

Robin Hood

Chapter 1-3



Introduction

Lord Gamwell followed the man to the middle of Sherwood Forest. There, in the spring sunshine, he saw his daughter. He also saw a baby boy in her arms. Joanna looked up at her father and smiled. 'This is Robin, your grandson,' she said.

Robin Hood was born in the forest, and the forest was his home for much of his life. His story is hundreds of years old. At that time, in England, many Saxon people lived in small villages on the lands of important Norman lords (from Normandy, now in France). Other people lived on church lands. Life was hard for these villagers because they had to give money and food to their lord and to the church.

So village people loved to hear stories about Robin Hood. Robin Hood was clever, strong and brave. He loved adventure, and he was the best fighter in England. He took money from rich people and gave it to the poor villagers.

The most famous Robin Hood stories are in this book. They are about beautiful Lady Marian, the greedy Sheriff of Nottingham, good King Richard, and his bad brother, Prince John.

Many countries have stories about brave and clever adventurers. But is Robin Hood only a story? Perhaps Robin really did live, and perhaps not. There was a King Richard; he was king from 1189 to 1199. He left England and fought in Jerusalem. When he was away, Prince John was the most important man in England. Then, when Richard died, John was the next king.

The stories say that Robin Hood lived with his men in Sherwood Forest, near the town of Nottingham. Sherwood Forest and Nottingham are about two hundred kilometres north of London. Many people there say that Robin Hood really lived in the forest.

Chapter 1

Robin Fitzooth is Born in Sherwood Forest

The Robin Hood stories are very famous. Most people know that Robin lived in Saxon and Norman¹ times. He robbed rich people and gave the money to poor people. But not everybody knows that he came from a rich family. And not many people know that Robin Hood was half- Saxon and half-Norman.



The story begins with Robin Hood's Saxon grandfather, Sir² George Gamwell. Gamwell lived near a Norman lord. This lord wanted to take Gamwell's house and his lands. The two men fought, and the Norman lord killed Gamwell's two sons. Gamwell's wife also died.

But Sir George also had a young daughter, Joanna.

‘I have no sons,’ Gamwell said to Joanna. ‘So I will teach you to fight with a sword, and with a bow and arrow.’

Five years later, Joanna was nineteen years old and very beautiful. One day, a young man visited Sir George. His name was William Fitzooth, and he was a Norman.

‘Sir George,’ he began, ‘I love your daughter. I hope that she loves me. I would like to marry her. I have money and land...’

But Sir George was very angry.

‘Never!’ he answered. ‘My daughter will never marry you. Get off my land. Do not come here again or I will kill you!’

Joanna loved this young man. So she tried to talk to her father, but he didn't want to listen.

‘Go to your room!’ he shouted. ‘I do not want to hear that man's name again.’

¹ Saxons and Normans: In the Middle Ages, many different people came to England. The **Saxon** were a group who came from Germany and Scandinavia. The **Normans** were people who came from France.

² Sir, Lord, Lady: Important men had the words Sir or *Lord* before their names; important women had the word *Lady*.

That night, William came back to Sir George's home. He stood under Joanna's window and called to her. Joanna took some clothes and came quietly out of the house.

William took her hand. 'Will you come with me and marry me?' he asked. 'We cannot live in my home because your father's men will look for you there. So we will live in the green forest.'

'I am sorry for my father,' Joanna said sadly, 'but I love you. I know you are a good man. I will marry you.'

In the morning, Sir George woke late. He called to his men, 'Where is my daughter? I want to speak to her.'

But Joanna was nowhere in the house.

Sir George was very angry, then very sad.
'I have no family now,' he thought.

One fine day in April, a year later, a man came to the house.

'Your daughter sent me here,' he said. 'She wants you to come and see her.'

Sir George followed the man to the middle of Sherwood Forest. There, in the spring sunshine, he saw his daughter. He also saw a baby boy in her arms. Joanna looked up at her father and smiled.

'This is Robin, your grandson,' she said.

She gave the baby to her father. Sir George wanted to be angry, but he was very happy with his grandson in his arms.

'Robin? Is that your name?' he said. 'Well, little Robin, I wanted to kill your father but that is not possible now. Please, daughter, come with your husband and live near me. Let's forget the past.'

'We will come and live near you, father,' said Joanna. 'But I will often bring my son to the forest. I will teach him to find his

way in the forest in the day and at night. He will learn to make arrows for his bow, and to catch forest animals. He will make a fire and cook the meat. The forest will always be his second home.'

Activities for chapter 1

Questions for the story

- 1) Why does Gamwell teach Joanna to fight with a sword, and bow and arrow?
- 2) What is the name of the man, who Joanna marries?
- 3) Why do they marry in secret?
- 4) Why is Gamwell first angry and sad, but ends up being happy?
- 5) Where does Joanna says that Robin will have his second home?

Understanding the words

Try to explain the following words. Some of the words, you will probably need to look up online:

- 1) What is a **lord**?
- 2) What is a **lady**?
- 3) Who were **the Normans**?
- 4) Who were **the Saxons**?

Find examples

- 1) Find two adjectives
- 2) Find three verbs

Chapter 2

The Sheriff of Nottingham Finds Robin Hood

Robin's grandfather died, then his mother and father. After twenty-five years, Robin was lord of Gamwell and Locksley, and lived in his father's home, Locksley House.

