



The Swiss Family Robinson

Johann David Wyss (1743 - 1818)

Read by:	Mark F. Smith	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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The Swiss Family Robinson by Swiss pastor Johann David Wyss is a story about a Swiss family en route to Australia that is shipwrecked in a storm in the East Indies. Modeled on Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the name Robinson in the title refers not to the family's surname but rather identifies the book as part of the adventure genre spawned by Defoe's classic. The adventures proceed as a series of incidents that teach Christian-oriented moral lessons in self-reliance, the natural world and the values of frugality, cooperation, husbandry and civilization. The book is shaped in roughly three parts. The first tells of the ship running aground, the crew abandoning the family, and their actions to rescue provisions, tools, books, livestock, weapons and dogs from the ship and establish a homestead on the island. The second section is a series of vi-

gnettes in which they build a tree house, discover unusual and improbable plants and animals, and build mechanical devices. In the third section they sail around the island, discover another European family hiding from pirates (with a female love interest for the boys), and set the stage for their re-entry onto the outside world.

Wyss' son Johann Rudolf Wyss played a large role in editing the book, which was first published in 1812. An early French adaptation by Isabelle du Montlieu in 1813, which was followed by a "continuation" in 1824 that grew the total to five volumes, led the way for the emergence of many versions of the original story, with episodes added, changed and deleted. The best-known English version was based on the French and published in 1849, abridged and edited by William H.G. Kingston. This reading is based on that version.

Johann David Wyss (May 28, 1743 – January 11, 1818) was a Swiss pastor who served as a chaplain in the Swiss Army and best known as the author of *The Swiss Family Robinson*. He was inspired by Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* tale of self-reliance and survival under duress, which were popular with his four sons. The book took shape as his family discussed the stories and then began to make up their own, Wyss transcribed and crafted into a story that frame the incidents with a strong moral message. His son Johann Rudolf Wyss, who was also the author of the Swiss national anthem, edited the book, and another son, Johann Emmanuel Wyss, illustrated the book.