

Summary: Chapter 1 — *I Go to Sea*

I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, though not of that country, my father being a foreigner. . . .

A man named Robinson Crusoe records his own life story, beginning with his birth in 1632 in the English city of York. Crusoe's father was a German, originally named Kreutznaer. Crusoe is the youngest of three brothers, the eldest being a soldier and the second one having vanished mysteriously. As the youngest son in the family, Crusoe is expected to inherit little, and, as a result, his father encourages him to take up the law. But Crusoe's inclination is to go to sea. His family strongly opposes this idea, and his father gives him a stern lecture on the value of accepting a middle station in life. Crusoe resolves to follow his father's advice. But when one of his friends embarks for London, Crusoe succumbs to temptation and boards the ship on September 1, 1651. A storm develops. Near Yarmouth the weather is so bad that Crusoe fears for his life and prays to God for deliverance. The ship nearly founders, but all are saved. Crusoe sees this ordeal as a sign of fate that he should give up sea travel, and his friend's father warns him against setting foot on a ship again, echoing his own father's warning.

Summary: Chapter 2 — *I Am Captured by Pirates*

Crusoe parts with his friend and proceeds to London by land, where he meets a sea captain who proposes that Crusoe accompany him on an upcoming merchant voyage. Writing to his family for investment money, Crusoe sets off with forty pounds worth of trinkets and toys to sell abroad. Crusoe makes a net income of 300 pounds from this trip, and considers it a great success. Taking one hundred pounds with him, and leaving the remaining 200 pounds with a widow whom he trusts, Crusoe sets off on another merchant expedition. This time he is pursued by Moorish pirates off the coast of Sallee in North Africa. His ship is overtaken, and Crusoe is enslaved, the only Briton among his Moorish master's slaves. Crusoe is assigned the task of fishing because of his natural skill. One day the slaves' fishing vessel gets lost in fog, and the master installs a compass on board. The master also stores some gunpowder on board in preparation for a shooting party, but the guests do not come. Crusoe waits.

Summary: Chapter 3 — *I Escape from the Sallee Rover*

Robinson sets off on a fishing expedition with two other slaves, a man named Ismael and a boy named Xury. Sneaking up behind Ismael, Robinson pushes him into the water. Ismael swims alongside the boat and begs to be taken in. Crusoe pulls a gun on him and tells him to return to shore or else be killed. Crusoe then asks Xury whether he will

accompany him and serve him faithfully, and Xury agrees. By evening, Crusoe calculates they have sailed 150 miles south of Sallee. They see wild creatures onshore that Crusoe recognizes as lions. Crusoe shoots one dead, and he and Xury skin it. They proceed southward toward what Crusoe believes are the Cape Verde or Canary Islands. They see naked black people onshore, and they fear them until the natives offer them food. When the Africans witness Crusoe shooting a leopard, they are impressed, and they offer the skin to Crusoe. Unsure where to head, Crusoe is surprised by a European ship in the distance. The ship picks up Xury and Crusoe, and its kind Portuguese captain offers to take them to Brazil. The captain buys Crusoe's boat as well as Xury.

Summary: Chapter 4 — *I Become a Brazilian Planter*

After a voyage of twenty-two days, Crusoe lands in Brazil, accepting many farewell gifts from the Portuguese captain. After meeting his Anglo-Brazilian neighbor, he conceives a plan to become a tobacco planter. For two years Crusoe earns only enough on which to subsist, but in the third year he begins to do well and, in retrospect, misses the labor potential of the slave boy Xury whom he sold. Having told the Portuguese captain of his 200 pounds left in England, the captain arranges to have one hundred pounds sent to Crusoe in Brazil, along with many gifts besides. After receiving what the captain sent, Crusoe feels quite well off. Eager for slave labor to extend his business further, he agrees to an acquaintance's plan to sail to Guinea for black slaves, in exchange for his own share of the slaves.

Summary: Chapter 5 — *I Go on Board in an Evil Hour*

After writing a will leaving half his possessions to the Portuguese captain, Crusoe sets sail for Guinea on September 1, 1659 with a cargo of trinkets with which to buy slaves. Sailing up the South American coast, the ship encounters a storm, and two men are lost. Crusoe fears for his life. Reaching the Caribbean, the ship is shaken by yet another storm that drives the ship onto the sand, breaking the rudder. The ship is clearly doomed, and the crew climbs into boats to make for shore. Crusoe loses sight of his mates when all are swept away by an immense wave. Finally Crusoe makes it to shore, where he immediately prays to God in gratitude. He never sees a sign of another living crewmember. After drinking some fresh water and finding a tree in which to sleep, Crusoe spends his first night on the island.

Summary: Chapter 6 — *I Furnish Myself with Many Things*

"O drug!" said I aloud, "what art thou good for?"

