

**ROBINSON CRUSOE FOR
CHILDREN**



DANIEL DEFOE

ROBINSON CRUSOE

WRITTEN ANEW FOR CHILDREN

WITH APOLOGIES TO

DANIEL DEFOE

BY

JAMES BALDWIN

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

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TO
THE TWO LITTLE LADIES
WHO HELP TO MAKE OUR SUMMERS AT
BREIDABLIK
A SUCCESSION OF
BROAD BLINKS OF DELIGHT
THIS NEW OLD STORY IS AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED
BY THEIR LOVER, PLAYMATE
AND GRANDPAPA

FOREWORD

In the year 1719 an Englishman whose name was Daniel Defoe wrote a very long story, which he called "The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe." His story was not designed for children, and therefore it contained a great deal of hard reading. There was much in it, however, that was interesting to young people, and from that day to this, the marvelous tale of Robinson Crusoe has been a favorite with boys as well as men. I have rewritten the story in words easy for every child, and have shortened it by leaving out all the dull parts.

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I WISH TO BE A SAILOR



MY name is
Robinson Crusoe.
I was born in the
old city of York,
where there is a
broad river, with
ships coming
and going.

When I was
a little boy, I spent
much of my time
looking at the river.

How pleasant was the quiet stream, flowing,
always flowing, toward the far-away sea!

I liked to watch the ships as they came in with
their white sails spread to the wind.

I liked to think of the strange lands which
they must have visited, and of the many wonderful
things they must have passed.

I wished to be a sailor. I thought how grand it
must be to sail and sail on the wide blue sea, with the

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sky above and the waves beneath. Nothing could be pleasanter.

My father wanted me to learn a trade. But I could not bear the thought of it. I could not bear the thought of working every day in a dusty shop.

I did not wish to stay in York all my life. I wanted to see the world. I would be a sailor and nothing else.

My mother was very sad when I told her.

A sailor's life, she said, was a hard life. There were many storms at sea, and ships were often wrecked.

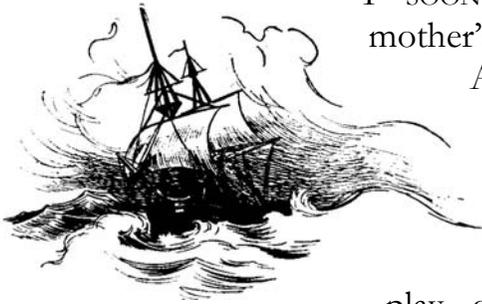
She told me, too, that there were great fishes in the sea, and that they would eat me up if I fell into the water.

Then she gave me a cake, and kissed me. "How much safer it is to be at home!" she said.

But I would not listen to her. My mind was made up, and a sailor I would be.

When I was eighteen years old, I left my pleasant home and went to sea.

I MAKE MY FIRST VOYAGE



I SOON found that my mother's words were true.

A sailor's life is indeed a hard life.

There was no time for play on board of our ship. Even in the fairest weather there was much work to be done.

On the very first night the wind began to blow. The waves rolled high. The ship was tossed this way and that. Never had I seen such a storm.

All night long the wind blew. I was so badly frightened that I did not know what to do. I thought the ship would surely go to the bottom.

Then I remembered my pleasant home and the words of my kind mother.

“If I live to reach dry land,” I said to myself, “I will give up this thought of being a sailor. I will go home and stay with my father and mother. I will never set my foot in another ship.”

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Day came. The storm was worse than before. I felt sure that we were lost. But toward evening the sky began to clear. The wind died away. The waves went down. The storm was over.

The next morning the sun rose bright and warm upon a smooth sea. It was a beautiful sight.

As I stood looking out over the wide water, the first mate came up. He was a kind man, and always friendly to me.

“Well, Bob,” he said, “how do you like it? Were you frightened by that little gale?”

“I hope you don’t call it a little gale,” I said. “Indeed it was a terrible storm.”

The mate laughed.

“Do you call that a storm?” he asked. “Why, it was nothing at all. You are only a fresh-water sailor, Bob. Wait till we have a real storm.”

And so I soon forgot my fears.

Little by little, I gave up all thoughts of going home again. “A sailor’s life for me,” I said.

My first voyage was not a long one.

I visited no new lands, for the ship went only to London. But the things which I saw in that great city seemed very wonderful to me.

Nothing would satisfy me but to make a long voyage. I wished to see the whole world.

I SEE MUCH OF THE WORLD

IT was easy to find a ship to my liking; for all kinds of trading vessels go out from London to every country that is known.

One day I met an old sea captain who had been often to the coast of Africa. He was pleased with my talk.

