

## 2013 Suggestions for Teaching *The Heart of Robin Hood* by David Farr

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### Before seeing/reading the play

1. Research the evolution of the Robin Hood legend, the possible historical basis for the story, and the possible locations for the legend. These and other websites provide information:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin\\_Hood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robin_Hood)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger\\_Godberd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Godberd)

[www.boldoutlaw.com/robbeg/robbeg3.html](http://www.boldoutlaw.com/robbeg/robbeg3.html)

2. Research the evolution of the character of Marion. Familiarize yourself with *Le Jeu de Robin and Marion*, the play by Anthony Munday called *The Downfall of the Earl of Huntington* and *The Ballad of Robin Hood and Maid Marian*. What new elements about Maid Marion does each telling bring to the story? These and other websites provide information:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maid\\_Marian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maid_Marian)

<http://www.answers.com/topic/le-jeu-de-robin-et-de-marion-the-play-of-robin-and-marion>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Downfall\\_and\\_The\\_Death\\_of\\_Robert\\_Earl\\_of\\_Huntington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Downfall_and_The_Death_of_Robert_Earl_of_Huntington)

[www.robinhoodlegend.com/downfall-robert-earl-huntington/](http://www.robinhoodlegend.com/downfall-robert-earl-huntington/)

3. Research the life and legend of Richard the Lionheart. Research the Third Crusade. In what ways do reality and legend differ? What is Prince John's connection to the story in legend? In fact? These and other websites provide information:

[www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/plantagenet\\_2.htm](http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/plantagenet_2.htm)

[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/king\\_john.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/king_john.htm)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third\\_Crusade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Crusade)

4. Research the English story of *The Babes in the Woods*. This and other websites provide information:  
[www.its-behind-you.com/storybabesinthewoods.html](http://www.its-behind-you.com/storybabesinthewoods.html)
5. Little John is one of the “merry men.” In most versions of the story of Robin Hood, how do Little John and Robin meet? These and other websites provide information:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_John](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_John)  
[www.boldoutlaw.com/rhbal/bal125.html](http://www.boldoutlaw.com/rhbal/bal125.html)
6. Research Herne the Hunter and the Green Man. These and other websites provide information:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herne\\_the\\_Hunter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herne_the_Hunter)  
[www.greenmanenigma.com/theories.html](http://www.greenmanenigma.com/theories.html)
7. Research the symbology of the forest, trees, and specifically the oak? These and other websites provide information:  
[http://www.mythicjourneys.org/newsletter\\_deco6\\_guerin.html](http://www.mythicjourneys.org/newsletter_deco6_guerin.html)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enchanted\\_forest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enchanted_forest)
8. What is meant by the term “pastoral literature?” What do pastoral stories have to say about the life of the country versus the life of the court? In what ways are the story of Robin Hood and pastoral literature similar? These and other websites provide information:  
[www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446078/pastoral-literature](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/446078/pastoral-literature)  
<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Pastoral+Literature>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastoral>
9. Research social conditions for commoners in Medieval and Renaissance England. Pay special attention to land enclosures. These and other websites provide information:  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commoner>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enclosure>  
[www.hyw.com/books/history/Commoner.htm](http://www.hyw.com/books/history/Commoner.htm)

10. Research the Saladin tax of 1188 and the tax to ransom King Richard in 1194. Pay attention to the effects of the tax on the citizens of England. These and other websites provide information:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saladin\\_tithe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saladin_tithe)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxation\\_in\\_medieval\\_England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxation_in_medieval_England)

## Resources

### Books:

Howard Pyle. *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*

### Films:

*The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) with Errol Flynn

*Robin Hood* (1973) Walt Disney animated version

*Robin and Marian* (1976) with Sean Connery

*Robin Hood: The Prince of Thieves* (1991) with Kevin Costner

*Robin Hood* (2006-2007) BBC TV

## After seeing/reading the play

1. Refer to your research on the history of the Robin Hood legend. What elements has playwright David Farr kept, what has he changed, and what has he added to his version of the story? For example, the traditional meeting of Robin Hood and Little John is altered in this version. How is it altered and why? What does this change and others contribute to the story? How specifically does this re-telling of Robin Hood speak to a contemporary audience?
2. What is the significance of the title of the play? To whom or what does the word “heart” refer? Pierre tells us at the start of the play that he will tell the story of “How I found my heart. And Robin Hood found his.” What does Pierre find? How does he find his “heart”? In what ways is he changed by the end of the play? How does Robin Hood find his “heart”? In what ways is he changed by the end of the play? Who else finds their heart?

