September 1st, 1651, I went to Hull, and the next day we sailed for London.

But, a few days later, there was a strong wind. The sea was rough and dangerous, and the ship went up and down, up and down. I was very ill, and very afraid.



*The sea was rough and dangerous.*

‘Oh, I don’t want to die!’ I cried. ‘I want to live! If I live, I’ll go home and never go to sea again!’

The next day the wind dropped, and the sea was quiet and beautiful again.

‘Well, Bob,’ my friend laughed. ‘How do you feel now? The wind wasn’t too bad.’

‘What!’ I cried. ‘It was a terrible storm.’

‘Oh, that wasn’t a storm,’ my friend answered. ‘Just a little wind. Forget it. Come and have a drink.’

After a few drinks with my friend, I felt better. I forgot about the danger and decided not to go home. I didn’t want my friends and family to laugh at me!

I stayed in London for some time, but I still wanted to go to sea. So, when the captain of a ship asked me to go with him to Guinea in Africa, I agreed. And so I went to sea for the second time.

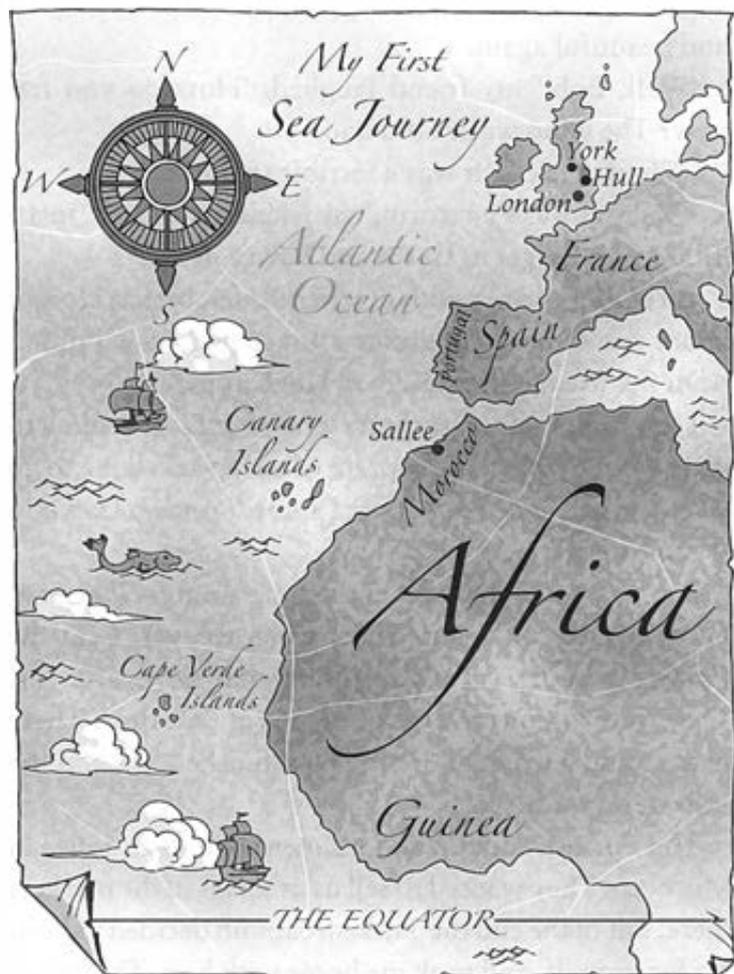
It was a good ship and everything went well at first, but I was very ill again. Then, when we were near the Canary Islands, a Turkish pirate ship came after us. They were famous thieves of the sea at that time. There was a long, hard fight, but when it finished, we and the ship were prisoners.

The Turkish captain and his men took us to Salé in Morocco. They wanted to sell us as slaves in the markets there. But in the end the Turkish captain decided to keep me for himself, and took me home with him. This was a

*Robinson Crusoe*

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sudden and terrible change in my life. I was now a slave and this Turkish captain was my master.



## Down the coast of Africa

For two long years I lived the life of a slave. I worked in the house and the garden, and every day I planned to escape, but it was never possible. I thought about it day and night. My master liked to go fishing in a little boat, and he always took me with him. A man called Moely, and a young boy also went with us.

One day my master said to us, 'Some of my friends want to go fishing tomorrow. Get the boat ready.'

So we put a lot of food and drink on the boat, and the next morning, we waited for my master and his friends. But when my master arrived, he was alone.

'My friends don't want to go fishing today,' he said to me. 'But you go with Moely and the boy, and catch some fish for our supper tonight.'

'Yes, master,' I answered quietly, but inside I was excited. 'Perhaps now I can escape,' I said to myself.

My master went back to his friends and we took the boat out to sea. For a time we fished quietly, and then I moved carefully behind Moely and knocked him into the water. 'Swim!' I cried. 'Swim to the shore!'

