

**William Bligh**



*A Narrative  
Of The Mutiny,  
On Board His  
Majesty's Ship Bounty*

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# **A Narrative Of The Mutiny, On Board His Majesty's Ship Bounty**



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SHIP BOUNTY; AND THE SUBSEQUENT VOYAGE OF PART OF  
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Friendly Islands, To Timor, a Dutch Settlement in the East  
Indies.

Written by Lieutenant WILLIAM BLIGH.

ILLUSTRATED WITH CHARTS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

NARRATIVE, &c.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

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The following Narrative is only a part of a voyage undertaken for the purpose of conveying the Bread-fruit Tree from the South Sea Islands to the West Indies. The manner in which this expedition miscarried, with the subsequent transactions and events, are here related. This part of the voyage is not first in the order of time, yet the circumstances are so distinct from that by which it was preceded, that it appears unnecessary to delay giving as much early information as possible concerning so extraordinary an event. The rest will be laid before the Public as soon as it can be got ready; and it is intended to publish it in such a manner, as, with the present Narrative, will make the account of the voyage compleat.

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A

# NARRATIVE, &c.

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I sailed from Otaheite on the 4th of April *1789. APRIL.*  
1789, having on board 1015 fine bread-fruit plants, besides many other valuable fruits of that country, which, with unremitting attention, we had been collecting for three and twenty weeks, and which were now in the highest state of perfection.

On the 11th of April, I discovered an island in latitude 18° 52' S. and longitude 200° 19' E. by the natives called Whytootackee. On the 24th we anchored at Annamooka, one of the Friendly Islands; from which, after completing our wood and water, I sailed on the 27th, having every reason to expect, from the fine condition of the plants, that they would continue healthy.

On the evening of the 28th, owing to light winds, we were not clear of the islands, and at night I directed my course towards Tofoa. The master had the first watch; the gunner the middle watch; and Mr. Christian, one of the mates, the morning watch. This was the turn of duty for the night.

Just before sun-rising, Mr. Christian, *1789. APRIL.*  
with the master at arms, gunner's mate,  
and Thomas Burket, seaman, came into my cabin while I was asleep, and seizing me, tied my hands with a cord behind my back, and threatened me with instant death, if I spoke or made the least noise: I, however, called so loud as to alarm every one; but they had already secured the officers who were not of their party, by placing centinels at



their doors. There were three men at my cabin door, besides the four within; Christian had only a cutlass in his hand, the others had muskets and bayonets. I was hauled out of bed, and forced on deck in my shirt, suffering great pain from the tightness with which they had tied my hands. I demanded the reason of such violence, but received no other answer than threats of instant death, if I did not hold my tongue. Mr. Elphinston, the master's mate, was kept in his birth; Mr. Nelson, botanist, Mr. Peckover, gunner, Mr. Ledward, surgeon, and the master, were confined to their cabins; and also the clerk, Mr. Samuel, but he soon obtained leave to come on deck. The fore hatchway was guarded by centinels; the boatswain and carpenter were, however, allowed to come on deck, where they saw me standing abaft the mizen-mast, with my hands tied behind my back, under a guard, with Christian at their head.

The boatswain was now ordered to hoist the launch out, with a threat, if he did not do it instantly, to take care of himself.

The boat being out, Mr. Hayward and Mr. Hallet, midshipmen, and Mr. Samuel, were ordered into it; upon which I demanded the cause of such an order, and endeavoured to persuade some one to a sense of duty; but it was to no effect: "Hold your tongue, Sir, or you are dead this instant," was constantly repeated to me.

The master, by this time, had sent to be allowed to come on deck, which was permitted; but he was soon ordered back again to his cabin.

I continued my endeavours to turn the *1789. APRIL.* tide of affairs, when Christian changed the



cutlass he had in his hand for a bayonet, that was brought to him, and, holding me with a strong gripe by the cord that tied my hands, he with many oaths threatened to kill me immediately if I would not be quiet: the villains round me had their pieces cocked and bayonets fixed. Particular people were now called on to go into the boat, and were hurried over the side: whence I concluded that with these people I was to be set adrift.

I therefore made another effort to bring about a change, but with no other effect than to be threatened with having my brains blown out.

The boatswain and seamen, who were to go in the boat, were allowed to collect twine, canvas, lines, sails, cordage, an eight and twenty gallon cask of water, and the carpenter to take his tool chest. Mr. Samuel got 150lbs of bread, with a small quantity of rum and wine. He also got a quadrant and compass into the boat; but was forbidden, on pain of death, to touch either map, ephemeris, book of astronomical observations, sextant, time-keeper, or any of my surveys or drawings.

The mutineers now hurried those they meant to get rid of into the boat. When most of them were in, Christian directed a dram to be served to each of his own crew. I now unhappily saw that nothing could be done to effect the recovery of the ship: there was no one to assist me, and every endeavour on my part was answered with threats of death.

The officers were called, and forced *1789. APRIL.* over the side into the boat, while I was kept apart from every one, abaft the mizen-mast; Christian,

armed with a bayonet, holding me by the bandage that secured my hands. The guard round me had their pieces cocked, but, on my daring the ungrateful wretches to fire, they uncocked them.

Isaac Martin, one of the guard over me, I saw, had an inclination to assist me, and, as he fed me with shaddock, (my lips being quite parched with my endeavours to bring about a change) we explained our wishes to each other by our looks; but this being observed, Martin was instantly removed from me; his inclination then was to leave the ship, for which purpose he got into the boat; but with many threats they obliged him to return.

The armourer, Joseph Coleman, and the two carpenters, M'Intosh and Norman, were also kept contrary to their inclination; and they begged of me, after I was astern in the boat, to remember that they declared they had no hand in the transaction. Michael Byrne, I am told, likewise wanted to leave the ship.

It is of no moment for me to recount my endeavours to bring back the offenders to a sense of their duty: all I could do was by speaking to them in general; but my endeavours were of no avail, for I was kept securely bound, and no one but the guard suffered to come near me.

To Mr. Samuel I am indebted for securing my journals and commission, with some material ship papers. Without these I had nothing to certify what I had done, and my honour and character might have been suspected, without my possessing a proper document to have defended them. All this he did with great resolution, though guarded and strictly watched. He attempted to save the time-keeper, and a box