



Boon Island

Kenneth Roberts

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The complete text of Roberts' last historical novel, presented for the first time with contemporary--and conflicting--accounts of the shipwreck on which the novel was based.

Boon Island Details

Date : Published January 2nd 1956 by Doubleday & Company (first published January 1st 1956)

ISBN :

Author : Kenneth Roberts

Format : Hardcover 275 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Adventure, Survival, Novels

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From Reader Review Boon Island for online ebook

Albert says

Near the end of the book there is a gross account of eating a dead human body and repeatedly makes reference to it through several chapters. Other than that it was a great story. Kenneth Roberts always seems to finish the story with the right sentiment of the peace and the freedom of living in America.

Maureen says

"All anybody does in college - if he's fortunate - is to learn how to make a start at educating himself; to change his mind if his mind needs changing." That quote is from the early pages, and foreshadows the type of education you wouldn't wish on anyone!

A rollicking good adventure

Charlotte says

I read this book so long ago that I really can't remember it, but it gripped me, I do remember that. I think I shall reread it.

Kenney says

A staple of my childhood, as I grew up within sight of Boon Island, and within a few miles of Roberts' home.

Jeanne says

This author also did Arundel and Rabble at ARms, stories of Revolutionary war & Battle of Ticonderoga, focusing on the men of upper New England and their resilience and capabilities! The same name keeps coming up, a character named Nason (last name). Have seen Nason graves at Clinton, Maine Cemetery and it always intrigues me to think of the lives of those hardy people at the birth of our nation!

Fred R says

As a preteen history buff, I read this and every other Kenneth Roberts novel I could get my hands on. In the early 70s I was stationed at a US Naval Hospital on the southern coast of Maine, and I could see Boon Island from my window. Quite literally. His books are very much worth the look!

Phair says

Don't remember if this was a school assignment or if I picked this myself. I do very much recall how grim and bleak the story was. Decidedly NOT a fun read. Diary listing was one star.

Judy says

The #10 bestseller of 1956 is what I call "dick lit." Extreme adventure with not one female character until the last few pages. Essentially it is a ship wreck story and is meant to show the benefits of strong leadership in times of peril and stress.

Kenneth Roberts had two top bestsellers in the 1940s: Oliver Wiswell (1940) and Lydia Bailey (1947). He is an excellent story teller, is clearly on the right politically, and can create fascinating female characters when they fit in the story. Boon Island however, is Lord of the Flies with a happy ending, where the good guys win.

A group of men set out from England in 1710 with a cargo of rope and Irish cheese, bound for Maine. They are harboring a young man who accidentally committed murder back in London. Also on board are a psychopathic first mate and two of his cronies. The first mate is the type of character who brings evil into the midst of men of good will. Captain Dean is your level-headed, patient yet firm sort who would lead a boy scout troop these days.

Within one day's sail of their destination, in the middle of winter, they are driven by a storm onto desolate, rocky Boon Island. Will they survive in freezing temperatures on nothing but mussels and seaweed? Will the evil Langman succeed in taking over from the admirable Captain Dean?

It is an exciting story with plenty of psychological content and many mentions of how hardworking people save the day though they carry the slackers on their backs. Clearly men still read novels in the mid 1950s.

Robert says

Superb story teller.

Chris Gager says

A grim hi-fi tale about a shipwreck on a big rock within sight of land. When my parents lived in Kittery we took their sailboat out to look at Boon Island. There's a tall lighthouse on it now and back then (1960/70's) there was still a Coast Guard crew there. To see the place in person was to reinforce the reality those shipwrecked had to deal with. The edition I read was without the "extra" stuff I think. Date read is a guess.

Brian says

Grim and powerful, with many overtly and covertly delivered truths about the nature of man.

Jessica says

Boon Island is based on the true story of the wreck of the Nottingham Galley on the tiny freezing Boon Island off the coast of Maine. Roberts works in his extensive research of how this unfortunate group of seamen survived 21 days without food or fire and does a great job of building his characters - the positive characters and the negative ones. I loved the last passage, "How many of us have our Boon Islands? And how many of us have our Langmans[the scoundrel]? But doesn't each one of us have an inner America on which in youth his heart is set; and if-because of age, or greed, or weakness of will, or circumstances beyond his poor control- it escapes him, his life, to my way of thinking, has been wasted."

Jerry Johnson says

I read this book in high school and couldn't put it down. Roberts was one of America's finest novelists.

Nina says

Early 18th Century merchant ship crashes and maroons the crew on a frigidly cold, wet, and empty island off the American shore. Tale of survival. Nice reading, but the characters really aren't developed all that well.

Steve Schinke says

Originally, I was going to give this 1 star, because it is bad, predictable historical fiction. Because it is rooted in an actual event, I gave it two stars. I had read all of Roberts other historical fiction, and it pales in comparison. If I had not looked at the publish date, I would thought it was one of his earlier efforts.

Jane says

Survival stories? Shipwrecks? Cannibalism? I'm SO in. This was a re-read from adolescence, and such a good one: well written, fast paced, memorable characters, and then the total pleasure of sitting on a summer porch reading about being stuck on a storm-lashed, snowy island in December off the coast of New Hampshire.

Peg Lotvin says

During a trip to the Maine coast we visited the lighthouse at Nedick, ME. From there across the water you could see Boone Island, about 10 miles away. Her lighthouse was not there in 1710 when an English ship, the Nottingham, crashed on the rocky island. The survivors spent nearly a month with no shelter, fire, or food before being rescued New Years Day by mainland fishermen. Kenneth Roberts brings this tale to life in a fictionalized version of the shipwreck and ensuing struggle to stay alive. As people do when faced with the most extreme conditions, they resorted to cannibalism.

I read a very early edition of the book, not the one above. I see now that there is more information available about the wreck and what ensued. Must get a copy of the newer edition.
