

LEGEND
a story passed
down through time

THE LEGEND OF ROBIN HOOD

ADVENTURE AWAITS YOU.

BY SPENCER KAYDEN

Robin Hood is a hero from English folklore. Stories about him date back to at least the 1300s.

CHARACTERS

Circle the character you will play. *Indicates a major role.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| *Narrators 1, 2, 3
(N1, N2, N3) | Will Scarlet, one of the Merry Men | Bishop of Hereford |
| *Robin Hood, an outlaw | Merry Men, to be read by a group | Villagers 1, 2, 3 |
| Little John, one of the Merry Men | Much, the miller's son | Herald, an announcer |
| Friar Tuck, one of the Merry Men | *Sir Guy of Gisbourne, a deputy and knight | Crowd, to be read by
a large group |
| | *Lady Marian, a noblewoman | |
| | *Sheriff of Nottingham | |

As You Read Think about what motivates each of the main characters.

PROLOGUE

N1: The lights come up on a dark forest. Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, and a group of other Merry Men speak to the audience.

Robin Hood: In the year 1192, King Richard I is off fighting a war. In his place, the corrupt Prince John rules England. He demands that everyone pay heavy taxes, even the very poor.

Little John: Where we live, the Sheriff of Nottingham collects these taxes—using threats and violence.

Friar Tuck: He sends some money to the prince, but he keeps most of it for himself.

Will Scarlet: Since the laws have become unjust—

Robin:—I, Robin Hood—

Merry Men:—and we, his Merry Men—

Robin:—live as outlaws in Sherwood Forest.

Merry Men: We steal from the rich to give to the poor!

Friars were a group within the Catholic Church who took a vow of poverty. They had no possessions and dedicated their lives to serving others.

Robin: What has happened to you, lad?

Much (sniffing): My father could not pay the new taxes, so the Sheriff of Nottingham burned down our mill. Now we have nothing!

Will: The Sheriff's cruelty is limitless.

Little John: I'll pummel that villain!

Robin: Nay, we can injure him using our brains rather than our brawn. As for you, young friend—

N2: Robin takes a loaf of bread and a hunk of mutton from his satchel.

Robin (giving it to Much): Tell your father Robin Hood will not let your family starve.

Much: We are forever in your service!

SCENE 2

N3: The Merry Men practice archery.

Merry Men: England is rotting from the top on down! We pledge our revenge on Nottingham Town!

N1: Friar Tuck comes rushing up to them.

Friar Tuck (out of breath): I have just been to the village. Sir Guy is collecting taxes for the Sheriff today.

Robin: Indeed?

Friar Tuck: He must pass through our woods to get back to the castle.

Little John: His purse will be heavy with coins.

N2: Robin grabs his arrows.

Robin: Time for an adventure, boys!

SCENE 1

N2: With bows and arrows slung over their shoulders, Robin and the Merry Men walk in Sherwood Forest.

N3: They begin to chant.

Merry Men: The forest comes alive in the sweet green of spring. Apple buds blossom and cuckoo birds sing.

N1: They come across a young man whose face and clothes are covered in dirt.

SCENE 3

N3: Sir Guy and Lady Marian ride through Sherwood Forest with their guards.

Sir Guy: I thank you, milady, for accompanying me today. Take this necklace as a token of my appreciation.

Lady Marian: That necklace belonged to one of the villagers, did it not?

Guy: She could not pay her taxes, so I took this instead. I would like you to have it.

Marian: I cannot accept it, Sir Guy. This villager was not born into nobility as we were. Why should she be punished for her poverty?

Guy: I have no pity for commoners and peasants. If they worked harder, they would have plenty.

N1: Lady Marian frowns. Sir Guy looks down the dark path ahead.

Guy: I dislike passing through these woods. They are full of dreadful bandits.

Marian: Is this Robin Hood as ruthless as they say?

Guy: He stole from the Bishop of Hereford, taking his money *and* his clothes!

Marian: Can't the Sheriff do something?

Guy: There is a **bounty** of 200 gold coins on his head, but the people will not turn him in. To them, he is a saint.

Marian: Saint Robin Hood?

N2: Just then, Robin drops from a tree.

