

A Modern Crusoe.

The Story of Deliverance Island and Its Hermit.

There are many lonely islands on the Australian coast, but the most interesting are those with an unusual history. One of these is Deliverance Island, near Cape York, North Queensland. Now uninhabited, this tiny coral speck has a unique history, for the only white resident it has ever known was Australia's, and probably the world's most outstanding hermit. This modern Crusoe, who met a particularly tragic death a few years ago, lived alone on this isolated island for an unbroken period of thirty-five years — never once leaving the island. His name was Harry Envoldt, and there were all sorts of legends about him and his reasons for living a hermit-like existence on this island. There were rumors current that he was a Danish prince who had to flee from his country in disgrace. Actually, however, he was a Danish sailor whose vessel was wrecked in Torres Strait in the 'eighties of last century. After several years in the berche-de-mer industry, Envoldt, for some unknown reason, went to live on the island in 1893. He was then 41 years of age, and his long hermitage did not end until he had reached his 78th year in 1928. He built a home on the island (and its remains still stand), but rarely did he receive visitors, although in the early days he sold vegetables to sailors, pearl-ers and fishermen of Torres Strait. He, himself, lived chiefly on turtle meat and fish, and he used to cure the meat by placing it in a wire cage and anchoring this beneath the water off the beach. On January 27th, 1928, he was attending to this cage when he was attacked by sharks. After a struggle he managed to regain the shore, but collapsed there and died from his wounds. His body was found by a visiting pearler, and the dead man's story was learned from a diary he had written up every day during his thirty-five years' residence on the island.

*Portland Guardian (Victoria)
Monday December 10, 1934, page 4*

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