



The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood

Howard Pyle

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The story of Robin Hood originally printed in 1883. The edition is illustrated also by the author Howard Pyle.

The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood Details

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Author : Howard Pyle

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From Reader Review The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood for online ebook

Holly says

At my high school, I have to read 500 pages worth of classic books. I'm not the kind of girl to fawn over Wuthering Heights or Jane Eyre. I wanted an interesting classic, so I picked up Robin Hood (because who doesn't like him?) I was especially drawn to him thanks to a recent viewing of Robin Hood: Men in Tights. Thank you, Mel Brooks.

Anyway. Back to the book. I was concerned about the whole "steals from the rich and give to the needy" at first because the whole premise seemed to be this: Robin meets a strong stranger. They fight until Robin is overcome. Robin toots his bugle to get his merry men to come. Robin asks the stranger to become part of his band. Stranger accepts. They get drunk. The End.

The characters were actually pretty diverse and entertaining. I think the constant meeting of new characters helped the story because we would learn a person's story every few pages and then see how Robin and Little John either tried to help them or asked them to join their band.

And there was some action, too! I guess that's kind of obvious. The villains constantly getting outsmarted is always fun to see. You can't help but want to laugh at them and say "Didn't you learn the last time?"

If anyone else has to read classics for school, this is a good one. They do talk a little funny and it's a tad hard to understand at times, but you get used to the rhythm quickly.

Krista Baetiong Tungol says

Howard Pyle gave an interesting glimpse into the escapades of the lighthearted Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, and with so many adaptations about this infamous folklore—both in print and film/TV—I must say that this version was entertaining enough. If there is only one thing that challenged me throughout the read, it is the archaic wording.

On another note, it took me forever to finish this book because I was watching the BBC TV adaptation of Robin Hood (starring Jonas Armstrong) the same time I was reading this.

Steve Hemmeke says

A rollicking good time. This long version by traditional storyteller Howard Pyle hums with the merriment of Robin's band of brothers. Their adventures involve bringing justice to folks in need, at the expense of the apathetic or oppressive rich and powerful passing near Sherwood forest.

It struck me that Robin Hood presents some lessons from the 1200s on masculinity, which we might not learn in our culture. The typical reference to Robin's merry men today tends to be an off color homosexual

reference, which only shows how little we understand true masculinity.

1. Good men are quick to laugh, not because they are fools but because they pursue a life of joy.
2. True men can laugh at themselves. They are not so caught up in their ego, pride or machismo that they don't see when they have BEEN the joke.
3. Real men aren't afraid of others of superior ability, but invite them to join them in common cause. This strengthens them in a community that depends on others. It is amazing how many times Robin loses a fight, then asks the winner to join him.
4. Men trust other friends with their lives. We need friends to share our fight, walk our road, and tell our stories with us.

Be a real man like Robin Hood.

I'm not sure it was intended originally, but the premise presents a powerful parallel with David, outlawed from Saul in 1 Samuel. Both David and Robin gather those indebted or out of favor or outlawed to the king. Both are really in the right and will be vindicated in the future. Both work for the good of the kingdom (and themselves) before that time comes, by plundering God's enemies. Both are pursued by the oppressive authorities (Saul, the Sheriff), but are vindicated by higher authorities (God, King Richard).

E.F.B. says

3 stars stands for, "Didn't love it, didn't hate it. Just kinda feel meh about it."

FYI: I listened to this on audio book.

I was a teeny tad disappointed in this book. I had hoped it would be a lot more fun than it was, and it was fun in some places, but in others it was, IMO, boring/unneeded, and there were things about the writing style that drove me absolutely bonkers.

Things started out pretty well. I thought the way the narrator talks to the reader in the prologue and asks you to take his hand so he can lead you on this adventure was rather charming. I was all like, "Teehee! Okie dokie!"

But by the epilogue when the narrator releases your hand to go your separate ways, I was feeling a lot more like,

I'm sad that I felt that way because this book is a classic and Robin Hood was an interesting character, but WOW it was way longer than it needed to be. Like I said above, there were some fun parts. I enjoyed the episodic events that I would say are the most familiar to the general public: Robin Hood and Little John's first meeting, the various archery tournaments, and King Richard pardoning Robin Hood. I also enjoyed the few chapters that involved Queen Elanor (sp?). While I wasn't previously familiar with her involvement in the story it was just really nice to have a female character who actually did something. (Speaking of female characters, I don't think I heard a single mention of Maid Marion in this entire story. If someone knows of a version of Robin Hood where she was actually featured, I would appreciate it if you pointed it out to me, because I was disappointed she wasn't there.)