My master liked to shoot seabirds and so there were guns on the boat. Quickly, I took one of these guns. Moely was swimming after the boat and I shouted to him:

‘Go back to the shore! You can swim there – it’s not too far. I won’t hurt you, but if you come near the boat, I’ll shoot you through the head!’ So Moely turned, and swam back to the shore as quickly as he could.



*‘Swim back to the shore!’ I shouted.*

Then I said to the boy, 'Xury, if you help me, I'll be a good friend to you. If you don't help me, I'll push you into the sea too.'

But Xury was happy to help me. 'I'll go all over the world with you,' he cried.

I wanted to sail to the Canary Islands, but I was afraid to go too far from the shore. It was only a small boat. And so we sailed on south for some days. We had very little water, and it was dangerous country here, with many wild animals. We were afraid, but we often had to go on shore to get more water. Once I used a gun to shoot a wild animal. I don't know what animal it was, but it made a good meal.

For about ten or twelve days we sailed on south, down the coast of Africa. Then one day we saw some people on the shore – strange, wild people, who did not look friendly. By now we had very little food, and we really needed help. We were afraid, but we had to go on shore.

At first, they were afraid of us, too. Perhaps white people never visited this coast. We did not speak their language, of course, so we used our hands and faces to show that we were hungry. They came with food for us, but then they moved away quickly. We carried the food to our boat, and they watched us. I tried to thank them, but I had nothing to give them.

Just then two big wild cats came down to the shore



*They gave us food and water.*

from the mountains. I think they were leopards. The people were afraid of these wild cats, and the women cried out. Quickly, I took a gun, and shot one of the animals. The second wild cat ran back up into the mountains.

Guns were new to these African people, and they were afraid of the loud noise and the smoke. But they were happy about the dead wild cat. I gave them the meat of the dead animal, and they gave us more food and water.

We now had a lot of food and water, and we sailed on. Eleven days later we came near the Cape Verde Islands. We could see them, but we couldn't get near because there was no wind. We waited.

Suddenly Xury called to me, 'Look, a ship!'

He was right! We called and shouted and sailed our little boat as fast as we could. But the ship did not see us.

*Down the coast of Africa*

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*Then I remembered the guns which made a lot of smoke.*

Then I remembered the guns which made a lot of smoke. A few minutes later the ship saw us and turned.

When we were on the ship, the Portuguese captain listened to my story. He was going to Brazil and agreed to help me, but he wanted nothing for his help. 'No,' he

said, when I tried to pay him. 'Perhaps, one day, someone will help *me* when I need it.'

But he gave me money for my boat, and for Xury, too. At first, I did not want to sell Xury as a slave, after all our dangerous adventures together. But Xury was happy to go to the captain, and the captain was a good man. 'In ten years' time,' he said, 'Xury can go free.'

When we arrived in Brazil three weeks later, I said goodbye to the captain and Xury, left the ship, and went to begin a new life.

### 3

#### The storm and the shipwreck

I stayed in Brazil and worked hard for some years. By then I was rich . . . but also bored. One day some friends came to me and said, 'We're going to Africa to do business. Why don't you come with us? We'll all be rich after this journey!'

How stupid I was! I had an easy, comfortable life in Brazil, but, of course, I agreed. And so, in 1659, I went to sea again.

At first, all went well, but then there was a terrible storm. For twelve days the wind and the rain didn't stop. We lost three men in the sea, and soon the ship had holes in its sides. 'We're all going to die this time,' I said to

## *The storm and the shipwreck*

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myself. Then one morning one of the sailors saw land, but the next minute our ship hit some sand just under the sea. The ship could not move and we were really in danger now. The sea was trying to break the ship into pieces, and we had very little time. Quickly, we put a boat into the sea and got off the ship. But the sea was very



*One of the sailors saw land.*

rough and our little boat could not live for long in that wild water.

Half an hour later the angry sea turned our boat over and we were all in the water. I looked round for my friends, but I could see nobody. I was alone.

*Robinson Crusoe*

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*I fell on the wet sand.*

That day I was lucky, and the sea carried me to the shore. I could not see the land, only mountains of water all around me. Then, suddenly, I felt the ground under my feet. Another mountain of water came, pushed me up the beach, and I fell on the wet sand.

At first I was very thankful to be alive. Slowly, I got to my feet and went higher up the shore. From there, I looked out to sea. I could see our ship, but it was wrecked and there was nobody near it. There was nobody in the water. All my friends were dead. I was alive, but in a strange wild country, with no food, no water, and no gun.

It was dark now and I was tired. I was afraid to sleep on the shore. Perhaps there were wild animals there. So I went up into a tree and I stayed there all night.