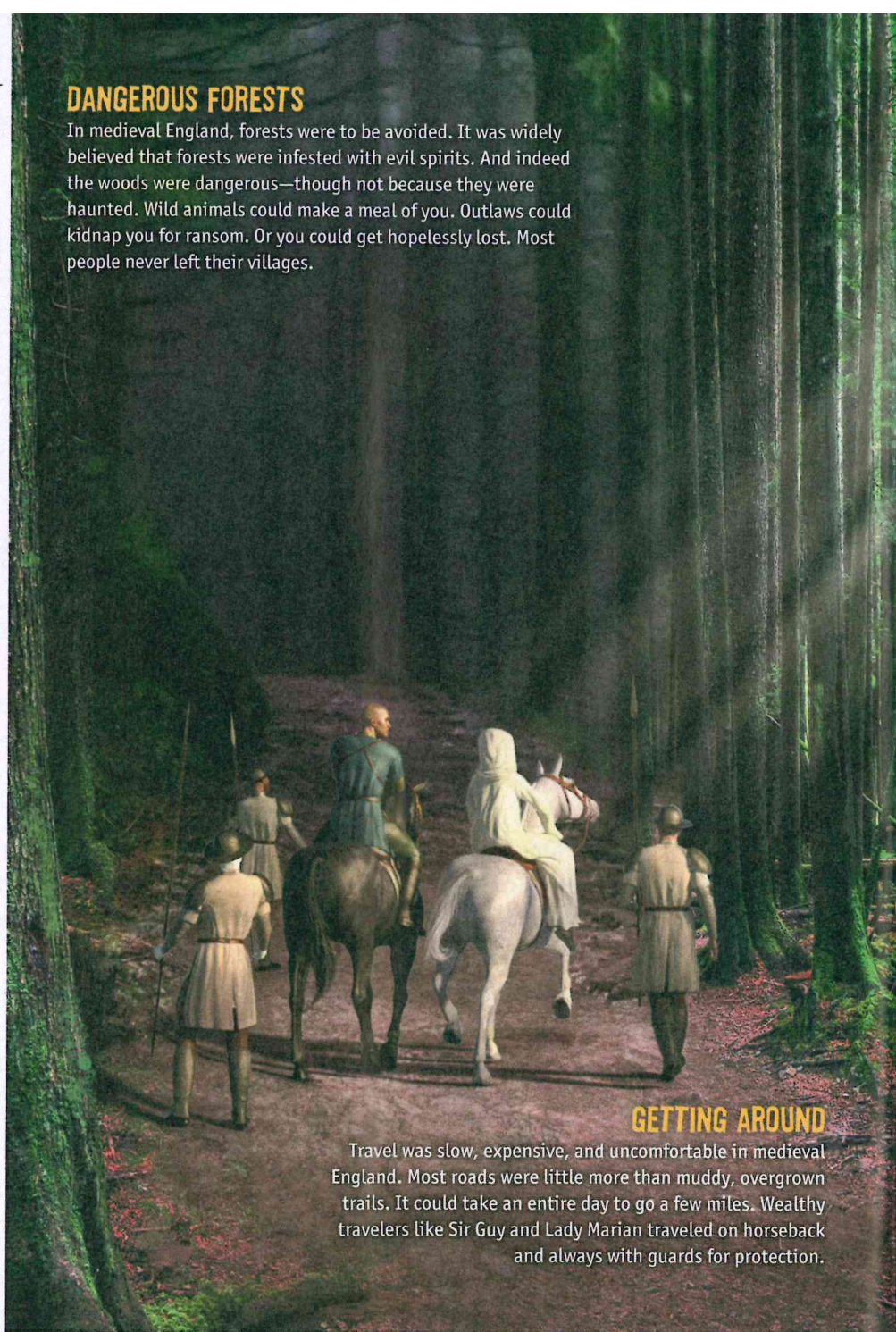
Robin: You called?

N3: Sir Guy and his guards draw their swords.

N1: Robin blows his bugle.

DAINGEROUS FORESTS

In medieval England, forests were to be avoided. It was widely believed that forests were infested with evil spirits. And indeed the woods were dangerous—though not because they were haunted. Wild animals could make a meal of you. Outlaws could kidnap you for ransom. Or you could get hopelessly lost. Most people never left their villages.



GETTING AROUND

Travel was slow, expensive, and uncomfortable in medieval England. Most roads were little more than muddy, overgrown trails. It could take an entire day to go a few miles. Wealthy travelers like Sir Guy and Lady Marian traveled on horseback and always with guards for protection.

