





53	8-2	<b>Chapter 17</b>	12:35
54	8-3	It was no less than eight days...	13:30
55	8-4	He told me there were two desperate villains...	9:18
56	8-5	<b>Chapter 18</b>	11:10
57	8-6	When they had set themselves over...	12:27
58	8-7	Our strength was now thus ordered...	11:04
59	9-1	One of them answered in the name of the rest...	4:29



60	9-2	<b>Chapter 19</b>	13:02
61	9-3	When this was past...	10:18
62	9-4	In order to prepare things for my going home...	12:19
63	9-5	<b>Chapter 20</b>	9:41
64	9-6	These things, and the approach of night...	10:43
65	9-7	The next morning our guide was so ill...	9:56

**Total running time: 11:27:01 • 9 CDs**

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# Daniel Defoe Robinson Crusoe

*Robinson Crusoe*, published in 1719, has some claim to be the first English novel. It was an immediate success, and has since been an enduring myth. It has been translated into many languages, transformed into various media, continued in various sequels (the first of which was written, within months of publication of the original, by Defoe), imitated and parodied. Crusoe in his home-made clothes, walking the limits of his small domain, the typical Englishman carrying his umbrella in the blazing tropics, hearing no voice for decades apart from his parrot, is a figure familiar throughout the Western world.

Defoe's first sustained work of fiction recounts Crusoe's experience of being shipwrecked on a desert island in simple and compelling style. Crusoe's fate is precipitated by what he describes as his 'original sin': rebelling against his father's authority and pursuing his wandering disposition, rather than accepting the mild and unadventurous middle station of life into which he was born.

*Robinson Crusoe* is in essence an adventure story, but it establishes its hold over the imagination through various means, of which narrative is only one. Crusoe's experiences are filtered through a practical, resourceful and curious mind. He tries to make sense of his personal history and his relation to a Providence, which appears generous and vindictive by turns.

Crusoe is the sole survivor of a shipwreck that leaves him entirely alone for over twenty-five years. Defoe taps into a common acquisitive instinct in listing the minute but fascinating details of the survival kit that Crusoe amasses for himself from the wrecked ship: in participating imaginatively with Crusoe in constructing the minimal conditions of a viable existence, the reader runs through a catalogue of essential aspects of ordinary life. Crusoe has to reproduce for himself, in miniature, the world he has left behind. As he puts it, 'my extremity roused my application': he is forced to become a builder, a farmer, a miller, baker, tailor, carpenter and hunter, as well as explorer. He domesticates the environment around him in a manner that is ingenious, painstaking, sometimes unconsciously comic, and overall curiously touching.

The spiritual transformation that he undergoes animates what would otherwise have been a barren loneliness. Crusoe's understanding of value is stripped down to essentials as he establishes a one-man economy and state. Ultimately, Crusoe does make contact with humankind again after the famous episode of discovering a footprint in the sand. His horror at encountering cannibals, and his scruples about imposing his value system on theirs, are amusingly set aside to allow the adventure narrative to progress. Crusoe's rescue of Man Friday from death, and the circumstances of his final rescue, are vividly told in plain and powerful prose. As Friday's self-appointed guardian, master, pastor and teacher, Crusoe becomes the sovereign of a little kingdom; and when he defeats a band of mutineers and pirates that come to his island, he is transformed into the instrument of Providence.

Defoe is believed to have based *Robinson Crusoe* on the true-life experiences of Alexander Selkirk, who was left alone on the island of Juan Fernández from 1704 till his rescue in 1709.

Daniel Defoe was already sixty years old when he wrote *Robinson Crusoe*. He had been brought up in the dissenting tradition and had originally intended to enter the Presbyterian ministry but instead embarked on a varied commercial and literary life. His business enterprises met with variable success. His literary output was vast, including some 560 political tracts, journals, poems and economic writings. He participated in Monmouth's rebellion, joined William III's army in 1688, travelled as a merchant, became bankrupt, was fined, imprisoned and pilloried for publishing *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (which attacked intolerance by ironically demanding absolute suppression of dissent), and acted as a secret agent. *Robinson Crusoe* was followed in the next five years by a number of other fictional works, including the celebrated *Moll Flanders*.

## Notes by Daniel Eilon