



Robinson (New Directions Classic)

Muriel Spark

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A suspense novel about three castaways marooned on an island owned by an eccentric recluse.

January Marlow, a heroine with a Catholic outlook of the most unsentimental stripe, is one of three survivors out of twenty-nine souls when her plane crashes, blazing, on Robinson's island. Presumed dead for months, the three survivors must wait for the annual return of the pomegranate boat. Robinson, a determined loner, proves a fair if misanthropic host to his uninvited guests; he encourages January to keep a journal: as "an occupation for my mind, and I fancied that I might later dress it up for a novel. That was most peculiar, as things transpired, for I did not then anticipate how the journal would turn upon me, so that having survived the plane disaster, I should nearly meet my death through it." In *Robinson*, Muriel Spark's wonderful second novel, under the tropical glare and strange fogs of the tiny island, we find a volcano, a ping-pong playing cat, a dealer in occult as well as lucky charms, flying ants, sexual tension, a disappearance, blackmail, and perhaps murder. Everything astounds, confounds, and convinces, frighteningly. "She is," as Charles Alva Hoyt once put it, "the Jane Austen of the Surrealists." *Robinson*, a unique and marvelous novel, is another display of the powers of "the most gifted and innovative British novelist" (*The New York Times*). In the work of Dame Muriel in the last words of Robinson "immediately all things are possible."

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