

Robin Hood and the Beggar Knight

A **G** **A** **G** **capo III**
Lythe and listen, gentlemen that be of freeborn blood,
D **A** **F#m** **E**
And I shall tell a merry tale of our good Robin Hood;
D **A** **Bm** **G**
He guards the weak and weary from the evils of the strong,
D **A** **Bm** **E**
And doles out justice high and low, and rights each wicked wrong.

Deep in Sherwood Forest green, bold Robin built a hall,
That he might feast and he might sing with his good yeomen all.
And never did the king dine half as well, nor any lord,
D **A** **D** **E**
For all the forest bounty found its way to Robin's board.

Chorus: **A** **E** **D** **E**
Sing hey! For the hind and the hound and the hare,
A **E**
Sing high! For the summer and spring;
A **D** **A** **E**
Sing ho! For the life of the merry greenwood,
D **E** **A**
Where Robin Hood is king!

One day upon the forest path, a beggar knight was spied;
All dreary was his countenance, and little was his pride.
His hood was worn and weathered, and his mantle old and thin,
And Robin hailed him gently, and addressed him with a grin.

Welcome be you, gentle knight, to Sherwood Forest fair!
Robin Hood shall be your host, with plenty and to spare.
By your looks, it has been long since you had meat and wine;
Come hither to my hall and I shall show you how we dine!" CH

When they had finished eating, Robin said, "It seems no right
For yeomen to pay provender for any goodly knight."
"Alas, for shame," the knight replied, "I have no golden store;
I have within my coffers but ten shillings and no more."

"If that be true," said Robin Hood, "No penny shall I touch,
And if you have a need for more, I'll lend you twice as much."
The knight took down his coffers, and he laid them on the ground,

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And Robin counted out ten silver shillings, half a pound. CH
“How comes it then,” said Robin Hood, “That poverty is thine?
For though your hood is tattered, I can see it once was fine.”
“My son was held to ransom,” said the knight, and gave a sigh,
“My wealth is in my land, and I have little coin put by.”

The abbot of Saint Mary’s church agreed to lend the gold,
But then demanded payment ere my harvest could be sold!
My goods and gear are not enough to pay the full demand;
Tomorrow I must pay four hundred pounds or lose my land.”

Robin said, “Fear not, my friend,” and sent for his own store;
The chest was brought, and such a sum few men have seen before!
He counted out four hundred pounds, and gave it to the knight,
“Pay off your debt and save your land, and put all things to right.” CH

The abbot of Saint Mary’s church was riding through the wood,
And who should he encounter, but the outlaw Robin Hood!
As with the knight, the abbot was invited to a feast
And at its end, bold Robin asked for payment from the priest.

“I cannot pay,” the abbot slyly said, “You must agree,
“What little money I may have is spent in charity.
I swear it by Our Lady, I have no great store of gold;
My coffers hold but twenty marks to feed the poor and cold.”

“If that be true,” said Robin Hood, “No penny shall I touch,
And if you have a need for more, I’ll lend you twice as much.”
The abbot hugged his coffers, but the outlaw broke them wide,
And Robin found within eight hundred pounds and more beside. CH

On a day, the knight, no longer beggar, came to call,
He rode a splendid palfrey to the gates of Robin’s hall;
“Good Robin,” said the knight, “You are a gentleman well met,
And I have here four hundred pounds to pay my rightful debt.”

“Your riches you may keep,” unto the knight said Robin Hood,
“Use it with my gramercy to do your people good.
Our Lady has repaid your debt, and twice as much again,
For she believes, as I do, in the worth of honest men!” CH

Words by Lisa Theriot

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The story comes from "A Gest of Robyn Hode" printed circa 1500. The story of the beggar knight comprises lines 1-143 and 205-280 of the gest, which also includes several other story lines.