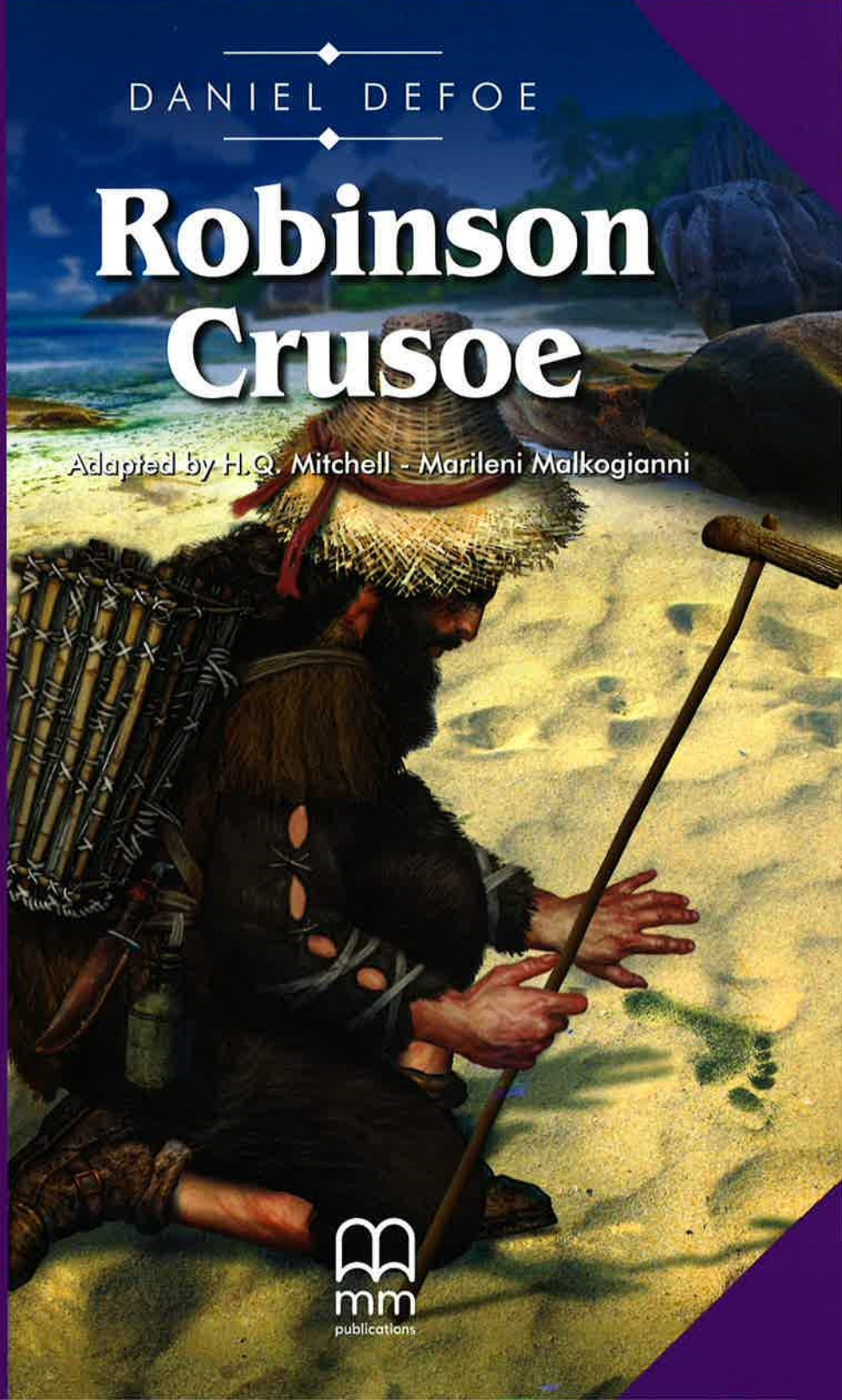


DANIEL DEFOE

Robinson Crusoe

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CHAPTER 1

MY NAME IS ROBINSON CRUSOE. AT THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN I decided to leave my home and go to sea; I wanted to see the world. My mother and father tried hard to make me change my mind. They wanted me to stay in England and become a lawyer and live a middle-class life, which they believed to be the best situation a man could find himself in.

‘You have no reason to leave,’ my father said to me.

