Robinson Crusoe

DANIEL DEFOE
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 . . .
Robinson Crusoe
Stage 2 (700 headwords)
DANIEL DEFOE

The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe

Retold by Diane Mowat

Illustrated by Anthony Williams

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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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.

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