N2: Scores of Merry Men appear, arrows drawn.

Guy: Seize them!

Merry Men: Ha! Ha! Ha!

Marian: With respect, Sir Guy, we are outnumbered.

N3: Robin takes off his hat and bows to Lady Marian.

Robin: The lady is **perceptive**.

N1: A smile twitches at the corners of Marian's mouth.

Guy: Scoundrel! Let us pass.

Robin: Why the hurry, Sir Guy? You must be hungry after a long day of robbing the poor. Join us for a feast.

Guy: I would rather not.

Robin: Oh, but I rather insist.

N2: Robin's men blindfold Sir Guy and Lady Marian and lead them to their camp hidden deep in the forest.

SCENE 4

N3: Sir Guy and Lady Marian sit uncomfortably on tree stumps. A fire crackles as a deer roasts on a spit.

N1: Little John raises his goblet.

Little John: To the Sheriff: Though his heart may be empty, his pockets are always full!

Merry Men: Ha! Ha! Ha!

N2: After the feast, Will steps forward.

Will: Before you go, Sir Guy, we ask a small donation for the meal we have given you.

Guy: Why should I pay for a meal you forced me to eat?

Will: Think of it as a tax for coming through our forest.

Guy: Very well, but I have only three gold coins.

Friar Tuck: Is that so?

N3: Friar Tuck searches Sir Guy's saddlebag. He finds a pouch and pours out hundreds of coins.

Robin: Pity, Sir Guy. If you truly had but three, we would have taken nothing. But you lied, so we will take it all.

Guy: Thief!

Robin: Please allow my men to escort you to the road.

N1: Robin bows deeply.

Robin: Until we meet again, good lady.

N2: Lady Marian smiles. Sir Guy rolls his eyes.

N3: Lady Marian glances back at Robin as she rides off.

SCENE 5

N1: The Sheriff of Nottingham storms around the great hall of his large home. The heels of his boots echo off the high stone walls.

Sheriff: You cowardly fool!

Guy: I was helpless.

Sheriff: That money was for the Crown.

Bishop of Hereford (muttering): Among others . . .

Sheriff: Now they will think I cannot control my own **shire**!

N2: The Sheriff lifts a sword off the wall and runs his fingers along the blade.

Sheriff: Hood, when I catch you, your head will roll.

Bishop: You cannot beat him in the forest. You must lure him out into the open.

Sheriff: How?

Bishop: He fancies himself the finest archer in the kingdom. How about a shooting match with a valuable prize for the winner?

Sheriff: He will know it is a trap.

Bishop: Perhaps, but he is a show-off. He will not be able to resist the opportunity for glory.

Guy: Especially if Lady Marian gives the prize.

SCENE 6

N3: Robin strolls through the village handing out wheels of cheese, deer meat, and chickens. →

MEDIEVAL SOCIETY

Great for the rich.
Brutal for the poor.



For much of history, the people of England were divided into groups called classes. People generally lived and married within the class they were born into. Royals, like King Richard I, ruled. Nobles, like Lady Marian, owned property, oversaw the lower classes, and supported "the Crown"—that is, the current king or queen. Commoners, like merchants and millers, often lived in small villages and sold their goods in markets. Peasants had the toughest time of all. They lived and worked on big farms called manors. They could not leave without permission from the lord of the manor and often lived on the brink of starvation.

N1: Hungry villagers clutch at his sleeves.

Villager 1: Bless you, Robin Hood!

Villager 2: This will keep my family alive for a month.

Villager 3: Robin Hood, hero of the people!

N2: A herald rides in and sounds his trumpet.

Herald: Three days hence, an archery contest will be held in Nottingham Town. An arrow of pure silver will be awarded to the winner!

Robin: Gentlemen, let's head to Nottingham for this merry shooting match.

Little John: Master Robin, do you not see this is a trick to capture you?

Robin: All the more reason to attend.

Little John: Robin, it is certain death. Please do not go.

Robin: And let some lesser archer walk off with my prize? Never!

SCENE 7

N3: In Nottingham Town, cheers swell as archers stream onto the field. Among them is a limping beggar with an eye patch. He wears a tattered scarlet cloak that hides his face.

N1: The Sheriff, Sir Guy, and Lady Marian sit on a platform decorated with flowers.

