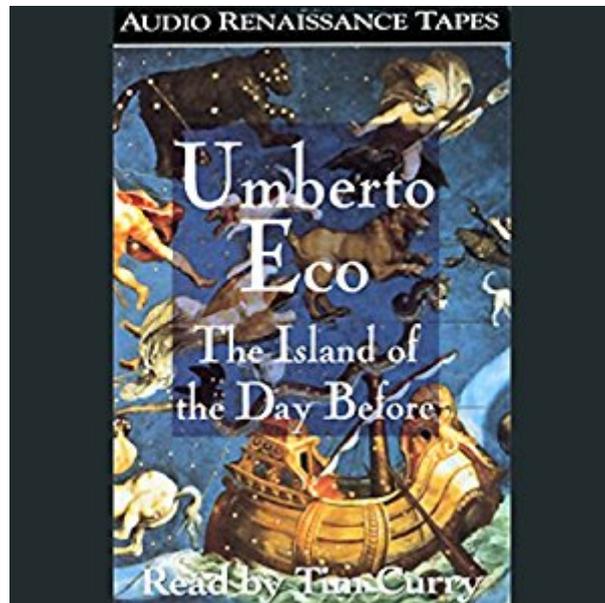


The book was found

# The Island Of The Day Before



## Synopsis

After a violent storm in the South Pacific in the year 1643, Roberto della Griva finds himself shipwrecked. Swept from the *Amaryllis*, he has managed to pull himself aboard the *Daphne*, anchored in the bay of a beautiful island surrounded by treacherous coral reefs. The ship is fully provisioned, he discovers, but the crew is missing. As Roberto explores the vessel and descends into madness, he remembers chapters from his youth: Ferrante, his imaginary evil brother; the siege of Casale, that meaningless chess move in the 30 Years' War in which he lost his father and his illusions; the Aristotelian metaphor machine of Padre Emanuele; the salons of Paris; the theory of the Powder of Sympathy; the approach of his unapproachable Lady, then prison; and finally, the summons of Cardinal Mazarin himself. In this fascinating, lyrical tale, Umberto Eco tells of an international race to master the seas by unraveling the mysteries of longitude; of a young dreamer searching for love and meaning; and of a most amazing old Jesuit who, with his clocks and maps, has plumbed the secrets of longitude, the depths of the ocean, and the Biblical Flood.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The meaning behind the name of this book struck me about a quarter of the way through. Sometimes I forget titles while I read and just enjoy the contents. But this had so much significance to what the book was actually about, it stayed with me. Imagine; even if only 'imagined', the ability to swim to an island within your sight, and arrive in the prior day. Not too shabby, compared with most titles I see, and the meanings behind them. But a clever title is not all to be found with this Umberto Eco novel. Theology; existentialism; lost language; and even one of my favorite words (discovered

first while performing in 'The Pirates of Penzance'); escutcheon. Others criticize Eco on his meandering thoughts and ideas; on his half-truths/half-fictions; his playful use of alternate reality; and his obvious disregard for probability. I say 'what the heck are you reading Eco for, then?' It took me four years of owning this book to read it. Prior to this, I could not do it. But now, with Name of the Rose and Baudolino under my belt, I thoroughly enjoyed this book, devouring it from cover to cover, and opening my mind to all that Eco has to offer... Roberto, the 'hero' of the story, finds himself stranded on board the Daphne, a boat anchored just offshore an unreachable island. Without wind, without crew, and without a know-how of swimming, Roberto explores his new 'prison', having survived a shipwreck of the vessel Amaryllis. Finding that he is indeed NOT alone on the boat, Roberto prepares to flush out the intruder and face him down. But what Roberto discovers is not quite what he set out to find.

Roberto della Griva, the protagonist of The Island of the Day Before, was born in 1614, a member of one of the minor noble families of northern Italy, vassals of the Marquis of Monferrato. While still a young child, Roberto manages to convince himself that he has an evil brother, Ferrante, kept secret by his family, to whom he ascribes all his bad actions. Ferrante serves to explain Roberto's bad luck, for everything bad that happens to Roberto is Ferrante's fault and Roberto must therefore go through life being punished for Ferrante's misdeeds. At the age of sixteen, Roberto's father is killed at the Siege of Casale, the fortress guarding the frontier between Italy and France. Roberto manages to return to Italy long enough to arrange a yearly income for himself before travelling to France. Roberto arrives in Paris in the early 1640s, at the moment of the transition of power between Cardinal Richelieu and Cardinal Mazarin. Having an interest in astronomy and philosophy, Roberto frequents the scientific salons and we learn much about the early 17th century. During the course of his visits, Roberto falls in love with one of the great ladies of Paris and mistakenly believes that she returns his love. He begins writing her a series of letters that eventually fall into the hands of the narrator and form the basis of the book. Ferrante intervenes, however, in the guise of Cardinal Mazarin and Roberto's carefree life in Paris comes to an end. France is engaged in a race with England to find the answer to the problem of longitude, and Mazarin blackmails Roberto into booking passage on the Dutch vessel, the Amaryllis, bound for the South Seas.

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