Summary of An Outcast of the Islands

Willems was bound to spend his life inside the Malay Archipelago. When he was young, he runs away from home, and is raised later by the great Rajah Laut Tom Lingard. For several years, Willems becomes Lingard’s understudy. He learns a lot about trading from the master of the islands himself, but learns nothing about the true honour-principles of the captain.

Several years later, Willems leaves Lingard to serve for Hudig, a trading post owner, as a successful clerk. During this time, Willems becomes more ambitious and arrogant about his achievements. He maintains his pride by corrupting a small amount of Hudig’s fortune to feed his worshipper, and he falls hard when his act is found out. In a minute count, Willems loses everything that he has, his wife and child, his property, and his racial, moral superiority among the people he knows.

Fortunately, Lingard found him again, and sheltered Willems in his secret port, Sambir, a place he owns as a sole trader there, since there’s no one who is able to find the passage way to reach it besides himself. Every trader around the archipelago dream is to be able to land there, but it seems only Lingard who knows the way, and he doesn’t wish to share the knowledge with anyone else. The
one thing that the Rajah Laut forgets is Willems’ mental condition after his economical breakdown. There in Sambir, Willems often quarrels with Almayer, another one of Lingard’s protégé, and it makes Willems often leaves the hut where they live and accidentally meets Aíssa, a daughter of a blind Asian ex-pirate.

Willems and Aíssa fall in love with each other. And since love is blind, the ‘blind’ Aíssa is used by Abdulla, who is a West Asian trader, to persuade the ‘blind’ Willems, to show him Lingard’s secret passage way. Through no difficulty at all, Abdulla manages to use both of them for his advantage. After Willems takes him to Sambir, he becomes the second trader there. However, with his same religion and skin color as the townsfolk, Abdulla may become number one there in no time.

And as for Willems, he is forced to pay his act of treachery to Lingard, and he pays it hard. Willems has to stay in a remote island far from any trading activities for the rest of his life as Lingard’s prisoner. He is left alone as a white among the colored, and alone as a treacherous beast, locked away from the whites, to suffer as an outcast together with Aíssa, before finally his life ends even more tragic by being killed by Aíssa.

**Biography of Joseph Conrad**

Joseph Conrad was born in 3 December 1857 as Józef Teodor Konrad Nałęcz Korzeniowski in Ukraine, Poland. He lost both of his parents at his early ages. He lost his mother when he was 7 years old, and his father when he was 11. As he grew older, he became more and more interested with a life on the sea, and
he began his sailing journey at the age of 16, leaving Poland for France. From 1878, he spent his 20 years-life to come as a sailor under the flag of the British Merchant Navy.

During his service on deck, he sailed to many places around the Asiatic oceans, and paid several visit to Australia. He had landed on the grounds of Calcutta, Java, Borneo, and other towns with many different ships. Conrad wrote his first novel when he was 31 years old, and it was published six years later. His first novel is about the adventures around Java, Celebes, and Borneo, Almayer’s Folly. It is the first of his trilogy, followed by An Outcast of the Islands and The Rescue several years later. He also wrote several other novels, which are Tales of Unrest, Lord Jim, Nostromo, and Heart of Darkness.

Joseph Conrad died of a heart attack when he was 66 years old in 1924. He died one year after he declined honorary degree from Cambridge, and several months after he declined knighthood. He was buried in Canterbury.