“If you want to see the world,” he said, “you must sail with me.” And then he told me that he was going again to Africa, to trade with the black people there. He would carry out a load of cheap trinkets to exchange for gold dust and feathers and other rare and curious things.

I was very glad to go with him. I would see strange lands and savage people. I would have many a stirring adventure.

Before ten days had passed, we were out on the great ocean. Our ship was headed toward the south.

The captain was very kind to me. He taught me much that every sailor ought to know. He showed me how to steer and manage the vessel. He

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told me about the tides and the compass and how to reckon the ship's course.

The voyage was a pleasant one, and I saw more wonderful things than I can name.

When, at last, we sailed back to London, we had gold enough to make a poor man rich.

I had nearly six pounds of the yellow dust for my own share.

I had learned to be a trader as well as a sailor.

It would take too long to tell you of all my voyages. Some of them were happy and successful; but the most were unpleasant and full of disappointment.

Sometimes I went to Africa, sometimes to the new land of South America. But wherever I sailed I found the life of a sailor by no means easy.

I did not care so much now to see strange sights and visit unknown shores.

I cared more for the money or goods that I would get by trading.

At last a sudden end was put to all my sailing. And it is of this that I will now tell you.

I UNDERTAKE A NEW VENTURE



I HAD grown very tired of being a sailor. I was so tired of it that I made up my mind to try something else.

It happened that I was then in Brazil. I bought some land there and began to open a plantation. The ground was rich, and it would be easy to raise tobacco and sugar cane.

But I needed many things. I must have plows and hoes and a sugar mill. Above all I must have men to do the work on the plantation.

But neither men nor tools could I get in Brazil.

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I sent to London for the tools. I tried to buy some slaves of the planters near me, but they had not enough for themselves.

“We will tell you what to do,” they said. “We will fit out a trading vessel for Africa. We will put aboard of it everything that you need. As for your part, you shall be the manager of the business; and you shall do the trading for us. You need not put in a penny of your own.”

“But how is that going to help me?” I asked.

“Listen, and we will tell you,” they said. “With the goods which we send, you will buy as many black slaves as the ship will hold. You will bring them here, and we will divide them equally. You shall share with us, just as though you had paid the money.”

The plan pleased me very much. I figured that each one of us would have thirty or forty slaves.

It was very foolish of me to go to sea again; but the offer was so good that I could not say No.

The ship was soon fitted out for the voyage. Her load was not very heavy. But there were plenty of goods such as were most fit for trade.

There were boxes of red and blue beads, of bits of glass, and of other trinkets. There were also knives and hatchets and little looking-glasses. We reckoned that each one of these would buy a slave.

The ship was to carry fourteen men besides the captain and myself. She was as fine a little vessel as ever sailed from the coast of Brazil.

I AM SHIPWRECKED



At length all things were ready for the voyage, and I went on board the ship.

It was just eight years to the day since I had left my father and mother and my pleasant home in good old York.

I felt that I was doing a foolish thing; but I did not dare to say so.

The wind was fair. The sails were spread. Soon we were out to sea.

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For several days the weather was fine. The ship sped swiftly on her way, and every one was happy and hopeful.

Then a great storm came up from the southeast. I had seen many a fierce storm, but never one so terrible as this.

We could do nothing but let the ship drive before the wind. Day after day we were tossed by the waves; and day after day we expected the ship to go down.

The storm grew fiercer and fiercer. The men gave themselves up as lost.

But on the twelfth day the wind went down. The waves were not so strong. We began to hope for our lives.

Early the next morning a sailor cried out, "Land! land!"

I ran out of the cabin to look. But at that very moment the ship struck upon a great bank of sand over which the fierce sea was rolling.

She stopped short. She could not move. The great waves dashed over her deck. All of us would have been washed overboard if we had not hurried back to the cabin.

"What shall we do?" cried the men.

"We can do nothing," said the captain. "Our voyage is at an end, and there is no longer any hope for our lives. We can only wait for the ship to break in pieces."

I AM SHIPWRECKED

“Yes, there is one chance for our lives,” cried the mate. “Follow me!”

In the lull of the storm we rushed again to the deck. One of our boats was still there.

We slung her over the ship’s side. We jumped aboard of her. We cut her loose, and floated away upon the wild sea.

No boat could live in such a sea as that. But we saw land ahead of us; and perhaps some of us might be cast alive upon the beach.

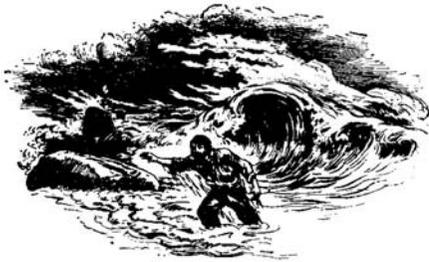
This was our only hope.