Awakening the next morning refreshed, Crusoe goes down to the shore to explore the remains of the ship. Swimming around it, he finds it impossible to climb aboard until he finds a chain hanging, by which he pulls himself up. Crusoe conceives the idea of building a raft out of broken lumber, on which he loads provisions of bread, rice, goat meat, cheese, and other foods. He also finds clothes, arms, and fresh water. He sails his cargo-laden raft into a small cove, where he unloads it. He notices that the land has wildfowl but no other humans. Crusoe returns to the ship twelve times over the following thirteen days. On one of the later trips he finds thirty-six pounds, and he sadly meditates on how worthless the money is to him. After a strong wind that night, he awakens to find the ship's remains gone the next morning.

Summary: Chapter 7 - *I Build My Fortress*

Wary of savages, Crusoe decides he must build a dwelling or "fortress," as he calls it. He chooses a spot with a view of the sea, protected from animals and the heat of the sun and near fresh water. He drives wooden stakes into the ground, using them as a frame for walls. Crusoe sleeps securely in the shelter that night. The next day he hauls all of his provisions and supplies inside, and hangs a hammock on which to sleep. He also builds a cellar. During a thunderstorm he suddenly worries about his gunpowder supply, which he separates from the other supplies and stores in the cellar. Crusoe discovers wild goats on the island. He kills one and then sees that it had a kid, which he then kills too. On about his twelfth day on the island, he erects a large cross that he inscribes with the date of his arrival, September 30, 1659. He resolves to cut a notch on the cross to mark every passing day. He also begins a journal in which he records the good and evil aspects of his experience, until he runs out of ink. He keeps watch for passing ships, always disappointed.

Summary: Chapter 8— *The Journal*

Crusoe makes us privy to the journal that he keeps for a while, beginning with an entry dated "September 30, 1659," that inaugurates his account of life on the "Island of Despair," as he calls it. He proceeds to narrate events that have already been narrated: his discovery of the ship's remains, his salvaging of provisions, the storm that destroys the ship entirely, the construction of his house, and so on. He notes that he has lost track of which day is Sunday, and he is thus unable to keep the Sabbath religiously. He records the building of various pieces of furniture and tools. He tames his first goat.

Summary: Chapter 9 — *I Throw Away the Husks of Corn*

Continuing his journal, Crusoe records his failed attempt to tame pigeons and his manufacture of candles from goat grease. He tells of his semimiraculous discovery of barley: having tossed out a few husks of corn in a shady area, he is astonished to find healthy barley plants growing there later. He carefully saves the harvest to plant again and thus is able eventually to supply himself with bread. On April 16, an earthquake nearly kills him as he is standing in the entrance to his cellar. After two aftershocks, he is relieved to feel it end with no damage to his life or property.

Summary: Chapter 10 — *It Blows a Most Dreadful Hurricane*

Immediately after the earthquake, a hurricane arrives. Crusoe takes shelter in his cave, cutting a drain for his house and waiting out the torrential rains. He is worried by the thought that another earthquake would send the overhanging precipice falling onto his dwelling and resolves to move. But he is distracted from this plan by the discovery of casks of gunpowder and other remains from the ship that have been driven back to shore by the hurricane. Crusoe spends many days salvaging these remains for more useful items.

Summary: Chapter 11 — *I Am Very Ill and Frighted*

For more than a week of rainy weather, Crusoe is seriously ill with a fever and severe headache. He is almost too weak to get up for water, though he is dying of thirst. He prays to God for mercy. In one of his feverish fits, he hallucinates a vision of a man descending from a black cloud on a great flame. The man brandishes a weapon at Crusoe and tells him that all his suffering has not yet brought him to repentance. Crusoe emerges from the vision to take stock of the many times he has been delivered from death and cries over his ingratitude. He utters his first serious prayer to God, asking for an end to his distress. The next day, Crusoe finds he is beginning to recover, though he is still so weak he can hardly hold his gun. He struggles with thoughts of self-pity followed by self-reproach. Taking some tobacco and rum, his mind is altered and he opens the Bible to read a verse about calling on the Lord in times of trouble, which affects him deeply. He falls into a profound sleep of more than twenty-four hours, which throws off his calendar calculations forever. In the days that follow, Crusoe almost completely recovers and kneels to God in gratitude. He prefers not to eat the wildfowl while sick and instead eats some turtle eggs that he finds. He begins a serious reading of the New Testament and regrets his earlier life. He comes to conceive of his isolation on the island as a kind of deliverance from his former guilty existence.

Summary: Chapter 12— *I Take a Survey of the Island*

Now, in the month of July, in his tenth month on the island, Crusoe discovers that the rainy season is a very unhealthy time. Having acquiesced in the idea that only Providence controls his deliverance from the island, Crusoe resolves to explore the place thoroughly. He discovers sugarcane and grapes, and is delighted with the beauty of one valley especially. He secretly exults in imagining himself the king and lord of the whole domain. Crusoe lays out grapes to make raisins and carries home a large basket of limes and grapes. He contemplates choosing that site as his new home, then spends the rest of July building a bower in the valley. He notes that his domicile now houses some cats. He celebrates the passing of one year on the island by fasting all day. Shortly after this occasion, he runs out of ink and discontinues his journal.