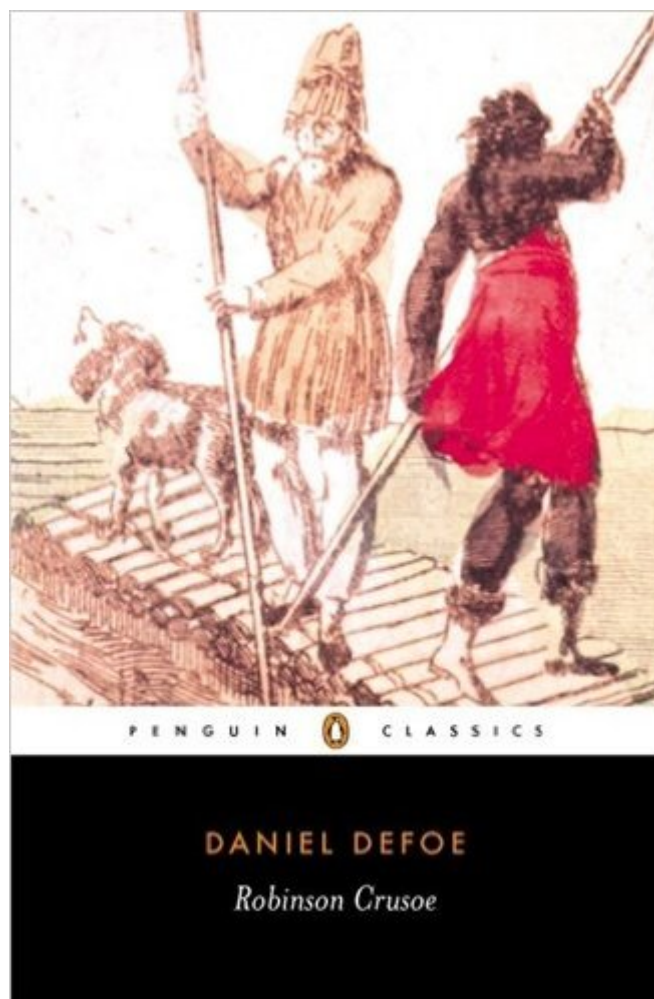


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Robinson Crusoe (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

The original tale of a castaway struggling to survive on a remote desert island, and one of the first novels in English. The sole survivor of a shipwreck, Robinson Crusoe is washed up on a desert island. In his journal he chronicles his daily battle to stay alive, as he conquers isolation, fashions shelter and clothes, enlists the help of a native islander who he names 'Friday', and fights off cannibals and mutineers. Written in an age of exploration and enterprise, it has been variously interpreted as an embodiment of British imperialist values, as a portrayal of 'natural man', or as a moral fable. But above all is a brilliant narrative, depicting Crusoe's transformation from terrified survivor to self-sufficient master of an island. This edition contains a full chronology of Defoe's life and times, explanatory notes, glossary and a critical introduction discussing Robinson Crusoe as a pioneering work of modern psychological realism. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; Reissue edition (April 29, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0141439823

ISBN-13: 978-0141439822

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (512 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #16,860 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Classics #81 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Criticism & Theory #117 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Survival Stories

Customer Reviews

After reading Glyn Williams' trenchant 'The Prize Of All The Oceans' I had an overwhelming desire to read this classic once again. I first read it when I was a mere 10 year old and it completely

mesmerized me; I find that it still held the same power over me thirty years later. It is difficult to put this tale down once the title character becomes a castaway on the "island of despair" (as Crusoe refers to it) and he begins the battle against the odds to survive. Facing extreme tropical heat, torrential storms, a dreadful loneliness and the struggle to master some of the simplest of skills we take for granted Crusoe wages his one-man crusade for survival. Beginning his desolate existence steeped in woeful self-pity he slowly realizes through a series of trying circumstances, devotional reading of the Bible and finally relief from his isolated state that the experience proves to be one of reverie. In the process Crusoe becomes quite possibly the most inspirational figure to spring forth from the pages of literature. Though it is annually listed by literature scholars as one of the 100 finest works of fiction, today primarily adolescents read Defoe's enduring tale as part of their required reading for school; very few others rarely bother with this nearly three century old tale. 'Robinson Crusoe' it seems is a classic awaiting a renaissance of rediscovery by adults who regularly read for either leisure or as a part of continuing education. While the novel's approach to morality may seem a bit old fashioned by today's contemporary standards, the character's awakening to wisdom, inner strength and faith will inspire any reader of any age.

The author of Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe, is generally credited with being one of the first novel writers in the English language. The book is surely an influential one-- spawning countless imitations, derivations, and (in our era) reality-based television shows. It is billed, quite fairly, as an adventure story. However, it is a very different kind of adventure than the modern action-sequence laden book which readers today may expect. It is an adventure story, but one which centers primarily on mastery and morality. The morality is placed centrally in the book when Crusoe rejects the advice of his father to accept the happiness of the middle class life to which he was born. Against the wishes of his family, he runs off to sea to find adventure. It is not until Crusoe literally recreates a primitive approximation of that middle class life for himself on his island that he is freed. Crusoe is also a story about the ability of mankind to master his surroundings through hard work, patience, and Christianity. The combination of these three supports are what allow him to escape captivity in Africa, overcome the deadly obstacles on the island, and finally leave the island itself. His physical prowess and combat skills are significantly less important to his journey than the message of trust and persistence that the decades he spends on the island convey. While this message might need tempering for the modern reader, it is also inspirational and important to read. If the potential reader is not used to the diction of the time, the book itself may take some patience and persistence. It pays off, in the end, and should be an excellent book for the young

teenager (or the not-so-young grown-up) interested in stories of adventure.

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