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DANIEL DEFOE

ROBINSON CRUSOE

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ROBINSON CRUSOE

DANIEL DEFOE (c. 1660–1731), one of the most famous writers in English literature, was born in London, the son of James Foe, a butcher. It was Daniel who changed his name to De Foe or Defoe in about 1705.

Politics occupied quite a bit of Defoe's earlier life. He was an opponent of King James II, and had supported the Duke of Monmouth in his short-lived uprising in 1685. When the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was successful, and William III was on the throne, Defoe became one of his personal friends.

This led to his becoming employed, after failing miserably as a businessman, as a writer for the government. At the same time, however, he pursued an independent line as a writer of pamphlets – often satirical – on various social issues. Although this landed him in prison in 1702, he was soon reinstated and, in 1706 formed part of the team sent to Scotland to negotiate the terms of union with England.

In 1706, a sailor named Alexander Selkirk was rescued after having lived alone for three years on a desert island in the Pacific. When Defoe turned to full-time writing, this

episode fired his imagination – and the result, in 1719, was the publication of *Robinson Crusoe*. The book has become so famous that it has lent its name to the whole genre of castaway literature, which are called by their French name of *robinsonnades*. Defoe's particular strength is in meticulous detail, giving the reader the impression that he is not reading fiction but an historical report.

Several other adventure stories followed, including *Moll Flanders* (1722), and other works, of which the most famous is *A Journal of the Plague Year* (also 1722). In all, including pamphlets, Defoe authored over 250 works.

Defoe has often been compared to Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift, however, complained of Defoe's occasional moral tone and seriousness. Puffin agree with Swift, and therefore this abridged edition concentrates on the essential storyline of the book.

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THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

JUST SO STORIES

LITTLE MEN

THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

TALES OF ANCIENT EGYPT

I was born in the year 1632 in the city of York, of a good family, though not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade lived afterward at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, nay, we call ourselves and write our name. Crusoe, and so my companions always called me.

Being the third son of the family and not bred to any trade, my head began to be filled very early with rambling thoughts. I would be satisfied with nothing but going to sea, and my inclination to this led me so strongly against the will, nay, the commands of my father, and against all the entreaties and persuasions of my mother and other friends, that there seemed to be something fatal in that propension of nature tending directly to the life of misery which was to befall me.

My father, a wise and grave man, gave me

serious and excellent counsel against what he foresaw was my design. He called me one morning into his chamber, and expostulated very warmly with me upon this subject. He asked me what reasons more than a mere wandering inclination I had for leaving my father's house and my native country, where I had a prospect of raising my fortune by application and industry. He told me it was men of desperate fortunes on the one hand, or of aspiring, superior fortune on the other, who went abroad upon adventures; that these things were all either too far above me, or too far below me; that mine was the middle state, which he had found by long experience was the best state in the world. He bid me observe it, and I should always find, that the calamities of life were shared among the upper and lower part of mankind; but that the middle station had the fewest disasters, and was not exposed to so many vicissitudes as the higher or lower part of mankind.

After this, he pressed me earnestly, and in the most affectionate manner, not to play the young man, not to precipitate myself into miseries which nature and the station of life I was born in seemed to have provided against; that I was under no necessity of seeking my bread; that he would do well for me and endeavour to enter me fairly into the station of life which he had been just recommending to me; and that if I was not very easy and happy in the world, it could only be my own fate or fault that must hinder it, and that he

should have nothing to answer for, having thus discharged his duty in warning me against measures which he knew would be to my hurt: in a word, that as he would do very kind things for me if I would stay and settle at home as he directed, so he would not have so much hand in my misfortunes as to give me any encouragement to go away; and though he said he would not cease to pray for me, yet he would venture to say to me, that if I did take this foolish step, God would not bless me, and I would have leisure hereafter to reflect upon having neglected his counsel when there might be none to assist in my recovery.

I was sincerely affected with this discourse, and I resolved not to think of going abroad any more, but to settle at home according to my father's desire. But alas! A few days wore it all off; and in short, to prevent any more of my father's importunities, in a few weeks after, I resolved to run quite away from him.

