

## DRAMA SESSION ON THE NOVEL **ROBINSON CRUSOE** (1719)

THEME: COLONIALISM AND RACISM

QUESTIONS: CAN FRIDAY BE CONSIDERED A COMPANION OR JUST A SERVANT?

WHAT HAPPENS TO FRIDAY AT THE END OF ROBINSON CRUSOE?

HOW IS FRIDAY WELCOMED BY THE CIVILIZED ENGLISH PEOPLE?

I've always wondered what happens to Friday at the end of Robinson Crusoe, because the ending is quite ambiguous. We read that Crusoe, Friday, and an English captain overcome the sailors who planned to maroon the captain. After that...the book doesn't mention Friday again. After 28 years Crusoe takes leave of his island...and doesn't even say whether Friday goes with him.

In the sequel *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the first paragraphs tell us that Crusoe has married and has three children. But he misses his island and then his wife dies. Seven years after returning home, he sets sail again.

As he departs, he finally mentions that Friday is accompanying him. So Friday journeyed to England and other countries and spent seven years in Europe as Crusoe's manservant, ending up on the same island where they had met.

Finally, Crusoe and Friday leave the island for the Brazilian mainland. They spot an oncoming fleet of Native canoes and Friday is killed in a sea battle.

Actually, I have always wondered how the inhabitants of a small English town reacted to a "wild" Indian in their midst.

### **ACTIVITY 1** (warm-up game)

#### *WAYS TO WALK*

Teacher to students, 'Move around the classroom and walk as if you were A KING, A SERVANT, A PRINCESS, A LION, A SNAKE, A TEACHER, A BABY, AN OLD MAN...'

### **ACTIVITY 2**

#### *TABLEAU (or STILL IMAGE)*

The teacher splits the students into 4 groups and asks them to create a TABLEAU (or STILL IMAGE) to portray the ending of the novel, when Robinson finally gets back to Yorkshire with Friday and meets his 2 sisters and his 2 nephews.

### **ACTIVITY 3**

#### *FLASHBACK AND FLASHFORWARD*

The teacher says, 'I'll count to 10 now. Think where your character would have been one month before or would be in 1-month time.'

The students are asked to improvise scenes that took place a week, a month or a year before. Then they are asked to move back to their original image and finally to move forward in time (one month or one year later maybe).

#### **ACTIVITY 4** (choose either a or b)

##### *a) THOUGHT TAP*

The teacher freezes the drama activity and tap students on the shoulder. To ask them to reveal their thoughts, the teacher asks some questions, eg. 'Who are you?' 'What are you doing/thinking/feeling?' 'What are you going to do?'

##### *b) HOT SEATING*

Hot seat Friday and Robinson Crusoe and interview them.

#### **ACTIVITY 5**

##### *THOUGHT TUNNEL/CONSCIENCE ALLEY*

The teacher splits the students into 2 groups and asks them to form 2 lines facing each other – this is the tunnel. As a student walks through the tunnel, those closest to him/her in the line will try to persuade him/her that they are right. At the end of the tunnel the student will have to take one or the other course of action.

The 2 groups will have to take on 2 contrasting viewpoints on this topic:

**DO YOU THINK THERE ARE HUMAN BEINGS WHO ARE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS?**

#### **FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

The students may be asked to write a text with the following title for homework:

**WHO IS FRIDAY TODAY?**