

Literature of the Sea

The sea has fascinated and inspired English writers and poets of all times. They have written books about great adventures, about characters fighting the power of the oceans, about people who were shipwrecked and had to survive on desert islands.

Gulliver's Travels, Jonathan Swift, 1726

In Gulliver's Travels, Lemuel Gulliver tells his fantastic adventures on imaginary islands: Lilliput, Brobdingnag and Houyhnhnms.

My name is Lemuel Gulliver, I was born in England in 16--. I decided to work as a ship doctor. I liked traveling. It was an interesting life. One ship I worked on was called the Antelope. Our voyage went very well at first, but, one day, there was a big storm. The ship hit a rock in the sea and began to sink. I swam for many hours in the water, and I was very tired. Suddenly, my feet touched the ground. I walked a long time and then I came to the beach. I fell asleep on the sand. When I woke up, it was morning. I tried to stand up, but I couldn't move at all. I raised my head a little, and I could see ropes around my body. Then I saw hundreds of little creatures on and around my body! They were very small. They were talking to each other but I couldn't understand their language. I didn't know it yet, but I was on the island of Lilliput.

Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe, 1719

Robinson Crusoe is the story of a man who is tossed onto an island after a shipwreck. It is a story of survival on a desert island.

When day came, the sea was quiet again. I looked for our ship, and, to my surprise, it was still in one piece. I looked around the ship, and, after a few minutes, I found some long pieces of wood. I tied them together with rope and I got the things I wanted from the ship: food, books and guns. I went back to the shore. After a time, I found a little cave in the side of a hill. In front of it, there was a good place to make a home. I used the rope, the ship's sail and the pieces of wood, and, after a lot of hard work, I had a very fine tent. The cave at the back of my tent was a good place to keep my food, and so I called it 'my kitchen'. That night, I went to sleep in my new home.

Treasure Island, Robert Louis Stevenson, 1881

Young Jim Hawkins, a 12-year-old boy, dreams of treasure and adventures at sea. With his friends Squire Trelawney and Doctor Livesey, he leaves England in the sailing ship Hispaniola and starts the long voyage to Treasure Island to find the famous treasure of dead Captain Flint.

We landed the boats at the mouth of the second river, then began to climb Spyglass Hill. I followed a long way behind the rest. We were near the top when a man cried aloud. The others started to run towards him.

"He can't have found the treasure," said Morgan. And indeed, it was something very different – the bones of a human skeleton. Cold fear filled every heart. Suddenly, out of the middle of the trees in front of us, a high shaking voice began to sing:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest..." The effect on the pirates was terrible to see. They looked like frightened children. "It's Flint!" shouted one of them. "No!" answered Silver. "It's no ghost! I'm here to get that treasure and I will get it! I have never been afraid of Captain Flint in his life, and, by thunder, I will not be afraid of him dead!"