
MACMILLAN READERS
PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

STEPHEN COLBOURN

Robin Hood



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Robin of Locksley

Robin Hood was born in the small town of Locksley in Nottinghamshire. Locksley's buildings were made of wood and it was smoky and dirty, like many other towns in England.

Robin's father owned a small farm which didn't have very much land. Life was sometimes very hard.

The family hadn't always been poor. Robin's grandfather had been a knight⁸ and he had owned a lot of land around Locksley. But then the Sheriff of Nottingham had taken the land because Robin's grandfather could not afford to pay the Sheriff's high taxes.

Robin worked on his father's farm every day. He had grown up to be tall and strong. He was fair-haired and very handsome.

Robin liked to practise archery on his father's farm, and he had become a very good archer. Many people came to watch Robin shooting his longbow. One of these people was the daughter of a local knight. Her name was Maid Marian. Marian had long blonde hair and she was very beautiful.

Robin and Marian often looked at each other. Then they began to meet secretly, and slowly they fell in love.

At this time, the King needed archers for his army. He had ordered all the strong young men in England to practise archery.

Every year, there were special archery contests⁹ in England. In the small towns, the prizes were of meat and drink. In the large towns, the best archers won prize money.

One of the biggest archery contests was held in Nottingham. Every year, the Sheriff of Nottingham gave the winning archer a prize from the King. The prize – one hundred golden crowns¹⁰ – was a lot of money. Archers came from all over England to compete¹¹ in the contest.

When Robin reached his eighteenth birthday, he decided to speak to his father about the contest in Nottingham.

‘Father, please let me go to Nottingham,’ Robin said. ‘I am old enough to enter the contest and I am the best archer in Locksley. I can hit a target¹² at five hundred paces¹³. Let me compete with the archers in Nottingham. I am sure that I can win.’

His father was silent for a moment, then he replied,

‘You are a very good archer, my boy. But the King and the Sheriff want archers for their wars. Don’t go Robin. Stay in Locksley and be a farmer. It’s not a bad life.’

‘But I want to see the world,’ said Robin. ‘I have never been to Nottingham. And I may win one hundred golden crowns. With that money we can buy more land. And . . . then I can ask Marian to marry me!’

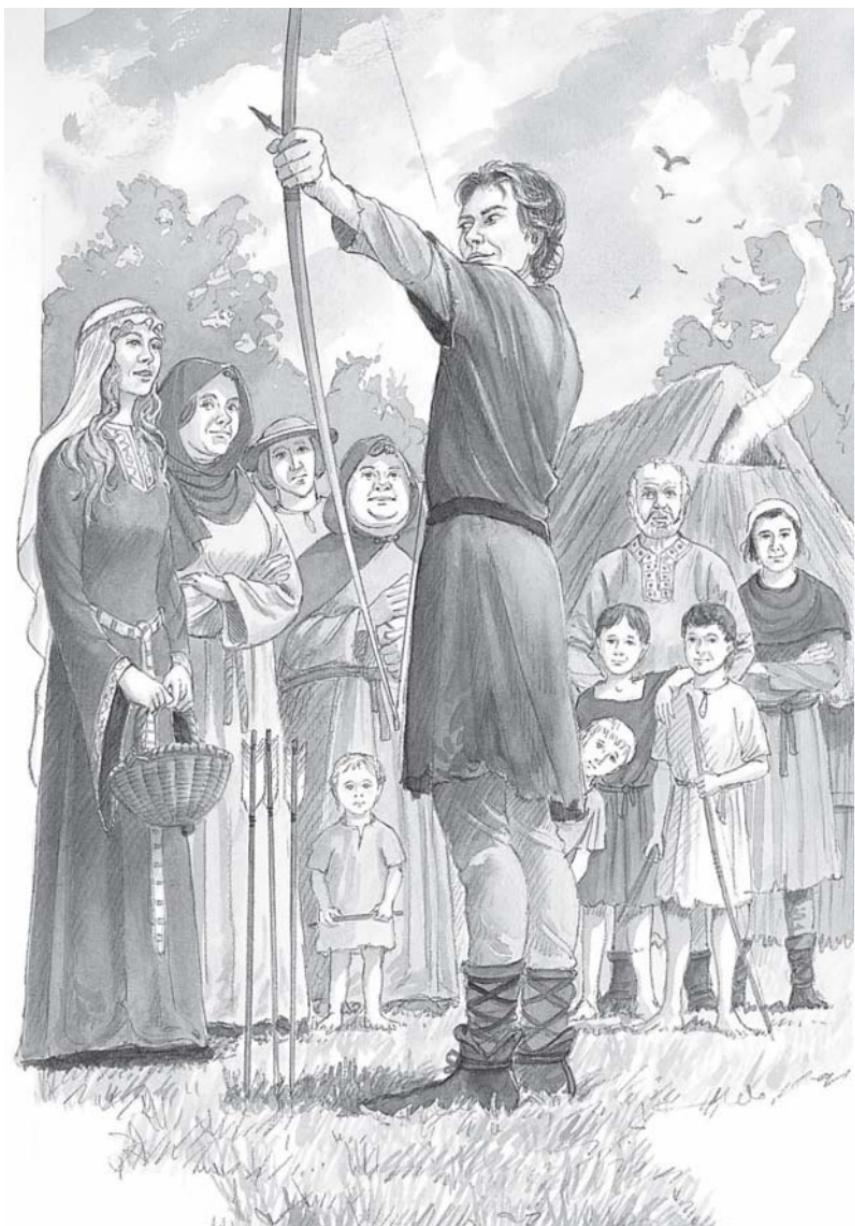
‘You may win the contest,’ replied Robin’s father, ‘but Marian’s family still won’t let you marry her. They want their daughter to marry a knight, not a farmer.’

‘But your father was a knight,’ said Robin. ‘He owned land in Huntingdon and around Locksley.’

‘That was over twenty years ago,’ said his father. ‘The Sheriff took most of our land when my father could not pay his taxes. Now we are poor and no one can take any more from us.’

‘We are poor but honest,’ replied Robin. ‘I am sure that Marian will marry me for love.’

‘Do not talk of love and honesty!’ said his father angrily.



Robin and Marian often looked at each other.