



The Island of Doctor Moreau

H.G. Wells

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The Island of Doctor Moreau is an 1896 science fiction novel by H. G. Wells, who called it "an exercise in youthful blasphemy". The text of the novel is the narration of Edward Prendick, a shipwrecked man rescued by a passing boat who is left on the island home of Doctor Moreau, who creates human-like hybrid beings from animals via vivisection. The novel deals with a number of philosophical themes, including pain and cruelty, moral responsibility, human identity, and human interference with nature. The island belongs to Dr. Moreau. Prendick remembers that he has heard of Moreau, formerly an eminent physiologist in London whose gruesome experiments in vivisection had been publicly exposed. At the time of the novel's publication in 1896, there was growing discussion in Europe regarding degeneration and animal vivisection. Several interest groups were formed to oppose vivisection, the two largest being the National Anti-Vivisection Society in 1875 and the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection in 1898. The Island of Doctor Moreau is the account of Edward Prendick, a shipwrecked Englishman with a scientific education. A passing ship takes him aboard, and a man named Montgomery revives him. Prendick also meets a grotesque bestial native named M'ling, who appears to be Montgomery's manservant. The ship is transporting a number of animals which belong to Montgomery. As they approach the island, Montgomery's destination, the captain demands Prendick leave the ship with Montgomery. Montgomery explains that he will not be able to host Prendick on the island. Despite this, the captain leaves Prendick in a dinghy and sails away. Seeing that the captain has abandoned Prendick, Montgomery takes pity and rescues him. As ships rarely pass the island, Prendick will be housed in an outer room of an enclosed compound. The next day, Moreau begins working on a puma. Prendick gathers that Moreau is performing a painful experiment on the animal, and its anguished cries drive Prendick out into the jungle. While he wanders, he comes upon a group of people who seem human but have an unmistakable resemblance to hogs. As he walks back to the enclosure, he suddenly realises he is being followed by a figure in the jungle. He panics and flees, and the figure gives chase.

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