On the other side of things, however, many of the episodic events in this story were repetitive to the point of becoming predictable and boring: You know how Robin Hood and Little John actually fought each other when they first met? Well, it turns out that happened with quite a few of the other merry men, too. It seemed like nearly everyone they met in Sherwood forest either fought Robin or Little John with staffs, or competed with one or the other in archery, or a battle of wits. I just got tired of it quickly, and even reached a point where my brain was totally tuning out while I listened, but when I tuned back in, I didn't feel like I had missed anything because the same kind of things kept happening.

And then there were the songs. I don't mind songs or poetry being featured in stories in general. I mean, I love Tolkien's writing and he certainly had plenty of those in his books. But what I need from songs in stories is for them to either build the characters, build the world, or move the story along. In general, the songs sung by the characters in this book did none of this and they were also way too long. For example, there was one point where some of the characters just wanted to compare their singing voices and the songs they knew, and I literally had to sit and listen while three different characters sang three different songs. Not little samples of songs, mind you, they sang the ENTIRE SONG and the songs were just merry little tunes about silly things that had nothing to do with actual story. Then there was a point where Robin and his men spied on Friar Tuck when he was sitting there under a tree drinking and talking to himself like he was two different people having a conversation, and then those "two people" decided to sing a song where one "person" sang one part the other "person" sang the replying parts. It was funny at first and did build his character a little, I'll admit, but then he Just. Kept. Singing. It truly reached a point where, when someone started singing, I automatically hit fast forward because I just plain didn't care anymore.

And the writing. Never have I seen such flowery writing outside of Shakespeare, not to mention so many repetitive descriptors in all my reading life! Nearly everyone was described as "merry" at some point in the book, and if I ever hear someone described as "lusty" or "saucy" again, I will scream and throw things.

By the time I got to the epilogue I was soooooo ready to finish the story, but it wasn't even over yet! The epilogue was actually twenty minutes long on audio and detailed the end of Robin Hood's life, which I totally wasn't expecting. It was pretty sad what happened to him too, because after escaping his enemies so many times (view spoiler)

What a way to go. :/ I did, however, find myself liking Robin as a person even more than before after this, because even as he died he was compassionate towards those who did him wrong. Though I would have preferred to finish things on a happy note rather than know how Robin Hood died, his attitude of forgiveness even in the face of death meant a lot to me and it earned him a lot of respect in my eyes.

All of that said, I didn't enjoy this book as much as I had hoped to. I didn't hate it and didn't find anything outright objectionable in it, but I just didn't love it either. Seeing how I got so tired of it at one point that I wasn't sure I wanted to finish it, I don't feel I can even be generous enough to give it four stars, so three stars it will remain.

Content advisory for those who want to know: I believe that, technically, this book is considered a children's classic. There was no sexual content in this book that I can recall. There was lots of fighting, some killing, and some brief mentions of blood, but the descriptions of this violence were very flowery (like the rest of the book) and not graphic or intense. There is also quite a bit of drinking of ale and other alcoholic beverages

that goes on throughout and people rarely seem to suffer ill-effects from it.

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

I liked this book until the end...I wont ruin it for those of you who have not read it...but after you read it I think you will understand what I mean. Another iconic character that has evolved to this day (Green Arrow and Hawkeye).

Kirsten says

This was I genuinely life altering book for me. I read it for a 12th grade book report and I absolutely loved it. This one book sparked a revolution in my reading habits. No longer was I a participant of the young adult genre, devouring books like Harry Potter or The Series of Unfortunate Events (and that's nit to say I don't like them anymore or that I think they're stupid, I still love them), I now belonged to a more scholarly class of literature. A whole new world was opened up for me.

In the beginning of this story, through a course of events, young Robin eventually takes someones life. The story later goes on to narrate that Robin had made a vow never to take another life in vain. I think that this was the cause of Robin's life long sacrifice. I think that he felt guilty for taking something that wasn't his to take and he vowed to make amends by righting any wrong that, to any degree, replicated the injustice he caused. The book doesn't outrightly state any of this, it's just a theory of my own. That, I think, gives Robin some depth, and that's why I love this book. Any book that holds some wider philosophical, ethical or spiritual significance is a great book by me!

Nikki says

Read this for my Robin Hood module, as with Ivanhoe. This is the second book which I just couldn't read as anything but an English Literature student; my lit student hat remained firmly jammed upon my head. It pains me to read other people's reviews and thoughts on this, given that they're so wildly inaccurate about it. E.g. someone thinking it was "the" book of Robin Hood (and not knowing about the ballad tradition, or the forerunners to this such as Ivanhoe). Or someone thinking it's written in Old English (see also: my review of Ivanhoe). Seriously, no, guys. It's not even Middle English. It's faux-Middle English in parts, but it isn't even that old a text, for God's sake. Even Shakespeare (late 1500s/early 1600s) was writing in Modern English. This was written in 1883 or so, right? About as Anglo-Saxon as what I'm writing right now!

