**The true story of Robin Hood**



**I**
Robin Hood is a **tale** that every little boy **fantasizes** about, every little girl dreams of as her **hero** and a character film makers would like to cash in on, but how much of the **story** is really true? Well that may (and probably should) **remain** a **mystery** forever.

**II**
Films such as the 1991 release Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves starring Kevin Costner and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio or the latest 2010 flick – Robin Hood starring Russell Crowe and Cate Blanchett **ensure** that the character never dies.

Okay we do know the story but how about **reminiscing** it once again. Robin of Loxley lived under the **governance** of a Nottinghamshire's minor **noble** Richard the Lionheart. Robin was **outlawed** for **treason** and this was **punishable** by death, his **offense** – **poaching** **deer** in the **royal** forest. This happens at a time when the **kindhearted** King Richard is away on his 3rd Crusade and his **evil** brother John is ruling. The highly skilled **swordsman** and **archer** – Robin, escaped the clutches of the Sheriff and sought **refuge** in the greenwood of Sherwood Forest. Robin makes a living by **looting** rich travelers passing through the forest. But the kind of gentleman that he is, he doesn't keep the **loot** for himself and instead distributes it amongst the poor. This wins him a band of followers nicknamed the “merry men” and of course the love of his life, Maid Marian. Nottingham's evil **sheriff** despite repeated efforts is unable to capture our hero and finally King Richard returns to his **kingdom**. The kindhearted king **pardons** Robin Hood and his men and restores his lands, but Robin Hood always **remains** the poor man's hero. Of course this is only the romantic version. There are other versions where our hero meets his death from the **abbess** of Kirklees Priory, a **kinswoman**, but we, sweet souls, would not like to have bad endings, would we? And this is as far as the story goes.

**III**
With no **historical** records certifying Robin Hood's **existence**, the character may well be a popular ballad role which caught the **fancy** of the young and old and got carried from generation to generation. The name Robin Hood first **appeared** sometime in 1228 in various forms like 'Robinhood', 'Hobbehod' or 'Robehod' in the rolls of English Justices as an **outlaw**. Historians have found 8 **references** of “Rabunhod” from 1261 to 1300 spreading across England's south to north, Berkshire to York. What may be surprising to note is the old **grave stone** marked “Robard Hude” found in the Kirklees Priory grounds.

**IV**
Contrary to the stories as can be seen from the **ballads**, early Robin Hood legends do not **depict** him as an **aristocrat** which probably came into being in later versions. Robin Hood was always **portrayed** as a simple **yeoman** who takes to crime due to the **atrocities** of the rich people. **Hence** it is no wonder that the poor took to this folk tale like ants to sugar.

"Lythe and listin, gentilmen,

That be of frebore blode;

I shall you tel of a gode yeman,

His name was Robyn Hode."

-A Gest of Robyn Hode

This was the early printed ballad found that refers to Robin Hood. Later on many versions to The Tales and Adventures of Robin Hood can be found. The most popular of them are Robin and the Knight, Robin and the Potter, Robin Hood and the Monk, Robin and the Curtal Friar, Robin and the Silver Arrow and lastly The Death of Robin Hood. Even the great English **poet** and **playwright** William Shakespeare was fascinated by the Robin Hood **folklore** and depicted a similar character in his early work The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

**V**
Apart from **spouse** Maid Marian, Robin's band of “merry men” **included** Will Scarlet, Little John, Friar Tuck, Much the Miller's son and Richard at the Lee. Of course no Robin Hood story will be complete without the **bad guys** – so here they are – Sheriff of Nottingham, Guy of Gisborne and Prioress of Kirklees. **Incidentally** at the time these ballads of Robin Hood were being **weaved**, Nottingham did not have a specific Sheriff (the first Sheriff **post** was created only sometime in 1449). That is probably the reason the Sheriff in Robin Hood tales do not have a name. However, Nottinghamshire and the **neighboring** Derbyshire did have a common Sheriff.

**VI**
The present people of Nottinghamshire have surely gown warm to these **folk tales** and have put up many signs of Robin Hood's **existence**. You can find **major** **road signs** depicting Robin Hood holding his bow and arrow, welcoming the visitors. There is also a Robin Hood Way and the entire **county** of Nottinghamshire has thousands of **inns**, roads and other objects bearing the legendary name. There is also a major oak tree which legends say Robin Hood used as a **hideout**. So you can **pleasantly** warm up to the thought that your favorite hero Robin Hood was not just a folk tale or a **bedtime story** like Superman, but still lives in the hearts and minds of many people like a legend.

Słowniczek

Post-posada

hence-form. z tego powodu, dlatego, w związku z tym, wskutek tego

appear-ukazywać się, pokazywać się, pojawiać się

portray-szt. zagrać, odegrać (np. postać, rolę, charakter)

include-obejmować (zawierać coś)

treason-zdrada (np. stanu, ideałów itd.)

atrocity -okropność, potworność

spouse-małżonek, małżonka

Yeoman-(BrE.) hist. drobny właściciel ziemski

swordsman-fechmistrz, szermierz

sheriff-szeryf

royal-królewski

road sign-znak drogowy

reminisce-wspominać

remain-pozostawać

refuge-schronienie

punishable-karalny

playwright-dramatopisarz/dramatopisarka

poet-poeta, poetka

poach-nielegalnie polować na (coś)

pleasantly-miło

pardon-darować winę, ułaskawić

outlaw-człowiek wyjęty spod prawa

offense-przestępstwo, wykroczenie

noble-arystokrata/arystokratka

neighboring-sąsiadujący, sąsiedni

mystery-tajemnica

loot-łupić, plądrować, rabować

loot-łup

kinswoman-krewna

kindhearted-dobry, życzliwy

inn-gospoda, oberża

hideout-kryjówka

grave stone-nagrobek, płyta nagrobkowa

governance-rządy

folk tale-podanie ludowe

fancy-upodobanie

ensure-zagwarantować, zapewnić

depict-przedstawiać

deer-jeleń

abbess-przeorysza

***EXERCISE:*** Wskaż nagłówki, które najlepiej pasują do paragrafów I-VI czytanki.

1. Paragraph I

1. So what's the story?
2. The first versions of the story
3. Who are Robin Hood's friends?
4. He's a hero
5. And now for a bit of history
6. Robin Hood today
7. To rob the rich and give to the poor

2. Paragraph II

1. So what's the story?
2. The first versions of the story
3. Who are Robin Hood's friends?
4. He's a hero
5. And now for a bit of history
6. Robin Hood today
7. To rob the rich and give to the poor

3. Paragraph III

1. So what's the story?
2. The first versions of the story
3. Who are Robin Hood's friends?
4. He's a hero
5. And now for a bit of history
6. Robin Hood today
7. To rob the rich and give to the poor

4. Paragraph IV

1. So what's the story?
2. The first versions of the story
3. Who are Robin Hood's friends?
4. He's a hero
5. And now for a bit of history
6. Robin Hood today
7. To rob the rich and give to the poor

5. Paragraph V

1. So what's the story?
2. The first versions of the story
3. Who are Robin Hood's friends?
4. He's a hero
5. And now for a bit of history
6. Robin Hood today
7. To rob the rich and give to the poor

6. Paragraph VI

1. So what's the story?
2. The first versions of the story
3. Who are Robin Hood's friends?
4. He's a hero
5. And now for a bit of history
6. Robin Hood today
7. To rob the rich and give to the poor