

ROBIN HOOD



by Paul Creswick

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The road wound in and about the forest, and at noon they came to a part where the trees almost shut out the sky. (Chapter 1)



"Catch him by the middle," he shouted. "Now you have him, m'lord, fairly. Throw him!" And, sure enough, Stuteley came down.
(Chapter 5)



Marian allowed her eyes to rest on young Fitzooth's ardent glance for just a moment. Then she looked away. But Robin came straight to the front of her box, and began to speak.
(Chapter 11)



"Smite them, Warrenton," he cried. "Quickly, or they will end this fight against us. Now!"
(Chapter 15)

Was Robin Hood real?

No-one knows for sure. There were certainly outlaws in England in the late 12th century. Some of them probably had hideouts in Sherwood Forest or Barnesdale.

However, there are no written records of the time that mention Robin Hood by name. In those days the printing press had not been invented. In the 12th and 13th centuries the only books that existed were hand-written, mostly religious books, in Latin. The priests did not write books about wicked outlaws!

Robin's fame was spread in ballads, story-songs that were usually sung in taverns, and popular with commoners. However, the words of Robin Hood ballads were not written down until the late 15th century - 300 years after Robin is supposed to have lived.

Many of the people and places mentioned in this story are real. There was a real Sheriff in Nottingham. Prince John and King Richard the Lionheart were historical figures. In fact, Prince John became King after Richard died, and in 1215 signed the famous Magna Carta, agreeing to subject himself, as King, to the rule of law.

There are some who believe that this breakthrough, and the subsequent development of democracy in England, that later spread through the world, was possible only because one man led a fight against oppression and in favour of what was then a radical idea: freedom for all, under the rule of law.

Life in England at the time of Robin Hood

In the historical times of this story, there was simmering tension and resentment in England between the Normans and the Saxons. The Normans had come from Normandy (northern France) and had successfully invaded England (under William the Conqueror) in 1066.

More than a hundred years later, when this story is set, the Normans were still in control. In most of England, the Norman lords owned the land and its wealth, and the peasant Saxons worked for them, in poverty. The character George of Monfichet, in this story, is one of these Norman lords. Robin's father, Hugh Fitzooth, was one of the many Saxons who had lost his own lands to a Norman.

In those days, there was no opportunity for a peasant to save and invest money, and improve his or her position in life. Peasants farmed their lord's land, and helped to keep their lord wealthy, in his manor. Peasants were not free, because they could stay on the land only at the discretion of their lord. These peasants or "serfs" would have to pay their lord, or work the lord's land for him, for their entire lives.

Robin Hood and his band had dropped out of this system to live dangerously as "free men" in Sherwood Forest. They could not earn an honest living this way, so had to become outlaws to survive.



At last Little John made a dart on Roger and the chase grew furious. Dishes, plates, covers, pots and pans—anything that got in the way went flying. (Chapter 18)



The beggar dealt his foe a back thrust so neatly, so heartily, and so swiftly that Nat was swept off the stage into the crowd like a fly off a table. (Chapter 24)



Little John had recovered enough from his wound, to sing them a song, while Robin accompanied him on a harp.
(Chapter 31)



Leaning heavily against Little John's sobbing breast, Robin Hood flew his last arrow out through the window, far away into the deep green of the trees. (Chapter 35)



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