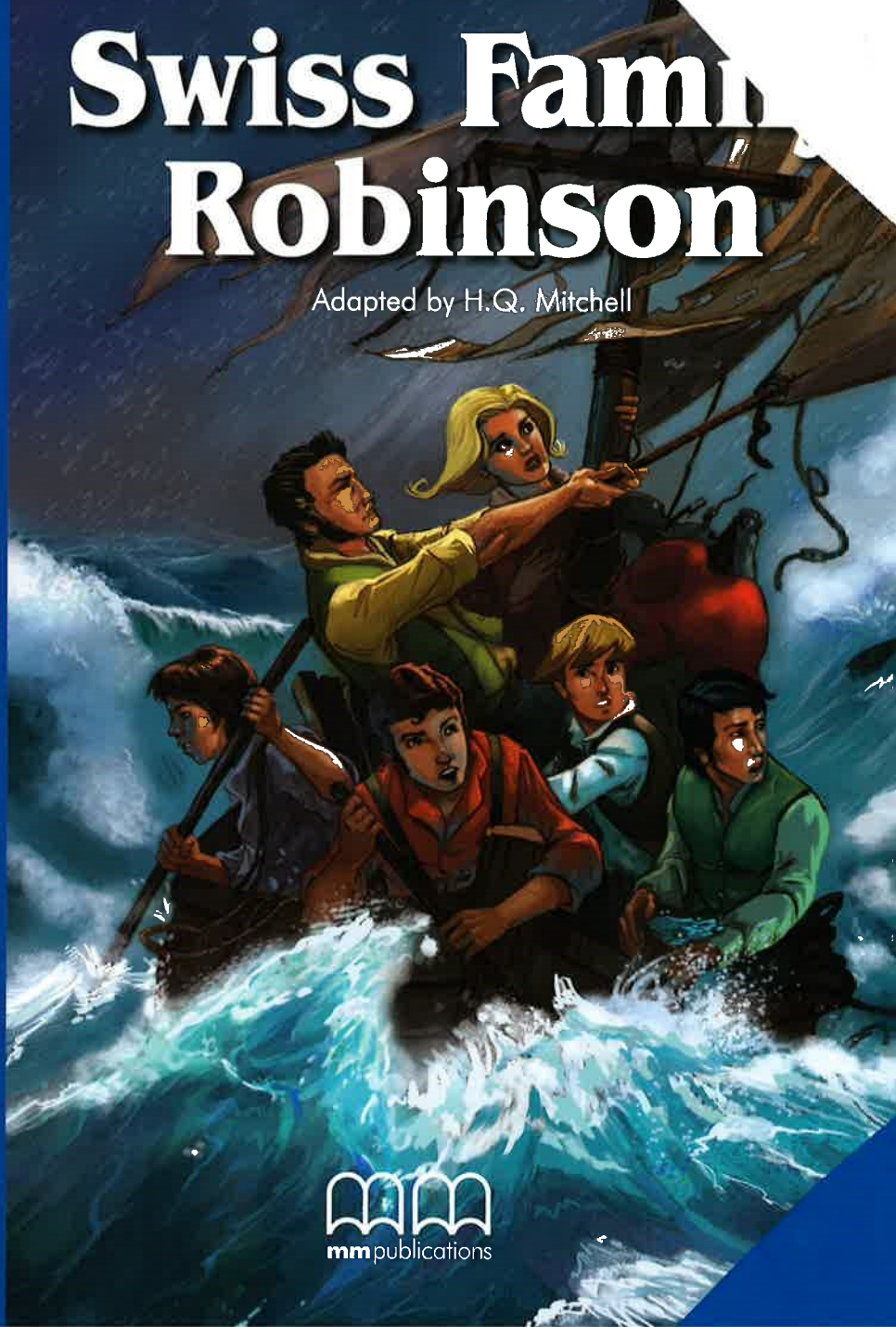


TOP READERS

JOHANN DAVID WILHELM

Swiss Family Robinson

Adapted by H.Q. Mitchell



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3


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CHAPTER 1



LIEUTENANT BELL HAS been a sailor for many years. He's spent a long time at sea and he's faced a lot of difficulties on his voyages; pirates are a great danger, and there have been terrifying moments during storms, when huge waves nearly swallowed his ship, the Adventurer.