The raging waves carried us nearer and nearer to the shore.

We could see the breakers dashing upon the great rocks. The land looked more frightful than the sea.

Then all at once, a huge wave upset the boat. We had no time to speak or think. We were thrown out into the raging sea. We were swallowed up by the waves.

I AM CAST UPON A STRANGE SHORE



THE next thing I knew I was lying on the beach and the breakers were rolling over me.

Some wave, kinder than others, must have carried me there.

I got upon my feet and ran as fast as I could.

I saw another wave coming after me. It was high as a hill.

I held my breath and waited. In a moment the wave was upon me. I could feel myself carried farther and farther toward the dry land.

The water covered me. But I held my breath and tried to swim.

The wave became smaller and weaker as it rolled farther and farther up the long beach.

At last I could keep my head and shoulders above water. I could breathe again.

I AM CAST UPON A STRANGE SHORE

I felt the ground under my feet. I struck out with all my might for the dry land.

But now the water was rushing back from the shore. I feared lest I should be carried out to sea again.

I swam, I ran. I held on to the rocks. Then another great wave came and lifted me high upon the shore.

In another moment I was safe on dry land.

All worn out with the hard struggle, I lay down upon the green grass. I looked up at the sky and thanked God that I was alive and safe.

After I had rested a little while I arose and looked around me.

Far out from the shore I could see the ship. It was still lying where it had stuck in the sand. The waves were dashing over it.

“How was it possible for me to swim so far?” I asked myself.

Then I began to think of the men that were with me. Had any of them been saved?

I walked along the shore for a mile or more. I looked in every spot for some signs of my friends.

In one place I found a hat; in another, a cap; And in still another, two shoes that were not mates.

But of the men themselves I saw nothing. All were drowned in the deep sea.

I FIND A STRANGE LODGING PLACE



It was now late in the afternoon. The sun was shining in the bright sky. The storm was at an end.

I began to look around me, to see what kind of place I was in. "Where shall I go?" I asked myself. "What shall I do?"

My clothes were still wet. I could dry them only by sitting in the sun.

I had nothing to eat or drink.

I had nothing about me but a knife, a pipe, and a little tobacco.

How could I live on this strange shore without shelter and without food?

The thought of this made me almost wild. I ran this way and that, like a madman.

I FIND A STRANGE LODGING PLACE

Then I sat down and cried like a child.

I never felt so lonely as at that moment. I never felt so helpless and lost.

Soon I saw that night was coming on.

I thought: "What if there are wild beasts in the woods? They will come out in the darkness and find me here. And then how can I save myself from them?"

A little way from the shore I saw a tree. It stood all alone, with no other trees near it.

It was thick and bushy, with long thorns on its branches.

I walked out to look at it.

To my great joy I found a spring of fresh water bubbling out from among its roots.

I knelt down and took a long drink, for I was very thirsty. Then I climbed up into the tree.

The branches grew very close together. I found a place where I could rest, half sitting and half lying, with no danger of falling.

With my pocket knife I cut a strong stick about two feet long. This would be my weapon if any beast should find me in the night.

It was now quite dark. The only sound that I could hear was that of the waves breaking against the shore.

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It seemed so good to be on dry land that I forgot every danger. I was so tired that I soon fell asleep. Never have I slept more soundly.

I VISIT THE WRECK



WHEN I awoke it was broad daylight. The sun was up. The sky was clear. The air seemed soft and mild. A fine day was beginning.

It did not take me long to come down from my lodging place.

I looked out toward the sea.

To my great wonder, I saw that the ship was now much closer to the shore. The high tide had lifted her off the sand. It had carried her toward the land and left her on a huge rock less than a mile away.

I could see that the good ship stood upright and was firmly wedged into the rock.

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The waves had not broken her up, but her masts had been snapped off, and all her rigging was gone.

The sea was quite smooth, and the tide was still going out. Soon the beach was bare, and I could walk a long way out.

I was now within a quarter of a mile of the ship.

As I looked at her, a sad thought came to my mind. For if we had all kept on board when she stuck in the sand, we would now have been safe.

But there was no use in thinking of what might have been.

I waded out as far as I could, and then swam for the ship.

As I came near her, I saw that she was lying high out of the water. The part of the rock that was uncovered rose steep and straight into the air. There was no place for me to set my feet.

I swam round the ship twice. How could I ever climb up her smooth sides?

I was about to give up, when I saw a small piece of rope hanging down from the deck. It reached almost to the water. How strange that I did not see it at first!

I seized hold of the rope, and climbed hand over hand to the deck.

I went into the ship's cabin. I looked all through the unlucky vessel.