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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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Robinson Crusoe rescued (6/6)

After being on the island for twenty-seven years, an English ship finally arrived. The ship was taken over by robbers, but Robinson Crusoe rescued the captain and two of the crew members including the helmsman, and seized the ship's boat. He also took several robber prisoners.

We planned to take the ship and leave the island. We started our preparations. First, we lifted the boat with all our strength so that it would not float away at high tide. The water had already made a hole in its bottom that was too big to stop the water quickly. As we pondered what to do next, we heard a ship firing a cannon and waving its flag as a signal to come on board, but no boat moved in our direction.

They fired several times and gave other signals. Finally, when all their signals and fires proved fruitless and they discovered that the boat was not moving, we saw another boat being hoisted from the ship and rowed towards the coast. We discovered, as they approached, that there were no less than ten of the robbers, and they had firearms with them.

We had a good and complete view of them as they came, we could even clearly see their faces. The captain knew the people and characters of all the men in the boat, of whom three were certainly very honest.

When they landed, they ran first to their other boat. It was clear to see that it was a big surprise for them to see how the boat was, with a large hole in it. After considering it for a while, they let out two or three loud cries to let their imprisoned companions know that they were there. But it was all in vain. Then they all came closer and fired a volley with their small arms. We heard this well because the echoes rang through the forest, but we were sure that the prisoners in the cave could not hear it. They decided to all go back on board their ship and let them know that all the men had been killed and that the boat had been abandoned. But then we saw them all come back ashore. Three men were left in the boat, while the rest went ashore to look for their comrades.

This was a great disappointment for us because now we did not know what to do since it would not be an advantage for us to grab those seven men ashore if we let the boat escape. They would surely row to the ship, and then the rest would certainly sail away, and so the saving of the ship would be lost. However, we had no other solution but to wait and see what would happen. The seven men came ashore, and the three who stayed in the boat anchored it at a decent distance from the shore to wait for them. It was impossible for us to reach them by boat. Those who came ashore stayed close together and marched to the top of the small hill under which my dwelling lay. We could see them clearly, but they could not see us.

It would have been nice if they had come closer to us, so that we could shoot at them, or if they had been

farther away so that we could come out. But when they reached the top of the hill, they shouted and yelled until they were exhausted. It didn't seem like they wanted to venture far from the coast or from each other because they sat down together under a tree to think about what to do next. If they had decided to sleep there, they would have made it easy for us. But they were too afraid of danger to sleep, even though they didn't know what danger to fear.



We became very anxious when we saw them, after much discussion, all marching towards the sea. It seemed that the danger of this place had dawned on them and that they had decided to return to the ship. They gave up their companions as lost and wanted to continue their planned journey with the ship.

As soon as I saw them heading towards the coast, I thought my suspicions were coming true. That they had indeed given up their search and were going back. As soon as I told the captain my thoughts, he lost heart. But I came up with a plan to bring them back. I ordered Friday and the captain to go over the little creek to the west. As soon as they came to a bit of rising ground, about half a mile away, I told them to

shout "hello" as loud as they could and wait until they noticed that the robbers heard them. Once the robbers responded, they would respond as well. Then they would make a circuit, still calling out "hello," to lure them as far as possible into the island's woods and then come back my way, out of sight.

They were just getting into the boat when Friday and the captain shouted "hello," and soon they heard them and shouted back and ran along the coast to the west, in the direction of the voice they heard. Then they stopped at the creek, where, because the water was high, they could not cross, and called for the boat to come and ferry them across. Just as I had indeed expected. When they lay down, I saw that the boat had gone quite far up the creek and had gone into a kind of harbor, leaving only one man in the boat after they had tied it to the stump of a small tree. This was what I wanted, and leaving Friday and the captain of the ship to their task, I took the rest with me. Crossing the creek out of their sight, we surprised the two men before they knew it - one of them was on land, the other was in the boat. The man on land was dozing. The captain walked up to him and knocked him down, and called on him to surrender or die.

It was not difficult to force a single man to surrender when he saw five men coming towards him and saw that his comrade had been knocked down. Moreover, this was one of the three men who were not as bad as the rest of the crew. He could therefore easily be persuaded not only to surrender but also to join us afterwards. Meanwhile, Friday and the helmsman had

arranged their affairs so well that the rest followed them, calling out "hello" and answering each other. They went from one hill to another, and from one forest to another, until they were tired. Eventually they just stayed where they were because they couldn't get back to the boat before dark. We now had nothing to do but watch them in the dark and wait for them to be attacked so that they would definitely work with us. After Friday returned to me, it was several hours before they returned to their boat. We could hear them answering and complaining about how crippled and tired they were, and that they were unable to run faster. That was very welcome news for us. They finally reached the boat; but it is impossible to express their confusion when they found the boat stuck to the ground in the creek and their two men were gone. We could hear them calling to each other in a very pitiful way, telling each other that they had landed on an enchanted island. And that there were either inhabitants, and they would all be killed, or that there were devils and spirits, and they would all be carried off and devoured. They called out "hello" again and called their two comrades by name but never got an answer. After a while, we could see them running around, wringing their hands like men in despair, and sometimes sitting in the boat to rest, then coming back to land and walking around again. My men would have liked me to give them permission to attack them immediately in the dark. But I planned to use them, so I wanted to spare them and kill as few of them as possible. But above all, I was not willing to

take the risk of anyone being killed, knowing that the enemy was very well armed. I decided to wait and see if they didn't split up. So I brought my ambush closer to them and ordered Friday and the captain to crawl on hands and knees as close to the ground as they could before firing.

