

This story is brought to you by Ririro.com for free. Our mission is to give all children in the world free access to a variety of stories. The stories can be read, downloaded and printed online and cover a wide range of topics, including animals, fantasy, science, history, diverse cultures and much more.

Support our mission by sharing our website. We wish you a lot of fun reading!



Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

Robinson Crusoe: The Footprint of a Man in the Sand (4/6)

It would have brought a smile to my face if I could have seen myself sitting at the table with my little family. There was His Majesty, the Prince and Lord of the whole island. I had the lives of all my subjects under my absolute command. I could hang them, set them free, or have them killed, as I pleased. It was also wonderful to see myself dine like a king, all alone, but accompanied by my servants! Poll, my dog, was the only one allowed to talk to me. He had grown old, and he always sat at my right hand. And two cats, one on either side of the table, always sat waiting for something tasty. Despite the presence of all this and the abundant way in which I lived, it must be said that I would have preferred it to be different. But that would change soon enough....

I was simply impatient, as I had noticed with my boat. I didn't want to take any more risks, but I still thought of ways to get the boat over the island. But at other times, I was content as it was. Yet I felt a strange urge in my mind to go to the point of the island. This urge increased every day, and eventually, I decided to travel there, along the edge of the coast. So I set out, as I had said. But if anyone in England had met a man like me, they would either have been afraid or would have

laughed at me. I had to smile at the idea that I would travel through Yorkshire dressed like this:

On my head, I wore a high, shapeless hat made of goat skin, with a flap that hung down to protect my neck from both the sun and the rain.

I also wore a short jacket made of goat leather, with long flaps down to my thighs. I wore breeches with open knees made of the skin of an old goat with long hair. I had also made stockings and shoes from goat skin, but they flapped around my legs.

I hung a sword and a dagger, a small saw and an ax, from a wide belt made of goat skin. I had made another belt that could go over my shoulder. My gun and powder hung from that. On my back, I carried my basket and my gun. I wore a kind of large, clumsy, ugly umbrella made of goat skin on my head. So I had everything that was really necessary with me. As for my face, it didn't have the color you would expect from someone living so close to the equator. I had cut my beard quite short with a big mustache and wild sideburns. All in all, I looked frightening.

But it didn't matter. I couldn't see myself, and no one who saw me. In my new outfit, I set out on a journey that would last five or six days. I first traveled along the coast, straight to where I had first anchored my boat. But now I went over land, close to the sea. I was surprised to see how smooth and still the sea was.

There was no lapping, no movement, no current, nothing at all.

It was difficult to understand, and I decided to spend some time figuring out how this could be. Later, I was

convinced that the ebb tide from the west had to converge with the flow of water from a large river on the coast. That had to be the reason for the water's stagnation. Depending on the wind from the north or west, this current was further away or closer to the coast. When I went to check again in the evening, I saw that the current had returned to its previous location but was now half a mile offshore.

This discovery convinced me that all I had to do was observe the tide. I would then easily be able to get my boat back across the island. But when I thought more about how to execute this in practice, I became afraid, after what had happened last time. I made a more difficult but safer decision. I would build another canoe. Then I would have a boat on both sides of the island. You must understand that now, as I can call it, I had two settlements on the island.

My small fort, or actually a tent, under the rock. I had enlarged the cave behind me to have multiple apartments. The largest and driest one I filled with large earthen pots and baskets full of provisions. The trees around my home had grown so large and the walls so overgrown that there was nothing to see of the house.

Near this home, a little further inland and on lower ground, lay my two plots of cultivated wheat. The land yielded me a



decent harvest. And I could always take a new piece of land.

In addition, I had my country residence. I had my arbor here, surrounded by a hedge. There was always a ladder on the inside. I also chopped down trees here and there to give the other trees room to grow into thick sturdy trees that would provide a lot of shade. In the middle of this, I always had my tent, a piece of sail spread over poles. Underneath it, I had made a bed of the skins of all the animals I had killed. I had a coat of skins as a blanket. Whenever I could get away from my main residence, I took refuge in my country home. Adjacent to this, with much diligence, I had made enclosures for my goats or else the goats would run away. I tried to make it as comfortable as possible for the goats and to ensure that they could not run away. I found maintaining this breed very important. These tame creatures provided me with meat, milk, butter, and cheese for the foreseeable future. Who knows, it might be necessary for the next forty years. Along the fence, I let my grapes grow. I was dependent on them for my winter stock of raisins. These were the best and most pleasant delicacies in my entire diet. In addition to being tasty, they were also medicinal, beneficial, and nourishing.

I often stayed here because this place was exactly halfway between my other house and my boat. I also made sure that the boat remained in order. Sometimes I would get in the boat, but I would no longer make dangerous journeys. I was too afraid that I would be

swept away again by the current or wind or would die in an accident.