The village people liked Robin Fitzooth.

‘He is a good man,’ they said. ‘No man, woman or child is hungry on Robin of Locksley's lands.’

Not all lords were so kind. The worst person was the greedy Sheriff of Nottingham. The sheriff took everything from the villagers, and often these poor people were very hungry. Robin listened carefully to the stories about the sheriff. He sent food and clothes to the poorest families.



At about this time, people began to tell stories about a robber. They called him Robin Hood.

‘The sheriff is a hard man,’ they said. ‘He and his rich friends take everything from us. But now brave Robin Hood and his men rob rich people and give their money to poor villagers!’

In those days, the Great North Road went through Sherwood Forest. Robin Hood's men often stopped rich men in the forest, and took their money. Sometimes Prince John's men also used the road. So Robin Hood robbed him too.

‘The forest is on your land,’ said Prince John to the sheriff. ‘Why don't you catch and kill this robber?’

‘It is not so easy,’ answered the sheriff. ‘The village people don't want to tell me much. They say only that the robbers live in or near Sherwood Forest. But they know more than they say. I have a plan to learn more about this man Robin Hood.’

‘What is your plan?’ asked the prince.

‘It is this,’ answered the sheriff. ‘Robin of Locksley lives near Sherwood Forest. Tonight there is going to be a great party at Locksley House. I know that Fitzooth

will invite the village people on his land. So I will send one of my men. He can wear village clothes and ask questions about “good” Robin Hood, “the people's friend”. When I know more about this Robin, I can catch him.’

That evening, there were a lot of people at Locksley House. There was food and drink for the villagers, and there was dancing and singing. Everybody was very happy. And Robin was the happiest person there, because he and the lovely Lady Marian Fitzwalter planned to marry the next day.

The sheriff's man turned to a villager next to him.

‘I often hear the name Robin Hood,’ he said. ‘Who is he? Does he live near here?’

The man laughed. ‘Don't you know, friend? Robin Fitzooth is Robin Hood!’

The sheriff's man quickly left Locksley House and went to his lord.

‘This is better than I hoped,’ said the sheriff. ‘Tomorrow, Robin Fitzooth will marry Lady Marian at St Mary's Abbey. But my men will stop him and bring him to me. Prince John will kill him and give me Fitzooth's money and lands. Lady Marian's family is also rich. She will not marry Robin, so perhaps I will marry her. Yes, tomorrow will be a great day for me!’

Activities for chapter 2

Questions for the story

- 1) How old was Robin, when he became lord of Gamwell and Locksley?
- 2) What do the people think about the sheriff?
- 3) Where does the robbers live?
- 4) Who is invited to the party at Locksley?
- 5) Who does Robin plan to marry?

Understanding the words

Translate the following words. Use a dictionary if necessary:

- 1) Village
- 2) Villager
- 3) Robber
- 4) Kind
- 5) Rich
- 6) Poor
- 7) Quickly

Write about it

*The people say Robin is a **good** man. Write about what makes a person good:*

Chapter 3

At St. Mary's Abbey

At 10 o'clock the next morning, Robin Fitzooth and Lady Marian stood in front of the abbot in St Mary's Abbey. Lady Marian was some years younger than Robin, and very lovely. She wore a white dress, and her long hair was the colour of the forest trees in autumn.

The abbot began to speak.

'Robin of Locksley,' he began 'do you ...'

'Stop!' somebody called from the back of the church. Robin turned. It was the Sheriff of Nottingham. Behind the sheriff were twenty men with bows and arrows.

'My Lord Abbot,' called the sheriff loudly. 'This man has to come with me. He is the robber, Robin Hood!' Then he turned to his men. 'Why are you waiting?' he asked. 'Take him!'

'Yes, I am Robin Hood,' answered Robin, 'but you will not take me. Look carefully round the church, Sheriff. Do you not see my men?'

The sheriff looked and saw thirty or more tall, strong men.

The abbot was angry and afraid. 'What are you doing?' he shouted. 'Will you fight in a church?'

'This man has to come with me,' said the sheriff again. 'Give me your sword, Robin Hood, and come quietly. The good abbot does not want you to fight!'

Robin walked slowly to the sheriff.

'Here you are, my Lord,' he said - and hit the sheriff hard on the head with the top of his sword. The sheriff fell back.

'Outside! Everybody outside!' shouted Robin.

His men pushed the sheriff's men back through the church door. A great fight began outside the abbey.

Robin spoke quickly to Marian.

'We can fight and win today,' he said. 'But now the sheriff knows my name, and I cannot go back to Locksley House.

Wait for me, my love. King Richard will come back to England - he will hear about the greedy sheriff and his friends. But now I will be Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest and not Robin of Locksley. I will never hurt a woman, a child or a poor man. But rich and greedy men will be afraid to walk near my forest home!'

Activities for chapter 3

Questions for the story

- 1) What is the colour of Marian's hair?
- 2) How many men is with the Sheriff?
- 3) How many men does Robin have?
- 4) What does Robin hit the Sheriff on the head with?

Understanding the words

Write a sentence with the following words. Use a dictionary, if you don't know the words:

- 1) **Lovely:** _____
- 2) **Turned:** _____
- 3) **Loudly:** _____
- 4) **Tall:** _____
- 5) **Slowly:** _____

Write about it

Robin calls the sheriff **greedy**. Why do you think that is?
