Robin Hood
Retold by Liz Austin

SUMMARY

When the evil Sheriff of Nottingham discovers that Robin Hood, the popular robber of Sherwood Forest, is really the land-owning Robin Fitzooth of Locksley, he devises a plan to catch him at his wedding to Marian Fitzwalter. But, as always when cornered by the sheriff, Robin uses his superior skill and cunning to evade capture. However, he cannot now return to his lands, and becomes an outlaw. Gradually he gathers a band of trusty men to his cause – Will Scarlet seems to be there from the beginning, in turn bringing Much the forester’s son to the forest when his father is killed by the sheriff for stealing a deer. Robin recruits Little John, after meeting and fighting him for possession of a forest bridge. Then Marian has to flee to the forest too, after she refuses to marry the sheriff. She brings with her Friar Tuck, but they get separated in the forest. Robin finds him working as a ferryman and has some fun with his boat before enlisting the friar to officiate at his marriage to Marian, and then to join the outlaw band.

Once again, the sheriff devises a cunning plan to get Robin to show himself. He organises an archery contest, knowing that Robin will have to come and prove his mastery. Robin duly comes, wins the contest and escapes.

Shortly after this, a mysterious stranger arrives in Sherwood. He is, it transpires, none other than King Richard himself, come to check up on Robin Hood. When he has satisfied himself about the outlaw’s true self, he reveals himself and restores Robin’s lands. He is Robin of Locksley once more, but not for long. Richard dies, his brother John ascends to the throne and once more Robin finds himself pitted against the sheriff. Inevitably he escapes, but not before receiving a mortal wound. From the abbey of St. Mary’s to which he retires to die, he fires an arrow and is buried in the forest where it falls.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

Robin of Locksley first appears in English songs of the 14th century. Many of the people in the songs are real – King Richard, who ruled England from 1189 to 1199, and his brother, John, who became King when his brother died. Many of the places are real, too – Sherwood Forest for example, and the nearby city of Nottingham with its famous castle. There were certainly people living in the forests throughout the Middle Ages, who killed and ate the King’s deer, which was against the law. It is uncertain, however, whether there was one particular outlaw called Robin Hood.

The theme of the Robin Hood stories is an ancient one. The good thief, who steals from the rich to give to the poor, exists in many cultures and goes back hundreds if not thousands of years. The stories abound in situations where people do not even have enough food to feed their family, and in this situation, the ethical questions arises, is it acceptable to steal when the only alternative is starvation for yourself and your family? On a theoretical level it seems, from the success of these stories, that the answer is yes, but when a person actually becomes a victim of a crime, the answer sometimes changes. In many societies, particularly modern ones, there is the notion of the victimless crime. Nobody suffers because the victim has enough money not to miss it, or because the insurance company will pay. In truth of course, there is no such thing as a victimless crime, but stealing one of the king’s deer in the Middle Ages must have seemed like this to many people.
The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the Reader and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopyable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of the discussion and pair/groupwork activities, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

**ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK**

1. Ask students to look at the title and the front cover and say what they know about Robin Hood.

2. Put students into small groups and ask them to look through the illustrations. For each illustration and caption, ask them to think of a possible story.

**ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION**

**Chapters 1–5**

1. Put students into groups to discuss this question: If you don’t have enough money to live, is it alright to steal money or food, particularly from rich people?

2. Robin Hood is able to hide in Sherwood Forest and the sheriff can’t find him. How can you hide in a forest? Ask students to think of some ways.

**Chapters 6–10**

Put students into threes to role play:

1. The conversation between the sheriff and Marian’s father after the fight. The sheriff wants to marry Marian. He will be a good friend if she agrees. And if she doesn’t?...

2. The conversation between Marian and her father. She doesn’t want to marry the sheriff and finally decides to leave and stay with her uncle, and to take Friar Tuck with her.

3. The conversation between the sheriff and Marian’s father the next day, when the sheriff returns for Marian’s answer and she has left.

**Chapters 11–16**

Ask students to choose one of the characters from this part of the book and to write a few sentences about their meeting with Robin Hood. Each student then reads out his/her sentences and the other students have to work out which character is speaking.

**ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK**

Put students in groups to try to remember how Robin met these people:

1. Little John
2. Much the forester’s son
3. Friar Tuck

**Glossary**

It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the ‘Before You Read’ sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

- **Chapters 1–5**
  
  - abbey (n) a large church, especially one with a building next to it where monks or friars live
  - abbot (n) a man who is charge or a monastery and the friars who live there
  - adventure (n) an exciting experience in which dangerous or unusual things happen
  - arrow (n) a thin straight weapon with a point at one end that you shoot from a bow
  - bow (n) a weapon used for shooting arrows
  - brave (adj) dealing with danger, or difficult situations with courage
  - deer (n) a large wild animal that lives in forests – the male has long horns that look like tree branches
  - forest (n) a large area of land covered with trees
  - gold (n) valuable soft yellow metal
  - greedy (adj) wanting more money, food, power, etc. than you need
  - king (n) a man from a royal family who rules a country
  - land (n) a country
  - poor (adj) having very little money and not many possessions
  - prince (n) the son of a king or queen
  - rob (v) to steal money or property from a person, bank, shop, etc.
  - sheriff (n) an old title for the man in charge of law and order in an area of England
  - sword (n) a weapon with a long sharp blade and a handle

- **Chapters 6–10**
  
  - hood (n) the part of a coat or jacket that you pull up to cover your head
  - staff (n) a thick stick which you use for fighting

- **Chapters 11–16**
  
  - contest (n) a competition
Photocopiable
Students can do these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only exercises are marked.

Activities before reading the book
Read the Introduction.
Answer these questions:
1 Which forest did Robin Hood live in?
2 What was the name of Robin’s mother?
3 Where did the Normans come from?
4 Who took money and food from the poor people?
5 Who did Robin take money from?
6 Who did he give it to?
7 Did Robin Hood really live?
8 Where is Sherwood Forest?

Activities while reading the book
Chapters 1–5
1 Match these people from Chapter 1 and the descriptions.
(a) George Gamwell Robin’s father
(b) Joanna Gamwell Robin’s grandfather
(c) William Fitzooth Robin’s mother
2 Who said each of these things in Chapter 2? Choose from the list. You can use the same person more than once.
- A villager
- Prince John
- The sheriff
- The sheriff’s man
- the village people
(a) He is a good man.
(b) Why don’t you catch and kill this robber?
(c) It is not so easy.
(d) I have a plan to learn more about this man Robin Hood.
(e) What is your plan?
(f) I often hear the name Robin Hood.
(g) Robin Fitzooth is Robin Hood.
(h) Prince John will kill him and give me Fitzooth’s money and lands
3 Are these sentences about the events in Chapter 3 true or false?
(a) Robin Fitzooth married Lady Marian.
(b) Lady Marian’s hair was black.
(c) The sheriff came into the church alone.
(d) There were a lot of Robin’s men in the church.
(e) Robin and the sheriff fought in the church.
(f) After the fight, Robin went back to Locksley House.
(g) King Richard came back to England.
4 Complete these sentences about the events in Chapter 4. Use a noun from the box in each sentence.
- arrows - bows - deer - forest - forester - gold - hand - home - house - lands - lord - man - son - sword
(a) The sheriff asked Prince John for Robin’s ....
(b) The prince sold them to him for a lot of money in ....
(c) The new .... of Robin’s lands was a hard man.
(d) The village of Farnsfield was very close to the ....
(e) The sheriff’s men found an old .... from Farnsfield.
(f) He had a .... on his back.
(g) His name was Much the ....
(h) The sheriff’s man took out his .... to kill Much.
(i) Much said ‘I can take you to Robin’s .... in the forest.’
(j) The sheriff’s man took his .... away and Much ran into the forest.
(k) The sheriff’s fighters took out their ....
(l) Three .... hit Much and he died.
(m) The sheriff’s men pulled down Much’s ....
(n) Will Scarlet, Robin’s man, took Much’s .... into Sherwood Forest to be a fighter.
5 Put these events from Chapter 5 in order.
(a) Little John didn’t fall into the water.
(b) Little John kicked Robin.
(c) Little John moved onto the bridge.
(d) Little John turned and looked.
(e) Robin and Little John fought in the middle of the bridge.
(f) Robin came to a little bridge.
(g) Robin didn’t move from the bridge.
(h) Robin fell into the water.
(i) Robin quickly kicked Little John’s legs as hard as he could.
(j) Robin said, ‘Come to our forest home, Little John.’
(k) Robin said, ‘I think I’m going to do some fishing. Then, perhaps, I will get out of your way.’
(l) Robin said, ‘Look, the sheriff’s men.’
(m) Robin thought ‘I will catch a fish for lunch.’
(n) Robin walked to the middle of the bridge.
(o) Robin went for a walk to the river.
(p) Suddenly Little John said ‘Get out of my way!’