"If you love me and our children, you won't go on another voyage," his wife keeps begging, urging him to stop travelling and find a job on land.

"If you love me, then you know that what you ask is impossible," he always answers. "The sea is my life and I cannot imagine myself away from it."

During his last trip, Lieutenant Bell kept remembering his wife's words as the Adventurer struggled with waves the size of mountains. The ship was travelling in the South Seas when a terrible storm started, blowing it far away and off its course. For three days the ship shook, tossed here and there by wild winds and everybody thought they were lost forever.

Then, suddenly a voice was heard. "Land ahead!" A strip of land was visible far away, and the crew managed to take the ship there and anchor it. It was a quiet, natural port on what looked like an island.

"We can stay here for a while and repair our ship," said Captain Johnson. "When the storm stops, we'll set sail again."

A little later, the men set off to explore. They were surprised to find a small boat and a tent house further up the shore. Inside were some clay pots and oyster shells, and also furniture and other comforts. It was clear that they were not the first men on the island.



“Lieutenant Bell!” called one of the men, as he came out of a small forest nearby. He rushed towards the officer, followed by a middle-aged stranger dressed in European clothes and carrying a big leather bag. The stranger looked friendly, even though he had a gun.

“Finally, after all these years!” cried the man in a trembling voice. “Thank God you are here!”

“My goodness,” the lieutenant thought. “It’s Robinson Crusoe himself!”

The man was a Swiss pastor who had been shipwrecked with his wife and four children when their ship crashed onto a rock. The crew had disappeared in the storm and they were nowhere to be seen afterwards.

“We were extremely lucky to be saved together as a family,” said the pastor. “We were on our way to Australia to start a new life but, instead of that, we had to start a new life on this island. We have been here for four years,” he added.

Lieutenant Bell told him that the ship was on its way to England when the storm stopped them.

“Would you like to come aboard?” asked Bell. “You can meet the captain and discuss your family’s rescue with him,” he suggested.

“We can all meet here tomorrow morning,” answered the man. “I should return to my family and prepare them for our departure,” he explained. “I did not want to alarm them when I saw your ship through my looking glass, so they don’t know anything about it yet. I must hurry home and tell them. The boys will be thrilled!” he said with a big smile.

Then he took a diary out of his bag and put it in Lieutenant Bell’s hands.

“Here is our story,” he said. “If something happens, I would like you to give this to my brother in Switzerland. Now I must go,” he added. “There is so much to do!”



CHAPTER 2

THE STORM THAT THE PASTOR'S FAMILY HAD BEEN CAUGHT IN was similar to the one that had brought the Adventurer to the island. For seven days their ship fought with monstrous waves but the strong winds blew it further and further off its course.

The ship shook and tossed out of control until it finally crashed onto a rock. Nothing could be done to move it from where it was stuck. The crew feared that they would sink. "Save yourselves!" cried the captain. "Quick! Get on the lifeboats!"

The boats were filling up quickly, so the pastor rushed to get his family. "Be brave, dear ones," he yelled as he led them to the deck.

Unfortunately, when the family went up on deck to board the lifeboats, the ship's crew had already disappeared. They realised that they were alone.

"Have they forgotten us?" cried Franz, the youngest of the boys, who was six years old. "What will happen to us now?"

The father advised his family to stay calm. Exhausted and afraid, the boys finally fell asleep. The pastor and Elizabeth, his wife, stayed awake, thinking of ways to save the family.

The first rays of morning light brought fresh hope. The family were thankful that the wind had stopped and they were relieved to see some land nearby. "It looks like an island," said the pastor.

"Let's swim to land while the sea is calm," suggested the fourteen-year old Fritz.

"That may be easy for you," said the second son, 12-year-old Ernest. "You are a strong swimmer, but the rest of us aren't. Why not build a raft?"

"Great idea, Ernest," said the pastor. "Now, let's all search through the ship for equipment to build a small raft. You should also look for anything that could be useful to take to the island," he added.

Fritz found guns and bullets. Ernest found nails, an axe, scissors, a hammer, and other building tools. Even young Franz found fishing hooks. Elizabeth announced that she had found and fed a cow, a donkey, six sheep and two goats. There were also some chickens, a rooster, geese and pigeons.

