

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Daniel Defoe
Robinson Crusoe

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

**CLASSIC
FICTION**



NA306512D

1	I was born in the year 1632	6:28
2	I go to sea	10:21
3	My ill fate pushes me on	7:39
4	I was now landed safe on shore	8:43
5	I explore the island	3:45
6	I had now been thirteen days on shore	4:53
7	I consider my condition	5:37
8	The Journal	11:44
9	Religious reflection begins	5:41
10	More thoughts	6:00
11	I had now been in this unhappy isle above 10 months	4:17
12	Further exploration of the island	5:44
13	I finished my fourth year in this place...	10:27
14	The print of a man's naked foot!	5:57
15	Signs of cannibals	5:05
16	The rights of cannibals?	6:31

17	Contentment on the island	10:17
18	The cannibals return, with captives	8:00
19	A comely handsome fellow	3:55
20	I dress my man Friday	5:48
21	Friday learns English	5:52
22	The canoes arrive again	6:03
23	A surprise through the perspective glass	7:37
24	More surprise visitors	5:55
25	I fit myself up for battle	3:16
26	The captain explains his situation	5:18
27	I tell him my story	6:25
28	I devise my stratagem	5:18
29	We win on land	6:59
30	'My dear friend, the ship is all yours'	8:08
31	I take leave of the island	4:38

Total time: 3:22:37

Daniel Defoe

Robinson Crusoe

Robinson Crusoe, published in 1719, has some claim to be the first English novel. It was an immediate popular success, and has ever since been an enduring myth, 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 with his dog; 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': of 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 that 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 himself becomes the instrument of Providence in defeating a band of mutineers and pirates that come to his island.

Defoe based *Robinson Crusoe* on the true-life experiences of Alexander Selkirk who was left alone on the island of Juan Fernandez 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

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

HANDEL CONCERTI GROSSI OP. 6 Capella Istropolitana/Jozef Kopelman	8.550158
FAMOUS TRUMPET CONCERTI Miroslav Kejmar, trumpet; Capella Istropolitana/Skvor	8.550243

Cover picture: Crusoe with his parrots and cats by Elenore Plaisted Abbott.
Courtesy of the Mary Evans Picture Library.

Daniel Defoe Robinson Crusoe

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

Robinson Crusoe, the first English novel, was an immediate success when first published in 1719, and has been an internationally popular classic ever since. The compelling tale of a man who put to sea in search of adventure and found himself shipwrecked on a desert island and alone for decades has become a resonant modern myth. Crusoe walking the limits of his small domain, a typical Englishman carrying his umbrella in the blazing tropics, is a figure familiar throughout the Western world.



Nigel Anthony has worked in television (*Coronation Street, Spender, Casualty* etc.) and in the theatre, with the RSC and with Alan Ayckbourn at Scarborough. He is, however, best known for his numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio. For many years he has been one of the leading actors in that medium and as a master of vocal disguise has played countless different character roles. He has twice won awards for best actor. Nigel Anthony also reads *The Life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* and Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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Total time
3:22:37