They hadn't been in that position for long when the boatswain, who was the main leader of the mutiny, and who now showed himself to be the most depressed and discouraged of the rest, came walking towards them, with two more of the crew. The captain wanted to have this chief scoundrel in his power so much that he could hardly wait to let him get close enough to catch him for sure. But when they really got closer, the captain and Friday rushed at them. The boatswain was killed on the spot. The next man was shot in the body and fell down next to him, although he only died an hour or two later. At the sound of the gunfire, I immediately advanced with my entire army, which now consisted of myself, Friday, the captain and his two men, and the three prisoners of war whom we had taught to handle weapons. We met them in the dark so that they couldn't see how many of us there were. I took the man they had left in the boat hostage to see if I could negotiate with them. And



that worked. In their condition, they were eager to surrender.

Our next task was to repair the boat and figure out how to take possession of the ship.

The next morning, I sent the captain to them to see if they could be trusted to board the ship and surprise it. He spoke to them about the harm that had been done to him, about the condition they had been brought to, and that, although the governor had given them a quarter of their lives for their current action, they would all be hanged if they were sent to England. But that if they were to join in the attempt to get the ship back, they would be granted clemency by the governor. Anyone can guess how easily such a proposal would be accepted by men in their condition; they fell on their knees before the captain and promised to be faithful to him to the last drop, and that they would owe him their lives and go with him all over the world.

"Well," said the captain, "I must go and tell the governor what you say, and see what I can do to get him to agree."

So he reported to me what he found and that he really believed they would be faithful. But to be sure, I told him to go back one more time and choose five as hostages for the other five men. If they proved unfaithful, the five hostages would be hanged alive on the coast. This made an impression and convinced them that the governor meant it. They had no choice but to accept it, and it was now the task of the prisoners, as

much as of the captain, to persuade the other five to do their duty.

Our manpower for the expedition consisted, first of the captain, then his mate and passenger, and secondly, the two prisoners of the first gang, to whom I had given their freedom and entrusted weapons. Thirdly, the other two whom I had so far confined in my bower, but had now been released on the captain's orders. Fourthly, these five were finally released, making a total of twelve. We kept the hostages in the cave.

When I showed myself to the two hostages, it was with the captain, who told them I was the person the governor had ordered to take care of them, and that the governor was pleased that they would not move anywhere else unless I gave orders. If they did, they would be brought to the castle and put in chains. The captain had no trouble now in manning his two boats. He appointed another captain, and they did as they were instructed. They arrived at the ship around midnight. As soon as they reached the ship, Robinson greeted them and told them they had taken the men and the boat away. He chatted with them until they reached the side of the ship. When the captain and the helmsman entered first, they were immediately knocked down with the butt of their guns. They tied up the rest of the men on the main and aft decks and closed the hatches to imprison them. Then the other boat arrived with the men who tied up the forepart of the ship and found the prisoners there.

After everything was secure on deck, the captain ordered the helmsman and three men to break into the

roundhouse, where the new mutinous captain lay, who had risen. He and two men and a boy had firearms. When the helmsman opened the door, the new captain and his men shot and wounded the helmsman with a bullet, breaking his arm. Two other men were also injured. The helmsman, who called for help, ran into the roundhouse and, though wounded, shot the new captain in the head with his pistol. The rest surrendered, and the ship was successfully taken without any more loss of life.

Once the ship was secured, the captain ordered the cannons to be fired, which signaled me of his success. I was certainly very happy to hear this. After hearing the signal, I lay down and slept soundly until I was startled by the sound of a gun. When I got up, I heard a man calling me by name, "Governor! Governor!" and recognized the captain's voice. Then he climbed to the top of the hill, pointed to the ship, and embraced me. "My dearest friend and savior," he says, "there is your ship. She is all yours, and so are we, and everything that belongs to the ship."

I glanced at the ship, which was anchored just over half a mile from the shore. They had anchored it just at the mouth of the little creek, and as the tide rose, the captain brought the boat near the place where I first landed with my rafts.

At first, I was full of surprise, for I did indeed see my redemption nearby, a large ship ready to take me wherever I wanted to go. For a time, I was unable to answer him, and when he had taken me in his arms, I held on to him, or I would have fallen to the ground.

He noticed my surprise and immediately took a bottle out of his pocket and gave me a sip of lemonade, which he had brought especially for me. After drinking it, I sat down on the ground; and although it brought me back to myself, it took me a long time to speak a word to him. All that time the poor man was in as great an ecstasy as I was, only not as surprised as I was. He said a thousand kind and tender things to me, to bring me back to myself. But the flood of joy in my breast confused my whole mind. At last I burst into tears, and shortly after regaining my speech, I embraced him in turn and we shared the joy together.

