
Economic Literacy
for Children
Robinson's Island
BOOK 6
Fish for Rainy Days
The sequel to "The Chief's Share"
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AGES 6–10

PICTURE BOOK

Fish for Rainy Days

The sequel to "The Chief's Share"

THE CHARACTERS

Robinson, a sailor who lives on an island and fishes with his net
Friday, a brave sailor and the best climber on the island
Zachary, the chatty green parrot with the red head
Malu, who makes clay jugs, and her daughter Lani, who weaves mats
Tiko, who builds boats and paddles
Kai, who carves fish hooks from bone
Roko, who weaves baskets

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Dark clouds are gathering over the island. “A big storm is coming,” says Tiko. “Maybe tonight, maybe tomorrow.” Robinson starts keeping fish for later, but Zachary eats all his bananas. Who will be ready when the storm comes?

Remember the dark clouds at the end of the last story? This is the story of the storm. It’s made up, but this is how people have always got ready for hard days: by keeping a little of today for tomorrow.

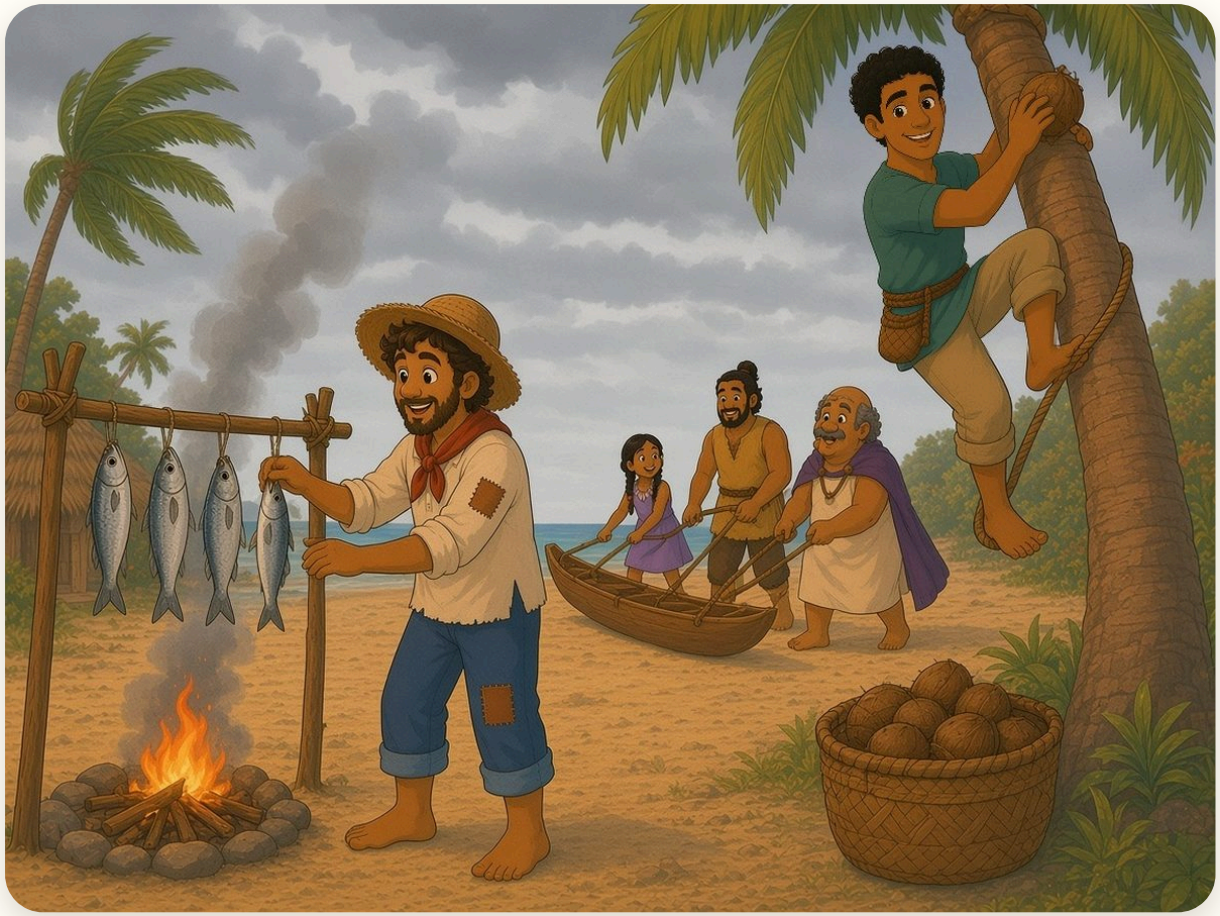


THE NEXT MORNING

Grey clouds

The next morning, the wind is louder and the sea has turned grey. The sea birds are flying inland, away from the water. Tiko looks up at the sky for a long time. “A big storm is coming,” he says. “Maybe tonight, maybe tomorrow. Nobody can know for sure.”