Sheriff (scowling): Where is Hood?

Guy: He will be here.

Herald (shouting): Each archer will shoot one arrow. The 10 best will face off.

N2: Arrows fly. The final 10 are chosen. Among them is the one-eyed beggar.

Sheriff: Who is that varlet in scarlet?

Guy: If he wins, we'll find out.

N3: Each archer aims his arrow and lets fly.

Crowd: Hooray!

Sheriff: My head archer, Gilbert, has hit the center. He cannot be beaten. Ha!

Herald: Final contestant, approach!

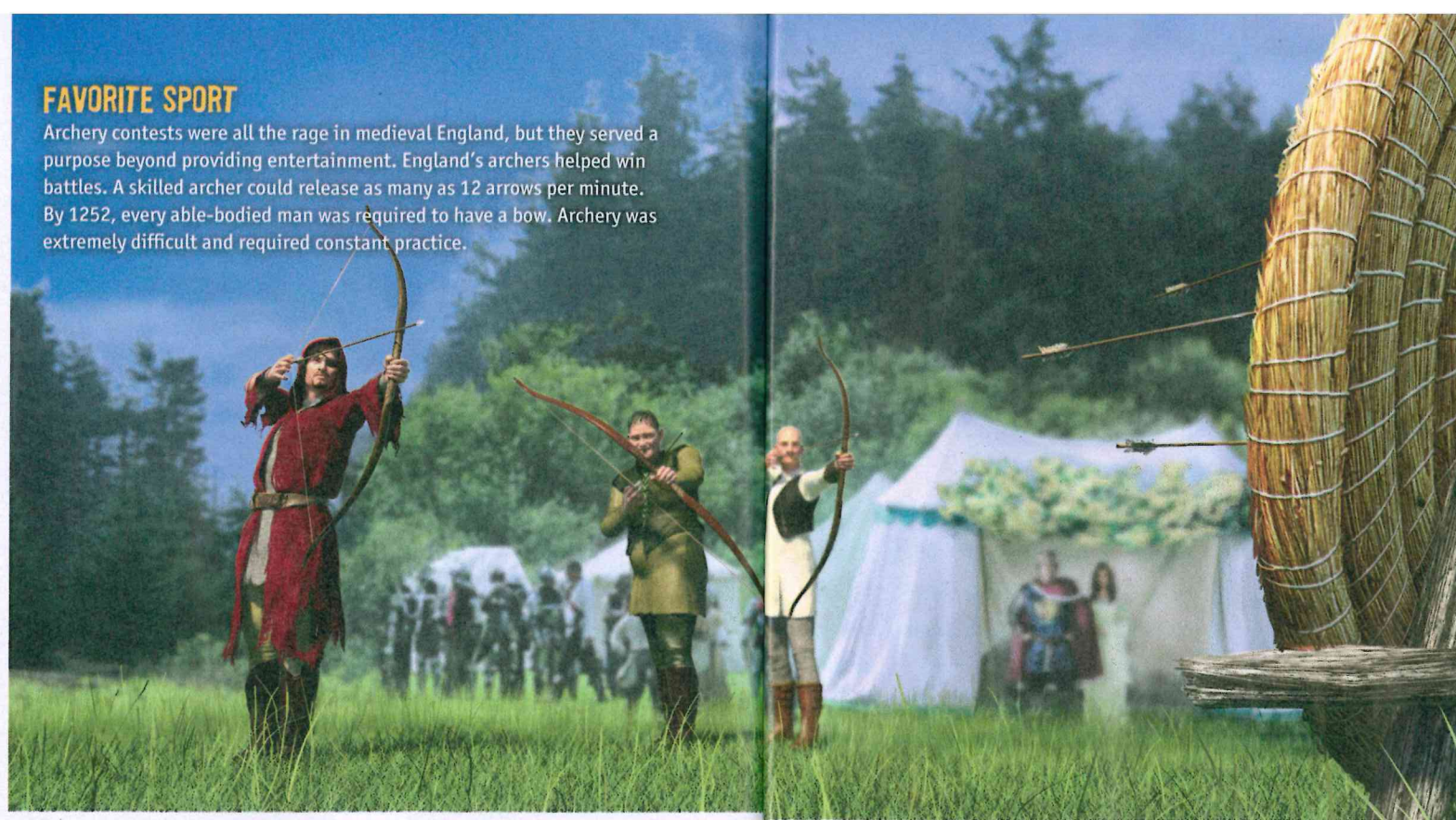
N1: The beggar steps forward and shoots his arrow. It splits Gilbert's arrow in half and lodges in the center of the bull's-eye.