After we had talked for a while, the captain told me that he had brought me some refreshments and that the ship had not been plundered. He then shouted loudly to the boat, ordering his men to bring ashore the things that were for the governor. And indeed, it was a gift as if I were someone who was not going with them, but as if I were still going to live on the island.

First, he had brought a chest of bottles full of excellent hot water, six large bottles of Madeira wine, two pounds of excellent good tobacco, twelve good pieces of ship's beef, pork, a bag of peas, and about a hundredweight of biscuits. He also brought me a box of sugar, a box of flour, a bag full of lemons and two bottles of lime juice, and a whole lot of other things. But what was a thousand times more useful to me were six new clean shirts, six good neckcloths, two pairs of gloves, a pair of shoes, a hat, and a pair of stockings, and a very good suit that had been little worn. In short, he dressed me from head to toe. It was

a very nice and pleasant gift, as anyone can imagine, for someone in my circumstances, but never was anything in the world so unpleasant and uncomfortable to wear as these clothes were for me.

Then we began to discuss what to do with the prisoners we had. It was worth considering whether we should risk taking them with us or not, especially two of them, whom he knew to be real villains. These villains would certainly have to be handed over to the authorities at the first English colony he could reach. I noticed that the captain himself was very concerned about this. So I said to him that if he wished, I would arrange for the men to be left on the island.

"I would genuinely be very happy with that," said the captain. "Okay," I said, "I will have them come and talk to them." So I made sure that Friday and the two hostages, who were now released because they had kept their promise, went to the cave and brought the five bound men to the arbor, where they were held until I arrived. When I arrived in my new clothing, I was again called the governor. I had the men brought before me, and I told them that I had given a full report of their behavior to the captain.

I let them know that I had seized the ship on my orders, and that they would see that their new captain had received the reward for his treachery, and that they would see him hang from the yardarm. I asked them what they had to say for themselves and why I shouldn't execute them as pirates.

One of them answered on behalf of the rest, saying that they had nothing to say except that they humbly

begged for mercy. But I told them that I didn't know what mercy to give them. As for myself, I had decided to leave the island with all my men and had arranged with the captain for the crossing to England. As for the captain, he had no choice but to take them as prisoners to England to be tried for mutiny and piracy. They had to know that the consequence was the gallows. I could not say what was best for them unless they were planning to accept their fate on the island. If they wanted to, because I had the freedom to leave the island, I tended to let them keep their lives. They seemed very grateful and said they would much rather risk staying there than be taken to England to be hanged. So I left it at that.

The captain, however, seemed to have some trouble with this, as if he didn't dare to leave them behind. I got a little angry with the captain and told him that they were my prisoners, not his; and that since I had granted them so many favors, I would also keep my word. If he did not agree, I would release them and then he could capture them again himself. They seemed very grateful for this, so I set them free and ordered them to withdraw into the forest, to the place they had come from. I would give them some firearms, some ammunition, and some instructions on how to live. After that, I got ready to go aboard the ship; but I told the captain that I would stay on the island that night to get my things ready, and asked him in the meantime to go aboard and make everything ready on the ship and to send the boat for me to shore the next day. I also ordered him to hang the new captain who had been

killed from the yardarm so that these men could see him.

When the captain left, I had the men come to my apartment and talked seriously with them about their circumstances. I told them that I thought they had made a good choice because if the captain had taken them away, they would surely have been hanged. I showed them the new captain hanging from the yardarm of the ship and told them that they could expect no other fate.

When they all declared that they wanted to stay, I told them that I would let them into the story of my life there, and help make it easy for them. Then I told them the whole history of the place and my coming there. I showed them my fortifications, the way I made my bread, planted my corn, dried my grapes, in short, everything that was necessary to make it easy for them.

I left my firearms and three swords behind. I explained to them how to care for the goats and how to make butter and cheese. In short, I let them share in my life. I also gave them the bag of peas that the captain had brought me and asked them to sow and multiply them. After I had done all this, I left them the next day and went on board the ship. We immediately prepared to sail. The next morning, two of the five men swam to the side of the ship and begged to be taken on board because they would be killed. The captain pretended he had no power without me. After some discussion, and after their solemn promises of improvement, they were

taken on board and turned out to be very honest and quiet men.

The next time the boat was sent to the shore with boxes and clothes for which they were very grateful. I encouraged them that if I could send a boat, I would not forget.

When I said goodbye to this island, I wore, as a souvenir, the large goat-leather hat I had made and my umbrella. And I took one of my parrots on board. I also did not forget to take the money that had been unusable with me for so long that it had become rusty and could hardly pass for silver.

And so I left the island on December 19, 1686, after having been there for twenty-eight years, two months, and nineteen days. I was freed from this captivity on the same day of the month that I first attempted to escape in the sloop. In this ship, after a long journey, I arrived in England on June 11, 1687, after being absent for thirty-five years.