It was not till almost a year after this that I broke loose, though in the meantime I continued obstinately deaf to all proposals of settling to business, and frequently expostulating with my father and mother, about their being so positively determined against what they knew my inclinations prompted me to. But being one day at Hull, where I went casually, and without any purpose of making an elopement that time; but I say, being there, and one of my companions being going by sea to London in his father's ship, and

prompting me to go with them, I consulted neither father or mother any more, nor so much as sent them word of it; but leaving them to hear of it as they might, without asking God's blessing, or my father's, without any consideration of circumstances or consequences, and in an ill hour, God knows, on the first of September 1651 I went on board a ship bound for London. Never any young adventurer's misfortunes, I believe, began sooner, or continued longer, than mine. The ship was no sooner gotten out of the Humber, but the wind began to blow and the waves to rise in a most frightful manner; and as I had never been at sea before, I was most inexpressibly sick in body and terrified in my mind. I began now seriously to reflect upon what I had done, and how justly I was overtaken by the judgement of Heaven for my wicked leaving my father's house, and abandoning my duty; all the good counsel of my parents, my father's tears and my mother's entreaties, came now fresh into my mind; and my conscience reproached me with the contempt of advice, and the breach of my duty to God and my father.

All this while the storm increased, and the sea, which I had never been upon before, went very high, though nothing like what I have seen many times since; no, nor like what I saw a few days after: but it was enough to affect me then, who was but a young sailor, and had never known anything of the matter. I expected every wave would have swallowed us up, and that every time

the ship fell down, as I thought, in the trough or hollow of the sea, we should never rise more; and in this agony of mind I made many vows and resolutions, that if it would please God here to spare my life this one voyage, if ever I got my foot upon dry land again, I would go directly home to my father, and never set it into a ship again while I lived; that I would take this advice, and never run myself into such miseries as these any more. Now I saw plainly the goodness of his observations about the middle station of life, how easy, how comfortably he had lived all his days, and never had been exposed to tempests at sea or troubles on shore; and I resolved that I would, like a true repenting prodigal, go home to my father.

These wise and sober thoughts continued all the while the storm continued, and indeed some time after; but the next day the wind was abated and the sea calmer; towards night the weather cleared up, the wind was quite over, and a charming fine evening followed; the sun went down perfectly clear and rose so the next morning; and having little or no wind and a smooth sea, the sun shining upon it, the sight was, as I thought, the most delightful that ever I saw.

I had slept well in the night, and was now no more seasick but very cheerful, looking with wonder upon the sea that was so rough and terrible the day before, and could be so calm and so pleasant in so little time after. And now, lest my good resolutions should continue, my companion,

the ship, who I had so happily delivered, and by the same means saved the ship and cargo, having given a very handsome account to the owners of the manner how I had saved the lives of the men, and the ship, they invited me to meet them and some other merchants concerned, and altogether made me a very handsome compliment upon the subject, and a present of almost two hundred pounds sterling.

But after making several reflections upon the circumstances of my life, and how little way this would go towards settling me in the world, I resolved to go to Lisbon, and see if I might not come by some information of the state of my plantation in the Brasils, and of what was become of my partner, who I had reason to suppose had some years now given me over for dead.

With this view I took shipping for Lisbon, where I arrived in April following; my man Friday accompanying me very honestly in all these ramblings, and proving a most faithful servant upon all occasions.

When I came to Lisbon I found out by inquiry, and to my particular satisfaction, my old friend the captain of the ship, who first took me up at sea, off the shore of Africa. He was now grown old, and had left off the sea, having put his son, who was far from a young man, into his ship, and who still used the Brasil trade. The old man did not know me, and indeed, I hardly knew him; but I soon brought him to my remembrance, and as

soon brought myself to his remembrance, when I told him who I was.

After some passionate expressions of the old acquaintance, I inquired, you may be sure, after my plantation and my partner. The old man told me he had not been in the Brasils for about nine years; but that he could assure me, that when he came away my partner was living, but the trustees, who I had joined with him to take cognizance of my part, were both dead; that, however, he believed that I would have a very good account of the improvement of the plantation; for that upon the general belief of my being cast away and drowned, my trustees had given in the account of the produce of my part of the plantation, to the procurator fiscal, who had appropriated it, in case I never came to claim it; one third to the king, and two thirds to the monastery of St Augustine, to be expended for the benefit of the poor, and for the conversion of the Indians to the Catholic faith; but that if I appeared, or anyone for me, to claim the inheritance, it should be restored; only that the improvement, or annual production, being distributed to charitable uses, could not be restored; but he assured me, that the steward of the king's revenue (from lands) and the steward of the monastery, had taken great care all along, that the incumbent, that is to say my partner, gave every year a faithful account of the produce, of which they received duly my portion.

I remained in Lisbon to settle my affairs. Within

seven months, I received what I was owed from the survivors of the trustees; the merchants for whose account I had gone to sea.