And then people thinking this is "the" book, the original. Sheesh.

Obviously, a lot of the stories come straight from the surviving ballads -- perhaps all; I haven't read every single Robin Hood ballad. They're expanded upon by Howard Pyle, in that he writes them out as a coherent narrative and with all the same characters recurring, and obviously it's not in verse. It's a pretty sanitised version, given that Robin rarely kills as an outlaw: once when he becomes an outlaw (as opposed to the fifteen he kills in the original ballad, Robin Hood's Progress to Nottingham) and once when he kills Guy of Gisborne (and unlike in the ballad, he doesn't cut Guy's face off). It wasn't obvious that it was an adaptation for children, from the language -- it's not exactly difficult, but nor is it easy or exciting. Still, in the time

period, perhaps that's not surprising. (I should have some basis of comparison, given my Introduction to Children's Literature course, but I can't bring anything to mind right now.) The sanitisation gave it away rather, in any case.

I did get kind of bored reading it, honestly. Each tale is more or less the same -- they're practically all "Robin meets his match" stories, and at the end the stout yeoman will join the band. The writing isn't intensely exciting, as I mentioned. I did enjoy it, and possibly would have enjoyed it more in small doses. And, of course, it's very episodic so it can easily be read in small chunks.

It's, ah, one of the more 'homosocial' Robin Hood stories I've read, honestly. There are two or three mentions of Marian, at most, and she doesn't come into it as a character at all -- I half-expected a chapter that came from Robin Hood and Maid Marian. And Will Scarlet is so very, very camp. And Little John and Robin are so very very close. It kind of read like a slashfic of Robin Hood, sometimes.

I will confess, the epilogue made me want to cry. Oh, Robin. Incidentally, apparently tales of Robin's death are quite rare, and this is one of the few.

(Note: If anyone wants links to the ballads, or indeed, this book, online, I know where the book can be downloaded legally as an ebook, and where the ballads are collected online.)

Steven Walle says

This was a wonderful reread from my childhood. A wonderful romp through the Sherwood forest with Robin and his merry men. A tale of good and evil stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

I recommend to all.

Enjoy and Be Blessed.

PS It makes it a lot more fun if you read it aloud to a child.

Diamond

Rob says

Marry, I didst learn to prate e'en as those stout fellows did in Merry Old England. 'Tis true, there are other accounts of Bold Robin's merry doings, but this one, I wot, pleases me most of them all. By the bright eyes of the lass I love best, I'll say you, do you give yon 'Bloody Quaker' the chance, thou wilt likewise fall, willy-nilly, under his spell, both with the pen, and the brush, for he is a fair hand with both, withal.

And to whoever did lightly reave away my copy (I've since obtained another) ten years gone, a murrain upon thee!

Sheila Beaumont says

I read this book several times as a child, and it was fun to revisit it via this excellent audiobook. Christopher

Cazenove does a brilliant job of narrating it.

Dave Skaff says

Pretty much the first thing every new Kindle owner does is download a shitload of free classics. And hey why not? They're much lauded - and free! And among that set for me was this book.

I loved the Robin Hood tales as a child, read some other more kid-friendly versions of it time and time again as a boy and so I thought I'd tackle the original* here.

And? It was awesome. If you liked it then you'll like it now. Friar Tuck, Little John, Will Scarlet - the whole band is there, frolicking and robbing and carrying on. What I didn't recall, however, is that this book is *funny*. Robin has a wicked sense of humor and the dialogue is witty! A bit cartoonish even. So I dug that this trip around.

*I asterisked original here because, there really is no original. After reading this I was prompted to read all of the Wikipedia entries about Robin Hood and the evolution of his tales. This version by Pyle is widely regarded as the beginning of the modern and well known tale, but it was neither the beginning nor the end. Check the Wikipedia entry if you're curious for more: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Hood

Happy hunting.

Salem says

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Brian says

After getting a taste of Robin Hood in *Ivanhoe*, I decided to find out more about him. *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* takes its basis from the many old ballads about Robin Hood. As a result, it is a combination of mini-stories. Howard Pyle does a commendable job in joining all these stories into a cohesive novel. It was fun following the adventures of Robin, Little John, Friar Tuck, and the rest of the merry band!

For more info on Robin Hood check out:

Robin Hood - lots of general info, and was there a real Robin Hood?

Robin Hood - general info.

Robin Hood - general info and good info on his death.

Adventures of Robin Hood - 1938 movie with Errol Flynn.

Mary says

Quite different from many modern retellings of the story. The men where really men (it seems like beating someone up was the equivalent of a handshake), but they were also really women (I'm looking at you, Will Scarlet.) Maid Marian is present only as a thought in Robin's head. The really excellent stories, like how Robin keeps tricking people out of their clothes to keep the vengeful King Henry off his tail (by the time King John shows up, Robin is--oddly--working for him) or carrying Friar Tuck over the creek, are typically not included in Robin Hood lore. At first I didn't like how Robin Hood wasn't particularly noble, but now I love what he was in this book--thoroughly decent.