3. Early in the play there is a robbery of an aristocrat and his wife. What is the role of class and status in the play? To what class, if any, does Robin Hood belong? When does Robin adhere to the rules of class and when does he disregard them?
4. Refer to your research on pastoral literature. In what ways does *The Heart of Robin Hood* fit into the pastoral tradition? In what ways does it break from pastoral tradition? In the play, what characterizes life in the court? What characterizes life in the forest? Who holds power in the court and who in the forest? Who finds safety in the court and who in the forest? What power structures are diminished in the forest and vice versa? Who holds power in both places? In what ways do these two worlds come together at the end of the play?
5. Refer to your research on the significance of the forest and the oak tree. What happens in the forest that cannot happen in other locations in the play? How do people's attitudes about the forest change with their circumstances? What characters are transformed by their stay in the forest and how?
6. What are the guiding principles of Robin Hood and his merry men? In what ways do they stay true to those principals and in what ways do they break from them? When they break from their principals, what do they learn and how are they transformed?
7. Refer to your research on the English story of *The Babes in the Woods*. What elements of this story are incorporated into *The Heart of Robin Hood*? What does the presence of children add to the Robin Hood story? How does Robin Hood grow and learn from the children in the play?
8. Refer to your research on the Green Man and Herne the Hunter. What do they represent to Jethro and Sarah?
9. If you are seeing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, compare the character of the Green Man to the character of Puck. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? How does each define the world of the forest in their respective plays?

10. Compare and contrast Marion and Alice. What values does each hold dear? What are their opinions on love, family and honor? How does each act on her values in the course of the play?
11. Marion decides to go to the forest to meet Robin Hood. Before she meets him, she describes him as “a good man with a heart brave and true.” What does she discover about Robin Hood when she meets him? What does she decide to do as a result of that meeting? In what ways does she fulfill the ideal of “a brave heart and true?”
12. Refer to your research on taxation during the reign of Richard I. In the play, there is a tax called the Holy Contribution. What is the tax supposed to be used for and what does Prince John intend? How does Prince John’s plan for the tax effect the common people of the play? How do Prince John’s plans create a world where Robin Hood can flourish?
13. What does Robin learn from Marion? How does his attitude toward women change over the course of the play? How is he transformed as a result of his association with Martin/Marion?
14. What does Marion learn from her association with Robin Hood? What does she gain by disguising herself as a man? What options and opportunities are available to her as Martin that would not be available to the daughter of the Duke of York?
15. Why do Robin and Marion refuse to get married in the church at the end of the play? What does the forest symbolize to them?
16. Transformation is a theme running through the play. In addition to Robin and Marion, what other character transformations take place? How do Jethro and Sarah transform? The merry men? Prince John? Alice?
17. What theatrical storytelling techniques are used in the production? How does the flying and acrobatics contribute to the telling of the story? The actors playing animals, carriages and other needed properties? Creating the sound effects? How is the violence in the story conveyed? What affect did these storytelling techniques have on you as you watched the production?

18. If you are also seeing *Cymbeline*, compare Marion's journey to that of Imogen. In what ways do their disguises reveal and hide who they are?
19. Describe the relationship between Marion and her father, the Duke of York. If you are seeing *King Lear*, *My Fair Lady*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Cymbeline*, compare the daughters in those plays with Marion. How is each daughter valued, and by whom? How much power does each daughter have? Which daughters find power by defying the societal expectations of their role as women? Which by conforming?
20. If you are seeing *King Lear*, *My Fair Lady*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Cymbeline*, compare the relationship between love and marriage in the plays with *The Heart of Robin Hood*. On what factors do the fathers decide who will marry their daughters? How much influence do the daughters' wishes have? What attributes other than love do the fathers value?

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