I was now master, all on a sudden, of above £5,000 sterling in money, and had an estate, as I might well call it, in the Brasils, of above a thousand pounds a year, as sure as an estate of lands in England: and in a word, I was in a condition which I scarce knew how to understand, or how to compose myself for the enjoyment of it.

My interest in the Brasils seemed to summon me thither; but now I could not tell how to think of going thither, till I had settled my affairs, and left my effects in some safe hands behind me. At first I thought of my old friend the widow, who I knew was honest and would be just to me, but then she was in years, and but poor, and, for ought I knew, might be in debt; so that in a word, I had no way but to go back to England myself, and take my effects with me.

I arrived in London in January of the next year and began to think of leaving my effects with the good widow, and setting out for Lisbon, and so to the Brasils. However, my true friend, the widow, earnestly dissuaded me from it, and so far prevailed with me, that I sold my estate in the Brasils for £20,000, and for almost seven years she prevented my running abroad; during which time I took my two nephews, the children of one of my brothers, into my care. The eldest having something of his own, I bred up as a gentleman, and

gave him a settlement of some addition to his estate, after my decease; the other I put out to a captain of a ship; and after five years, finding him a sensible, bold, enterprising young fellow, I put him into a good ship, and sent him to sea: and this young fellow afterwards drew me in, as old as I was, to farther adventures myself.

In the meantime I in part settled myself here; for first of all I married, and that not either to my disadvantage or dissatisfaction, and had three children, two sons and one daughter: but my wife dying, and my nephew coming home with good success from a voyage to Spain, my inclination to go abroad, and his importunity, prevailed and engaged me to go in his ship, as a private trader to the East Indies. This was in the year 1694.

In this voyage I visited my new colony in the island, saw my successors the Spaniards, had the whole story of their lives, and of the villains I left there; how at first they insulted the poor Spaniards, how they afterwards agreed, disagreed, united, separated, and how at last the Spaniards were obliged to use violence with them, how they were subjected to the Spaniards, how honestly the Spaniards used them; a history, if it were entered into, as full of variety and wonderful accidents as my own part; particularly also as to their battles with the Caribbeans, who landed several times upon the island, and as to the improvement they made upon the island itself, and how five of them made an attempt upon the mainland, and brought

away eleven men and five women prisoners, by which, at my coming, I found about twenty young children on the island.

Here I stayed about twenty days, left them supplies of all necessary things, and particularly of arms, powder, shot, clothes, tools, and two workmen, which I brought from England with me, a carpenter and a smith.

Besides this, I shared the island into parts with them, reserved to myself the property of the whole, but gave them such parts respectively as they agreed on; and having settled all things with them, and engaged them not to leave the place, I left them there.

From thence I touched at the Brasils, from whence I sent a bark, which I bought there, with more people to the island, and in it, besides other supplies, I sent seven women, being such as I found proper for service, or for wives to such as would take them. As to the Englishmen, I promised them to send them some women from England, with a good cargo of necessaries, if they would apply themselves to planting, which I afterwards performed. And the fellows proved very honest and diligent after they were mastered and had their properties set apart for them. I sent them also from the Brasils five cows, three of them being big with calf, some sheep, and some hogs, which, when I came again, were considerably increased.

But all these things, with an account how three

KIDNAPPED

Robert Louis Stevenson

Young David Balfour came to the sinister House of Shaws to claim his inheritance. Instead, he found himself kidnapped. With the help of daring rebel Alan Breck, David escapes, only to get mixed up in a desperate adventure – suspected of murder himself, and hunted across the Scottish moors:

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DANIEL DEFOE

ROBINSON CRUSOE

Daniel Defoe was born in 1660. He studied politics for a short time. Then he became a writer for the government. At the same time, however, he persued an independent line as a writer by pamphtes on various social issues. This job landed him in prison in 1702. when he was released from prison he started writing stories.

He has 250 works which are well known around the world. Some people believe that he is the second. Touathan swift. Thise comparison is quite right. Because these two writers has the same ideas and philosophy in writing. D. Defoe died in 1731. But his works will remain forever.

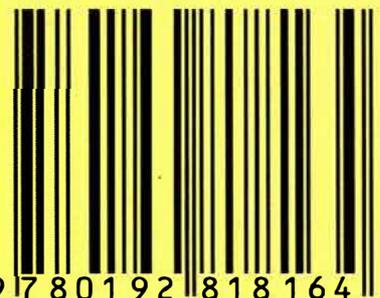


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