Katy says

Read this one over time using the Serial Reader App for iPad.

Each installment was another adventure for the "merry men." The first few were the joining of several characters to the band of men. And such a sad ending that I had no idea had happened.

Karen says

Seldomly I've been so touched by a book as I was by Robin Hood. From the very beginning it was a lighthearted and happy tale of an outlaw and his adventures, told in a careless, joyful and entertaining language - depicting Robin Hood not as a criminal, but a lovely young man with a sharp wit, sense of humour and excellent skills with the bow. He is the king of his band of men yet they are equal, he shows mercy for the needing and sympathy for the weak. You wish him all good in the world and it is with a somewhat heavy heart that you wish him a good journey with the King of England when he "grows up", and you shed tears when he returns to Sherwood after years of service to the King, even more so when his band of men all return to him. Even so, all things good must end and you feel like you've lost your dearest cousin, the one that was your favourite because he was charming, witty and wellmannered, as well as he had a pure heart...farewell Robin Hood, may you rest in peace.

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I do realise that this story is nothing but fiction based upon folklore and that the real Robin Hood might not have been worth the glory...nevertheless he is an interesting character and I believe that Pyle has managed to create a real hero with his interpretation of him. I love Robin Hood more now than I did as child, watching countless movies and cartoons about him, most of these inspired by this tale. But nothing beats the "real thing", so to say, and I feel that my childhood hero has gained a stronger place in my heart.

Amanda Tero says

My review is a bit torn between two. Robin Hood in this retelling was nothing but a rogue and restless fellow. There was no King Richard for whom he was fighting behind the sheriff's back. Instead, he was just at odds with the sheriff and the sheriff could not overcome him or his men. So, there really wasn't much noble in Robin's character here. That, I really couldn't admire.

On the flip side, the humor in this was hysterical. I had several laughing aloud moments. I can appreciate good wit, and the merry men surely had it. Of course, as with any wit, it did go too far at times.

There was a heavy theme of drinking throughout the pages. The only form of Christianity would be the priests who cares more for their purse than their parishes (which was to be a revealing of hypocrisy). There was next to no romance (sorry, no maid Marion in this book, besides her name being mentioned once). It's possible that the songs they sung could have had some questionable content, but I'll be honest and confess that I skipped over the poetry, so I don't know what they contain.

A good way to think of this book is as a collection of short tales of Robin Hood, as the flow wasn't exactly novel-type.

The adventures were a mix of fun and some with which I could not approve (they just lacked the integrity and nobility that I have seen in Robin in other retellings). I could revisit some of the stories and cannot say I wish I hadn't read it.

Malum says

I have been wanting to read some Robin Hood stories ever since I read Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* because Robin Hood is mentioned so often in it. I don't think Sawyer was reading Pyle (I believe that Twain's book was published first), but this is certainly something that I could see young Tom Sawyer really enjoying.

There are honorable knaves, bloody duels, merry men pulling one over on the man, and even quite a few references to King Arthur and his knights. Also, the gang is all here, along with all of their "origin stories" (I read too many comics...): Will Scarlet, Little John, Friar Tuck, Alan a Dale, King Richard, and the evil Guy of Gisborne and the Sheriff of Nottingham. The only thing missing (shockingly enough) was Maid Marian (she is mentioned briefly at the beginning but doesn't actually make an appearance in the book).

So, if you are looking for a fun, light classic, you really can't go wrong with *The Merry Adventures of Robin*

Hood.

Ahmed says

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Brittany says

The stout yeoman Robin Hood and his broad-shouldered band of outlaws make for an awesome reading adventure. The boys (ages 4 & 7) and I loved listening to the stories in the car. The book was just as good as I remember it from my childhood.

I love how the reader does all the voices. And when the characters burst into song, as they are wont to do on occasion, the narrator even sings in character! I laughed at the fun language Robin Hood and Little John use: Any good character is stout and broad-shouldered, while anyone with negative qualities is called a knave. Little John constantly calls upon "the good Saint Dunstan" for protection and thanks. And who can leave out all the short staff matches and archery tournaments?

As an adult I do wonder, though... how can these men spend their lives lying about on the grass under a great tree, sometimes breaking into fight practice and going on occasional adventures? Robin Hood is constantly summoning up huge feasts, but who is preparing these feasts? There is a startling lack of women in the story: Allan-a-Dale is the only married man that we hear about, and only up until her marriage and then not until the very end of the book. Is she the one doing all the cooking? Still, it's a wonderful story, and well narrated. Howard Pyle is a genius. I'm hoping next to get my hands on an audio copy of his King Arthur stories.