But now I come to a new chapter in my life....

It happened one day, around noon, as I was walking towards my boat. I was extremely surprised to see the imprint of a barefoot man in the sand. I stood still, struck by lightning, as if I had seen a ghost. I listened, looked around, but heard and saw nothing. I climbed up the rocks to see further and went back and forth along the coast. But I couldn't find any other footprints than that one. I went back to see if there were any more, and to see if it was something else, but it was really a footprint.

I didn't know how the footprint got there, and I couldn't think of how it could have happened.

Completely confused by all my thoughts, I finally made it back home. I was terrified, looking back and around every two or three steps. Every bush and tree I saw looked like a man. In my fearful imagination and fantasy, everything around me became dangerous.

When I reached my home, I fled inside like someone being chased. I can't even remember whether I went in through the ladder or through the hole in the rock. I didn't sleep that night. Although I was far from the footprint, my fear only grew. That's how it is with things you think about when you're scared. Sometimes I even thought it must be the devil in human form, because what else could it be?

Or had it been a ship that brought them? What other traces were there? And how could a man get there?

But it didn't seem very likely that the devil would take

on a human form in such an uninhabited place. The devil could have made me afraid in many other ways, but the chance of me seeing his footprint was very small. The sea would have erased it with the first wave, or it would have disappeared in the hard wind.

I came to the conclusion that it must be a more dangerous being. Perhaps someone from the other side, who was canoeing across the sea, had reached the island and set foot on it, wanting to attack me.

While these thoughts were spinning through my head, I was very grateful that I wasn't near when he came ashore, and that they hadn't seen my boat. Then they would have known that the island was inhabited and might have looked for me. Yet I thought again that they might have seen my boat after all, and would come back in great numbers to devour me. And if they didn't find me, they would find the fence. They would then destroy all my grain and take away my herd of tame goats. I would surely perish from hunger. I decided that it would be better if I had enough grain for the next two or three years so that there would always be enough bread.

While I was pondering all of this, the idea came to me that all of this could be just a figment of my own imagination. And that this footprint could be the imprint of my own foot when I landed from my boat. This cheered me up a bit, and I began to convince myself that it was all a delusion; that it was nothing more than my own foot. Of course, I could not say that for sure because I did not know exactly where I had walked and where I had not.

Now I began to regain my courage and look outside again. I had not left my house out of fear for three days and nights, and I was getting hungry. I also realized that my goats needed to be milked after such a long time. So I went outside to milk my herd, but I still looked back often and was always ready to run away.

I went down like this for two or three days, and because I had seen nothing, I began to become a little bolder and to think that there was really no other danger. But I would only be sure if I went to the coast to measure the footprint with my own foot. But when I got to the spot, it became clear that when I landed my boat, I could not have gone ashore anywhere nearby. Secondly, when I measured with my own foot, I noticed that my foot was not as big. These two things filled my head with new fantasies and made me very scared again, and I even trembled with fear. I quickly went home, convinced that a man or men had been on the shore or that the island was actually inhabited. I did not know which course to follow to be safe.



Oh, what terrible thoughts people have when they are possessed by fear! The first thing I thought of was to tear down my fence and let all my domesticated animals run wild in the woods. After all, otherwise, the enemy would find them, and then

they would visit the island regularly for a similar bounty. Then I thought I would plow up my two fields of corn, otherwise, they would find my grain and then come back to the island. Next, I would tear down my tent so they would not find any traces of inhabitants.

I thought about all of this the first night after I returned home. But the fear of danger is far greater than the danger itself. I could not find any way to calm my mind and only fell asleep towards morning. When I woke up, I felt rested and could think calmly again. I came to the conclusion that this pleasant, fertile island, not so far from the mainland, was not as completely abandoned as I had thought. While no inhabitants lived there permanently, boats did pass by. I had lived there for fifteen years without seeing anyone. If there were people, they had been driven there against their will by a storm and would stay no longer than a night on the island.

For my safety, I decided to build a second fort exactly where I had planted a double row of trees about twelve years before. I would thicken my outer wall with pieces of wood and make openings to place muskets in. In case of emergency, I could fire seven cannons in two minutes. It took me many months to complete the work, and until it was done, I was never safe.

When it was finished, I planted the entire ground around my dwelling with young willow sticks that would grow. I left a space between the ground and the wall from where I could see my enemy if they tried to approach the outer wall.

After about five years, I had a thick forest in front of my dwelling that became so thick and strong that it was completely impassable. No human being would ever imagine that there was anything there, let alone a dwelling. I entered and exited through two ladders because I did not want to make a path. I would bring in and break down the ladders. Now no living person could come to me without doing themselves harm.

So, for my own safety, I took all the measures that could be imagined. And it will eventually be revealed that this was not without reason and that my fear was not unfounded...