Crowd (louder): Hooray!

N2: Lady Marian brings forward the silver arrow.

FAVORITE SPORT

Archery contests were all the rage in medieval England, but they served a purpose beyond providing entertainment. England's archers helped win battles. A skilled archer could release as many as 12 arrows per minute. By 1252, every able-bodied man was required to have a bow. Archery was extremely difficult and required constant practice.



Marian: Sir Champion, you beat the unbeatable.

N3: The beggar's eye twinkles as he declines the arrow.

Robin: Please keep it, milady. You might need it the next time someone drops out of a tree and blocks your path.

N1: Lady Marian's eyes grow wide. The Sheriff approaches, his purple robe flaring.

Sheriff: Your name?

Robin: Jack o' the Glen.

Sheriff: You are a better archer than the coward Robin Hood, who dared not even show his face today.

N2: The beggar throws back his hood.

Robin: Coward, you say?

Guy: Guards! Capture him!

N3: Robin draws his sword from under his cloak.

Will (from the crowd): Run, Master Robin! Run!

Robin: And miss all the fun? I think not!

N1: He sends one guard tumbling over backward.

Another guard steps in. Their swords clash.

N2: Robin fights valiantly, but he is overpowered.

Sheriff: To the dungeon! We will hang him tomorrow. It will be a lesson for all who think they are above the law.

N3: Lady Marian clutches the silver arrow as she watches Robin being dragged away.

SCENE 8

N1: Lady Marian sneaks into the dungeon. She speaks to Robin through the bars.

Marian: Is it true you are a noble and could be living in luxury in Locksley?

Robin: Yes, milady.

Marian: Why have you chosen a criminal life?

Robin: I loathe unjust laws and the Sheriff's cruelties.

Marian: But laws must be followed, or there will be no justice.

Robin: Justice? Tell that to the widow whose son was executed for stealing flour for his starving family.

Marian: So you support stealing?

Robin: The peasants would not have to steal if the Sheriff did not steal from them. Do you not see what is happening all around us, Marian? People are suffering.

Marian: And you are willing to die for them?

Writing Contest

Write the next scene of this play. You'll need to decide when it takes place, where it takes place, and who is in the scene. Make sure the characters stay true to how they are portrayed in the play. Send your scene to **Robin Hood Contest**. Three winners will get *The False Prince* by Jennifer A. Nielsen.

Entries must be submitted by a legal resident of the U.S. age 18 and older, who is the teacher, parent, or guardian of the student. See page 2 for details.

Robin: Better to die fighting for what is right than to live an idle life of privilege and greed.

SCENE 9

N2: Robin is dragged to the gallows, his hands bound.

N3: A large, somber crowd has gathered.

Robin: Give me a sword; let me fight to my death.

Sheriff: No, you are a thief and shall die like one.

N1: A noose is placed around Robin's neck.

N2: Friar Tuck pushes his way forward and calls out.

Friar Tuck: Would you kill this man without a blessing?

Bishop (grumbling): He deserves no blessing.

N3: Friar Tuck climbs the platform and blesses Robin while secretly cutting the rope binding Robin's hands.

Friar Tuck (whispering): Fear not, Robin.

Sheriff (smiling): Goodbye, Robin Hood.

N1: The hangman pulls the rope.

N2: Suddenly, Lady Marian appears on horseback. She raises her bow and draws an arrow—a sparkling, silver arrow—to her cheek.

N3: Snap! The arrow whizzes through the air and pierces the rope above Robin's head. He drops.

Merry Men (throwing off their cloaks): Hooray!

Sheriff: Catch him! Catch them all!

N1: Lady Marian gallops to the edge of the gallows.

Marian: Robin, jump!

N2: Robin leaps onto the back of the horse.

Guy: You shall regret this, Marian!

Marian: I only regret that I did not join them sooner!

N3: They charge out of the gates of Nottingham with the Merry Men close behind.

Marian: To Sherwood Forest, good Robin?

Robin: To Sherwood Forest!

Merry Men: To Sherwood Forest! ●