Chapters 6–10
1 Complete these sentences about the information in Chapter 6. Use an adjective from the box in each space.
- afraid - bad - beautiful - cold - good - greedy - hungry - little - old - poor - sad
(a) One ... day, Sir Richard of Lee came along the Great North Road.
(b) He was on an .... horse.
(c) Will Scarlet said to the man. ‘It is a .... morning.’
(d) ‘Why are you so ....?’
(e) The man on the horse was not ....
(f) He knew that Robin Hood helped .... people.
(g) He was very .... and ate food with Robin’s men in the forest.
(h) He thanked Robin for the .... food.
(i) ‘Can’t you pay us for your dinner?’ said Robin. ‘With a .... gold I can help many families.
(j) Richard said the money was for the abbot and Robin said the abbot was a .... man.
(k) ‘But perhaps,’ said Robin, ‘the abbot is not .... man.’
2 Who, in Chapter 7 said or thought ....?
(a) This evening I will be Lord of his house and his lands!
3 Who in Chapters 8 and 9
(a) had a great party every summer?
(b) came to the party with fifty of his men?
(c) went to Marian and spoke to her?
(d) took out their swords and moved through the dancers?
(e) ran for their swords?
(f) stopped Marian from fighting?
(g) arrived at Lord Fitzwalter’s house with twenty horsemen?
(h) listened behind the door?
(i) said he would like to marry Marian?
(j) said he was afraid of the prince?
(k) went to her uncle’s house?
(l) did Marian take with her?

4 Match the beginning (a–k) and ending (i–xii) of each sentence about the events in Chapter 10.
(a) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(b) Why did Marian say ‘Poor man!’?
(c) Why did Robin think she was a boy?
(d) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(e) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(f) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(g) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(h) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(i) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(j) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?
(k) Why did Friar Tuck sit down under a tree?

5 Find three true things which the tall friar said in Chapter 12.
(a) Little John went to the road
(b) Two churchmen came along the road
(c) Little John came out of the forest
(d) The churchmen stopped their horses
(e) Little John said he knew a quick way to the abbey
(f) After a few minutes they saw smoke
(g) They were unhappy
(h) The food was very good
(i) Little John looked in the churchmen’s bags.
(j) Robin told them to take off their clothes.
(k) Robin took the money, horses and expensive clothes
(l) and moved to the middle of the road.
(m) and saw that each man had five large money bags.
(n) and the two men had to walk to the abbey in old clothes.
(o) and the younger man spoke to Little John.
(p) and then a fire.
(q) and waited behind a tree.
(r) but the churchmen couldn’t eat.
(s) but they couldn’t leave.
(t) but they didn’t have any money.
(u) in expensive clothes.
(v) so they followed him.

6 Match the questions (a–h) and answers (i–viii) about the information in the last chapter.
(a) Who sent the sheriff to Robin?
(b) Where did Robin go after fighting the sheriff’s men?
(c) What did the abbot want to do?
(d) When did Robin go after fighting the sheriff’s men?
(e) Why didn’t he kill Robin?
(f) ‘Good friar,’ called Robin. ‘Will you take me to your boat?’
(g) Who came to Robin at the abbey?
(h) Why did Robin ask Little John to carry him to the window?
(i) Because he wanted to use his bow.
(j) Because they were in a church.
(k) Kill Robin.
(l) Robin and Will Scarlet went ... the forest to River Dale.
(m) ‘Now lives ... the river.’
(n) ‘For one penny, he will take people ... the river in his boat.’
(o) ‘They say he came ... the village last month.’
(p) ‘He ... the village.’
(q) ‘They say he came ... the village last month.’
(r) ‘Now lives ... the river.’
(s) ‘For one penny, he will take people ... the river in his boat.’
(t) When people cannot pay, he carries them ... his back.
(u) & got ... the boat.
(v) He came quickly ... the river.
(w) He jumped ... the boat.
(x) Robin pushed the boat and it moved away ... the river.
(y) Friar Tuck came ... of his house –
(z) – and got ... the boat.

Activities after reading the book
Work in pairs. Think of something which you remember from the book. Tell your partner but don’t give the names of the characters. Can your partner guess the story and the characters?