“Maybe it won’t come at all!” says Roko. “Maybe,” says Robinson. “But if it comes, I want to be ready.” He remembers the fish he wanted to dry for rainy days, back when Roko wanted a share of everything. Roko’s cheeks turn pink. “Now every fish I keep is mine,” laughs Robinson, and he picks up his net.

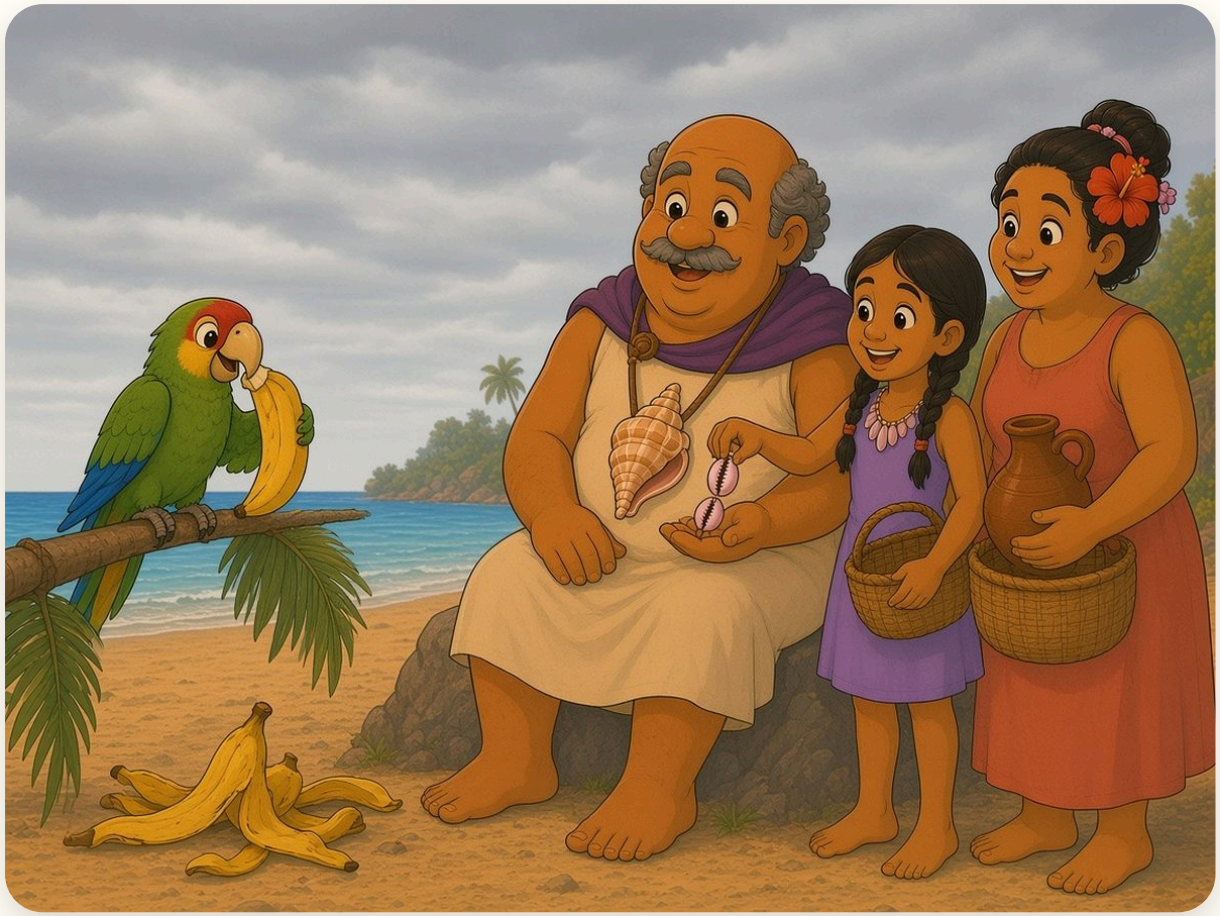


ALL THAT DAY

Getting ready

Everyone gets ready in their own way. Robinson casts his net in the morning and again in the afternoon. The sun is hidden, so he hangs the fish over the smoke of a small fire to dry. Tiko and Kai catch fish with Kai's hooks and hang them in the smoke too. Friday climbs palm after palm and fills his big basket with coconuts. Malu and Lani fill all their jugs at the spring.