‘You should be happy with what you have here; I can help you find a job, and you do not need to risk your life as your brother did his.’ My brother had joined the army seeking adventure, but he got killed in the Low Country Wars.

I promised to stay, but on the first of September 1651, I boarded a ship to London without asking for my father’s blessing. However, I never thought that my troubles would start so soon, and could not imagine how long they would last. As soon as the ship was out of the Humber, the wind began to blow and the sea to rise in a most frightening way. I was terrified and very sick.

I soon began to regret what I had done. I promised to go back to my father’s home and live a quiet life, and never again to follow my need for adventure if only my life would be saved.

But when the storm died down and the sun shone brightly over the calm blue sea, I forgot all my fears and all the promises I had made, and went on with my journey.

On the sixth day, the wind began to blow strongly again. It blew harder and harder, and it looked like the waves would swallow up the ship. We decided to anchor the ship in Yarmouth Roads, which was like a harbour. But on the eighth day, the wind increased and the sea became rougher. To make matters worse, a storm broke out.

‘We have no hope; we will be drowned,’ I heard the captain saying.

The waves were as high as mountains, and they hit the ship with great force every three or four minutes. I saw two ships being pulled out of Yarmouth Roads to sea by the storm. Both of them were destroyed before my very eyes, and I could tell that we were in great danger too.

Towards the evening, the captain decided to cut the front mast



because it made the ship shake too much. Then we cut the middle mast; but nothing we did helped, and then water began to flow in. No matter how hard we worked to get the water out, more and more came in.

The men fell to their knees, hoping for some miracle; the captain fired his gun for help. A lightship, which we could see just ahead sent us a boat that came near; but the waves made it incredibly difficult for us to get on board.

Our men threw them a rope, and we managed to pull them closer to the ship and all get into the boat. But again, there was no way that we could reach their ship. So we all agreed to let the water take the boat towards the shore.

With our lives in great danger, we managed to reach the shores of Winterton Ness. In poor condition and with a heavy heart, I walked to Yarmouth along with the others, where the townspeople offered me warm clothes, a warm place to stay, and some money to get back home. But did I go back to the safety of my home? No, I didn't. For some reason I cannot explain, I began to search for a new adventure.

In London I met the captain of a ship who had been to the coast of Guinea, in Africa. He said he had had great success there and intended to return. He seemed to like me, and so he asked me to come along on the trip with him, all expenses paid.

'Bring some toys with you,' he said. 'You can sell them to the natives and make good money.'

So I spent the forty pounds I had managed to collect to buy toys, which by the end of the journey had made me three hundred pounds; that was the only journey that was ever successful for me.

On our return, the good captain got very sick and died. I decided to leave two hundred pounds of my money with the captain's honest wife for safekeeping, and tried my luck for a second time; I got on the same ship, as a tradesman, and set off on a journey towards the west coast of Africa. But then misfortune hit again.

Near the Canary Islands our ship was attacked by Moroccan pirates. Three of our men were killed, and the rest of us were taken back to Salé as prisoners. Everyone was sent north to the Emperor's



court, except for me. The captain of the pirate ship kept me at his home to be his personal slave, along with a young boy servant called Xury. A Moroccan man, who was a Moor, lived with us as well.

Every day, the captain went out to sea and left me behind on shore to care for his garden and his house, where I thought of nothing else but my escape.

I hoped that he would take me on board with him, and that his ship would be attacked by a Spanish or Portuguese ship, which would result in me being set free.

But that never happened.





CHAPTER 2

TWO YEARS LATER, A MOST UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY CAME up, which would eventually give me back my freedom.

As time passed, my master would sometimes take me fishing with him in a boat. On one occasion, we got caught in a storm. The fog that day was so thick that we lost sight of the shore and had to work hard all day and all night to return.

My master took this as a warning. So he put a compass and some provisions on board, and built a cabin in the middle of the boat, where he kept a couple of guns and some gunpowder.

One day a couple of years later, he had invited some guests over to the house, and he asked me and the other two slaves to go out in the boat and catch some fish for their dinner. At that very moment, my ideas of how to escape returned. I secretly took some wax on board to make candles, brought a hammer and a saw, and asked the Moor to bring some food just in case we had to stay out for a long time. He agreed and brought a big basket full of biscuits, and three jars of fresh water on the boat.

When everything was ready, we sailed out of the port to go fishing. The wind blew south, which was not what I had wished for, but I didn't mind as long as I escaped.

After fishing for some time, we only managed to catch very few