Then they all help to drag the canoes and Tiko's boat high up the beach, far from the waves, and tie them to the palm trees with strong rope. "Tie them tight," says Tiko. "A storm can carry a boat right out to sea."



THAT AFTERNOON

Zachary's bananas

And Zachary? He sits on a branch and eats one banana after another, until there are none left. "Why keep them?" he squawks. "Maybe the storm won't come. And bananas go brown anyway!" Robinson smiles. "Fresh fish go bad by the evening too. But once they're dried in the smoke, they keep for many days."

Roko has no net and no fish. So he sits on his flat rock and finishes the baskets for Lani and Malu. Each of them gives him two pink shells. Roko puts them with the two he already has and counts: "Six! I can't keep fish, but I can keep my shells."



THE NEXT DAY

Where is the storm?

The next day, blue gaps open up in the clouds, and the storm doesn't come. "See?" squawks Zachary. "All that work for nothing!" Robinson just laughs and casts his net again, in the morning and in the afternoon. "Maybe it'll come, maybe it won't," he says. "If it doesn't, I'll still have fish for later."

In the evening, Zachary counts the fish on the rack like a teacher. Robinson has eaten three fish each day and kept all the rest. "Six, twelve... eighteen! Eighteen fish!" "That's enough for six days," says Robinson, "at three fish a day." He packs them into his basket and carries it into his hut, with his net and his little clay pot of shells.



THAT NIGHT

The storm!

In the middle of the night, the wind starts to howl. Rain pours down, and big waves crash right up to Robinson's hut. Tiko comes running down the hill. "My hut is high up, and it's strong," he shouts. "Come up, all of you!"

Everyone climbs the hill in the rain, carrying what they have kept. Robinson carries his basket of fish, his net and his clay pot of shells. Malu carries a big jug of water, Friday carries his basket of coconuts, and Tiko and Kai carry their dried fish. Roko holds his shells tight in his fist. Zachary rides on Lani's shoulder and holds Roko's tiny basket. It is empty.



TWO DAYS OF RAIN

Inside Tiko’s hut

For two days and two nights, the rain doesn’t stop. Nobody can fish, and nobody can climb the palm trees. But inside Tiko’s hut, almost everyone has something put aside. Robinson eats his fish, three a day, just as he worked out. Tiko and Kai have their dried fish. Friday has his coconuts, Malu has her big jug of water, and they share them with each other.

Only Zachary and Roko have nothing to eat. Zachary’s tummy rumbles louder than the thunder. “Where are my bananas?” he groans. “In your tummy,” giggles Lani. Friday cracks open a coconut and gives Zachary a piece as a present. “Thank you,” mumbles Zachary. “Next time I’ll keep some.”



ON THE SECOND DAY

Roko’s shells

On the second morning, Roko’s tummy is rumbling too. He opens his fist. “Robinson, will you swap me some fish for shells? I have six from my baskets.” Robinson counts his fish: fifteen. “I eat three a day,” he thinks. “If the rain lasts four more days, I’ll need twelve. So I can spare three.”

“Three fish for three shells,” he says. He could have said “No, thank you,” but he is glad to swap. Roko smiles under his moustache. “I didn’t keep any fish, but I kept my shells!” “That’s what shells are good for,” says Robinson, dropping them into his clay pot. “They can wait.”



ON THE THIRD MORNING

After the storm

On the third morning, the sun comes out at last. Everyone hurries down the hill. Robinson's hut has lost its roof, and his rack has been knocked over. Malu's shelter has fallen down, and two of her jugs are broken. Kai's white stones are scattered, and Zachary's nest has blown away.

But the canoes and Tiko's boat are safe, because they were tied up high. The beach is covered in seaweed, and the waves have washed up big logs. The sea is still rough and cloudy with sand. "Nobody can fish in that," says Tiko. Zachary looks up at the empty palm tree where his nest used to be, and his tummy rumbles again.



THAT MORNING

Nine fish

Zachary peeks into Robinson's basket and counts: "Nine fish left!" Robinson smiles. "Nine fish, three a day. That's enough for three days. For three days I don't need to fish. So I can fix my roof!" Just like when he made his net, the fish he kept will feed him while he works on something that lasts.

For his new roof he needs lots of woven palm leaves, and nobody weaves faster than Lani. "Will you weave me two big mats for my roof?" he asks. "For four pink shells?" "Yes, please!" says Lani. Robinson takes the shells out of his clay pot, and Lani starts weaving straight away.



FOR THREE DAYS

Mending

For three days, the whole island mends what the storm broke. Robinson ties Lani's mats onto his roof, knot by knot, and stands his rack up again. Tiko and Friday help Malu put her shelter back up, and she starts shaping new jugs. Kai puts his white stones back in their ring, one by one.

Zachary can't build anything. Every day he flies from tree to tree looking for something to eat, and by the evening he is too tired to start a new nest. "Robinson fixes his roof, and I look for food all day!" he grumbles. "Because Robinson kept some fish," says Lani.



THREE DAYS LATER

Back to the sea

Three days later, the sea is calm and clear again, and Robinson's basket is empty. He wades into the water and casts his net: six fish! He eats three, and hangs the other three on his rack. "For the next rainy day," he says.

Zachary is busy too. High up in the big palm tree, he is building a new nest, twig by twig. In the middle he puts Roko's tiny basket, and he fills it with nuts. "Nuts don't go brown like bananas," he squawks proudly. "This is my store, for rainy days!"



THAT EVENING, UNDER THE STARS

Were we lucky?

That evening, they all have a party on the beach, under the stars. Robinson brings grilled fish from his afternoon cast, Friday brings coconuts, and Malu pours water from one of her new jugs. Zachary sits in his nest above their heads, guarding his nuts. “Were we just lucky?” he asks.

“Nobody knew when the storm would come,” says Lani. “But each of us had kept something for later. Robinson kept fish, Roko kept shells, and Mum kept water.” “And next time, I’ll keep nuts!” squawks Zachary, and everyone laughs. Tiko sits on one of the big logs the storm left behind and looks at the stream rushing down into the sea. “I have an idea…” he says… but that’s another story.

The End

The Lesson

Nobody knew exactly when the storm would come. Tiko could only guess, and Roko thought it might not come at all. That's how tomorrow always is: we can't know for sure what it will bring.

Robinson ate three fish a day, but he caught more and kept the rest. Malu filled her jugs, and Roko kept his shells. When the storm came, they had what they needed, and afterwards Robinson could fix his roof instead of looking for food. Zachary ate all his bananas at once, so he spent his days looking for something to eat. Nobody told anyone to keep something for later. Each of them chose to.

A little of today, kept for another day: that is what helped the friends through the storm. Next time you have a few sweets or a few coins, remember Robinson's rack: a little that you keep today can help you on a rainy day.

For grown-ups: sources and further reading

WHERE EACH PAGE COMES FROM

- **Page 1, “Grey clouds”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. VI, “Uncertainty and Acting”, ¶1
- **Page 2, “Getting ready”:** Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 1, “The Formation of Capital”, ¶59
- **Page 3, “Zachary’s bananas”:** Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 4, “The Marginal Utility of Money”, ¶9
- **Page 4, “Where is the storm?”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. VI, “Uncertainty and Acting”, ¶1
- **Page 5, “The storm!”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. XVIII, “Capital Goods”, ¶3
- **Page 6, “Inside Tiko’s hut”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. XVIII, “Capital Goods”, ¶3
- **Page 7, “Roko’s shells”:** Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 4, “The Marginal Utility of Money”, ¶9
- **Page 8, “After the storm”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. VI, “Uncertainty and Acting”, ¶1
- **Page 9, “Nine fish”:** Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 1, “The Formation of Capital”, ¶59
- **Page 10, “Mending”:** Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 1, “The Formation of Capital”, ¶59
- **Page 11, “Back to the sea”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. XVIII, “Capital Goods”, ¶3
- **Page 12, “Were we lucky?”:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. VI, “Uncertainty and Acting”, ¶1 · Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. XVIII, “Capital Goods”, ¶3
- **The Lesson:** Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. VI, “Uncertainty and Acting”, ¶1 · Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. XVIII, “Capital Goods”, ¶3 · Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 1, “The Formation of Capital”, ¶59 · Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 4, “The Marginal Utility of Money”, ¶9

FURTHER READING

- Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. VI, “Uncertainty and Acting”: why the future is always uncertain for anyone who acts (¶1).
- Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, ch. XVIII: things stored and kept for later as “a reserve for rainy days and emergencies” (¶3).
- Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 1: Crusoe puts aside a stock of 100 berries for a few days or a week later (¶59).
- Murray N. Rothbard, *Man, Economy, and State*, ch. 4: why people keep something on hand “in case of a rainy day” (¶9).

NOTE

The pictures are illustrations for children, and the story is made up. Robinson and Friday are inspired by Daniel Defoe’s characters (1719); Zachary, Malu, Lani, Tiko, Kai and Roko are invented. The story follows Ludwig von Mises, who writes that the future is always uncertain and that what we store for later is “a reserve for rainy days and emergencies”, and Murray N. Rothbard, whose Crusoe puts aside a stock of berries for the days ahead. The numbers are ours, so that children can count along easily.

THIS BOOK

From the Kids corner on praxeologos.net.

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